University of Birmingham

The Indian Army 1939-1945:

Transformation in Adversity

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine the impact of institutional changes to the Imperial Indian Army that were brought on by the Second World War. These changes will be explored through five main themes:

- Image and perceptions of the Indian Army
- Recruitment and expansion
- The institution, unity and diversity
- Dissent, politicisation, subversion and mutiny
- Morale, health and welfare.

The chosen themes reveal much about the complex and challenging institutional transformation that was undertaken and how this eventually resulted in impressive performance improvements in Burma by 1944-45. The thesis places emphasis on aspects of institutional and social change rather than assessment of the military aspects of the remarkable turnaround in fortunes that the Indian Army achieved.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Swarn Singh Landa (1915-1994). I had the privilege of meeting Swarn on several occasions. In his lifetime Swarn saw more tragedy and ruination than anyone should but he also helped in rebuilding communities and reconciliation. With his father and brothers he ran a restaurant business in Shanghai until they were forced to flee in 1941. They took a sea passage as far as Saigon and then made their way as best they could across French Indo-China and Thailand. They joined the mass exodus of Indian refugees from Burma in 1942 and made their way on foot through Assam to Calcutta and eventually back to the family home in Lahore.

One event of this magnitude was more than enough in anyone's life but during Partition the family were forced to leave their home in Lahore in 1947 with little more than they could carry and join the Sikh exodus to India. Seeking stability and a safe haven they moved to Britain in 1948. Swarn's father Bhil Singh Landa worked with others to establish the first registered Sikh temple in the UK at 15 Monton Street, Moss Side. Manchester. The Landa family have continued to contribute to their Sikh community and the wider community of all races and creeds in the North West of England ever since.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was undertaken on a part- time basis and I must thank my long term supervisor Steffen Prauser for his unstinting support over an unusually extended period of study. I must also thank fellow researchers Catherine Wilson and Alan Jeffreys for their generous advice, help and encouragement. The hard working and undervalued teams at all the archives I have visited have demonstrated unfailing professionalism and have been most helpful to me on many occasions. Finally I must thank my family for their patience and support.

1. CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

> This was the old Indian Army going down to the attack, for the last time in history, exactly two hundred and fifty years after the Honourable East India Company had enlisted its first ten sepoys on the Coromandel Coast. These men were not all Indians or Gurkhas, for every Indian Division contained British elements…. Once, this arrangement had been made so that the stubborn and phlegmatic British soldier could steady his volatile Indian comrades. This was no longer so.[1]

This evocation of the old Indian Army captures the incongruous mix of tradition, dynamism, sentimentality and efficiency that was the imperial Indian Army in 1945. It perhaps understates the transformation the institution had undergone in the previous five years. While bearing many similarities to its former self it was a radically different institution in countless respects. By March 1945, as the final race to liberate Rangoon began, this revitalised Indian Army demonstrated modernity of methods and arms. It was larger, more effective, and more Indian than before. The colonial army of 1939 was a cornerstone of the Raj but by 1945 it was also the precursor to the armies of independent India and Pakistan.

The primary objective of this thesis is to examine the impact of institutional changes brought on by the Second World War and how these changes affected the British Imperial Indian Army.[2] The operational performance of the Indian Army has been the subject of much attention and some aspects of its transformation have also come to the fore, notably the improvements to training. Other aspects of the changes it undertook have perhaps received less scrutiny.

Transformation was difficult, sometimes traumatic, and it involved both progress and setbacks. The inevitable pressures on the institution in wartime will be discussed from the perspective of social and institutional history. The military history of the Indian Army has been amply

[1] Masters, J., *The Road Past Mandalay* (London, Michael Joseph, 1961), pp. 297-298

[2] The imperial Indian Army is referred to throughout this thesis as the *Indian Army.* When referring to the post-colonial army of the Republic of India, founded in 1947, this will be explicitly identified as the *Independent Indian Army*. In 1947 the British colonial Indian Army was divided into the armed forces of two, newly independent states, the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Sri Lankan Army was developed from the locally raised Ceylon defence forces and can trace little of its parentage directly to the Indian Army. The armed forces of Bangladesh were largely raised from scratch after East Pakistan became the independent People's Republic of Bangladesh in 1971.

researched and discussed elsewhere but the changes to its culture, constituents and institutional foundations that occurred between 1939 and 1945 have been somewhat neglected. Institutional change has often been treated as background to more prominent military themes in much of the existing literature but it deserves greater prominence.

This research has examined the institutional changes that the Indian Army underwent through five main themes. The themes have been chosen to explore aspects of the Indian Army that have tended to be treated as tangential in other work. The themes are:

- *Image and Perceptions of the Indian Army*. What was the institution's self-image? How was it perceived by others?
- *Recruitment and Expansion*. Despite being a volunteer force drawn from a politically divided and somewhat alienated population, the Indian Army expanded to twelve times its peacetime establishment. How was this achieved and what impact did expansion have on the institution?
- *The Institution, Unity and Diversity*. An assessment of the unifying influences and diversity factors affecting the Indian Army as an institution. How were diversity factors managed and what changes were introduced during the conflict?
- *Dissent, Politicisation, Subversion and Mutiny*. An examination of the extent to which internal and external interventions led to dissent and instability within the Indian Army and how reactions to dissent influenced its scale and impact.
- *Morale, Health and Welfare*. The efforts made to build and maintain good morale within the Indian Army and the British troops attached to it will be examined. Attention will also be given to the impact of improvements in health and welfare provision.

By focussing on these interrelated themes the intention is to reveal more of the institutional, cultural and social character of this institution at a time of exceptional strain and to assess its success or failure in meeting the demands made of it in a global conflict.

1.1 Scope and Approach

This study faces challenges in delineating its scope due to the complexity of the Indian Army's structure and its diversity. The Indian Army consisted of formations and units made up of Indian, Nepali Gurkha and British troops. Most British troops in India were attached to Indian Army formations and were therefore *Indian Army*. British troops based in India but not attached to the

Indian Army were *British Army in India*, for example the British 2nd Infantry Division.[3] Whilst the British Army in India is not within the scope of this study, in matters such as morale, health and welfare there was little practical distinction as all British troops in India were treated similarly. Where the issue in question was different for British or Indian troops I have sought to make distinctions clear. In most respects Gurkhas were treated much the same as Indian troops, with the notable exception of the language of command, Gurkhali, not Urdu.[4]

The scope of research is largely, not exclusively, limited to events in India, Burma and Malaya. In examining these wider themes, there are exceptions and mutinies in Egypt and Hong Kong are discussed in Chapter 5 for example. There are also references to the Indian Army's role in North Africa, East Africa and Italy, where these shed light on the institution as a whole. The reason for limiting the scope of study to Malaya, Burma and India is that these were the theatres where the Indian Army played a leading role. The Indian Army contribution to the East African campaign was also significant but it fits logically within the Middle East theatre. It also played a notable role in North Africa and Italy, with at least one division deployed and later three in Italy but never operating as an Indian corps. However, this was a strong supporting role within a cast that included allied troops from several nations.[5]

The period in focus is 1939-1945 with references to the pre-war institution included for comparison and context. If space and time allowed, it would have been rewarding to include the period from 1945 to the end of imperial rule in India in 1947 but this must wait for future research. Similarly hard choices have been made with regard to themes. It would have been relevant for example to include more on the Army's performance but this subject has been widely discussed elsewhere.

The methodology applied to this thesis has been to define and develop the five main themes, to follow the sources and to identify what is available and relevant within each area. Various hypotheses have emerged and lines of argument have been developed and my thesis has sought to avoid being burdened with preconceived views. Despite its complexity the Indian Army has invited many simplistic preconceptions over its history, some of which are explored in this work. Its manifest diversity and complexity defy such generalisations. Nobody enters the

[3] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume III, The Decisive Battles* (London, HMSO, 1961), pp. 500-502

[4] In recent times the Gurkhali language is more widely referred to as Nepali.

[5] The Allied war effort in North Africa and Italy involved troops from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States, Canada, France, Poland, Greece and several other smaller contributions.

field of colonial history without at least some prejudices and the challenge is to remain open minded and self-questioning throughout any endeavour in this fascinating area of research.

1.2 Themes

1.2.1 Image and Perception

Perceptions sometimes shape reality almost as much as reality informs perception. Neither conceived nor equipped for global conflict the Indian Army was relatively large and efficient by colonial army standards. It was not however well prepared for the Second World War. From 1941 to 1943 the image and self-confidence of the Indian Army sustained several knocks, before reaching a level of effectiveness that delivered successes in 1944-45 and engendered greater confidence and self-assurance. Its reputation had suffered in the eyes of those responsible for the higher direction of the war effort and its stock fell with other senior commanders and allies too. As its performance improved, external perceptions still lagged behind an impressive recovery. This and imminent independence may have led to continued lack of recognition long after 1945. The immediate risk was that damage to the Indian Army's reputation could interrupt the essential flow of volunteer recruits. The perception of Indian civilians mattered greatly in this period of unprecedented political instability within India.

The image of the Indian Army had evolved over more than 150 years. At face value it was familiar to the wider public in India, Britain and across the English-speaking world, not least due to the influence of literature, cinema and the standard histories in contemporary use in schools. The romanticised image of adventures on the North West Frontier soon contrasted with harsh reality for those joining the Indian Army in the Second World War. For British conscripts, serving in India and the Far East was unpopular. It is sometimes difficult to determine whether it was location, welfare conditions or a lack of affinity for the Indian Army that caused this unpopularity.

1.2.2 Expansion

There was no pre-war strategic plan for the Indian Army to expand on the scale that was ultimately required. Contingency plans were also inadequate. The crisis of May/June 1940 and the defeat of France negated any possibility that British imperial troop commitments could be limited to something less than what was required in the First World War. The collapse of Britain's main ally and the declaration of war by Italy in June 1940 forced a belated and hasty reappraisal of the need to draw on the full capabilities of the Empire and Dominions. The scale

of imperial armies had previously been determined by the lower priority assigned to land forces and the greater emphasis given to naval and air capabilities. France's defeat rendered this strategy untenable and mass expansion of troop numbers by all viable means became unavoidable. The Indian Army inevitably had a larger role to play in imperial mobilisation. Despite the lack of adequate preparation, planning and equipment for such eventualities the Indian Army grew five-fold within 12 months. The impact on the Indian Army of this delayed start to expansion is a significant theme of this research.

The peacetime Indian and British armies were relatively small, professional and exclusively volunteer forces. The professional army was in each case augmented with a part time territorial wing, that could be called upon if needed and a reservist system to recall veterans. In October 1939 the Indian Army consisted of 194,373 volunteers with an insignificant territorial component.[6] Limited pre-war plans allowed for overseas deployment of at least one infantry division as part of the Imperial Reserve scheme.[7] The relatively smooth and effective deployment of the 4th and 5th Indian Infantry Divisions in North and East Africa in 1940 was the product of these effective but profoundly unambitious contingency plans. I will argue that more could have been done and done more effectively, but for government timidity, delays and indecision in the period 1938-1940. A case can also be made that hesitation had negative political consequences within India. However, the most damaging impact was to the efficiency of the new formations hurriedly created after June 1940.

Any institution that had to expand rapidly from some 200,000 troops to close to 2,500,000 would be subject to growing pains and the Indian Army was no exception. The problems were compounded by the delayed start, conflicting objectives, changing requirements and overriding priorities. When mass mobilization was approved in June 1940, the consequences of earlier delay and hesitation were felt directly in terms of reduced opportunities for training and equipment shortages. I argue that the defeats suffered in Malaya and Burma in 1942 and 1943 were in part the consequence of truncated training programmes and other destabilising factors, including the excessive dilution of the experienced cadres within units through the process known as milking. Another factor influencing efficiency within larger formations was the frequent redeployment of brigades to meet urgent demands. Brigade transfers between divisions disrupted divisional training programmes and delayed the complex process of welding new formations together.

[6] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation 1939-45* (Combined Inter-Services Historical Section India & Pakistan, Orient Longmans, 1956), pp. 402-409
[7] IOR L/WS/1/153, *Chatfield Committee - Creation and maintenance of an imperial reserve*

1.2.3 Unity and Diversity

The effectiveness of the Indian Army was determined by many factors, including doctrine, quality and quantity of equipment, logistics, supply, training, morale, size and leadership. Underlying all these factors, the effectiveness of the institution was always dependent on achieving the right balance of unifying factors to counterbalance the potential risks of its arguably unique diversity. As a consequence of long term policies on selective recruitment, the Indian Army of 1939 did not fully reflect the diversity of Indian society. However, wartime expansion cast the recruitment net wider and diversity increased significantly from 1942.

By limiting recruitment to certain preferred localities, racial groups and classes, the myths of Martial Race theory still underpinned the structure and constituents of the pre-war army to a significant degree.[8] The limitations of a narrow recruitment base were unsustainable given the overriding imperatives of wartime expansion but Martial Race dogmas retained some influence. These theories were justified on the basis that meticulously selective recruitment from favoured and suitably martial groups improved overall quality of the army and made the institution more stable. It begs the question: to what extent if any did the introduction of greater diversity by wartime relaxation of the adherence to Martial Race theory impact the effectiveness and cohesion of the institution? I will argue it did not.

For an army to fight effectively, voluntarily and without coercion, political leaders needed to provide a convincing and unifying definition of war aims. What was the Indian soldier fighting for? The Allied war effort has often been described as a just war. For the average British, American, or Russian soldier this typically engendered a sense of fighting for a just cause, against enemies whose greed and naked aggression had caused the conflict. For colonial troops this clarity of purpose was clouded by their lack of independence. To some, including Winston Churchill, the principles set out in the Atlantic Charter were not applicable to India. Nevertheless the Charter was a sincere effort on the part of the Roosevelt administration to set out war aims to which all citizens could rally.[9] Whether or not the Charter applied to India was perhaps academic but the future status of India was central to any war aims that Indian troops

[8] Martial Race theory is discussed extensively in Chapter 4.

[9] Toye, R., *Churchill's Empire, The World That Made Him and the World He Made* (London, Macmillan, 2010), pp. 212-216. Churchill sought to exclude the Empire and India in particular from the scope of Point 3 within the Charter and to limit its reference to "All people". See also, Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945* (London, Allen Lane, 2016), pp.216-218, Mukerjee, M., *Churchill's Secret War: The British Empire and the Ravaging of India During World War II* (New York, Basic Books, 2010), pp. 58-59, Herman, A., *Gandhi & Churchill, The Epic Rivalry that Destroyed and Empire and Forged Our Age (*London, Hutchinson, 2008). pp. 474-475.

might support. Were Indian troops fighting for someone else's freedom, their own, or both? The Indian Army did not exist in a political vacuum and as the conflict progressed greater efforts were made to communicate more effectively with the troops and to define and explain what Allied war aims were. Whether these efforts could have succeeded while India's future independence remained in doubt is open to question.

The relationship between coloniser and colonial subject and the influence of race and class prejudices on the progress towards Indianisation during wartime were critical considerations. The Indian Army was almost entirely commanded by British officers prior to the 1920s. The process known as Indianisation involved the gradual introduction of Indian officers to increasing levels of command responsibility.[10] Extensive work has been done on the process of Indianisation and I will not seek to repeat this narrative. The focus will be on two aspects: the impact of delays in Indianisation on the overall scope and effectiveness of the expansion programme and the social and cultural challenges of Indianisation and how these issues played out during the last few years of the Indian Army.

Another question is the degree to which the traditional regimental template of the British Army proved to be the right model for the Indian Army, by aligning with the diverse patchwork of Indian culture, religion and ethnicity. Expansion seems to have been a positive agent for change which helped to erode the influence of Martial Race dogma and to render resistance to Indianisation unsustainable and irrelevant. There was, however, a counter argument expressed by some at the time that wider recruitment was resulting in reduced quality. This assertion will be considered but available evidence does not appear to support such views.

1.2.4 Dissent, Mutiny and Politicisation

Several instances of dissent occurred that had the potential to disrupt the Indian Army's effectiveness. There were significant examples of protest within individual units in the period 1939-41 that were deemed to be mutiny. The events that led to the creation of the Indian National Army (INA) in 1942 seemed likely to cause instability in India and the Indian Army. The INA was an externally promulgated and directed threat that was beyond the scale of a few mutinous protests. The Japanese sought to raise the INA from the captured, disaffected Indian troops in the aftermath of the defeats in Malaya and Singapore in order to undermine the Indian

[10] Deshpande, A., *British Military Policy in India, 1900-1945: Colonial Constraints and Declining Power* (New Delhi, Manohar Publishing, 2005), pp. 87-115, Kundu, A., *Militarism in India, The Army and Civil Society in Consensus* (London, Taurus Academic Studies, 1998), pp. 11-25, Barua, P.P., *Gentlemen of the Raj, The Indian Army Officer Corps, 1817-1949* (Connecticut, Praeger, 2003), Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp.82-86.

Army. These instances of dissent will be assessed for their likely impact on the loyalty, morale, cohesion and effectiveness of the Indian Army as an institution.

There were intermittent but determined efforts by the Congress Party from late 1939 to discourage recruitment as part of their campaigns of non-cooperation with the war effort. Political opposition to army recruitment was immediate in 1939 as the Congress Party took great exception to the Viceroy's failure to consult it before declaring that India was in a state of war. The Congress campaign of non-cooperation rumbled on through the first two years of the war with little impact on the Indian Army. Until June 1940, the lack of large scale expansion plans or major overseas commitments meant that the rate of recruitment was more than sufficient to meet requirements, despite political headwinds. From mid-1940 to early 1942 the rate of recruitment does not seem to have been detrimentally impacted either, despite escalating political opposition. However, following the Cripps mission and the failure to agree a political roadmap to independence in 1942, political unrest erupted in the Quit India campaign, with far greater impact on India's war effort. There was, however, no stage at which the supply of recruits dried up and it would be difficult to determine whether any recruitment difficulties that were encountered were as a consequence of continued targeting of the same martial classes and localities, or as a result of political attempts to undermine recruitment.

Three specific instances of mutiny and dissent within the ranks of the Indian Army gained considerable prominence in the thinking of the high command and the Government of India in 1939-41. It is evident that they continued to exert disproportionate influence on intelligence analysis well into 1943. The acts of mutiny recorded in Egypt, Bombay and Hong Kong were seen as signs of Communist entry-ism and external political influence. There was much deliberation about the threat of Communism and the potential for unreliability within Sikh regiments in particular. I will argue that these concerns were overplayed and that the acts of dissent were largely the result of inept handling of local grievances rather than organised conspiracy. I will further argue that undue focus on the possibility of external, politically motivated threats distracted attention from the need to address genuine grievances and that this may have provided fertile ground for the emergence of the far greater potential threat presented by the INA.

1.2.5 Morale, Health and Welfare

This theme will examine the ways in which morale within the Indian Army was affected both positively and negatively. The impact on morale of defeats sustained by the Indian Army in 1942 and 1943 will be discussed, as will the systematic efforts made to raise and maintain good morale, including welfare provision and the extent to which these efforts were successful. I will argue that the approach to raising and maintaining morale within the Indian Army developed considerably and became aligned to the rapidly evolving British Army approach. However, some issues affecting morale were specific to the Indian Army and the contentious issue of pay comparability between British and Indian officers festered throughout the conflict.

Issues regarding healthcare were central to the efficiency of the Indian Army in the unhealthy, disease-ridden jungles of Southeast Asia. Healthcare improvements had the potential to deliver significant gains in morale and troop welfare but they were also crucial in raising combat effectiveness. Drastic reductions in sickness rates were achieved from 1943, counteracting some of the most insidious attrition factors in the Indian Army and Fourteenth Army in particular. The case will be made that improvements in medical treatment and preventative healthcare measures were key foundations for victory. Enhanced firepower was rightly seen as a force multiplier but substantially improved healthcare was also a key enabler and stabilising factor.

Inadequate measures to counter malaria and other infections in the early campaigns in Malaya Burma and the Arakan drastically reduced military efficiency and morale. Drugs such as Penicillin, the anti-malarial drug Mepacrine and the insecticide DDT, in tandem with rigorously enforced prophylactic measures, could not alone deliver victory but they resulted in spectacular reductions in sickness rates among allied troops in Eastern India and Burma. Formations could not remain effective if their attrition due to tropical diseases exceeded the supply of adequately trained replacements. The role of intensive training in improving the performance of the Indian Army has been widely recognised, but without healthcare improvements, the efforts going into better training were negated by spiralling sickness rates.

The context of each of the five main themes will be discussed further in the introduction to each chapter. It should be recognised that the themes are interrelated and in some cases there is some overlap. For example, *Chapter 3 - Expansion* and *Chapter 4 - Unity and Diversity* both include discussion of important aspects of recruitment policy. Each major theme within this thesis has been carefully chosen and could in itself be the subject of further research and this was my intention from the outset. My aim has been to open up different perspectives and to encourage others to see the Indian Army as a rapidly evolving and complex institution that was redefining itself in the midst of a world war. There were other armies that achieved equally

momentous transformations, perhaps most notably the army of the United States, but no other contemporary army managed radical transformation in such a uniquely diverse organisation and in such an unstable political context.

1.3 Literature Review and Sources

The themes explored in this research have not lain fallow but they have received less attention in large parts of the historiography. There are exceptions where notable historians have tackled similar themes but the overlap with this research has not been extensive. Whilst the chosen themes have been touched on in other research they have tended to be peripheral to the main focus of other researchers. In focussing on the Indian Army's institutional responses to stress the aim is to assess the resilience of the institution at a time of unprecedented demands. By examining the factors influencing its performance it is possible distinguish between the institutional turnaround achieved by the Indian Army rather than the more general factors that led to the wider resurgence in the effectiveness and fortunes of British imperial forces.

The available primary sources impose some constraints on research of these five themes. When compared to the depth of sources available for the European and Middle-Eastern theatres of war there are some gaps that impose limitations on Indian Army research and its roles in India and Southeast Asia. These limitations will be discussed both here and in the relevant chapters. One example is the relative sparsity of memoirs from Indian officers and other ranks. Another challenge is the limited documentation relating to the Indian Army response to the Indian Nation Army (INA).

Looking first at some of the related research, Jonathan Fennell has made a notable contribution on the imperial and Commonwealth war effort with his recent book, *Fighting the People's War*.[11] His chapter on the Indian Army comes closest to overlapping with the scope of this thesis but the Indian Army is one part of his much broader survey. His admirable earlier work on the Eighth Army morale offers greater detailed examination of troop morale, albeit for a theatre in which the Indian Army was not the leading participant.[12] Given the lack of comprehensive censorship reports for troops in Burma and India it is not possible to adopt Fennell's highly effective methodology in researching morale of the Indian Army in India and Burma. I have

[11] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019)
[12] Fennell, J., *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to Victory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011)

therefore approached the morale question from other angles using summary censorship reports, disciplinary numbers and other data in primary sources.[13]

Tarak Barkawi's recent work, *Soldiers of Empire,* looks closely at the motivation of Indian and British troops in the imperial context.[14] His work is relevant to this research in that it explores some of the motivational differences between the colonial volunteer soldier and the nation state conscript. He encounters the same issues with the scarcity of personal accounts, correspondence and detailed censorship reports for Indian troops. He draws on his relevant wider research on combat motivation to mitigate this. I concur with most of his conclusions regarding the motivation of Indian volunteers but I think he understates the importance of Izzat, the pride and prestige conferred on self and family by military service.[15] For the typical Indian recruit, the importance of family, community and class/caste reputation had close associations with the identity and reputation of their regiment and army. The counter argument can be made that wartime expansion considerably widened the recruiting base and these family associations with the Indian Army were less significant for recruits from classes not previously or not recently recruited. For the Punjabi Sikh whose father, uncles, grandfather and earlier generations may have served in the same regiment, the imperative of maintaining family reputation was a powerful motivator.

In his admirably researched book, *Medicine and Victory*, Mark Harrison confirms that the effective management of disease risks and sanitary arrangements conferred a substantial advantage on Allied forces in the Western Desert and to a lesser extent, in Burma.[16] I will suggest that he perhaps understates what was achieved in Burma given resource deficiencies, extremes of climate, terrain and endemic tropical diseases. Indian Army healthcare improved markedly, from a low start point, as that of the Imperial Japanese Army deteriorated. This accentuated increasing disparities in other measures of military effectiveness especially in the aftermath of the Imphal and Kohima and in the final weeks of the war.[17] My research suggests that the increasing disparity was at least as important a factor in Allied victory as improved weaponry, logistics and training. Conversely, the large scale ill-health in earlier campaigns had

[13] See Chapter 6 for a discussed of my approach.
[14] Barkawi, T., *Soldiers of Empire : Indian and British Armies in World War II* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017)
[15] Ibid., pp. 17-48
[16] Harrison, M., *Medicine and Victory: British Military Medicine in the Second World War*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 82-127, pp. 185-231
[17] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, Appendix 1, pp. 637-643, Allen, L., *Sittang, The Last Battle*. Appendix B, pp. 247-249

a deleterious effect on morale and eroded the benefits of early improvements in training, experience and numbers.

Much of the secondary literature is Anglo-centric, in part reflective of corresponding gaps in the main primary sources. The popular image of the Indian Army is explored in Chapter 2 though it bore little resemblance to wartime reality and rarely presented the Indian perspective. Even contemporary propaganda tended to under-represent the role of colonial troops. Despite Forgotten Army myths, the Fourteenth Army has not been forgotten by historians or participants. At least until recently, much attention has concentrated on the British contingent and less on the role of Indian troops.[18] This overall imbalance presents a challenge for any institutional and social history of the Indian army and it cannot easily be resolved.

Another factor is the understandable emphasis on military history. There continues to be a steady stream of military histories of the battles for Kohima and Imphal in 1944 and the Chindit campaigns.[19] The defeats in Malaya, Burma and Singapore and the campaign to retake Burma are also well served but the institutions of the Indian Army in the context of India's home front receive less attention. With notable exceptions, the Indian voice is given less prominence in many accounts.[20] Indian troops made by far the largest contribution to the Burma campaign and the imbalance in secondary sources deserves to be addressed.

Two official histories are directly relevant to this thesis: British and Indian. *The War Against Japan* series are most relevant source in the United Kingdom Military Series and they are well regarded.[21] The *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War* was a

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[18] Notable exceptions include, Callahan, R., *Triumph at Imphal-Kohima: How the Indian Army Finally Stopped the Japanese Juggernaut* (Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 2017), Slim, W. Field Marshal Viscount , *Defeat into Victory* (London, Cassell, 1956), Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945* (London, Allen Lane, 2016), *Marston, D.P., Phoenix from the Ashes* (Westport CT, Praeger, 2003), Singh, G., *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy* (London, Bloomsbury, 2014), Jackson, A, Khan, Y., Singh, G., *An Imperial World at War: the British Empire, 1939*-1945. (London, Routledge, 2016), Singh, G., *Between Self And Soldier : Indian Sipahis and Their Testimony During the Two World Wars* (Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh, 2010)

[19] Calvert, M., *Fighting Mad, One Man's Guerrilla War* (London, Jarrold, 1964), Calvert, M., *Prisoners of Hope* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1952) Colvin, J., *Not Ordinary Men, The Story of the Battle of Kohima* (London, Leo Cooper, 1994), Edwards, L, *Kohima, The Furthest Battle* (London, The History Press, 2009), Fergusson, B., *Beyond the Chindwin* (London, Collins, 1945), Fergusson, B., *The Battle For Burma, Wild Green Earth* (London, Collins, 1946), Keane, F., *Road of Bones, The Epic Siege of Kohima, 1944* (London, Harper Press, 2010), Masters, J., *The Road Past Mandalay* (London, Michael Joseph, 1961), McCann, J., *Return To Kohima*, Rooney, D, *Burma Victory, Imphal, Kohima and the Chindit Issue, March 1944 to May 1945* (London, Arms and Armour Press, 1992)

[20] For example, there are but a handful of Indian voices in, Thompson, J., *Forgotten Voices of Burma, The Second World War's Forgotten Conflict* (London, Ebury, 2009). Exceptions include: Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, Bayly, C., Harper, T., *Forgotten Armies, Britain's Asian Empire and The War With Japan* (London, Allen Lane, 2004) Reprinted (London, Penguin, 2005)

[21] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I*, (London, HMSO, 1957),

rare collaborative effort between the governments of India and Pakistan and it has proved useful in this research.[22] It provides more detailed analysis of the role of the Indian Army in the context of its expansion and demobilisation.[23] Both Official Histories series achieved a high standard. Excepting areas where new information has come to light since publication, they remain relevant and authoritative. The British official history includes *The Mediterranean and Middle East* series which has relevance to the Indian Army but less so to the scope of this research.[24] The United Kingdom Civil Series is also provides helpful context to the supply and logistics challenges for the Indian war effort.[25]

A number of secondary sources can be singled out as having made significant contributions to the collective understanding of the Indian Army and its contribution during the Second World War. Philip Mason's impressive works on the civil and military administration of India have, in

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The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour (London, HMSO, 1958), *The War Against Japan, Volume III, The Decisive Battles*(London, HMSO, 1961), *The War Against Japan, Volume IV, The Reconquest of Burma* (London, HMSO, 1965), *The War Against Japan, Volume V,* (London, HMSO, 1969)

[22] Prasad, S.N, *The Reconquest of Burma (Official history of the Indian armed forces in the second world war,1939;1945;vol.8)* (Combined Inter-Services Historical Section India & Pakistan, Longmans Green, 1959), Prasad, B., *The retreat from Burma 1941-42 (Official history of the Indian armed forces in the Second World War,1939;1945)* (1959), Singh, R., *Post-war occupation forces: Japan and South-East Asia (Official history of the Indian armed forces in the Second World War,1939;1945;vol 7,* (1958), Pal, D., *The campaign in Italy, 1943-45 (Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-1945. Campaigns in the Western theatre),* (1960), Madan, N.N &. Prasad, B., *The Arakan operations, 1942-1945 (Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-1945. Campaigns in the Eastern Theatre),*(1954), Bhargava, K. D., *Campaigns in South-East Asia, 1941-42 (Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45. Campaigns in the Eastern Theatre*) (1960), Quereshi, N.A., *East African campaign, 1940-41 (Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45. Campaigns in the Western Theatre*), (1963), Khera, P.N, *Technical services: ordnance & IEME (Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45. (General war administration and organisation in India)* (1962), Raina B.L, *Medical stores and equipment (Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45. Medical services),* (1963), Raina B.L., *Medical Services: Statistics (Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War),* (1962), Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45,* (1956)

[23] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*

[24] Playfair, I.S.O, *The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 3: The Early Successes Against Italy, to May 1941*, (London: HMSO, 1954), Playfair, I.S.O. et al., *The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 3: The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 2: The Germans Come to the Help of Their Ally, 1941*, (London: HMSO, 1956), Playfair, I.S.O. , *The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 3: British Fortunes Reach Their Lowest Ebb*, (London: HMSO, 1960), Playfair, I.S.O., Molony C.J.C., *The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 4: The Destruction of the Axis Forces in Africa*, (London: HMSO, 1966), Molony, C.J.C., *The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 5: The Campaign in Sicily, 1943 and the Campaign in Italy, 3rd September 1943 to 31st March 1944*, (London: HMSO, 1973), Molony, C.J.C., *The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 6, Part 1: Victory in the Mediterranean: 1st April to 4th June 1944*, (London: HMSO, 1984), Jackson, W., *The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 6, Part 2: Victory in the Mediterranean: June to October 1944*,(London: HMSO, 1987), Jackson, W., *The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume 6, Part 3: Victory in the Mediterranean: November 1944 to May 1945,* (London: HMSO, 1988)

[25] Parker, H.M.D., Edited by, Hancock, Sir W.K.,, *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series: Manpower* (London: HMSO, 1957), Postan M.M., Edited by, Hancock, Sir W.K., *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series: British War Production,* (London: HMSO, 1952), Central Statistical Office, Editor Hancock, Sir W. K., *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series: Statistical Digest of The War,* (London: HMSO, 1951). (Revised, Kraus-Thompson, 1975), Gibbs, N.H. Edited by, Butler, J.R.M., *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Military Series Grand Strategy Volume 1: Rearmament Policy* (London: HMSO, 1976)

many respects, set the scene and remain relevant for his personal observations from the Government of India perspective. Mason's work was on a broad canvas, describing the Indian Army's entire imperial sojourn. Mason served as a senior civil servant in the Government of India but neither book is biographical.[26] He made further contributions that have proved very useful in this research in providing pointers to an approach to the social and cultural context of the Indian Army.[27]

Louis Allen's enlightening books remain relevant, in part because Allen had rare insights into the Japanese perspective. As an intelligence officer with language skills, he interviewed several senior Japanese commanders after the surrender.[28] *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45* remains one of the most authoritative accounts of the Burma campaign and it was the book that first engaged my interest in this subject. The Indian Army was not his primary focus but he gave it due prominence. Robert Lyman's recent *A War of Empires: Japan, India, Burma & Britain: 1941–45* is an impressive effort to bring this story to a wider audience from the perspective of a clash of empires.[29]

Two works by Daniel Marston stand out for both the quality of his research and his insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the Indian Army: *Phoenix from the Ashes* and *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*.[30] Whilst the latter is peripheral to this research, both are insightful with regard to Indian Army morale, motivation, efficiency and effectiveness. The efforts of Tim Moreman, Alan Jeffreys and Patrick Rose have been valuable in revealing aspects of the unique and transformative training methods that were developed and refined by the Indian Army during the Second World War.[31] They have explored many underlying reasons for the impressive transformation in the performance and fortunes of the Indian Army that were demonstrated from 1943. I must add that without the drastic improvements in healthcare and Malaria treatment in particular, the training improvements they describe might have had far less impact.

[26] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1974), Mason, P, *The Men Who Ruled India* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1985)
[27] Mason, P, Editor, *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity: A Symposium* (Oxford, University Press, 1967)
[28] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45* (London, Dent, 1984). Reprint (London, Phoenix, 1998), Allen, L., *Singapore: 1941-42* (London, Davis-Poynter, 1977), Allen, L., *Sittang, The Last Battle* (London, MacDonald, 1973)
[29] Lyman. R., *A War of Empires: Japan, India, Burma & Britain: 1941–45* (Oxford, Osprey, 2021)
[30] Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, (Westport CT, Praeger, 2003), *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014)
[31] Moreman, T.R., *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare. 1849-1947* (London, MacMillan Press Ltd.,1998), Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle: Training the Indian Army During the Second World War* (War & Military Culture in South Asia) (Solihull, Helion, 2016)

The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947, by Tan Tai Yong, has revealed much about the intimate relationship between the Indian Army and its primary recruiting area, the Punjab.[32] Recent excellent books by Yasmin Khan and Srinath Raghavan have also made a contribution to the subject of India at war, from the civil and military perspectives respectively.[33] We must hope that this signifies renewed interest in these subjects.

Academic conferences in the last few years have led to a flowering of edited conference papers and these have proved valuable.[34] Kaushik Roy deserves special mention in this area, both as author and editor. These contributions have advanced the subject considerably. Several of these collected papers have been referenced as they represent solid work done by others within the scope of some aspects of this thesis.

Several biographical sources are of historical value. Perhaps the most renowned of these was written by Field Marshal Slim.[35] *Defeat into Victory* gained best-selling popularity in 1956 and was largely responsible for ensuring the Fourteenth Army and the Burma campaign were no longer forgotten. This and his minor work, *Unofficial History,* remain insightful sources as Slim repeatedly demonstrated frank self-criticism. His judgment has frequently proved sound on how events came about.[36] Slim has been widely quoted and his judgement is often verifiable from independent sources. However, Slim avoids direct criticism and attribution of culpability to individuals when it was sometimes appropriate and, for the historian, necessary.

Arguably, Slim was partly responsible for promoting the Phoenix rising from the ashes narrative more widely but this redemptive theme predates *Defeat into Victory*. The Phoenix analogy is central to many accounts of how the Indian Army weathered the storms of 1941-1944 and it has remained a popular theme.[37] It was no accident that the Phoenix was chosen as the emblem for

[32] Tan. T.Y. (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi, Sage, 2005)
[33] Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War* (Gurgaon, Random House India, 2015), Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*
[34] Rose, P. & Jeffreys, A Ed., *The Indian Army, 1939-47: Experience and Development* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2012), Roy, K., Ed., *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006), Roy, K. & Rand G. Eds., *Culture, Conflict and the Military in Colonial South Asia* (New Delhi, Routledge, 2018), Roy, K., Editor , *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars* (Leiden, Brill Academic, 2011)
[35] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, *Unofficial History*
[36] Slim, W., *Unofficial History*
[37] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45* (London, Dent, 1984)

Southeast Asia Command from its inception in 1943. [38] This symbolism has been recurrent in the historiography.[39]

A substantial body of memoirs has been left by senior and junior British officers of the Indian Army.[40] Of these narratives, Patrick Carmichael's, *Mountain Battery,* stands out as a compelling description of the retreat from Burma, from the junior officer's perspective.[41] Other notable memoirs have proved valuable with regard to specific aspects of health and welfare.[42] Too few accounts from Indian officers have been published but some do exist.[43] Other ranks are even less well represented across the board with the notable exception of prisoner of war accounts.[44]

Published diaries that have proved useful include, Leo Amery: Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall, Lord Mountbatten, General Stilwell and Alanbrooke.[45] Amery, despite being unable to visit India throughout his time as Secretary of State, often demonstrated an astute appreciation of the needs and characteristics of the Indian Army and he repeatedly defended its reputation against brickbats from Churchill and others. Pownall offered few insights into the Indian Army,

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[38] Ziegler, P. *Mountbatten: The Official Biography*, p. 257

[39] See Chapter 4 for further discussion of the related symbolism of the "Forgotten Army" and the "Phoenix rising from the ashes

[40] Calvert, M., *Fighting Mad, One Man's Guerrilla War*, Calvert, M., *Prisoners of Hope*, Fergusson, B., *Beyond the Chindwin*, Fergusson, B., *The Battle For Burma, Wild Green Earth*, *Baker, R , Cross, J.P., In Gurkha Company* (London, Arms & Armour Press, 1986), *Prendergast, J. , Prender's Progress: A Soldier in India 1931-1947* (London, Cassell, 1979), *Randle, J., Battle Tales from Burma* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2004), *Robinson-Horley, E.W., Last Post, An Indian Army Memoir* (London, Leo Cooper, 1985), *Tuker, Lieut.-General Sir F., While Memory Serves* (London, Cassell, 1950)

[41] Carmichael, P., *Mountain Battery* (Bournemouth, Devin, 1983)

[42] Bamford, P.G., *Burma Post* (Worthing, Churchman,1989),Evans, C., *A Doctor in the XIVth Army* (London, Leo Cooper, 1998), Girdwood, R.H. , *Travels With a Stethoscope: A Physician Looks at the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1991)

[43] Dillon, G., *From My Bones - Memoirs of Col. Gurbaksh Singh Dillon of the Indian National Army* (New Delhi, Aryan Books International, 1998), Hamid, Major-General S., *Disastrous Twilight, A Personal Record of the Partition of India* (London, Leo Cooper, 1986), Thorat, S.P.P.., *From Reveille to Retreat* (New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1986)

[44] Crasta, J.B., *Eaten by the Japanese: The Memoir of an Unknown Indian Prisoner of War* (New York, Invisible Man, 1999), Twigg, R., *Survivor on the River Kwai: The Incredible Story of Life on the Burma Railway* (London, Penguin Viking, 2013), Urquhart. A., *The Forgotten Highlander: My Incredible Story of Survival During the War in the Far East* (London, Little Brown, 2010)
Useful Prisoner of War accounts by officers are also available, including, Lomax, E., *The Railway Man* (London, Vintage, 1996), recorded interviews held at the IWM, IWM Sound Archives 5196, Interviewee/speaker 2nd Lt. George Stanley Gimson, Recorded 1981/08/19, IWM Sound Archives 5264, Interviewee/speaker - Captain Ruthren Barry Montheath Recorded 1981/11/14.

[45] Alanbrooke, Field Marshal Lord, Danchev, A., Todman D., ed., *War Diaries 1939-1945* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), Amery, L. ,Nicholson, D., ed., *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries, 1929-1945* (London, Hutchinson, 1987), Pownall, Lt. General Sir Henry, Bond, B. Ed., *Chief of Staff: The Diaries of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall: Volume Two* (London, Leo Cooper, 1974), *Mountbatten Admiral, Lord L., Ed. Zeigler, P., Personal Diary of Admiral The Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South-Est Asia, 1943-1946* (London, Collins, 1988), Stilwell, General J.W., Ed. White, T.H., *The Stilwell Papers*, (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948), Stilwell, Stilwell, General J.W, *The World War II Diaries of General Joseph W. Stilwell (1941-1945)*, (The Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, California, 2008), http://www.hoover.org/hila/collections/6977902.html

but his grasp of the strategic situation was consistently sound. It is best to read the unexpurgated and frequently profane diaries of Stilwell, held on the Hoover Institute website. He had nothing good to say about the Indian Army and little that was positive about the limeys either. Alanbrooke's main focus was on the grand strategy for the Mediterranean and Europe and this is reflected in his priceless diaries, but he did engage with matters further east and this has proved insightful.

Field Marshal Auchinleck's evident modesty was undoubtedly sincere but it may have led to him leaving no personal memoir that could speak for his record as a central figure in improving the fortunes of the Indian Army behind the front. Two good biographies have gone some way towards filling the gap but both were written some time ago and the Auk's career deserves revisiting.[46]

Several division and regimental histories in the main written by Indian Army officers and often published by Gale & Polden remain relevant but must be treated with caution.[47] These books provide much detail on events within the regiments and divisions. They were written for the most part with an uncritical eye. As unapologetic celebrations of the formation or unit, they do nonetheless offer perspectives on institutional aspects of the Indian Army.

In addition to the prominent biographies and memoirs already mentioned, there are numerous other works that have been most helpful in gaining a broad understanding of the Indian Army and related subjects.[48] It has been necessary to spread the net wide to glean relevant

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[46] Warner, P., *Auchinleck, The Lonely Soldier* (London, Buchan & Enright, 1981), Connell, J., *Auchinleck - A Critical Biography* (London, Cassell, 1959)

[47] Bamford, P.G. , *1st King George's Own Battalion (Ferozepore Sikhs), The Sikh Regiment, 1846-1946*, Booth, J.R. and Hobbs, J.B., *Ninth Battalion, Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, Raised 1st April 1941 Disbanded 8th July 1947* (Cardiff, Western Echo and Mail Ltd, 1948), Brett-James, A., *Ball of Fire - The Fifth Indian Division in the Second World War* (Aldershot, Gale & Polden, 1951) Reprinted by Naval & Military Press, Doulton, Lieut.-Col. A.J.F., *The Fighting Cock, Being the History of the 23rd Indian Division, 1942-1947* (Aldershot, Gale & Polden, 1951) Reprinted by Naval & Military Press, Shakespear, Colonel L.W., *History of the Assam Rifles,* (London, MacMillan, 1929), Reprint (Uckfield, Naval & Military Press, 2006)
Anon. Forward by General Brodie Haig, Colonel of the Regiment, *Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, A Short History 1939-1945* (London, Lund Humphries, 1946), Prasad, S., *The Gallant Dogras, An Illustrated History of the Dogra Regiment* (New Delhi, Lancer Publishers,2005)

[48] Akbar, M.J., *Nehru, The Making of India* (London, Viking , 1988), Baker, R , *Burma Post,* Bose, S., *His Majesty's Enemy* (Cambridge MA, Belknap, 2011), Broad, R., *The Radical General: Sir Ronald Adam and Britain's New Model Army, 1941-1946* (Stroud, Spellmount, 2013), Bryant, C., *Stafford Cripps, The First Modern Chancellor* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), Chaudhuri, N., *Thy Hand, Great Anarch! India 1921-1952* (Boston, Addison-Wesley Longman, 1989), Dillon, G., *From My Bones - Memoirs of Col. Gurbaksh Singh Dillon of the Indian National Army*, Evans, C., *A Doctor in the XIVth Army*, Feiling, K., *The Life of Neville Chamberlain* (London, MacMillan,1946), Felton, M., *The Coolie Generals: Britain's Far Eastern Military Leaders in Japanese Captivity* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2008), Fergusson, B., *Beyond the Chindwin*, Fergusson, B., *The Battle For Burma, Wild Green Earth*, Frazer, D., *Alanbrooke* (London: William Collins, *1982),* Girdwood, R.H. , *Travels With a Stethoscope: A Physician Looks at the Twentieth Century*, Grigg, P.J., *Prejudice and judgment : Reminiscences*

perspectives from books that shed light in passing on the army's institutional and social structures. Some sources have been treated with additional caution and have been verified where possible.[49] Despite relating to pre-war perspectives some sources have proved useful in revealing the degree and scope of wartime transformation.[50]

A significant weakness in the current secondary sources is in the study of the Indian National Army. This may be in part due to the paucity of primary sources.[51] INA history also remains a politically emotive subject in India, and this continues to exert influence on its treatment by some historians and other writers. Some of the secondary source material has been of a high standard.[52] However, there are conflicting views and there has been no recent and definitive

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(London, Jonathan Cape, 1948), Hamid, Major-General S., *Disastrous Twilight, A Personal Record of the Partition of India,* Hamilton, N., *Monty, The Making of a General, 1887-1942* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1981),Hamilton, N., *Monty, Master of the Battlefield, 1942-1944* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1983), Hayes, R., *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany, Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda* (London, Hurst, 2011), Herman, A., *Gandhi & Churchill, The Epic Rivalry that Destroyed and Empire and Forged Our Age* (London, Hutchinson, 2008), Jenkins, R., *Churchill,* (London, MacMillan, 2001), Karnad, R, *Farthest Field, An Indian Story of the Second World War* (London, William Collins, 2015), Kippenberger, Major-General H. , *Infantry Brigadier* (London, Oxford University Press, 1949), Lewin, R., *Slim The Standard Bearer* (London, Leo Cooper, 1976) Reprinted (Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 1999), Lomax, E., *The Railway Man*, Louis, W.R., *In the Name of God Go!, Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), Lyman. R., *Slim, Master of War, Burma and the Birth of Modern War* (London, Constable, 2004), Lyman. R., *The Generals: From Defeat to Victory, Leadership in Asia, 1941-45* (London, Constable, 2008), Lynn. Dame V., *Some Sunny Day: My Autobiography* (London, Harper, 2009), MacDonald Fraser, G., *Quartered Safe Out Here,* (London, Harvill, 1992), Masters, J., *The Road Past Mandalay*, Miller, R., *Uncle Bill: The Authorised Biography of Field Marshal Viscount Slim* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2013), Montgomery, Field Marshal The Viscount. B.L., *The Memoirs of Field Marshal, The Viscount. Montgomery of Alamein, K.G.* (London, Collins,1958), Mountbatten Admiral, Lord L., Ed. Zeigler, P., *Personal Diary of Admiral The Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South-Est Asia, 1943-1946*, Perry, J., *A Stupid Boy, The Autobiography of the Creator of Dad's Army* (London, Century, 2002), Randle, J., *Battle Tales from Burma*, Roberts, F, Robinson-Horley, E.W., *Last Post, An Indian Army Memoir* Schofield, V., *Wavell: Soldier & Statesman (London, John Murray, 2006),* Seagrave, G. S., *Burma surgeon* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1944), Spencer Chapman, F., *The Jungle is Neutral* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1949) Spencer Chapman, F., *The Jungle is Neutral*, Sykes, C., *Orde Wingate: A Biography* (Cleveland, World Publishing Co., 1959), Tuker, Lieut.-General Sir F., *While Memory Serves*, Wavell, A.P., *Allenby: A Study in Greatness* (London, Harrap, 1940), Ziegler, P., *Mountbatten, The Official Biography* (London, Collins, 1985), Singh, V.K. Major-General, *Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers* (New Delhi, Sage, 2005)

[49] Bennett, Lieut.-Gen. H.G., *Why Singapore Fell* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1944)

[50] Masters, J., *Bugles and a Tiger, My Life in the Gurkhas* (London, Michael Joseph, 1956), Field Marshal, Earl, *Forty-One Years in India: from Subaltern to Commander-in-chief* (London, MacMillan, 1897)

[51] See 1.4 Primary Sources.

