

Chronology of Events – Burma (1941-42)

1941

April

13th Indian Infantry Brigade arrives in Burma, being detached from the 7th Indian Division stationed in India.

November

16th Indian Infantry Brigade arrives in Burma, having been detached from the 7th Indian Division stationed in India.

13th December

Japanese troops capture Victoria Point at the extreme southern tip of Burma.

1942

19th January

Japanese troops of the 3rd Bn. 112th Infantry Regiment capture Tavoy.

20th January
04.00 hours

Japanese troops of the 55th Division invade Burma at Myawaddy and Palu.

30th January

Japanese troops commence attack on Moulmein.

31st January
08.30 hours

Evacuation of Moulmein by 2nd Burma Brigade completed.

9th February

Martaban abandoned by Allied troops following attacks by the Japanese.

10th February

215th Regiment crosses the Salween river and attacks units of 46th Brigade.

15th February

Units of 17th Indian Division withdraw over the Balin river.

16 th February	Japanese troops of the 33 rd Division attack 17 th Indian Division across the Balin river. 16 th and 48 th Brigades involved in fighting.
20 th February	16 th and 48 th Brigades withdrawn to Kyaikto, joined by 2 DWR from Rangoon. 213 th and 214 th Regiments attack Kyaikto directly whilst 215 th Regiment outflanks 17 th Indian Division to attack and seize the Sittang Bridge.
20 th February	Stage II of Rangoon Evacuation Scheme implemented and law and order in city breaks down.
22 nd February 08.30 hours	Elements of 215 th Regiment reach the eastern end of the bridge and attack defending units.
23 rd February 03.30 hours	Japanese units reach railway line at the Sittang Bridge giving them direct line of fire across the bridge.
23 rd February 05.30 hours	Sittang bridge blown up by Allied engineers effectively trapping 16 th and 48 th Brigades on the eastern side of the river.
23 rd February 11.30 hours	Orders issued to Allied units to withdraw across the river by any means.
24 th – 26 th February	Survivors of 17 th Indian Division collected in Waw. Division then withdrawn to refit to Pegu.
2 nd March	Japanese troops advance into Daik-u.
4 th March	Japanese troops attack Pegu which was defended by 17 th Indian Division.
7 th March	Allied troops withdraw from Rangoon.
7 th March 04.00 hours	Japanese troops block Rangoon – Prome road at Taukkyan, 17 miles north of Rangoon.

7 th March	Allied units attack road block from the north and south.
8 th March First light	Units from 7 th Armoured Brigade attack the road block from the south to find that the Japanese had withdrawn during the night. Allied troops continue their withdrawal northwards.
8 th March 1200 hours	Japanese troops enter Rangoon.
10 th March	17 th Indian Division break out of Pegu and head north towards Prome.
11 th March	1 st Burma Brigade attack Pyuntaza and 2 nd Burma Brigade attack Shwegyin. Then both brigades withdraw to Kyauktaga.
19 th March	Allied units pass through Chinese troops at Pyu and continue to Toungoo to rest.
25 th March	Units of 1 st Burma Division reach Allanmyo.
28 th – 30 th March	Units of 17 th Indian Division counter attack south of Prome with little success.
28 th March	Chinese troops abandon Toungoo.
11 th April	Japanese troops of 33 rd Division commence offensive against 1 st Burma Division and 17 th Indian Division in the Yenangyaung area.
14 th April	Japanese troops force gap between the two Allied divisions. 1 st Burma Division commence withdrawal to Magwe.
15 th April	Yenangyaung oilfields destroyed by Allied forces.
16 th April	Japanese troops attack the new positions of 1 st Burma Division. Division forced to withdraw northwards.
17 th – 18 th April	1 st Burma Division trapped south of Pin Chaung river.

19 th April	Despite counter attack by 38 th Chinese Division, Allied units forced to withdraw having extricated themselves losing much equipment in the process.
25 th April	Decision taken to withdraw Allied forces back to India to regroup.
28 th /29 th April	48 th Brigade fights successful action at Kyaukse and delays advance of 18 th Imperial Guards Division.
30 th April	1 st Burma Division withdraws across the River Irrawaddy. Ava bridge blown by Allies.
30 th April	Japanese troops attack Monywa, which is to the north of 1 st Burma Divisions position.
1 st May	Japanese troops attack HQ 1 st Burma Division just to the south of Monywa.
2 nd May	1 st Burma Division attacks Japanese positions in and around Monywa with success.
4 th May	Burma Corps reaches Ye-U.
10 th May	Japanese troops attack Burma Corps rearguard at Shwegyin. All tanks (except one) and artillery destroyed by Allies as they escape north to Kaing.
12 th May	Monsoon breaks.
19 th May	Burma Corps reaches Imphal.
24 th May	2 nd Burma Brigade reaches Imphal area.
May – December	Monsoon period.

