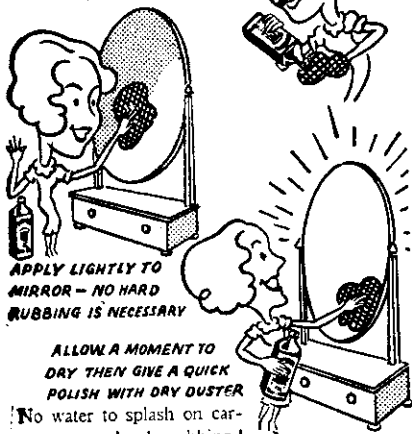


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BRITISH RAID BURMA

(continued from previous page)

ordered to return. When the columns got back to Irrawaddy—it was a bitterly cold night with a brilliant moon—the Japs opened up with mortars and machine guns. Wingate could have forced a crossing, but it would have meant heavy losses. Standing on a sand-bank in the Irrawaddy, looking like some minor prophet with his huge beard and a blanket wrapped around his shoulders, he made a split-second decision. He ordered the Chindits to break up into groups of 40 and play hide-and-seek in the jungle until they had given the Japs the slip. Within 48 hours every party had managed to cross the river safely. Then they buried their wireless sets, smashed their heavy equipment, and set off on the 300-mile trek to India.

Without radios, no more air-borne supplies were possible. The Chindits first ate their bullocks and mules, and after that lived on rice, snakes, vultures, banana palms, jungle roots, and grass soup. Hunted every yard of the way, they were forced to avoid the main drinking places, and sometimes went for

days with only a few mouthfuls of water drained out of hollow bamboos. Knowing that their security lay in speed, Wingate drove his men without mercy.

A "Sword and Bible" General

A good impression of Wingate himself was given last year by Charles J. Rolo, an American correspondent, who saw him in India. Here it is, considerably abbreviated:

THE British Army seems to produce one such eccentric soldier-genius in every generation — Clive of India, "Chinese" Gordon, Lawrence of Arabia. Wingate is a "sword and Bible" general, a profound believer in prayer, a mystic given to Yoga, and a hard-bitten professional soldier who loves fighting for its own sake. He starts the day with prayer, uses Scripture passages for code. The sword, the Bible, and the flair for strange races are all a part of Wingate's heritage. His father served 32 years in the Indian Army, and after retiring, founded a mission for the Pathans. His deeply religious mother gave him a Puritan unbringing.



THE CREW of an American plane carrying supplies for "Wingate's mob" mans machine-guns against Japanese interceptors.

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Wingate has the lean face of an intellectual, deep-set piercing blue eyes, a thin, bony nose, severe mouth and lantern jaw. His blond hair is bleaching into grey. In Burma he wore a tattered bush shirt, russet corduroy trousers and an old-fashioned scuttle-shaped sun helmet.

He has a pet theory that human beings can store up energy as a camel stores up water. In the field he can keep going for weeks on end with only a few hours of sleep, but when the job is done, will spend days sleeping or in dreamy contemplation. He is a fanatic about physical fitness, a non-smoker, and believes firmly in the health-giving properties of raw onions, which he munches on the march. He massages his back with a rubber hairbrush every night.

For a man whose profession is war, Wingate's range of interests is bewildering. In the early morning he can be

(continued on next page)