[52] Toye, H., *The Springing Tiger: A Study of a Revolutionary* (London, Cassell, 1959). This work was republished later with revisions, Toye, H., *Subhas Chandra Bose, The Springing Tiger* (Mumbai, Jaico, 1991). Toye, H., *The First Indian National Army, 1941-42*, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984) , Vol. 15, No. 2 (Sep., 1984), pp. 365-381, Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 276-295 and pp. 394-400, Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Sundaram, C.S., Chapter 4: *Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets, Disaffection among Indian Troops in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1940-1 and the formation of the Indian National Army,* p. 126-128, Roy, K., Editor , *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars*, "Breaking the Chains with which we are bound"; the Interrogation Chamber, The Indian National Army and the negation of Military Identities, 1941-1947, pp.493-518, Sundaram, C.S., *A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945* War and Society, Volume 13, No. 1 (New South Wales, University of NSW, 1995), Lebra, J.**,** *The Indian National Army and Japan* (Singapore, Donald Moore, 1971), Marston, D.P., *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, Marston, D.P. & Sundaram, C.S., *A Military*

work on the INA that is both comprehensive and balanced. Subhas Chandra Bose remains a totemic political figure in recent Indian history and this has led to much work of a biographical nature, focused on the Netaji and his inner circle.[53] Regrettably this has resulted in hagiography rather than biography in some cases. Chandar Sundaram's brief comments offer a trenchant critique of the politicised nature of current discourse on the INA and Bose. He summed up with the following observation:

> Much as the author Paul Scott wrote that the INA marked the movement of India from the 19th to the 20th century, its dispassionate, balanced, critical, non-polemical and rigorously historical treatment, especially in India, will mark that country's passage from the 20th century to the 21st century.[54]

Detailed study of the INA is not within the scope of this thesis. For research aimed at a balanced and wider study of the INA, the current state of the bibliography would present significant challenges but my research is limited to the impact of the existence and actions of the INA on the Indian Army. The Indian Army as an institution under stress can be assessed despite the prevailing weaknesses in the secondary sources. Additional primary sources, including some notable personal papers, are held by the National Archive of India and some incomplete information related to Japanese involvement in the creation and sponsorship of the INA is available in Japan but these are of marginal relevance to the Indian Army perspective.[55]

The imbalance in secondary literature in favour of the British perspective is partly indicative of underlying gaps in primary sources. There was no Mass Observation for India and it appears that no detailed censorship records remain for troops in India and Fourteenth Army, only summary reports.[56] The censorship summaries for Indian troops in the Middle East do include

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History of India and South Asia: From the East India Company to the Nuclear Era (London, Praeger, 2007), *The Indian National Army, 1942-1948: A Circumstantial Force*, pp. 123-130

[53] Fay, P. W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1995), Bose, S., *His Majesty's Enemy*

[54] Sundaram, C.S., *Towards a Balanced and Critical Appraisal: The Indian National Army*) Vol. 50, Issue No. 30, 25 Jul, 2015 (Mumbai, Economic and Political Weekly, 2015), P.23. It is earnestly hoped that Sundaram's own research in this area reaches fruition in the near future.

[55] The National Archives of India, http://nationalarchives.nic.in/, The National Archives of Japan, http://www.archives.go.jp/english/, The National Archives of Japan, Digital Library, https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/index_e.html. These primary sources are for the most part not written in English. I have not had the opportunity to access either of these sources as part of my current research but I have not identified material that would be sufficiently relevant to warrant the expense of visiting these archives.

[56] IOR L/WS/1/70, *Censorship: telegraph and postal censorship 1939-1945* ,IOR L/WS/1/351, *Publications (GOI): Censorship regulations and connected handbooks, 1929-1942,* IOR L/WS/1/375, *Publications (GOI): Censorship regulations and connected handbooks Internal Security Instructions, 1931-1940,* IOR L/WS/1/423, *Intelligence: Indian censorship, 1940-1944*

some useful material.[57] There is also a wider deficiency in primary sources that would offer insights into the lives of Indian troops. The imbalance may well have existed during the conflict, as exemplified by some official publications. *The Campaign in Burma*, prepared for Southeast Asia Command, contains more than twice as many images of British troops than Indian troops, which suggests editorial bias. [58] In post-independence India and Pakistan, the Second World War and the Indian Army's role in it appear to have engaged much less interest from historians than the independence struggle and partition. This has led to some failure to capture the voices and memories of surviving participants, which has only recently begun to be addressed.[59]

The most extensive primary sources are the India Office Records (IOR) held at the British Library. Relevant papers include the extensive Military (MIL) series and the War Staff series (WS) but other civil series include substantial material relevant to the Second World War from the civil perspective. Many documents were sourced from the India Office in London but sources also include documents originating within the Government of India in Delhi. However, they are not a complete record of the inner workings in the Delhi administration. Given the sensitivities around India's independence it is possible that documents sourced from Delhi may have been weeded before release but this is difficult to determine. Weeding for political sensitivities, if it did occur, may have had less impact on purely military papers. One possible exception might be the politically difficult subject of the INA. The accessions relating to the INA, intelligence matters and other instances of dissent do contain sensitive material that offers insights into the events surrounding the INA and the motivations of some leading protagonists. Detail is lacking in some areas and records of interviews with INA suspects were not retained. They were perhaps disposed of for reasons of political sensitivity rather than privacy. One insurmountable gap was as a result of official records for Malaya and Singapore being destroyed at the time of surrender in 1942, with similar losses in Hong Kong and Rangoon.

[57] IOR L/PJ/12/654 and IOR L/PJ/12/655 *Middle East Military Censorship Fortnightly Summary Covering Indian Troops*
[58] Central Office of Information, *The Campaign in Burma* (London HMSO, 1946). Prepared for SEAC.
[59] Relatively rare exceptions include, Crasta, J.B., *Eaten by the Japanese: The Memoir of an Unknown Indian Prisoner of War*, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Japanese-ate-Indian-PoWs-used-them-as-live-targets-in-WWII/articleshow/40017577.cms, Shama, M.S., *Japanese Ate Indian PoWs, Used Them as Live Targets in WWII* (Delhi, Times of India, 11 August 2014). This is a report of several prisoner accounts from various sources. Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*. This includes numerous brief personal recollections. Karnad, R, *Farthest Field, An Indian Story of the Second World War*, Raghu Karnad, a journalist, has acknowledged that he had to use dramatic licence to fill the gaps in family memories and records of the three protagonists in this nonetheless revealing memoir.

Research on the INA has also been impeded by the lack of official records from the INA itself. In some instances these were deliberately destroyed on the orders of Bose.[60] Others were lost or destroyed, in the last days of the War. India Office Records provide useful insights but the relevant documents were in most cases assembled quite hurriedly in 1945 at a time of repatriation and demobilisation.[61] Some historians have quite reasonably argued that these sources do not offer balance, as they were written from the victor's perspective.[62] However, the documents were in some cases quickly drafted as the authors prepared for repatriation and they lack polish.[63] They can hardly be described as propaganda from the British perspective, given they were intended for restricted circulation and the tone is direct and largely factual. The document written by Lieutenant-Colonel G.D. Anderson contains a number of forthright opinions and observations that would have been unpalatable to the intended audience.[64]

Deliberations of the British Government and the Chiefs of Staff, in relation to India and the Indian Army, are held in The National Archives. In most cases these papers have not been relevant to this thesis as the higher direction of the war has been peripheral to its scope. Copies of some British government and War Office documents are held in the India Office Records if they were retained by the India Office.

The John Rylands University Library at the University of Manchester holds Field Marshal Auchinleck's personal papers, which offer useful insights. In the absence of Auchinleck memoirs these sources are especially important given his prominent role in transformation of the Indian Army.[65] These are augmented by the collections of his notable correspondents including Leo Amery, Secretary of Start for India, 1940-1945, Field Marshal Alanbrooke, Chief

[60] Fay, P. W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945*. pp. 556-557. Fay indicates that Bose ordered some destruction or documents before leaving for his final ill-fated flight to Japan.
[61] The key documents held in the India Office Records include:
IOR L/WS/1/1576, L/WS/1/1577 and L/WS/1/1578, *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, 3 parts, 1942-1947*, IOR L/WS/1/1579, *Annexe: INA and Free Burma Army: press cuttings and debates, 1945-1946*, IOR L/WS/1/1711, *Indian National Army Reports: 1943*, IOR L/WS/2/44, *Note on Sikhs, 6th November 1942* , Appendix A, IOR L/WS/2/45, *A brief chronological and factual account of the Indian National Army, by Lt-Col G.D. Anderson*, Monograph 3: *The incidence of Volunteers and Non-Volunteers Etc*., IOR L/WS/2/46, *History of the Indian National Army - A Brief Outline of Chapters 13-19,* IOR L/WS/2/47, *Interrogation reports on the Hikari Kikan from sources now present in the Rangoon Jail*
[62] Fay, P. W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945*. pp. 553-563
[63] IOR L/WS/2/45, *A brief chronological and factual account of the Indian National Army, by Lt-Col G.D. Anderson*, p. 1
[64] Ibid., Monograph 3: *The incidence of Volunteers and Non-Volunteers Etc*.
[65] Auchinleck's papers are held at the University of Manchester, The John Rylands University Library (JRL), see section 2.1 of the bibliography for a full list.

of the Imperial General Staff, 1941-1946 and General Ronald Adam, Adjutant General, 1941-1946.[66]

There are extensive collections of the personal papers of Indian Army officers held in the Imperial War Museum (IWM), the Churchill Archive, the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives at King's College London and the National Army Museum. The substantial papers of General Sir Douglas Gracey, general officer commanding 20th Indian Infantry Division, are of particular note and I have relied on extensive analysis of these in Chapter 6.[67]

Some of the recorded audio interviews held by the IWM have been revealing. Most were part of an accession from the BBC, recorded in preparation for the *Plain Tales from the Raj* radio programme. They include additional material recorded subsequently by the IWM. These provide several insights into the workings of Indian Army formations from the command perspective. Interviews with British officers and other ranks, held at the IWM, provide perspectives on the role of junior officers and life in India for other ranks.[68] There are a few recorded interviews with Indian officers and other ranks held at the IWM but these offer limited insights as they tend to focus on military narrative.[69]

[66] Both Alanbrooke's and Adam's papers are held at The Liddell Hart Collection, King's College (KCL), London. Leo Amery's papers are held at the Churchill Archive, Cambridge, ((AMEL), Viscount Slim's papers are also held at Churchill College, (SLIM).

[67] Gracey, General Sir Douglas David, *Papers, General Officer Commanding. 20th Indian Infantry Division,* 1942-47, KCL,

[68] IWM Sound Archives 910, Interviewee/speaker - Private David Lloyd George Griffiths, South Wales Borderers 1938-42 (London, IWM, 1977-04-13), IWM Sound Archives 5196, Interviewee/speaker 2nd Lt. George Stanley Gimson, Recorded 1981/08/19, IWM Sound Archives 5264, Interviewee/speaker - Captain Ruthren Barry Montheath Recorded 1981/11/14

[69] IWM Sound Archives BBC Recording, Plain Tales from the Raj Interviewee/speaker: Major-General DK Palit VCR (London, BBC, 1974), IWM Sound Archives 33679, Interviewee/Speaker - Balwat Singh Bahia, REME, Recorded 2003/06, IWM Sound Archives 33680, Interviewee/speaker - Calgotra, Sohan Singh, Sapper, Recorded 2003/06, IWM Sound Archives 25138, Interviewee/speaker - Khadka, Lila Bahadur, Gurkha, 4th Gurkha Rifles in Burma, 1944; POW in Burma, 1944-1945 , Recorded 2003/07/16

2. CHAPTER 2 - IMAGE AND PERCEPTIONS

Were the 'Sepoy Soldiers' Any Good?[1]

The answer to this question is undoubtedly affirmative but the right people, the right training and the right tools were only part of the recipe for success. The Indian Army also needed high morale, self-assurance and solid foundations. The army of 1939 had supreme confidence in itself, built up over generations. In the face of unprecedented challenges, increasingly complex requirements and the need to expand rapidly, confidence suffered several setbacks, notably in Malaya and Burma in 1941-42. This chapter examines how that positive self-image was eroded by failures and then remade anew. Slim, may be forgiven for partiality but his retrospective view is summed up by this quotation, "My Indian Divisions after 1943 were among the best in the world. They go anywhere, do anything, go on doing it, and do it on very little."[2] His views might well have been endorsed by senior Indian Army commanders, but they too were somewhat biased. Perceptions of those responsible for the higher direction of the imperial war effort were often less favourable and at one stage this led to the possibility of a diminishing role from 1943. The British Empire did not have the luxury of being able to expend resources on apparently failing enterprises and the Indian Army had experienced too many failures. Events in 1944-1945 confirmed Slim's view and doubters were less vocal but negative perceptions persisted.

The Indian Army's performance in Southeast Asia is the subject of a wide and expanding bibliography, but little of it focusses on the Indian Army alone.[3] This thesis will not seek to

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[1] The thrust of this question is respectfully purloined from a title used by Professor Raymond Callahan, *Were the 'Sepoy Generals' Any Good?* The answer to his question was also affirmative. Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India, A Reappraisal of the British-Indian Army's High Command in the Second World War* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006)

[2] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, 1956), p.539

[3] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, Allen, L., *Singapore: 1941-42*, Bayly, C., Harper, T., *Forgotten Armies, Britain's Asian Empire and The War With Japan* (London, Allen Lane, 2004),Callahan, R., *Burma, 1942-1945* (London, Davis-Poynter, 1978),Callahan, R., *Triumph at Imphal-Kohima: How the Indian Army Finally Stopped the Japanese Juggernaut* (Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 2017), Carmichael, P., *Mountain Battery*, Chenevix-Trench, C., *The Indian Army, and the King's Enemies 1900-1947* (London, Thames & Hudson, 1988), Colvin, J., *Not Ordinary Men, The Story of the Battle of Kohima*, Edwards, L, *Kohima, The Furthest Battle*, Farrell, B.P, *The Defence and Fall of Singapore, 1940-1942*, Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*, Fowler, W., *We Gave Our Today: Burma 1941-1945* (London, Phoenix, 2010), Hickey, M., *The Unforgettable Army, Slim's XIVth Army in Burma* (Staplehurst, Spellmount, 1992), Rose, P. & Jeffreys, A Ed., *The Indian Army, 1939-47: Experience and Development*, Keane, F., *Road of Bones, The Epic Siege of Kohima, 1944*, Latimer, J., *Burma: The Forgotten War* (London, John Murray, 2004), Lunt, J., *A Hell of a Licking, The Retreat from Burma, 1941-42* (London, Collins, 1986), Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, Pearson, M., *End Game Burma, Slim's Masterstroke at Meiktila* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2010), Randle, J., *Battle Tales from Burma* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2004), Rooney, D, *Burma Victory, Imphal, Kohima and the Chindit Issue, March 1944 to May 1945*, Rose, P. & Jeffreys, A. Eds., *The Indian Army, 1939-47: Experience and Development*, Roy, K., *Sepoys against the Rising Sun: The Indian Army in Far East and South-East Asia, 1941–45*

replay the many versions of the “Phoenix from the Ashes” narrative, as it has been told many times. It will instead explore the institution’s self-image and the changing perceptions of it during the conflict. The Indian Army was an institution under severe strain. To consider how perceptions arose and how they changed during the Second World War sheds light on the institution’s responses to criticism both valid and otherwise. It is helpful to understand what expectations there were and to what extent the Indian Army was seen to meet those demands. By 1943 the Indian Army was actively addressing its many weaknesses but wider perceptions of its failings were reaching crescendo. Negative perceptions were rarely fully justified but the Indian Army’s tarnished reputation did lead some, not least Churchill, to question whether a much enlarged Indian Army was worth its salt, or a waste of resources.[4] Results were what mattered and external perceptions only began to change with the successes of 1944.

If the Indian Army of 1939 is treated as the benchmark for what followed, it can be argued that matters got substantially worse before they got better and this was the common perception of many at the time. This approach risks being simplistic as the Army of 1939 was quite different in size, structure, experience, skills, capabilities, equipment and its anticipated roles. The measures of success for a lightly armed force in colonial policing roles differ widely from those applicable to much larger all-arms forces operating in a global war. By contemporary standards of European and imperial armies in 1939 the Indian Army was experienced and well trained but relatively specialised in its colonial role. It was lightly equipped and lacked some essential specialisms of a modern army. Nor did it have adequate means to prepare troops for modern warfare. By 1945 it had all the capabilities of a modern army, ample versatility and well-developed training methods to fulfil new and varied roles.

2.1 Image and Prestige

Perceptions of the Indian Army varied greatly during the Second World War, depending on the perspectives and prejudices of the beholder. Its image with prospective recruits was especially important, as an ample supply of volunteers depended on institutional prestige as much as it did

(Leiden, Brill, ,2015), Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory,* Smith, C., *Singapore Burning, Heroism and Surrender in World War II* (London, Viking, 2005), Somerville, C., *Our War, How the British Commonwealth Fought the Second World War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), Lyman. R., *A War of Empires: Japan, India, Burma & Britain: 1941–45* (Oxford, Osprey, 2021)

[4] Callahan, R. *The Prime Minister and the Indian Army’s Last War*. Roy, K., Editor , *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars*, Chapter 10, pp. 311-331. Raymond Callahan provides a concise description of Churchill’s disparaging opinions of the Indian Army.

on pay and prospects.[5] The army's self-perception had a critical influence on morale, cohesion and confidence. [6] The perceptions of those responsible for the higher direction of the war effort were also critical as they determined where scarce resources would be allocated and how formations were deployed. The perceptions of the Indian Army's enemies were important too.

The intimate relationship between the Indian Army and its traditional recruiting areas, the Punjab and Nepal, tended to create a positive feedback loop. The prestige of the institution was enhanced, in turn enhancing the kudos of the individual accepted into it and ultimately raising the status of their families and their place in society, both in service and for veterans.[7] Superficially this was an inherently stable, successful partnership model but Professor Tan rightly argues that cracks in the Punjab "Garrison State" edifice were beginning to appear before 1939.[8] However, potential recruits in traditional recruiting areas would still have recognised that many of the most revered elders in their village were Indian Army veterans and that they enjoyed enhanced wealth and status as a result.[9]

For the typical recruit, perceptions of the Indian Army would likely have been formed at an early age by hearing stories from his father, grandfather, or uncle, of their service. In localities that were targeted for recruitment, it was not unusual for several generations to have served with the same regiment and to have served with a junior officer who was now Colonel of the same regiment. This strong continuity was often based on personal bonds of loyalty that formed part of the Izzat that linked family, village and community to the regiment and its officers, in a shared effort to build and maintain the reputation of all concerned.[10] For poor rural recruits the Indian Army conferred not just status and reputation but was also relatively well paid, with good pension prospects. This was often reinforced by other benefits, including ownership of land granted to them by the Government in reward for good service. An army career also offered good nutrition and medical care. These were not trivial matters in a country where adequate nourishment was not universal and security in old age was largely reliant on the family.

[5] See Chapter 3 for recruitment and expansion of the Indian Army.
[6] Indian Army Morale and the factors affecting it are explored in Chapter 6.
[7] IWM Sound Archives BBC Recording, *Plain Tales From the Ra:* Interviewee/speaker: Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, GCB,GCIE, CSI, DSO, OBE (London, BBC, 1976-10-07), Farwell, B., *The Gurkhas* (London, Allen Lane, 1984), pp. 72-85, Cross, J.P., *In Gurkha Company* (London, Arms & Armour Press, 1986)
[8] Tan. T.Y , *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 70-97, pp. 141-186
[9] IWM Sound Archives BBC Recording, *Plain Tales From the Ra:* Interviewee/speaker: Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck
[10] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the significance of Izzat.

With mass expansion, traditional concentration of recruitment on specific communities was unsustainable and the global conflict interfered with the long-established mutuality in two respects.[11] Twelvefold expansion required significant recruitment from other parts of India where the institution's prestige and influence were less entrenched. Defeats and losses sustained in Malaya, Burma and North Africa in 1942 risked reputational damage and other perceptions mattered little if the supply of volunteers dried up. The Army's reputation in the eyes of potential recruits mattered greatly if sufficient volunteers were to come forward. By 1945 the reputation of the Indian Army was restored and enhanced but at the nadir of 1942-1943 the prestige of imperial institutions including the Indian Army was in doubt but there was surprisingly little evidence of a failure to meet recruitment targets.

The perceptions of officer candidates varied considerably. The burgeoning middle classes of India were not used to considering the Indian Army as a career. Neither was it a realistic option as a vocation until the 1920s. Ambitious young men from the middle-classes were unlikely to join the ranks and work up to the level of senior Viceroy Commissioned Officer (VCO). A VCO enjoyed considerable status in rural Punjab but to a well-educated city-dweller it meant little. The fact that King's commissions had not been granted to Indians prior to the First World War meant that the Indian Army could not yet be seen as a family tradition for generations of Indian officers. The parents and grand-parents of some King's Commissioned Indian Officers (KCIO) had been VCOs and in this sense there was some generational continuity. However, first generation Indian commissioned officers were often drawn from families who had given public service in other spheres. Sitamma, the mother of K.S. Thimayya, had been awarded the Kaiser-e-hind medal for her contribution to social work. Her three sons joined the Indian Army and K.S. Thimayya was to achieve high rank and reputation in the army of post-independence India in addition to being highly regarded in the imperial army.[12] Given the institutional challenges that faced recruits it was difficult to attract the best candidates in sufficient numbers.[13] From the outbreak of hostilities, army recruitment was competing for officer talent with more prestigious career options in the Indian Civil Service, the legal profession and medicine but also with the rapidly expanding demands of manufacturing, transportation and construction in an economy moving rapidly to a war footing and developing a larger, more sophisticated industrial base.[14]

[11] See Chapter 3.
[12] Singh, V.K. Major-General, *Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers*, p. 87
[13] The vicissitudes of the first generation of Indian commissioned officers have been explored thoroughly and notable examples include: Singh, *Leadership in the Indian Army*, Kundu, A., *Militarism in India, The Army and Civil Society in Consensus*, pp. 11-29, Barua, P.P., *Gentlemen of the Raj, The Indian Army Officer Corps, 1817-1949*, pp. 25-82
[14] Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*. Yasmin Khan provides an excellent and broad view of the social and economic landscape of India during the Second World War.

The Congress Party may have regarded the Indian Army as the tool of imperial oppression and was actively opposed to the imperial war effort but it also recognised the need for post-independence armed forces. The future leaders have given varied reasons for seeking an Army career. The recollection of Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa, the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the independent Indian Army, was that he had always wanted to be a soldier but it was only the opportunity of a temporary King's Commission under the scheme introduced during the Great War that made this possible.[15] What was seemingly impossible for Cariappa in 1915 was realistic for S.P.P. Thorat in 1924, as the post-war scheme for appointing KCIOs had by then been running for three years.[16] Becoming a KCIO was a challenge in the first few years of Indianisation but it was still no small step in wartime to put oneself forward for the role of Emergency Commissioned Officer (ECO). To be an ECO was not regarded favourably in communities where the Congress party was strong and it was regarded as an unusual and uncertain career path given the slow pace of change and the looming possibilities of independence.[17]

Before 1939, British officer cadets made positive choices to join the Indian Army and only the best candidates could do so.[18] Indian Army service offered increased responsibility sooner and the chance of active service in peacetime.[19] For British other ranks it was not so prestigious an option. For the average recruit, Indian Army service was less likely to involve a family connection, although this was not uncommon. Tommy Atkins in peacetime was typically volunteering to join a British regiment which just so happened to send each battalion in turn to India while the other remained in Britain. If he had a sense of adventure he might sign up for overseas service in India and elsewhere.[20] Service in India was unlikely to figure highly in his aspirations but seeing the world in a more general sense might.

Jonathan Fennell suggests that many Indian volunteers joining the Army were economic conscripts, in the sense that they joined out of economic necessity. [21] However, the same could be said for many British recruits in the 1930s. Joining the army in depression-hit Britain was

[15] Singh, V.K. Major-General, *Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers*, pp.21-23
[16] Ibid., pp. 121-123
[17] Compiled from official records by direction of the Secretary of State., *The Indian Army List April 1939* (Delhi, Defence Dept. GOI, 1939)
[18] Warner, P., *Auchinleck, The Lonely Soldier*, p. 13, Hamilton, N., *Monty, The Making of a General, 1887-1942*, pp. 50-51.
[19] Masters, J., *Bugles and a Tiger, My Life in the Gurkhas*, pp. 94-101.
[20] IWM Sound Archives 910, Interviewee/speaker - Private David Lloyd George Griffiths, South Wales Borderers 1938-42 (London, IWM, 1977-04-13)
[21] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 66-69

often a decision based on economic necessity, not career aspiration. It was a low paid job but one that at least ensured pay, regular meals and basic welfare. Private David Lloyd George Griffiths, of the South Wales Borderers, described how he joined up in 1938 after unemployment and abject poverty in South Wales had driven him to walk to London in search of work.[22] Griffiths describes an almost accidental Indian Army career, certainly not one based on aspiration. After failing to get any other kind of employment in London he joined up. He did have some previous awareness of Army life as his elder brother had served in the British Army. After training at Brecon and Londonderry he volunteered for overseas service, as he was keen to go to India with his new-found mates and for no other reason. He was posted to the 1st Battalion in India but his mother warned him that he would come back with The Doolally Tap.[23]

Griffiths regarded his life in India as harder than at home. Accommodation was primitive, only the larger barracks had electric fans and lighting. The recruiting sergeants at Whitehall had hardly tried to sell the status and benefits of serving in India and they had told him that, "The only good wog was a dead one". Fortunately his impressions on arrival were somewhat more positive but the seemingly endemic attitude and culture of racism within the pre-war professional army does seem to have influenced him and many others for the worse. Griffiths was shocked the first time he saw a soldier kicking an Indian servant but admitted that he acquired similar attitudes himself in due course. This was still the traditional Indian Army of North West Frontier legend. Griffiths said that if you did not wear a topee you could be charged with attempted suicide. He confirmed that there were indeed cases of the *Doolally Tap* among those who did not take precautions against the extreme climate.

British perceptions of the Indian Army were often derived from cinema, popular fiction and primary and secondary education. This period in both British and Hollywood cinema produced a rich genre of romanticised tales of derring-do on the North-West Frontier, notably including *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer, Gunga Din* and *Wee Willie Winkie*. [24] The novels, poems and short stories of Rudyard Kipling remained popular. His pithy insights into army life in India would have been familiar to junior officers and other ranks. In popular children's fiction and short story comics the North West Frontier played a prominent role as the location for the adventures of

[22] IWM Sound Archives 910, Interviewee/speaker - Private David Lloyd George Griffiths, South Wales Borderers 1938-42 (London, IWM, 1977-04-13)
[23] "Doolally Tap" was frequently written on the papers of those being sent to Netley Mental Hospital from the transit camps in the Deolali area. Allen, C., *Plain Tales from the British Empire* (London, Abacus, 2008), p. 40
[24] *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* (Hollywood, Paramount 1934) , *Gunga Din* (Hollywood, RKO, 1939), *Wee Willie Winkie* (Hollywood, Twentieth Century Fox, 1937),

The Wolf of Kabul, for example.[25] British troops and officers who served with the Indian Army during the Second World War must have been struck by the stark contrast between these romanticised tales of the *Great Game* and the harsh realities of arrival in a Deolali transit camp or a tent in Ranchi. Frontier adventures were soon replaced by experiences of crowded cities, interminable train journeys, monotonous food, prickly heat and primitive accommodation.[26]

The British education system gave considerable prominence to the achievements of Empire. Events such as the siege of Lucknow and the Afghan wars were widely taught from a pro-imperial perspective. It is unsurprising that British school text books portrayed a positive, paternalistic view of empire but the history textbooks used in Britain would also have been widely used in the Indian equivalents of British public schools and by the crammers for the Indian Military Academy entrance examinations.[27] KCIOs were likely to have been exposed to these pro-imperial narratives, often written in the heyday of Empire and rarely revised.[28]

Historian Kathryn Castle makes the case that the momentum of history teaching, textbooks and curriculum at the height of Empire was aimed at promoting the image of a beneficial, pacifying and civilising British Empire.[29] Castle cites a typical example of paternalistic myth-making from the widely used *Textbook of English History* by Airy.[30] Sikhs were being portrayed as rather English in their characteristics, "They were a religious sect who maintained the abolition of caste, the unity of the godhead, and purity of life, and were distinguished for the steadiness of their religious fervour."[31] Castle also refers to the 1912 edition of *Groundwork of British History*, by Warner and Martin, as highlighting the, “steadiness and zeal” of Sikhs and going on to suggest that they could be compared to Cromwell's Ironsides.[32] My review of Warner and Martin reveals that the section Castle refers to in the 1912 edition is still unchanged in the 1932 edition and it is only with the publication of the 1943 edition of *The New Groundwork of British*

[25] *The Wolf of Kabul*, *The Wizard* (Dundee, D.C. Thompson, Comics from 1922). It may surprise some that this character was still appearing in comics as late as the 1980s.
[26] Griffiths indicates that only some of his billets had electric fans and the North West Frontier bases were primitive.
[27] See Chapter 3 for further discussion of the IMA entrance examination process.
[28] Mangan J.A. (Editor), *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience* (London, Routledge, 1993), Chapter 11, Gosh, S. C., *English, in Taste, Opinions, in Words and in Intellect: Indoctrinating the Indian Through Textbook, Curriculum and Education*, pp. 181-192.
[29] Ibid, Chapter 2, *India in British History Textbooks for Schools, 1890-1914*, pp. 23-39
[30] Airy, O., *Textbook of English History* (London, Longmans, 1893)
[31] Mangan, p. 28
[32] Warner, G.T. & Marten, C.H.K., *The Groundwork of British History* Published Editions: 1900, 1912, 1921, 1932. Warner, G.T., Marten, C.H.K. & Muir, D.E, *The New Groundwork of British History: The New Warner and Marten* (London, Blackie, 1943)

History: The New Warner and Marten, that the book's perspective is brought up to 1939 with some mention of Indian aspirations for independence.[33]

Paternalistic views of Empire and the Indian may still have appealed to some but British wartime recruits were conscripts. Few had any choice about where they were posted. Becoming attached to the Indian Army or serving in India, Malaya or Burma was neither choice nor vocation but an unavoidable necessity for most. India was an unpopular posting and there is ample evidence to suggest that it was rare for conscripts to feel that they were fighting to protect the Empire, its values and its traditions.[34] They were doing what they had to do in the earnest hope that they could go home in one piece and perceptions of the Indian Army were secondary to these imperatives. Widespread poverty and sometimes chaotic conditions in wartime India and Burma were unlikely to promote pride in Empire. In the words of a British cipher sergeant, attached to the Indian Army with the Devonshire Regiment in Burma, travelling through what he referred to as Death Valley, "How patient are the troops here in this heat, doing as we've all been doing more or less since we came up in May '42, playing a waiting game until the European war is over."[35]

Impressions still mattered for wartime conscripts and in contrast to Private Griffiths, they were perhaps, to a point, less influenced by ingrained prejudices from the old Indian Army but their views were still shaped by the perspectives of the British working classes. Foremost in their minds would have been the implications of being posted to an alien land on the other side of the world, for the duration. The prestige of the old Indian Army meant little to the reluctant conscript sent to India. If anything the institution had something of a blimpish reputation derived from such sources as the films mentioned earlier.[36]

The Indian Army received little prominence in wartime newsreels, propaganda or newspapers on the home front and for those sent to India and Burma the impression of being part of a Forgotten Army must have set in quickly. Ashley Jackson rightly suggests that the members of the, "Forgotten Army" were not themselves forgotten, "It might be pointed out, however, that the soldiers on the ground at the time did not feel woefully forgotten."[37] Every son, brother, father, husband or sweetheart was remembered by someone but that someone may have struggled to

[33] Warner, G.T., Marten, C.H.K. & Muir, D.E, *The New Groundwork of British History: The New Warner and Marten*, pp. 964-966
[34] See Chapter 6 for a more extensive discussion of morale and motivation.
[35] Aldrich, R.J., *The Faraway War, Personal Diaries of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (London, Doubleday, 2005), p. 526
[36] For example, the veteran actor, C. Aubrey Smith, playing the role of Colonel Wilson in the 1937 film *Wee Willie Winkie* comes to mind.
[37] Jackson, A., *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London, Continuum, 2006), p.351

understand what was happening in Burma or India, given censorship and limited news coverage. The slowness of mail deliveries may also have added to a sense of isolation. However, the "Forgotten Army" mythology was also a propaganda tool that strengthened Fourteenth Army morale. This was a case of perceptions usefully helping to strengthen the reality of an isolated but increasingly resurgent army.

In contrast to the typical experience of the wartime ECO, for the peacetime British officer cadet, a place in the Indian Army retained some prestige. It was a choice that was reserved for the best pre-war Sandhurst cadets. [38] For candidates of limited means such as the young Claude Auchinleck, the Indian Army had offered slightly better pay and the possibility of living within one's means.[39] The exclusivity implied by limiting applications to the Indian Army was perhaps a cause of friction between British Army officers and British officers of the Indian Army and this is one of the issues explored by Raymond Callahan.[40] In wartime, newly commissioned officers had little choice whether they were sent to the Indian Army or to the British Army. Being an Indian Army officer perhaps lost some kudos, especially when added to the perception that India was a secondary theatre of war and not the main show.

Among the officer corps some surnames recur generation after generation indicating a strong familial association, perhaps the most notable example being Jacob.[41] However, the perception that the Indian Army officer corps was hidebound and traditionalist was no longer valid in the 1930s. Senior Indian Army officers were better trained than ever before, through such institutions as the Staff College at Quetta and the Imperial Defence College in Britain. Perceptions changed slower than reality as world war forced the pace of Indianisation and the influx of many ECOs, few of whom had links with the old Indian Army and fewer still had time or the inclination to become steeped in tradition.

2.2 External Perceptions

[38] Warner, P., *Auchinleck, The Lonely Soldier*, p. 13. It was an option chosen by Claude Auchinleck, as he gained 45th place at Sandhurst and 45 places were open. Bernard Montgomery failed to make the grade in a year that had 35 places open, when his was placed 36th.
[39] Ibid., p. 13.
[40] Callahan, R., *Were the 'Sepoy Generals' Any Good?: A Reappraisal of the British-Indian Army's High Command in the Second World War*. Roy, K., Editor, Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006). pp. 305-322
[41] Ibid., p. 308. The Jacob family, appear in eminent association with the Indian Army over several generations, with no less than 52 family members joining, notably including Field Marshal Sir Claude William Jacob, (1863-1947), Major-General William Jacob, (1837-1917). Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Claude Jacob (1899-1993) was the first member of the family to choose the British Army in preference to the army of his forefathers.

Of the colonial armed forces extant in 1939, the India Army was the largest and for most of its existence it was the most effective too, widely recognised as professional and efficient if a little old-fashioned in its image and equipment.[42] By 1945 its reputation as a large and supremely versatile army was assured among those who had followed its progress but few had. Its contribution and the wider contribution of India to the war effort were largely unrecognised.[43] Transformation followed a difficult path and the institution's reputation was somewhat tarnished in 1942-43 when it came under criticism from many quarters. After initial successes in East Africa and Egypt in 1940-41 the India Army suffered several defeats in the East.[44] Reputational damage inflicted by the defeats in Malaya and Burma was substantial but the lowest point in its stock was perhaps reached in the first Arakan campaign in early 1943.[45] Despite numerical superiority and at least some jungle warfare training, the Indian Army was seen to fail, again but it was not a simple case of the Indian Army failing as an institution.[46] However, image does not always reflect reality and the institution and Indian troops were much criticised at the time.

Churchill had briefly served in India as a young officer, but this did little to enhance his understanding of the Indian Army or India. Churchill's perceptions were not helped by his unfavourable opinion of the expanded wartime army in comparison with the smaller pre-war professional force. Churchill's perception that the much enlarged army of 1941-45 was a failure and a waste of resources, might well have resulted in a substantially reduced role[47]. This did not happen but it was a serious possibility at the time of the Quadrant and Trident conferences in 1943.[48] Initially it was given lower priority for resources than the British Army, as Malaya and Burma were far removed from the active theatres until December 1941 and they were given what could be spared, not what was needed.[49] The reasons why contraction did not happen in 1943-44 are closely linked to the tangible improvements in performance achieved in 1944, but it

[42] The nearest equivalent force in terms of size and complexity was the French colonial army, drawn from North Africa and French Indo China. Other colonial forces included those of Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands East Indies and Belgium. Italian colonial forces were considerable in 1940 and possibly larger in number but by 1941 they had disappeared after the defeats in Libya and East Africa.

[43] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 320-355, Government of India Publication, *The Tiger Strikes, the Story of Indian troops in North Africa and East Africa* (London, H.M.S.O., 1942), Government of India Publication, *The Tiger Kills, the Story of British and Indian troops with the 8th Army in North Africa* (London, H.M.S.O., 1942), Government of India Publication, *The Tiger Triumphs, the Story of three great Indian Divisions in Italy, published 1946* (London, H.M.S.O., 1946)

[44] Raghavan, S., *India's War*, pp. 95-120 and pp. 176-208. Many more works on the campaigns in North Africa, East Africa, Malaya and Burma are listed in Chapter 1: Introduction.

[45] There are several good accounts of the first Arakan campaign, notably including: Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*

[46] See Chapter 6 for further discussion of the impact the first Arakan campaign had on morale.

[47] Connell, J., *Auchinleck - A Critical Biography* (London, Cassell, 1959), pp.740-741

[48] Callahan, R. *The Prime Minister and the Indian Army's Last War*. Roy, K., Editor, *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars*, Chapter 10, pp. 324-327.

[49] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I, The Loss of Singapore*, pp. 23-42

was a close run thing, as strategic priorities were subject to constant revision and the resource allocations changed repeatedly.[50]

Many of those responsible for the higher direction of the war effort had direct experience of India either in the Indian Army or in a civil role at some stage in their career. These experiences should have led to informed views of the Indian Army and India but this was not always so. The wartime Chiefs of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) had all served in India.[51] John Dill had undertaken staff duties in Quetta in the period 1928-31. As a young subaltern, Alanbrooke had served there, alongside Ronald Adam, the future Adjutant General, in the Royal Horse Artillery.[52] During Dill's tenure there was little if any reason for him to have anything but positive perceptions of the Indian Army, based on the performance the Indian troops in North and East Africa. His correspondence with both Auchinleck and Wavell indicates he was content to leave the Indian Army in their capable hands.[53]

The first indications of cracks in the edifice began to emerge when Japan entered the war. At the time General Alan Brooke was appointed CIGS his diary comments on the impending fall of Singapore make no qualitative distinctions between the Indian, British or Australian troops. His entry for the 11 February 1942, on the eve of the Singapore surrender suggests he sensed a wider problem:

> I have during the last 10 years had an unpleasant feeling that the British Empire was decaying and that we were on a slippery decline!! I wonder if I was right? I certainly never expected that we should fall to pieces as fast as we are and to see Hong Kong and Singapore to go in less than 3 months plus failure in the Western Desert is far from reassuring! [54]

However, his entry for the 12 February gets to the heart of the matter with astute observation, "We are paying very heavily now for failing to face the insurance premiums essential for security of an Empire! This has usually been the main cause for the loss of empires in the past."

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[50] Callahan, R., *Burma, 1942-1945*, pp. 68-106, Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour*, pp. 291-308 and pp. 379-408.
[51] William Ironside, 1939-40, John Dill 1940-41, Alan Brooke, 1941-46.
[52] Frazer, D., *Alanbrooke*, pp. 52-58
[53] KCL Dill 3/1/12, *Papers on military appointments and on the personalities of officers including correspondence,1940 Oct-1941 Oct*, KCL Dill 3/1/16, *Papers on India including paper on airborne divisions for India, 17 Sep 1941 and note on Indian military problems, 10 Oct 1941*
[54] Alanbrooke, Field Marshal Lord, Danchev, A., Todman D., ed., *War Diaries 1939-1945*, pp. 228-229

Whilst Alanbrooke did not visit India during his time as CIGS, he showed keen interest in the observations of his close adviser, Adjutant General Ronald Adam. Adam made brief tours in 1942, 1943 and 1945.[55] Both Alanbrooke and Adam shared some impatience with what they perceived to be the bureaucratic administrative inefficiency of the Indian Army, but there is no evidence to suggest either thought the Indian troops were less effective. In the War Cabinet Alanbrooke spent much time and effort defending the reputation and performance of imperial troops but there is no indication that he sought to make distinctions between the British and Indian armies. His diary entry for 2 February 1942 is a good example:

> At 5 pm Cabinet meeting. As usual most unpleasant remarks by various ministers in connection with defeats of our forces! As we had retired into Singapore Island and lost [illegible], besides being pushed back in Libya, I had a good deal to account for![56]

With regard to senior Indian Army officers, Alanbrooke had some reservations with regard to Auchinleck's choice of staff and advisers and ultimately this was a significant factor in the Auk's dismissal in August 1942.[57] In his retrospective notes later added, Alanbrooke was especially disparaging of one of Auchinleck's Indian Army appointments, his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General T.W. Corbett:

> One interview with him was enough to size him up. He was a very very small man unfit for his job of CGS and totally unsuited for command of the 8th Army, an appointment which the Auk had suggested. Consequently Corbett's selection reflected very unfavourably on the Auk's ability to select men and confirmed my fears in that respect.[58]

Corbett may not have been a big man but his papers and his correspondence with the Auk suggest that he was an intelligent adviser with a firm grasp of the requirements of mobile and armoured warfare.[59] Arguably it was not the appointment of Corbett that evidenced Auchinleck's occasional poor judgement in appointments but the appointment of one of Alanbrooke's own British Army protégés, Neil Ritchie, to command the Eighth Army. Alanbrooke does seem to have recognised this at the time but he was less critical of Ritchie while scathing in his critique

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[55] KCL, Adam 3/6/1, *Report by the A.G. on his tour overseas August 1942*, KCL, Adam 3/6/2, *Report by the A.G. on his tour overseas* April-May 1943, 3/6/3, KCL Adam, *Report by the AG on his tour overseas Nov-Dec 1943* 3/6/4, KCL, Adam, *Report by the AG on his tour overseas Jan-Feb 1945*

[56] Alanbrooke, Field Marshal Lord, Danchev, A., Todman D., ed., *War Diaries 1939-1945*, p. 226

[57] Ibid., pp. 289-294. See also Warner, P., *Auchinleck, The Lonely Soldier*, pp. 158-166,

[58] Alanbrooke, p. 289

[59] CCC CORB 1/15, *Evidence of Brigadier Corbett MC, Expert Committee on the Defence of India, New Delhi 22/12/1938* (Cambridge, Churchill College), CCC CORB 4/16, *Notes on Five Months As C.G.S. M.E.F 18/8/1942* (Cambridge, Churchill College), P.2 *Tactics*

of Corbett.[60] Other Indian Army generals sacked in North Africa around this time included Major Generals Pete Rees and Frank Messervy, both of whom later demonstrated their capabilities in Burma.[61]

General, later Field Marshal, Archibald Wavell, served as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.[62] He spent time as a child in the Nilgiri Hills cantonment of his father's regiment.[63] After service at the end of the Boer War he served with the 2nd Battalion of the Black Watch in India, 1903-08, at the time when Kitchener was making extensive reforms to the Indian Army.[64] Perhaps more influential on Wavell's views were his duties in Palestine, first as War Office liaison officer with General Allenby and then as Brigadier-General General Staff under General Chetwode at XX Corps.[65] Wavell had sight of all plans and opportunities to observe the extensive training and preparations of the Indian divisions in Palestine, as they took a more prominent role in the campaign after the capture Jerusalem.[66] Dennis Showalter argues cogently that this was pivotal moment in the modernisation and development of the Indian Army.[67] It was also a moment when Wavell had a roving brief to look and learn.[68]

Wavell must have known the potential of well-trained Indian troops, long before he was able to rely on the 4th and 5th Indian Divisions in 1940-41. Perhaps his positive perceptions of these experienced formations coloured his overly-optimistic expectations of the inadequately trained formations in Malaya and Burma during his brief tenure at ABDACOM.[69] He was under severe strain at this time and was highly critical of the fighting qualities of the inadequately trained troops of the 17th Indian Division in Burma and the commanding officer Major-General Smyth.[70]

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[60] Alanbrooke, Field Marshal Lord, Danchev, A., Todman D., ed., *War Diaries 1939-1945*, p. 220 and p.280.
[61] Callahan, R., *Were the 'Sepoy Generals' Any Good?: A Reappraisal of the British-Indian Army's High Command in the Second World War*. Roy, K., Editor, Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India. pp. 311-312
[62] Wavell served twice in this role, from June 1941 to January 1942, prior to his brief and ill-fated appointment to the joint American, British, Dutch, Australian (ABDA) supreme command and then again from February 1942 to July 1943.
[63] Schofield, V., *Wavell: Soldier & Statesman*, p. 8, Connell, J., *Wavell, Scholar and Soldier, To June 1941* (London, Collins, 1964), p. 28
[64] Connell, J., *Wavell, Scholar and Soldier, To June 1941*, pp. 45-58
[65] Ibid., p. 135
[66] Ibid., pp. 121-145
[67] Roy, K., Editor , *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars*, Chapter 4: Showalter, D., *The Indianization of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, 1917-18: An Imperial Turning Point.* pp. 145-163
[68] Wavell was well placed to write, perhaps the best account of Allenby's campaign in Palestine: Wavell, A.P., *Allenby*: A Study in Greatness
[69] American-British-Dutch-Australian, (ABDA) Command.
[70] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 48-50

When things did go wrong, the response and perception of some within the higher command and of those responsible for the imperial war effort was to blame the workmen and their tools. Wavell seems to have been unable to differentiate between the well-trained, highly experienced Indian Army professionals that served under him in 1940 and recently recruited and inadequately trained troops in Malaya and Burma in late 1941. The 4th and 5th Indian Infantry divisions, repeatedly demonstrated their effectiveness in 1940 and 1941 and represented the cream of the pre-war Indian Army. The recruits that were joining the 9th and 11th Indian Infantry divisions in Malaya and the 17th Indian Infantry Division in Burma had undergone limited training and they were joining units that had been deprived of their most experienced cadres by the process known as milking.[71]

Little more than a year later Lieutenant-General Noel Irwin and Wavell were similarly judgemental of the 14th Indian Division's performance in the first Arakan campaign. The low point was reached in the reputation of the Indian Army when Churchill began demanding that expansion plans should be cancelled and the army reduced in size and role.[72] The turnaround in the fortunes of the Indian Army was achieved despite the unsupportive political environment, notwithstanding constant conflicts between Churchill and his Secretary of State for India Leo Amery. On many issues, Churchill was too often guilty of setting unrealistic expectations and then blaming those who failed to meet them. In tandem with Churchill's long-standing prejudices against India and its peoples this resulted in him repeatedly disparaging the Indian Army.

The pivotal roles of Generals Auchinleck and Slim, ably supported by many others, were immensely helpful to the process of recovery that is so often associated with the familiar theme of the phoenix rising from the ashes. Once a reputation for competence was in part lost, it was all the more difficult for it to be recovered. The Indian Army had to prove its worth once more and on a larger scale. Improvements in actual performance were demonstrated from early 1944 but improving perceptions lagged behind.

Bernard Montgomery had taken the 1st Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment to Poona in 1933 and had subsequently been a well-regarded chief instructor at Quetta from 1935.[73] By the time he assumed command of Eighth Army he knew much about the Indian Army but he seems to have shown some favouritism in his regard for formations. Perhaps it was the

[71] Milking was the process by which cadres of experienced officers, VCOs and other ranks were drawn from experienced units, to form the nucleus for new units. Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, pp. 42-43
[72] Callahan, R., *Burma, 1942-1945* (London, Davis-Poynter, 1978), pp. 94-96
[73] Hamilton, N., *Monty, The Making of a General, 1887-1942*, pp. 237-243 and pp. 244-259

outstanding performance of the 4th Indian Division at Wadi Akarit that eventually led him to value Indian troops more highly.[74]

Lord Mountbatten's only notable previous experience of India had been when he accompanied Prince Edward on his tour of India and the Far East in 1921-22.[75] He had the good sense to listen to Indian Army experts, most notably Slim, when he became Supreme Commander of Southeast Asia Command in 1943. Mountbatten saw the Indian Army performing at its best during his tenure at SEAC.[76]

As a civil servant and Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council, Sir Percy James Grigg played a key role in India from 1934-39. Grigg returned to Britain in 1939 and was appointed by Churchill to the ministerial role of Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the War Office, from which he was promoted in 1942 to become Secretary of State for War. Grigg was well placed to understand the political climate in India, its economic potential and the strengths and weaknesses of the civil and military administrations in 1939. Some suggest that he went to India a liberal and returned an imperialist, but his sharp intellect and astute judgement ensured that when he assumed his role at the War Office he was able to draw on his ample experience. [77] In 1940 he made a convincing case that General Cassells was not up to the job of Commander-in-Chief and supported his replacement by General Auchinleck.[78] Whether this suggests a wider perception of inefficiency in the Indian Army at that time would be supposition but it seems likely that Grigg would have had opportunities to find fault during his five year tenure in Delhi.

