

100220

44-96

BURMA BACKGROUND

Every battle front has its problems of supply but none so difficult as in Burma. Pathe Gazette Cameraman, Oscar Bovill, turns in this story of boxes and bales travelling the hard way to our men fighting in the Lushai Hills....a newly-opened river transport service operating over a hundred and eighty mile Jungle and water route. Maghis boatmen battle their way up-stream, using varying applications of muscle power to move their craft against an 8 to 10 Knot flow.

Now comes the really hard part of the 15 to 20 day Journey. This is the halting place where cargoes have to be unloaded and sent overland while the empty river boats navigate the rapids. Nepali porters and mules carrying everything to the top of the rapids where the boats will be re-loaded again for the remainder of the Journey. A large percentage of the stores carried have to be consumed by men and beast during the back-breaking days on the trek.

Now see what happens as the boat crews tackle the rapids rushing against them at 20 to 30 knots. Day after day hauling on cables and poling every yard of the way. Occasionally, a returning boat sweeps by, doing the homeward run in about twenty-four hours.

There have been occasions when boats and crews have perished in the rapids through striking submerged rocks. An incidental hazard in the path of these Burmese back-room boys who ply the inland waterways on active Service.
