

# **THE CHINDITS**

## **1944**



**PART ONE**

**REPRODUCED FROM NEWSPAPERS OF REPORTS  
OF THE CHINDITS OPERATIONS DURING  
MARCH, 1944.**

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# TRIBUTE

by

**Lieut.-General W. J. Slim, C.B.,  
C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., G. O. C. in C.  
14th Army.**

*I first met Wingate in East Africa in 1940 when he was taking a leading part in the organization and leadership of the patriot forces in Abyssinia. I regarded him then as one of the several daring young soldiers who were showing themselves to be outstanding guerilla leaders. It was not until months later when I travelled with him on a long air voyage that I realised that Wingate was much more than that. I talked with him, and he gave me a paper he had written on the organization, control and operation of guerilla forces.*

*I then learned that, added to the tactical daring of the guerilla leader, were a wealth of vision and a depth of imagination that placed him far above his comrades.*

*Genius is a word that should not be easily used but I say without hesitation that Wingate had sparks of genius in him. Someone has defined genius as "an infinite capacity for taking pains." Genius is not that. People who have an infinite capacity for taking pains are not geniuses. They are routine men fit for minor administrative posts. Wingate was not like that. Real genius has the power to see things more clearly than ordinary men can.*

*This he had.*

*He had, too, another attribute of genius, the power to accept other people's ideas, to adapt them to his own purposes, and to give them his own individuality—a form of genius which has always marked a great artist. Thus Wingate would discuss tactical ideas with you. He would contradict, argue, make you explain and defend your methods.*

*When he had completely satisfied himself he would accept them and incorporate them harmoniously in his own technique. An example of this was his application of airborne methods to his own long-range penetration tactics.*

*But there have been many geniuses who have accomplished little. The rarer combination of vision and action is required for results. As a man of action Wingate excelled. He was truly dynamic. When he was about, something had to move.*

*First he had the power of imposing his view on others, not so much by argument alone as by sheer force of his own belief. To see Wingate urging action on some hesitant commander was to realise how a medieval baron felt when Peter the Hermit got after him to go crusading. Lots of barons found Peter the Hermit an uncomfortable fellow, but they went crusading all the same.*



**Major-General O. C. WINGATE, D.S.O.**

Wingate spared no one, himself least of all. He never courted popularity with those he commanded or with those who commanded him. He invited, and skilfully used, publicity in all its forms, not for his own glorification but to ensure support for his force, to increase the resources allotted to him, to sell his ideas to the people who could help them on.

For the effect on himself, I believe he was indifferent. It was the cause that mattered. As a deeply but privately religious man he had a firm belief in the justice of the cause for which we fight and his one object was to serve his country in that cause.

The number of men of our race in this war who are really irreplaceable can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Wingate is one of them. The force he built is his own; no-one else could have produced it. He designed it, he raised it, he trained it, he led it, inspired it and finally placed it where he meant to place it—in the enemy's vitals.

In all this he would have been irreplaceable, but he has accomplished his greatest work. He has forged the weapon; others may now wield it. From the force itself come his successors, imbued with his will and his vision.

We are proud to have Wingate's force as part of the Fourteenth Army. The men he led, his Chindits, know that the finest tribute they can pay to the great leader is to complete his work and to perpetuate in themselves his courage and his determination to strike to the utmost in their country's cause.



## British Columns Cross Chindwin

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### March To Beat Hannibal

CHINDWIN RIVER, Tues.—“Hannibal eclipsed” was the description, given by the CO of the Fourteenth Army troops now behind the Jap lines in Upper Burma, to the dogged performance of his men on the conclusion of the 100-mile march which brought them to the Chindwin river.

They had marched through torrential rain up and down gradients of one in one—through impossible country. Some of the accompanying mules died from exhaustion but the men kept up the pace.

At the Chindwin they halted for a short rest and a clean up. In advance the supply units of the Allied air forces had dropped all their needs, including facilities for crossing the river—rubber dinghies and small petrol-driven craft.

Last year the Chindits had great difficulty in crossing the river. This year, however, Fourteenth Army troops had the inestimable benefits of air supremacy and air power permits assistance to the land forces hitherto impossible.

### Camp Fires Blaze

An officer observer who flew with the commander to watch the crossing of the Chindwin has described the scene here. In a plane piloted by an American officer, they flew low over the river and landed on a sandbank.

From the east bank of the river could be seen a long column emerging from the thick jungle across the river. In single file, weary, travel stained, weighed-down with full equipment and each carrying a bamboo staff they trudged down to the water's edge, chaffed by their comrades who had arrived before them.

It grew quickly dark and camp fires sprang up along the jungle's edge. Around each sat small groups of men, in their beards and travel-stained clothes resembling Commandos of the Boer war.

### Supplies By Night

Suddenly came the drone of an aeroplane engine and at a sharp order every fire was extinguished. The plane roared over them, flashing a light. As the plane circled for the third time everybody was ordered to the jungle edge. The plane returned and now its great shape could be seen. From its side erupted dark bundles attached to parachutes, which fell with accuracy into the supply dropping area.

The mail, bread, ammunition and a dozen other articles badly needed by the jungle parties had been safely delivered from the base, hundreds of miles away, to a tiny sandbank and they had been delivered on schedule.

Throughout the whole of the arduous march there have only been 18 casualties. Two have been “appendix” cases, two “jaundice” and one a broken leg while the remainder suffered from minor ailments such as lacerated eyes from bamboo shoots.

Although the operation is still in its early stages it can be said that a complete surprise has been gained and that an area vital to the enemy has been successfully penetrated. This could only have been achieved by a combination of daring and confident planning and the high training and splendid morale of these men of the Fourteenth Army.

# Jungle Armada: Full Story

Reprinted by Permission from "The Daily Mail"

From GRAHAM STANFORD

At an Allied Air Base, Behind the Jap Lines  
in Burma, Wednesday (delayed).

**T**HIS dispatch is being written from an Allied air base more than 150 miles behind the Japanese lines in Burma. The enemy is all around us, and I have just heard that a column of Jap troops with elephants is moving through the encircling mountains to attack our positions.

But Spitfires and American Mustangs have just roared down our grass runway to patrol over Central Burma, and all through the night I was kept awake by the drone of Dakota carrier planes which bring us supplies from India.

No one here—ground troops or crack flyers of Colonel "Phil" Cochran's Air Commando Force—seems to give a hoot whether we are surrounded or not.

All they care is that we shall give the fullest possible support to the tough troops who are now striking out at the Japs at various points in Northern Burma with the aim of cutting the enemy's communications between Mandalay and his forces on General Stilwell's front in the north.

This is the most fantastic base in military history, an air and army stronghold in the heart of enemy-occupied territory, seized by a glider invasion force which had to be flown more than 200 miles over 8,000 ft. mountains.

This audacious plan—surely the most daring in history—was carried out without opposition from the Japs. They were baffled by this lightning stroke at their heart.

It was a week before enemy air intelligence sent aircraft over here to find out what was happening.

Their fighters and bombers have been over almost every day since, but Spitfires and Mustangs are always up there to meet them.

Two days ago Spitfires destroyed four, and as I write another air battle rages 15,000 ft. above this strange "island" base cupped out of the jungle-clad Burmese mountain range.

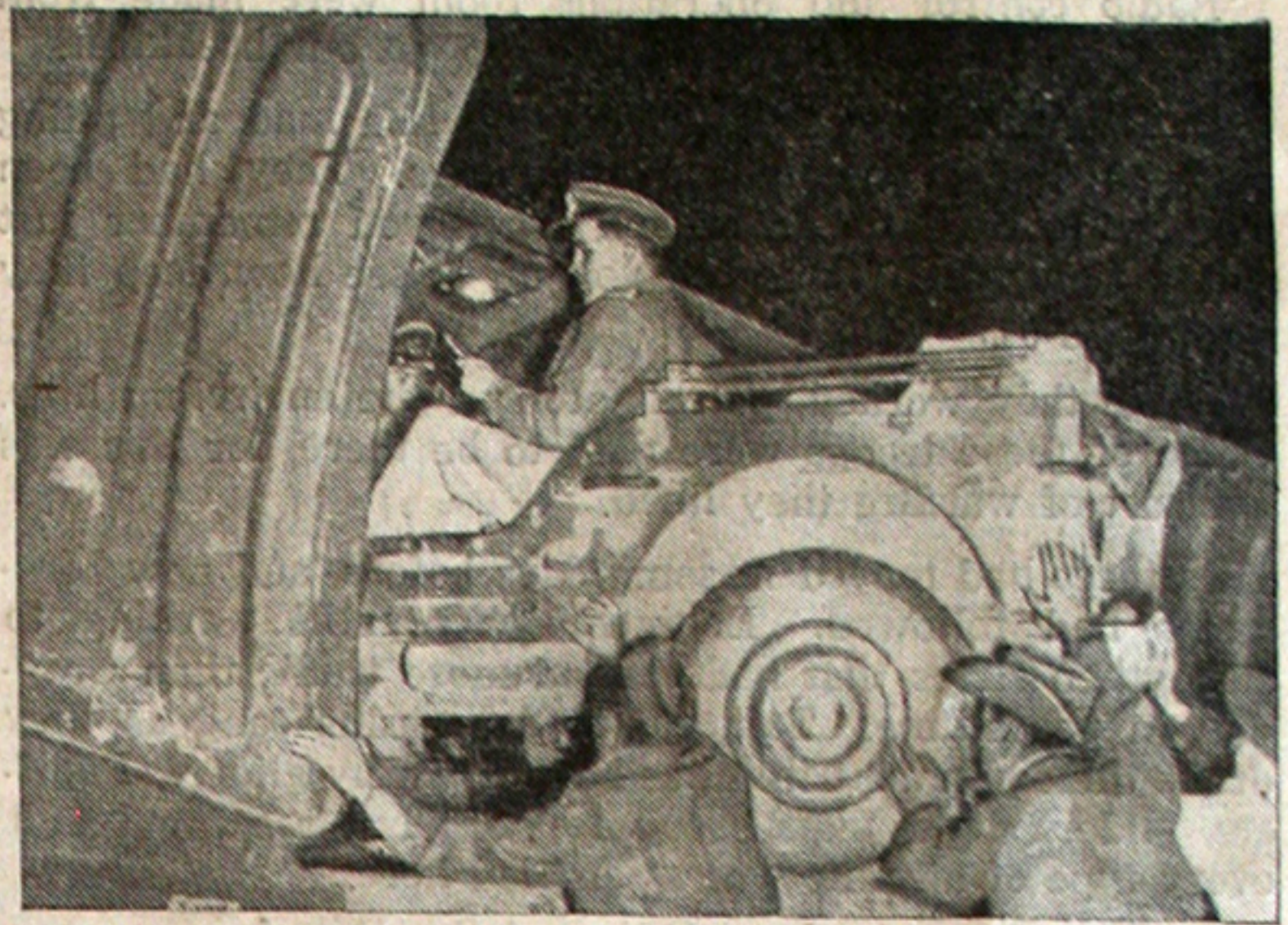
## SIX ALERTS

Six alerts were whistled through the woods yesterday—the first in the early hours and the last in the afternoon—but each time "Cochran's Outfit" and fighters of Sir John Baldwin's Third Tactical Air Force drove the Japs off.

