

AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
OPERATIONS IN BURMA  
CARRIED OUT BY  
PROBYN'S HORSE  
DURING  
FEBRUARY, MARCH  
& APRIL 1945



EDITED BY  
MAJOR B. H. MYLNE

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

At *Meiktila* it was decided that notes written by the Colonel and Squadron Commanders after individual actions should be collated for the information of both officers absent from the Regiment and of old members of the Regiment. It was intended to produce these notes in three parts :—

Part 1. The advance to and capture of *Meiktila*.

Part 2. The advance from *Meiktila* to *Rangoon*.

Part 3. The story of any subsequent operations.

It was also intended that these three parts should be rewritten eventually by one who specialises in the compiling of regimental histories.

Part 1 was prepared in B3 Echelon, with difficulty while the Regiment was on the move, and sent out from *Pegu*. On arrival in *Rangoon*, it was decided that Part 1 should be rewritten and combined with Part 2 and that both parts should be printed together with sketch maps, and photographs. This has been done, but the printing has taken far longer than was estimated. Part 3 will never now be written.

Any comments, additions or suggestions which should be included in the "Official Account of the Part Played by Probyn's Horse during the Japanese Campaign" when it is written will be more than welcome, both from those who were present and those who were not.

Oct 45.  
Rangoon.

B.H.M.



**A SHERMAN TANK CROSSING THE IRRAWADDY**



**THE IRRAWADDY RIVER**

## CHAPTER I.

255 Indian Tank Brigade, consisting of 116 R. A. C. (Gordon Highlanders), Probyn's Horse, and the Royal Deccan Horse concentrated in *Kanglatongbi* in *Assam* by the end of October 1944. Training took place during November, and exercises were carried out teaching lessons learnt by 254 Indian Tank Brigade during the operations around *Imphal* earlier in the year.

The move forward from *Kanglatongbi* was carried out on the axis *Palel - Tamu - Kalewa - Kan - Gangaw - Pauk*. The road in many places was hardly fit for transporters, and the surface was very rough causing undue wear and breakages. South of *Kan* the road was quite unfit for transporters.

4 Corps decided that one tank regiment should be made available to support 7 Indian Division in their task of advancing to and forming a bridgehead over the *Irrawaddy*. This task fell eventually to 116 R. A. C. (Gordon Highlanders) who happened to be ahead at the time. This regiment was put under command of 7 Indian Division with whom it operated for several weeks.

The actual assault across the *Irrawaddy* took place on the 14th February, 1945 and did not achieve local surprise. Many of the assault boats were swept by machine gun fire and failed to get ashore. For the first few hours the operation looked highly unpromising, and only a thin trickle of traffic was being landed. Then events took a more favourable turn as bridging equipment began to arrive in quantity, and enemy resistance was gradually overcome.

The crossing of all formations was controlled by 4 Corps, and a special route was allotted to 255 Indian Tank Brigade. The control organization of this route was under command of the brigade 2nd in command, (Col R. Younger DSO MC). Probyn's Horse was called upon to provide Major F. W. Kennedy, six officers, and the Intercommunication Troop. This party controlled the crossing of the brigade onto the South bank.

A force known as '*Tomcol*' commanded by Major D. H. Mudie the Royal Deccan Horse, the Scout Troops of Probyn's and the Royal Deccan Horse, and the truck company 6/7 Rajputs, had been formed with the object of passing through



the bridgehead and establishing patrol bases. From these bases reconnaissances were ordered to discover the presence or otherwise of enemy in the *Ngathayauk*, *Welaung*, *Seiktein*, and *Taungtha* areas, and to report on the state of the roads. *Tomcol* was later reinforced by one squadron 11 Cavalry (P. A. V. O.) and command was taken over by Major Chaplin of that regiment.

The thrust from the *Irrawaddy* bridgehead to *Meiktila* was carried out on the axis *Nyaungu - Nagathayauk*, thence on a two brigade front, main axis *Kamye - Taungtha*, subsidiary axis *Seiktein - Welaung - Taungtha*. From *Taungtha* the whole force moved on the road *Meilang - Sedaw - Meiktila*. The road mileage from *Kanglatongbi* to *Meiktila* was approximately 470, of which 260 were covered on transporters.

The brigade had moved into an assembly area at *Aingye*, North West of *Myitche*, and started crossing on the afternoon of the 17th. B2 and B3 echelons and administrative units remained with 17 Indian Division's administrative base. Probyn's Horse crossed the River without incident on the 18th and 19th February, and remained in a concentration area on the 20th, preparatory to the advance on *Nagathayauk*.

*Tomcol* had met resistance at *Sewa*, and, after an airstrike, the enemy fled leaving behind a gun and an ammunition dump. It was thought that he would return during the night, as *Tomcol* without infantry was unable to hold *Sewa*. Briefly the plan for the capture of the *Nagathayauk* group of villages was as follows:—

1. One squadron of the Royal Deccan Horse with 48 Indian Infantry Brigade was to move along the main divisional axis of the road towards *Sewa* preceded by *Tomcol*.
2. The remainder of 255 Indian Tank Brigade was to advance via *Wetlu*, South of the main road, to a point South West of *Sewa* from which the Royal Deccan Horse were to attack *Sewa*.
3. On the capture of *Sewa*, Probyn's Horse with the 6/7 Rajputs were to move across country and attack *Nagathayauk* from the South. Mopping up was the responsibility of 48 Indian Infantry Brigade.

Having arrived at *Wetlu* it was reported that *Sewa* was not occupied, and Probyn's Horse was therefore pushed