- May Outbreak of violence and sabotage in the Sind District perpetrated by the Hurs, a sect of the Moslem faith. This included the severing of the main railway line between Karachi to Lahore. This leads to the deployment of a large Army presence to the District.
- June Battle of Midway inflicts serious losses on the Japanese Navy.
- 12th June The British Prime Minister suggests to General WAVELL that he might plan to advance down the Arakan coast from Chittagong to Akyab. WAVELL starts planning for the recapture of Burma.
- June Eastern Army tasked by WAVELL with planning a major operation with Rangoon as the objective, codenamed 'Anakim'.
- June Situation on Imphal Plain poor. Headquarters IV Corps opened and operational. 23rd Indian Infantry Division the only operational formation in Central Front. Over 20,000 men of former Burma Corps present requiring care and feeding. In addition, thousands of refugees on Imphal Plain.
- Lieutenant General IRWIN, G.O.C. IV Corps decides that only 40,000 men can be sustained on the Imphal Plain by available supplies and transport during the monsoon. 23rd Indian Division deployed to cover the south-eastern and eastern approaches to the plain. 17th Indian Division to be re-equipped and retained as Corps Reserve. 1st Burma Division to be evacuated to Dimapur with all surplus personnel. A North Assam Brigade formed to defend the Hukawng Valley.
- 29th July Lieutenant General G. A. P. SCOONES assumes command of IV Corps at Imphal; Lieutenant General IRWIN assumes role of Commander-in-Chief Eastern Army vice General Sir Charles BROAD.

End of June	Reports received of Japanese activity in the Kaladan Valley. 14 th Indian Division ordered to move forward to Chittagong, with now the 123 rd Indian Infantry Brigade under command.
4 th July	A reconnaissance party is dropped by parachute at Fort Hertz in north Burma to establish if the locality can be used as a base for Allied forces.
11 th July	123 rd Indian Infantry Brigade arrives at Chittagong and transfers from the command of the 23 rd Indian Division to the 14 th Indian Division. The brigade is brought up to strength by the addition of the 10 th Bn. The Lancashire Fusiliers.
22 nd July	Reconnaissance party report no Japanese activity at Fort Hertz, however, landing ground is water logged and unfit for use.
8 th August	All India Congress Committee meets at Bombay. The committee sanctions 'the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale.'
9 th August	Gandhi and other Congress leaders arrested by the Government of India.
11 th August	Concerted outbreaks of violence and sabotage break out across India. Railway system particularly disrupted. This resulted in the eventual deployment of fifty-seven battalions of troops to maintain internal security.
13 th August	Second reconnaissance party dropped near Fort Hertz to find that the first party had also reached the location.
24 th August	A landing ground of 1,100 yards in length is ready for use at Fort Hertz. A company of Indian infantry are flown in on the 10 th September and a base is established.
17 th September	WAVELL issues an operational instruction to the Eastern Army to capture Akyab and reoccupy northern Arakan.

- 21st September Eastern Army orders Major General LLOYD to move towards Akyab without waiting for the arrival of the 55th Indian Brigade in order to prevent the Japanese securing the Maungdaw – Buthidaung.
- By mid-October Japanese garrison on Akyab now reinforced and comprised the 213th Infantry Regiment, less the 1st Battalion detached.
- 5th November Monsoon continues. Thirteen inches of rain fall in one day.
- 7th November Twenty-four hours of heavy rain closes all roads and tracks in the Arakan for at least two days.
- 17th November WAVELL advises the Chiefs of Staff of his decision not to launch an amphibious landing at Akyab. This was due to lacking of shipping, poor weather, and the delay in the arrival of the 29th Independent Infantry Brigade.
- 21st December LLOYD received information about 800 Japanese troops in the vicinity of Kondan, and decided in consequence to send the 47th Brigade down the Mayu Peninsula, with the 123rd Brigade to the east of the Mayu River, and the 8th/10th Baluch detached at 'SoutCol'.
- 25th December Patrol from the 10th Bn. The Lancashire Fusiliers find Rathedaung unoccupied.