Jap troops are deployed between here and the Indo-Burma border, but we keep the Jap fighters so busy that they cannot get over to help them.

They are virtually blockaded by the operations from this enemy base right in their midst. Meanwhile Jap troops between here and the border are being hit by men who—when the first glider invasion was successful—were landed here in fleets of troop-carrier planes.

I flew in three days ago. The moon was high, and 1,000 ft. below you could see unfriendly mountain peaks over which young American glider pilots had steered their machines on the historic night of the invasion.



Our plane was heavily loaded with food supplies, and petrol, and our pilot had to nurse her carefully over the highest peaks.

We carried two Burmese cooks.

Our pilot had no trouble in finding the airfield, for every night since the invasion he had been doing two Burma "runs," and now he had this hidden strip pin-pointed not only on his maps but in his mind.

As we circled round the edge of the cup they switched on the flare lights, and a green winking lamp told us that we could land.

Three jeeps, lights blazing, drove up to our plane carrying a party of Americans who had come to collect supplies. They were members of "Cochran's Outfit"—the name now given to the Air Commando Force.

They all sported beards and looked as though they had lived and slept in their battledress for days. So they had.

With brief snatches of sleep they had worked the clock round since the invasion, and one pilot had averaged eight flying hours daily.

"Hullo, Sport," said one of them—everyone is "Sport" with these boys.

"If you're looking for Cochran's deputy you'll find him asleep under the trees. But be careful how you tread, for these Indian kids are quick on the trigger. There are Japs around."

The deputy is a colonel, an ace fighter pilot and Number Two to Cochran. With no torch or matches, I stumbled into a wood on the edge of the field—a U-shaped spinney that had been fringed with elephant grass before the invasion.

I awakened the deputy and gave him the letter. "Hullo, Sport," he said. "Find yourself a place under the stars and I will be with you in the morning.

"I think we may have a busy day."

It was a fitful sleep, the chatter of a baboons' chorus, of barking deers, and the attention of blood-sucking leeches did not help.

I was awakened at dawn by the deputy tearing through the woods for the airfield, and a few minutes later his Mustang was climbing steeply. Japs were on patrol.

When daylight came I saw that the airfield was strewn with the wreckage of gliders: men were collecting the pieces and using them for camp furniture, and nylon silk tow-ropes hung from trees.

Radio control and operations room were made from gliders, and we sat on glider seats to eat our breakfast.

In the woods troops were digging like mad and piling logs on top of newly made bunkers. They had been burrowing hard for days, and when you remember just where you were, it cheered you up to see how deep they were digging.

While they worked, patrols scoured the encircling hills. Some of these troops were glad to be there, for this was the sort of warfare they liked.

Spitfires had moved in some days before, and now Mustangs had followed. Engineers were still working to strengthen strips that had carried more traffic than Croydon in peace-time. Tall, rangy Americans sang as they drove the equipment that has been flown by glider. Fighters, gliders, light planes, supply carriers—it seemed that every type of aircraft was assembled here.

To-day we received an Order of the Day from a man whose genius made the whole thing possible. I am not permitted to disclose his name, but he is a master of the unorthodox, a man who one day may well become known as the Clive of Burma.

I met him before and after the operation. He never had the slightest doubt of its success.

They pinned the Order of the Day on a notice board. Men read it and re-read it. It is couched in language typical of the man who—still young—has helped to write a piece of history.

Here it is: "Our first task is fulfilled. We have inflicted a complete surprise on the enemy. All our columns are inserted in the enemy's guts. The time has come to reap the fruits of the advantage we have gained.

"The enemy will act with varying tactics. We will resolve to reconquer our territory in Northern Burma. Let us thank God for the success He has vouchsafed us and press forward with swords to the enemy's ribs to expel him from our territory.

"This is not the moment when such an advantage has been gained to count the cost. This is a moment to live in history. It is an enterprise in which every man who takes part may feel proud to say one day he was there."

\* \* \* \* \*

*And here is a message from Graham Stanford describing how the invasion armada left.*

**I**T was evening, outside a large bamboo hut on the Burma border, and an historic moment.

For this was the last briefing of the glider pilots—young Americans who were to fly British and Indian troops 150 miles behind the Japanese lines in Burma and carry out the most audacious landing of the war—an operation first planned at the Quebec Conference.

For the last half-hour these pilots had listened silently as Colonel Cochran ran through the final details of the plan which he had worked out with the officer commanding.

They were the air spearhead of the attack. It was their job to take British and Indian troops into Burma and stay there and fight.

The sun was setting over the two-mile strip and it made a fantastic sight.

As far as you could see there were lines of gliders and they looked very light and frail beside the giant Dakota transport planes that were to tow them thousands of feet over the mountains that separate India from Burma.

As the Dakota pilots warmed up their engines, scores of mechanics pored over the gliders: laid out the lines of nylon silk tow ropes that shone in the evening sunlight, and hitched up gliders to the "tow ships."

Loading of the gliders had been going on all day. Mules, jeeps, equipment—all had been piled into these frail craft which are still looked upon as flying toys.

Mules—lashing out in all directions—were somehow edged into gliders and fastened in bamboo stalls: squatting around the edges of the field were the troops who were to make the first attack.

They wore green battledress and slouch hats: carried two knives in their belts and hand grenades in every pocket.

Sitting there in the fading sunlight, talking and laughing, they looked the toughest band of pirates that you could imagine.

Walking up and down the field inspecting the gliders and talking to the men were a group of high officers.

There was the leader of the landing force. There was young "Phil" Cochran. There was General Stratemeyer, deputy head of Eastern Air Command, General Old, troop-carrier chief, Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin, commander of Third Tactical Air Force, and General "Bill" Slim, commander of the Fourteenth Army.

It was probably the biggest evening in the lives of all of them.

The sun went down, and now it was getting very near to the time when the first Dakotas would roar down the grass runway with tow-glanders trailing behind.

Young Colonel Cochran had said that it could be done and he was doing it.

This was the plan. They were to land on three known fields more than 150 miles inside Burma; put guards around them while engineers made a runway fit to carry Dakotas.

Then—if there was no opposition—the troop-carrier planes would come in. They would be flown straight into the heart of enemy-occupied country. They would be fresh, fighting fit, with full equipment.

That is why the troops were so cheerful as they sat around the airfield waiting for zero hour. Some of them had never flown in a glider before; some of them, in fact, had never been in an aeroplane. But anything was better than to walk into Burma.

The main landings were to be made at two fields. Now the Dakotas and the gliders were all "lined up" for the "take off" and the men—quiet and tense—were piling in.

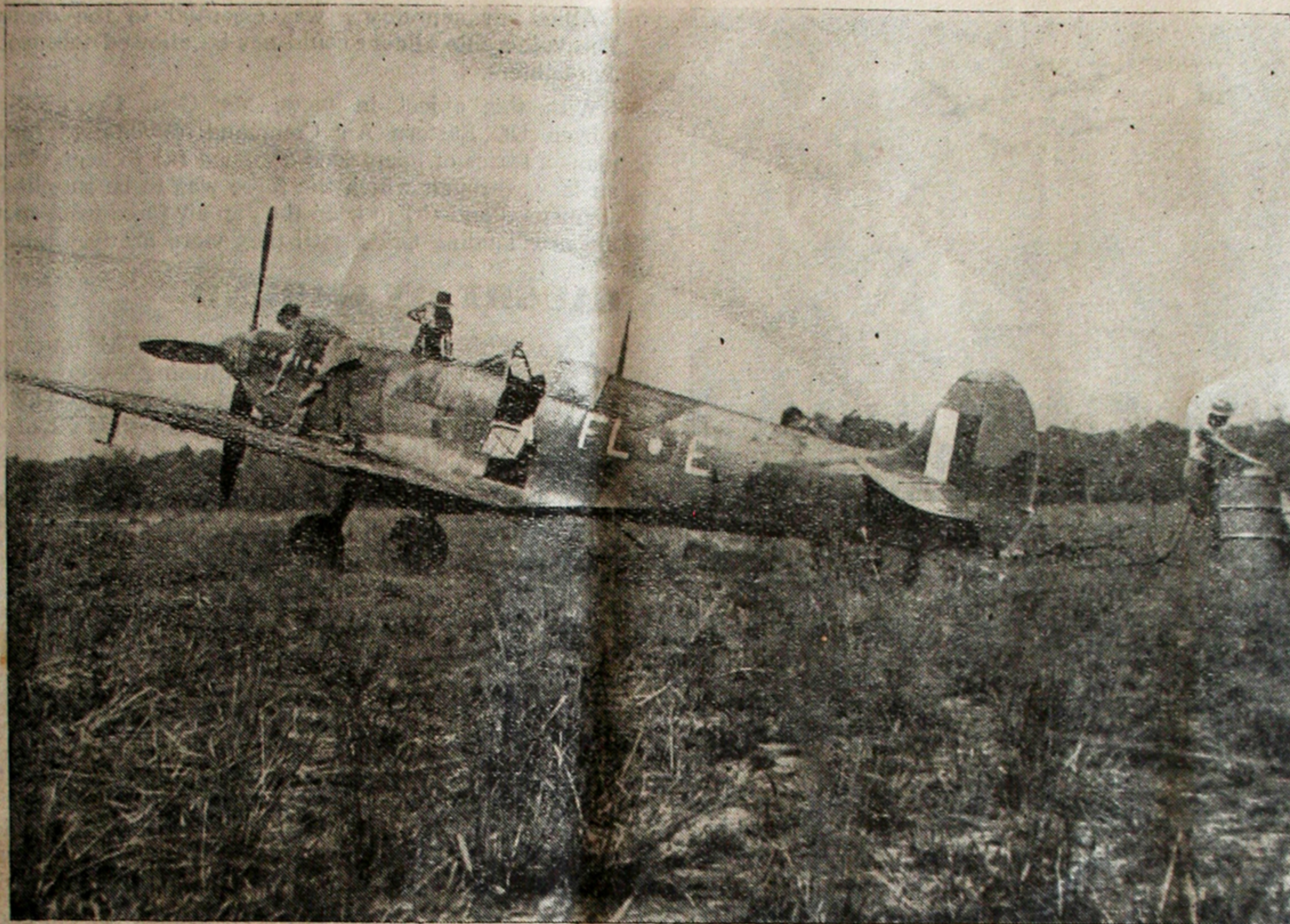
Twenty minutes remained before the launching of this strange invasion. The officer commanding and the group of high officers were pacing up and down the field.

At 6-20 on this Sunday evening the first Dakotas roared down the runway with gliders floating behind, carrying troops and mechanical equipment.

They kept on their navigation lights as they circled round to gain height, and then they were away over the dark range of mountains, on the horizon above which the moon was slowly rising.