Leo Amery served as Secretary of State for India from 1940 to 1945 and was born in India but spent little time there. [79] He consistently demonstrated a better understanding of India than Churchill, as regularly demonstrated in his correspondence on Indian Army matters with Auchinleck.[80] Amery's perceptions of the Indian Army remained largely positive throughout, to

[74] *Purnell's History of the Second World War, Volume 12, Wadi Akarit* (London, Phoebus, 1980). pp. 1268-1271. This somewhat populist source includes an excellent detailed personal account of Major-General Sir Francis Tuker, general officer commanding 4th Indian Division.
[75] Ziegler, P., *Mountbatten, The Official Biography*, pp. 59-63
[76] Ibid., pp. 271-273, Mountbatten, Admiral, The Lord Louis, Ziegler, P. Ed., *Personal Diary of Admiral The Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 1943-1946*, pp. 145-146
[77] Harris, W., *Two Roles in Whitehall* (London, The Spectator, 29 October, 1948), p.20, Book review of *Prejudice and Judgment*. By P. J. Grigg, (London, , 1948)
[78] KCL, Dill 3/1/12, *Memo 24/10/1940 P.J. Grigg to C.I.G.S, Papers on military appointments and on the personalities of officers including correspondence,1940 to Oct-1941*
[79] Louis, W.R., *In the Name of God Go!, Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill*, pp.29-30
[80] JRL AUC/125, Letter 19/02/41 Amery to Auchinleck, *Request for information concerning Indian Army expansion*, JRL AUC/126, Letter 20/02/41 Auchinleck to Dill, *Draft appreciation of the current state of the Indian Army*, JRL AUC/132, Letter 17/03/41 Auchinleck to Amery *on Indian Army expansion*. This sequence of letters

the extent that he was a dogged defender of its reputation in repeated clashes with Churchill throughout his tenure. His diaries record several heated disagreements.[81] It is perhaps surprising that even in 1945, Churchill was still harking back to earlier criticisms and Amery was still prepared to contradict him. Fortunately for its morale, few in the Indian Army were aware of this perennial friction at cabinet level. One who did know was General Hastings Ismay, Chief of Staff to Churchill in his role as Minister of Defence, but he was both discrete and detached from his Indian Army roots at this time. Of the other significant political observers, Stafford Cripps undoubtedly gained an astute appreciation of the political landscape in India, in part helped by his personal contacts with Nehru and others but he had little to do with Indian Army matters.[82]

The longstanding and prestigious reputation of the Indian Army suffered serious setbacks during the first 18 months of the war against Japan. Whilst substantial improvements were evident by late 1943, the recovery in external perceptions lagged behind the reality. Churchill remained disparaging of this much expanded and seemingly less martial Indian Army even in 1945. What really mattered to this army was a continued ability to attract unprecedentedly large numbers of willing recruits and at no point did the supply of suitable recruits dry up.

suggests the dialogue between Auchinleck and Amery was such that both demonstrated a clear understanding of the difficulties facing the Indian Army in early 1941.

[81] Amery, L. Nicholson, D., ed., *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries, 1929-1945,* p. 1039. The diary entry for 27 April, 1945 provides but one example of their repeated confrontations.

[82] Bryant, C., *Stafford Cripps, The First Modern Chancellor*, pp. 296-301, Moorehead, A., *African Trilogy: The Desert War 1940-1943* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1944) Reprinted (London, Cassell, 1998), pp. 278-316, Herman, A., *Gandhi & Churchill, The Epic Rivalry that Destroyed and Empire and Forged Our Age*, pp. 485-487.

3. CHAPTER 3 - RECRUITMENT AND EXPANSION

From mid-1940 the Indian Army underwent rapid and unprecedented expansion. Despite the hard lessons derived from First World War expansion, the British government and the Government of India failed to plan effectively for large-scale expansion before the Second World War.[1] The failure to anticipate the need to raise an Indian Army of one million was unsurprising in 1914, as the British Empire had not foreseen the immense scale a global, industrialised war. The omission was less excusable in 1939, given experience in 1914-18 had demonstrated the likely strategic commitments in a global war and the potential threats were, if anything, greater and more complex.

The British Government made the apparently naïve assumption that no commitment on the scale of a continental army would be required. This was reliant on the strategic assumption that France would provide the bulk of any land forces and that the British Empire would make its main contributions by sea and air. Implicit too was the assumption that the mass mobilisations of the First World War were an aberration and that the current policy was a return to military-strategic normality.[2] By September 1939 there had been some reappraisal of grand strategy. Britain was committed to sending a modest British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to France and to increasing troop levels in the Middle East.[3] Far more was needed as the British Empire could not hide behind the French Army.

Pre-war planning for the Indian Army was concentrated on the modernisation and re-equipment of a smaller force, realigned with the contemporary British army in terms of equipment scales. There were no plans for expansion to First World War levels and certainly not for the twelve-fold increase that ultimately occurred. These limited aims provided little contingency for the possible entry of Italy and Japan into the conflict and made no allowance for setbacks that might occur in the most likely theatre of war: Northern France. It might be argued that financial rectitude

[1] The failings of recruitment in the First World War mainly centred on the over reliance on over-recruitment within the Punjab, based on the unnecessarily restrictive bounds set by Martial Race theory. The issues are amply described in a number of works: Tan T.Y. (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi, Sage, 2005), Ch. 3; Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, Ch. 17

[2] Bond, B., *British Military Policy Between the Two World Wars* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980), Gibbs, N.H. Edited by, Butler, J.R.M., *History of the Second World War: Grand Strategy Volume 1: Rearmament Policy* (London: HMSO, 1976), French, D., *Raising Churchill's Army, The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

[3] Gibbs, N.H. Edited by, Butler, J.R.M., *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Military Series Grand Strategy Volume 1: Rearmament Policy* (London, HMSO, 1976), pp. 465-482, pp. 491-516

trumped military contingency planning in a cabinet run by Neville Chamberlain but this would be an injustice. He worked assiduously from 1934, first as Chancellor of the Exchequer and then as Prime Minister, to ensure that at least the most pressing rearmament measures were managed, when affordable.[4] In Chamberlain's view solvency was the first and most essential foundation of successful imperial defence policy, a perspective in which he was not alone. He was correct in thinking that sound finances would ensure Britain could pay its way and absorb the unavoidable shift required in the balance of trade in the event of war.[5] The irreconcilable dilemma for both Britain and France was that they needed to rearm with the aim of deterring aggression but they needed to maintain a strong peacetime economy too.[6] In retrospect, the dilemma facing the British Empire was how to meet the defence commitments of a global empire in the face of increasing belligerence from three powerful potential enemies.[7]

By setting expectations low and failing to at least plan for the possibility of conflict with three major powers, the British Government came close to breaking the finely honed tool that was the Indian Army of 1939. Several historians have argued that the British Empire as a whole was better prepared for war in 1939 than the prevailing wartime and immediate post-war consensus suggested. David Edgerton shows that, in terms of weapons technology and modern equipment, Britain invested heavily, after a slow start.[8] The BEF that embarked for France in 1939 was small but well equipped by contemporary standards. The Indian Army's position was weaker as it lagged behind in modern equipment, mechanisation, armour, anti-aircraft weapons and infantry firepower. Modernisation was proposed and approved but had barely started in 1939. In contrast to the two years of progress towards mechanisation within the British Army, the Indian Army remained adequately equipped for colonial policing but not modern warfare. With the exception of service rifles, small arms ammunition and kit, where there was some

[4] Stewart, G., *Burying Caesar: Churchill, Chamberlain and the Battle for the Tory Party* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999). pp. 207

[5] Ibid. Chamberlain made two key changes that put the Treasury and himself at the centre of rearmament decision making, establishing the Defence Requirements Committee as a sub-committee of the Committee for imperial Defence and by requiring all defence expenditure proposals to be first reviewed by the Chancellor. For a deeper examination of the financing of rearmament and the war economy see: Gowing M.M., Edited by, Hancock, Sir W. K. , *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series: British War Economy,* (London: HMSO, 1949) Revised (London, Kraus-Thompson, 1975)

[6] Maiolo, J., *Cry Havoc, The Arms Race and the Second World War, 1931-1941* (London, John Murray, 2010) pp. 142-147. Maiolo explores the many challenges of paying for rearmament that the British government faced during the 1930s. He argues that the two democracies were trying to speed up rearmament without imposing wartime controls on the economy and without eroding democracy itself.

[7] For the broad view see, Brendan, P., *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s* (London, Johnathan Cape, 2000). For a more specific examination of the role of the Treasury see, Peden, G., *British Rearmament and the Treasury Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press*, 1979) and see, Gibbs, N.H. Edited by, Butler, J.R.M., *History of the Second World War: Grand Strategy Volume 1: Rearmament Policy* (London: HMSO, 1976).

[8] Edgerton, D., *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources and Experts in the Second World War* (London, Allen Lane, 2011), pp. 28-31

manufacturing self-sufficiency, India was largely dependent on British sources for modern, sophisticated weaponry.[9]

There were tentative stirrings of activity from the Government of India but little tangible progress was made until the defeat of France. Sri Nandan Prasad points out in *Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation 1939-45* that in May 1940 the Government of India made an offer to the British Government to raise one armoured and five infantry divisions for service.[10] This offer was a response to the perceived increase in the threat of a Soviet invasion via Afghanistan, in the aftermath of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939.[11] The offer was politely declined as it was conditional on the provision of equipment from Britain or allotment of sufficient dollars for the purchase of arms from the United States. Neither was likely to be forthcoming in the becalmed atmosphere of the Phoney War. From the London perspective, if there was no mass mobilisation plan of the British Army on the scale of 1914-1918, then why plan for mass mobilisation of the Indian Army? [12] The position had been framed by the terms of reference set for the Chatfield committee in 1938, appointed to examine the question of modernisation and the possibility of establishing an imperial reserve in India, drawn from the Indian Army.[13]

The limited aims of the Chatfield committee were driven by the financial implications of modernisation, rather than broad redefinition of imperial strategy. Modernisation had already been examined in India by the Modernisation Committee under the Deputy Chief of Staff, General Auchinleck, and the Chatfield committee deliberations were to determine the manner in which part of the Indian Army could be redefined as an imperial reserve and how this force might be funded, if deployed outside India.[14] Philip Warner suggests that the findings of the Modernisation Committee were, "….a model of clarity, foresight and restraint."[15] However, the terms of reference dictated that any modernisation would be funded primarily from existing means. The cost of modernisation improvements was to be partly offset by a net reduction in manpower. Far from putting in place mobilisation contingencies that might enable the Indian Army to make a major contribution if required, the case was being made for a smaller "modern"

[9] Ibid., P.61, The rifle factory at Ishapore had long been providing for peacetime levels of demand and it did manage to expand to produce and repair some 700,000 Lee Enfield rifles in addition to Bren guns which came on stream later.
[10] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp. 56-60
[11] Ibid.
[12] French, D., *Raising Churchill's Army, The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 156-183
[13] IOR L/WS/1/153, Chatfield Committee - Creation and Maintenance of an imperial Reserve
[14] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, p. 20
[15] Warner, P., *Auchinleck, The Lonely Soldier*, pp. 36-38

army with greater firepower.[16] This shift was laudable in qualitative terms but to reduce troop numbers in 1938-39 suggested that wishful thinking and financial rectitude had reached unfounded levels of optimism. In September 1939, £34,000,000 was allocated to fund modernisation of the Indian Army over five years, 25% being funded by the Government of India. By February 1940 there had been some reconsideration of the financial contributions of the two governments but the Chatfield recommendations remained the basis for modernisation and deployment.[17]

On 8 September 1939, the Land Forces Committee of the new War Cabinet made recommendations for measured expansion of the imperial field forces to a total of 55 divisions, comprising 32 British, 14 Dominion, four Indian, and provision of equipment for five Allied divisions.[18] David French has pointed out even this expansion plan would stretch available resources and risked having an impact on the expansion of naval and air forces.[19] The plan would deliver 20 fully equipped divisions by September 1940. Four Indian Army infantry divisions could be raised with a reorganisation of standing forces and recall of reservists. The recommendations therefore implied no substantial growth was envisaged at this stage and there was no appetite within the new War Cabinet to move much beyond the recent Chatfield recommendations.

The Chatfield recommendations at least provided foundations for the formation and deployment of the 4th and 5th Indian Infantry Divisions committed to Egypt and East Africa in 1939-1941. The contribution of these divisions, whilst invaluable, did little to offset the numerical preponderance of Italian forces in Libya and East Africa. Fortunately, quality and vigour more than offset quantity in the opening campaigns in Egypt, Libya and Eritrea, though few strategists in 1938 would have banked on this fortuitous outcome in 1940. In a global conflict against Germany, Italy and eventually Japan too, two divisions were little more than a token reserve, hardly worthy of this description, but the initial objective had been to create just one Imperial Reserve Division.[20]

[16] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, pp. 466-470
[17] IOR L/MIL/17/5/1802, *Report of the Expert Committee on the Defence of India 1938-39 [Chatfield]. Cabinet Office, 1939.* See also, Under Secretary of State for India, Sir Hugh O'Neill, *Army Estimates 1938.* (Hansard, House of Commons Debate, 29 February 1940 volume 357 cc2255-6)
[18] TNA CAB 92/111/LF(39), *Minutes of Meeting 2 Meeting, 8th September 1939*; TNA CAB 92/111/LF(39)5, *Hoare, Land Forces Committee, Report, 8th September 1939*. "Allied divisions" in this context was referring to Polish, Free French, Czech and other forces supported and equipped by Britain at this time.
[19] French, D., *Raising Churchill's Army, The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945*, pp. 157-158
[20] IOR L/WS/1/153, *Chatfield Committee - Creation and maintenance of an imperial reserve*

On 10 March 1938, Lesley Hore-Belisha, Secretary of State for War, introduced the Army Estimates. He stated that funds for the creation of the Imperial Reserve were finite and the modernisation plans for the British and Indian armies were interdependent.[21] In the context of a programme under which the limitations of financial prudence dictated the scale of rearmament resources, this was logical. Another factor that he mentioned was the impact of planned improvements in British Army pay and conditions. For British forces attached to the Indian Army and based in India, this additional cost had to be borne by the Government of India, under the established Cardwell principles.[22] This cost factor was in part what led to the modernisation plan becoming a trade-off between modernisation and headcount.

Uniquely among the armies preparing for war in 1939, the British Army was set on a course towards not just modernisation but mechanisation. The BEF enjoyed a higher level of mechanisation than its French and German contemporaries. The Indian Army had similar, if less ambitious aspirations. However, most of the equipment required for modernisation could not be sourced locally and would have to come from Britain. The Indian Army was likely to remain the poor relation when it came to allocation of finite production capacity for modern weapons and vehicles. The 4th and 5th Indian divisions, as the first to deploy overseas, were given priority for the available resources, but overall the Indian Army suffered more frequent and sustained equipment shortages. Few Indian troops had seen a tank before 1939. Some mortar detachments deployed to Burma with the 63rd Indian Brigade in early 1942 had trained with wooden mock-ups and had not handled a real 3 inch mortar until just before embarkation.[23]

The Indian Army was fourth in the imperial defence pecking order.[24] Inevitably it was behind the British Army in the queue for modern weaponry, given its partial dependence on financial contributions from Britain.[25] However, the British Army was behind the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force in procurement priorities throughout the 1930s. As expansion gathered pace the time taken to achieve acceptable and sustained levels of effectiveness, in both British and Indian Army formations, was longer than might have been wished. The consequences were paid for with military defeats, increased casualties and dented morale. The British Army sustained early defeats and was forced to learn faster. It began to achieve the required level of

[21] Hore-Belisha, L., MP, Secretary of State for War, *Army Estimates 1938.* (Hansard House of Commons Debate, 10 March 1938 4.14 p.m. volume 332 cc2133-255)
[22] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, p. 342
[23] Ibid., pp. 490-491, Lunt, J., *A Hell of a Licking, The Retreat from Burma, 1941-42*, p. 280
[24] Peden, G.C., *British Rearmament and the Treasury* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1979), p. 113. Peden suggests that one of the tasks of the Defence Requirements Committee was to restrain the Admiralty from taking up so much of the available industrial capacity as to deprive the other two services. To this conundrum we must add the Indian Army as poor relation, as it appears to have received very little attention prior to June 1940.
[25] The Government of India paid for troops on home service but imperial deployments were funded by Britain.

consistency by late 1942, under commanders who understood both its strengths and limitations. The rapidly expanding Indian Army was at least nine months behind the British Army in its development, with the exception of the pre-war professional troops deployed to Africa in 1940-41. From the outset the best of the pre-war Indian Army performed well but few of the newly raised units were effective before mid-1943.

The dearth of contingency planning and preparations for substantial Indian Army expansion resulted in a repetition of some of the errors of the previous conflict in 1914-18, including initial over-reliance on traditional recruiting areas. Recurrent mistakes were compounded by errors that, in some cases came close to destabilising entire formations at the lowest ebb in Indian Army fortunes. Many later problems with Indian Army expansion were direct consequences of the lack of preparation before September 1939 and the slow start that was evident before June 1940. Extra months of training might have made a noticeable difference to the performance of the first cohort of newly raised battalions. Despite equipment shortages, they would have been able to undertake more individual and unit training before active deployment with consequent benefits for larger formation training.

What may have seemed like ample time to prepare was in many respects wasted. The 9th and 11th Indian Infantry divisions in Malaya only commenced divisional training in late 1941, on the eve of the Japanese assault. Even though Japanese capabilities had been underestimated, it would have been difficult to argue these divisions were well prepared. An earlier start would surely have paid dividends. We cannot know whether the benefits would have made a crucial difference on the Jitra position in northern Malaya in December 1941. We do know that better trained troops generally proved more resilient in defeat than those lacking training.[26] The counter argument can be made that even if expansion and training had commenced earlier, there would not have been the necessary modern equipment available to make that training effective. However, these shortages still prevailed when the expansion did begin, as the surge in recruitment coincided with the urgent and overriding need to replace the substantial equipment losses sustained by the BEF. The most pressing shortage was in the supply of rifles. This was a temporary issue but one that would surely have been addressed by more timely increases in local production. It was resolved by expanding other sources of rifle production, including production in India.[27]

[26] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I, The Loss of Singapore*, pp. 204-213, Farrell, B.P, *The Defence and Fall of Singapore, 1940-1942*, pp. 170-179 ,Allen, L., *Singapore: 1941-42*, pp. 123-129, Smith, C., *Singapore Burning, Heroism and Surrender in World War II*, pp. 236-249

[27] Edgerton, D., *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources and Experts in the Second World War*, pp. 59-61

Once the failings of 1940-43 were addressed, the Indian Army demonstrated impressive levels of effectiveness and exceeded the performance of the British Army in some respects. It set a benchmark for performance by colonial forces, unlikely to ever be surpassed.

3.1 Lost Opportunities

Political opportunities were also missed. The Marquis of Linlithgow, Viceroy of India, was decisive and swift in his confirmation that Britain's declaration of war against Germany automatically applied to India on 3 September 1939.[28] He was so swift in the exercise of his constitutional powers that he allowed no time for formal or even informal consultations with the leaders of India's main political movements. Philip Mason suggests that this was an oversight:

> For a year, Delhi and Simla had been preparing for war. In a year, that technical point could surely have been dealt with. But no one thought of it. It was not malice or arrogance that committed India to the war without consulting any popular leader. It was insensitive, no more than that; no one thought of it – but if anyone had, you may be sure the thought would at once have been killed by legal pedantry. Whatever the reason, India was automatically at war and the Congress ministries in the provinces resigned. In the Congress provinces, the Governor rules as in the old days.[29]

Oversight or not, the consequences were politically damaging. To Congress it signified arrogance and conceit on Linlithgow's part and suggested a lack of political astuteness within the higher echelons of the vice-regal administration. Mason goes on to suggest that many senior civil servants thought the Congress response made no difference to the war effort but this may seem like self-justification in hindsight. There were consequences in terms of widespread non-cooperation and the Quit India campaign of 1942.[30] Given India's quasi-dominion status, the Viceroy's hasty move was unnecessarily crass and counter-productive. It exacerbated resentment within the Congress Party, with damaging consequences for India's active participation in the war effort. Mason also hints at the lack of forethought in another sense. If the Government of India had only been preparing for war for a year, it was even less well prepared than the British Government.

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[28] Linlithgow's full title was, *His Excellency, The Most Honourable, The Marquis of Linlithgow, KT, GCSI, GCIE, OBE, TD, PC, Viceroy of India*.
[29] Mason, P, *The Men Who Ruled India* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1985), p. 318, Glendevon, J., *The Viceroy at Bay: Lord Linlithgow in India, 1936-43* (London, Harper-Collins, 1971)
[30] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 20-31 and pp. 271-272

Insensitivity and a fleeting surfeit of decisiveness on the part of the Viceroy were soon to be followed by hesitation and indecision:

> My trouble is that I cannot promise to lead when I don't myself see the path. The fact is that the military exigencies, still known only to providence, must govern this position, and until they become manifest, no one is entitled to tell people what to do, still less spend money.[31]

It seems Linlithgow was not the least certain of the expected role of Indian forces. He was responding to energetic and no doubt sincere offers of assistance from Indian communities in the Punjab and United Provinces (U.P.), coming via the respective Governors, Sir Henry Craik and Sir Harold G. Haig. The Punjab and the traditional recruiting areas in particular were naturally expected to offer fulsome support, as shown in Craik's communication on 16 September 1939, "It is unfortunate that we cannot take advantage of the present general enthusiasm by initiating a great recruiting drive or some movement of that kind." [32]

Craik provided anecdotal evidence of the mood of the Punjab in the first two weeks of war, "I have today been reading the reports received from our District Officers for the first fortnight of September. Practically all DCs report that throughout the recruiting areas great enthusiasm prevails.[33] He further quotes several District Commissioners:

> From the D.C. Jullundur:
> So far the Government have not asked for either men or money, both of which I know would be forthcoming. Sardar Bahadur has already placed his Jagir at my disposal and many offers of help keep coming in,[34] but until some instructions are received from Gov. It is difficult to coordinate and utilise these offers.
>
> *D.C. Lahore:*
> If it is intended to carry out recruiting on anything like the scale of the last war, preliminary steps should be taken now while people's interest is awakened and a

[31] IOR L/WS/1/136 *Recruitment in India* , 52-54 Telegram, from Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow to Sir Henry Craik, 18/9/1939
[32] Ibid., 48-51 Telegram, from Sir Henry Craik, to Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, 18/9/1939
[33] DC – District Commissioner: The senior civil administrator within a District.
[34] A "jagir" meaning "place", -gir meaning "keeping, holding". A Jagir was a type of feudal land grant in India, bestowed by a monarch to a feudal superior in recognition of his administrative and/or military service.

> gradual enlistment of recruits would have a good effect in the villages. At the moment there is no reason to believe that there will be any difficulty in obtaining recruits.
>
> D.C. Attock:
> I have been surprised to notice how well-informed the ordinary villager is regarding European politics. There seems to be a genuine feeling of indignation against the German leaders, which in some cases has extended to profanity in my presence.[35]

Rural Punjab was assumed to be staunchly loyal but a memorandum along similar lines from Haig, Governor of United Provinces suggests the mood in this pro-Congress state, was similarly supportive:

> India is at the moment out of the main current of the war, and it is exceedingly difficult to utilise her present very sincere desire to help. If however, no use is made of the present spirit of the people, I fear it may gradually die away and we shall have lost an important moral advantage.[36]

Haig also raised the issue of the military view that the Punjab was the most suitable recruiting ground, hinting at the political and social benefits of wider recruitment:

> I am well aware of the military view, that the best soldiers are to be found in the Punjab, that there is an ample supply of them in the province, and that therefore it is on the whole unnecessary to go outside the Punjab for purposes of recruitment. If one admits the correctness of that argument, there is still the question whether we should concentrate purely on military considerations, or whether psychological factors should be taken into account.[37]

Linlithgow's initial response was indecisive. In many respects he was echoing the views of the British Government, which still hoped to avoid raising large armies. He would have been aware of the assumption at the heart of imperial defence policy that France would lead the way on land. Whilst in part Linlithgow's position may be excused or at least explained by the

[35] IOR L/WS/1/136 *Recruitment in India* 48-51 Telegram, from Sir Henry Craik, to Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, 18/9/1939
[36] Ibid., 55-58, Telegram, From H.G. Haig, Governor General UP to Viceroy Lord Linlithgow Viceroy of India, 17/9/1939.
[37] Ibid.

ambivalence shown by His Majesty's Government in 1939, the result was a missed opportunity for imperial defence, as well as damaging for the Indian Army.

The Government of India's slow response was perhaps a failure of imagination and a sign that some within the imperial leadership were in denial. Precious time was lost, despite the obvious risk that German aggression might soon be followed by similar actions by Italy, Japan and in the aftermath of the Molotov - Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, the Soviet Union too. Even if France were to take the lead on the Maginot Line and the Belgian frontier, imperial policy had been alternately wrestling with or trying to ignore the unthinkable possibility of war against multiple foes for several years. War with Germany was already a reality. Given recent events in Spain, Abyssinia and China, war with both Italy and Japan was a strong possibility.

Government inaction handed the political initiative to Congress and resulted in a failure to harness the initial wave of popular support within India. Next, it was the turn of Congress to drop the ball by deciding to protest rather than seize the initiative.[38] The response from Congress was to resign from all of the recently devolved elected regional government structures. This ceded hard won regional powers back to the imperial government. Congress abrogated power and influence at the national and state level at a time when other approaches might have garnered greater leverage. The resignations had limited impact on Indian Army recruitment but the grassroots reaction of the Congress support base was potentially more damaging to the civilian war effort. The political vacuum created by the Viceroy on one hand and Congress resignations on the other allowed a myriad of local reactions that were a mix of pacifist, anti-Raj, anti-mobilisation in some areas and supportive war effort in others. The response within the key Punjab recruiting areas remained positive, both in terms of recruits and monetary donations.[39]

There were no Muslim League resignations. It reaffirmed support for the war effort and gained, influence and favour in consequence. This strengthened relationships between the Indian Army and the Muslim communities from which it recruited. Muslim recruits provided approximately 25% of the Indian Army and Muslim League support helped to insulate the Indian Army from the consequences of Congress non-cooperation. There was no major shift towards recruiting Muslims as a result and the flow of non-Muslim recruits remained strong, despite Congress

[38] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 10-13
[39] Tai T.Y. (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi, Sage, 2005), pp. 282-283

opposition. Congress was left on the outside looking in and its influence on Indian Government and imperial policy was much diminished at a critical juncture. [40]

3.2 Expansion

Prasad usefully delineated Indian Army expansion in three phases.[41] The first, from September 1939 to April 1940 coincided with the "Phoney War". Limited growth beyond the recall of reservists was achieved but a number of modest preparatory steps that were taken. The second phase unfolded from May 1940 to the end of 1943, which saw the greatest expansion but this period revealed most of the weaknesses in aspects of recruitment, training and deployment. This second phase acquired greater urgency when Japan entered the war.[42] In the third phase from January 1944 onwards, net growth slowed, although attrition continued to require extensive recruitment. Reductions and demobilisation began before September 1945 as many British troops were returning home as early as May of that year. Numbers reduced more dramatically throughout 1945-1947. Before examining these phases I will discuss the context of Indian Army expansion.

In the twentieth century there were three well-established mobilisation strategies. The recruitment methods were voluntary service, peacetime conscription with wartime mobilisation and peacetime voluntary service with hostilities-only conscription. For an army of 2.5 million, the Indian Army was unique in remaining a volunteer force throughout the Second World War.

Since the nineteenth century several states had adopted peacetime conscription that required able-bodied male citizens of military age, to serve a fixed period in the armed forced as a duty. Wartime mass mobilisation would quickly recall these reservists. The citizen reservist had undergone military training and expansion to a war footing could be achieved within days. France saw universal conscription of the citizen army as a key foundation of the Republic, both as a duty and a right to bear arms in defence of the state. Conscription achieved continental army scale by the mass mobilisations that occurred in 1914. Citizen armies were also seen as a bulwark against any potential risk to democracy presented by a small professional army that might be wielded against the citizenry by a political faction or reactionary elite. In 1939 France

[40] Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*, pp. 1-17
[41] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp.56-60
[42] Note that the initial attack on British Empire territory was on 8 December slightly before the attack on Pearl Harbour on the 7th, as these locations are on different sides of the international date line.

rapidly mobilized some 70 divisions to face Germany.[43] Other nations reliant on conscription included the main Axis powers: Germany, Italy and Japan.

The model adopted by Britain, the Dominions and America was to maintain a small volunteer professional army in peacetime, without conscription.[44] This army was supplemented in peacetime by part-time volunteer Territorial, National Guard or militia forces that were incorporated into mobilisation plans.[45] To varying degrees, these states resorted to some form of conscription in wartime. Britain had first introduced hostilities-only conscription in 1916 and did so again in 1939. The United States introduced conscription in 1940. Canada introduced conscription but service overseas remained voluntary.[46]

Conscription was neither likely nor feasible in imperial India. Arguably the close association between rights and duties of citizenship rendered the conscription model incompatible with colonial rule. When the unfettered rights of citizenship in an independent state were denied, how could the obligations of conscription be expected to apply?

The Indian Army largely relied on volunteers to expand from 200,000 in October 1939 to almost 2.5 million troops, including the British contingent and Indian States Forces and with several million supporting non-combatants.[47] This figure included just over two million Indian troops, including Gurkhas from Nepal, 240,000 mostly conscripts attached British troops, almost 100,000 Indian States Forces and some 66,000 Burmese, irregular and auxiliary combatant forces. Expansion required a ten-fold increase in the number of commissioned officers between 1939 and 1944.[48] Expansion on this scale inevitably resulted in a dilution of pre-war levels of professionalism that as Commander-in-Chief, General Auchinleck was keenly aware of:

> When one remembers that, before the war, the regular officer cadre of the Indian Army was less than 3,000 strong, and that now it is over 30,000, and that all this vast

[43] The French Army did include a colonial, volunteer component.
[44] *United States Army in World War II, The War Department, Chief of Staff: Pre-war Plans And Preparations*, Mark Skinner Watson (Center of Military History, United States Army, WASHINGTON, D. C., 1950)
[45] French, D., *Raising Churchill's Army, The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945*, pp. 53-55
[46] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*. Fennell provides a description of the variations in conscription and voluntary service in the main imperial forces.
[47] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation 1939-45*, p.78 and pp. 400-409. A maximum size of the Indian Army is the subject of some confusion but the data provided by Prasad appears to be reliable.
[48] AUC/1057, *Letter, Auchinleck to Amery,* 16 May 1944

> expansion of the army has been effected by that small leaven of 3,000 pre-war officers, it gives one to think somewhat.[49]

First World War expansion was less dramatic but still unprecedented, rising to 985,000, with 1.3 million passing through the ranks. A key difference was that British officer casualties reached crisis point in 1915 and this diminished overall effectiveness as experienced officers became scarce.[50]

Useful comparison can also be made with Britain's 1939-45 mobilisation efforts. More than four million were mobilised in British forces. However, given the numbers entering Royal Navy and Royal Air Force service, the largely conscript British Army was only slightly larger than the Indian Army. British Army expansion was limited by demographic constraints, the competing demands of a fully mobilised industrial workforce, demands of the other arms, the merchant marine and deployments to support imperial forces raised in India and Africa.[51] By 1943 Britain was combing out skilled workers from essential industries and surplus ground crew from the RAF to maintain army formations and provide replacements.[52]

Indian Army growth was also partially offset by attrition, primarily within units deployed on active service. Planned expansion had to provide adequate numbers of suitably trained replacements for active units and demand was difficult to predict. The quality and supply of trained replacements was inadequate throughout 1942.[53] Casualty rates varied, depending on the nature and intensity of battle, sickness rates and casualty recovery rates. In areas where malaria was endemic, including the Arakan and Assam, non-combatant casualty rates soared.[54] Defeats that resulted in the surrender of entire formations resulted in large numbers captured or missing. The surrender of Singapore resulted in the capture of the 9th and 11th Indian divisions along with other imperial troops.

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Government of India, *India's Services In the War, Volume 1&2* (Calcutta, Govt. of India, 1922), Reprinted (Delhi, Low Price Publications, 1993), pp. 43-46. Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, p. 413

[51] Ministry of Information , *What Britain Has Done,1939-1945, A Selection of Outstanding Facts and Figures* (London, Ministry of Information,1945) Reprinted (London, Atlantic Books, 2007), pp. 11-15

[52] The Author's father, Frederick Arthur Hicks was a skilled machinist, working on the production of variable-pitch propeller hubs among other products, until called up to join the Royal Army Service Corps in late 1943. He was later attached to the RIASC with 9th Army in India and Japan.

[53] Several armies were finding the issue of adequate replacements to be insoluble by 1943-44. This affected the British Army especially: see French, D., *Raising Churchill's Army, The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945*, pp. 243-246 and p.277. Manpower shortages was a recurrent theme from 1943 in the deliberations of the C.I.G.S., see Alanbrooke, Field Marshal Lord, Danchev, A., Todman D., ed., *War Diaries 1939-1945*

[54] See Chapter 6 for a more extensive discussion of the impact of Malaria and other diseases.

For the North African campaign, Jonathan Fennell has compared attrition rates in offensive and unsuccessful defensive actions.[55] From November 1941 to January 1942, coinciding with the Operation Crusader offensive, participating Indian Army units sustained 7% casualties, with 5% being killed or wounded and 2% missing or captured.[56] In the period encompassing the defeat and withdrawal from Gazala and Tobruk, 27 May 1942 to 24 July 1942, 13,000 of the 48,000 deployed were missing or captured, with 27% of the total and only 1% or 600 killed or wounded.[57] Such losses could not easily be replaced and entire units had to be reconstituted or replaced. If replacements were inadequately trained or reinforcement became impossible then the impact on unit effectiveness could be disastrous, as was the case for the divisions deployed in both Malaya and Burma in 1941-42.

The armies of Germany, the USSR and the United States grew much larger than the Indian Army but their expansion was by conscription. The United States Army grew slowly on a voluntary basis from a peacetime low of 134,024 in 1932, to 188,565 in June 1939 and to 267,767 in June 1940. The Draft law enacted to introduce conscription was passed in September 1940 and numbers grew to 1,460,998 by June 1941.[58] Plans for an army of four million were being drafted in parallel with initial expansion and eventually the US Army grew to 8,291,000 by May 1945.[59] The Indian Army was never as large but with the exception of its British contingent it remained a volunteer force. Another important difference was that the US Army enjoyed a significant period of peacetime expansion and this reduced the disruptive effects of attrition during its first two stages of growth.

The Indian Army's first expansion phase ended abruptly, with the Allied defeats of May and June 1940. When Italy declared war on the British Empire, 36,000 imperial troops in Egypt and 27,000 in Palestine were confronted with many times their number of Italian and Italian colonial troops in Libya and East Africa.[60] Indian Army expansion became imperative, irrespective of cost or equipment shortages and the second expansion phase was directed at delivering

[55] Fennell, J., *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to Victory*, pp. 41-43
[56] Ibid., p. 42
[57] Ibid.
[58] *United States Army in World War II, The War Department, Chief of Staff: Pre-war Plans And Preparations*, Mark Skinner Watson (Centre of Military History, United States Army, WASHINGTON, D. C., 1950), p. 15
[59] *Statistical Review, World War II, A Summary of Army Service Forces Activities* (Washington, United States Army Service Forces, Control Division, Statistics Branch, 1945), p. 57
[60] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*, p. 118, Neillands, R., *Eighth Army: From the Western Desert to the Alps, 1939-1945* (London, John Murray, 2004), p. 7

formations for Egypt and the Middle East. When Japan entered the war, the emphasis shifted rapidly towards training formations to fight the new enemy.[61]

Despite sporadic attempts by Congress to discourage recruiting, attracting sufficient volunteers was never an insurmountable problem but the lack of prior planning for mass expansion and the lack of equipment and resources undoubtedly were. If drive and determination to plan for mass mobilisation was somewhat lacking in both India and Britain, there is also some evidence to suggest that the incumbent Commander-in-Chief, General Cassells, was not up to the job of driving mobilisation. When the question of his replacement was being discussed in late 1940, the Permanent under Secretary of State for War, P. J. Grigg, made his views on Cassells clear to the CIGS General Dill:

> There is one point about the appointment of the C.-in-C., India which I have not hitherto seen brought out, but which is, in my view very important, seeing the universal belief among Europeans and friendly Indians that Cassels (sic) is not up to his job and should be replaced at the earliest possible moment.[62]

Cassells may have been a safe pair of hands in peacetime, but the recommendations made by Dill to Churchill suggest neither Dill nor Grigg had confidence in his ability to meet the demands of mass mobilisation.[63]

The second phase of expansion was rapidly put in hand by the autumn of 1940 and in this respect, the appointment in November 1940 of Lieutenant-General (Later Field Marshal) Sir Claude Auchinleck as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army was timely. The Auk injected vigour and clarity into the expansion program in the brief period before he swapped roles with General Wavell to take over as Commander- in-Chief in the Middle East on 21 June 1941. His understanding and knowledge of the Indian Army and his affinity for the Indian soldiery began with his recruiting tours of villages in the Punjab as a young subaltern with the 62nd Punjab Regiment from 1904.[64] He was also a moderniser and few were as suited to the role of transforming the Indian Army. He further demonstrated this on his return to the role in 1943 and throughout his tenure until 1947. Whilst his period in command in the Middle East may have

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[61] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour*, p. 424. This operational area became known as the China, Burma, India (CBI) Theatre.
[62] KCL Dill 3/1/12, Papers on military appointments and on the personalities of officers including correspondence,1940 Oct-1941 Oct, Letter, P.J. Grigg to Dill, 24/10/1940
[63] Ibid.
[64] IWM Sound Archives, BBC Recording, *Plain Tales From the Raj*, Interviewee/speaker: Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, GCB,GCIE, CSI, DSO, OBE (London, BBC, 1976-10-07)

been higher profile, his service to the Indian Army as its last and greatest Commander-in-Chief was more valuable and probably a source of greater personal satisfaction to him.

When Auchinleck exchanged roles with Wavell this should have remained beneficial for the Indian Army as Wavell had ample recent experience of high command and was also familiar with the institution. Wavell should have been able to further galvanise the expansion programme and to ensure the right kind of training and prioritisation of effort was achieved. However, in the few months before Japan attacked, Wavell seems to have had limited impact. His appointment to the thankless role of Supreme Commander of the improvised American, British, Dutch, Australian (ABDA) command in January 1942 ensured that Wavell was overwhelmed with other responsibilities for several months.[65] General Sir Alan Hartley stepped up to the role of acting Commander-in-Chief until Wavell returned on the disbandment of ABDA just six weeks after its creation on 25 February 1942.[66]

In late 1940, Britain had insufficient arms to equip the expanding British Army, let alone a larger Indian Army. Aid from the United States was still on a cash and carry basis and cash reserves were rapidly depleting.[67] Without financial relief from the United States, in the form of Lend-Lease in 1941, the equipment problem would have remained intractable. Even with US help, the British Army took precedence and the Indian Army suffered persistent equipment shortages. British sources did go some way to meeting the challenge and the spectacular increases in UK armaments production after Dunkirk delivered substantial increases but the immediate priorities were defence of Britain and the campaigns in North Africa. The second phase of Indian Army expansion depended on three sources: increased British output, Lend Lease from the USA and significant increases in India's growing manufacturing capacity.[68] Limited quantities of Lend-Lease material were allocated to the Indian Army before 1943, so it largely relied on British and Indian resources until then. Serious shortfalls were still being highlighted as late as December 1943, as shown by the observations of General Adam on his visit to India and in Auchinleck's responses.[69]

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[65] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I*, pp. 263-265

[66] Ibid., p. 429. See also IOR L/PO/8/98, *Gen Sir Alan Fleming Hartley appointed Commander-in-Chief India; Lt-Gen Edwin Morris appointed Chief of General Staff India , 30 Dec 1941*

[67] Gowing M.M., Edited by, Hancock, Sir W. K. , *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series: British War Economy*, (London: HMSO, 1949) Revised (London, Kraus-Thompson, 1975), pp. 233-247

[68] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*, p. 619, Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, p. 71

[69] KCL Adam 3/6/3, *Report by the AG on his tour overseas Nov-Dec 1943,* (London, King's College Library, Liddle-Hart Collection, Adam Papers). In his response, General Auchinleck sought to rebut some of the points made by Adam but he agreed with many of the observation made. JRL AUC/1050, Auchinleck to Alanbrooke, *D.O. No. 80/B-1/6*, pp. 1-2. (Manchester, John Rylands Library Archive, Auchinleck Papers)

Indian divisions deployed to the Middle East and East Africa demonstrated professionalism and resilience but their efficiency came at a cost to overall expansion. The best trained and most experienced Indian troops were deployed overseas at the time when the building of a much larger Indian Army accelerated. The rest of the Army was necessarily cherry-picked to ensure these divisions remained at full strength and mobilisation plans were largely geared to Western Desert requirements. A further consequence of the crisis in 1940 was that the best and most experienced British battalions in India were recalled to Britain and replaced by territorials. For example, the 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers which had been in India since 1938 was recalled in 1940.[70] There were also many British Indian Army officer secondments to British Home Forces.[71]

A more insidious factor in the expansion programme was milking. This has been widely recognised as a factor in the poor performance of some formations in 1942-43.[72] The cadre for any new formation was normally drawn from existing battalions of the regiment. For example a core of junior officers, VCOs, NCOs and Jawans would be milked from the 1st and 2nd battalions to create a new 5th Battalion and the same would happen to the 3rd and 4th battalions to create a 6th Battalion. The impact of this happening once would be manageable, given time. If repeated too soon to raise other battalions then donor units would be further weakened and overall efficiency could deteriorate rapidly. Daniel Marston points to another factor that further concentrated the impact of milking on specific units:

> An example is of an order dated 29 November 1940, which states it was necessary to raise 63 battalions. However, only 30 percent of units still stationed in India were regular units. The rest had been sent overseas as part of the 4th and 5th Indian Divisions.[73]

For obvious operational reasons the active campaigning divisions were spared the depredations of milking so the impact fell more heavily on home-based battalions and the divisions in Malaya. Indian Army formations that saw action in Malaya and Burma had repeatedly suffered the effects of milking. The 5th Battalion, 11th Sikh Regiment embarked for Malaya in April 1941 and was attached to the 22nd Brigade of 9th Indian Division. It had been milked just prior to departure

[70] Private David Lloyd George Griffiths, 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers, 1938-42 (London, Imperial War Museum Sound Archives - Recorded 1977-04-13)
[71] JRL AUC/102, *Letter from General Sir Sydney Muspratt to Auchinleck* (Manchester, John Rylands Library Archive, Auchinleck Papers). Muspratt complained about treatment of Major (Acting Lt. Colonel and later promoted to Major General)) H.L. Davies. Davies was seconded but then marooned in Iceland in November 1940 with loss of pay and role.
[72] There is extensive discussing of "milking" in several works, including: Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, pp. 42-47, Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp. 82-84
[73] Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, p. 53, Footnote 15.

and the establishment had been made up with 450 partly trained recruits and six British ECOs who had not yet learned Urdu.[74] Another example was the 9th Battalion, 14th Punjab Regiment, raised on 1 April 1941. The battalion had started with 240 "old soldiers" and commenced training for mechanised Western Desert operations. In September 1941 it lost 40 other ranks and one VCO to new units.[75] The likely disruption to training is obvious.

There were few alternatives to milking if new units were to start with experienced cadres but what made it worse was the short timescales and repetition. The impact of milking was compounded by the slow first phase of expansion and by constantly changing priorities. Why did the US Army not suffer similar problems? It achieved even greater expansion than the Indian Army but it had the benefit of starting expansion well before hostilities commenced. Even after 7 December 1941 few newly raised formations saw active service before November 1942 and for many the Operation Torch landings were a relatively gentle initiation.

Another challenge facing the Indian Army was the question of ethnic, caste and class diversity.[76] Recruitment from the Punjab was central to the expansion programme at the start of the second phase. Demographic constraints would inevitably limit the number of volunteers that could be recruited from this state and such a policy made little sense in wartime given the large population of India. However, driven by the still dominant dogmas of Martial Race theory, and despite the lessons of 1914-18, most recruitment focussed on the narrow base of Sikh, Hindu and Moslem groups in the Punjab that were deemed most suitable. Bias towards Punjab recruitment diminished from 1942 and this change was made sooner than in the Great War. Recruitment outside the Martial Race classes only started in 1917, when matters were already in crisis. Difficulties remained with the quality of replacements in 1941-43 but the decisive move away from restrictive policies was beneficial.[77]

Prominent among the new arrivals were recruits from Madras sent to the reinstated Madras regiments. Some 302,732 Hindu, 28,799 Muslim and 59,946 Christian Madrassis were recruited.[78] A conspicuous obstacle was that few if any Madrassis spoke Urdu or any of the related languages, such as Punjabi. There was no shortage of suitable recruits but the most

[74] Khanna, Maj. Gen. P. K. & Chopra P.S., *Portrait of Courage: Century of the 5th Battalion, The Sikh Regiment* (New Delhi, Military Studies Convention, 2001), p. 157. See also: Roy, K., *Sepoys against the Rising Sun: The Indian Army in Far East and South-East Asia, 1941–45*, pp. 72-74
[75] Booth, J.R. and Hobbs, J.B., *Ninth Battalion, Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, Raised 1st April 1941, Disbanded 8th July 1947*, p. 13
[76] This issue is explored extensively in Chapter 4.
[77] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp. 62-70
[78] Ibid., Appendix 13

intractable aspect of the language problem was the need to provide experienced NCOs and VCOs who could speak the same language as the new recruits. There was no readily available pool of experienced Madras-born VCOs, as the last Madras raised regiments had been disbanded in the early 1930s. Steps were taken to draw experienced VCOs from Punjab raised units and to train Madrassis to at least understand rudimentary Urdu. Auchinleck described the difficulties in his correspondence with the CIGS:

> The greatest obstacle to turning this new material into efficient and reliable soldiers lies not in the nature and characteristics of the men themselves, but in the difficulty of providing Viceroy's Commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers of their own kind to lead them. Lacking as they do previous military traditions and associations, this is inevitable. This disadvantage is being overcome by the appointment of experienced leaders of other classes, and by special training measures designed to produce leaders belonging to the new or expanded classes. These measures promise to be highly successful.[79]

Tan Tai Yong has provided useful insights into the longstanding dependence on Punjabi recruits, from Sikh, Moslem and Hindu communities from 1857 and its consequences.[80] He quotes the Indian Army Caste Returns that show that by 1910, 53.7% of the army were Punjabi. This proportion had reduced somewhat by 1939 and the overall proportion for 1939-45 was 36.67% of the total.[81] Over-reliance on the Punjab was a constraint in both world wars but in 1939-45 the recruitment net was cast wider and sooner, avoiding a recruitment crisis similar to that of 1917.[82]

3.3 Officer Recruitment

Officer recruitment for the first generation King's Commissioned Indian Officers in the 1920s was more stringent than for British Army officer candidates. The experience recounted by Lieutenant General S.P.P. Thorat offers some perspective:

[79] JRL AUC/1034, Auchinleck to Brooke, *A note on the size and composition of the Indian Army*, August 1943, p. 4
[80] Tan T.Y. (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi, Sage, 2005), pp. 70-71.
[81] IOR L/WS/1/1136 , *Recruiting in India*
[82] Tan. T.Y, *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 133-138

> All applicants were first interviewed by the provincial Governors who submitted the names of deserving candidates to the Government of India. This initial screening was very selective and in 1924 only ten candidates from the whole of India and Burma were chosen to take the entrance examination. This small batch of raw sixteen-year old boys gathered in Simla and was given the written test of the undergraduate level. Then followed a series of interviews. The first was by the Selection Board and I was overawed by the array of Army officers who constituted it. They asked me a few simple questions but followed each with exhaustive supplementaries to ascertain the depth of my knowledge. After this ordeal came the interview with the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood… The next and final face I saw was His Excellency Lord Reading, Viceroy of India.[83]

The successive hurdles described by Thorat were neither demanded, nor feasible, for Emergency Commissioned Officer candidates in the Second World War. Nor was the bar set quite so high for candidates. However, India still lagged behind in implementing new, more objective officer selection processes that had been promulgated by the Adjutant General of the British Army, General Ronald Adam.[84] Adam had introduced the War Office Selection Board (WOSB) process within the British Army and from 1942 this rapidly improved officer selection and reduced failure rates.[85] Adam was still working as late as his tour of India in November 1943 to persuade Delhi GHQ and the Indian Army Adjutant General, Lieutenant-General Sir William Baker, of the urgent need to change officer selection processes.[86] More alarming were his comments on the continued prevalence of inconsistent and arbitrary selection practices at the local level:

> The selection board which I sent out to India has carried out an interesting experiment in an experimental selection of Indian Officers for King's commissions. Selection was done by interview and pre-selection by local boards. Local boards were pretty useless. One board banged paper bags behind candidates' ears, and immediately rejected those that flinched. Another board set questions on soldiers of the Great War; in consequence, a crammer's trade was springing up, which taught names of great soldiers for a small sum. The Defence Committee will require persuading, but I think British selection will apply to Indians; the board had found Indians responded in exactly the same way to the

[83] Thorat, S.P.P., *From Reveille to Retreat*. pp. 3-4. See also Kundu, A., *Militarism in India, The Army and Civil Society in Consensus* , pp. 12-14
[84] Broad, R., *The Radical General: Sir Ronald Adam and Britain's New Model Army, 1941-1946,* pp. 111-120
[85] Ibid., p. 111
[86] KCL Adam 3/6/3, *Report by the AG on his tour overseas Nov-Dec 1943*, pp. 2-3

> tests given as a British Officer. They want considerable assistance in the selection of other ranks, The R.A.C., for instance, is full of men who will never make good.[87]

For the British Army, WOSB processes were the first significant step taken towards modern personnel selection methods and systematic identification of leadership potential. Whilst it was work in progress and needed refinement, it was a vast improvement on what it replaced and this was confirmed by results.[88] Indian Army selection processes were also in dire need of reform, more so as the acceleration and shortening of the officer training processes for ECOs inevitably revealed earlier defects in selection. Failure rates during training and after deployment were always more costly than getting candidate selection right first time. The WOSB process had proved its worth in the British Army but it was not without critics. Roger Broad, in his biography of Adam, suggests that the aspect that caused most alarm in a fundamentally conservative army culture was the use of psychiatrists and psychologists in the selection process:

> In an institution based on discipline, cohesion, tradition, hierarchy and authority such a detached approach to human behaviour was particularly unwelcome, to admit weakness was taboo: it undermined the masculine character of military life. The use of the term 'trick cyclist' was ostensibly disdainful; in fact it hid fear.[89]

It is likely that the WOSB initiative elicited much the same reaction within the Indian Army and this may in part explain implementation delays. Another factor that may have increased resistance was the entrenched regimental system in both armies. The Regimental Centre had always taken a lead in the promotion, selection, mentoring and training of officers but control of the WOSB process was more centralised and it diminished regimental influence on selection. Officers, VCOs and NCOs had always been developed within the close knit, familial atmosphere of the regiment but this approach was unsustainable in the face of wartime exigencies and unprecedented expansion. Regimental loyalty undoubtedly had its benefits in engendering unity but the application of modern officer and NCO selection methods was likely to have been seen as diametrically opposed to widely supported traditions of the regimental system.

