

medal rolls, in accordance with the regulations, of all officers and soldiers who are entitled to the decoration.

From the Adjutant-General in India to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department—(No. 3069 A, Field Operations, dated Simla, the 7th May, 1887).

IN continuation of my letters noted in the margin,* I am directed by the Commander-in-Chief in India to submit, for the information of Government, the accompanying Despatches† from the General Officers Commanding the Upper Burma Field Force and the Eastern Frontier District, bringing to special notice the good services of the officers and troops therein detailed during the operations commencing immediately after the capture of Mandalay, and ending with the pacification of the province of Upper Burma.

2. In forwarding these reports for favourable consideration, and in recording his Excellency's entire concurrence in the recommendations made by Major-General Sir G. S. White, K.C.B., V.C., and Major-General J. J. H. Gordon, C.B., I am desired very briefly to advert to the course of events in Upper Burma during the past year.

3. The two notes by the Commander-in-Chief on the military situation in Upper Burma‡ dealt with existing circumstances and requirements at the date of his Excellency's assumption of immediate command, with the measures taken or contemplated for the restoration of order in the disturbed and disaffected areas, and with the course and result of those measures. To render the narrative complete, some reference seems necessary to the unexpected development of disturbance during the early part of last year, the action taken with a view to its repression up to October, 1886, and the progress made in permanently pacifying the country since the Commander-in-Chief's departure from Rangoon.

The capture of Mandalay, the disbanding of the Burmese soldiery, most of whom carried off their arms, and the stoppage of the administrative machinery of the late King's government, produced a state of temporary anarchy which it was at first supposed that the substitution of a settled British administration would remedy without material difficulty or delay.

This anticipation was not fulfilled, mainly on account of the gross misgovernment of Upper Burma during the late King's reign. As already explained by the Commander-in-Chief in his Excellency's second note, most of the local authorities from 1878 to 1885 had been occupied, not in maintaining civil order, but in conducting a system of organized spoliation for the benefit of themselves, and to satisfy the extravagant demands of the Court. To these ex-officials and their dependents the introduction of any form of settled government was most distasteful, and they did their utmost to thwart and resist British authority. At the same time several pretenders to the throne had sprung up, who were joined by the disbanded soldiery, by such villagers as were disaffected or had been deprived of their means of livelihood by previous misgovernment,

* No. 3421-A, dated 30th July, 1886. No. 1465 Camp, dated 3rd February, 1886. No. 1673-A, dated 28th April, 1886.

† Despatches (1) dated 10th March, 1887; (2) No. 166-B-C, dated 27th March, 1887; and (3) dated 11th April, 1887, from the General Officer Commanding the Upper Burma Field Force. Despatch, No. 97-C, dated 21st March, 1887, from the General Officer Commanding the Eastern Frontier District.

‡ Not published.

and by the criminal classes. Numerous dacoit bands took advantage of the unsettled state of the country, and devastated the districts that were not immediately dominated by an adequate military force.

These disturbing elements, without concentrating into an organized enemy which could have been encountered in the field and overcome once for all, pervaded the greater portion of Upper Burma, rendering abortive all attempts to bring certain districts under a settled administration, and inducing a general feeling of distrust and insecurity.

4. Experience soon proved that the transitory visits of flying columns to the disturbed districts were quite insufficient to restore order, and that the establishment of numerous military posts was essential for the effectual suppression of dacoity, and for the security and encouragement of the well-disposed inhabitants.

In the selection of sites for these posts and in their distribution, the protection of the main lines of communication by road and river, and the support of the civil power in its efforts to re-establish a settled Government, were kept in view.

5. Climatic and physical conditions in Burma during the hot weather and rains are extremely adverse to active operations in the field,—the extensive swamps, the dense jungle, the heavy rainfall, and the consequent prevalence of malarious fever, not only greatly hampering the movement of troops, but absolutely incapacitating them for further service if subjected to prolonged exposure. It, therefore, resulted that until reinforcements could be safely despatched to Upper Burma (and the month of October was fixed as the earliest safe time of arrival, having due regard to health and efficiency) the available military strength at the disposal of the General Officer Commanding was insufficient to do more than to garrison the posts and outposts which were being established, to hold the more important centres of trade and population, and to guard the lines of communication.

6. As soon, however, as the cold weather had set in, and a larger force became available, no time was lost in taking the initiative, and in arranging combined movements calculated to bring the whole country under thorough control. The objectives of the military operations undertaken last winter were summarized in the Commander-in-Chief's first note, and need not here be recapitulated. In view of the large augmentation of the force in Burma that took place in October, Government thought it advisable to entrust the immediate direction of operations to the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army. The lamented death of the late Sir Herbert Macpherson, the subsequent assumption of the supreme command by the Commander-in-Chief in India, and the appointment of Sir Charles Arbuthnot to the command of the troops in Burma on Sir Frederick Roberts's return to India in February, are matters of too recent occurrence to call for more than a passing reference.

7. The Commander-in-Chief's second note indicated how far the measures taken during the past winter had succeeded in their object up to the date of his Excellency's departure.

The hope then expressed that the permanent pacification of the country had been virtually accomplished, and that although outbreaks of disorder might still be anticipated, such outbreaks would be of a progressively milder type and capable of easier repression, seems likely to be completely realized.