Wave after wave of gliders took off until the field was empty and the officer commanding and Colonel Cochran and other officers went back to wait for the signal that the landing had taken place: that the jungle "beachhead" was established.

Then the second phase of operations could be put into effect—troop carriers could fly in to support the glider advance guard.



High over the Chin Hills the glider fleet soared on their flight into Burma. It was smooth flying for all but nine of the craft. Their silk tow ropes broke and they were loose in the darkness over mountains and enemy.

Their pilots struggled with straining muscles to keep height so that they could glide back near to the Burma border. The troops—unused to the strange feeling of gliding—closed their eyes and waited.

Two of the gliders "crash landed" within a few hundred yards of Japanese headquarters: the others came down in the jungle or mountains.

At the time of writing, glider crews and men of five of these gliders are safely back in India after incredible adventures. One small party employed Burmese coolies to make a landing strip. It was made, and along came one of the tiny American planes to pick them up and carry them to safety.

They swam rivers, crawled through jungles within a few yards of Jap patrols—but they got back and have now returned to the fight.

One river crossing was carried out within 100 yards of a strong Japanese position. Before they started to swim the men agreed that if they were in difficulties they would not call out, for fear the Japs were aroused.

One man in this party was drowned without making a sound.

It was about 9-20 p.m. when the first wave of gliders arrived over the field where the landing was to take place.

The first Dakotas cut the tow rope and the first gliders made a smooth landing. Leaping out of the glider, the British colonel fired off his tommy-gun into the jungle surrounding the field. There was no response. The Japs were not there. The invasion was on.

In the second wave of gliders came another ace American fighter pilot and number two to Colonel Cochran. He was to be "airport manager." He was to see that this field was ready to receive troop carriers in the shortest possible time.

By now the gliders were coming in fast and the sky above this jungle field seemed to be full of planes and gliders and the silken tow-ropes that came twisting down and wrapped themselves round the trees.

One of them crashed. Within a few minutes another had crashed into it. Men struggled like mad to clear the wreckage from the runway, for gliders were now coming in faster than ever.

There were accidents in which men were killed and badly injured. Doctors performed operations by torchlight and they made an emergency hospital by the side of the field.

One glider crashed in a nearby wood, and a rescue party struggled through the undergrowth to release the trapped men. Meantime, mules, jeeps, and other equipment were pouring out of gliders.

As he gave his orders, one of the British officers sent out his men to establish defensive positions around the field and make it a stronghold in the heart of Burma.

At 6 o'clock on Monday morning they started on the construction of a strip for light planes, for the evacuation of the wounded. At 11 o'clock the same morning the first light plane touched down, and a few minutes later took off with wounded.

At 7 o'clock the same evening—Monday—the heavier strip was ready, and five minutes later the first troop-carrier plane appeared over the mountain tops, made a perfect landing, and disgorged its cargo of eager men, who formed up and struck off into the jungle.





## AIRBORNE SHOW MAKES HISTORY

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BEHIND JAP LINES IN N. BURMA, Sat.—An Anglo-American airborne operation which will take a place among the most brilliant feats of war in all history has given the Allies a firm foothold in the rear of the Japanese 18th Division which has been barring the advance from the Hukawng Valley of General Stilwell's armies in North Burma.

Now 12 days after the first landings, British troops, with air support based on a landing strip which they carved out from the jungle, are astride the Jap communications.

Every man, every weapon, every pack animal of this force was taken into position by air.

Spearhead of the force was made up of British jungle-hardened troops and American engineers. They were carried from their bases in India in gliders towed by US Air Commando units of Eastern Air Command over the 7,000-foot Chin Hills by night.

As soon as they landed, engineers and troops, working by moonlight, cleared the jungle to make a landing strip. In less than 12 hours, the job was finished.

Next night, RAF and USAAF Dakotas and C-47's which had been waiting on Indian airfields were given the OK and flew over to land the main body of our ground forces. More strips were cut.

First class staff work was revealed by the fact that it was not until 8 days after the first landings that Jap recon planes found the airfields that had been established in the heart of the territory that for nearly 2 years has been theirs virtually undisputed.

### 4 JAPS SHOT DOWN

The Jap air force came in to the attack—and got a bloody nose. Spitfires took off and shot down 3 of the enemy, badly damaged 3 more. AA gunners on the ground got another.

Measure of the air-ground co-operation was shown by one incident in that first attack. A Jap fighter got on a Spit's tail, and was shot off by a burst of fire from the ground.

Allied air supremacy was essential to the operation. The vulnerable gliders could not be allowed to encounter Jap fighters.

With this object in view, Maj.-Gen. George Stratemeyer, OC Eastern Air Command, dove-tailed into the plans a series of operations designed (a) to keep clear the air-lanes through which the force was to be supplied and augmented and (b) to keep the Jap air force from spotting the new landing fields until they were firmly established.

### CAUGHT ON GROUND

It was with object (a) in view that USAAF units of the Tactical Air Force made their lightning sweep over the airfields at Shwebo, Onbauk and Anisakan. This raid caught the Japs on the ground and smashed 32 of their fighters without loss to the Americans.

A few hours later RAF fighters flew over the still-blazing fields and shot up more aircraft. A series of raids within the next three days brought the total to 63 planes destroyed.

The Jap air force was, temporarily at least, crippled, and could offer no serious interference to our airborne expedition.

Not one aircraft was lost in the whole operation, though several gliders necessarily made crash landings.

The existence of this force across vital Japanese communications must obviously have its effect on the military position in North Burma, especially when it is considered in the light of the announcement that British long-range penetration columns have crossed the Upper Chindwin.

As yet no land contact has been made with the enemy, but our men—all trained jungle fighters—are awaiting with confidence the inevitable clash.

"We have had a big preliminary success due to surprise," said a SEAC spokesman, "but the Jap is not going to take it lying down."

These Air Commando operations, according to him, have enabled us to wrest the initiative from the Jap in that area.

### THREE DIMENSIONS

We have presented the enemy with the same problem with which he presented us in the Arakan last month.

In such operations, an enemy can appear and reappear in front and behind. Warfare is now conducted in three dimensions.

A situation can develop in which opposing armies interpenetrate each other and everybody surrounds everybody else.

But the side which has air superiority, and well-trained and adequately supplied troops will be the ultimate winner.

It is not known what is the exact objective of the operations, whether it is part of a larger plan to recover Northern Burma, a long-distance penetration or a mere in-and-out raid.

It should be remembered that, however spectacular the operations, they are limited in scope and should be viewed in relation to the future war for the reconquest of Burma.

"The Monsoon is not far off," warned the spokesman. "The weather is going to limit the result to be obtained from the operation."



## PADRES GO IN WITH CHINDITS

*Reprinted by Permission from SEAC Newspaper.*

CHINDITS H.Q. (delayed).—Chaplains moving with our LRP troops 200 miles inside Jap-held Burma are sharing their hardships and dangers and living and marching under exactly the same conditions, writes an Observer with the Special Force.

Troops admire these men. "I crawled 200 yards and found our padre, who attended to my wound and saw me safely back before he returned to the forward troops. He was a grand chap," said one soldier. "Our padre was killed when the glider made a forced landing," said another.

Lt.-Col. Christopher Perowne, Deputy Assistant Chaplain General, who is with the Special Force, said: "The chaplain goes in exactly as every other soldier, carrying out the same training, wearing the same equipment. He shares completely in the life of the column but, above everything, he is a Man of God. Naturally, he assists the MO and makes use of his own knowledge of first-aid.

"The Communion set, specially designed for use in the jungle, is carried in a pouch attached to the chaplain's web belt."

## Wingate's Men Rout the Japs

*Reprinted by Permission from The Sunday Pictorial.*

THE story of the gallant Wingate forces—the Chindits, who are battering far behind the Japanese lines in the jungle of Central Burma—has reached the headquarters of Lord Louis Mountbatten in Ceylon.

**It was flown out from the Chindits' positions.**

Japanese troops who threw themselves against our defensive positions at a road block in the Katha area were routed, the message reveals. Their dead who lay along our defence wire symbolised their complete failure.

### Death Blows

In the jungle miles behind the recognised front, the special force are fighting their own war against a bewildered enemy.

Men of famous North Country and Midland regiments took the brunt of a heavy Jap assault and dealt crippling blows to them.

The majority of these attacks petered out about 700 yards from the Chindits' positions in the face of withering fire.

The night's work cost the enemy over 200 killed and wounded.

So ends the message, but the Chindits stand at the ready.

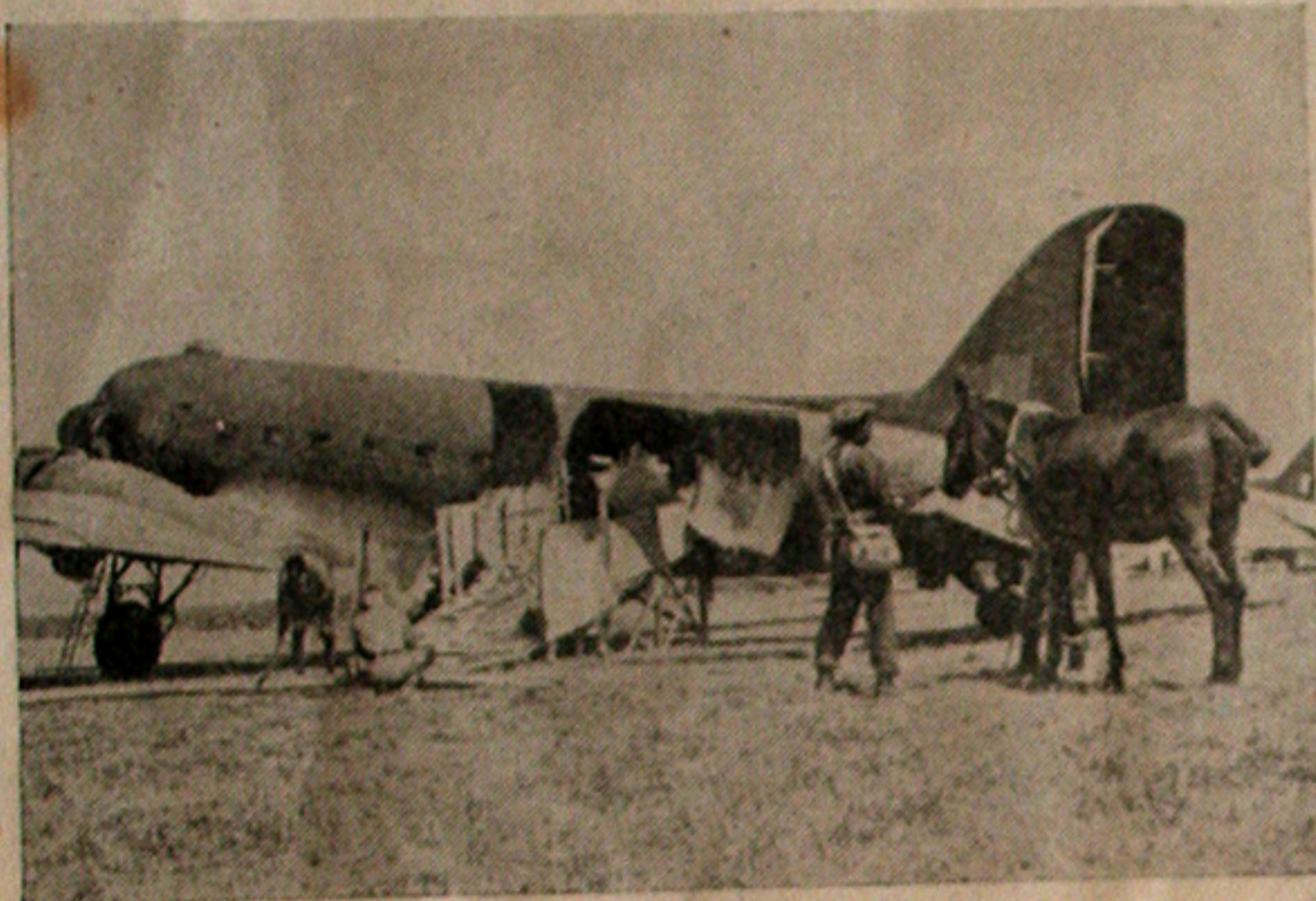
## "THOSE BOYS ARE THE TOPS"

Reprinted by Permission from SEAC Newspaper.