[87] KCL Adam 3/6/2, Report by the AG on his tour overseas April-May 1943, p. 4
[88] Broad, R., *The Radical General*, pp. 111-112
[89] Ibid., p. 113. The derogatory slang term 'trick cyclist' was being used to refer to psychologists.

Adam also initiated experiments within the British Army to assess the best approach to NCO candidate pre-selection within units. The most effective approach was determined to be involvement of the other ranks within the sub-unit in recommending candidates. Such a radical and in some senses *Bolshevik* approach was hardly likely to go down well with the Army Council and it did not.[90] It is intriguing to consider what the impact of such an approach to VCO candidate selection might have had in the Indian Army. With its class, cast and ethnic divisions such an approach might have been divisive or unworkable. Senior VCOs had a strong influence and when poor candidate selection choices were made by officers and senior VCOs, it could result in serious consequences for unit cohesion. There is some evidence that clannish favouritism with regard to promotions could take hold in units led by officers who were not sufficiently observant in their dealings with the senior VCOs, if a VCO took advantage of this weakness. Grievances about promotion and nepotism among VCOs were identified as a causal factor in the mutiny of the Central India Horse in 1940.[91]

Another aspect of officer selection that deserves consideration was the initial examination process. My review of the subjects included in examination questions set for Indian officer candidates for the Indian Military Acadamy in Dehra Dun exposes the inherent backwardness and Anglo-centric nature of the written examination element of the selection process. Examination questions for November 1939 included a series of questions on English History from 1485 but the Indian History test was included in the optional Part 2 section.[92] It seems to have been designed with intention of selecting candidates who had undergone a traditional English public school education but it inevitably resulted in a lucrative trade for crammers. Ironically, by favouring those who had the benefit of a middle-class English-style education the examinations loaded the dice against those coming from the traditional martial race recruiting grounds of the Punjab. The results tables show a failure rate among Punjabi recruits of 48%, whereas all three Bengali candidates in that cohort passed with respectable results. Few in rural Punjab had access to a public school education based on the English model. Easier access to a westernised secondary education and to crammers conferred advantages on the urban candidate.[93] The results also highlight the difficulties in selecting technically able candidates, with only 12 passing out of 43 candidates for the technical wing in the March-April 1940 examination.[94]

[90] Ibid., pp. 114-116
[91] IOR L/WS/1/303, *Disaffection of Sikh Troops,* Item 71. See Chapter 5 for more discussion of the C.I.H mutiny.
[92] IOR L/MIL/7/19116 , *Indianisation Reports on Army Entrance Examinations held in India*, Items 59-65
[93] Ibid., Item 2
[94] Ibid., Items 59-65

Officer selection in 1939 within both the Indian and British Armies relied too much on subjective judgements by serving officers. It also tended to favour an approach that was predisposed to generating facsimiles of the British public school educated yeomanry officer of an earlier age, too often lacking in technical education. The approach was outmoded and needed reform but it also exacerbated the systemic problems that were impeding the urgently needed Indianisation of the officer corps. Whilst the belated introduction of the WOSB process to the Indian Army in 1944 was unlikely to resolve all of the Anglo-centric and class biased weaknesses of officer selection, it was surely a step in the right direction, albeit too late and too small a step. A little more of Adam's radicalism, administered sooner, might have paid dividends.

3.4 Modernisation and Training

In parallel with expansion, the Indian Army was undergoing modernisation, transforming its capabilities from a lightly equipped frontier and policing force to an army capable of fulfilling multiple roles in a global war. Modernisation in this context is defined as the adoption of new doctrine, methods, training, technical disciplines and equipment. In popular histories the focus tends to be on new equipment but without the other factors improved equipment had little value. It was increasingly obvious from 1942 that global war required all-arms infantry formations, with the flexibility and firepower to operate in desert, mountain, jungle and amphibious combined operations. Such versatility was a luxury that few formations achieved in any army but the 5th Indian Division came close, serving successfully in all these roles, as did some other formations.[95] Before December 1941, efforts were aimed at achieving the mechanisation and mobility essential for open warfare in desert conditions. The mechanised role required close cooperation with armour and stronger artillery components than it was used to. Pre-war Indian troops had rarely seen a tank or anything larger than the 3.7" howitzer.

Novel specialisms including armour and airborne infantry were created from scratch. New weapons and technologies were mastered, new doctrine and methods were evolved. The Indian Army was building on well-established training methods that were based on regimental training companies and a few specialised training schools but the system had to be radically enhanced and expanded to meet the challenges of training and retraining a larger army.[96]

[95] Brett-James, A., *Ball of Fire - The Fifth Indian Division in the Second World War*. The division maintained its traditional skills of mountain warfare and policing too.

[96] Jeffreys, A. & Rose, P, Editors, *The Indian Army, 1939–47: Experience and Development*, Jeffreys, A. Chapter 4, *Training the Indian Army, 1939-1944*. pp. 69-86

The first two phases of expansion were primarily intended to deliver formations that could operate in North Africa.[97] Notable exceptions were the troops deployed to Malaya and the units in Burma that later formed the 1st Burma Division and the 17th Indian Division. The conflicting imperatives of desert and jungle warfare were overridden by the need to deploy replacements and new formations to North Africa and Iraq.[98] Jungle warfare training provision was a low priority but not completely ignored. The first edition of *Military Training Pamphlet, No. 9 (India), Notes on Forest Warfare*, was issued in October 1940.[99] It provided useful if basic guidance on jungle warfare that was developed in later editions.[100] Jungle warfare training remained limited and troops suffered accordingly, in Burma and Malaya. The newly formed units that were thrown into Burma and Malaya as reinforcements had little enough training of any kind but most of it had been directed at desert warfare. The 17th Indian Division had trained for desert but even before it was sent to Burma, two brigades were detached and sent to Malaya.[101] Training deficiencies were thus compounded by inadequate formation training above battalion level.

Mechanisation was essential for desert warfare but Slim argued in 1942 that, in terms of mobility, Burcorps in retreat was too dependent on motor transport and that off-road movement and resilience were impaired as a consequence.[102] Libyan Desert operations without motor transport were potentially suicidal but road-bound dependency on motor transport in the close country of Burma or Malaya made formations cumbersome and tied them to the few available all-weather roads. Before 1944 this allowed well-executed but not particularly novel Japanese tactics of infiltration and roadblock to repeatedly throw British and Indian formations off balance. Mechanisation was beneficial overall but dependence on motor transport in close country was dangerous.

The exemplar of how far the Indian Army had progressed was the transformation of the 17th Indian Division by 1944 to a versatile *Light Division* formation. It operated skilfully in two

[97] Roy, K., Editor , *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars* (Leiden, Brill Academic, 2011), Moreman, T., Chapter 7, *From the Desert Sands to the Burmese Jungle: The Indian Army and the Lessons of North Africa, September 1939-November 1942*, p. 245
[98] Buckley, C., *Five Venture, Iraq-Syria-Persia-Madagascar-Dodecanese* (London, HMSO, 1954), pp.8-10,
[99] War Office Publication, *The Jungle Book, Military Planning Pamphlet Number 9 (India)* (4th Edition – September 1943) Also known as *Japanese in Battle Part 2* (W.O 36). I have only been able to examine this later edition of MTP 9.
[100] Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle: Training the Indian Army During the Second World War*, War & Military Culture in South Asia (Solihull, Helion, 2016), pp. 62-64
[101] Luto, J., ed., *Fighting with the Fourteenth Army in Burma, Original War Summaries of the Battle Against Japan. 1943-45* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2013), pp. 56-57
[102] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 35-37

different configurations in quick succession during Operation Extended Capital.[103] It reconfigured within a few weeks from operating in jungle warfare with light levels of equipment and transport based on mules, light trucks and jeeps, to a mechanised and partly air-mobile formation. In Operation Extended Capital it thrust across open country with armoured support and by air to Meiktila at impressive speed.[104] The option of using air transport allowed enhanced mobility and rapid movement of reserves and it was a significant enabler. What would Slim or any commander have given to have this level of flexibility and agility two years earlier?

Training for desert warfare was a strain on existing training capacity but it required major reallocations of resources to shift emphasis towards jungle warfare. Constantly evolving training programmes for two very different environments added burdens on already stretched resources.[105] Much pre-war training was located in places that resembled the arid and mountainous North West Frontier and these served well enough for training troops to be deployed in North and East Africa. For jungle warfare entirely different facilities and locations were essential but the diverse climate and geography of India offered suitable alternatives. Ideal conditions were found in Southern and Eastern Command areas. Parts of Ceylon also proved suitable, as demonstrated in the early stages of training for the 20th Indian Division.[106] New accommodation and facilities were urgently required. The risk of malaria and other jungle ailments in such conditions could impair training efficiency but realistic conditions helped to develop doctrine, tactics and jungle acclimatisation.

Generic elements of training had value in any theatre of operations but many aspects of tactical and formation training, for desert conditions were of limited use in jungle and vice-versa. The formidable Japanese troops encountered in December 1941 had little jungle warfare training either but their ample experience and flexibility counted greatly.[107] Battle hardened troops adapted quickly to new environments and many technical and support functions were relevant in all theatres but often required adaptation to unfamiliar conditions. Radio communication in jungle clad ravines, heavy rain and unpredictable atmospheric conditions in Assam was more problematic than in the open deserts of Libya. Procedures were much the same for the operator

[103] Roy, K., Editor , *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars*, Marston, D., Chapter 8, *The War in Burma: The 7/10th Baluch Experience*, pp. 275-283, Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour*, p. 242

[104] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, p. 468

[105] Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle: Training the Indian Army During the Second World War*. Alan Jeffreys presents a valuable analysis of the fundamental changes in the direction of travel of Indian Army training as priorities shifted from desert to jungle and later to combined operations.

[106] KCL Gracey 1/1, Memorandum: Gracey to Officers of 20 Indian Infantry Div. on Policies for Training, KCL Gracey 1/2, Notes made by Gracey on the raising of 20 Indian Infantry Div.

[107] Lyman. R., *The Generals: From Defeat to Victory, Leadership in Asia, 1941-45*, pp. 17-55, Ness, L., *Rikugun, Guide to Japanese Ground Forces 1937-1945*(Solihull, Helion & Company, 2014), pp. 98-103

but experience and training in mitigating the environmental factors was essential. Skills that were essential to modernisation were in short supply. Drivers, vehicle mechanics, engineers, electrical engineers, electricians and amateur radio enthusiasts were relatively rare in civilian India at that time, particularly in rural Punjab. Perhaps the single largest source of engineering and technical skills was the Indian Railways but given the vastly increased demands put on the railways during wartime this source was best left untapped.

Technical training from scratch was unavoidable but it slowed progress and increased training effort, thus delaying deployments.[108] Technical training infrastructure was enhanced with new training centres across India.[109] In the medium term, shortages of qualified trainers could only be mitigated by increased reliance on British technicians who were in demand elsewhere. The Indian Army was competing for recruits in a largely unregulated employment market, where technical aptitudes had many remunerative applications, not least in the burgeoning arms industries.[110] The necessary expansion of technical skills had subsequent downstream benefits for the civilian labour market and the economies of independent India and Pakistan.

Shifting priorities inevitably led to some units being trained for roles they never fulfilled and further retraining for different roles. To individual soldiers this may have seemed like incompetence on the part of those in high command. It undoubtedly wasted energy and resources and must have been bad for morale. This was not unique to imperial forces and similar shifts in priorities were happening in most armies. Expansion plans had in 1941 determined that an Indian armoured corps of three armoured divisions should be raised.[111] Shifting priorities in 1942, from North Africa to Southeast Asia, resulted in scaled down plans and no armoured divisions were deployed. However, several armoured brigades were raised. They proved valuable even in close jungle conditions and especially so on the plains of Burma.

Before 1943, tactical all-arms training was hampered by the lack of modern equipment, including aircraft, radios, mortars, armour and medium artillery. India's capacity to produce modern armaments was negligible at the start of the conflict.[112] Most of these shortages were only partly addressed by late 1942 and some were never fully resolved. By 1944 equipment levels were adequate for requirements in Assam and Burma but they were never comparable to

[108] Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle: Training the Indian Army During the Second World War*, pp. 77-78
[109] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp. 27-28
[110] Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*, pp. 82-88
[111] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp. 64-65
[112] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 88-94

the British 21st Army Group in Northern Europe.[113] Without Lend-Lease resources the position of Fourteenth Army would have remained parlous. Slim was occasionally guilty of exaggerating the shortages of modern equipment but he was substantially correct in arguing that his Army was at the end of the queue when it came to provision of the best and most modern equipment.[114]

3.5 New Battalions

The building of new formations is examined from two perspectives: the raising of individual battalions, the building blocks of the army, and the raising of the most important large formations, infantry divisions. Wartime expansion of the Indian Army required the raising of many new formations and component units. These included new infantry battalions but also many specialist units. In most cases new battalions were raised within existing regiments but some new regiments were raised from scratch, for example the Chamar Regiment.[115] Expansion of existing regiments allowed new battalions to draw on their collective heritage, izzat and reputation. Some regiments were re-formed with names of previously disbanded regiments, as in the case of the Madras regiments. [116]

The complexities and variable outcomes of raising new infantry battalions can be explored using one example. The 14th Punjab Regiment, which grew from five pre-war battalions, to thirteen, with a Regimental Centre establishment of 8,000, is fairly typical.[117] This regiment illustrates some of the diverse fortunes of new battalions and illustrates the challenges encountered in the successive expansion phases. It can be seen that a significant proportion of the pre-war core of this respected regiment was either distributed across the newly formed battalions, killed in action, or captured in Malaya and Singapore. The new battalions enjoyed success in some cases, unfulfilled promise in others and early disbandment for one.[118]

[113] For example in 1945 the Indian armoured brigades were still using types developed in 1941 such as the Lee and Grant tanks, when the 11th Armoured Division was beginning to deploy the Comet tank in Belgium at the start of 1945. The Comet was two generations ahead in terms of AFV development. Fletcher, D., *The Universal Tank, British Armour in the Second World War, Part 2 (London, HMSO, 1993*). pp. 59-64, pp. 112-113

[114] KCL Adam 3/6/3, *Report by the AG on his tour overseas Nov-Dec 1943*, (London, King's College Library, Liddle-Hart Collection, Adam Papers). Adam was referring to comments made by Slim that identified serious shortages still affecting Fourteenth Army in late 1943. See also the partial rebuttal of these issues by General Auchinleck, JRL AUC/1050, Letter 20/01/44 Auchinleck to Alanbrooke, *Referring to Sir Ronald Adam's report* (Item AUC/1045).

[115] The reason for the raising of the Chamar Regiment is discussed in Chapter 5.

[116] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the resurgence in recruitment from Madras. There were no longer any Madras regiments to which the large intake from Madras could be recruited, so new regiments had to be raised.

[117] Anon. , *Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, A Short History 1939-1945*

[118] See the account of the 16th Battalion below.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions were both severely mauled, before being caught in the capitulations of Singapore and Hong Kong respectively.[119] The 1st Battalion was in the thick of the defensive fighting at Jitra, an unsuccessful counter-attack on 11 December 1941 and subsequent counter moves by the Japanese,

> The Punjabis were thrown into confusion by this attack and forced off the road. Only some 200 men, including the Brigadier, [Brigadier K.A. Garrett, 15th Brigade] succeeded in re-joining the division the following day. Small parties made their way back later but, for the time being, the battalion could not be regarded as a fighting unit. The remnants of the 1st Battalion surrendered in Singapore after two months of hard-fought defeats and withdrawals.[120]

The 2nd Battalion fought throughout the defence of Hong Kong and surrendered with the garrison on Christmas Day 1941.[121] With the exception of the experienced cadres already milked from these battalions while Malaya and Hong Kong remained peaceful, the extensive pre-war experience and recent hard gained tactical lessons of fighting the Japanese were entirely lost in the graves and prison camps of Malaya, Hong Kong and elsewhere, or in some notable cases to the INA. [122] The 5th Battalion was also committed to Malaya and shattered in the disaster at Slim River. By 8 January the battalion strength was six officers and 129 other ranks and the 11th Indian Division as a whole "…ceased to be an effective fighting force."[123] The survivors surrendered in Singapore.[124]

The 3rd Battalion fared better, serving extensively in the Middle East and Burma, initially with the 4th Indian Division and later with the 5th Division.[125] The 4th Battalion exemplified the problems of milking. It was based in Waziristan until 1942 and it provided no less than 14 officers, 22 VCOs and 618 other ranks in drafts to other battalions.[126] By the time it joined the 7th Indian Division in April 1942, only two pre-war officers remained attached. The battalion served with this division for the remainder of the war and in the liberation of Thailand and Malay after Japan's surrender.

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[119] Ibid., pp. 1-8. For the 1/14th
[120] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I*, p. 205
[121] Ibid., pp. 144-145
[122] Among those captured in the confused aftermath of the Jitra debacle was Captain Mohan Singh who subsequently took a lead in creating the first manifestation of the Indian National Army. See Chapter 5.
[123] Woodburn Kirby, *The War Against Japan, Volume I*, p. 281
[124] *Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, A Short History 1939-1945* , pp 36-44
[125] Ibid., pp. 9-22
[126] Ibid., pp. 23-35

Of the new battalions, the 6th Battalion was raised at Baroda in October 1940 with initial cadres drawn from the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions, augmented with new recruits.[127] It was raised two months later than planned but it is unclear whether the delays were due to local issues or wider problems with the sudden increase in the raising of new units.[128] This battalion was a victim of the abrupt shift in strategic priorities brought on by the debacle in Malaya and Singapore. After many months of training and working towards a planned Middle East deployment in March 1942, the battalion was rushed to Singapore, arriving in late January 1942, just days before the final Japanese assault during which it suffered heavy losses before surrender and far worse after. In seven days of desperate fighting it sustained 80 casualties.[129] 58 members of C Company died in captivity. Companies A and B were shipped to New Guinea and very few survived the appalling conditions.

The fate of the 7th Battalion might well have been similar but its deployment to Assam was shortly after the long retreat of Burcorps.[130] The initial approval for this battalion to be raised was issued on the 25 July 1940 but it was eventually formed on the 22 March 1941 as a frontier warfare battalion, undergoing extensive mountain warfare training.[131] The July 1940 memorandum made it clear that this and other battalions being raised were to be established around a core milked from other units. It was subsequently mobilized with only 10 days' notice, to adopt a new war establishment, exchanging several drafts of trained men for recruits and deployed to the India/Burma border. Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence took command in April 1942 with only two other regular officers of 3 and 6 years' service in support. Several of the other officers had no Urdu which must have had a deleterious impact on efficiency. By April 1942 the battalion was attached to 23rd Indian Division and dispersed in penny packets between Tamu and Kalewa to provide little more than token defence. Some 200,000 refugees passed through this line of retreat and for such a weakened and inexperienced battalion the effect on morale of witnessing this apocalyptic exodus was damaging. On 10 June 1942, Lawrence reported that the battalion had suffered some 20 desertions, including seven Sikhs, of whom four had deserted with arms.[132] 7th Battalion was subjected to milking on no less than nine occasions,

[127] Ibid., pp. 45-50
[128] IOR L/WS/1/394, *Recruitment: New Units Raised in India Since the Outbreak of War, 1939-1943.* Item 44 *Extracts from AHQ Report No. B/61666/III/A.G.S Simla, 11th June 1940*
[129] Woodburn Kirby, *The War Against Japan, Volume I,* pp. 385-386
[130] *Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, A Short History 1939-1945,* pp. 51-56
[131] IOR L/WS/1/394, *Recruitment: New Units Raised in India Since the Outbreak of War, 1939-1943.* Item 37 *Extracts from AHQ Report No. B/61666/III/A.G.S Simla, 25th July 1940.*
[132] IOR L/WS/2/44, *Note on Sikhs,* Appendix A, p. 3

with the result that it released a total of 361 all ranks, including 7 officers, 12 VCOs and 15 NCOs to other units being raised or maintained up to strength.[133]

The 8th Battalion was raised at Bareilly on 1 April 1941 by Lieutenant Colonel G.R. Pouncey, formerly of 3rd Battalion.[134] It was soon attached to the 98th Brigade, with 8th and 9th Battalions of the Frontier Force Rifles (FFR) that had been raised at the same time. At this time it was not uncommon for a brigade to consist of three new units with very little in the way of an experienced nucleus. A total of 260 VCOs, NCOs and other ranks had been milked from 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions supplemented by raw recruit drafts incorporated in May and June after only 2-3 months service. However, a further draft was being milked from the 7th Battalion less than a month after it had been raised. This may have seemed barely enough time to unpack and repack one's kit and it is likely that the FFR battalions were similarly constituted. Desert warfare training commenced but in December 1941 90 men were dispatched to Malaya for 1st Battalion replacements. Notwithstanding milking and equipment shortages the battalion had achieved some level of efficiency. When it joined 19th Indian Division in April 1942 it had undertaken a 2000 mile drive from Delhi to Ranipet with the loss of only one vehicle.

Milking was not yet over and as it sought to make its place in the 19th Division, 8th Battalion was forced to reconstitute owing to the heavy losses sustained by the regiment's other battalions in Malaya. The 8th Battalion ceased to be an active unit and was put back to square one in terms of efficiency. This had a damaging impact on morale as apparently the reason was never explained. Many may have assumed that it had failed to make the grade but it is more likely to have been a case of *force majeure*. The battalion moved to Madras and was soon involved in railway protection duties as a result of the Quit India disturbances from August 1942. Morale gained a momentary boost in September 1943 when orders were received to re-join 19th Indian Division but the orders were soon cancelled, again without explanation. The reason was the shortage of reinforcements for the regiment as a whole and naturally the impact fell on the least experienced battalion. In the spring of 1944, Auchinleck expressed his personal regret that the battalion had not seen a more active role but as 1944 wore on the unit was required to send 160 men to other battalions. Five, now experienced British officers were transferred out too, leaving the battalion 25% understrength by end of 1944. The luckless 8th ceased to exist in April 1946, when its remaining troops were transferred into the reconstituted 2nd Battalion. This unhappy tale illustrates the difficulties in achieving optimal utilisation and deployment for some units in the face of constantly changing priorities.

[133] Ibid.
[134] *Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, A Short History 1939-1945* , pp. 57-61

The 9th Battalion was raised in Jhansi on the same day as the 8th enjoyed better luck.[135] It was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Gwyn, from the 4th Battalion, with initial drafts of 240 men from the other battalions. It was attached to 100th Brigade in the 34th Indian Division and drafts of new recruits began arriving in May. By the end of July it consisted of 690 men of all ranks but it is noted in the Battalion history that most of the new recruits required a great deal more basic training after joining the unit. When the 34th Division moved to Trincomalee the battalion was fortunate in having ample scope for intensive training in jungle terrain. It was attached to the 32nd Brigade, 20th Indian Division from June 1943, alongside the more experienced 3rd Battalion, 8th Gurkha Regiment and 1st Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment. As part of this division, the 9th Battalion was later actively engaged in several actions around Imphal and throughout the Burma campaign. The battalion underwent amphibious warfare training and was earmarked to participate in Operation Zipper, the recapture of Malaya. After the surrender the division was tasked with disarming the surrendered Japanese troops in French Indo-China and it was actively involved in re-establishing order in Saigon from October 1945. The contrast between the successive roles of the 9th Battalion and with the repeatedly unhappy circumstances suffered by the 8th Battalion is stark.

The 14th Battalion was raised in January 1942 at Ferozepore and served extensively on the North West Frontier.[136] Several men were invalided out after a major dysentery outbreak and the shortage of replacements was further exacerbated by overriding requirements from units in Burma. To address this intractable problem the battalion resorted to local recruiting and training as in the old Indian Army, despite tacit opposition from higher authority. By this unorthodox approach it managed to achieve near full complement.

The 15th Battalion had initially been earmarked as the Regiment's machine gun battalion but served as an infantry unit. It was raised at Ferozepore in July 1942. After an uneventful stint in Bihar, providing railway security, the battalion was to have been deployed in Burma but the order was quickly cancelled in August 1943 and it was reassigned as a jungle training unit with the 39th Training Division at Saharanpur. From September 1943 it joined the 106th Infantry Training Brigade. Drafts of 200 were received on the first of each month and were put through 2 months of intensive jungle warfare training and battle inoculation.[137]

[135] Ibid., pp. 62-76
[136] Ibid., pp. 77-82
[137] Ibid.

Garrison battalions were raised by most regiments and offered a second line role for the less fit, older and those recovering from wounds. The Regiment initially raised two such battalions, the 25th in 1941 and the 26th in 1942. The 25th Battalion was subsequently reclassified for active service and renamed the 16th Battalion. This upgrading occurred in July 1942 and personnel changes were made to prepare for this by transferring out less fit and elderly soldiers. However, it continued in the same role for some time and some elderly VCOs and NCOs were retained at this stage. At the end of 1942 the battalion was concentrated at Karachi and Manora, where proper unit training was finally possible and it started to prepare for North West Frontier deployment. The remaining elderly and unfit VCOS/NCOS were now replaced. However, this planned deployment was victim to a shortage of replacements for the four battalions actively deployed in Burma and the 16th was broken up to provide replacements for more active and experienced units. The 26th Garrison Battalion ploughed the more orthodox and uneventful furrow of garrison duties.[138]

The Regimental Centre underwent radical change, taking on a wider range of roles that necessitated a larger more complex structure.[139] The peacetime establishment was a small but important part of the regiment with a core of perhaps less than 100, based around an officer cadre involved in regimental recruiting and administration and a training company of instructors. The 14th Punjab wartime establishment rose to 8,000, which may seem excessive but this included no less than five training battalions, a regimental headquarters, two duty companies and attached administrative sections. Each training battalion consisted of a major, two captains, 100 instructors and rolling intakes of 650 raw recruits. There were motor transport, mortar and signals sections too. From 1943, 'E' Training Battalion became a specialist training unit and a Boys Company was formed for the administration and care of the youngest recruits. A holding company was attached to 'A' Training Battalion for the final documentation and drafting of attested ranks. At its peak there were 16,681 recruits and 1,300 reservists attached. To support other regiments, a further 400 Madras Regiment recruits and 1000 Indian Army Ordnance Corps recruits were trained.

Expansion overwhelmed the available regimental base facilities and in late 1941 1,200 recruits were accommodated in tents. In 1940 many retired VCOs were recalled to support the expansion programme and in 1942 three former subedar majors were granted commissions as lieutenants. The Regimental Centre was repeatedly milked for NCO instructors and many of their replacements returned from active service battalions were below standard and therefore

[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid., pp. 95-111

unsuitable. As one of the contributing authors observed, “The unwanted NCO and the NCO with a “grouse” from the Battalions were always a serious problem in the Centre.”[140]

The most obvious constraints on regimental expansion were the shortage of experienced professional officers, trained junior officers, VCOs, trained NCO instructors, equipment and time. Obtaining recruits of the right quality was not an issue in the first two years but the regiment had some difficulty recruiting from 1943 and this was believed to be due to the reputation it had acquired for bad luck and high casualties. This was unsurprising given the total loss of four battalions, including three regular, plus reinforcements, in Malaya and Hong Kong. In the villages of the main recruiting areas this must have had a chilling impact on recruitment, not least because those taken prisoner were given little or no opportunity to communicate with home during captivity.

A shortage of suitable candidates for leadership of the training battalions resulted in no less than five changes of commanding officer in one battalion in its first year, with consequent damage to efficiency and training quality. The pre-war training company, normally commanded by an experienced lieutenant colonel, was similar in size to a wartime training battalion but the latter were in most cases commanded by a junior officer with less than two years of service. The quality of training delivery cannot have been helped by scarcity of facilities and equipment in 1941 and 1942. In June 1942 queues of up to 600 could accumulate at the two available firing ranges. In 1941 there were 670 service rifles available for 3500 recruits, with no Bren guns and only four obsolescent Vickers Berthier guns per training battalion, with 25% in repair. The training battalions had access to only two 2” and four 3” mortars, with limited ammunition.

Regimental training schedules from June 1940 encompassed a six months basic training programme for drill, rifle, bayonet, grenade and light machine gun handling. Four and half months basic training was given to those allocated to specialisms such as signals, followed by a further six weeks training in the relevant specialism. Inevitably, training, discipline and morale standards could not always match less rapid peacetime schedules.[141] From March 1942 training with anti-tank-rifles, sub-machineguns and mortars was added with no extra time allowed. It was recognised at the time that the regimental training programme was becoming overloaded and was in danger of producing a jack of all trades and master of none.[142] Motor transport

[140] Ibid., p. 97
[141] Comparison between the following two accounts gives a good indication of the different pace of training in the immediate pre-war period and during wartime: Masters, J., *Bugles and a Tiger*, *My Life in the Gurkhas*, Randle, J., *Battle Tales from Burma*
[142] Ibid., p. 100

training was restricted by vehicle shortages. Schedule overload was addressed in December 1942, when one month was added to the training programme and from early 1943 the equipment situation improved noticeably.

More realistic training methods developed in the British Army were being introduced by training battalions. Obstacle courses were adopted in late 1942 and battle inoculation under realistic fire became common practice. Weapons drill and *Tactical Exercises without Troops* (TEWTS) were introduced for junior officers at the behest of GHQ India in 1943. The Regimental Centre recorded gradual improvements in shooting accuracy. By late 1943 the standard was mostly above 16 out of 20, with overall hit rates of 75/120 for a standard rifleman, with first class trainees achieving 80/120 and marksman achieving 100. Averages improved further in 1944.[143]

From June 1943 additional jungle warfare training was instigated by GHQ India, involving three weeks in jungle camps, with several platoons undergoing training together, including three-day return marches. Further training improvements were initiated after a GHQ conference held in August 1943.[144] Wavell's last initiatives as Commander-in-Chief included the appointment of a new Director of Military Training and the forming of the Infantry Committee.[145] The conference brought together training centre commanders from across the Indian Army, encouraging frank discussion of problems, sharing of good practice and proposing solutions.[146]

Another significant outcome of the Delhi conference was the creation of two dedicated training divisions, the 14th and 39th Training Divisions. Alan Jeffreys has described in some detail the reforms instituted in 1943, including those that impacted on regimental training.[147] Training Divisions drew judiciously on the foundations already established by the regiments and in the case of the 14th Punjab Regiment the 15th Battalion was reassigned as a jungle training unit, attached to the 39th Division. New standards required all recruits to undergo nine months basic training in the regimental centre, followed by two months of Post-Basic jungle warfare training. Specialists had additional training between Basic and Post-Basic. For example this involved five months for signals, two months for motor transport and one month for mortar crews or snipers. The new training regime applied across the Indian Army from 15 September 1943.

[143] Ibid., p. 103
[144] Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle: Training the Indian Army During the Second World War*, pp. 158-163
[145] Callahan, R., *Burma, 1942-1945*, p. 97
[146] Ibid.
[147] Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle*, pp. 163-166

Desertion during training was not uncommon and cases escalated as the Regimental Centre expanded. Summary Courts Martial were frequently convened and as a result the Commandant delegated responsibility to the commanding officers of training battalions. An added problem was the professional deserter, who would join to collect his recruitment bounty of 10 Rupees and then desert to join again elsewhere. With widespread recruitment activity throughout the Punjab, this scam could be perpetrated several times, especially if inexperienced recruitment personnel were unfamiliar with the villages, clans and family names in the locality. Desertions during training were only part of the challenge as the Centre also dealt with as many as 50 Deserters from active units in Burma, typically described as "lost in the jungle".[148] These would be undergoing punishment in parallel at any one time and if the two categories of deserter were not kept separate the impact on morale and discipline of recruits was potentially damaging. Not all aspects of training were negative and minor awards were introduced as visible tokens of achievement for above average recruits. Each recruit was given a condensed regimental history in Roman Urdu, to promote regimental pride.

The number of officers passing through the Regimental Centre peaked at 132 and by 1944 VCO numbers peaked at 450. The numbers of enrolled recruits peaked in 1941 at 7,581 and at this stage the shortage of uniforms resulted in 800 recruits having to parade in civilian dress.[149]

Regimental Centre activity scaled back from 1944 as recruitment reduced but it expanded again in 1945-46 to handle the sensitive process of receiving former prisoners of war, including those who had joined the Indian National Army. Demobilisation required extensive preparation with the running of training courses in the skills required for civilian employment. Recruiting remained closed until May 1946. In 1946 the 5th and 6th Battalions were disbanded along with the wartime raised 9th, 14th, 15th, 26th Battalions and several garrison companies.

From September 1945 released POWs from the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th Battalions began to arrive at the Regimental Centre for assessment and rehabilitation. The return of up to 3,933 other ranks who were understood to have been POWs was anticipated but 775 remained missing at the end of 1948.[150] Many returned with severe physical, mental health and morale problems. There were issues to deal with regarding pay, seniority, promotion, demobilisation, invaliding from the Service and land grants, not least due to the lack of official records from Hong Kong and Singapore for pay and field promotions. The most sensitive matter was the segregation and

[148] Anon., *Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, A Short History 1939-1945*, p. 98
[149] Ibid., p. 99
[150] Ibid., p. 104

processing of those who had joined the INA, known as *JIFFs*.[151] Whilst civilian feelings were equivocal, given the political climate, there were deeply held resentments against the former INA soldiers from within the loyal regiments and the 14th was no exception. This was especially the case between JIFFs and former POWs who had remained loyal. They had to remain segregated at all times.[152]

3.6 New Divisions

Building Indian Army infantry divisions represented a different aspect of expansion, albeit dependent on regimental foundations. Successful organic growth through the regiments did not alone guarantee a successful expansion programme as infantry battalions were but one ingredient of an effective infantry division. Other components included the specialist arms, artillery, medical, transportation, engineers, signals, maintenance and military police. All these elements needed to be welded into a single, versatile formation that could be wielded flexibly as one or with each of its three, brigades operating independently.[153] During each phase of expansion more divisions were raised and trained. Plans for raising armoured divisions were curtailed as the emphasis shifted away from deployment in North Africa and armoured brigades became the largest Indian armoured formations to be deployed.

The expansion proposals in Plan 'A' of May 1940 were not approved by the British Chiefs of Staff, as delivery was conditional on the availability of scarce British equipment or cash to buy from American sources.[154] This plan envisaged the formation of three infantry divisions on the higher mechanisation scale required for mobile warfare. These formations were to be designated the 6th, 9th and 10th Indian divisions. Two divisions on a lower scale of mechanisation, the 7th and 8th Infantry Divisions were also envisaged.[155] The Government of India made a revised offer to form four infantry and one armoured division, again dependent on sterling funds or equipment, neither of which was in prospect in the proposed timeframe.[156] A plan was finally agreed on the basis of four new infantry divisions, the 6th, 8th, 9th and 10th but with one motorized cavalry brigade. This formed the basis for 1940-41 expansion plans.[157]

[151] See Chapter 5
[152] Ibid.
[153] Some divisions operated for long periods with only two brigades, for example the 4th Indian Division, for much of the later stages of the North African campaign.
[154] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp.60-61
[155] Ibid., p.60
[156] Ibid., pp. 61-62
[157] Ibid., p.62

Until Germany invaded the Soviet Union, expansion plans were responding to two requirements, increased deployments in Middle East and a perceived threat to India by the USSR, through Afghanistan, Iraq or Iran. However, the revised plans were still unrealistic in terms of equipment availability and continued shortages of suitable officers.[158] Regimental expansion was dogged by shortages of trained leaders and equipment but at the level of forming new divisions the plans were in danger of unravelling too. Divisions that saw action prematurely sometimes suffered severely as a consequence. Well prepared and trained formations had better prospects of success and lower casualties in proportion to the intensity of action. Success bred success and the best trained formations demonstrated this.

To achieve competence and confidence new divisions required time to iron out wrinkles in the training of component units and to work up to the necessary pitch of integration and command efficiency. Many British infantry divisions had four years of frequently intensive training prior to deployment in Normandy in 1944. Few Indian divisions had similarly ample time to develop into fully effective formations.[159] The 20th Indian Infantry Division had the good fortune to enjoy extended periods of working up before being committed. This division deployed in defence of Ceylon for many months and benefitted from extensive jungle training and improving equipment levels.[160] In contrast the 17th Indian Infantry Division had barely any time to train as a division before it was thrust into battle against agile, experienced and better trained Japanese troops in southern Burma, from December 1941 to February 1942.[161] The consequences were hardly surprising and this division came close to collapse more than once during the retreat from Burma. After the disastrous losses at the Sittang Bridge battle in February,[162] its remnants were reconstituted with the newly arrived but lamentably under-prepared 63rd Brigade.[163] The 17th as a fighting formation was forged, shattered, re-forged and depleted as a fighting formation in the longest ever retreat by imperial forces.[164] After a period of rest, reinforcement and retraining the

[158] Ibid., p.64
[159] The first line Territorial divisions, the 43rd (Wessex) Infantry Division and the 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division were both formed in September 1939 and did not see action prior to June 1944 in Normandy.
[160] KCL Gracey 1/1, Memorandum: Gracey to Officers of 20 Indian Infantry Div. on Policies for Training
KCL Gracey 1/2, Notes made by Gracey on the raising of 20 Indian Infantry Div
[161] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour*, pp. 23-46
[162] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*. Reprint (London, Phoenix, 1998), pp. 1-90,
Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour*, pp. 64-77
[163] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II*, p. 89
[164] There are several admirable accounts of the retreat from Burma. These include: Allen, L., *Burma : The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 1-90, Lunt, J., *A Hell of a Licking, The Retreat from Burma, 1941-42*, Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 7-138, Carmichael, P., *Mountain Battery*

17th Division, later dubbed “the Black Cats”, proved to be one of the most successful divisions in the history of the Indian Army, in the Burma campaigns of 1944-45.[165]

The process of taking a disparate assemblage of partly trained battalions, artillery and other specialist units and turning it into an efficient fighting formation was similar in principle to that in any army.[166] There were differences in that roughly one third of Indian Army units were from the British Army and two-thirds Indian or Gurkha and typically three languages were spoken, English, Urdu and Gurkhali. The wider implications of diversity are more fully discussed in Chapter 4 but it is sufficient here to highlight that the practical challenges of language, cultural unfamiliarity and occasional racial and religious tensions that were added to the demands of a steep learning curve.

My research suggests that other factors were at least as disruptive for new divisions as milking was for new battalions. It was common practice in both the British and Indian armies to transfer brigades between divisions, to detach brigades, or to transfer battalions between brigades. For experienced formations working under common doctrine this was manageable but it was profoundly destabilising for partly-trained units in formations that were barely established. Divisions that had not yet achieved acceptable levels of efficiency and were subject to milking were further destabilised by having to release units or entire brigades for redeployment. The 17th Indian Infantry Division has already been shown to have suffered from this problem.[167] The 23th Division fared little better and had to relinquish the 63rd and 64th brigades soon after being raised.[168] If milking was the pervasive destabilisation factor of 1941 then restructuring and unit transfers between divisions was the issue in 1942. The loss of two brigades was described thus, “These were birds of passage and cannot be considered as integral parts of the Division.”[169]

Whilst brigade transfers were not unusual, it could be particularly disruptive to the learning curve when a division was finding its feet. The impact of transfers after a short time was less

[165] Luto, J., ed., *Fighting with the Fourteenth Army in Burma, Original War Summaries of the Battle Against Japan. 1943-45*, pp.56-65
[166] Doulton, Lieut.-Col. A.J.F., *The Fighting Cock, Being the History of the 23rd Indian Division, 1942-1947*, pp. 1-38. The 23rd Indian Division was fairly typical of the newly raised infantry divisions.
[167] IOR L/WS/1/394, *Recruitment: New Units Raised in India Since the Outbreak of War, 1939-1943*. Item 18 Memorandum Defence Department India to Chief General Staff India, 11 May 1941.
[168] Doulton, Lieut.-Col. A.J.F., *The Fighting Cock*, p. 1
[169] Ibid.

than it would have been six months into an intensive programme of divisional training.[170] For example, the 23rd Brigade had initially joined 14th Division in early 1941 but it was renamed 123rd Brigade and transferred to 23rd Division in March 1942 and then transferred back to 14th Division during that division's deployment in the first Arakan offensive. Thus, the development of two divisions was disrupted within one year. Given the grave threat posed by Japan, the mixed fortunes of Eighth Army in North Africa and over-stretched commitments elsewhere it was often a case of needs must. The first half of 1942 was the critical period when imperial forces were stretched to their utmost on land, sea and air, and the imperative to create efficient well-rounded divisions was overridden by the need to fight fires on too many fronts.

Until the benefits of the training reforms introduced in 1943 fed through, the first step for most new divisions was to address the glaring deficiencies in basic and small unit training. A division could not be expected to function well with soldiers who could not shoot straight or were unfamiliar with basic equipment and drills. In parallel with remediation, battle inoculation, jungle warfare and further specialised training were carried out.[171] Once reasonable proficiency had been achieved the new division would undergo large-scale exercises both as TEWTs on the sand table and as a complete formation under realistic conditions. The training of divisions in close proximity to the Japanese such as the 23rd Division was very much on the job and this division plied its trade with gradually increasing confidence in the jungles of Assam.[172] Constant patrolling and jungle familiarisation were the watchwords but there was little opportunity for full-scale divisional training. At this stage this was not a problem in Assam but in the mobile phase of the Burma campaign in 1945 divisions needed to operate effectively as fully integrated formations. In the jungle warfare of 1943-44 many patrol encounters involved a section or less and battles might involve a company or no more than a battalion. By the time speed and agility were required in Burma the Indian Army was ready.[173]

The limits for overall expansion were never reached, unlike the manpower shortages affecting the British Army. For the Indian Army to expand to well above two million was a unique achievement but it could be argued that more was possible. There was little evidence that a shortage of suitable manpower in India as a whole impeded the expansion programme, provided the traditional focus on allegedly Martial Races was discarded, as it was by 1943.

[170] More than one brigade transfer occurred between the experienced 4th and 5th Indian Divisions in the Middle East but this was a case of experience troops moving between two well-tried and established formations and was therefore much less disruptive.
[171] Training where the troops were subjected to close proximity live fire under as realistic conditions as possible.
[172] Doulton, Lieut.-Col. A.J.F., *The Fighting Cock*, pp. 37-45
[173] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*. pp. 425-458, Pearson, M., *End Game Burma, Slim's Masterstroke at Meiktila*, pp. 55-68, Lyman. R., *Slim, Master of War, Burma and the Birth of Modern War*, pp. 229-261

Major General G.N. Molesworth, Military Secretary to the India Office from July 1943, estimated that the theoretical upper limit of potential recruits might have been close to 29 million but he qualified this and his more realistic view was stated as, "I have always believed myself that the true recruitable figure is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 10,000,000 – that is including classes not recruited pre-Great War II."[174]

However, some argued that the quality of recruits was in doubt and possibly deteriorating by 1943. Indeed Molesworth went on to voice this reservation in the previously quoted letter:

> You may think I have painted a gloomy picture, but I do not think it is far short of the mark. We have very definite limitations which U.K. and U.S.A. can never grasp. My own personal view is that, in the last 9 months we have gone beyond the safe limit of recruitment of fighting men, i.e. from what I have seen and heard we have increased quantity at the expense of quality. I still believe the real limit, for fighting troops, is below the 1,000,000 mark. This may give you something to bite on.[175]

Events in 1944-45 proved that Molesworth's reservations about quality were wrong but the majority of "fighting men" continued to be those drawn from traditional sources.[176] Molesworth's predecessor as Military Secretary, Major General Robert Lockhart, was a contemporary of Auchinleck, but the concerns he had previously raised regarding broader recruitment suggest he may have been more conservative than the Auk:

> Of these classes Madrassis are the main reservoir for expansion, until sufficient V.C.O.s and N.C.O.'s have been trained to officer them full use of their numbers cannot be made. Even after these supervisory personnel have been produced under what approximates to "hot house" methods, units concerned will remain an uncertain quantity until they have been fully tried out, though reports from the ME [Middle East] present encouraging reports of Madrassis in action with British N.C.O.'s.

[174] IOR, L/WS/1/136, Items 9-10, General G.N. Molesworth, Military Secretary, India Office, *Memorandum 21/07/43 Recruitment in India*
[175] Ibid.
[176] See Chapter 4 for an assessment of the differing deployments of troops drawn from the traditional martial sources and recruits from new sources.

> Similarly as regards the other new classes it cannot yet be indicated as to whether they have generally proved successful or not as up to the present units which have been fighting have still been principally composed of pre-war classes.[177]

Whilst the traditional recruitment areas of the Punjab were approaching exhaustion, there were few demographic impediments to the recruitment of, for example a further million from the populous Madras and Bombay regions. Lockhart was however correct in pointing to the more serious constraints on expansion that were imposed by shortages of suitable VCOs and NCOs. The leadership and language issues proved to be addressable by using carefully selected and trained Punjabi VCOs and NCOs. In due course Madrassis proved to be excellent soldiers but relatively few of them were present in the teeth arms in the crucial 1944-45 campaigns.[178] No less important a limiting factor was equipment availability. This was a constant consideration until the largesse of US Lend-Lease reached its peak in 1944. India's own manufacturing of military equipment was also beginning to make a significant contribution from 1943. The shortage of suitable recruits for technical roles was also a limiting factor, as was the slow pace of pre-war Indianisation.

The twelvefold expansion of the Indian Army was sanctioned belatedly and fell victim to inadequate preparation and planning. Grand strategic assumptions that may have seemed valid in1938 were nullified in June 1940 and December 1941. These errors and repeatedly unrealistic expectations resulted in painful lessons and defeats in 1941-43, damaging to the Indian Army's reputation and made its necessary transformation more difficult. The problem lay not with poor quality recruits but with inadequate, compromised and often interrupted training and a host of deficiencies in doctrine, command, healthcare, rigidity of deployment and over-confidence in high places. However, the institution proved resilient and steps towards the turnaround were already underway as the ignominious failures of the first Arakan campaign came to a close. Given the precious commodity of time, the turnaround was amply demonstrated in 1944 and comprehensively so by 1945.

[177] IOR L/WS/1/136 Item 12. General R.M.M. Lockhart, Military Secretary, India Office, *Memorandum 15/11/42 Recruitment in India*
[178] See Chapter 4.

4. CHAPTER 4 - THE INSTITUTION – UNITY AND DIVERSITY

The Second World War was an agent for change like no other. Its social impact on the Indian Army and more widely was considerable. The difficulties faced by the institution were great given the social complexities of Indian society from which it was drawn. This chapter will examine a range of diversity factors that may have led to disunity and the influences brought to bear within the Indian Army to promote unity and cohesion. How did the Indian Army continue to cope with the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity that prevailed within India, at a time when the politics of the independence struggle and global war presented substantial challenges? What unifying influences were promoted to mitigate the difficulties that could result from diversity issues at a time when other factors rendered the status quo unstable? Effective management of morale and welfare have always been important binding factors in any army, especially so in the much expanded Indian Army.[1] Managing diversity within the Indian Army and promoting unity of purpose and shared aims were key foundations for good morale and military effectiveness.

India was the most ethnically and religiously diverse and populous entity within the British Empire. It was also a deeply divided society, or more accurately, group of societies.[2] The Indian Army had evolved a sophisticated colonial template, intended to manage diversity. Given the complex nature of Indian society and its ethnic, religious, caste, cultural, economic and political divisions this was essential. In the context of the developing of Indian nationalism, Partha Chatterjee poses the question, "Whose imagined community?"[3] In 1939 there were at least two answers to this question, both relevant to the Indian Army.

The dominant colonial vision of India's community had evolved over 150 years, and it attempted to mould India to the needs of an imperial construct. It was based on rigid hierarchies, industrious compliance and a kind of urban modernity that co-existed with several almost feudal rural societies. The colonial vision sought to prevail by turning a sub-continent, no less diverse than Europe, into a complex array of administrative entities, including regional states with limited local powers, semi-independent princely states and border territories under direct rule from the centre. The imperial template was partly maintained by force but more often the implied threat of force. But it also exploited many useful underlying diversity factors, through

[1] These factors will be discussed in Chapter 6
[2] Chatterjee, P., *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus: The Nation and Its Fragments* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 14-34
[3] Ibid., pp. 3-13

differentiation, patronage and such devices as Martial Race theory. The Indian Army was an unashamedly overt guarantor of this imagined community.