The British troops who formed the glider-borne spearhead of the air invasion of North Burma were taken over the Chin Hills and 200 miles behind the Japanese lines by American pilots.

Philip Cochran is the 33-year-old Colonel at the head of the Air Commandos of Eastern Air Command.

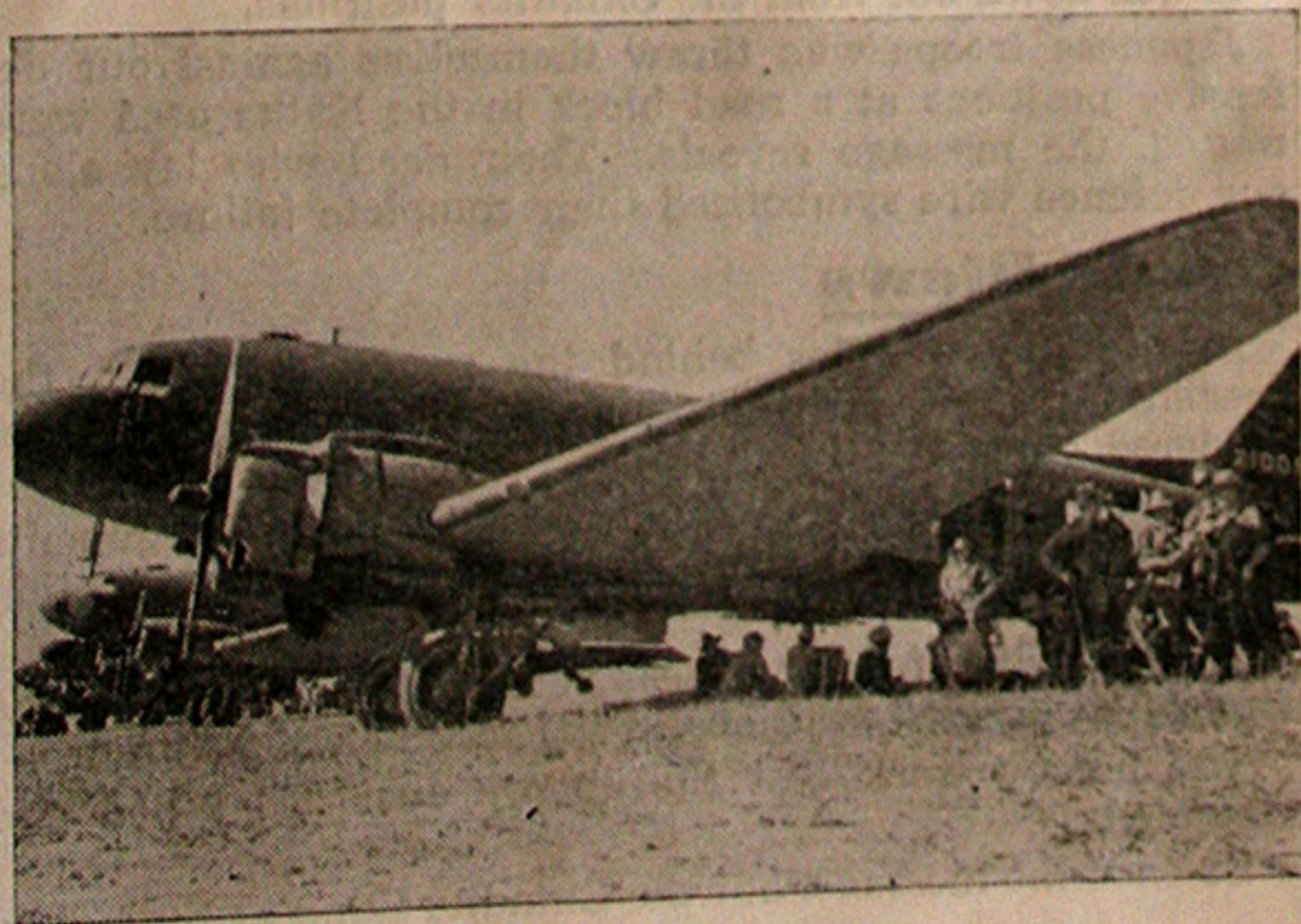
On the night the operation started, the troops and construction engineers, who were soon to be landed in the heart of the Japanese-held jungle, rested near the gliders and their twin-engined towing planes while the pilots received a final briefing from Colonel Cochran.



### RED FLARE

"Anything you boys have done in the past can be forgotten," he said. "Tonight you're going to find your souls. Tonight you are going to take these troops in and put them down just right. If there is any trouble with the first few gliders a red flare will be fired. But the man who has that flare has just told me it's in a mighty deep pocket and will take a lot of finding. In other words those boys are going to do a tough job and we are going to do all of our bit to help."

At dusk, all was ready. The troops, the American engineers, the equipment, were loaded. Weights were checked. The night ride ahead was through bumpy, turbulent mountain air with only friendless jungle and jagged peaks underneath for any glider that might break loose.



## THEY JOKED

Men of a famous North Country regiment joked as they climbed into their machines. Chewing-gum was handed round, a few last minute questions were asked, and the spearhead was ready to take off.

One of the pilots made a comment about the troops. "I've met some men in this war," he said "but those boys are the tops."

The engines of the first towing planes started up, and in neat precision, the first wave became airborne. Lt-Gen. Slim, Commanding 14th Army, Air Marshal Sir J. Baldwin, Commanding 3rd Tactical Air Force and Brig-Gen. Old, Commander of the Troop Carrier Command, watched the planes and gliders away. In one of the first gliders to leave was a Brigadier DSO, commanding one of the forces taking part.

High over the Chin Hills the gliders were towed, and then over the Jap-occupied jungle to the sites chosen for their landings. Right on time the first gliders were cast off, and came down in the darkness to land in strange country, aided only by the moon.

A number of the earlier gliders had their undercarriages broken, and there were some casualties, but the troops were unanimous in their praise for the American pilots, who performed great feats of evasive action as previously unseen obstacles loomed up.

Once down, the pilots, together with some of the troops they had brought, worked furiously to clear the ground and to help the gliders which were still coming in.

### PROTECTIVE SCREEN

Flares were used, and an American colonel on Cochran's staff took over the flying control. As soon as their machines came to rest the assault troops filed off into the jungle to give a protective screen to the area.

At any moment bursts of fire might reveal that the Japanese were about—and the presence of any strong enemy force on that critical first night might have brought ruin to the plan.

The patrols widened their searches and were reinforced with more gliders which were still coming in. But there were no shots—no Japanese. The surprise was complete.

Meanwhile on the landing site the engineers, aided by other troops, were making the airstrip which was the key to the whole operation. They couldn't bank on a continued absence of the enemy—but even if the enemy came, help could still reach our men if the strip was ready to receive the big Dakotas and C-47s.

### BRIGADIER PILOT

Tree stumps were cleared—ruts dug out, broken gliders dragged away—and the ground smoothed. In 12 hours the strip was ready—one of the finest feats of the war had been done.

Less than 24 hours after the first gliders had left their Indian airfield, the first transport planes carrying troops landed on the strip. The pilot was Brig-Gen. Old, his passengers, more British troops.

The shuttle service of aircraft men and material went on without a hitch, and without the loss of a single transport.

By the time the Japs discovered, eight days later, what was afoot, the air operation was over. The forces had been landed, and in the words of Air Marshal Sir Richard Peirse. "Air-ground co-operation history has been made."

# Wingate Leads Our Burma Drive

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**T**HE Prime Minister, in a review of the war situation broadcast early today (20.00 Sun. BST) revealed that Maj.-Gen. Charles Orde Wingate is leading the Allied forces that have established themselves 150 miles inside Jap-held Burma.

In an interview with a Fourteenth Army Observer, Gen. Wingate, whose force forms part of the Fourteenth, said the Premier had promised full support to his plans.

"On my return to India in the autumn of 1943, I found there was a great deal of doubt as to the feasibility of the proposed operation," the General continued, "But I always assumed my plans would go through and, in the difficult conditions which govern military operations on this front, would be found to be the only ones feasible.

"My plan was to go where the enemy was not. Previous airborne operations have always gone where the enemy was waiting and established.

"We have now established, some 150 miles inside Burma, strongholds which highly-trained Long-Range Penetration groups are able to use as bases and from which fighter forces are able to operate.

## 200-Mile Penetration

"If my men had been ordinary troops they would not have been able to do the work. They have established road and rail blocks 200 miles behind the Jap lines. Officers from outside my force who accompanied them in the gliders report that the LRP troops are some of the finest they have ever seen.

"This is due simply to the preparatory training which fitted them for the task. Every man is at home in the jungle despite the fact that he is in the middle of 4 Jap divisions.

"On landing from the gliders each man instead of standing around waiting for orders, started to build a home for himself. But first, with the help of American engineers, they built an airstrip which enabled the rest of the force to land on following nights without casualties.

"We attained complete surprise. Now the Jap has at last discovered our position he has launched 4 heavy air attacks, and has already lost a number of aircraft.

## Spying Out The Land

"Information on where airstrips could be located was obtained from the Chindits' Expedition of Spring 1943. It was the Chindits who traversed the whole region we are now using who discovered the airfields and who, at the cost of not inconsiderable losses and sufferings, found out what could be done in Jap-occupied Burma by bold troops adequately supported by air forces.

"It was Col. Cochran's faith and enthusiasm, joined to my own intimate knowledge of the problems, that gave us confidence to overcome all obstacles. Cochran and his Air Commando were provided at the direct instance of Gen. Arnold, USAAF, expressly for the support of LRP operations. Gen. Arnold did this on the occasion that the Supreme Allied Commander unfolded to him his plans for employing LRP forces. Had this force not been provided the operation could not have been carried out.