The competing view of community was the emerging nation, oppressed by colonialism but now demanding its rightful independence. The dominant view of this community was the Congress narrative of unified nationalism. This was itself challenged by the alternate visions offered by Moslem League and Sikh aspirations, both of which sought to define separate national identities framed by religious differences. The colonial vision still maintained the veneer of continuity and stability but the underlying struggles for independence and new identities meant that India's community, or communities, were increasingly unstable. Given the critical importance of Sikh, Hindu and Moslem recruiting that underpinned the expansion of the Indian Army, these competing visions of "community" presented potential threats to institutional cohesion.

By 1939 the divide between colonial power and the colonised was widening, despite the grudging steps taken towards Dominion status. The longer term settlement remained unresolved.[4] The diluted version of Dominion status introduced in 1936-37 gave limited powers to Congress and the Muslim League administrations at the state level and a consultative framework at the national level but substantial powers remained with the Viceroy.[5] The princely states remained nominally separate and semi-independent. Regional self-government had been making tentative progress but the mass resignation of Congress administrations in September 1939 was a major setback to power sharing.[6]

Religious divides were further widened by political divisions and it became increasingly difficult to envisage a united, independent India that would meet the expectations of all parties. Congress was regarded by many Muslims as the party of Hindus, though it retained some influential Muslims in its senior ranks. As a result, the concept of a separate Pakistan was steadily gaining credence among politically engaged Muslim communities and support for it was vocal within the Muslim League. As a consequence, Sikhs became increasingly fearful that without their own separate state they would be at the mercy of the two larger groups in any

[4] The following works offer a range of perspectives on the independence struggle. Akbar, M.J., *Nehru, The Making of India*, Herman, A., *Gandhi & Churchill, The Epic Rivalry that Destroyed and Empire and Forged Our Age*, Khan, Y, *The Great Partition, The Making of India and Pakistan* (Yale, Yale University Press, 2007), Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*, Low, D.A., *Congress & The Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-47* (London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1977), , Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*

[5] Muldoon, A., *Empire, Politics and the Creation of the 1935 India Act* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009)

[6] See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the consequences of the Viceroy's position on the declaration of war.

post-colonial settlement.[7] For an army that relied heavily on recruitment from the Punjab, the risk of a three-way political impasse in that particular region signalled danger.[8]

As an ostensibly national institution, the Indian Army cannot be considered in isolation from the underlying characteristics and fault-lines of the society from which it was drawn. However, the Indian Army was not India in microcosm. The institution had, over many years, found ways to mitigate and to some extent exploit the divisions within its underlying communities. This was mainly done by narrow and restrictive recruitment based on Martial Race principles, but it was also achieved by the strict rules and conventions that applied within the institution.[9] The beneficial aspects of diversity were most obviously exploited through the adoption of a regimental system based on the British Army template. Regimental identities aligned with region, religion, class and community engendered strong and sustainable bonds within each regiment. In comparison many British regiments were associated with specific counties or regions but recruitment was often from a wider catchment, particularly in wartime.[10]

Unlike the Indian Army, the British Army did not overtly reflect religious differences in its regimental structure, although this had not been the case with Irish regiments prior to Irish independence.[11] The Indian Army did not fully reflect diversity factors affecting wider Indian society as it was never intended to mirror the society from which it came. Significant sections within the population were deliberately excluded, whilst others were relied on extensively. The obvious manifestations of this selective approach were the regimental names, Dogra, Sikh, Garhwal, Punjab, Baluch and others but the recruitment practices in peacetime were also specific to locality, clan and sometimes family. A common approach was for recruits to be segregated into Muslim, Sikh or Hindu regiments, giving both regional and religious identity to each regiment. However, there were many mixed composition regiments. Daniel Marston cites several mixed class examples, including Probyn's Horse, the 7th Light Cavalry, and the 2/1st

[7] Tan. T.Y, *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp.286-291
[8] Ibid., pp.281-302
[9] Ibid., pp.57-69, Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, pp. 341-361, Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Chapter 7 *Martial Gurkhas: The Persistence of a British Military Discourse on 'Race'*, rpp.225-241, Roberts, F, Field Marshal, Earl, *Forty-One Years in India: from Subaltern to Commander-in-chief*
[10] Arguably the most directly comparable model within the British Army was that of the Highland Regiments. In wartime these units recruited far more widely but in peacetime the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, for example, were predominantly but not exclusively recruited from a specific geographic region.. For a useful insight into the social and regional complexities of a Highland regiment, see: Moffat, J. & Holmes McCormick, A., *Moon Over Malaya, A Tale of Argylls and Marines* (Stroud, Tempus, 2002), pp. 11-79.
[11] The nearest equivalent to Indian regiments defined by religious affiliation, were the Irish regiments that were raised prior to Irish independence. Regiments raised in Ulster had a distinctly Protestant and Unionist character, particularly during the First World War.

Punjab Regiment.[12] The latter consisted of two companies of Punjabi Musalmans, one of Jat Sikhs and one of Hindu Rajputs.[13] This illustrates segregation was still the norm, either at the regimental level or within a battalion. The exceptions were specialist units, such as signals companies, that dispensed with segregation for pragmatic reasons.

With the notable exception of 1917-18 when the recruitment net widened, Martial Race theory remained a pervasive influence on recruitment policy at least until 1942-43 and some would argue much longer.[14] The strains of expansion had necessitated reform of recruiting systems and policy in 1917 and changes were also necessary from 1942. [15] The reductions in the peacetime establishment of the Army, in the 1920s and 1930s, had reversed most of the wartime progress towards greater diversity and Martial Race dogma reasserted its influence. If the army had to shrink then the argument in favour of retaining established and revered regiments always prevailed. For example, the disbandment of the Madras Pioneers in 1933 meant recruitment from Madras virtually ceased until the Second World War.[16] The three remaining Madras infantry regiments raised during the First World War were disbanded between 1923 and 1928. The demise of the well-respected pioneer regiments completed these retrograde moves.

It was not merely a practical matter of recruitment choices based on perceived qualitative differences. For decades Martial Race theory was seen as a stabilising influence within the Indian Army, insulating it from potentially contentious divisions in wider society. The emphasis on rural recruitment was also linked to Martial Race ideas. Concentration of recruitment in predominantly rural, allegedly *Martial* communities with strong Indian Army associations was seen as mitigating the risk of political influence.[17] By reducing the influence of Martial Race theory in wartime, the Army was increasing diversity but arguably increasing the risk of politicisation in unstable times. Increased diversity of intake was justifiably seen as a positive step towards a modern army but might also increase the risk of disunity and dissent unless the

[12] Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes* (Westport CT, Praeger, 2003), pp. 14-15
[13] Ibid.
[14] Amin, Major A. H., *Ethnicity, Religion, Military Performance and Political Reliability - British Recruitment Policy and The Indian Army -- 1757-1947.* Defence Journal, February, 2001 (Karachi, Pathfinder Fountain, 2001)
[15] Indian Army recruitment in the First World War discussed extensively in several authoritative works, including, Tan T.Y., *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi, Sage, 2005), Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, Olusoga, D., *The World's War* (London, Head of Zeus, 2014), Omissi, D., *The Sepoy and the Raj, The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (London, MacMillan Press Ltd., 1994), Government of India , *India's Services In the War, Volume 1&2* (Calcutta, Govt. of India,1922)
[16] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour,* p. 349.
[17] Cunningham, Lt Col. W. B. MC., *Dogras*, (Calcutta, Govt. of India,1932)

process was sensitively managed. These issues were not unexpected and the Indian Army had learned lessons in the First World War.[18]

In practice there was little evidence of negative consequences with wider recruitment in the Second World War, other than the obvious difficulties presented by language and differing dietary requirements. The introduction of non-martial recruits did no discernible damage to cohesion or efficiency. On the contrary, some of the most "Martial" did in extreme circumstances present a risk to unity. One of the paradoxes of the wartime period is that some of the most sought after recruits in terms of Martial Race, the Jat Sikhs, were conspicuously present in the ranks of the INA and were involved in other acts of dissent.[19] If Martial classes were among the INA's more willing recruits then this weakened the argument in favour of exclusivity in recruitment.[20] It soon became evident that some of the least "Martial" recruits taken in during the Second World War proved to be both loyal and effective, as we will see in the case of the Chamar Regiment.[21] For lower caste Hindus and Sikh, the honour of serving in the armed forces was something that conferred status and was perceived as very positive by groups that benefitted.[22] Independent India has seen wider recruitment as a necessity, to ensure that the army is more representative of Indian society. Whilst the former Martial Races remain significant within the post-independence armies of India and Pakistan, the influence of such theories is now significantly reduced.[23]

In examining the factors that promoted either unity or in some way contributed to disunity, it is useful to adopt a structured approach and any such method should be more akin to social history than military. In his introduction to *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity,* Philip Mason suggested a framework for the definition and discussion of diversity factors in Indian society.[24]

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[18] Cohen, S.P., *The Indian Army, Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation* (Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 70-73

[19] IOR L/WS/1/303, *Disaffection of Sikh Troops.* IOR L/WS/2/44, *Note on Sikhs, 6th November 1942*. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the acts of Mutiny that occurred in 1939-40 and the impact of the Indian National Army on perceptions of loyalty from the most established recruiting sources.

[20] The impact on the Indian Army of the creation and existence of the INA is discussed in Chapter 5

[21] Lieutenant-Colonel Sir G**.** Betham and Major H.V.R. Geary, *The Golden Galley, The story of the Second Punjab Regiment 1761-1947* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1956). pp. 292-296, See further discussion later in this chapter.

[22] See the example of Mazhabi and Ramadasias Sikh recruitment in Section 1.3.6 of this chapter. These lower caste Sikhs had been lobbying for the right to be recruited for some time.

[23] Kundu, A., *Militarism in India, The Army and Civil Society in Consensus.* Kundu's excellent book includes a wider discussion of the role of the Indian Army in modern Indian society and the difficulties of the continued over-representation of those groups previously labelled as Martial Races.

[24] Mason, P, Editor, *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity: A Symposium*, pp. 1-29, *Unity and Diversity: An Introductory Review*. In his later career as Director of the Institute of Race Relations, Mason was able to draw on the insights of his earlier roles in the Indian Civil Service and to demonstrate an astute appreciation of the social and cultural issues affecting India at that time.

The essays in this volume remain relevant to 1939-45 as they explore themes that may be less applicable in modern India and Pakistan.[25] Mason suggested several "disunities" or areas of diversity in India, each of which presented risks to Indian unity.[26] These were religion, language, region, ethnicity, caste and status in economic, educational and social class terms. This is a useful start point but if we wind the clock back and apply these diversity factors to wartime imperial India then we must also consider colonial influences and the differences between the colonised and the coloniser. Other diversity factors that could be added to the list include physical appearance and political allegiances. The differing physical attributes of unusually tall recruits from the North West Frontier provinces or the darker skin of some ethnic groups had little bearing on the unity of the India Army but politics undoubtedly did and will therefore be considered.

To understand why the Indian Army largely maintained stability it is essential to first examine the unifying factors that held the Indian Army together in a period of unprecedented adversity. It is also important to assess the impact of factors, both internal and external, that had the potential to promote disunity. This fundamentally imperialist institution existed in the social, structural and political tensions of wider Indian society. Steps were taken to insulate the army from more contentious diversity factors, for example by segregation of many units by class and religious differences. It was recognised that diversity factors could either strengthen or weaken the army, or their effect could be neutral. Some unifying factors that bound the Indian Army together were similar to those influencing a non-colonial army. For example regimental allegiance and esprit de corps were engendered in much the same way as in the British Army. Other factors are more difficult to define, such as strong family traditions of military service, izzat and the kudos of improved social status came into play before and after recruitment.

When an individual had joined the army, several considerations had to be managed with care. Sensitive handling of potentially divisive issues was essential and above all this required the honouring of the underlying principles and duty of care on which the "contract" between the institution and the individual was based. This "contract" was not merely the formal sum of service regulations, standing orders, ration scales and policies. It was also the unwritten

[25] Whilst this work was published in 1967, it provides a useful insight into the subject in the late colonial and immediate post-colonial periods. Much of the more recent discourse on India's diversity is focussed on modern India and not the late colonial era. Examples include, David, H. and Jarman, F., Eds., *India Diversity* (Noida, OM Books, 2017), Shiva, V., *India Divided: Diversity and Democracy Under Attack* (New York, Seven Stories Press, 2005), Tripathy, J. and Sudarsan, P. , Eds., *The Democratic Predicament: Cultural Diversity in Europe and India* (Delhi, Routledge India, 2016)

[26] Ibid., pp. 2-4

commitment by the institution and its representatives, commissioned officers, VCOs and NCOs to do right by the individual soldier in all circumstances. In the words of Slim:

> Unselfishness, as far as you are concerned means simply this – you will put first the honour and interests of your country and your regiment; next you will put the safety, well-being and comfort of your men; and last – and last all the time – you will put your own interest, your own safety, your own comfort.[27]

Promoting unity and cohesion was central to this commitment. Trust and confidence had to be earned by the institution, through the behaviours and actions of its officers at all times. Once assured, it reinforced the unity of purpose and cohesion that can only exist in a close-knit organisation. In a sense, this was no different from any other army but in a colonial army of volunteers the bond of trust and commitment was not necessarily underpinned by patriotism or nationalism.

4.1 Unifying Factors

4.1.1 The Cause

A paradox at the centre of Allied war aims was the continuation of colonialism. The two most significant colonial powers, Britain and France, later joined by the Netherlands and Belgium, were reluctant adversaries of Germany and later Italy and Japan. The cause was, to use Slim's phrase, "a great and noble object", that is, the defeat of aggressive fascism. However, that cause was compromised in the eyes of many by the imperialist stance of Britain and some of its allies. The defeat of fascist Italy, itself an imperial power, Nazi Germany an aspiring one and the imperialist militarism of the Japanese had the superficial hallmarks of a just and noble endeavour. However, it could be argued that imperialist allies did not come to this cause with clean hands. Fascism was anathema to India's Congress Party leadership but the Atlantic Charter's resounding re-statement of the universal right to self-determination rang somewhat hollow in India.[28] At a time when some 23,000 Indians had been convicted and imprisoned for participation in the Satyagraha, Churchill poured scorn on the idea that the Atlantic Charter was applicable to India in his parliamentary speech on 9 September 1941.[29]

[27] Slim, W. Field Marshal Viscount , *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, Cassell & Co, 1957)
[28] Toye, R., *Churchill's Empire, The World That Made Him and the World He Made*
[29] Low, D.A., *Congress & The Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-47*, p. 390.

Churchill's somewhat circular argument was that the Atlantic Charter did not apply, as other principles set out in relation to the British Empire already applied and these were aligned to the Charter:

> …the Joint Declaration does not qualify in any way the various statements of policy which have been made from time to time about the development of constitutional government in India, Burma or other parts of the British Empire. We are pledged by the Declaration of August, 1940, to help India to obtain free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth with ourselves, subject, of course, to the fulfilment of obligations arising from our long connection with India and our responsibilities to its many creeds, races and interests.[30]
>
> We have made declarations on these matters which are complete in themselves, free from ambiguity and related to the conditions and circumstances of the territories and peoples affected. They will be found to be entirely in harmony with the high conception of freedom and justice which inspired the Joint Declaration.[31]

Richard Toye counters that there was little evidence to substantiate the claims of other progress towards enfranchisement and independence.[32] If freedom was the inalienable right of citizens in the occupied countries of Europe then surely it was also the right of Indians and for this reason the sophistry of the Prime Minister's position was an affront to many in India.

It would be wrong to suggest that there was wide political support in India for the old global order but to many the threatened new order seemed far worse. Opposition to the Axis was widely expressed in India and there was at least qualified goodwill towards the Allied cause. Gandhi acknowledged the validity of the cause, if not the strategy. In a meeting with Linlithgow on 4 September 1939 he offered support for the war effort and said, "It almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force and as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else."[33] However, Gandhi's support was tempered by scepticism and cynicism about Britain's intentions towards India and past precedents were unpromising. The expectations of greater self-rule in the aftermath of the First World War remained unfulfilled and the India Act of 1935 had failed to confer unfettered Dominion status.

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[30] Winston Churchill, Prime Minister, *The War Situation* (House of Commons Debate, 9 September 1941, Volume 374 Col 69)
[31] Ibid.
[32] Toye, R.**,** *Churchill's Empire, The World That Made Him and the World He Made*, pp. 214-215
[33] Chaudhuri, N., *Thy Hand, Great Anarch! India 1921-1952*. pp. 534-535

The Axis powers were obligingly unambiguous in demonstrating unprovoked aggression and there could be little doubt which side had chosen to use war to gain power and territory. Diplomacy and appeasement had failed and there could be no credible suggestion that the British Empire was seeking colonial gains by going to war but it was seeking to preserve a status quo that was unacceptable to most Indians. The initial support within India for the need to go to war was, however, marred by the Viceroy's insensitivity in announcing that a state of war existed, without prior consultation.[34]

If the Indian civil-political jury was divided and to some degree uncommitted, the Indian Army found little difficulty in showing unity of purpose in conflict with Italy and Germany in North and East Africa or indeed in Italy from 1943. Fighting for the defence of Hong Kong, Malaya and Burma was "business as usual" for the Empire's fire brigade but instances of entrenched traditions of racial prejudice in Malaya proved damaging to military/civil relations there.[35] Indian commissioned officers discovered they could not travel in the same railway carriages as British officers under Malayan regulations. They were refused membership rights to equivalents of the cantonment clubs in India that had barred entry in earlier times.[36] The same petty racial discrimination that confronted the first KCIOs, in both India and Britain, still pervaded Malaya, which seemed a decade behind the gradual progress being made in India.

It was difficult for Indian officers to believe in a fight to protect those who treated them as inferior and sought to impose petty segregation upon them at every turn. Some recognised the noble cause was manifestly less compelling to colonial subjects. The adjournment debate held in Parliament on 24 and 25 February 1942, was the first opportunity for the surrender of Singapore and its implications to be discussed in full. Several MPs raised the question of whether or not colonial subjects would or indeed could be motivated to fight for the Allied cause. Richard Stokes, Labour MP for Ipswich, drew attention back to the Atlantic Charter and its political significance to Malayan, Burmese and Indian colonial subjects and found the Prime Minister's position wanting:

> I find myself in a dreadful confusion when the Prime Minister says that India is specifically excluded from the application of the principles in the Atlantic Charter. In connection with this, the Prime Minister of the Punjab said that it was the biggest rebuff

[34] See Chapter 3.
[35] IOR L/WS/1/391, *Discipline of Indian Troops in Singapore*, Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Sundaram, C. *Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets: Disaffection among Indian Troops in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1940-1, and the Formation of the Indian National Army*, pp. 136-140
[36] Ibid., pp. 134-138

> India had ever received. Another recent event in India is that we have had Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek visiting there, and his message to India had the appeal that India should give her united support to the principles in the Atlantic Charter. But why should India give her support if they do not apply? Something will be done soon, I hope, in this matter. I trust that the right hon. and learned Gentleman will insist, as part of his job in the Government that something constructive is done with regard to India.[37]

These observations applied equally to Indian troops defending Burma and those who had recently been forced to surrender in Hong Kong and Singapore. Not before time, "something constructive" was attempted soon after the debate, in the guise of the Cripps Mission. However, it failed to gain the approval of all parties in India and the issue of fighting for the freedom of others whilst being denied that same freedom would continue to fester.[38] On the second day of debate, Alexander Sloan, Labour MP for South Ayrshire, made telling points in similar vein:

> If, as has been claimed, this is a war for freedom and democracy and the rights of nations to govern themselves, we cannot limit our freedom to certain people. If we are to fight for freedom for the Poles, the Czechoslovaks, the Belgians and the Greeks, we must not limit our horizon now that the matter has been forced upon us. We must widen our perspective. We must establish freedom wherever it does not exist, and if we have stumbled across areas which stand as much, or more, in need of freedom than some of our European countries, we must act as if we mean what we say and say what we mean.
>
> Their land was invaded by an imperialist-minded army, but they were already dominated by another of the same type. What material difference would it make to the Malayans? Merely exchanging one set of vultures for another, not the difference perhaps of a bowl of rice. [39]

Stokes and Sloan were making the obvious connection between the aims of the Atlantic Charter and the current plight of recently invaded Malaya and Singapore. This was the very connection that Churchill sought to avoid in his speech on 9 September 1941. The issue was starkly relevant for India. If colonial subjects were to be expected to fight for "freedom" then it needed to be something that was available to them too, not something reserved for those in occupied

[37] Stokes, Richard. MP for Ipswich, *The War Situation* (House of Commons Debate, 24 February 1942, Volume 378 cc25-176)
[38] See Chapter 5.
[39] Sloan Alexander. MP for South Ayrshire, *The War Situation* (House of Commons Debate, 25 February 1942, Volume 378 cc230-322)

Europe. Neither MP mentioned the Indian Army specifically but the points raised were no less applicable to motivation of the largest volunteer army.

A less ambivalent uniting factor in the case of the fight against the Japanese was the widespread brutality shown by the opponent. The behaviour of Japanese troops in the “Rape of Nanking” in 1937 was widely reported but the behaviour of some Japanese troops seems to have come as a surprise in Malaya and Burma. Stories soon began to spread in both Malaya and Burma of the savage treatment of prisoners and civilians by the Japanese.[40] Whilst the initial intention on the part of the Japanese may have been to intimidate and lower their opponent’s morale, the bayoneting of prisoners and wounded in some incidents, increasingly strengthened the resolve of Indian, British and Australian troops. The segregation of Indian troops and officers from their British officers and other British and Australian troops at Farrer Park Racecourse, Singapore in February 1942 was a partly successful attempt to inveigle Indian troops into the INA. Better treatment was offered to those joining the INA. However, those who refused were in some cases treated worse than other POWs.[41]

The unifying influence of anti-Japanese propaganda has been explored by Tarak Barkawi and his conclusions are convincing, if complex.[42] Whilst Allied propaganda often resorted to oriental racist tropes to demonise, those in most direct contact, either in battle or as prisoners, had more than enough reasons to unite in hating their enemy. My own anecdotal experience suggests that hating the Japanese was a strong unifying factor among Malaya and Burma veterans but was far less prevalent among Ninth Army veterans who served in the liberation and in the occupying forces sent to Japan. My conclusions result from informal discussions with veterans, including my father over many years. However, the discussions were not conducted with academic rigour and predate my more recent academic interest in this subject.

4.1.2 The Influence of Martial Race theory

Many rightly regard Martial Race theory as one of the more disreputable tools that colonisers used to justify the segregation and special treatment of certain groups within a colonial society. It has been seen as a useful adjunct to a wider divide and rule strategy.[43] The concept of Martial Race had no credible basis and was a convenient colonial construct, linked in some respects to the discredited ideas of Eugenics. However, for many years Martial Race theory gave the Indian

[40] Allen, Louis, *Singapore: 1941-42*, pp. 265-266
[41] See Chapter 5
[42] Barkawi, T., *Soldiers of Empire : Indian and British Armies in World War II*, pp. 229-247
[43] Imy, K., *Faithful Fighters: Identity and Power in the British Indian Army* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2019), pp. 17-18

Army a useful means and justification, albeit specious, for narrowing the scope of recruitment and thus reducing the potential risk that diversity factors would lead to disunity within its ranks. For both practical and political reasons, Martial Race theory was, by the 1930s, increasingly unacceptable, especially to Indian politicians at national and regional level. Global war necessitated unprecedented Indian Army expansion and rendered adherence to such outmoded notions impractical. Expansion required wider diversity of recruitment and this carried some risk of increased divisiveness. For the first two years of the conflict, recruitment was still predominantly from the Punjab and on Martial Race lines. By 1942 this policy was no longer viable for practical reasons.[44]

The Government of India and the Indian Army high command expended considerable effort over generations in managing issues of diversity and potential disunity. The shift away from army recruitment in Bengal and to recruitment from the Punjab was one of the obvious consequences of the events of 1857. The thinking was that Bengalis had been at the heart of the Mutiny and Punjabis had remained loyal, so the Punjab was the logical choice for future recruitment.[45] This argument gained momentum and superficial validity from the evolving theories of Martial Race, which became more refined elaborations of policies based on increasingly narrow selection criteria, by race, caste, class, region, locality, clan and family.

The mythology of Martial Race theory was a useful tool to promote unity and to manage potentially negative aspects of diversity in the ranks. Just as pride in the regiment could be a boost to morale, so could pride in being part of a select Martial Race. For institutional strength, effective unifying factors were fostered and diversity factors that might lead to disunity were avoided, limited or controlled. These policies further narrowed recruitment and reduced diversity. The obvious danger of such a policy is that the Army might become so narrowly based that one designated Martial Race, for example, the Sikhs, might become the only Martial Race that was recruited. An extreme example of how such a policy could go wrong was demonstrated by the long term consequences of Belgium favouring the Tutsi minority in their former colony, Rwanda. Ultimately the fostering of one minority created ever deeper tensions that in the post-colonial era led to the genocide of 1994.[46] This did not happen with the Indian Army, in part because no single group within society dominated all spheres of government or in

[44] The detailed statistics are available in, IOR L/MIL/14/234, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1938-40, IOR L/MIL/14/235, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1941, IOR L/MIL/14/236, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1942. See later in this chapter for examples of the policy shift towards wider recruitment.
[45] Tan T.Y., *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 50-69
[46] Prunier, G., *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008)

wider Indian society. A degree of diversity was always maintained but the recruitment of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs did increasingly focus on the Punjab. Tan Tai Yong has shown how the concentration of recruitment on the Punjab fostered the ever closer links between region and army. A shared destiny was developed where the politics and governance of this state became symbiotically linked with the Indian Army.[47] However, the Punjab was itself relatively diverse and by no means dominated by one religion, class, caste or ethnic group. This diversity made the Punjab one of the main flashpoints of the partition tragedies of 1947-48.[48]

Martial Race theory was convenient nonsense and more liberal thinkers said so even at the peak of its influence.[49] The idea that certain racial groupings make better soldiers simply as a consequence of their genetic makeup and the location of their birth is alien to most modern thinking on race and social theory, but it was for decades seen as conveniently rational to many. These theories made considerable progress as both convention and doctrine under Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army, 1885-1893.[50] On assuming command of the Madras Army in 1880, Roberts made his views all too clear:

> I made long tours in order to acquaint myself with the needs and capabilities of the Madras Army. I tried hard to discover in them those fighting qualities which had distinguished their forefathers during the wars of the last and the beginning of this century. But long years of peace and the security and prosperity attending it had evidently had on them, as they always seem to have upon Asiatics, a softening and deteriorating effect; and I was forced to the conclusion that the ancient military spirit had died in them as it had died in the ordinary Hindostani of Bengal and the Mahratta of Bombay,…" [51]

Lord Roberts was a towering presence from the 1880s, with unrivalled influence within the Indian Army. His judgement on many military matters was sound but it seems not to have occurred to him that poor, sometimes indolent leadership or a lack of recent active service in

[47] Tan T.Y., *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi, Sage, 2005)
[48] Khan, Y, *The Great Partition, The Making of India and Pakistan*, pp. 18-22
[49] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, p. 347. Mason refers to the more enlightened views of Lord Roberts's contemporary General John Jacob and to Auchinleck in a later generation.
[50] Field Marshal Frederick Sleigh Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts, VC, KG, KP, GCB, OM, GCSI, GCIE, KSt.J, VD, PC, 1832-1914. As Commander-in-Chief Bengal Army, Roberts was de facto C.in C. of the Indian Army as the role included oversight of the other Presidency armies.
[51] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, p. 345. This quotation does not refer to martial races specifically but it does enunciate Roberts's very negative view of troops regarded as not from the martial races.

the challenging environment of the North West Frontier might have been greater factors in determining the quality of the troops than nature or nurture. Mason rightly points out that Roberts could not ignore the manifest efficiency of the Madras Sappers, but Roberts seems to have failed to see a correlation between effective, ambitious and intelligent Royal Engineer officers and the corresponding efficiency of their Sappers.[52] In contrast, the infantry officers of the Madras Army lacked experience of the right kind. Promotion prospects were slow and opportunities for active service were few.

One revealing approach to understanding of Martial Race theory is to examine the Indian Army recruitment manuals. Philip Mason cites the Sikh handbook for this very purpose.[53] The recruitment manuals were created to assist junior officers in preparation for recruitment tours the target areas for their regiment. Most were initially published before the First World War and then revised periodically, at least until the 1930s. Another revealing example was the recruitment manual for the Dogra Regiment.[54] It was updated in 1932 from a previous edition in 1918 and this suggests that the thinking it reveals still remained current in the 1930s. There appears to be no later edition and wartime recruitment may still have been influenced by the 1932 edition. In the introduction the author makes a lineal connection between the Dogras of northern India and the alleged “cradle of the Aryan Race” on the banks of the Oxus. There is a clear and somewhat patronising inference that Indian Aryans migrated in an easterly direction and might be the next best thing to European Aryans who migrated to the west. This unfortunate line of argument is one that leading Nazis would probably have been comfortable with.[55]

The manual goes on to discuss the origin of the warrior class of Dogras through their connection with the Rajputs, and it subdivides the Aryans into four classes:

> Thus the Aryans by a process of natural selection, gradually resolved themselves into four castes:-
>
> - The Brahman or priestly caste, composed of Rishis, their descendants, and disciples, to which was entrusted the expounding of the Vedas and the conduct of religious ceremonies

[52] Ibid., pp. 345-346
[53] Ibid., pp. 352-353
[54] Cunningham W.B., Lt Col. M.C. *Dogras,* (Calcutta, Government of India, 1932)
[55] See Hayes, R., *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany, Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda,* for a wider discussion of the Nazi view of Indian Aryanism.

- The Kshatriya, i.e. Rajput, or governing and military caste, composed of the maharajas and their warrior kinsmen and companions, whose duty it was to rule, fight, administer justice, and protect the community in general.
- The Vaisiya or trading and agricultural caste, which, assisted by the conquered aborigines, tilled the land, raised cattle and manufactured the arms, implements and household utensils required by the Aryan commonwealths.
- The Sudra or menial caste, composed of captured aborigines whose lives had been spared, and the progeny of marriages between Aryans of different castes and Aryans and the women of the country, all of whom, by the rigid exclusiveness of Hindu custom were regarded as degraded.[56]

The contemporary reader was no doubt reassured that, "All however were recognised as belonging to the 'twice born' or Aryan race, all were permitted to attend the great national sacrifices and all worshipped the same gods".[57] The concept of Martial Races had gained considerable traction in the late nineteenth century at a time when race based theories such as Eugenics were also fashionable. The thin line between these two dogmas is illustrated by the Dogra recruitment manual. A more extensive discussion of the theories of Aryanism in the context of British India may be of interest but this must remain outside the scope of this thesis.[58] The handbook proceeds with a breakdown by caste, class, clan, family name within clan and locality.[59] Dogras from the hills are to be preferred to the Dogras from the plains and the latter are regarded as not even being "true Rajputs".[60] No satisfactory explanation is offered for the statement regarding the lowland Dogras alleged lack of Rajput heritage and this adds to a sense that much of the commentary is based on hearsay.

The problem with incoherent pseudo-science of this sort is that there is always a just sufficient veneer of practical and reasoned basis to give the Martial Race narrative some degree of authority. For example, a Dogra sepoy who has grown up in a hilly area was perhaps more physically fit than someone from the plains, provided both have benefitted from sufficient nutrition and good health. Being labelled as suitably *Martial* did not provide immunity from the patronising clichés of colonialism; "Dogras are by nature tractable and obedient. They have no aspiration after independence, and seem to prefer being under authority."[61] As if this

[56] Cunningham, *Dogras,* p.2
[57] Ibid.
[58] Troutman, T.R., *Aryans and British India* (California, University of California Press, 1997). Troutman sets out a useful description of the influence of Aryanism on European academic thought in the 19th and early 20th Centuries.
[59] Cunningham *Dogras,* pp. 35-51
[60] Ibid., p.50
[61] Ibid., p.89

condescending tone was not enough, the Dogra was also regarded as intellectually lacking, "In spite of their refined and high-bred features, they are not particularly intelligent and are very superstitious and distrustful of strangers." And finally, Dogras were portrayed as steadfast rather than heroic, "As soldiers, Dogras are not remarkable for daring or impetuous bravery, but they can always be depended on for quiet unflinching courage, patient endurance of fatigue and orderly obedient habits."[62]

The whole elaborate Martial edifice of the *Dogra* recruitment manual is somewhat undermined by the recent observation of Kaushik Roy that the term *Dogra* was a relatively recent British descriptive term, applied to the hill tribes of a specific area in the Punjab. The term had no historical significance in the context of Indian heritage.[63] This is a stark illustration of the kind of mythology that gained credibility under the auspices of Martial Race theory. A revealing article by retired Major Agha Humayun Amin of the Army of Pakistan casts further doubt on the validity of Martial Race theories by showing its inconsistency over time.[64] He argues that the stock of certain Martial races rose or fell depending on the incidence of any acts of disloyalty or mutiny. Amin draws on his own experience to confirm that Martial Race theory still had at least some currency within Pakistan's army as recently as the 1990s.[65] More controversially, he also suggests that Pakistan's over-confidence in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 was engendered by a lingering belief that Pakistan's armed forces were more *Martial* than those of India, "…it was generally thought in the Pakistan Army till 1964 that the Hindus were non-Martial and were inferior to Muslims in general and Punjabi/Pathan Muslims in particular."[66] Perhaps Martial Race theory is now so resoundingly discredited in the twenty-first century that it can be laid to rest.

4.1.3 Regimental Unity

Just as regiments of the British Army were building blocks of its cohesion and spirit, the template was applied in the Indian Army over many years. In a sense, the regimental bonds were even stronger, as many of the Indian Army regiments were recruited from much narrower catchment areas, based on religion, race, caste, locality, clan and family connection. In comparison, the British army regiments were no longer recruited from one locality to the same

[62] Ibid., p.90
[63] Roy, K., *The Army in British India: From Colonial Warfare to Total War 1857 – 1947*, p.80
[64] Amin, Major A. H. , *Ethnicity, Religion, Military Performance and Political Reliability - British Recruitment Policy and The Indian Army -- 1757-1947.* Defence Journal, February, 2001 (Karachi, Pathfinder Fountain, 2001) pp.3-4
[65] Ibid., pp. 15-16
[66] Ibid., p. 2

extent. For example, many recruits to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were from the streets of Glasgow, Clydebank and Edinburgh, not the Scottish Highlands.[67]

The importance of the regiment is well documented from the officer's perspective but less so from the viewpoint of the ordinary soldier. There are many memoirs written by officers of the Indian Army that describe the process of joining and, more importantly, becoming part of the regiment. One that is relevant is *Bugles and a Tiger*, by John Masters.[68] Masters described the relatively leisurely pre-war process of becoming suffused with the spirit of the regiment over two or three years. John Randle describes the more rapid wartime learning curve in *Battle Tales from Burma*.[69] In peacetime, British and Indian officers were attached to a British Army regiment for their first year in India, prior to joining an Indian Army regiment. The aim of this was to learn the regimental ropes in a supportive and, for the British officer, more familiar environment prior to having to take on the additional demands and responsibilities of junior command. In wartime, there was neither time nor indeed genuine need. The value of this attachment was often variable as some accounts suggest that the attached Indian officers were not always made welcome. In either case, once attached to an Indian regiment the junior officer was soon given greater responsibility than was likely in British regiments.[70] There was a second learning curve on joining an Indian or Gurkha regiment, as the young subaltern had to learn Urdu or Gurkhali and become familiar with quite different regimental norms.

4.1.4 Command Structure

The Indian Army's unique command structure promoted cohesion by addressing the potential weaknesses that might undermine the relationships between Indian troops and British-born officers. Until the gradual process of Indianisation of the officer corps began in the 1920s the Indian Army had two segregated officer classes. British King's Commissioned officers (KCOs) were selected from the same pool of recruits as the British Army and their status was identical to British Army officers. There were Non-Commissioned Officers, (NCOs) just as in the British Army but with Indian rank titles. The unique constituent was the Indian Viceroy's Commissioned Officer. The most senior VCO with many years of service was still less senior than the most junior KCO but his role was to act as the essential link between the British officers and the Indian other ranks. In practice, senior VCOs had greater experience, power and influence over the men than the young second-lieutenant, who might command the company but would be wise to take the advice of his Subedar on most matters relating to the men in his care.

[67] Moffat, J. & Holmes McCormick, A., *Moon Over Malaya, A Tale of Argylls and Marines*, p. 19
[68] Masters, J., *Bugles and a Tiger, My Life in the Gurkhas*
[69] Randle, J., *Battle Tales from Burma*
[70] Singh, V.K. Major-General, *Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers*, p. 56 and pp.92-93

Most senior VCOs had more than 20 years of good service and experience behind them. Brigadier John Prendergast, in his memoir, captures some of the importance of the VCO role both as someone of considerable standing with the India Army and the VCO's village community:

> VCOs were very big shots indeed, especially in their own villages. They were often awarded decorations such as the Indian Distinguished Service Medal…for long and loyal service. Like the gallantry awards these carried the grant of a sizeable piece of land, which again helped to preserve the yeoman connection.[71]

Indian regiments had few British officers, perhaps a dozen KCOs within a battalion and a British second lieutenant would often command a company. Platoons were commanded by VCOs. In the words of John Masters:

> The remaining nineteen officer jobs were carried out by Viceroy's Commissioned Officers. The VCO started his military life as an enlisted man and, when promoted, was promoted within the same battalion.[72]

Gurkha VCOs were referred to as "Gurkha Officers" and Masters suggests that, "The Gurkha officers were the backbone of the regiment and held much responsibility". He acknowledges the great reliance of a young and inexperienced officer on his subedar second in command and the VCOs who commanded each platoon.

In peacetime, there was ample time allowed for the junior officer to learn Urdu or Gurkhali and to begin to develop a working relationship and a level of trust with his troops. The VCOs were still the primary interlocutors for that relationship and the bonds of trust and mutual interdependence were brokered and strengthened by the VCOs.[73] In wartime, the role of the VCO was critical to success as the young officer might well not be a KCO but an Emergency Commissioned Officer (ECO), with little knowledge of Urdu and minimal command experience or familiarity with Indian Army ways.[74] In this situation, effective VCOs were the lynch-pins and

[71] Prendergast, J., *Prender's Progress: A Soldier in India 1931-1947*, p.59. Prendergast may have suffered a memory lapse in this instance as the IDSM was awarded for gallantry, not long service, although many VCOs would indeed have had this award bestowed on them. Nor were land grants necessarily a direct consequence of an IDSM award but they were linked more widely to distinguished service.
[72] Masters, J., *Bugles and a Tiger, My Life in the Gurkhas*. pp. 94-95
[73] Ibid., pp. 94-96
[74] IWM Sound Archives 5196, Interviewee/speaker 2nd Lt. George Stanley Gimson, Recorded 1981/08/19

without them, a unit was significantly weakened. Conversely, poor, or more specifically partisan, VCO leadership could be damaging and was implicated in one instance of mutiny examined in Chapter 5.

Indianisation policies altered the traditional recipe with mixed consequences. Some battalions were designated to become entirely Indian officered and were structured along similar lines to a British Army battalion, with an Indian second-lieutenant in command of each platoon and no VCOs. This had two negative consequences. On the one hand KCIOs recognised they were being given less command responsibility than British equivalents and for this reason, the arrangement was unpopular. The other disadvantage was that the valuable juxtaposition of the freshly trained but inexperienced junior officer with the highly experienced, but perhaps a little set in his ways, VCO was lost. The unit-based Indianisation scheme was over-ridden by war imperatives and Indian officers found themselves commanding units that included VCOs in some cases and many capable VCOs were granted emergency commissions too.

4.1.5 Duty and Honour

In interviews recorded for the *Plain Tales of the Raj* Radio 4 documentary first broadcast in 1974, Field Marshal Auchinleck shared his recollections as a young officer. He describes visiting villages in the Punjab, building the mutual trust that often existed between the young subalterns of his Regiment and the elders, parents and veterans in each village. By meeting veterans and families and reaffirming bonds, the recruiting officer strengthened one of the foundations of regimental unity.[75] This oft-repeated social interaction was also reinforcing the related concepts of izzat and "Ma Bap", encapsulating principles of honour and duty for the jawan and the officer respectively. In the case of "Ma Bap", Mother/Father, the junior officer was overtly taking on a duty of care for his charges that was paternal in character. The importance of Izzat reminds one of Mowbray's speech in Richard II, "….The purest treasure mortal times afford is spotless reputation. That away and men are but gilded loam or painted clay."[76] It was natural that a young recruit, whose father had served with the same regiment and grandfather too, felt an obligation to family, village, clan and regiment to uphold the honour of all through his own good behaviour and loyal service. To fail was not merely to let oneself down but also to fail one's family and to reduce their standing within the insular societies of village and clan. Coming home with a gallantry medal was not just about the award to the individual. It was also an

[75] IWM Sound Archives BBC Recording, *Plain Tales From the Raj*. Interviewee/speaker: Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, GCB,GCIE, CSI, DSO, OBE (London, BBC, 1976-10-07)
[76] Shakespeare, W. *Richard II, Act 1 Scene 1*. Izzat has a meaning that is a combination of honour, reputation, and prestige and is typically used in the context of family honour.

enhancement of family reputation and potentially improved financial standing.[77] It reaffirmed the bond between soldier, ancestors and regiment. Izzat mattered and even if it didn't stop the occasional fall from grace of individuals, it perhaps deterred dissent or bad behaviour more effectively than appearance before the adjutant on a charge.

The contract that was implicitly struck between the Jawan and the Indian Army was sustained on a daily basis by officers fulfilling their duty of care to the Jawan. This has sometimes been associated with the concept of "*Ma Bap*". The idea was explored in one of the themes in Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* novels.[78] The naive and traditionalist Indian Army officer, Teddy Bingham, loses his life in the attempt to bring an INA soldier, formerly of his own regiment, back under the wing of the regiment and his officer.[79] This traditional Indian Army stance is in stark contrast to the dismissive and unemotional stance of Captain Merrick, who sees Bingham's efforts as outmoded naivety and therefore doomed to fail. "Ma Bap" infers a patriarchal relationship between officer and soldier of a special nature that was also somehow imagined to suffuse the whole relationship between coloniser and colonial subject. The daily reality of ensuring adequate accommodation, conditions, pay, pensions, food, arms, pastoral support and medical provision were far more relevant to the cohesion and effectiveness of the Indian Army than any ethereal concept of patriarchy. The Bingham/Merrick divide is a nice metaphor for the dichotomy between the "old" professional Indian Army and the modern and technocratic professionalism of the "new" army of 1939-45. This divide had become more pronounced by 1943-44, when the Bingham/Merrick narrative is set. With revolutionary changes in training policies, wider recruitment, and the influx of new British officers unfamiliar with the old ways, "Ma Bap" no longer had a place in the Indian Army but the practical implications of a duty of care between officer and men very much did.

4.1.6 "Phoenix" and the Forgotten Army

The central role of the Indian Army within Fourteenth Army meant that the morale of both was interdependent. From 1944, Indian Army formations were at the forefront of its achievements. The symbolism of the Phoenix rising from the ashes of defeat was surely a powerful unifying

[77] Awards for gallantry or long and distinguished service could lead to a land grant for some Indian Army soldiers on retirement.
[78] Scott, P., *The Raj Quartet: The Jewel in the Crown* (London, William Heinemann, 1966), *The Day of the Scorpion* (London, William Heinemann, 1968), *The Towers of Silence* (London, William Heinemann, 1971), *A Division of the Spoils* (London, William Heinemann, 1975)
[79] *The Day of the Scorpion*, pp. 362-401. The theme recurs at several points in the narrative of the *Raj Quartet*, in both a civilian and military context.

factor, as was the kudos of being part of a formidable but allegedly "forgotten" army.[80] Similar mythology developed around the Eighth Army, "D-Day Dodgers" in Italy. In both cases the association with a somewhat cynical and downbeat view of perceptions and perceived indifference at home created stronger bonds within.[81] Phoenix symbolism was a badge of pride to many as it suggested that, despite earlier defeats and the lack of resources that came with being a "Forgotten Army", the Fourteenth Army, had redeemed itself in terms of performance and morale. To what extent these themes appealed to Indian troops is difficult to discern but they had positive influences on attached British troops.

If high morale was a unifying factor then low morale could just as easily promote disaffection. Nadirs in morale were reached in Malaya and Burma in 1942 and in the first Arakan campaign in early 1943. These were critical moments when internal weakness and disunity could come to the fore. The disastrous Malaya campaign and subsequent events at Farrer Park in Singapore on 15 February 1942 undoubtedly damaged Indian Army cohesion but any wider impact on troop morale was contained locally due to the surrender. [82] The divisive impact of the defeat and surrender in Singapore is discussed in Chapter 5. Morale is explored further in Chapter 6.

The horrors of Japanese run prison camps were not known until later and the emergence of the INA was only widely known at a point when the phoenix was already beginning to rise. Nor did the defeat in Burma have a widespread impact on the Indian Army as a whole, because most returning remnants were held in relative isolation, in monsoon-sodden camps around Imphal or distributed to hospitals across India that admitted the wounded and sick. As the remnants of Burcorps marched out of Burma, battered and depleted, it retrieved some degree of redemption by retaining cohesion to the end. In the often quoted words of Slim:

> On the last day of that nine-hundred-mile retreat I stood on a bank beside the road and watched the rear-guard march into India. All of them, British, Indian and Gurkha, were gaunt and ragged as scarecrows. Yet, as they trudged behind their surviving officers in groups pitifully small, they still carried their arms and kept their ranks, they were still recognisable as fighting units. They might look like scarecrows, but they looked like soldiers too.[83]

[80] Documentary Film: Boulting, R. Director, *Burma Victory* (London, Army Film Unit, 1945), British Pathe, *The Forgotten Army* (London, British Pathe News, 1944),
[81] Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, pp. 1-6
[82] Lyman. R., *The Generals: From Defeat to Victory*, *Leadership in Asia, 1941-45*, Chapter 1, *Yamashita*, pp. 17-58, Chapter 2 Percival, pp.59-97. These two chapters illuminate the contrasting perceptions of the two sides in Malaya.
[83] Slim, William, Field Marshal Viscount, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 125

The failure of the first Arakan campaign was trivial in strategic terms for the simple reason that it had limited strategic objectives. It was the Army's first attempt to get back in the saddle after two bad falls and the impact of the Arakan failure on morale and reputation was considerable.[84] It might also have created further fractures within the Indian Army but the impact seems to have been temporary, in part due to the swift changes in the high command and the establishment of Southeast Asia Command (SEAC).[85] Those who were not so close to the reality on the ground saw this failure as existential for the Indian Army but it was not. Reputational damage and widespread, often ill-informed criticisms of the Indian troops might have affected morale and cohesion.[86] At a time when the Indian Army desperately needed some kind of *Phoenix* moment to raise its overall morale, the first Arakan campaign turned to ashes. If this had descended into recriminations between the British and Indian contingents, the institutional damage might well have been irreparable.

4.2 Diversity and Disunity Factors

Unifying factors contributing to institutional resilience were, to a degree, in tension with those factors that could lead to disunity. Since a diverse, often disunited India was the source of most recruits, we must examine aspects of diversity and the methods by which these factors were managed. Applying the measures of diversity suggested earlier in this chapter to the Indian Army is different from applying them to wider Indian society. In the absence of conscription it was not drawn from all sections of Indian society. It was a selective institution with restrictive recruitment policies, based traditionally on Martial Race theory, further narrowed by political and economic considerations that dis-incentivised volunteers from some sections of Indian society.

Several factors narrowed the field for recruitment. For example, in 1939 the Indian Army did not recruit from the minority tribal societies of central and southern India or indeed from the main Madrassi and Tamil populations in South India.[87] In addition to caste and region perceived or actual levels of political engagement were a factor. The politics of independence and non-cooperation tended to limit volunteering from the educated, politically aware, urban and business classes. This trend was reinforced by the Non-Cooperation and Quit India campaigns.

[84] See Chapter 6.
[85] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume III*, p. 45. South-East Asia Command came into being on 16 November 1943
[86] See Chapter 2
[87] Numerous minority ethnic groups or tribes were identified or scheduled by the Government of India and were administered separately from mainstream local governmental administration. The relationship between these tribal groups and the Indian Army will be explored later in this chapter.

There was no equivalent to the British Ministry of Labour within the Government of India, with sweeping powers to direct workers into specific roles and it had less power in this respect than British Governments had exercised in either world war. With a booming and unregulated war economy, rising pay attracted potential recruits into expanding manufacturing industries. Industry could deprive the Indian Army of the technically capable recruits it needed. Efforts to broaden recruitment in terms of caste, class, region and educational attainment were partly attenuated by such factors. Nonetheless, progress was made towards a more diverse army. An unintended consequence of increased diversity may have been a more regionally balanced and representative army that was closer to the post-independence needs of the emerging states.[88]

Progress towards diversity was constrained before 1942 by Martial Race based selection. Religion, language, geographic region, ethnicity, caste, social class and economic and educational status were secondary considerations in traditional recruitment terms. However, these factors were themselves seen as differentiating criteria for Martial Race selection. The distinction between coloniser and the colonised remained at the forefront when it came to officer recruitment, despite modest recent progress towards Indianisation.[89] Whilst Indian officers were more numerous, the gradual progression towards seniority still favoured British officers.

4.2.1 Religion

Mythical Martial Races included both Hindu and Muslim and these theories gave significant prominence to the Sikh community of the Punjab and to Hindu Gurkhas recruited from independent Nepal. Christians from both the Anglo-Indian/Eurasian communities were recruited and the long established Christian communities in the South were also recruited.[90] Whilst relations across religious divides were increasingly strained in India, there is little evidence that religion was significantly divisive within the Indian Army.[91] In most respects the Indian Army had successfully addressed or mitigated the potential risks of religious differences within its ranks long before 1939 and this maintained a foundation for wartime expansion to be achieved without noticeably increased religious tension. The risk of disunity had not in most respects gone away but it was actively managed. To avoid friction, the long-standing civil religious divisions were carefully handled by the Indian Army, as it recruited from the main religious

[88] However, as in the aftermath of the First World War there was some retrenchment and narrowing of the recruitment base after 1945. The least diverse of the post- independence armies was that of Pakistan as very few of its formations were recruited from Bengal/East Pakistan, with unfortunate long term consequences for national unity.
[89] See Chapter 3.
[90] IOR L/MIL/14/234, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1938-40**,** IOR L/MIL/14/235, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1941, IOR L/MIL/14/236, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1942
[91] For example religion was not highlighted as a factor in the major instances of dissent discussed in Chapter 5.

groups and respected their distinctive character within its ranks. With the exception of Christian Indians, the main groups were mostly operating in regiments that were aligned to their religion.

The 1941 Census for India indicated that the Muslim population was approximately 27% of the total for British India and 14% for the princely states.[92] A recruitment breakdown for 1939-45 appears is in the *Official History of The Indian Armed Forces*.[93] Muslim recruits were approximately 25% of the total, 617,353 from a total of 2,499,909. There were 112,378 Sikh recruits and 100,235 Christians. It is clear that recruitment from Muslim communities was broadly proportionate to their representation in the wider population. Given a Sikh population of just under 2% of the total in 1941, a higher proportion of Sikhs were recruited, as they made up around 5% of the Indian Army. Christians were 1.6% of the overall population but 4% of the army intake. While the Hindu and Muslim intake was broadly proportional, two of the most significant religious minorities were over-represented but not to an extreme degree. However, if representation in the teeth arms were to be analysed it is likely Sikhs had significantly higher representation owing to the residual influence of Martial Race theory.[94] Conversely, a higher proportion of the non-combatant units such as the Pioneers were Hindus. The majority of Gurkhas were Nepali and did not figure in the Indian census data.

Religious diversity was treated sensitively but what did this mean in practice? One of the most significant factors in daily unit life was adherence to and respect for religious dietary requirements. This may have seemed somewhat obsessive and some have suggested the significance of dietary requirements was overstated.[95] The likelihood that individual soldiers might compromise their strict adherence in extremis does not undermine the point that the Indian Army was seen to make considerable practical efforts to respect religious dietary needs. Such policies required the delivery of Halal meat to Muslims, an adequate vegetarian diet to vegetarian Hindus, grain flour for some and rice for others.[96]

Dietary essentials were delivered to multiple theatres of war and with already strained supply lines this burden was not taken on lightly. However, it did deliver a clear and unambiguous

[92] Government of India, *Census of India 1941*, (Delhi, The Manager of Publications, Government of India , 1941).
[93] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*. Appendix 13
[94] This is less easy to prove within the Caste returns data but the prevalence of Jat Sikhs in the teeth arms compared to lower caste Sikhs is discussed later in this chapter. It suggests there were still lagging indicators pointing to the influence of Martial Race theory after recruitment had been widened.
[95] Imy, K., *Faithful Fighters: Identity and Power in the British Indian Army*, pp. 117-147
[96] For an example of the strenuous dietary provision efforts made, see the food procurement records for Indian former POWs accommodated reception centres in Britain, prior to repatriation, IOR L-WS-1-704 *War diaries Indian PoW reception headquarters 2 parts 1944-1945*, IOR L-WS-1-705 *War diaries Indian PoW reception headquarters, 2 parts, 1944-1945*

message to the Jawan that his religious principles were being respected. If an army really does march on its stomach then a quarter of this particular army did not eat pork, more than 60% would not eat beef and a significant minority of those were vegetarian.[97] Some were unaccustomed to rice but others depended on rice as their staple source of carbohydrates and regarded a wheat based diet as indigestible. In some respects the British contingent pretty much ate what they were told to eat but an endless diet of *bully beef*, the much loathed *Soya Link* and hard biscuits had few willing takers. It was not unusual for British troops to prefer some of the more varied options of their Indian comrades to their own monotonous fare.[98] With regard to feeding the Fourteenth Army, the challenges presented to its head of administration, Major General 'Alf' Snelling, were manifold. In the words of Slim:

> We were a very mixed party and Snelling's problems were not simplified by there being some thirty different ration scales in the Fourteenth Army. Among the Indians, these were based partly on religion, partly on district of origin… [99]

Respect for dietary requirements mattered even in extremis. Second Lieutenant George Stanley Gimson described how food offered by his own Punjabi Muslim anti-aircraft battery to Hindu troops digging machine-gun pits on the beaches near Keppel Harbour in Singapore was politely rejected.[100] As they prepared for the final defence of the Singapore shoreline, the Hindus had arrived with no rations, had not eaten since the previous day and were physically exhausted. Nonetheless, they were not prepared to break this key tenet of their religion, especially at a time when death might come very soon. Gimson also noted that his men had set their minds and affairs at rest some 36 hours before the surrender and had prepared for death with readings of their personal copies of the Koran, which were tied around their necks.[101]

For the Sikh jawan, the turban and dagger held great religious significance as symbols of his faith. The uniform of the Sikh regiments incorporated the turban and the other essential symbols of the Sikh religion and as will be seen in Chapter 5, a failure to respect these symbols led directly to disaffection and protest in the Hong Kong garrison in 1940. A more intractable issue

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[97] These percentage estimates are based on analysis of the Caste returns. IOR L/MIL/14/234*Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1938-40**,** IOR L/MIL/14/235, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1941, IOR L/MIL/14/236, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1942

[98] This assertion is based on conversations with my father, formerly Private Frederick Arthur Hicks, attached to the RIASC in Indian in 1945. He and some, by no means all, of his unit acquired a taste for North Indian cuisine, courtesy of a neighbouring Sikh unit.

[99] Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 197

[100] 2nd Lt. George Stanley Gimson Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, 5196, Interview recorded 19/08/1981

[101] Ibid.

was the emerging possibility of partition and the idea of Pakistan.[102] Implicit in the idea of creating a majority Muslim state of Pakistan was the prospect of the western Punjab being subsumed within it. This became a serious political issue for Sikhs after the Lahore Resolution was passed by the Muslim League on 23 March 1940.[103] The idea had emerged over decades but this declaration of intent struck fear into the hearts of most Sikhs. There is little direct evidence that the Lahore Resolution damaged relationships within the Indian Army at the time but it was a powerful factor in politicising some Sikh veterans in the post-war period.[104] In the long run these divisions festered and Daniel Marston describes the active role of some demobilised Jat Sikhs in the organised communal violence of 1947.[105]

In the 1930s the Hindu/Muslim religious divide in India became an entrenched political rift between Congress and the Muslim League. Some Muslims remained within the Congress Party but most did not and the political strategy of the Muslim League was increasingly directed towards further polarisation. The Lahore Resolution was a significant step and the process developed seemingly unstoppable momentum. The manner in which war was declared had also contributed to polarisation.[106] By resigning in protest at the Viceroy's action, Congress administrations lost influence.[107] In contrast, the Muslim League supported the Government of India and those provincial governments that were led by the Muslim League remained and prospered politically. The frustrations of the Cripps Mission and attempts to reach wartime compromise with Congress caused some weakening of Muslim League support for the war, but it remained largely supportive.[108] Muslim troops were a minority within the ranks of the INA and very few were active participants in the manifestations of dissent discussed in Chapter 5. However, it is unclear whether this limited participation in dissent was a consequence of political or religious affiliations.[109]

There was no religious dilemma for Indian soldiers in taking up arms against the Axis in 1939 but there had been for Muslim troops in 1914-18. The Indian Army took a leading role in the fight against Turkey and therefore Muslim sepoys were, at least in principle, taking up arms

[102] Said, H.M., Haq, S.M., Mujahid, S., Khan, A.Z.., *Road to Pakistan, A comprehensive History of the Pakistan Movement, 1947 – Volume 1* (Karachi, Pakistan Historical Society, 1990), p. 20
[103] Said, H.M., Haq, S.M., Mujahid, S., Khan, A.Z., *Road to Pakistan, A comprehensive History of the Pakistan Movement, 1947 – Volume 1*, p. 20. Subsequent political events and their impact on the Sikhs see, Tan. T.Y (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 296-300
[104] See discussion of the political impact later in this chapter.
[105] Marston, D.P., *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, pp. 283-284
[106] See Chapter 3.
[107] Low, D.A. Ed., *Congress & The Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-47*, pp. 351-354
[108] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*. Appendix 13
[109] As will be seen in Chapter 5, dissent was, rightly or wrongly, seen as predominantly Sikh problem.

against the Caliphate.[110] The Sultan of Turkey was also the hereditary Khalif of Islam and "Commander of the Faithful". Charles Chenevix-Trench suggests that, "To ask Moslems to fight against him was like asking Catholics to take arms against the Pope." However, this case may be overstated, as Islam was not as unitary as Catholicism and the Caliphate's influence on Muslims outside Turkey had been waning over many decades. No such issues arose in the Second World War as none of the Axis powers had affiliations with Islam. However, the fighting in Iraq and the invasion of Iran in 1941 did pit Muslim against Muslim. There is no record of any instance of a refusal to fight by the units involved.

Martial Race theory had largely precluded recruitment of Bengali Muslims prior to 1939 and the majority of Muslim recruits were from the Punjab, North West Frontier regions and Baluchistan. Some 10% (61,615) of the total 617,353 Muslim recruits were from Bengal compared to more than 50% from the Punjab. Sweeping generalisations can give a misleading impression and it should be noted that 19,239 Bengali Hindus had also volunteered and the total number of Bengali recruits is not insignificant when compared to the 112,378 Sikh recruits, for example.[111] What tends to distort perceptions somewhat is that the traditional Martial Races remained dominant in the fighting arms.

Some 100,235 recruits were classified as Christians.[112] Of these, about 10% were from Assam and more than 50% from Madras state.[113] The latter percentage suggests most were from the more populous Catholic communities of South India and not specifically Anglo-Indian. Anglo-Indian and Indian Christian women were prominent in the Women's Auxiliary Corps (India) and army nursing staffs.[114] There were no specifically Christian regiments and Christian recruits were deployed widely in many units.

4.2.2 Language

The mandatory language of command was Urdu, except for Gurkha regiments whose language of command was Gurkhali. Other Indian languages were not used and this presented a challenge when wider recruitment brought in southern Indian recruits. Commands in English given to Indian troops were generally discouraged but English was required for inter-unit communication with British Army formations and it was the language of staff officers and high

[110] Chenevix-Trench, C., *The Indian Army, and the King's Enemies 1900-1947,* pp. 31-32
[111] Ibid.
[112] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*. Appendix 13
[113] Ibid.
[114] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45,* pp. 106-108, See also, IOR L/WS/2/85, *Review of Medical Services in India, 27th March 1944.*

command. This was well established before 1939 but rapid expansion resulted in many British officers being given insufficient time to learn Urdu or Gurkhali. Second Lieutenant Gimson makes it clear that he had not had time to learn Urdu before being given command of his Punjabi Moslem unit in Singapore. For an anti-aircraft battery the essential technical training and the issuing of complex instructions required for predictive aiming at targets were virtually impossible if Gimson could not speak Urdu and the gunners spoke no English in most cases, "The unit was about as ineffective as it could be."[115] There are few diversity issues that can impact military efficiency quite so much as an inability to speak a common language with any degree of adequacy. With hundreds of British ECOs arriving in India, language became a constraint on efficiency.

As expansion accelerated more efficient ways of language learning were devised to replace traditional methods. Peacetime junior officers took one-to-one lessons with a distinguished, often elderly Munshi. This was workable given the leisurely pace of peacetime training.[116] With large numbers of ECOs being passed out from truncated officer training the process of language learning had to be expedited and scaled up. Nor was Urdu the first language for all Indian ECIOs. Few South Indian recruits knew Urdu or had knowledge of related North Indian languages. The Punjabi language bore at least some similarities to and shared some phrases with Urdu but the South Indian languages have Dravidian roots and are completely unrelated to Urdu in either spoken or written form.[117] The interim solution was to train Punjabi VCOs to serve with Madras regiments, to allow time for the training of Madrassi junior leadership and while the language difficulties were further mitigated. However, this was far from ideal as the Adjutant General highlighted in a report in late 1942.[118] British officers recruited in India had typically worked in local businesses or civil organisations such as forestry or civil engineering and they were often familiar with more than one Indian language.[119]

4.2.3 Geographic Region

The Army was not recruited from all regions of India and despite the necessary widening of recruitment policies from 1942, much recruitment was still narrowly focused in a few regions.

[115] 2nd Lt. George Stanley Gimson Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, 5196, Interview recorded 19/08/1981.
[116] A revealing comparison can be drawn for the pace of learning described in the following personal accounts, pre-war and wartime respectively, Masters, J., *Bugles and a Tiger, My Life in the Gurkhas*, Randle, J., *Battle Tales from Burma*
[117] Mason, P, Editor, *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity: A Symposium*, pp. 51-66, Morris-Jones, W.H., *Language and Region Within the Indian Union,* This discourse on the political and cultural challenges of Language in the 20 years since independence gives a flavour of how much of a minefield language diversity could have been for the Indian Army when it expanded beyond its traditional recruitment sources.
[118] Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, p. 219, IOR L/WS/1/968, *Army in India: expansion, 1942-1944*
[119] Carmichael, P., *Mountain Battery*. Pat Carmichael was an artillery officer recruited and commissioned in India after a previous career with the Madras based trading company, Binny and Company.

The long preferred source was the Punjab and this bias created serious problems in the First World War as specific districts were targeted relentlessly by recruitment drives until the supply of suitable recruits dried up.[120] During the First World War, some 60% of all Indian Army recruits were from the Punjab.[121] Similar issues emerged from 1941 but the Army reacted faster and more effectively, both within the Punjab and by increased recruitment from other regions. In both conflicts the dogma of Martial Race theory had focussed on specific localities and recruitment had to be broadened to previously overlooked areas within the Punjab and beyond.

The Punjab was also one of the most productive agricultural areas of India and excessive army recruitment risked labour shortages that would impact food production. As a proportion of the total population, army recruitment was still relatively small but within a locality it targeted those who were most fit and unlike Britain there was little opportunity to substitute agricultural mechanisation for farm labour. Neither was there any prospect of conscripting women into a substitute Land Army, as rural women already worked on the land.[122]

Whilst food security within India was the responsibility of the Government of India and not the Indian Army the Bengal famine presented a real risk to the morale of those troops from areas affected and of troops whose families were indirectly affected elsewhere by the consequent dislocation of food supply and prices. Large numbers of Indian troops were based in the regions impacted and the grim presence of large scale famine could hardly be concealed. Soldiers reacted to it in different ways. Elizabeth Collingham, in her impressive contribution, *Taste of War, World War II and the Battle for Food,* cites examples of soldiers sharing their own rations with victims, despite strict orders not to do so.[123] She also cites one shameful incident where British soldiers taunted famine victims.[124] After Viscount Wavell became Viceroy, the situation gradually improved but famine remained visible on the streets of Calcutta in 1944. It was something that the Indian Army could not ignore but the unfolding tragedy did not appear to affect the troops in ways that undermined military effectiveness. The Indian Army assisted in a number of ways including the release of military food stocks, the escort and delivery of

[120] Tan T.Y., *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*
[121] Ibid., p.98
[122] L/WS/1/654, India's requirements of food grains, 1943-1945, In his correspondence regarding the food shortages that had resulted in the Bengal Famine, Viceroy Wavell repeated raised the issue of the negative effect on Indian Army morale of food shortages in the civilian population, especially in the home areas from which they were recruited.
[123] Collingham, E.M., *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (New York, Penguin Press, 2012), pp. 149-151
[124] Ibid.

emergency food supplies and improvements to food distribution logistics. This probably helped to maintain troop morale in affected areas.[125]

Few soldiers may have realised that rising military procurement demands had been one of the triggers for the Bengal Famine and perhaps it was just as well for morale that they did not. If the primary recruiting area for the Indian Army had been, as it once was, Bengal and not the Punjab, one wonders what the impact on the cohesion of the Indian Army might have been in 1943-44. Famine in the Indian Army's main recruitment area might have been its undoing in 1943 but the Punjab was not entirely immune to events unfolding in Bengal. Punjabi troops were well aware that food shortages and spiralling prices were affecting the Punjab and other regions.[126]

As in the case of Dogra recruitment policy, the Indian Army set great store by recruits from hill countries and less so on recruits from lowland areas. The perception was that being raised in hilly or mountainous areas bred hardiness, endurance and resourcefulness. It was not a question so much of which hills, as how high and how isolated those hills were. For the Gurkhas, this perception seemed irrefutable but the simplistic nature of Martial Race theory ignored the reality that the majority of India's population led a hard life at this time and making up nutritional deficits was often the greater challenge. By 1943, new roads and airfields were being constructed rapidly by large contingents of locally hired labour in Bengal and Assam, including many women labourers. It was clear that mountains alone did not make a soldier and neither, necessarily, did a hard life.[127]

4.2.4 Ethnicity

Ethnic diversity within the Indian subcontinent is at least as wide as in comparable areas of Europe or Africa. Recruitment policies based on Martial Race theory were a significant limiting factor within the ranks. Nevertheless, there was still considerable ethnic diversity, more so as the conflict continued and recruitment broadened. Ethnicity was perhaps less influential than religion as a diversity factor within the Indian Army. For example, in ethnic terms Jat Hindus were indistinguishable from Jat Sikhs. Both were ostensibly of the same caste, although Hindus might attach more significance to caste than Sikhs. Both would have defined their differences primarily in terms of religion and class rather than ethnicity. There are wide variations in stature and skin colour across the sub-continent and in some cases these were and still are the subject

[125] Ibid., IOR L/WS/1/654, 1943-1945, Item 276, Telegram Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 24 January 1944
[126] Ibid.
[127] See Chapter 6 for further discussion of troop fitness and welfare.

of ethnic prejudices. However, the prevalence of selection on the basis of physical attributes was commonplace in the Indian Army and the tallest Pathan recruits were generally preferred.

The small but prominent Anglo-Indian community made a significant contribution to the Indian Army and to the war effort in general but it is unclear what proportion of army recruits were Anglo-Indian as they were not treated as a separate "class" for the purposes of recruitment classification.[128] However, within the officer cadet intake for the Indian Military Academy, Anglo-Indians were a notable minority.[129] The IMA returns show at least one or two Anglo-Indian officer cadets passing out from every course and as many as five in June 1940, one external candidate and four Indian Army nominees, from an overall pass group of 53.[130] The prominent role of Anglo-Indians in the civil railway and transportation sectors would suggest that significant numbers may have been recruited into the Royal Indian Army Service Corps and as engineers but I have been unable to confirm this hypothesis.

It was generally believed that Anglo-Indians were even more staunchly loyal to the King Emperor than the British but in Indian civil society Anglo-Indians were frequently the victims of insidious forms of racial prejudice. Whilst it is difficult to find overt evidence of this within the Indian Army, it seems unlikely that this kind of prejudice was only shown within the civil society. Although it is a civilian example, a particularly crass quote from a tea planter, Kenneth Warren, illustrates one prevalent attitude and shows that Anglo-Indians were seen as easy targets for derision. When discussing cultural conformity within the colonial community:

> …it really only ended with the emancipation that came with the Second World War. Then it was best symbolised by the abandonment of the Topee, leaving this "status symbol of the European community" to be adopted by the Anglo-Indians, "who practically wore topees in their bedrooms, because of the need to show that they were of European descent.[131]

4.2.5 Tribal Populations

The role of troops raised from the tribal groups at the margins of Indian society is little researched, or understood. Several tribal groups had been displaced and marginalized over many centuries by successive migrations into the sub-continent. In colonial India they were given some civil protection and were administered under separate arrangements in some

[128] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, Appendix 13.
[129] IOR L-MIL-7-19145, *Commissions for Indians Reports on cadets at IMA*
[130] Ibid.
[131] Allen, C., *Plain Tales from the British Empire*. p. 66

cases. Tribal groups were regarded as non-caste and therefore among the most disadvantaged. In post-independence India the legal protections provided to tribal groups were strengthened in part by the legal classification of them as “Scheduled Tribes”, broadly in parallel with the emerging legal construct of the “Scheduled Castes”. As late as the 1960s, Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes were still being lumped together as “the Backward Classes”.[132]

In twentieth century colonial India the tribal groups were treated with varying degrees of paternalism, benign supervision, occasional coercion and neglect. Charles Pawsey, the Deputy-Commissioner for the Naga Hills region, based at Kohima until the siege of 1944, was an outstanding example of the benevolent district officer demonstrating a mix of benign paternalism and compassionate governance.[133] His bungalow and tennis court became one of the most fought over pieces of ground on Earth during the siege of Kohima in 1944. He dedicated his working life to the good governance of the Naga Hills and was highly respected by the Naga people. Perhaps this was another positive manifestation of the “Ma Bap” notion. Not all interactions with the tribal groups were as positive and in many respects they were forgotten minorities, little known or understood by the majority of Indian or colonial British populations.

In Martial Race theory terms, urban Madras or Pune had not been seen as fertile recruitment territory for the pre-war Indian Army. There can be no doubt that marginalised tribal groups such as the Nagas were perceived as even less suitable. This widely dispersed minority of the population amounting to more than 25 million were broadly classified as “Tribes”.[134] They tended to be at the economic margins and socially isolated from wider Indian civil society and to some extent they have remained so.[135] An indication of negative official thinking was implied by the widespread use of the term “Aborigines” when referring to tribal groups. The social and economic status of tribes such as the Baigas, Bhills and Bhuiyas is evidenced by a Kale memorial lecture of 1941, *The Problem of Aborigines in India*.[136] The lecture focussed on the perceived problems of alcohol abuse, recent alleged headhunting and banditry. The unfortunate and probably unjustly traduced Baigas were, for example, dismissed in the following manner:

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[132] Mason, P, Editor, *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity: A Symposium*, pp. 83-120, *The Future of the Backward Classes: The Competing Demands of Status and Power*.
[133] Keane, F., *Road of Bones, The Epic Siege of Kohima, 1944*, pp. 29-34
[134] Government of India, *Census of India 1941, Volume 1 Part 1*, (Delhi, The Manager of Publications, Government of India , 1941). Introduction and Acknowledgements, pp. 97-101
[135] Mason, P, Editor, *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity*, pp. 83-120, *The Future of the Backward Classes: The Competing Demands of Status and Power*
[136] Thakkar, A.V. *Kale Memorial Lecture, The Problem of Aborigines* (Pune, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, 1941)

> The Baigas are more backward than their neighbours, the Gonds. In the villages the Baiga quarters are apart from the Gond quarters and are not even as clean and comfortable as the latter. Their belief in magic and their love for "Bewar" or shifting cultivation are said to be especially strong. [137]

Whilst tribal recruitment was virtually unknown outside the North West Frontier prior to the Second World War, this position changed modestly during the conflict. As the recruitment net spread ever wider in wartime, small numbers from the tribal groups were recruited. The Official History of Indian Armed Forces includes some 143,199 recruits under the classification, "Miscellaneous Classes".[138] Four tribes are mentioned specifically, Hos (1009), Mundas (499), Oraons (372) and Santhals (288), with the remainder shown as "Other Classes" (141,031).[139] All are counted under the main intake and not under the "Non-Combatant (Enrolled)" totals but there may well have been additional tribal recruits included under this classification. Some of the 2,772 recruits identified as Assamese, under the Hindu heading may have been from Assam tribes but there is no evidence to confirm this. Those recruited to the Assam Regiment may be counted in this total or under the "Miscellaneous Classes" heading. Despite virtually no pre-war recruitment, the wartime "Miscellaneous Classes" eventually exceeded the number of Sikh recruits by some margin.[140]

The tribal groups of the North West Frontier had been recruited long before 1939 and indeed1914. They were classified separately and were not accounted for under the classification of "Miscellaneous Classes" but were included as "Mussalmans". There were Frontier Scout recruits drawn from Pathan groups including the, Afridi, Bangash, Khattaks, Orakzais and Yuzufrais. The total for those tribal groups classified as Pathans is 65,103.[141] Recruitment to the Baloch regiments was from Baloch tribes of the State of Baluchistan. Punjab regimental recruitment also drew to some extent on groups from the North West Frontier including the Pathans.

It is reasonable to surmise that the tribal groups who resided in jungle and mixed scrub areas would have been valuable recruits for jungle warfare and the creation of the Assam Regiment would seem to suggest this was realised by some. However, the Assam Regiment was raised

[137] Ibid.
[138] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45,* Appendix 13.
[139] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945,* p. 400, Raghavan cites the example of the Munda Labour Battalion raised from one specific tribe.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.

in June 1941 and this was before the need for Jungle warfare skills was fully appreciated or recognised as a priority. It seems more likely that the Regiment was initially raised for general service as part of wider expansion plans. Arguably the tribes of Assam and north western Burma were ideal recruits for jungle warfare, in terms of their field craft skills and familiarity with the terrain that would be fought over in 1944. However, few in 1940-41 anticipated that the north-eastern frontier of India would soon be threatened with invasion. The Assam Regiment proved its worth in the doggedly fought rear-guard actions that preceded the siege of Kohima in 1944.[142]

An established para-military force, the Assam Rifles also played a distinguished role in the conflict but this was a specialised police force, not Indian Army.[143] Tribal levies were also recruited in North East India and Burma, but these ad hoc forces were not formally incorporated into the Indian Army. Perhaps the most famous account of the Naga contribution to the war effort is *Naga Path*, the biographical account of Ursula Graham Bower, one of the most courageous women to serve in India during the Second World War, in close collaboration with Naga civilian volunteers.[144] She and others worked with these often heroic Nagas to gather valuable intelligence on Japanese troop movements. They also acted as porters and labourers in areas that were under direct fire and retrieved many injured soldiers from the contested hills surrounding Kohima in 1944.[145]

Despite their ample demonstration of effectiveness, bravery and loyalty, the Nagas, Kuki, Ahom, Lushai and others were not formally recognised as a uniquely valuable source of jungle warfare skills for conventional forces. A leading authority on Indian Army training, Alan Jeffreys, has confirmed to the author that he has found no evidence that recruits from these tribal groups were invited to assist in jungle warfare training.[146] Perhaps they could have distinguished themselves as tactical trainers and demonstrators in the vastly expanded training programme that was developed from 1942 and with increased momentum in 1943-45, if given the opportunity. These potentially useful resources seem to have been an overlooked when the need for jungle warfare skills was recognised.

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[142] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 228-237. McLynn, F., *The Burma Campaign, Disaster Into Triumph, 1942-45* (London, Bodley Head, 2010), p. 317. The Assam Regiment's role in the retreat to Kohima and the subsequent siege led to it being awarded the special 'Defence of Kohima' battle honour shared only with the Royal West Kents.

[143] Latimer, J., *Burma: The Forgotten War*, p. 269. Elements of the 3rd Battalion Assam Rifles fought throughout the Kohima action. They were also seen as one of the few pre-war sources of jungle warfare skills, Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, p. 26.

[144] Graham Bower, U. Naga Path (London, John Murray, 1952)

[145] Keane, F., *Road of Bones, The Epic Siege of Kohima, 1944*, pp. 293-295

[146] Unrecorded conversion circa 2017.

4.2.6 Caste

Caste was a significant factor but less so than one might assume, as it was secondary to the influence of Martial Race theory and in many ways it was co-opted into the Martial Race narrative. Under the tenets of Martial Race theory, there was no simple correlation between high caste and Martial virtues. However, Jats, both Sikh and Hindu, were regarded as warrior elites and were also higher caste.[147] Whilst this was indeed a caste-based association with warrior heritage, the overriding factor in choosing Jats was their alleged status as a Martial Race and not their caste.

Expansion was contingent on maintaining an adequate supply of recruits and compromises on the preferred sources led to some shifts in recruitment policies with regard to caste. In terms of numerical impact the shift in Sikh recruitment, away from higher caste Jat Sikhs and towards lower caste Mazhabi and Ramadasias Sikhs was significant. Some 33,244 recruits were Mazhabi and Ramadasias Sikhs, compared to 44,751 Jat Sikhs.[148] In correspondence between the Viceroy Linlithgow and the Secretary of State, Amery, related to the Central India Horse mutiny in 1940, the Commander-in-Chief, General Cassells, is cited as having pointed to another justification for this shift.[149] His clear inference was that Jat Sikhs were implicated in the mutiny and therefore troublesome:

> Prevailing communal tension in Punjab which, in Chief's view, arises directly or indirectly from Moslem League proposals for Pakistan. Some recruiting officers have been told by potential Sikh recruits that they do not propose to join the army and have decided to stay at home and defend their villages. There are also many rumours of collections of arms by Sikhs all over the country. There are also indications that this general attitude adopted by Sikhs is having repercussions on some at least of the Moslems and even our Dogra troops. C-in-C is sending some experienced officers with special knowledge of Sikhs both to visit units concerned and to the main Sikh recruiting areas, and will report whether their enquiries tend to confirm his suspicions of what is wrong. In the meantime he proposes:
>
> - To discharge all recruits and reservists belonging to CIH, which Regt. will not in future have a Sikh squadron;

[147] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, p. 348. For example, General Roberts held the high caste Marathas in low regard, despite their former martial heritage.
[148] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, Appendix 13.
[149] IOR L/MIL/7/13791 *Question of Appeal from Sentence of Death passed by Court Martial in India 1940*

- To close future recruitment Sikh recruitment to MT (RIASC) and other ancillary services;
- To limit recruitment of Jat Sikhs to absolute minimum in any future expansion of the Army;
- To start recruiting Sikhs other than Jat Sikhs, (I.e.) Mazhbis and Ramdasias, either as complete units or to form part of existing unit or corps." [150]

It was perhaps unsurprising that Cassells recommended reduced reliance on Jat Sikhs and substitution of Mazhbis and Ramdasias Sikhs as they had been successfully recruited in the First World War, "I cannot conceal my fears that, under the present circumstances, Sikhs generally, with the exception possibly of Ramdasias, Mazhbis and Lobanas, are not entirely reliable."[151]

However, the Caste Returns for 1941 show limited progress in this endeavour. In the total of 51,006 Sikhs, there were 34,944 Jats, 3,155 Mazhbis and 1,966 Ramdasias. The latter castes were almost exclusively attached to the Sappers and Pioneers with only eight Ramdasias and no Mazhbis in the infantry. Even second-line garrison units only included ten Mazhbis and a solitary Ramdasias.

The 1942 returns show greater progress but these classes were still largely relegated to secondary roles.[152] Broader recruitment was happening and superficially it would seem that Cassels's policy shift had been implemented. However, analysis of unit strengths shows clearly that after two year of expansion the Ramdasias and Mazhbis recruits were almost exclusively allocated to Pioneer and Royal Indian Army Service Corps (RIASC) units and front line Sikh units remained dominated by Jat Sikhs.[153] Even within the RIASC, the Mazhbis and Ramdasias recruits were posted to the mule handling units and not motor transport. Some were still posted to second line garrison battalions.[154] If we discount the implausible idea that these classes were innately unsuited to other roles then it must be concluded that an entrenched attachment to

[150] For further discussion of the CIH Mutiny see Chapter 5
[151] *Disaffection of Sikh Troops* (India Office Records, L/WS/1/303,), Item 74, Letter from Cassells to Sir Henry Craik Governor of the Punjab 01/08/1940
[152] Ibid.
[153] IOR L/MIL/14/234, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1938-40, IOR L/MIL/14/235,*Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1941, IOR L/MIL/14/236, *Indian Army Annual Caste Returns of the Native Army* 1942
[154] Ibid. Garrison battalions tended to be used in security protection roles in India and they were often allocated less fit troop, including those who had not sufficiently recovered from wounds or were deemed too old or unfit for active duty.

Martial Race prejudices resulted in the dilution of Cassells's intended policy shift by more conservative elements within the Indian Army.

One novel experiment, without precedent, was the recruitment of a specific non-caste group.[155] The 27th Battalion of the Second Punjab Regiment was raised in June 1942 at the Regimental Centre at Meerut in the usual manner but it was recruited from the Chamar class never previously considered. Chamars were traditionally leather workers and were therefore excluded from the caste system. Experienced VCOs and NCOs could not initially be drawn from Chamar recruits so they were taken from the wider pool. The experiment was judged to be highly successful but it does not appear to have been repeated with other "untouchable" non-caste groups. The authors of the regimental history pointed to allegedly notable characteristics, "The Chamars have the reputation of being brave and tenacious, and on occasion cunning and even fierce, and they can be dangerous enemies." [156]

After 9 months, the battalion had performed so well that it had been taken on as a regular Indian Army unit in and assumed the title of the Chamar Regiment. During the Japanese invasion of Assam, the battalion undertook deep penetration patrols into the Naga Hills and were credited with managing difficult marches over long distances in both Assam and Burma. After the relief of Kohima, a 240 mile 19 day fighting patrol was successfully led by Major G. Withy.[157] Given the relatively few actions that the Chamar Regiment was involved in, it is notable that two Military Crosses, three Military Medals and 12 Mentions in Dispatches were awarded.[158]

These tentative moves towards a more diverse recruitment policy were not seen as positive by some more reactionary thinkers and Winston Churchill frequently harked back to the halcyon days of Martial Race theory. He firmly believed that the Indian Army of 1943 was inferior to its smaller and more "Martial" predecessor.[159] In contrast, Auchinleck was pleased with the class diversification that was well under way by the time he was re-appointed as Commander-in-Chief in 1943. In a situation report sent to the CIGS in August 1943, he highlighted several aspects of the shift in recruitment policy.[160] However, the motive for much of this report was not to

[155] Lieutenant-Colonel Sir G**.** Betham and Major H.V.R. Geary, *The Golden Galley, The story of the Second Punjab Regiment 1761-1947* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1956). pp. 292-296,
[156] Ibid., p.296
[157] Ibid., pp. 293-294
[158] Ibid., p.296
[159] Raghavan, S., India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945, pp. 395-396
[160] JRL AUC/1034, Auchinleck to Brooke, *A note on the size and composition of the Indian Army*, August 1943, pp. 2-5

advertise new initiatives but to defend the Indian Army from suggestions, not least by Churchill, that the size of army should be substantially reduced:

> The idea underlying the demand for reduction seems to be based on the idea that the Indian Army, owing to its great size and expansion, is now composed to a large extent, of men who, because they belong to classes previously untried as soldiers, are unreliable and unsuitable.
> This idea appears to have arisen from certain reports conveyed to the Secretary of State concerning the disloyalty of certain elements among the prisoners of war in the hands of the Japanese, and because of certain disquieting incidents that have occurred in the Arakan and elsewhere.[161]

The paradox is that, with a few exceptions, it was not the new non-Martial classes that had shown disloyalty to the colours in Singapore but some of the Jat Sikhs, for example. However, for Auchinleck to have made this point might well have been counter-productive so he pursued other lines of argument. Firstly he challenged the assumption that the newly recruited classes were, "classes previously untried".[162]

> It will be seen that Madrassis account for more than half the total. Madrassis of course are the oldest of the classes to be enlisted in the Indian Army and the record of the Madras Sappers and Miners, one of the most senior corps in the Indian Army, is justly famous. For many years past, however, the enlistment of Madrassis has been very limited, so that it may be said that the great increase which has taken place in the last three years constitutes an innovation.[163]

Auchinleck went on to argue that the Madrassis were doing very well, notably in artillery units and that drastic reduction in their number would be very disruptive. Moving on to the 37,000 Bengalis, the Auk acknowledged that this was a "completely new class", although arguably Bengalis had been the majority of recruits before 1857. Evidently Auchinleck was avoiding those facts that might have undermined the argument he was presenting to Brooke. He acknowledged that Bengali recruits would, based on experience, be unsuited to the infantry but he also stressed their advantages in technical roles such as signals, ordnance and as engineers.[164] Auchinleck also described what he refers to as "experiments" with the recruitment

[161] Ibid., p.2
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid., p.3
[164] Ibid.

of Chamars, Mahars, Assamese and Meos and he indicated these initiatives were showing promise, if on a small scale. He also referred to the failure of Oudh Brahmins recruited to the infantry in the First World War but suggests that they have proved more successful in a variety of roles and that they have, "largely eschewed their caste prejudices, which handicapped them in the last Great War."[165]

4.2.7 Status

The economic and social status of the individual recruit was not especially relevant to the Indian Army, with some exceptions. Recruits from poor socio-economic backgrounds still needed to meet minimum standards of physical fitness. After joining the training battalion they would often need to be fed high nutrition diets to achieve suitable physical fitness. Educational prowess was not sought after in the pre-war army. As the recruitment manuals indicated, the need was for the stolid virtues of loyalty, dependability and compliance rather than academic attainment but with the technical demands of modern warfare, this was beginning to change. The Dogra recruitment manual articulates the traditional position:

> From a military point of view it does not appear to matter much what a man's position in the social scale may be, provided that he comes of a martial race and becomes a good soldier and provided that the difference between the higher and lower grades is not so marked as to cause difficulties if they serve together in the same unit.
> It has been said that a high class Dogra makes a better officer than the low class Dogra. This may be so. It probably is if the proportion of High class men is high, but nowadays in most units the percentage of high class men is so small that it may be doubted whether it makes any difference what a man's caste is.[166]

Martial characteristics trumped social status before 1939 but in an increasingly technical conflict, the low educational attainment that usually accompanied low social status was disadvantageous. Mechanisation, armoured vehicles, wireless, gunsights and electrical engineering tasks required numeracy and literacy skills previously undervalued. This added burdens to crowded training programmes.

For KCIO candidates, pre-war standards were if anything set higher than for equivalent British officers seeking roles in the Indian Army.[167] Social class and the social context of education

[165] Ibid.
[166] Cunningham, Lt Col. W. B. MC., *DOGRAS*, (Calcutta, Govt. of India,1932), pp. 35-36
[167] Kundu, A., *Militarism in India, The Army and Civil Society in Consensus*, pp. 12-16.

were seen as important for officer cadets. British public schools or their Indian equivalent were well-regarded institutions for nurturing future officers and imperial administrators. In earlier debates about Indianisation the lack of sufficient equivalent institutions in India had been seen as a major stumbling block to progress.[168] Experience in both World Wars was to show that the products of a grammar or technical school could make just as good officers as the alumni of any public school but this dogma persisted throughout Indianisation and is perhaps not entirely expunged from the British Army several decades later.

Other ranks were typically recruited from less well educated rural communities of the Punjab, Nepal and elsewhere, partly as a consequence of Martial Race theory. It was argued that such recruits were less likely to be politically engaged independence supporters. However, this point was often overstated as the average recruit was unlikely to be oblivious to the independence struggle. Political awareness within the Punjab was in any case increasing, as partition became more likely.[169] Longstanding inequalities resulted in low literacy levels and limited access to formal education. This does not suggest in any way that recruits were of low intelligence, but they lacked access to formal education. For the infantry this had not been seen as an issue but by 1939 the Indian Army was entering a process of modernisation and mechanisation that required technical and mechanical aptitudes and warfare itself was becoming more complex. Initiative was encouraged from the individual soldier and there was a greater focus on mechanical skills that were rare in the prevailing un-mechanised agrarian economy.[170] In 1940-41 the focus was on providing mobile forces for the deserts of North Africa and expansion of the RIASC was key to this requirement. This required drivers, mechanics and logistics skills.

The role of the Indian Army Ordnance Corps (IAOC) expanded at a faster rate than the rest of the Indian Army, 20-fold compared to the twelvefold increase overall.[171] By 1942 it was recognised that the existing IAOC organisation was unable to cope in some areas and some aspects of its role were restructured along similar lines to the British Army. The Directorate of Mechanical Engineering was established in December 1942 and the Indian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Corps formed in May 1943, mirroring the British Army's Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) organisation.[172] Increased technical demands were direct

[168] See Chapter 3, *Section 1.5 Officer Recruitment*, for a discussion of the Indian Army attitudes towards educational attainment.
[169] See below, *Section 1.3.9 Politics*.
[170] Pray, C, E,, *The Impact of Agricultural Research in British India* (The Journal of Economic History, Vol. 44, No. 2, The Tasks of Economic History (Jun., 1984), pp. 429-440) (Jstor, Cambridge University Press, 1984)
[171] Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces And Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp. 352-354. Agricultural output had declined per acre and per capita in the period 1922-1947 and prices had been very low in the 1930s.
[172] Ibid., pp. 354-358

results of two factors: mechanisation and the impossibility of increased reliance on the British Army to fill these technical roles. The number of motor vehicles on strength was one indication of the impact of mechanisation. In 1939 it had been 7,500. By 1945 it was 350,000.[173]

Total war required total mobilisation and the British home population was fully mobilised by 1942 in civilian or military roles. Even women were conscripted into industry and agriculture.[174] The British Army struggled to meet its own burgeoning technical requirements and the Ministry of Labour was, by 1943, resorting to combing out some of the required technicians from reserved occupations in British armaments factories.[175] The Indian Army needed to take on more of the technical roles of a modern army and this meant recruiting and training many more Indians with the requisite aptitudes or recruiting those already in possession of relevant but scarce skills. This urgent imperative required the recruitment of more volunteers from the urban, educated and industrialised population but this was increasingly difficult given the rapid rise in armaments manufacturing jobs that paid better and entailed less danger. The Indian Army of 1945 was much more diverse in terms of intellectual and technical aptitudes than the army of 1939 and as the army demobilised these skills were of great benefit to the economies of the emerging independent states.[176]

4.2.8 Colonial Relationships

Perhaps the greatest gulf within the Indian Army and in India itself at this time was between the coloniser and colonial subject. In a manner that would have been unthinkable in pre-Dominion status Australia or Canada, the Indian soldier was treated as second class in some respects but there is ample evidence that good British officers built strong and positive bonds with their troops.[177] Relationships between officers could be collaborative and friendly, but as long as

[173] Ibid., pp. 356

[174] Parker, H.M.D. Edited by, Hancock, Sir W.K., *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series: Manpower* (London: HMSO, 1957), pp. 200-211. This passage describes the peak of military and civil mobilisation in 1943.

[175] The Author's father, Frederick Arthur Hicks was "combed out" of engineering tool-making in aircraft component manufacture in 1943 and later joined the RIASC, attached to 9th Army, serving in India and in Japan as part of the occupation forces.

[176] Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*, pp. 310-321. Prasad, N., *Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation 1939-45*, pp. 195-246. The economic role of demobilised Indian Army troops is very difficult to quantify as the economic disruption caused by Partition coincided with demobilisation. However the substantial influx of veterans with mechanical, electrical, engineering, logistics, planning, leadership and transportation skills must surely have had a positive impact on the economies of the newly independent countries.

[177] Cross, J.P., *Jungle Warfare, Experiences And Encounters* (London, Guild Publishing, 1989), Barua, P.P., *Gentlemen of the Raj, The Indian Army Officer Corps, 1817-1949*, Lunt, J., *A Hell of a Licking, The Retreat from Burma, 1941-42*, Chenevix-Trench, C., *The Frontier Scouts* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1985), Chenevix-Trench, C., *The Indian Army, and the King's Enemies 1900-1947*, Prasad, S., *The Gallant Dogras, An Illustrated History of the*

racial and social divisions applied in wider colonial society, tension was inevitable. Added to this social divide were other issues that lingered within the army, such as lower pay rates for Indian officers and troops.[178]

The root cause of this division was in part racial prejudice but this was gradually being eroded in peacetime and in many respects World War accelerated improvements. The slow pace of Indianisation within the officer corps was untenable, given the drive for unprecedented expansion. The numbers and seniority of Indian officers increased more rapidly than before 1939. However, Auchinleck still regarded progress as too slow by 1943 and rightly so.[179] In response to questions raised by an Indian member of the Council of State in August 1943, the Commander-in-Chief provided two significant answers:

Honourable H.N. Kunzru:

> Taking into account all officers serving in the IA, whether regular service or Emergency Commissioned Officers or British Serving Officers, what is the proportion of Indian to British officers?

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, General C. Auchinleck:

> The proportion on the 15th July, 1943 is 1 Indian to 3.7 British.

Commander-in-Chief, in response to a second question regarding the number of Commanding Officers,

> Presuming that units are defined as those commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel or above, there are 97 in total:
>
> - One Cavalry Regiment
> - Five Infantry Battalions
> - Five Royal Indian Army Service Corps units
> - Two Ordnance Depots
> - 37 Field Medical units
> - 46 Garrison Medical units
> - One Remount unit.

Dogra Regiment, Singh, V.K. Major-General, *Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers,* Thorat, S.P.P., *From Reveille to Retreat,* Tuker, Lieut.-General Sir F., *While Memory Serves*

[178] See Chapter 6 for discussion of pay differentials and the resulting impact on morale.

[179] IOR L/MIL/7/19044 *Commissions for Indians – Indianisation of the Indian Army - Extract from Official report of the Council of State debates 1943, p*. 51

The data suggests that the perception of accelerated Indianisation was inflated by the numbers of Indian Army Medical Service emergency commissions granted to senior medical doctors. The total of 97 commanding officers seems at first glance to show good progress but 83 of these were commanders of medical units.[180] Senior surgeons would for example have been granted higher ranks and in this sense, the 83 senior medical commands were a reflection of Indianisation of the medical profession in India, not progress in the armed forces overall. Some of India's finest surgeons volunteered and their rank and seniority reflected their deservedly high professional status, but what about the infantry?

Indianisation was an established norm within the Indian Army by 1939 but progress since the First World Was had been tardy. The issue was no longer the principle but the pace, which was too timid for the expanding needs of imminent global conflict. Promotion prospects for even the best Indian officers remained slow when compared to the pace of promotion for rising stars within the British Army. The rate of promotion of some of the future leaders of the post-independence Indian Army gives an indication of continued bias in favour of British officers. Future Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa attained the rank of Brigadier in November 1944 but lack of battle experience seems to have counted against him in the roles he was offered.[181] The only KCIO to command a brigade in battle during the Second World War was K.S. Thimayya, later General and Chief of the Army in 1961 but he attained command of the 36th Indian Brigade only in March 1945.[182] Whilst their rate of promotion was not as slow as some in the British Army, they were not as rapidly promoted as others. Major-General G.P. (Pip) Roberts was born in the same year as Thimayya. He was given field command of the 22nd Armoured Brigade in 1942 and promoted to temporary Major-General in late 1943, to take command of the 11th Armoured Division at the age of 37. It is perhaps dangerous to generalise from a few cases and Roberts was an exceptional officer, but so too were several of the first generation of KCIOs.

Other factors helped erode traditional and sometimes entrenched prejudices. Many of the ECOs arriving from Britain were not from the public school mould, nor were they fervent imperialists. For most in the new intake they were not in India to fight for the preservation of empire but to defeat totalitarianism and to go home as soon as possible.[183] These officers had scant affinity with outdated imperial institutions or the traditions of colonial India. "Hostilities only" British troops saw none of the splendour of the 1911 Delhi Durbar but on the other hand they did see abject poverty, famine on the streets of Calcutta and a range of institutions that showed signs of

[180] Ibid.
[181] Singh, V.K. Major-General, *Leadership in the Indian Army, Biographies of Twelve Soldiers*, pp. 30-31
[182] Ibid, pp. 101-102
[183] IOR L/MIL/7/19044 *Commissions for Indians – Indianisation of the Indian Army*

being unable to cope with wartime demands. General Slim was not wrong when he suggested that the soldiers of the Fourteenth Army would not be voting for Winston Churchill in 1945 and neither would many be sorry to see India attain independence in 1947.