## Will Paralyse Enemy

"It was a great support to me to have Gen. Old, commanding Transport Command, a leader with the faith and enthusiasm necessary to land the men, mules and equipment so far behind the enemy's lines. It is due to the support of Old and Cochran that the plan succeeded.

"Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin, when he was aware of the details of the plan, was enthusiastic in its support. We arranged for the tactical and strategical air actions which preceded and accompanied the plan.

"LRP operations are based on exploiting wireless telegraphy and aircraft, whose full application is only just beginning to be realised.

"What have we accomplished? We have now a defended airport 200 miles behind the enemy's lines. Around and beyond we have columns who will strike out and paralyse the enemy in his vital centres and on his communications.

"The first stage has been completely successful. Everything we set out to do has been done.

"Troops which were not airborne have marched nearly 200 miles through mountains where no troops or patrols have ever previously been because the track gradient was too steep and the undergrowth too thick. The British troops got through despite these hazards.

"To do this they had to go a long way round to help Gen. Stilwell, already fighting the Japs on the shortest route.

"The Japs are hardly a first-class military power—they are years behind us technically, although brave enough. Before you can kill Japs you must have a sound strategic plan. But a very small force used imaginatively will defeat them."



MAJ.-GEN. WINGATE.

## He Restored an Emperor

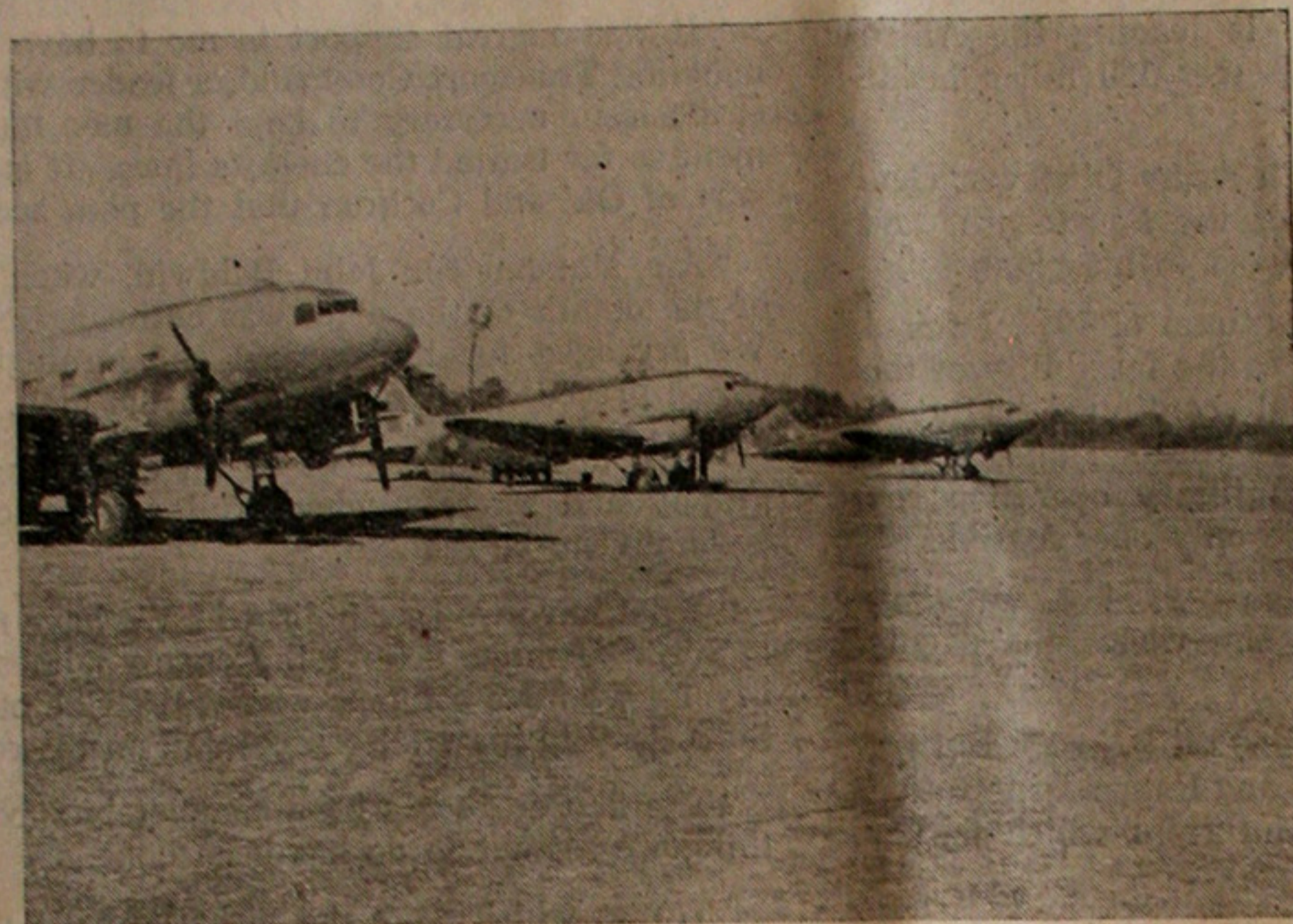
Charles Orde Wingate, son of an Indian Army Officer, himself born in India, is one of the most forceful and colourful characters thrown up by World War II.

He was called "Lawrence of Abyssinia"—a title he detests—because he put Haile Selassie back on his throne. He was called "Clive of Burma" because his previous expedition marched to within 60 miles of Jap H.Q.

Born in 1903, he went through RMA, Woolwich, was commissioned as a gunner in 1923. His first military operation was against smugglers and poachers on the Sudan-Abyssinia border. He started to make a fabulous reputation with his light squadrons against the Arab revolt in Palestine in 1938.

# When The Gliders Landed

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Here are some sidelights on the Cochran-Wingate glider borne invasion of Burma—the most successful, audacious and quietly heroic glider-borne and power-ship-borne invasion in the history of warfare. They are written by a U.S. Lieut.-Colonel of Infantry who accompanied the expedition.

IN the first glider to land there was a British lieutenant-colonel. His job was to rake the surrounding jungle with his Tommy gun and if he received answering fire, he was to fire a red Verrey flare to warn the rest of us not to land on Target One. Eight hours before take-off, in casual conversation he said: "I've got that flare so deep in my pocket that I doubt if anyone else can find it if I'm killed." There being no Target Two or no way of getting back from Target One, he chose that casual way of announcing to us that we would fight for the airstrip site even if we found a Jap Division sitting on it when the gliders started to come down.

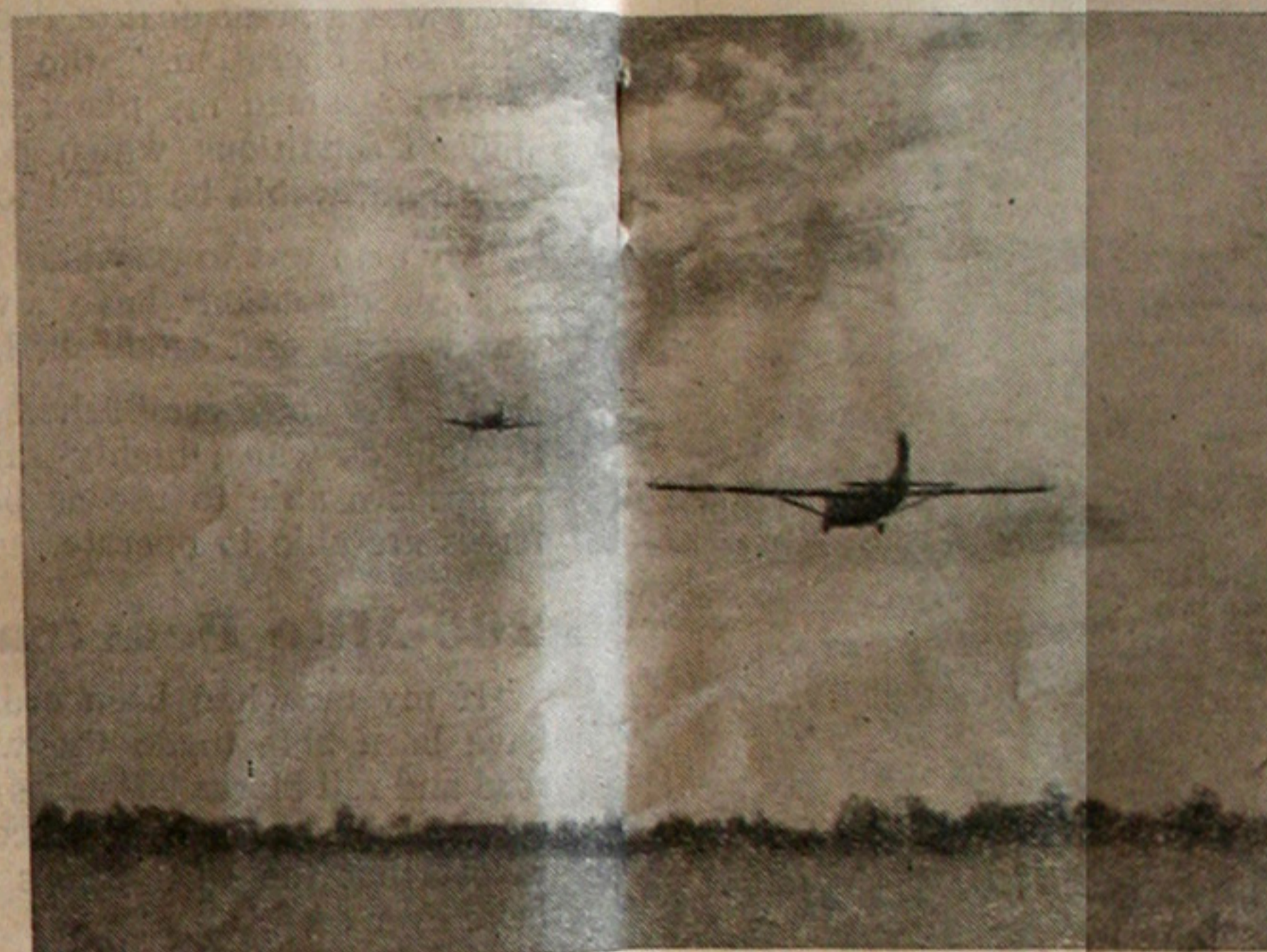
When the gliders did start to come down, some hit ploughed ground and knocked off wheels. These began to jam up the far end of the landing space in spite of heroic efforts to man-handle them out of the way. Two gliders cut off and started to come in toward the immobilized gliders already down. One crashed into the group with harrowing results. The other saw the wreckage at the last possible moment, zoomed at it at 120 m.p.h. and landed beyond. The American pilot leaped out and began to pound furiously on a strut with his clenched fist. "I demand an explanation of this. I want to know who cluttered up this strip with wrecks! I demand an explanation in writing!"