If Indianisation of the officer corps had been started at least a decade earlier and been pursued less tentatively then it would have been more closely aligned with the progress within the established Dominions, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In such circumstances, by 1939 the officer class of the Indian Army would have resembled that of Australia or Canada in terms of only a minimal and reducing reliance on British officers. It did not and the result was quantitative and qualitative shortfalls which imposed limitations on the expansion plans of 1940-43. The Indian Army was by no means in the worst position in this respect and could be compared favourably with the status of East and West African troops who fought alongside the Indian Army in Burma. University educated sons of West African chieftains were still denied commissions in these forces on the pretext that Africans lacked leadership skills.[184] The worst of all cases was perhaps the Republic of South Africa which prevented black citizens from joining the armed forces or taking up arms.[185]

4.2.9 Politics

The Indian Army sought to remain impartial and apolitical at all times but impartiality had obvious limits as it was also the military arm of an imperial power structure. Impartiality did apply in the case of intercommunal violence. The army could act in aid of the civil power and would follow strict procedures. In such cases troops might be ordered to fire upon rioters of the same religion. Instances where such an order was refused were rare, though not unknown.[186] Individual Indian officers and troops were rarely as politically naïve or disengaged as their colonial rulers might have hoped. The circles in which young KCIOs moved would occasionally result in them meeting Indian politicians from both the Congress Party and the Muslim League. On his return voyage from passing out from Sandhurst in 1926, S.P.P. Thorat, later Lieutenant General, met Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Lala Lajpat Rai. Thorat asked whether he had been wrong to join the British Indian Army. Rai responded:

[184] Killingray, D., *Fighting for Britain: African Soldiers in the Second World War* (Suffolk, James Currey, 2010), pp. 84-88.
[185] Ibid., pp.5-6
[186] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, p. 451-452. This example of a Garhwal battalion's refusal to fire on rioters, in aid of the civil power occurred in 1930. These instances were rare.

> No, I don't think so at all. How long will the British continue to rule us? One day, India shall become a free country, and then we will need trained men like you. So work hard and qualify yourself for that moment.[187]

This encounter was not unique and other officers had similar conversations, including K.S. Thimayya.[188] The loyalty of Indian Army officers may well have been sustained for the duration of hostilities on the implicit understanding that steps towards independence were already evidenced by the failed Cripps mission and other signs. Whilst these officers willingly fought totalitarianism in the Second World War, they had firm expectations that independence must soon follow.

The Indian Army was not immune to political influence or oblivious to the implications of the independence struggle but to what extent was it influenced or affected by the conflicting political aims of Congress, the Muslim League and other regional parties in the Punjab? Professor Tan has made a convincing case that the previously strong relationship between the Raj and Sikh communities was inexorably eroded by the political impasse that ultimately led to Partition.[189] If the British could not protect Sikhs from the consequences of Partition and if Sikhs influence on the political dialogue was weakening, then the mutually beneficial relationship which had prevailed for almost 90 years would surely unravel. Few could have predicted how much the Sikhs would suffer in the Partition but many were deeply worried by the possible outcomes from the time of the Lahore Resolution.[190]

Whilst the Indian Army did not reflect the entirety of India's diversity, it did become more diverse as a consequence of wartime expansion. The sensitivities of this significant transformation were not always well managed but for the most part stability and unity of purpose were maintained sufficiently for the Indian Army to demonstrate increasing effectiveness.

As the Indian army wrestled with the challenges of unprecedented expansion and the inevitability of transition to independence the old certainties of Martial Race theory lost influence but had not disappeared completely. Experiments with wider recruitment were generally more successful than in 1917-18 and the army was better positioned for independence as a consequence. There were some missed opportunities to exploit broader recruitment and

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[187] Singh, V.K. Major-General, *Leadership in the Indian Army, Biographies of Twelve Soldiers*. p. 124
[188] Ibid., p. 96
[189] Tan T.Y., *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi, Sage, 2005). pp. 280-302
[190] Said, H.M., Haq, S.M., Mujahid, S., Khan, A.Z.., *Road to Pakistan, A comprehensive History of the Pakistan Movement, 1947 – Volume 1*, p. 20

traditional martial groups still remained predominant in the front line. It should not be forgotten that despite its unique diversity and many potential causes of friction and division the Indian Army of 1945-47 did not descend into civil war despite the strains of partition and separation into the armies independent India and Pakistan.[191] This in part was a testament to the manner in which wartime transformation was managed.

[191] Marston, D.P., *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ*ersity Press, 2014)

5. CHAPTER 5 - DISSENT, POLITICISATION, SUBVERSION AND MUTINY

Instances of mutiny were relatively rare in most armed forces during the Second World War. Not least because the sanctions that were applicable and in some armies applied, were draconian.[1] The Indian Army suffered three well documented, significant incidents in the first 18 months of the conflict and these will be examined in some detail. I will reassess these events with more scepticism than has previously been applied, questioning the validity of some aspects of the contemporary official view. Of greater significance was the attempt, sponsored by the Japanese in 1942 and again in 1943, to form an anti-British Indian National Army that successfully recruited significant numbers of Indian prisoners of war captured in Singapore and Malaya. I will assess the INA in terms of its impact on the Indian Army as an institution, but not its military effectiveness or wider political impact.

One other incident in Malaya in April 1940, the "Seditious Letters" case against Lieutenant Mohammed Zahir-ud-Din, will not be discussed. It was not a collective act of mutiny and it has been amply examined by Chandar Sundaram and others.[2] The case involved one officer and was not linked with the themes explored in relation to the three mutinies or the INA. I will not review fluctuations in the numbers of desertions in detail as the available data is incomplete but the notable increase in desertions at certain stages of the conflict will be mentioned. There were other instances of dissent and outright mutinies, notably including the mutiny of the 1st Battalion of the Mauritius Regiment in Madagascar.[3] However, it was not unusual in both the British and Indian armies for such incidents to be dealt with discretely and quietly by local commanders and defused without resort to formal Mutiny charges.[4] Acts of mutiny that occurred

[1] The sanctions regime within the Japanese, German and Soviet forces were notably harsh but the ultimate sanction of execution was retained by most combatant forces, including the British and Commonwealth forces. Within the British imperial forces, death sentences were rare, and they were usually commuted. The Salerno mutiny in 1943 was a notable example, David, S., *Mutiny at Salerno, 1943: An Injustice Exposed* (London, Brassey's, 1995)

[2] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Sundaram, C.S., Chapter 4: *Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets: Disaffection among Indian Troops in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1940-1 and the Formation of the Indian National Army*, pp. 129-140

[3] Jackson, A., *The Madagascar Mutiny of the First Battalion The Mauritius Regiment, December 1943* (London, Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research 80,2002), pp. 232-250, See also, James, L., *Mutiny: In the British and Commonwealth Forces, 1797-1956* (London, Buchan & Enright, 1987) for a wider survey of mutiny events.

[4] IWM Sound Archives 910, Interviewee/speaker - Private David Lloyd George Griffiths, South Wales Borderers 1938-42 (London, IWM, 1977-04-13). Reel 3. Private Griffiths refers to an incident that had occurred at the regimental barracks in Brecon. He stated that some of the conscript recruits at Brecon were undisciplined at first and locked themselves into a barrack block in 1940, refusing to take orders. They were eventually persuaded to end the protest and no charges of mutiny were brought. Despite visiting the SWB archive in Brecon, I have not been able to corroborate this account from other sources but the actions would have amounted to mutiny, assuming it did

in the immediate post-war period in India and the Far East are not within the timeline of this research.[5]

I will argue that the Government of India and the Indian Army high command showed a tendency to conflate unrelated incidents of dissent into a conspiracy narrative that was both simplistic and to a degree self-vindicating for the Army's institutional reaction to these events and its subsequent actions. It was more convenient to blame external political factors than to recognise internal weaknesses and failures of command or communication that may have triggered these incidents. I further suggest that despite the seriousness of these incidents, there was no point at which the integrity of the Indian Army was so compromised as to put at risk its ability to fulfil its role. I also suggest that the potential and actual impact of political agitation, subversion or entry-ism, whether from Communist Party of India, Congress or any other political factions was overestimated at the time. Whilst this over-emphasis on potentially malign external influences is perhaps understandable, it diverted attention from internal problems and deeper institutional fault-lines.

Whilst the INA may briefly have had the potential to destabilise the Indian Army, its actual impact was limited. Its failure as a disruptive force was in part due to mistakes in its development and handling by the Japanese and more substantially due to the unrealistic expectations of its Indian leadership. Its deployment in battle was too little, too late to make a difference and its use as a fifth column was neither timely nor sufficient to exploit the early weaknesses of the expanding Indian Army or wider public sentiment. By the time the INA was deployed in 1944, in the Arakan and Assam, Indian Army morale had recovered from earlier defeats and the institution was less susceptible to attempts to weaken the resolve and loyalty of its troops. INA propaganda and subornment tactics that might have worked in late 1942 or early 1943 were unlikely to work in 1944. The post war impact on morale and attitudes within the Indian Army of the INA trials held at the Red Fort in Delhi was more significant but falls outside the scope of this research. The contentious question of retention or dismissal from the service of returning INA members is also outside the timeline.[6] Primary sources and published works on

occur. It must be assumed that the incident involved the training company at Brecon. See *Training and Holding Units*, 1939-1960 (Brecon, Regimental Museum and Archive), Box 24, Accession 2003.188.

[5] These include the mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946, the widespread "strike" by RAF personnel and less well known incidents involving British, African and US forces.

[6] For discussion of the post-war handling of the INA survivors, see: Roy, K., Editor , *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars* , Chapter 17: *"Breaking the Chains with Which We Were Bound", The Interrogation Chamber, the Indian National Army and the Negation of Military Identities, 1941-47*, Marston, D.P. & Sundaram, C.S., *A Military History of India and South Asia: From the East India Company to the Nuclear Era* (London, Praeger, 2007), Chapter 9: Marston, D.P., *End of the Raj, 1945-47*,

the INA are somewhat patchy, in part due to the destruction of INA records prior to surrender.[7] However, given that a comprehensive study of the INA is not within the scope of this thesis, this was not a significant limitation on my current research.

The undue focus on external influences, Communism in particular, diverted attention and resources from more critical threats and from legitimate grievances that provided fertile ground for the INA. Welfare related institutional reforms that are described in Chapter Six were coming on rapidly from 1943 to 1945 but arguably they should have happened sooner and would perhaps have helped to reduce disaffection among Indian troops that facilitated the creation of the INA. However, when basic weaponry and training were in short supply, welfare reforms were inevitably given lower priority. The misdirection of scarce intelligence resources was less excusable.

Political instability and civil unrest affected several regions of India, most seriously during the abortive Quit India campaign of 1942. It had potential to undermine the loyalty and effectiveness of the Indian Army. The scale of protest and in some cases outright rebellion was beyond anything encountered by the Raj since 1857.[8] The campaign swiftly followed the nadir in imperial military fortunes, evidenced by the loss of Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, Burma and the recent air raids on Calcutta and Ceylon.[9] If the British Empire was about to collapse in the summer of 1942, as it seemed to some, this was surely a moment of peril for the Indian Army too.[10] Alleged plotting by relatively minor Communist groups paled to insignificance compared to this eruption of protests. However, the line was held, brutally in some instances, and the crisis passed. Army morale suffered in this period, as will be discussed in Chapter Six. Despite increased desertions and other indicators of potential trouble, the Indian Army retained

[7] Useful INA sources include, Toye, H., *The Springing Tiger: A Study Of A Revolutionary*, Fay, P. W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1995), Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Sundaram, C.S., Chapter 4: *Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets: Disaffection among Indian Troops in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1940-1 and the Formation of the Indian National Army, pp. 129-140* , Marston, D.P. & Sundaram, C.S., *A Military History of India and South Asia: From the East India Company to the Nuclear Era*, Chapter 8, *The Indian National Army, 1942-46: A Circumstantial Force*, Lebra, J., *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Hayes, R., *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany, Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda* (London, Hurst, 2011)

[8] Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*, pp. 180-194, Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Kamtekar, I. *Chapter 11: The Shiver of 1942*, pp. 344-346

[9] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Kamtekar, I., The Shiver of 1942, pp. 330-357

[10] Perhaps the most cutting assessment of imperial weakness at this time was attributed to Gandhi, "If the Congress President ask my advice I will say that the British proposals form a post-dated cheque on a failing bank." *Bryant, C., Stafford Cripps, The First Modern Chancellor*, p. 299. It should be noted that different versions of this quotation are in circulation, for example see, Herman, A., *Gandhi & Churchill, The Epic Rivalry that Destroyed and Empire and Forged Our Age*, p. 489. and Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, p. 234

cohesion, continued to find the recruits needed for expansion and was able to weather the further military reverses of the first Arakan campaign of 1942-43.[11]

5.1 Politics and Perceived Threats

State institutions, however impartial, are rarely immune to the pervasive influences of day to day partisan politics, but the politics of India in the period 1919 to 1947 were anything but humdrum. From Linlithgow's arguably inept handling of the declaration of war in September 1939, India's military involvement without political consent became central to the grievances and demands of Congress and others in their pursuit of independence.[12] The wartime role and higher direction of the Indian Army were inextricably linked to the politics of independence and the emerging possibility of partition along religious and sectarian lines.[13] The Indian Army was somewhat insulated from the heated debates and protests of Indian independence but Indian soldiers were not so detached as to be politically unaware.

The wider clash of ideas between Communism and other ideologies, including Fascism, appears in retrospect to have had little tangible impact on the institution or its effectiveness. Nonetheless there were fears within the imperial hierarchy that the Congress inspired independence struggle and international Communism were threats to stability and loyalty within the Indian Army.[14] The striking irony is that the creation of the Indian National Army under the direct sponsorship of the Japanese might have presented the most serious threat to the Indian Army in this period but it had little if any connection with Communism or with the mainstream Congress movement. By the time the INA was formed, the USSR was a firm if somewhat uncooperative ally of the British Empire and Communist groups in both India and elsewhere had become at least temporarily enthusiastic supporters of the Allied war effort. Congress had severed any direct links with Subhas Chandra Bose, well before his attempts to reconstitute the INA from 1943.[15]

Fear of Communism and the Soviet threat were pervasive themes in British home and imperial security affairs throughout the period 1919-1939 and this persisted beyond June 1941 when

[11] IOR L/WS/2/44, *Note on Sikhs, 6th November 1942*, p. 3. See also, Deshpande, A., *British Military Policy in India, 1900-1945: Colonial Constraints and Declining Power*, p. 150
[12] Toye, H.**,** *The Springing Tiger:* A Study of a Revolutionary
[13] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 233-246.
[14] IOR L/WS/1/317, *Monthly Intelligence Summary 1940 (to 5th April 1943)*. The monthly summaries contain several references to the risk of communist subversion.
[15] Toye, H.**,** *The Springing Tiger:* A Study of a Revolutionary, Toye, H.**,** *Subhas Chandra Bose, The Springing Tiger*

Britain and the USSR became allies in adversity. Anxieties regarding Soviet intentions and the actions of the Comintern Congress were prudent responses to a threat that had been both overt and clandestine, but these risks were overblown at times.[16] Britain was increasingly preoccupied with the threat of Communism at home and across the Empire from the 1920s. A recurrent concern of MI5, throughout this period, was the threat of Communist subversion within the armed forces. The Director General of MI5, Sir Vernon Kell, was disappointed in his efforts to get comprehensive and draconian measures incorporated into Britain's Army Act of 1919 to deter civilian acts intended to promote disaffection in the Army.[17]

Whilst the USSR undoubtedly sought to promote Bolshevism through the Comintern throughout this period; the perceived threat to British and imperial forces was worse than anything that international communism actually achieved. One example of this preoccupation was the reaction to the naval mutiny at Invergordon in 1931. This event was triggered by local mishandling of the announcement of austere pay cuts for certain ranks but there was an attempt to blame it on Communist infiltration of the Royal Navy, for which there was scant evidence.[18] The parallels with similar attempts to blame external Communist influences for the Central India Horse mutiny in August 1940 seem obvious. Institutions sometimes seek to blame external influences in preference to potentially painful recognition of institutional weakness or leadership failures.

MI5 and Special Branch both had strong ties with their respective equivalents in India and the Delhi Intelligence Bureau (DIB) was a branch of MI5 in all but name.[19] The wartime Director General of MI5, Sir David Petrie, was a former head of the DIB and both British services recruited extensively from the colonial police services and India in particular.[20] It is reasonable to assume that MI5's Comintern-induced anxieties were shared by the DIB and there were legitimate reasons why. George Allison, one of those convicted of a conspiracy to exploit the

[16] Andrew, C., *Defend the Realm, The Authorised History of MI5* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), pp. 148-155. Perhaps the most notorious manifestation of this British establishment fear of Communism was the near-paranoia that accompanied the reporting of the forged Zinoviev letter, which had led to the fall of the first Labour Government in 1924.
[17] Ibid., p. 142
[18] Ibid., p. 163. The hurried attempt to identify Communist subversion as being at the root of the Naval mutiny at Invergordon in September 1931 did little to address the root causes. Unfairly applied and poorly explained pay cuts that bore down especially harshly on some ranks had led to a spontaneous strike on some warships within the Atlantic Fleet. After the event, the Communist Party of Great Britain did send amateurish agents to the naval ports but there was no evidence to suggest that Bolshevism was a factor in initiating the Mutiny. In Portsmouth, Able Seaman Bateman remained loyal to the Colours despite the persuasive arguments and the blandishments of such culinary and alcoholic inducements as a fish supper and beer by an inept would-be agent provocateur. Somewhat similar farces were to play out in India but with more deadly consequences for some.
[19] Ibid., p. 137
[20] Ibid., pp. 236-237 and p. 333

aftermath of the Invergordon Mutiny, had earlier been intercepted, in India, travelling on a forged passport and had been sentenced to five years imprisonment.[21]

Concerns regarding Soviet inspired subversion aligned with long-standing imperial concerns that the Russian 'Bear', whether Tsarist or Bolshevik, was poised to sweep through Afghanistan and purloin the jewel of empire. Whilst Russia was more than happy to interfere in the politics of neighbouring Afghanistan there is little evidence that it harboured serious ambitions in India. The rivalry between the British Empire and Russia in Central Asia, commonly referred to as "The Great Game",[22] influenced imperial policy and perceptions at least until mid-1942.[23] For more than a century the Government of India and its predecessor, the East India Company, regarded Russia as the primary external threat to British India.[24] Wars had been fought and repeated diplomatic and covert efforts made to minimise Russian influence in Afghanistan and to negate the Russian threat.

The revolution of October 1917 transformed the Tsarist threat on the frontiers of Afghanistan and Persia into the seemingly more insidious threat of Bolshevik revolutionary subversion from within. The military threat may have diminished temporarily but the Communist threat to India remained a concern that was associated with the internal strife and political dissent that grew rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s. Despite the rising threats presented by Germany, Italy and Japan, the long-term preoccupation in India with Russian and Soviet threats on the North West Frontier was further reinforced by the events of 1939 and 1940, after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed on 23 August 1939.

Relations between Britain and the Soviet Union were at their lowest since the British military interventions of 1919 in support of White Russian attempts to overthrow the Bolshevik revolution. Even in 1940 the likelihood of Soviet intervention in India was remote, unless a British capitulation had offered easy opportunities to dismember a defenceless empire. The appointment of the independent socialist MP, Stafford Cripps, as Ambassador to Moscow in June 1940 was a first tentative step towards improved relations but there was little actual improvement. Efforts by Britain to warn the Soviets of imminent German aggression were ignored and Anglo Soviet relations only improved in June 1941 when the Soviet Union and the British Empire became ill-matched allies in extremis after Germany's invasion of Russia.

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[21] Ibid., p. 137
[22] Hopkirk, P., *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia* (London, John Murray, 1990), Evgeny, S., *The Great Game, 1856–1907: Russo-British Relations in Central and East Asia Paperback – 25 Aug 2014* (Washington, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), Kipling, R. , *Kim* (London, MacMillan, 1901)
[23] IOR L/WS/1/317, *Monthly Intelligence Summary 1940 (to 5th April 1943)*
[24] James, L., *Raj, The Making of British India* (London, Little Brown, 1997), pp. 364-369

In Indian political affairs the main focus throughout the first two years of war was undoubtedly on the Congress movement and the protests, culminating in the Satyagraha civil resistance campaign. The Congress Party was more akin to a liberal socialist movement and it was an adversary of Communism. Congress was not a Marxist movement in any sense, although some of its leaders were socialists. Gandhi was never likely to do the bidding of the Comintern in Moscow, or any other foreign government. His unique blend of Victorian liberalism, Hindu pacifism, pastoral socialism and mass appeal may have seemed to be indistinguishable from the 'Red Menace' to some within the British imperial establishment but any such view was simplistic. By comparison the communist Kirti Kisan organisation that was implicated in the Central India Horse mutiny in 1940 was a tiny organisation with little discernible influence outside the city of Meerut.[25]

By June 1942, the enemy was at the gates but it was not the Soviets and the threat was at the eastern frontier, not the north-west. To stretch the analogy further, there were no gates in the east and precious few gate-keepers either. Throughout the heyday of the Great Game, the only times that the Eastern frontier had achieved any prominence in imperial thinking were during the Burma wars in the nineteenth century.[26] At this time Burma had briefly become important due to increased French influence and its acquisition of colonies in Indo-China. Once Burma became part of the British Empire it became a commercially valuable appendage of India, governed from Delhi but often neglected in political and military matters.[27]

Simultaneously with the Pearl Harbor attack, Japan attacked Hong Kong, Malaya and Burma.[28] Hong Kong succumbed by Christmas but Malaya was the priority target. Malaya and "Fortress Singapore" fell in February 1942 and imperial forces in Burma undertook the longest forced retreat in the history of the British and Indian armies.[29] The Assam border in eastern India and Burma were occupied and the Japanese presented a direct threat to British India, having rapidly achieved dominance throughout Southeast Asia. The ever-present risk of civil unrest and

[25] IOR L/WS/1/303, *Disaffection of Sikh Troops, Telegram From GOC.in C. Egypt To War Office, 12td January 1940*, Items, 74 and 67. IOR L/WS/1/317, *Monthly Intelligence Summary 1940 (to 5th April 1943), Monthly Intelligence Summary No. 11, India, Monthly intelligence reports Issued by General & Air HQ, , Issued: 3/11/1941*, p.3, *Monthly Intelligence Summary No. 3, Issued by General & Air HQ, India. Containing information received up to 28th Feb 1942)*, Issued: 4/3/1942, p.3. Tan. T.Y, *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 169-170

[26] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, First Burma War, pp. 243-245, Second Burma War, pp. 261-262, Third Burma War, p. 373.

[27] Mason, P, *The Men Who Ruled India*, p. 322, Bayly, C., Harper, T., *Forgotten Armies, Britain's Asian Empire and The War With Japan*, pp. 81-105,

[28] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I, The Loss of Singapore*, Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour*

[29] Ibid.

widespread opposition to the war from the Indian independence movement led by Congress was of great concern but the perceived risk of Communist subversion was still given unwarranted attention.

At the low-point in Anglo-Soviet relations, the perceived threat from Communism may have understandably led to a misinterpretation of the underlying causes of the mutinies which occurred in the Indian Army in 1939-40. However, it is reasonable to challenge the accepted view, held at the time that these mutinies were manifestations of systematic subversion of the Indian Army by external Communist organisations and left-wing Sikh political influences. The accepted view led to an undue focus on a threat that was negligible from June 1941 and this in turn may have distracted attention from other greater threats to the Indian Army.

5.2 Mutiny

For an imperial power the dangers of disaffection among colonial forces were obvious and the responses were fraught with complexity and risk. The Indian Mutiny of 1857-1858 amounted to a failed war of independence that had threatened to end British rule but it began as mutiny.[30] These events cast a long shadow over the administration, structure, doctrine, culture and social landscape of the Indian Army and for some it remained a live subject for consideration when determining policy in 1939-1947.

On 9 August 1940, Linlithgow sent a secret telegram to the recently appointed Secretary of State for India, Leo Amery:

> Central Indian Horse incident is not an isolated one. There has been a good deal of trouble with Sikhs since outbreak of war, starting in September with (corrupt group) Sikhs in Jhansi who gave trouble and had eventually to be mustered out. Steel Helmet trouble was started in November 1939 which was almost entirely work of Sikhs. Ever since there has been a regular flow of small scale desertions, and following on CIH incident both reservists and recruits to that unit have given trouble.[31]

[30] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, David S., Chapter 2 *Greased Cartridges and the Great Mutiny of 1857, A Pretext to Rebel or the Final Straw?,* pp. 82-108. As the rebellion was promulgated by troops raised and paid for by the British East India Company, this event was correctly described as a mutiny, under the military laws in force at the time. Many have since described it as a war whose primary aim was independence and the removal of the British Raj. The initial insurrection spread rapidly and therefore both descriptions are correct.

[31] IOR L/MIL/7/13791 *Question of Appeal from sentence of death passed by court martial in India 1940*, Item 656. Telegram - Secret, from Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow to Secretary of State for India, 9 August 1940.

For Linlithgow to voice such fears about Indian Army troops who were normally regarded as the most loyal and effective must have alarmed Amery. For these concerns to be raised in August 1940 was especially worrying. This was the moment of greatest peril for Britain, certainly since 1805. The British Empire, its economic resources and the colonial armed forces were seen by His Majesty's Government as essential to Britain's survival. If such incidents were indicative of a wider problem with the Indian Army then the value of some 40% of the forces under the direct control of the Crown was in doubt. If Britain could not rely on Sikh regiments at a crucial moment then it could not rely on the Indian Army, as they were among the most highly regarded.

For almost a century the Punjab and Sikhs in particular had been the most important recruitment source. In political, economic and defence terms the Punjab was seen as one of the bulwarks of empire.

Recruitment up to 1/6/43.[32]

Provinces	***% recruited***	***Provinces***	***% recruited***
Punjab	*36.67*	*Madras*	*17.51*
UP	*13.7*	*Bombay*	*6.22*
Bengal	*5.22*	*Nepal*	*5.16*
NWFP	*4.72*	*Raj. & C.I.*	*3.61*
Bihar	*2.76*	*CP & Berar*	*1.59*
Assam	*0.67*	*Sindh*	*0.36*
Delhi	*0.26*	*Orissa*	*0.22*
Baluchistan	*0.07*	*Others*	*1.26*

Most armies have encountered occasional instances of internal dissent, especially at times of stress or political instability. Dissent may involve actions or inactions ranging in severity from passive non-compliance to armed insurrection. Dissent within armed forces in wartime presents particular dangers to the state and has generally been handled more decisively and aggressively than in peacetime. The degree of seriousness attached to offences has usually been calibrated by proximity to the fighting, in time and place. An order disobeyed in a training camp in Britain or a quiet cantonment in India was unlikely to elicit as heavy sanction as refusal to fight at a critical moment in battle. King's Regulations applied to the British Army and provided the disciplinary framework and a similar legal framework applied to the Indian Army. How the respective regulations were applied was another matter and evidence suggests

[32] IOR L/WS/1/136, *Recruiting in India*, Items 5-7, Memorandum from, Jenkins, GOI War Department To Maj General G.N. Molesworth, India Office.

discipline was more rigidly enforced in the Indian Army when compared to the largely conscript British Army.

Three separate incidents in 1939-1940, determined to be acts of Mutiny, within three predominantly Sikh units will be scrutinised. These events were less significant in scale and impact than the INA, but they are in some respects more revealing of political and social influences within the Indian Army. The mutinies led to a heightened fear of externally sponsored Communist subversion within Sikh units. Subsequent preoccupation with Communist subversion remained at the forefront of Army intelligence attention up to 1943, as evidenced by the monthly intelligence summaries.[33] These fears have been taken at face value by some historians but closer examination of the primary sources suggests that the military and civil authorities overstated external influences and that both the Army and the Government of India developed something of a corporate neurosis about a risk which was less significant than other threats. The wider political influences of Congress non-cooperation and the Quit India campaign had far greater impact and by mid-1942 early indications of the creation of the INA were emerging too.

The three mutinies led to considerable alarm in the Government of India and in the Indian Army high command as evidenced in Linlithgow's telegram of 9 August 1940 and subsequent correspondence with the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, General Sir Robert Archibald Cassels, the Secretary of State for India and others.[34] In the words of the Marquis of Zetland, Secretary of State:

> Following upon the trouble soon after the Indian Brigades reached Egypt and the serious episode which took place on the Frontier some time ago, when a number of British officers were shot, it gives one some cause for anxiety so far as some portions at any rate of the Indian Army are concerned. I am not of course suggesting for one moment that there is any general disaffection, but one cannot altogether ignore incidents of this kind.[35]

[33] IOR L/WS/1/317, *Monthly Intelligence Summary 1940 (to 5th April 1943)*
[34] IOR L/WS/1/303, *Disaffection of Sikh Troops, Telegram From GOC.in C. Egypt To War Office,* 12td January 1940, Items, 89, 87, 79, 74, 66 and 67, IOR L/WS/1/391, *Discipline of Indian Troops in Singapore,* Item 10 Extract from a letter from Secretary of State for India, Marquis of Zetland to Viceroy Lord Linlithgow.
[35] IOR L/WS/1/391, Item 10, Extract from a letter from Secretary of State for India, Marquis of Zetland to Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, 9th May, 1940.

The most serious Central India Horse mutiny in June 1940 was preceded by a less serious incident in Egypt in late 1939 and a third incident arose in Hong Kong on 6 December 1940. Take together they contributed to a persistent impression that all was not well with the Indian Army. There were recurrent references to these events in the monthly intelligence reports throughout the next two years in addition to concerns raised in correspondence between senior commanders.[36] The three incidents seem to have had a cumulative impact in raising questions about the loyalty of some Indian Army elements and Jat Sikhs in particular.

5.3 Egypt, December 1939

The incident that occurred in Egypt in December 1939 set the pattern for official responses and influenced the interpretation of subsequent events and motives. The circumstances were communicated by telegram from Indian Army Headquarters to the War Office in London on 12 January 1940:

> Disaffection exists RIASC.[37] Proportion of Indian Drivers necessarily employed here as loaders with unit, though leading to no loss of pay, has caused intermittent trouble ostensibly due loss prestige through doing coolie work. Culmination large numbers refusing to load supply echelons during Division exercise this week. 32 men awaiting court martial over 200 affected. Root of trouble possibly that men include many reservists called up for normal three months training before emergency then retained and moved with Heron without adequate warning or embarkation leave to arrange family matters. No trace so far of subversive activities by Egyptian or other external sources in Egypt. [38]

The incident was referred to as “disaffection” at this stage, not mutiny. Middle East Command set out the context for the likely cause:

> In India I gather that the system is different to that of the RASC at home, in that the men who load vehicles are a special class. Here of course, it was necessary to adopt the British system. This at once began to cause trouble.[39]

[36] These sources will be discussed further in the current Chapter and in Chapter 6: *Morale and Welfare*.
[37] RIASC - Royal Indian Army Service Corps, RASC – Royal Army Service Corps
[38] IOR L/WS/1/303, Item 112, War Staff Papers, Item 112, *Disaffection of Sikh Troops, Telegram From GOC.in C. Egypt To War Office, 12td January 1940*
[39] Ibid., Item 106

The British Indian Army officers in the unit had attempted to handle the situation with some sensitivity, by demonstrating that British drivers accepted the need to load their own trucks, "On one occasion it was carefully staged that the RIASC should see RASC personnel loading the vehicles."[40] When the Indian drivers continued to refuse the order, 34 drivers were arrested and were brought before a court martial a few days later.[41] The drivers included 22 Sikhs, 11 Moslems and one Hindu. The numbers were probably indicative of the unit class structure and not of any special significance, but subsequent investigations were to focus most attention on the Sikh contingent. There was a subsequent peaceful sit-down protest by some 300 mainly Sikh sympathisers from the same unit, who were arrested but not court-martialled.[42]

Two themes quickly emerge from the official documents relating to this incident. First, there is criticism by British Army officers within the high command of the way in which the incident was handled by British Indian Army officers. This is an important point as there is some evidence of friction between the officers of the British and Indian armies at this time.[43] In the letter of 15 January a member of the headquarters staff in Egypt suggests, "I suspect that the officers of the RIASC have some slight sympathy with the men and that this feeling has become known." The draft letter also includes the admission, "But I have no evidence", which was crossed out and is missing from the final draft.[44] A subsequent comment reinforces the criticism, "I'm inclined to think that the matter has been badly handled by the officers of the RIASC, but in saying this I do so not knowing whether my GOC-in-C is of the same opinion, and not knowing the view of the commanders of the 4th Division."[45]

The second emerging theme is one of immediate suspicion, that the mutiny cannot have resulted merely from the loss of status involved and that there must be some ulterior political or subversive motive. This suspicion led to a police officer, J.P. Morton being seconded from India to assist in the investigation. A report was produced by this officer who was described as being on deputation from the Indian Police.[46]

[40] Ibid.
[41] The number to be court martialled is 32 in some documents and 34 in others but the figure of 32 appears to be an error, corrected later.
[42] Ibid., Items 101-103
[43] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Chapter 10, Callahan R., *Were the 'Sepoy Generals' Any Good? A Reappraisal of the British-Indian Army's High Command in the Second World War*
[44] IOR L/WS/1/303, Item 106
[45] The author was referring to the 4th Indian Division which included both British and Indian commissioned officers of the Indian Army.
[46] IOR L/WS/1/303, Items 94-99, Dated 10 February 1940, *Report by: J.P. Morton. Esquire, Indian Police*.

Given the nature of his investigation and the conclusions he reached so quickly it would be reasonable to assume that Morton was an intelligence officer or at least a member of Special Branch but he is not referred to as such in the available correspondence. Further investigation indicates that Morton was no longer a police officer but an officer attached to the DIB. J.P. Morton, more widely known as "Jack Morton" was a rising talent within the DIB and subsequently had a long and successful career in counter-intelligence. He later played a key role in reorganising the counter intelligence effort under the Briggs Plan during the Malaya Emergency.[47] He played a similar role in Aden in the 1960s and finished his career working in counter-intelligence in Northern Ireland in the 1980s. The deployment of such an officer to investigate this mutiny gives an indication of the importance attached to it by the Government of India and the army high command.

At the court of enquiry it had been concluded that at the outset, "there was no subversive conspiracy to mutiny."[48] But following remarkably brief investigations, Morton suggested that the initial spontaneous protest had been taken over by subversive ring-leaders and, "This was attributed mainly to discontented reservists who in civil life had acquired a political taint and who infected the others involved."[49]

Morton's report described the subversion as:

> …a cancerous growth which thrives on real or imaginary grievances and my investigation was accordingly directed and confined to this aspect of the case. For any possible preventative action it was necessary to trace the origin of the infection, assess the weight and extension of its influence and expose as many of the ringleaders as possible.[50]

He went on to state that, "Trouble originated in the Division Supply Column and the Division Petrol Company, both of which contained a very large proportion of Reservists (67%)."[51] Morton provided a breakdown of the class structure within the unit, "*First batch to refuse was 71% Reservists (Sikhs 60%, Mohds 38%, Hindus 8%), (38% were Sikh Reservists in first batch, 33% overall). Across the whole of RIASC MT in Egypt the proportion was 30%."*[52]

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[47] Walton, C., *Empire of Secrets, British Intelligence, The Cold War and The Twilight of Empire* (London, Harper Press, 2015), pp. 179-183. Andrew, C. , *Defend the Realm, The Authorised History of MI5*, p.450
[48] IOR L/WS/1/303, Items 94-99.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] *Ibid*.

He also stressed the*, "high proportion of Reservists in the 2 worst affected units".* Morton was rapidly building the hypothesis that an initial refusal to undertake *"coolie work"* had been quickly exploited by a minority of older and allegedly politicised reservists. Perhaps the pace of Morton's investigation was just a little too hasty and his report certainly indicates that he was making possibly tenuous connections with known Communist conspiracies back in India, *"It was known in India that there was contact at Meerut between certain personnel of 25 MT Company (Largely involved in the present trouble) and the "Kirti Lehr" Office."* Kirti Lehr was a Communist newspaper directed by Sikh Communists, allegedly trained in Moscow. In Morton's view it represented a part of a long-standing conspiracy against the Raj, dating back to the Ghadr movement of 1914-16. Part of its programme was said to be the undermining of loyalty to the Indian Army by the spread communist doctrines among the Sikh troops.

Morton's report drew together connections between different individuals and organisations in order to link the alleged conspirators to the Ghadr movement, as if it was still an active movement:

> Source information at an early stage in Egypt was that the Sikhs, once the loading question was in issue, had stimulated and directed agitation and that subversive infection had been brought by them from Meerut. Soon afterwards it was reported that, No. 507978 Gurbaksh Singh was one of the prominent leaders who had been wise enough to avoid imprisonment and who with the aid of his group had been directing and encouraging the agitation from outside. Further that this individual who was known as Baba and who was a local Granthi had formed a "Nationalist" party in Meerut which included Naik Sadhu Singh. This Sadhu Singh is a brother of the notorious Ghadr leader and ex-State prisoner, Wasdev Singh and was reported against in India as having had contact with the office of the "Kirti-Lehr"s newspaper previously referred to.
>
> This information revealed a link with the Ghadr organisation in India. Although there is no direct evidence on this point the so-called Nationalist party said to have been formed by Gurbakhsh Singh in Meerut was undoubtedly connected in some way or other with the "Kirti" directorate.[53]

The problem with this elaborate narrative is that the Ghadr movement had largely ceased to exist as an organisation in any meaningful sense some 20 years earlier. In *The Garrison State,*

[53] Ibid.

Tan Tai Yong provides a useful account of the Ghadr movement and its demise.[54] The Ghadr had started as a political movement among Indian emigrants in North America but when some of its members were deported back to India it later attempted open rebellion in the Punjab. This gained negligible support from the local population and was largely eradicated by 1918. Although some former supporters of the Ghadr movement were early recruits of Kirt Kisan these organisations were not one continuum.[55] Unless Morton was using the term "Ghadr" generically to loosely identify all Sikh Communist movements we must assume his analysis and evidence is flawed in this respect at least.

The puzzling references to the long defunct Ghadr movement do retain relevance in one respect. The assassination, on 13 March 1940, just a few weeks later, of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the retired former Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab and the wounding of the Secretary of State for India, the Marquis of Zetland, occurred in London.[56] The assassination was perpetrated by Udam Singh who some years previously had been associated with the Ghadr movement but seems to have been acting alone in 1940.[57] This event may subsequently have been a consideration in the minds of those in authority when reading Morton's report. For them to attach undue significance to Morton's references to a Ghadr link would be understandable. They may have assumed a current and wider threat associated with Kirti Kisan. Morton could not have known what was about to happen but he may have assumed there was a broader continuity of left-wing threats over many years and his audience made the same connection.

There is of course a more prosaic interpretation of events and one that the initial court of enquiry seems to have supported. Reservists who had been recalled to the army in 1939 had already served in the peacetime Indian Army and had returned to their communities as respected veterans. As members of a revered military profession they brought honour and status to their families. Records of the investigation show that recalled reservists were dispatched overseas to Egypt at short notice, some without embarkation leave and that there was some evidence that this was the initial cause of discontent.[58] It also seems likely that reservists who had served in the relaxed traditions and certainties of peacetime India would have been all the more indignant to find that they were expected to undertake such low status

[54] Tan T.Y., *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 112-140
[55] Ibid., pp. 169-170, Josh, B.S., *Communist Movement in Punjab, 1926-47* (New Delhi, Anupama, 1979), pp. 79-90
[56] Perkins, R., *The Amritsar Legacy: Golden Temple to Caxton Hall, the Story of a Killing* (Chippenham, Picton, 1989) pp. 1-24. Sir Michael O'Dwyer had been Lieutenant Governor in 1919 at the time of the Amritsar Massacre and his killing is widely assumed to have been an act of revenge for his involvement. Perkins's book offers some interesting but unsubstantiated theories as to Udam Singh's motivation. The papers relating to trial of Udam Singh are not as yet released but his presence in Britain despite an earlier conviction does seem to suggest a murky trail from India to The Caxton Hall, with possible involvement along the way by the British intelligence services.
[57] Ibid, p. 130
[58] IOR L/WS/1/303, Item 112

"coolie work" as loading their own trucks. In their previous service this task would have been done by low paid labourers who were often of the Shudra and Untouchable castes.[59] What the British Army officers interpreted as "slight sympathy with the men" was more likely to have been an attempt by British born Indian Army officers to handle the issue sensitively and to persuade the men to follow orders without resorting to threats.

5.4 Bombay, June 1940

The most serious event occurred in late June 1940 and its impact was more significant as it occurred at a critical moment. An experienced reconnaissance squadron of the Central India Horse refused to board ship in Bombay to join Indian units being assembled in Egypt. It caused consternation within the Indian Army and court martial proceedings were immediately convened. 108 Jat Sikhs and two Punjabi Moslems were convicted for acts of mutiny and severe sentences were handed down:[60]

Sentence	Convictions
Death Sentences	16
Transportation for Life	1
Transportation for 15 years	88
Transportation for 14 years	1
Transportation for 7 years	4

There was some official disquiet at the severity of the sentences and these were reduced at the discretion of the Viceroy in agreement with General Cassels, but they remained severe by British Army and for that matter Indian Army standards:[61]

Sentence	Convictions
Death Sentences	4
Transportation for 15 years	10
Transportation for 10 years	84
Transportation for 7 years	6
Rigorous Imprisonment for 4 years	4

Petitions for mercy were rejected for the four condemned to death. This seems to have been based on a view that they were the ringleaders in a planned conspiracy and sentences were

[59] The *Shudra* and *Untouchable* castes were deemed by most Hindus to be "inferior" lower status castes, only suited to doing tasks involving manual labour.
[60] IOR L/MIL/7/13791, Item 653, *Question of Appeal from sentence of death passed by court martial in India 1940*.
[61] Ibid.

quickly carried out.[62] Those convicted and transported to the Andaman Islands later fell into the hands of the Japanese in 1942 when these islands were occupied. Some of the prisoners joined the INA, raised by the Japanese in 1942-43 from captured Indian soldiers and Indian civilians in occupied territories. The islands came under the control of the Azad Hind government, established by Subhas Chandra Bose and this may have facilitated INA recruitment of the released convicts.[63]

There had been previous concerns about the loyalty of the Sikh population due to the Ghadr movement that flared up during the First World War and in the aftermath of the Amritsar massacre in 1919.[64] Fears of widespread disaffection among Sikh troops proved transitory, not least due to welfare efforts directed though local District Soldiers Boards across the recruiting areas.[65] It was against this backdrop that the Indian Army felt itself to be under specific threat from a tiny Soviet inspired communist organisation referred to as Kirti Kisan or Kirti Lehr.[66]

General Cassells wrote to Sir Henry Craik, Governor of the Punjab:

> In the first place there is the ordinary Sikh taste for sedition with which we have been familiar for many years, the Sikh being an intriguer at heart. This fertile soil has been very largely cultivated by the activities of Gadhr-communists [sic], Socialists and revolutionary organisations, among which mention must be made of the Babar Akalis, the SPGC and the Kirti Lehar [sic] office (originally in the Punjab and later at Meerut) which has been at the bottom of our recent trouble.[67]

Whilst the evidence in the India Office War Staff papers does seem to substantiate a connection between some of the alleged ring leaders and the Kirti Lehr newspaper in the garrison town of Meerut, Cassells made a much more sweeping connection to a wider range of political organisations that had been active at different times over 25 years. This tendency to conflate political movements and organisations, from different periods, as manifestations of one

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[62] IOR L/WS/1/303 War Staff Papers, Items 87 and 79, *Disaffection of Sikh Troops, Telegram From GOC.in C. Egypt To War Office, 12td January 1940*

[63] Bayly, C., Harper, T., *Forgotten Armies, Britain's Asian Empire and The War With Japan*, p. 325

[64] Frazer, T.G., *The Intrigues of the German Government and The Ghadr Party Against British Rule In India, 1914-1918* (London, LSE, 1974)

[65] Tan T.Y., *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 164-170

[66] Kirti Kisan was the organisation and Kirti Lehr was the name of the newspaper published by Kirti Kisan but official correspondence tended to use either name to identify the organisation.

[67] IOR, L/WS/1/303 War Staff Papers, Item 74. *Disaffection of Sikh Troops, Telegram from GOC.in C. Egypt To War Office, 12th January 1940.* Note this spelling of "Ghadr" as "Gadhr" is in the original document but most sources adopt the former spelling.

contiguous movement became a recurrent theme in subsequent investigations and commentary.

5.5 Hong Kong, December 1940

An order issued by the commanding officer, to the 20th Heavy Artillery Battery of the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery, based in Hong Kong on 6 of September 1940, instructed all troops, including Sikhs to carry and when necessary wear, steel helmets. The majority of the unit complied with the order and helmets were at least carried, but the Commanding Officer, decided to read the order to the troops on parade on 6 December and this was the catalyst for protest by Sikh troops. It is central to the Sikh faith that the adult male wears the turban as one of several symbols of his religion. Wearing the Indian Army issue steel helmet was incompatible in the eyes of most Sikhs with the wearing of the Turban. The General Officer Commanding in Hong Kong, Major-General A. E. Grasett, set out the circumstances of the protest:

> An order to carry helmets was issued on parade on 6 December (original order had been issued on 6 September). The Jemadar signed an acknowledgement of the order to carry steel helmets but the Havildar Major initially refused but after further explanation from the CO the HM reluctantly signed the order. Senior Havildar still refused and was arrested but the remaining 85 Sikhs followed him to the guard room and remained there.[68]

Grasett reported that all who had previously been taken into custody under escort were on parade on the 21 December and their commanding officer explained the consequences of continued refusal. Only two of the 85 obeyed the order and the rest were to be tried by General Court Martial. However, he also expressed serious concerns regarding the risk of a wider mutiny, *"Strong action may obviate extensive trouble but possibility of mutiny of some 800 Sikhs must be faced."*[69] On the same day the 21st Sikhs of the Hong Kong Regiment refused to move wooden cases known to contain helmets.

In a further memorandum on 24 December, Grasett indicated that 78 Sikhs of the 20th Battery had begun a hunger strike.[70] On the evening of 22nd Sikhs of the 5th Anti-Aircraft Regiment had refused food and on the 24th they refused to parade and continued hunger strike*. "After a*

[68] IOR L/WS/1/303, Items 49 and 50, War Staff Papers, *Disaffection of Sikh Troops, "Strictly Secret", Memo From GOC Hong Kong, To C. in C. India, 22nd December 1940*
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., Item 45

talking to by British officers and Indian Officers they paraded and continued normal duties." He further stated that other Royal Indian Artillery units were involved in the protests. As Chandar Sundaram suggests in his essay *Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets,* the issue was no longer the wearing of helmets but the detention of the leading mutineers.[71] A poorly handled situation blundered on, fortunately without further escalation. Sundaram also points to the entirely peaceful nature of the protests, not unlike the tactics of Gandhi's followers. As with the protest in Egypt, the tactics of the protestors were remarkable only for their passivity. If this was part of a Ghadr inspired plot to undermine the Indian Army from within then it seems to have been unusually tentative.

The response from General Cassells is revealing on two counts.[72] First Cassells raised the spectre of Communist subversion; "...our experience has shown that all major Sikh incidents since the outbreak of war in Indian Army have been instigated by Communist cells and that in some cases Granthis have been implicated."[73] He then pointedly mentioned that Middle East Command was not issuing helmets to Sikhs, who had in some cases seen recent action, and that they were averse to issuing such orders. He also mentioned that no steel helmets were yet available for issue in India so the policy in relation to the order (IRO 994) had not yet arisen. The tone of this memo is much more conciliatory on the helmet issue and Cassells was surely hinting at a conciliatory approach, as taken in Egypt.

Cassells was, perhaps inadvertently, setting out two competing and contradictory analyses of the causes of this and the earlier incidents in Egypt and Bombay. On the one hand it was persistently argued by Cassells, Linlithgow and others within the Indian Army and Government, that the protests were the result of external subversive influences acting on army units that would otherwise have remained content. This was perhaps the more convenient and comfortable explanation for officers of the Indian Army as it avoided addressing issues of leadership or decision making. Cassells was also hinting that more pragmatic command decisions could have avoided giving cause for protest.[74] These two analyses are not mutually incompatible as the would-be agent of subversion needs some widespread grievance to exploit. Poor leadership decisions, weak 'middle-management' in the guise of partisan VCOs and

[71] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India* Sundaram, C.S., Chapter 4: *Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets, Disaffection among Indian Troops in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1940-1 and the formation of the Indian National Army,* p. 145

[72] IOR L/WS/1/303, Item 41, *Memo From C.in C. India To GOC Hong Kong, 24th December 1940*

[73] A Granthi is a caretaker of a Sikh gurdwara or temple and the reader of the Guru Granth, who officiates at some Sikh ceremonies.

[74] IOR L/WS/1/303, Items 23 and 27, *Memo: From C. in C. India To GOC Hong Kong, 24th December 1940,*

inexperienced junior officers, could give cause to any alleged conspiracy.[75] This is perhaps closer to the view of Cassels and others and it was articulated by General Muspratt in the War Office, "What I trust will be possible is to search out any ring-leaders and any civilian instigators who have tried to use simple Sikh soldiers as their tools."[76]

Sensitivities around the turban issue have sometimes eluded British soldiers and politicians. It was the cause of friction in both world wars and in more recent times, for example regarding UK legislation for the compulsory wearing of motorcycle helmets.[77] In 1940 higher standards were expected of Indian Army officers, steeped in the principles of Martial Race theory and fully aware of the religious sensitivities relating to dress, food and other issues but sometimes equally crass decisions were made.[78] For all manner of reasons Indian troops were not always under the command of the best and most experienced officers, familiar with regimental customs and this increased the risk of avoidable errors.