I don't think he got it because no typewriters came in that first night, as I remember.

Then there was the wrecked glider in the early dawn light—a glider fitted with mule stalls and the mule stalls littered with a deck of cards and a little Lancashire OR, looking at it and scratching his head "Eh lad, them chaps have been playing crib over them mules again."

By

Lt.-Col. J.W. BELLAH



There was the Gurkha on the long trip over the mountains—over most of the Japanese Army in those parts, over a vast mileage of enemy controlled terrain—who was, as polite phraseology puts it—caught short. Walking in hobnailed boots on the fabric that floored the rear end of his glider, he went all the way back to the tail, did his office, and returned to his seat. No one can explain to this day why the fabric didn't tear asunder and deposit him seven thousand feet below in Burma. The Gods of the Gurkhas walked with him.

There was the glider with a mass of heavy equipment lashed behind the pilot and co-pilot in the passenger space. In landing, the pilot turned left to avoid wreckage, overshoot and crashed into a clump of trees, the fusilage went between the only two trees that were wide enough apart to let it through. It went through at 100 m.p.h. Both wings crashed off and the fusilage went on merrily with the machinery torn loose inside. When the fusilage stopped, the machinery continued—at 100 m.p.h. But instead of buttering the pilot and co-pilot into the nose, it somehow tipped the nose piece and tossed it upward on its top hinges with pilot and co-pilot in it. The machinery roared out underneath them for fifty yards further, ending up in an indistinguishable crush of wreckage and the nose flipped back into place with pilot and co-pilot still in their seats. The Yank pilot looked the crash over for a moment and nodded sagely: "I planned it just that way."

The next forenoon with the jackals howling for our dead in broad daylight, we buried them in one grave regardless of nationality or religion or rank—and during the Lords

Prayer, high engines droned overhead. Enemy perhaps, or top cover for us. But nobody looked up or moved until the service was over. Then as we scattered for cover, somebody said "Jesus, I'll bet you could have heard that prayer five miles away" and the Jesus part of it was devout—and still apart of it.

For that was he sort of a show it was—magnificent, quietly done—rather awful in its import—but beautifully carried out in the best tradition of the fighting man. When the British Brigadier in command got his rough estimate of the casualties he said "Good Lord, it would have cost us three times that and more to walk in."

There was an American officer in that crash. His men wanted to get him out and bury him in a box. The word of the medicos was passed back to the Brigadier and he ordered cremation. But he turned as he did it and said: "Try to persuade his men to give up this idea of their's, will you? Do it gently. The order is passed—but I would like them to agree to it." I should like to go to war with that brigadier agin-sometime.

The funeral pyre lit up Burma for miles around—the old Viking ceremony—two hundred miles deep in the enemy's territory but with no dogs at hand to put at the feet of our dead—a great flaming holocaust, roaring defiance for any who could see it. Defiance that was not bluff or brag or bounce for by that time the strip was made, the power ships were shuttled in and a huge force was on the ground ready to move out on its mission—moving out on it, paving the way for the retaking of Burma.



No one who wasn't there has any conception of what went on that first hour after the first glider landed. The casualty list was not high but it was most dramatic and for a time continuous, and there was a strong expectancy of enemy fire at any moment. The British patrols took off at once on a 360 deg. Perimeter to force contact, if contact was to be made and the American Engineer and flying personnel (to be committed only on British order if the action became stiff,) started at once the 22-hour task of making an airstrip for the power ships to follow us in on the next night. The immobilized gliders began to accumulate at the ploughed end of the open space almost at once. Then a glider that had broken loose five miles away, tried to stall in over the jungle to us made it all but seven hundred yards and went down in the thick growth with a retching crash. Almost immediately afterwards a glider coming in correctly, made a sudden 180 deg. turn to avoid a glider ahead, tried to turn in again, lost height and crushed far down in the jungle. Search parties couldn't locate either crash that night as no answering calls came back from them. While the parties were out—one bad crash occurred on the strip itself. And there was the British sergeant in that crash, literally cut apart who could still say "Don't move me, Doc—this is where I lit and this is where I die."

That crash and other disabled gliders around it—the man-handling party trying desperately to clear the runway. Other gliders cutting off above and the continual shout of "Gliders" to scramble the man-handling crews out of the way of their lethal swoops in to earth, the agonized screaming of a desperately injured man (I do not recommend amputations by moonlight as a pleasant spectacle)—and the taut expectancy of enemy action did something to men's souls that night—and it did it quickly and completely.

A little tight-faced American sergeant grabbed me by the arm at one stage of the game and he said "Colonel, I want you to know this has made a so-and-so Christian out of me. I've told the so-and-so chaplain I'm going to his so-and-so church every so-and-so Sunday from now on!" And I think he meant it.



## The Chindits in Burma

Reprinted by Permission from "Manchester Guardian".

### Sergeant's Sacrifice

Alan Humphreys, Reuter's Special Correspondent, has sent the following report from the Chindits' advanced headquarters inside Burma:—

Many deeds of individual heroism are being performed here in the heart of Burma, where for more than a month the Chindit forces have been astride the main Japanese supply line between Indaw and Myitkyina. Among them is that of a wounded sergeant who made a "Captain Oates" decision when a Chindit force was surrounded by the Japanese. Weakly whispering "Go on. I shall only hinder the column," he threw himself off his mule. The sergeant was one of the first to be hit when the Chindits were ambushed at a river crossing. His comrades bandaged the wound, carried him across the river, and put him on a mule. But the sergeant refused to change his mind, and only asked for a drink of water. He was last seen lying at the side of the track as the Japanese closed in. His sacrifice was not in vain, for the remainder of the party reached the rendezvous safely.

### Enemy Attacks

To-day the Chindits' grip on the enemy life-line is even tighter, in spite of repeated Japanese assaults. In a desperate attempt to loosen the strangle-hold the Japanese are now making their fourth big attack. It started with six hours of mortar and artillery fire, then fighters and bombers were thrown in. Japanese infantry moved up but they were forced to withdraw. One officer, describing the present fighting, said, "We are at the giving end although the Japanese are giving us plenty to think about, especially with their heavy mortars. Every conceivable type of fire is being thrown in and it is just terrific."

The tale of demolitions, ambushes, and small successful actions by the Chindits grows daily. Men of a famous Scottish regiment attacked a dump, destroying much equipment and artillery, and killing fifteen Japanese. Another Japanese camp garrison fled when attacked by a force which destroyed ten tons of stores.

It would be wrong to assume that the Chindits are merely a small band of guerrillas harassing the Japanese. All these small actions fit into a plan. Chindit columns do not go seeking objectives—they were chosen long before the force entered Japanese-held Burma.

## Little Scots Matron of The Chin Hills

Reprinted by Permission from "Daily Sketch".

FROM IAIN LANG.

**T**O men of the first Wingate expedition the name of a diminutive, brown-haired Scotswoman is scarcely less well known than that of Wingate himself.

She is Matron McGearey, who was in charge of a hospital at a base near the Burma border through which all but a few Chindit casualties passed.

To-day Matron McGearey is running a hospital to which the wounded and sick from the airborne forces of the second Wingate expedition are evacuated.

She was recalled from the hospital in the forward area of the Chin Hills front by Lord Louis Mountbatten to undertake this duty at the request of General Wingate.

When a casualty arrives at the hospital, Matron McGearey's only concern is that he needs attention, and his rank or the colour of his skin do not matter. So I found a colonel in the same ward as a sergeant and a private, and British by the side of Gurkhas.

"It works out perfectly," said the matron. "When men have been sharing the same dangers they learn to respect each other."

### All Get Same Care

"It is true we have an officers' ward, but it is very small and when it is full we put wounded officers wherever we have empty beds. They all get the same care."

Matron McGearey believes in the paramount importance of "feeding the brute," not only when he is a patient but when he is fighting.

"The last time I saw General Wingate," she said, "I gave him a sackful of bottled beer and a cake I had baked myself to take to one of the airborne units."



## Arctic Fliers Deep in Burma

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**INSIDE JAP-HELD BURMA** (delayed)—British Spitfires operating on the Allied airfield behind the Jap 18th Division were part of a famous squadron which flew Hurricanes over Murmansk and later operated with Spitfires in Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily and Italy before coming to India.

They took part in the recent Arakan action which relieved the isolated 7th Indian Division. The pilots include Englishmen, New Zealanders, Australians, South Africans and one Canadian.

The Jap has already learned to respect these red-nosed Spitfires which carry the Ace of Spades as their insignia. The symbol was taken from a German squadron in North Africa against which they were outstandingly successful.

Three days after their first attack on the field, Jap aircraft returned—but they had obviously learned something from the sharp rebuff they got in their first attack.

### Block by Trees

Only three twin-engined Mitsubishi bombers came, with a strong screen of fighters above. Despite this show of strength the Japs did not make more than a tip-and-run raid, racing away as soon as they had dropped their bombs.

Bombing, however, was as nothing compared with the discomfort caused by a two-hour hurricane. All evening an electric storm flashed angrily round the hills and burst suddenly upon the stronghold with a rending gale and a fierce downpour of rain and hail.

Trees snapped all around, crashing down in the darkness, but amazingly nobody was hurt.

### Screen of Fighters

Nearly everybody was soaked through, blankets were sodden and the patches that serve for beds were inches under water.

Nearly everyone, moving about after the storm, fell into slit trenches full of water and mud and spent the rest of the night huddled against trees.

Daybreak showed the local geography had changed overnight. Tracks had disappeared, gaps were blocked by fallen trees.

Since that night the Japs have been reacting vigorously. Movement of troops to reinforce the affected areas is reported while their air effort has greatly increased.—API.

### Chindits Radio City

Reprinted by Permission of the B.B.C.

John Nixon, BBC correspondent with the Chindits, has sent us an interesting cable about the way orders are sent out to General Wingate's force which was recently landed behind the Japanese lines in Burma. Somewhere in India, says Nixon, Chindit Signals men have built a complete radio city. It was put up in less than a month, including road-making and the laying of some three-hundred miles of cable. About three-thousand gallons of petrol are used each week to generate the current for the transmitters. The receiving sets used by General Wingate's men are described by Nixon as "extremely tough". They are specially built to stand up to all sorts of rough usage like falling off pack mules and getting soaked in the jungle rivers.—BBC News Bulletin.

## Second Airborne Blow at Burma Japs goes well

Reprinted by Permission from "News Chronicle"

**D**ETAILS about the second airborne operation carried out behind the Japanese lines in Burma were released yesterday from Admiral Mountbatten's H.Q. in Ceylon.

A substantial force was flown in behind the Japanese lines as reinforcements for the columns already operating in the enemy's rear.

This operation, which was successfully concluded, was similar to that of the initial fly-in by Maj.-Gen. Wingate's forces at the beginning of last month, but these new reinforcements, although landing in enemy-occupied territory, found friendly forces waiting.

These were the men of the 14th Army Columns which last month marched into Burma from the north, crossed the Chindwin in boats and rafts dropped from the air, and then headed south.

In the valley between the range of hills in North and Central Burma these land forces found a clearing ideally suited for the construction of a landing strip, and sent back word to the 14th Army H.Q.

### No Transport Lost

The American Air Commando, headed by Col. Philip Cochran, flew in engineers and equipment by glider after consultation with Gen. Wingate, whose death in a flying crash occurred soon afterwards, on March 24.

In a few hours a strip capable of accepting transports was laid out, and Dakotas of the Commando force and R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. transports were ferrying reinforcements to join the land column.

Among the supplies taken by the glider trains were jeeps and bulldozers.

The strip has been consolidated and protected and is in constant use.

After the gliders left R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. transports followed them on schedule, carrying troops, pack animals, food, ammunition and weapons for the defence of the strip.

It was several days before the shuttling transports had completed the initial tasks, but this was done without the loss of a single transport, and without interference by the enemy.

### "Piccadilly"

A U.S. War Department report on the Wingate fly-in says the sites selected for the landings were known as Piccadilly and Broadway.

Of 54 gliders, 37 landed safely, eight descended in friendly territory and nine in enemy. Thirty men were killed and 33 injured in the landings on the first night, and almost all the gliders were damaged or destroyed.







## Air Photo Saved Force

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WASHINGTON, Tues.—The U.S. War Department disclosed to-day fresh details of the planning of Wingate's airborne invasion of Japanese-held Burma.

The plan called for the transport, supply and evacuation of troops up to the strength of a division. General Arnold, commanding United States Army Air Forces, summoned 33-year-old Col. Philip Cochran and 31-year-old Col. John R. Alison and directed them to organise and train an air task force, "for a specific and unorthodox function."

Col. Alison is now back in the United States to give a first-hand report on the undertaking. He described its progress as follows:

"The plan was all right with Wingate," he said. "He was a great man: a great leader. In the face of many cries of 'it cannot be done,' he went ahead.

"Operations started in February, when fighter planes and medium bombers ranged deep into the Japanese country softening up opposition for the invasion.

### Two Sites Chosen

"The operation was unique in that no one commander was given direct charge of the entire undertaking, and thus success was dependent on the co-operation of the various British and American army and air units involved.

"General Wingate's forces selected two sites for secret landing grounds in keeping with joint United States British effort. They were called 'Broadway' and 'Piccadilly.'

"Bulldozers were loaded aboard the first night's gliders to help prepare the fields for transports to follow. The day came, March 5. The weather was suitable. Air Marshal Baldwin gave the signal to carry out the operation.

"It had been decided that neither 'Broadway' nor 'Piccadilly' would be photographed preceding the operation, but Col. Cochran ordered photo reconnaissance.

### 11th Hour-saved

"Fifteen minutes before the takeoff time with gliders loaded and all personnel briefed for 'Broadway' or 'Piccadilly,' enlarged photographs of the two sites arrived.

"They showed 'Piccadilly' hopelessly obstructed. Large tree trunks had been dragged to all parts of the field, covering all but one small portion which might have been mined.

"Despite the possibility that the Japanese were ready for what had to be a surprise, despite, doubt and confusion created by the double briefing, it was determined to go ahead—all gliders to 'Broadway.'"

## Air Chindits: Inside Story

Reprinted by Permission from "SEAC" Newspaper.

WASHINGTON, Wed.—Continuing his report on the airborne Chindit landings in Upper Burma Col. J. R. Alison, who with Col. Philip Cochran organised and trained the force, said that 26 transports and 54 gliders left for Broadway air strip in the first wave despatched on the night of 5th March.

Of the gliders, 37 arrived at Broadway, 8 landed west of the Chindwin river in friendly territory. Nine others landed beyond the east bank in Japanese territory.

Thirty men were killed and 33 injured in the landing at Broadway that first night. Almost all the gliders were damaged or destroyed in the landing and the field was covered with broken gliders.

### Officer Swam River

Four Bulldozers were landed, one being put out of commission. A radio set was put in operation and a signal sent to the base from which the gliders had taken off asking that the second wave be stopped.

The second wave of single and double tow gliders were already in flight. All but one double tow were recalled before they reached the target area.

The officer who had been designated to superintend the field was in one of the missing gliders of the first flight.

His deputy took over the task of signalling gliders.

"We were in complete darkness. We did not dare show any lights," he said. "Planes were landed at all angles and their pilots could not see us any more than we could see them."

### Chowringhee

On 6 March plans were modified to bring into operation another landing ground, a secondary field, to help to relieve the congestion at Broadway.

A site was chosen and named Chowringhee, after Calcutta's main street. As fast as the airborne units of Wingate's force were landed, they were split up into columns and moved out to fulfil their appointed missions.

No Japanese reaction was noted until 8 March, when an Air Commando force discovered that the Japanese Air Force was being reinforced.

For seven days troops and supplies were moved steadily into northern Burma by transport aircraft operating under Troop Carrier Command.

A column and the H.Q. of one of General Wingate's units were landed at Chowringhee. Then the field was closed.

### Moon Over Broadway

Next day it was bombed by the Japanese. At Broadway and Chowringhee in seven days thousands of men, more than 500,000 pounds of stores, 1,183 mules and 175 ponies were landed.

Broadway remained immune to Japanese attack until 13 March. Japanese blows however failed to prevent routine flying of supplies to the stronghold and regular supply-dropping sorties by Troop Carrier Command.



## W. Africans Took Part in Airborne Invasion.

Reprinted by Permission from "The Statesman."

A well-kept secret of the Burma war has been made public with the announcement that W. African troops have taken part in the airborne invasion of Burma and are now operating from Allied strongholds miles behind the Jap lines.

The troops who were specially asked for by the late Maj.-Gen. Wingate are mostly Nigerians, and unknown to themselves, were assigned to their important role even before their ships sailed from W. Africa some months ago.

On arrival in India the men of this formation separated from their comrades who are now in the Arakan, and proceeded to a special training area somewhere in India. Here under the direct supervision of the late Maj.-Gen. Wingate they were trained along with other Allied troops for the arduous tasks involved in their special role. An especially high standard of physical fitness was demanded of both Africans and Europeans and it can safely be said that the men who have been flown into Burma in this daring expedition are amongst the fittest and best trained that W. Africa can produce.

That they were destined for "something different" was soon evident after their arrival in the special training area.

Supplies of the most modern equipment came forward in almost unlimited quantity and the men, although already trained in jungle warfare before leaving W. Africa were taught the lessons of long-range jungle penetration learned in the Wingate expedition of last year.

Particular attention was paid to physical endurance. An amusing story is told of a W. African infantryman who on being handed his "K" ration for the first time, poured the entire contents—sugar, chocolate, chewing-gum, etc., into a mess tin with some water, consumed the lot and said it was "fine."

The news that their "brothers" were in action in the Arakan spurred the men of this formation on to greater efforts and when they finally left by train for their long journey across India to their Eastern air-base, spirits and enthusiasm were high. An officer who was present when the men entered their troop-carrying planes for the final move into Jap territory, said that they were much less excited with what was to nearly all of them their first air trip, than they were with the prospect of at last getting to grips with the enemy whom they had come so many miles to fight. Even the mules, which have accompanied the men right across India, seemed to realize the importance of the occasion and behaved themselves perfectly.



# GLIDER MEN'S 19-DAY TREK

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**N**INETEEN days on the march after their glider had crashed in Burma, 11 British soldiers contacted British and Indian gunners on the Assam border and are now back at their base. Two of them marched several days with bush hats cut in two for footwear. One of the party wore two right boots after losing his own pair in the Chindwin.

They are: L/Cpl. William Mullin and his brother Pte. Jno Mullin, of Melrose, Kendrick Field, Chester; Pte. Wilfred Paxton, 21 Belle View, Willington, Co. Durham; Pte. Desmond Thompson, 10 Meetinghouse-lane, Wigton, Cumberland; Pte. Arthur House, 32 Weld-avenue, Chorley, Lancs; Pte. W. M. Griffiths, 6 Vernon-street, Barrow-in-Furness; Pte. Francis Moffatt, Everton; Cpl. James Durkin, 49 Red Rock-street, Liverpool; Pte. William Albert Paxford, 79 Leigh-road, Hindley Green, Wigan; L/Cpl. Albert Peers, 33 Park Side, Lower Bebington, Cheshire; and Pte. Jno Thomas Potter, 10 Glen-road, Upper Gornal, Staffs.

Pte. Mullin, who kept a log as far as possible, described their experiences to a 14th Army Observer while his comrades were enjoying the luxury of a shave.

"We were part of a special force being flown into Burma by glider," he said. "We had flown to the other side of the Chindwin when we made a forced landing into the undergrowth. Our padre was killed instantly. We were all badly shaken and only four of the remaining 18 were really fit to march.

## Arms Damaged

"From 6—12 March we went over the most difficult country imaginable. Then we were attacked by a party of Japs. Some of us were wounded and we had to split into parties of five and thirteen, the latter including a rece section and a detachment of mortars. We made no contact with the other group during the rest of the march.

"Most of our arms were badly damaged when the glider came down. The pilot was Flight Officer J. McTighue, of Pennsylvania. Our food was down and we drank swamp water until we reached the banks of the Chindwin on 16 March. That night we prepared to make the crossing with logs and rafts but at dusk we sighted the Japs in some strength about 200 yards up the bank and had to abandon the idea.

"The next plan was for the swimmers to get a sampan for the non-swimmers. Four of us, including my brother and myself, tried to make the first crossing. The current was too strong for the non-swimmers to get across.

"By this time Sgt. Hugh McGee, of Bootle, and Pte. Matthew Milburn, of South Shields, a medical orderly, had got through to our lines.

## Journey's End

"Two nights later the non-swimmers crossed safely and it was the swimmers who had the trouble—the sampan tipped up and three of us lost our boots. I dived in and

recovered a pair from the river bottom but they were both right boots. I wore them for the rest of the journey.

"The river was about 300 yards wide where we crossed. We lost our arms in the swamps. They were the worst obstacles—even worse than the thick undergrowth which we could only get through by flinging ourselves bodily at it one behind the other.

"Cpl. Durkin had a narrow escape in a swamp and that was where he lost the rest of our food. Heading west we went 5½ days without food and then ran into Japanese supply lines.

"Pte. Paxford sneaked up to a sleeping Jap and removed his bag of rice. We carried on for another three days through what appeared to be completely uncivilised country. We then met a patrol of two English officers and Indian soldiers and joined them.

"We had to lie up on seeing a Jap patrol of six and just before darkness spotted another Jap party with camouflaged ponies. During the night we heard a Jap company coming and thought it too dangerous to carry on further so we lay up once more in the bushes.

"The next day we bumped into a battery of British and Indian gunners and that was the end of our journey."

A Jap shot Pte. Griffiths in the back at point blank range but he carried on marching and is recovering.

## Rotten Shots

At the end of the trip there was one water bottle between the 11, and during the whole time their clothes were never dry.

Each member had his job allotted by the section leader. One was striking off the days on a calendar.

When the crossing of the river was first undertaken a rece disclosed that mules and ponies with food strapped on their backs were being ferried across and that all the crossings were made at night. Camouflaged assault boats with outboard motors were also seen. The 14th Army men were strongly tempted to commandeer one but lack of arms was the deciding factor.

"The crossing by sampan was as easy as getting across Sefton Park Lake," said a Liverpool man.

Debris in former Jap areas taught the men how to cook rice in pieces of bamboo.

They also found that inside the stalks of a banana there is a sort of pulp which tastes rather like water melon and is very refreshing.

They all agree the Japs are rotten shots, even at point blank range.

All had one overriding hope—that the rest of their party will manage to find their way back, then join them and return to the fight.

## AIR COMMANDO IDEA

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NEW DELHI, March 20.—It was revealed last night that the idea of the "air commando" which so successfully flew in the spearhead of our forces now in N Burma was first thought of by Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Broadcasting on All-India Radio last night, Air Marshal Sir Philip Joubert, of H.Q. SE Asia Command, said: "It is interesting to recall that this scheme of an air commando was first thought of by the Supreme Allied Commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten. He gave the idea to Gen. Arnold who adopted it enthusiastically and ordered the formation of such a force for the SE Asia Theatre. He also gave the name commando to the force as a compliment to Lord Louis Mountbatten, who, at that time, as head of Combined Operations, was in charge of the land commandos."—API



## BITTER FIGHTING IN HEART OF BURMA

Reprinted by Permission from SEAC Newspaper.

SPECIAL FORCE H.Q. 10 April.—First detailed story of the grim hand-to-hand fighting which led to the capture of Mawlu, 150 miles in the enemy's "guts" in Burma has reached this H.Q. The 14th Army Observer who was present at the capture was killed in the same area a few days later.

The attack by our infantry on 20th March, was the climax of two days' fighting during which the Japs, after infiltration, had wounded a number of our men and subjected isolated platoons to intense mortar and machine-gun fire.

Air support was immediately given and the officer commanding our troops himself led the counter-attack on the

blazing village. Surprised by our determination and ruthlessness, the enemy broke and fled in confusion down the railway line, pursued by accurately-aimed bursts of LMG fire.

Approximately 70 Jap bodies were recovered from the wrecked village, which was still smouldering three days after the attack. By then the position had been consolidated and troops were relaxing before the next battle.

It is estimated that over 50 p.c. of the Jap troops in this area were either killed or wounded. Jap communications by rail to the north have been severed but the enemy are bringing up reinforcements, including artillery.

# Wingate Dies

## In Air Crash

*Reprinted by Permission from SEAC Newspaper.*

Wingate is dead. An announcement from New Delhi yesterday said that while on a tour of inspection of the positions his forces have established behind the Jap lines, the B-25 American bomber in which he was travelling crashed on a mountain ridge in British-held territory. The American crew and two other passengers also died.

He was homeward bound for India when the plane crashed. An American pilot flying over the area that night—24 March—reported a big fire on the ridge. When the Wingate party did not land at their destination, a search party was sent out. It took some time to locate the wreck.

Major-General Orde Charles Wingate, at 41, was one of the youngest Britons ever to hold that rank. One of the many hailed as "a new Lawrence of Arabia" he was the one who more than any had a right to the description. He was a distant relative of Lawrence.

The son of an army officer—who saw considerable service in India—he was born a Leader. Unconventional, even flamboyant in his ideas of war, he first came to light as a guerrilla leader in Palestine in the 1936 troubles.

### **He Broke Duce's Duke**

In 1940, when Italy entered the war, he began to use his knowledge of the Sudan and Abyssinia, acquired as a junior officer, to build up an army of Ethiopians to help the re-conquest of Haile Selassie's empire. It was his force that disrupted the Duke of Aosta's Army and enabled Gen Platt to make the swiftest campaign in military history.

From Africa to Asia. When Alexander's men were coming out of Burma, beaten but unbroken, Brigadier Wingate, as he was then, was planning to go back into Burma.

He turned British and Indian troops into jungle warriors and, last year, led them on an expedition through Jap territory which confounded the strategists of every army.

### **Forestall Jap push**

His "Chindits," by their 1,000-mile march of destruction which smashed the Jap's communications and destroyed his supplies, undoubtedly upset the enemy's plans for an offensive against the Ledo Road last campaigning season.

Only a week ago it was revealed that he was the leader and largely the author of the expedition that now lies across the communications of the Jap 18th Division which is trying to hold the advance south of Gen. Stilwell's Chinese-American forces pushing down into north Burma.

At home in England he leaves a 26-year-old widow.

## War Correspondents Killed

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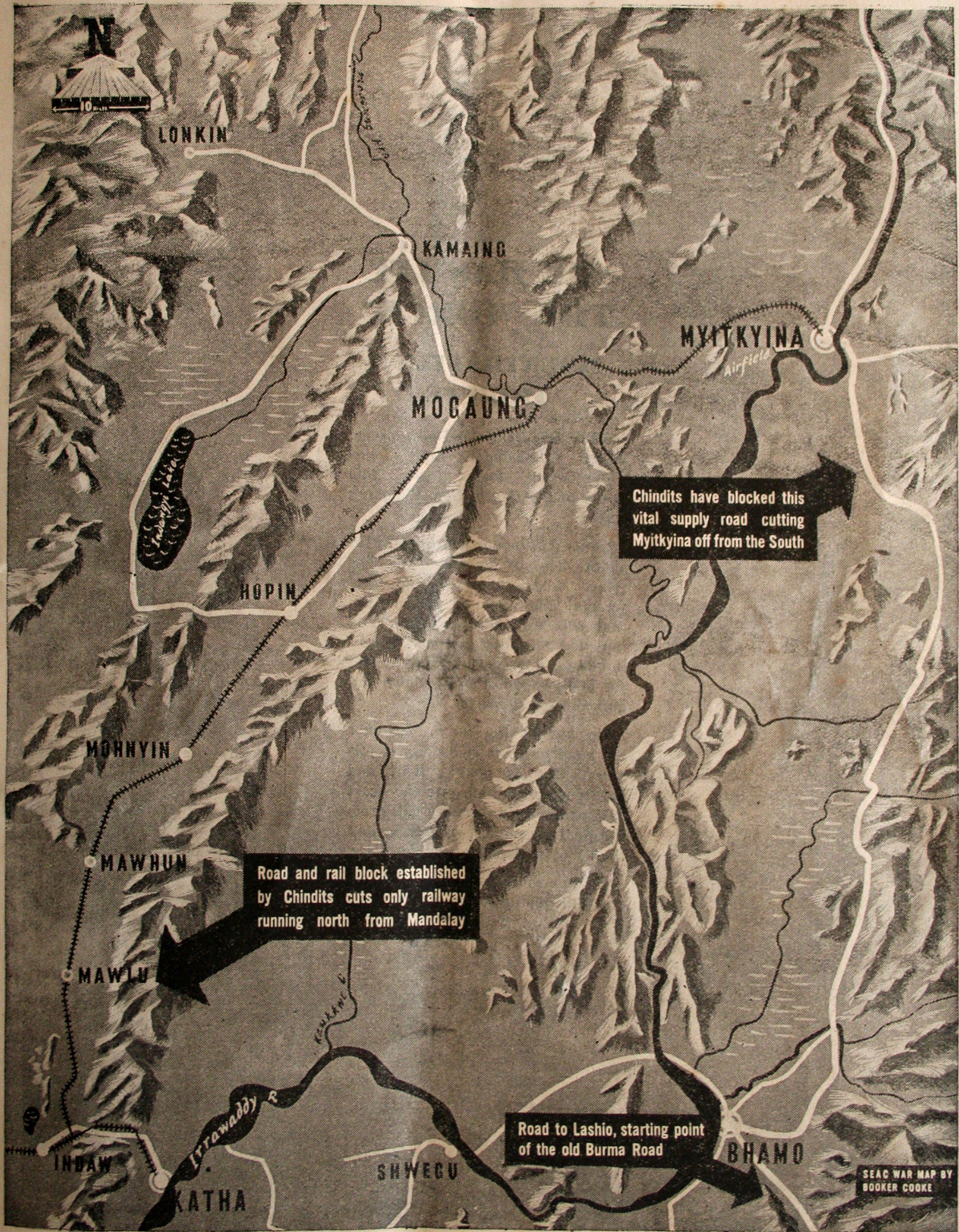
LONDON, April 2.—The War Correspondents Stuart Emeny, of the "News Chronicle," and Stanley Wills, of the "Daily Herald," are presumed to have been killed in the air accident in which Maj-Gen. Wingate lost his life, it is officially revealed today.—

Emeny was 40, was married and had two children. He became a leading war correspondent when he went to Abyssinia to report the Italian invasion. After a period as Assistant News Editor, he went to Palestine during the Arab-Jewish troubles where he was once caught in a sniper's ambush when motoring from Haifa but ran the gauntlet and escaped unharmed. He went to India in 1942. He accompanied Maj-Gen. Wingate's jungle raiders on part of the 200-mile trek through Japanese territory and was following up to report on the new Allied airfield behind the Jap lines when the crash occurred.

Wills who was 38 leaves a widow. He joined the "Daily Herald" in 1934 and was appointed War Correspondent last July, first at Algiers and since September in India. Last February he was the only journalist to witness the relief of the 7th Indian Division after its long siege by the Japanese, and in a dramatic cable described the scenes when the relief convoy got through.

Twenty-nine British and U.S. War Correspondents have now been killed on all fronts during the present war (of whom eight were British) and 34 have been wounded (of whom 12 are British). Four British and five Americans are missing and eight British and 37 Americans are prisoners of war, or are interned.—Reuter.





LONKIN

KAMAING

MYITKYINA  
*Airfield*

MOGAUNG

Chindits have blocked this vital supply road cutting Myitkyina off from the South

HOPIN

MOHNYIN

Road and rail block established by Chindits cuts only railway running north from Mandalay

MAWHUN

MAWLU

Road to Lashio, starting point of the old Burma Road

INDAW

KATHA

SHWEGU

BHAMO

SEAC WAR MAP BY BOOKER COOKE

## **'HE HAS LIT THE TORCH'**

### **MOUNTBATTEN'S TRIBUTE**

NEW DELHI. Sat.—The Supreme Allied Commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten, today issued this Order of the Day to Gen. Wingate's forces:

General Wingate has been killed in the hour of his triumph. The Allies have lost one of the most forceful and dynamic personalities that this war has produced. You have lost the finest and most inspiring leader a force could have wished for, and I have lost a personal friend and faithful supporter.

He has lit the torch. Together we must grasp it and carry it forward. Out of your gallant and hazardous expedition into the heart of Japanese-held territory will grow the final reconquest of Burma and the ultimate defeat of the Japanese.

He was so proud of you. I know you will live up to his expectations.