The voice of wisdom and common sense on this subject is captured in this extract form General Orders issued by General Wavell, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East on 11 October 1940:

> General Order 196 Steel Helmets – Indian Army
> On the introduction of steel helmets for use of the Army in India, it is not the intention that they shall be worn by the Sikh soldier. But it is hoped that of their own common sense Sikh soldiers will realise the importance of this form of protection and will avail themselves of it in battle[79]

If a similar order had been issued in Hong Kong there would have been no cause for protest, no courts martial and no alleged conspiracy. It is also worth recalling that the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery fought with as much determination as any other unit in the doomed defence of Hong Kong less than a year after this episode, as did other Indian Army units present.[80] Errors of judgement in command can create dissention during wartime and that is hardly surprising, but the response from the military and civil authorities was to draw a direct

[75] Viceroy Commissioned Officer were Indian officers, ranked below commissioned officers and broadly equivalent to a Warrant Officer in the British Army.
[76] IOR L/WS/1/303, Item 23, *Memo: From C in C India To GOC Hong Kong, 24th December 1940*
[77] *Hansard 1803–2005, 25 June 1976,) House of Commons Debate 25 June 1976 Vol. 913 cc2037-77* (*Hansard 1803–2005, 25 June 1976 , http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1976/jun/25/first-regulations-under-section-33a-to#S5CV0913P0_19760625_HOC_84)*
[78] See Chapter 4
[79] IOR L/WS/1/303, *Memo From C. in C. India To GOC Hong Kong, 24th December 1940*, Items 23 and 27
[80] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I*, pp. 119-151

link between this and earlier incidents in Egypt and Bombay and to suggest that it was another case of externally directed subversion.

5.6 A Communist Threat?

Nervousness about the reliability of the Indian Army and the risk of Communist subversion did not end with the three mutinies. The monthly intelligence summaries that were distributed to the Indian Army commands across India, give some indication of the disproportionate attention given to Communist subversion well into 1942.[81] For example *Monthly Intelligence Summary No. 11,* issued on the 3 November 1941 contains four times more content relating to perceived Communist threats than to Congress activities. The section relating to Communism is as much diatribe as factual intelligence summary. When referring to the Kirti Kisan Party for example, the author suggests:

> In their attitude to the war, the Communists' wish to make revolutionary use of the crisis, to bring about a British defeat and to convert it into a civil war- as the Bolsheviks did in 1917; at the same time they profess to have a policy to help the Soviets.[82]

The report links these comments back to the events of the three mutinies:

> The Sikh Kirti Kisan Party also advocates mass revolution but is a separate organisation from the Communist Party and has been dealt with in previous summaries. It is perhaps more important from the army point of view, owing to it specific efforts to contaminate Sikh and other serving soldiers, as was revealed in the history of the Meerut Kirti group. This has since disbanded and there has been no recent confirmation of Kirti contacts being made in the army; but the three chief Meerut conspirators are still at large. One of their principal links was arrested recently in a Punjab recruiting area, in possession of over eight thousand rupees in cash, including eight one-thousand rupee notes in series.[83]

Use of sequentially numbered high denomination notes certainly suggests conspicuous ineptitude on the part of the alleged conspirators. This continued focus on a possible Communist threat would perhaps be laudable if it was not for the fact that the USSR and the British Empire were by this time allies and little more than a month later the Japanese attacked

[81] IOR L/WS/1/317, *India Monthly Intelligence Summary 1940 (to 5th April 1943)*
[82] Ibid., *Monthly Intelligence Summary No. 11 Issued by General & Air HQ, India, November* 1941
[83] Ibid.

Malaya, Burma and Pearl Harbor. Japan is barely mentioned in *Summary No. 11* issued on 3 November 1941. This raises serious questions about the prevailing intelligence priorities.[84] By this time the evidence that Japan was likely to resort to arms in some manner was obvious and changes in the high command in Malaya were underway, in response.[85] The misdirection of attention becomes all the more stark when it is remembered that the lack of local intelligence resources in Burma, Malaya and Thailand was a major factor in the impending defeats. It must be contrasted with the widespread network of agents that Japan had developed with impunity in Malaya and Burma.[86]

In the aftermath of the fall of Singapore, Britain's greatest military defeat, resulting in the surrender of the largest number of imperial troops in the history of the British Empire, space was still found for the latest news on Communist subversives. *Monthly Intelligence Summary No. 3* includes an extensive account of the capture and career of Harminder Singh Sodhi:

> …the principal 'underground' Sikh Communist who was connected with the Meerut 'Kirti Lehr' group's subversive propaganda amongst Sikh troops during 1939-41, was recently arrested by the police at a wayside railway station close to Delhi…..
>
> Harminder Singh became involved in the Ghadr movement in America as a young man. In 1934 he was selected to go to Moscow to undergo revolutionary training as a Communist. He returned to India in 1938 on a forged passport, and thereafter became one of the secret leaders of Kirti Kisan (Sikh Communist) movement in the Punjab and elsewhere in N. India. Until the outbreak of war he was in charge of the 'Kirti Lehr' in Meerut where, in addition to publishing quantities of subversive literature, he was responsible for organising Communist 'cells', which have since proved to be the cause of the widespread trouble amongst R.I.A.S.C personnel in Egypt early in 1940, the refusal of a Sikh squadron to embark for overseas later the same year, and numerous Sikh desertions. He also played a leading part in causing strikes amongst Sikh labour in Jamshedpur.
>
> When war restrictions, combined with the resignation of Congress Ministries, forced him to leave Meerut, he threw in his lot with Subhas Bose, and in 1941 made his way to Kabul intending to proceed to Russia. Instead he became involved in Axis plans in

[84] Ibid.
[85] Plans to replace Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham with a younger Commander-in-Chief had gained a new urgency in November 1941. Alanbrooke, Field Marshal Lord, Danchev, A., Todman D., ed., *War Diaries 1939-1945*, pp. 197-198. For a broad assessment of Far Eastern strategy at this time, see, Pownall, Lt. General Sir Henry, Bond, B. Ed., *Chief of Staff: The Diaries of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall: Volume Two*
[86] For a general appreciation of the state of Japanese Intelligence capabilities in 1941 see, *Kotani, K. , Japanese Intelligence in World War II* (Oxford, Osprey, 2009)

> Kabul, and was given considerable sums of money to finance the revolutionary movement in India, and to organise a fifth column. Following Russia's entry into the war Sodhi returned to India, having broken off his connection with the Axis, but remaining underground. Like Communists elsewhere he now claims to be in support of the common war-effort, oblivious of the fact that his efforts during the past three years, if they had widespread support and been permitted to develop, would have helped materially towards a Nazi victory.[87]

For officers urgently seeking insights into the recent events in Malaya and Singapore, it must have been disappointing that *Summary No. 3* contained no useful intelligence perspectives on the role of Japanese inspired subversion in Malaya. This suggests continued misdirection of scarce resources and a poor sense of priorities. *Summary No. 4,* issued on the 4 April 1942 includes the first significant mention of the defeat in Singapore but also includes a series of opinions on the shifting alignments in the Communist position:

> Three changes of policy but no real change of their underlying intent to overthrow the Imperial order:
>
> - Loud support for the Soviet-German Pact.
> - Calling on their countrymen "to make revolutionary use of the war crisis."
> - "In active alliance with Subhas Bose for the first six months of the war they tried to force the Congress to launch mass civil disobedience".
> - In parallel with this overt political action they attempted to subvert through industry and peasant disorder and "to spread disaffection in the Army."
> - Then came the attack on Russia which took the Communists completely by surprise."
> - Nothing daunted however, the Communist Party leaders next invented the theory of 'two wars'.
> - In December last (1941), Indian Communists suddenly decided to change their policy and to proclaim themselves 'pro-war' on the grounds that it was no longer an 'Imperialist' but a 'People's War'.

Monthly Intelligence Summary No. 5, issued in May 1942 included a brief description of the Congress Party. On the eve of the Quit India campaign it perhaps signals a belated shift in attention towards Congress:

[87] IOR L/WS/1/317, *Monthly Intelligence Summary No. 3 Issued by General & Air HQ, India, March 1942.*

> It is moreover, the anti-British party 'par excellence': since the outbreak of war Congress has been able, with comparative immunity, to spread throughout India its doctrine of non-co-operation with the war, non-resistance to India's invaders, and hatred of the British.[88]

The Muslim League was also mentioned, but the political aims and methods of the Sikhs were given rather more attention. The Sikh aims were correctly assessed to be the prevention of total political domination by Hindus at a national level and to prevent domination by Muslims in the Punjab. The two main Sikh political parties, Akalis and the Khalsa Defence of India League were both described as *"sound".* Of these mainstream parties, the summary suggests that, *"Provided they do not feel their rights threatened they are unlikely to cause trouble."*
The summary then moves on to lavish yet more attention on Kirti Kisan, "There is, however, a minority who are willing to accept help from any quarter to further their dream of a Punjab under Sikh domination." This summary describes the Kirti Kisan organisation and the Kirti Lehr newspaper:

> The Sikh Communist Party – The Punjab Kisan Committee represents the most dangerous Sikh organisation in India. The Sikh Communists are distinct from the CP of India and their aims are fundamentally opposed:[89] The Kisan movement wishes to establish a Sikh raj in India with the support of the Communists, whereas the latter aim at a Soviet Republic in India.
>
> The Sikh Communist organisation inspired both the C.I.H. mutiny in Bombay, when over 100 Sikhs of the Regiment refused to embark for overseas, and the R.I.A.S.C. mutiny in Egypt through its organisation in Meerut. The Punjab Kisan Committee is the successor to the Kirti Kisan Party which, although banned in the Punjab in 1926, continued publication of its newspaper "Kirti Lehar" until the outbreak.
>
> This paper was ultra-revolutionary in tone and to avoid action against it, was moved in 1937 from the Punjab to Meerut, where it came under the protection of a benevolent Congress ministry. There it became the meeting place for Communists and revolutionaries from all over India, and these agitators in the Kirti Lehar office were able to establish contact with serving Sikh soldiers in Meerut: the object of spreading

[88] Ibid, *Monthly Intelligence Summary No. 11 Issued by General & Air HQ, India May 1942*
[89] CP - Communist Party. Whilst Kirti Kisan was a minor Sikh Communist organisation, the main Communist Party of India was and remains a large organisation with considerable influence in some Indian states, notably Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the south of India.

> disloyalty in the Indian Army being an important item in their party programme. The discontent stirred up among the Sikh soldiers resulted, at the beginning of the war in Sikh desertions and, later, in the C.I.H. and R.I.A.S.C. mutinies.

From the second half of 1942 the Monthly Intelligence summaries change significantly in tone and format and much less attention was lavished on Sikh Communism. This is hardly surprising as the Congress Party launched the abortive but violent "Quit India" campaign on 8 August 1942 and India was in the grip of widespread insurrection.[90] There is no evidence to suggest that Sikh Communists played anything more than a peripheral role in these disturbances. The corporate neurosis may not have subsided completely but there were more pressing threats to the Raj than the now defunct Kirti Lehr, a small circulation Communist newspaper that had once operated in Meerut.

5.7 From Dissent to Rebellion: The Indian National Army

Whilst the most significant political threat to British India was the Quit India campaign initiated by Congress in 1942, the greater threat to Indian Army cohesion was the creation, under Japanese sponsorship, of the Indian National Army. The INA was partly recruited from captured Indian troops in Malaya and Singapore but was also raised from the substantial civilian Indian diaspora in occupied countries of Southeast Asia. Formation of the INA was initiated by the Japanese and was not a spontaneous manifestation of internal dissent within the Indian Army. It did however, germinate and gain sustenance in many common resentments within the Army, including slow promotion and the relatively poor treatment of some Indian officers.[91] Overt and implicit acts of racism by European civilians in Malaya and the alleged abandonment of Indian troops by their British officers at the surrender in Singapore on 15 February 1941 were also factors.[92]

There were other examples of troops switching sides in the Second World War, affecting the armed forces of several combatants. Perhaps the closest parallel to the formation of the INA by Japan was the subornment of Soviet Cossack forces by the German Army and Waffen SS in the Ukraine in 1941-1942. A proportion of captured Soviet Cossack units proved ripe for turning and the Wehrmacht recruited entire units from Cossack prisoners of war, augmented by

[90] Toye, R., *Churchill's Empire, The World that Made Him and the World he Made*, pp. 225-229
[91] See Chapter 3 regarding the slow process of Indianisation of the officer corps.
[92] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Sundaram, C.S., Chapter 4: *Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets: Disaffection among Indian Troops in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1940-1 and the Formation of the Indian National Army*, pp. 129-140

civilians from discontented Ukrainian communities in occupied territory.[93] Two Cossack corps were formed to fight alongside the Germans.

The INA undoubtedly presented a potential threat to Indian Army cohesion.[94] It was instigated by the Japanese at the surrender in Singapore, by recruiting captured Indian troops systematically separated from their British officers and assembled at Farrer Park.[95] It was disbanded in December 1942 on the orders of its leader, Captain - later self-appointed General - Mohan Singh upon his arrest by the Japanese.[96] The INA was raised again in 1943 under the more politically astute leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose, an estranged former member of the Congress Party leadership.[97] This complex gestation, effectively of two formations that were in some respects different in character and origin, has led to some confusion in the available secondary sources. The existence of two iterations of the INA has made it harder to verify its size, scope and aims. To assess its impact as a potentially destabilising factor on the Indian Army it is necessary to consider each INA in turn.

The INA was but one product of Bose's military ambitions. A similar initiative was attempted by Germany, widely known as the Indian Legion.[98] Stephen Cohen suggests that the Indian Legion was militarily insignificant.[99] With no more than 3,500 volunteers it had no discernible military or political impact on the Indian Army, other than necessitating arrangements for the reception and assessment of the survivors after they were captured in late 1944 and 1945.[100] There is no evidence to suggest that the Indian Legion was used in any fifth column activities aimed at suborning Indian Army units and its main area of garrison deployment in France was remote from the nearest Indian Army formations in Italy.[101] Another notable difference between the two initiatives was that very few commissioned officers joined the Legion and most officers were German. One commissioned officer and 2,913 other ranks were apprehended by December 1946.[102]

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[93] Newland S.J., *Cossacks in the German Army 1941-1945* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2002)
[94] IOR L/WS/2/45, *A brief chronological and factual account of the Indian National Army, by Lt-Col G.D. Anderson,* Items 4 & 10
[95] Ibid., Monograph 3: *The incidence of Volunteers and Non-Volunteers Etc*.
[96] Singh, M. , *Soldiers' Contribution to Indian Independence* (Delhi, Army Educational Stores, 1974)
[97] Bayly, C., Harper, T., *Forgotten Armies, Britain's Asian Empire and the war with Japan*, pp. 321-327
[98] Hayes, R., *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany, Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda*, pp. 74-75
[99] Cohen, S.P., *The Indian Army, Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation*, pp. 147-148
[100] IOR L/WS/2/43, *Indian prisoners of war - reception camps,* IOR L/WS/1/1516, *Indian PoWs and Civilians in Europe, 1943-1945*
[101] Hayes, R., *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany, Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda*, p.75
[102] IOR L/WS/1/L-WS-1-1577, *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, 3 parts, 1942-1947, Item 40, Statement Showing the Total Number of INA Personnel (HIFS and JIFS) Recovered up to the end of December 1946 and their Classification.*

The military significance of the INA also proved to be limited and its contribution to the Japanese war effort was negligible.[103] However, by its existence and sporadic deployment the INA undoubtedly elicited Indian Army responses, in both local encounters and countermeasures. Wider reputational harm to the Indian Army's image is touched on in Chapter 2. Other influences on the institution will be discussed here. Post-war events had tangible if brief impact on morale. To a degree this crystallized some of the dilemmas the Army faced during the 1944-45 period, in dealing with members of the INA. Perceptions were polarised, between those in the independence movement and in wider Indian public opinion, who believed that the INA was a legitimate force fighting for Indian Independence and those who regarded its members as traitors and mutineers. The trial of three INA members at the Red Fort merely exposed the divisions that were already obvious to many.[104]

There were in effect two manifestations of the INA and each had a different impact on the Indian Army. The first INA barely existed long enough to have any impact and the second came up against a reinvigorated Indian Army. Sundaram argues that both were victims of the conflicting objectives at the heart of the relationship between the INA leadership and the Japanese:

> For the Japanese the INA was never more than a propaganda tool to use against the Allies. However, to the Indians who formed it and served in it, the INA was an instrument by which Indians could achieve independence from Great Britain.[105]

These misaligned objectives and expectations were never reconciled. Japan's understandable reluctance to sanction large and potentially uncontrollable INA forces, when few Japanese troops were on hand in Singapore, set the two parties on a collision course. This led to Mohan Singh's downfall and negated any practical impact the first INA might have had on the cohesion of British Indian forces in 1942. Singh's ambitions had overrun what the Japanese were

[103] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume III, The Decisive Battles*, p.353, Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume IV, The Reconquest of Burma*, p. 41, p.56, Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 327-328, p. 429, Allen, L., *Burma : The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 417-419, Marston, D.P., *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, pp. 123-127, Sundaram, C.S., *A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945* War and Society, Volume 13, No. 1 (New South Wales, University of NSW, 1995), Marston, D.P. & Sundaram, C.S., *A Military History of India and South Asia: From the East India Company to the Nuclear Era, The Indian National Army, 1942-1948: A Circumstantial Force*, pp. 123-130

[104] Marston, D.P., *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, pp. 127-142, Akbar, M.J., *Nehru, The Making of India*, pp.367-369, Hamid, Major-General S., *Disastrous Twilight, A Personal Record of the Partition of India* (London, Leo Cooper, 1986), pp. 59-60.

[105] Sundaram, C.S., *A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945* War and Society, Volume 13, No. 1 (New South Wales, University of NSW, 1995), p. 35

prepared to sanction. In December 1942 he was detained and reverted to being a POW for the duration. He ordered the disbandment of the INA and most troops complied with this final order.[106]

There is limited consensus on the number of Indian Army troops who joined each of the two INA establishments but estimates provided by Lieutenant Colonel G.D. Anderson appear to be reasonable. Confusion regarding troop numbers is in part a consequence of how events unfolded. Anderson estimated that nearly 40,000 had signed up by June 1942, whether voluntarily or as a result of coercion, from the available POW population of some 63,000.[107] This latter total included the Indian Army soldiers captured in Malaya, Burma, Hong Kong and elsewhere, who were expected to be recruited later. At this stage recruitment efforts were limited to prisoners held in Singapore. Mohan Singh aspired to an army of 250,000 including civilian Indian recruits from across Southeast Asia. The Japanese had no intention of allowing such a large force, nor were they willing or capable of providing equipment on this scale.[108] The Japanese Hikari Kikan organisation that acted as sponsor restricted the initial size of the INA to 16,000, the equivalent of one infantry division.[109] The majority of those who had volunteered or been coerced were therefore surplus to requirements. They reverted to POW status. At the time of disbandment significant numbers who had not been mustered and those disbanded were dispersed and used in most cases as slave labour. No significant recruitment was undertaken at this time of civilians from the Indian diaspora across Southeast Asia.

Following disbandment, numbers of former volunteers available for the second INA were reduced substantially to around 15,000. Many prisoners, both INA volunteers and those who refused, had been shipped to islands across Southeast Asia and were thus beyond reach of Bose's INA. Some who had joined the first INA refused to join the second, further reducing the available pool of POW recruits. Sundaram cites an interview in 1984 with the former INA officer, Colonel Prem Kumar Sahgal, indicating that initially only 9,000 expressed willingness to join the second INA.[110] A smaller 1st INA Division was formed and two further divisions were formed. Hugh Toye is more specific in suggesting that some 4,000 Indian Army prisoners who had

[106] IOR L/WS/2/45, *A brief chronological and factual account of the Indian National Army, by Lt-Col G.D. Anderson*, Monograph 3
[107] Ibid.
[108] Toye, H. , *The First Indian National Army, 1941-42*, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984) , Vol. 15, No. 2 (Sep., 1984), p. 375
[109] IOR L/WS/2/45, *A brief chronological and factual account of the Indian National Army, by Lt-Col G.D. Anderson*, Monograph 3: *The incidence of Volunteers and Non-Volunteers Etc*.
IOR L/WS/2/47 *Interrogation reports on the Hikari Kikan from sources now present in the Rangoon Jail.*, p. 1
[110] Sundaram, C.S., *A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945* War and Society, Volume 13, No. 1, p. 38

volunteered for the first INA, including 30 officers had refused to join the reconstituted force and were dispersed as slave labour and many subsequently died under the most appalling conditions.[111] Sundaram and others suggest that the number of volunteers increased to 15.000 over time, in part due to the persuasive oratory of Bose but also as a result of systematic recruitment efforts and the grim nature of the alternatives that were becoming increasingly obvious.[112] There are numerical discrepancies between the various sources but there does seem to be broad agreement that the second INA grew to approximately 40,000 overall, mainly by recruiting civilians. Some 156 commissioned officers and 20,196 other ranks were apprehended by December 1946.[113]

The motivation of individuals who joined the INA has a bearing on its impact on the Indian Army. Among Indian Army recruits to the first INA, it is reasonable to assume that a proportion, perhaps the majority, of those recruited had volunteered as a means of avoiding imprisonment. Prisoners were being held in conditions that were already deteriorating, due to dislocation in food supplies, ill-treatment and a general lack of adequate sanitation and medical services. For many, the decision to join or not was made by their commanding VCO and they simply followed his lead. Others were suborned under duress and this included the use of violence and torture in extreme cases. Some may have seen it as a means to get closer to home and thus make their escape. This last possibility seems to be supported by the swift surrender of many INA troops on first contact with British and Indian troops during the recapture of Burma in 1945.[114] Even if we allow for these possibilities, the scale of the INA rebellion remained very substantial and there is ample evidence that this caused consternation within the Indian Army among those made aware of the INA's existence. There is irrefutable evidence that some Indian commissioned officers and significant numbers of other ranks were enthusiastic and motivated volunteers, for a variety of reasons.

Following removal of the first INA leadership and its disbandment little happened until Bose was transferred from Germany to the Japanese, by submarine.[115] His earlier efforts in Italy and Germany had born limited fruit apart from a series of radio broadcasts under the Azad Hind

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[111] Toye, H. , *The First Indian National Army, 1941-42*, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Sep., 1984), p. 380. Also see Chapter 6 for a brief discussion of the conditions suffered by Japanese held Indian POWs.
[112] Sundaram, C.S., *A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945* War and Society, Volume 13, No. 1, p. 38, Fay, P. W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945*, p. 526
[113] IOR L/WS/1/L-WS-1-1577 *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, 3 parts, 1942-1947, Item 40, Statement Showing the Total Number of INA Personnel (HIFS and JIFS) Recovered up to the end of December 1946 and their Classification.*
[114] Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, p. 189, *The War Against Japan, Volume IV, The Reconquest of Burma*, p. 387, Luto, J., ed., *Fighting with the Fourteenth Army in Burma, Original War Summaries of the Battle Against Japan. 1943-45*, p.7, See also p. 128 for the main INA surrender in Rangoon.
[115] Bayly, C., Harper, T., *Forgotten Wars, The End of Britain's Asian Empire*, pp. 19-23

banner and the small Indian Legion.[116] Bose was keen to rebuild the INA as a larger, more effective force, operating directly against British imperial forces. He enjoyed greater political leverage with the Japanese than Mohan Singh and his sponsorship came from the highest levels in the Japanese government. Bose was, however, a politician, not a soldier.

Anderson's estimate for the overall size of the second INA was 40,000, including at least 18,000 civilian recruits.[117] Recruitment to the second INA was opened to Indian civilians in occupied countries and the proportions of civilian recruits increased in the new divisions. The 1st Division included 5% civilian recruits, the 2nd Division 40% and the 3rd Division 70%.[118] Toye suggests that there were some two million Indian civilians distributed across Southeast Asia, with the largest communities in Malaya and Burma.[119] Civilian recruits were mainly drawn from the substantial Tamil labour force that had been recruited over many years to work in the rubber plantations and tin mines of Malaya. Smaller numbers were recruited from groups such as the predominantly Sikh Indian police officers present in Malaya and Burma. In the case of Tamil labourers, joining the INA was preferable to being treated as slave labour on the construction of the Burma-Siam Railway. Prisoner of War Second Lieutenant George Gimson cites one example of meeting a group of Tamil labourers in just such dire circumstances, who attempted in vain to make a formal complaint to him under the no longer operable colonial regulations for the protection of labourer's rights.[120] The allegedly non-martial Tamil volunteers sometimes proved to be more steadfast than more "martial" POW recruits.[121]

5.8 The Impact of the INA

The Raj and the Indian Army regarded the INA as a serious threat. The consequences of the INA's existence and the resulting encounters with it were not as great as some sources have suggested but neither were they negligible. Morale and cohesion within Indian and British units of the Indian Army suffered very little but there were attempts by the INA to encourage desertions from the Indian Army.[122] The later treatment of INA troops who surrendered in Burma was also revealing.

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[116] Hayes, R., *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany, Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda*, pp. 66-67
[117] IOR L/WS/2/45, *A brief chronological and factual account of the Indian National Army, by Lt-Col G.D. Anderson*, Monograph 3.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Toye, H. , *The First Indian National Army, 1941-42*, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Sep., 1984), pp. 365-381, See also Chapter Six for a discussion of the welfare of Prisoners of War.
[120] IWM Sound Archives 5196, Interviewee/speaker 2nd Lt. George Stanley Gimson, Recorded 1981/08/19
[121] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, p. 293,
Amrith, S., *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge, USA , Harvard University Press, 2013)
[122] Raghavan, S., *India's War*, p. 394

If measured solely by military success then the INA undoubtedly failed.[123] Merely by its existence the INA had the potential to damage morale and cohesion within the Indian Army and to impact trust and morale among British troops too. It could also influence politics within India. If the contagion of rebellion could pass to other Indian troops or if British confidence in the loyalty of fellow Indian troops could be undermined, then the Indian Army could be weakened. However, for its two leaders, the undermining of the Indian Army was never the primary objective. To the more committed members of the INA it was a legitimate independence movement, created with the aim of marching on Delhi, to overthrow the British Raj by force. Bose expected Indian Army troops would flock to the INA when given the opportunity but this was seen as contributory momentum. However, there was no march on Delhi and no such opportunity arose.

The institution reacted to what it saw as a potentially contagious infection. Just as infection more easily takes hold when the patient's resistance is diminished by low morale or stress, this contagion was more likely to spread in an already weakened institution, reeling from defeats and low in morale. The military intelligence branch was gathering information on the INA from an early stage, and by late 1942 had formed a reasonably clear view of events.[124] Daniel Marston points to the report drafted in December 1942 by intelligence officer Colonel Wren.[125] Wren's report offered the explanation that the root of the problem could be traced back to the weaknesses of the pre-war Indianisation programme, and the alienation that this caused for some Indian commissioned officers. Wren suggested, "Had we been less cautious in 1938 the danger from the INA in 1942 would have been a great deal smaller."[126] Wren may have been partly right but at this stage he would not have known that relatively few Indian commissioned officers had joined the first INA and even fewer joined the second. However, those that did brought most of their units with them. Srinath Raghavan suggests the INA was more successful in recruiting ICOs than Germany's Indian Legion but the number of combatant officers who joined was still limited. Of the 400 officers who did join the first INA, 250 were medical officers and many may have joined simply for the protection of their men, as Raghavan acknowledges.[127]

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[123] Sundaram, C.S., *A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945* War and Society, Volume 13, No. 1

[124] IOR L/WS/1/1576, *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, 3 parts, 1942-1947,* Item 227,*AppendixC to C.S.D.I.C (I) No. 2 Section Report No. 19 Dated 6-11-42, The Indian National Army*

[125] IOR L/WS/1/1711, *Indian National Army Reports: 1943* – Report by Colonel Wren, 31st December, 1942, Items 226-228

[126] *Ibid*.

[127] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 283-284.

The second INA's encounters with Indian troops could conceivably have led to the subornment of Indian Army troops in direct contact, either by individual or mass desertions. A few small-scale INA successes of this kind were reported but evidence suggests there was little prospect of a cascade of such desertions.[128] Timing was the issue. Subornment tactics that might have succeeded in the retreat from Burma in 1942 or during the later stages of the abortive first Arakan campaign in 1943, when yet another defeat turned to disconsolate retreat, were unlikely to work in 1944. By then such attempts were assailing a resurgent Indian Army, with its tail up and morale rising. When the contagion risk was high, the INA barely existed as a formation, especially following disbandment in December 1942. Opportunities for large scale subornment were fleeting if they existed at all.

The INA of 250,000 that Mohan Singh aspired to might eventually have achieved more but there is no evidence that such a force was ever envisaged by the Japanese. The Japanese were wary of rearming large numbers of troops who had ostensibly changed sides but had no particular allegiance to Japan. There were also equipment shortages and logistical constraints with Japan facing increasing difficulties supplying Japanese troops across widely dispersed locations. The US Navy's submarine campaign against its shipping exerted ever tighter strangulation on supply from 1943. The first INA could call upon extensive stocks captured in Singapore but the larger second INA remained reliant on the same dwindling stocks, especially of uniforms. Some sources suggest officers who remained loyal to their oaths were being deprived of their uniforms for INA use, in addition to mistreatment.[129]

The Japanese were more interested in opportunities for subversion, sabotage and further weakening of the Indian Army than in the chimera of a large INA field army. In this respect the INA also failed.[130] Colonel Hideo Iwakuro, head of the sponsoring Hikari Kikan organisation, sent small numbers of INA troops to Burma, without the knowledge or consent of the political arm of the Azad Hind movement, the Council of Action. This triggered a crisis as Mohan Singh had reluctantly consented to the initial drafts but refused to sanction more.[131] The confrontation resulted in Singh's arrest.[132]

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[128] Bayly, C., Harper, T., *Forgotten Armies, Britain's Asian Empire and The War With Japan*, pp. 377-378
[129] Crasta, J.B., *Eaten by the Japanese: The Memoir of an Unknown Indian Prisoner of War* (New York, Invisible Man, 1999), p. 22
[130] Toye, H. , *The First Indian National Army, 1941-42*, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 15, No. 2 (September, 1984), pp. 375
[131] Fay, P.W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence 1942-1945*, p. 148
[132] Sundaram, C.S., *A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945* War and Society, Volume 13, No. 1 (New South Wales, University of NSW, 1995), p. 37

Iwakuro's decision was logical if high-handed and he had extensive expertise in such methods, unlike Singh.[133] The aim of suborning loyal Indian Army troops, by using small numbers of the most motivated INA troops, amounted to an extension of Japanese "Jitter" tactics and might well have had more impact in late 1942 than larger conventional deployments later.[134] A more politically astute individual than Mohan Singh might have compromised in order to retain some influence over events and in the hope of achieving early successes to boost INA morale. However, Singh was no Bose and he became increasingly entrenched in confrontations with both Iwakuro and the Azad Hind political leadership.[135]

In the civil sphere, there were obvious signs of instability in India during the latter half of 1942 under the concurrent strains of the Quit India campaign and continued low morale and alarm as a result of recent defeats and the bombing of Calcutta and Colombo.[136] Late 1942 or early 1943 were perhaps the most opportune period for sending INA agents into India, when the eastern border territories were inadequately defended. A GHQ India report of 30 March 1943 alluded to the existence of "The Penang Spy School" or "Indian Swaraj Institute", established in 1942:

> The activities of this spy school first came to notice when two separate parties, each of five Indian civilians, were arrested on landing in India from Japanese submarines at the end of September last.[137]

These early attempts at fifth column tactics met with little success, not least because the agents had only undergone a month of training and their arrival seems to have been eagerly anticipated. A further ten agents were apprehended whilst attempting to enter overland from Burma.[138] Such a clean sweep by the Indian security forces in apprehending the agents deployed suggests that their security must have been comprehensively compromised.

Mohan Singh's aspirations for the INA were grandiose and he saw deployment in penny packets under Japanese direction as a negation of his aims. By the time the second INA had

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[133] Fay, P.W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence 1942-1945*, p. 109
[134] The deployment of Jitter parties making feint attacks, shouting in English and using fire-crackers, particularly at night, was a common tactic that Japanese troops used to locate positions and to unnerve defending troops. Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, p. 134 and footnote 56.
[135] Fay, P.W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence 1942-1945*, pp. 137-152
[136] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II*, *India's Most Dangerous Hour*, p. 119, Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Kamtekar, I., The Shiver of 1942, pp. 330-357
[137] IOR L/WS/1/1576, *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, 3 parts, 1942-1947*,Item 209, *The Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army*, p.6
[138] Ibid., p.7

been formed, under Bose's leadership, the opportunity had already passed. Although the INA was re-established it would take months to achieve a degree of efficiency. By late 1943, the Quit India disturbances were supressed and Indian Army morale was on the road to recovery. The civil and political situation in India was more stable with the tragic exception of the continuing famine in Bengal. British intelligence services seem to have recognised that the moment of greatest danger had already passed:

> Bose has now finally burned his boats with us by virtue of his association with Germany and Japan, his political future being entirely dependent upon the continued military success of the Japanese and paralysis of British rule in India by internal revolt. Fortunately public morale and internal security in India are now fairly steady and the Japanese widely feared. Bose will undoubtedly be able to make some capital out of the economic distress and the political deadlock but unless he can win over Congress en bloc his chances of stirring up a major revolt would appear to be small. Had he arrived in East Asia last August or even during Gandhi's fast his prospects would have been much better.[139]

The steps being actively implemented to improve Indian Army morale were beginning to take effect in mid-1943 but the political window of opportunity was surely closed. At this stage very few adequately trained INA jitter parties or Penang trained civilian agents were ready for deployment and it was only in 1944 that such deployments began.[140] By then, the chance to exploit low Indian Army morale had faded.

The existence of the INA had potential propaganda value both politically in terms of radio broadcasts to India and at the local level in the form of battlefield leaflets inviting jawans to come across to the INA. Bose's earlier radio broadcasts from Germany had achieved some propaganda success within India but they were made before the INA existed or was widely known.[141] Propaganda broadcasts under Japanese sponsorship started soon after the events at Farrer Park.[142] However, the broadcasts were not likely to have been widely heard outside the urban middle class households of India due to the general scarcity of wireless receivers both in

[139] IOR L/WS/1/1576, Item 37, p. 75, *Note by MI2*, 14 July 1943, *Point 7*
[140] IOR L/WS/2/45 *A brief chronological and factual account of the Indian National Army, by Lt-Col GD Anderson*, Monograph 5
[141] Hayes, R., *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany, Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda*, pp. 66-67
[142] Fay, P.W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence 1942-1945* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 409

civil ownership and in the Indian Army.[143] Even British Intelligence appears to have been relatively slow in becoming aware of the INA. Peter Ward Fay indicates it was not mentioned in the confidential weekly intelligence summaries until July 1942.[144] The monthly intelligence summaries suggest that much Japanese propaganda in 1942 was directed at weakening the resolve of Australians and British rather than at India.[145] There seems to have been sporadic efforts to capitalise on the existence of the INA through the medium of radio during 1942-43 but the profile of the INA was limited.

The Indian Army's approach to countering INA propaganda was limited in 1942 but around the time of Auckinleck's reappointment as Commander-in-Chief, there was a change of gear that led to increased counter-measures. Srinath Raghavan suggests the trigger was probably GHQ awareness of the arrival of Bose in Southeast Asia but Auchinleck showed an immediate grasp of the issues and risks relating to the loyalty or otherwise of Indian troops.[146] These initiatives led to the introduction of several countermeasures at the unit level that seem to have been effective. Measures included the establishment of small "Josh" groups within units to disseminate suitable counter-propaganda locally and the use of carefully selected information, to counter possible INA influence.[147] As ever with propaganda, the use of language was important and just as Japanese troops had acquired derogatory labels, such as "Japs" and "Nips", INA troops were given the diminutive abbreviation, "JIFs" or "JIFFs" at every opportunity and the real name of the INA seems to have been avoided intentionally.[148] The likely aim was to rob the INA of its claim to be "Indian" or "National".

One missed potential opportunity for counter-propaganda was the possibility of using Sarat Chandra Bose, the elder brother of Subhas Chandra Bose, to challenge the legitimacy of the INA leader's decision to take up arms and to throw in his lot with the Axis powers. Despite being a prominent Congress leader in Bengal and having been detained on the eve of the Quit India crisis, Sarat Chandra Bose wrote to Viceroy Linlithgow from captivity in July 1943, offering to help the Allied effort:

[143] Efforts to distribute wireless receivers to troops for welfare purposes were still well below what was required even in 1945, see Chapter Six.
[144] Ibid.
[145] IOR L/WS/1/317, *Monthly Intelligence Summary 1940 (to 5th April 1943)*
[146] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 397-400.
[147] *Ibid*., pp. 398-399
[148] IOR L/WS/1/1576, *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, 3 parts, 1942-1947,* Item 394, Leaflet from GHQ (India) to All Commanding Officers of Indian Army Units. The term JIF or JIFF seems to have acquired more than one meaning, being variously referred to as *Japanese Inspired Fifth Column* or *Japanese Indian Forces*.

> I shall not pretend to be a friend of British imperialism, I have never been one. All my life I have been its opponent and no amount of imprisonment can crush that feeling within me. But if British Imperialism has so far blighted India's hopes and aspirations for freedom, Imperialism of the Nazi, Fascists and "Rising Sun" brands would, to my mind, prove much worse and speaking for myself, I am prepared to do whatever in me lies to prevent my country from coming under the latter's domination.[149]

The offer came at the time when Linlithgow was preparing to hand over to the new Viceroy, Wavell and it seems improbable that he would have done much to carry it forward. After some deliberation Linlithgow seems to have been swayed by Sir Reginald Maitland Maxwell, ICS Home member of the Viceroy's executive council. Both cast doubt on Sarat Bose's veracity. The offer was taken no further and Sarat Chandra Bose remained in detention. Had this progressed it would have carried considerable and perhaps unforeseeable political risks that would have been unappealing to the outgoing Viceroy. However, it might have been a useful and timely method of undermining Subhas Chandra Bose, thus diminishing his propaganda value to the Japanese.

The impact of INA propaganda on civilians was raised by the governor of Fiji, Sir Philip Mitchell, with the Secretary of State for the Colonies in February 1944 and the ensuing discussion highlighted one of the dilemmas facing any counter-propaganda effort, the question of how and when to respond for maximum effect. Mitchel wrote that the:

> Information Officer reports that story of the "Victorious Advance" of the "Army of Liberation", led by Subhas Chandra Bose, is spreading rapidly among the Indians here…..
>
> Grateful if the Ministry of Information could telegraph from time to time material likely to be useful in counter propaganda concerning the activities of Bose. [150]

A set of rebuttal responses were sent to Mitchell and to several other colonial governors. However, it was pointed out by Auchinleck that the timing of any counter-propaganda was critical if maximum effect was to be achieved:

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[149] Mansergh, N. Editor-In-Chief, Lumby. E.W.R Assistant Editor**,** *The Transfer of Power 1942-7 Volume II, "The Bengal Famine and the New Viceroyalty 15th June 1943-31st August 1944* (London, H.M.S.O.,1971), Item 50, p.94, Letter from Sarat Chandra Bose to Linlithgow, 24/7/1943.

[150] IOR L/WS/1/1576 *Indian National Army and Free Burma Army, 3 parts, 1942-1947*, Item 368

> So far we have given no publicity to above facts, propose as soon as battle is over and it is confirmed no hope of JIFs being successfully used to exploit to maximum extent information to discredit Bose and his claims. Jap broadcasts producing no appreciable effect in India.[151]

The existence of the INA indirectly influenced the Indian Army in the treatment of prisoners of war, both Japanese held Indian POWs and INA troops captured by British and Indian troops. Both aspects had possible implications for morale, behaviour and attitudes within the Indian Army. Prisoners of war who refused to join the INA were subjected to various forms of persuasion and sometimes coercion. Officers were put under considerable coercive pressure to join the first INA and there were allegations of torture and ill-treatment.[152] Peter Ward Fay suggests these allegations were exaggerated or untrue.[153] While the balance of evidence seems to suggest there was some exaggeration of the extent of any torture there is evidence to suggest coercion did happen. Evidence of extensive ill-treatment of Indian Army POWs is not easily dismissed.[154] Whether mistreatment was at the hands of INA volunteers or Japanese guards was perhaps of little consequence to victims as an ICO or VCO who refused one would soon be at the mercy of the other. If these accounts were sometimes exaggerated, the question arises: if coercive methods were not used in 1942 then why did the second INA feel the need to expressly forbid such methods? When these events became more widely known after VJ Day and in particular when victim statements were taken, there is little doubt it caused much anger within the Indian Army, directed against former INA members and INA leaders in particular.[155]

Even prior to the widespread awareness of allegations of coercion within the Indian Army, the treatment of surrendering INA troops by Indian Army troops had been problematic. Of the surrenders in May 1945, in the Palel area, Slim recounted:

> They had suffered a good many other casualties at the hands of our patrols and during May were surrendering in large numbers, but our Indian and Gurkha soldiers were at

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[151] Ibid., Items 372-373

[152] Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 289-290, Crasta, J.B., *Eaten by the Japanese: The Memoir of an Unknown Indian Prisoner of War*, p. 22

[153] Fay P. W., *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1995).

[154] Crasta, J.B., *Eaten by the Japanese: The Memoir of an Unknown Indian Prisoner of War* (New York, Invisible Man, 1999), Prasad, S. *The Gallant Dogras, An Illustrated History of the Dogra Regiment*. See the account of Havildar Rattan Singh, M.M. 3/17 Dogras, pp, 63-65

[155] Hamid, Major-General S., *Disastrous Twilight, A Personal Record of the Partition of India*, p.60, pp. 15-22, pp. 124-127.

> times not too ready to let them surrender, and orders had to be issued to give them a kinder welcome.[156]

Perhaps the Josh groups had done their work too well as the level animosity towards the INA seems to have been high. George MacDonald Fraser referred to similar issues during an encounter with four INA soldiers who surrendered to his patrol:

> We ran into a Baluch patrol who were coming out as we returned, and from the looks directed at our prisoners it was plain that the Jifs had been lucky to be taken in by a British unit.[157]

Significant numbers of INA troops were captured and they were much more likely to be taken alive than Japanese troops for the simple reason that they were more willing to surrender and less likely to pose a threat at the moment of capture.[158] However, it is reasonable to assume incidents of malign intent towards INA prisoners were commonplace and that loyal Indian troops took a dim view of the INA at this time. Whether this influenced morale within the Indian Army either directly or indirectly is impossible to determine but the ragged and sometimes emaciated INA prisoners being taken in during the rapid advances of 1945 must have presented a sorry spectacle to their Indian and British captors.

Undoubtedly the greatest impact in Indian Army morale was the post war response on all sides to the INA trials, when these became highly politicised within the Congress movement and to the wider public in India. This contentious issue falls outside the timeline of this research but it has been widely suggested elsewhere that it had sustained political impact. The question of retention or dismissal from the service of returning INA soldiers created much resentment within the Indian Army.

In conclusion, there was no stage at which the Indian Army showed signs of imminent collapse. The largely incompetent efforts of a few Communists from Meerut presented far less of a threat than some within the Indian Army and the Government of India thought. Undue alarm may have led to serious misdirection of scarce intelligence resources at a crucial time. Whilst the INA had much greater potential to threaten the integrity of the Indian Army, its timing was never opportune and its objectives were too ambitious. The INA's greatest impact was on Indian

[156] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, p. 327
[157] MacDonald Fraser, G. , *Quartered Safe Out Here*, pp. 255-259
[158] Few unwounded Japanese soldiers were willing to surrender on any front until the late stages of the conflict. There are many examples of wounded Japanese soldiers attempting to kill the captors at the moment of capture with a hidden hand grenade for example. Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 611-612

politics and achieved after its demise. Whilst the Quit India campaign caused serious disruption there is little evidence that it seriously weakened the Indian Army or caused any significant recruitment problems.

Assertion can sometimes take on the weight of fact in the hands of the expert and this is no less true of the retrospective views of historians than it is of police officers in 1940, so we should be careful not to draw firm conclusions on the basis of limited documentary evidence. To second-guess the investigating officer or intelligence operative many decades after the event is all the more problematic. Despite this cautionary warning, there are enough potential flaws and unsupported assertions in the relevant documents to suggest that the seconded “Police officer”, who was in fact a member of the Delhi Intelligence Bureau, J.P. Morton, was too hasty in identifying a web of connections and conspiracy that was only partially supported by available evidence. Perhaps he was right in his conclusions and perhaps there was more compelling evidence, not retained in official records, but the visible evidence adduced seems to be swiftly assembled, patchy and tenuous.

The consequences of any such extrapolation from the available facts are no more than reputational damage for a historian and the historian is encouraged and challenged by peers to be more open in discussing gaps in the available record. In the case of criminal investigation or court martial the consequences are more serious, especially so if evidential weaknesses are glossed over and peer review is precluded by urgency and lack of resources. The evidence gathering techniques of both the investigating officer and the historian can sometimes lead to a fragile concatenation of circumstantial evidence and the conflation of facts with mere assertions to construct an elaborate but fallacious narrative. In the Central India Horse case such a patchwork of evidence led to large numbers of draconian sentences and this reflected poorly on military justice. This case and the other two incidents have the hallmarks of failures in unit leadership, inept handling and weaknesses in the relationships between British officers, VCOs and other ranks. It is surely legitimate to look for alternative possible causation, which was acknowledged and in one case determined at the time.

Once the idea of conspiracy took hold within the chain of command, it became accepted as fact. The conspiracy hypothesis suggested by Morton and others was readily taken up by the most senior officials and army officers, in India, Egypt, Hong Kong and London, with little evidence of doubts being recorded. Morton was a highly capable officer who went on to a long and successful career in counter-intelligence in Malaya, Cyprus, Aden and Northern Ireland but it

can be argued that in 1940 he may have been a man in a hurry, with a pre-determined agenda set by the Delhi Intelligence Bureau.[159] Those in the chain of command were no fools either and if any doubt is to be cast on their conclusions then the question must arise, why did they accept the conspiracy hypothesis so quickly and wholeheartedly? First it is fair to say that the Government of India had been wrestling with dissent and independence demands for nearly three decades. The Ghadr movement was a serious but short-lived threat in 1916-17. Subsequent political developments in the Punjab became ever more complex and sometimes threatening, but generally it was more stable than most Indian states by 1939. However, it may have been tempting to see connections and conspiracy in the swirls and eddies of seemingly related events.

Admitting mistakes have been made in the exercise of military command is a difficult pill to swallow for any institution. From the army's perspective, it is perhaps easier for an officer to interpret dissent as being caused by malign external interventions beyond their control, rather than consequences of poor leadership and mishandling of religious and cultural sensitivities within their own area of accountability. The ease with which loyal soldiers can turn quickly from compliance to dissent if they feel they have been misled or poorly treated can be seen in all armies, but especially those in the sudden transition from peacetime stability to hasty mobilisation, in a new and alien environment, such as Egypt in 1939. The hypothesis that these mutinies were prompted by external political subversion was perhaps convenient for the Indian Army high command and for the respective operational commands. It offered simple explanations and swift conclusions in place of a more complex causation that might require painful introspection and would be likely to incur unsympathetic outside scrutiny. In the political climate of 1939-40 it may have been convenient for the civil authorities in India too, as it linked back to a continuing external threat narrative that had prevailed over decades.

Comparison between the Indian and British armies is informative, as the organisations shared similar doctrine, regimental structure and the King's Regulations that governed discipline in each institution were broadly similar. The most significant mutiny within the British Army occurred in 1943 at a crucial point in the heavily contested Allied landings at Salerno. In this case troop replacements brought in from North Africa, refused to join other regiments and demanded to be sent to their own units. This was not a refusal to fight but a refusal to accept orders to join other units. Saul David's account of the Salerno Mutiny offers useful insights into

[159] Walton, C., *Empire of Secrets, British Intelligence, The Cold War and The Twilight of Empire*, pp. 179-183, pp. 185-187, pp. 189-191. P.309, pp. 321-323

the frenetic activity involved in courts martial with many defendants and the potential for speedy but unjust outcomes.[160] Just as the draconian sentences in the Central India Horse mutiny were quickly reduced at the discretion of higher authority, the Salerno sentencing was also reviewed and reduced. What is apparent from both mutinies is that the speed of proceedings was dictated by the accepted view that it was necessary to deal quickly with a perceived threat. However, speed rarely proves conducive to good justice in military or civilian cases.

Despite general reductions in sentences in both cases, those convicted as ringleaders in the Central India Horse case were executed. In the Salerno case death sentences were never carried out and a number of those receiving lesser sentences were released early. It is perhaps too much to conclude that Indian Army discipline was more draconian than British Army discipline from just two instances but a comparative study of army discipline between these two armies and indeed across the range of imperial forces could offer revealing insights into the attitudes within and towards the different institutions. A more credible conclusion would be that the British Army in 1943, under the enlightened Adjutant General, Adam, was more likely to recognise its mistakes and excesses than the Indian Army was in 1940. Perhaps a comparison between the British Army of 1940 and the largely conscript British *citizen* army of 1943 would lead to similar conclusions but such conjecture is not part of this research.

The emergence of the first INA in 1942 was yet another shock to the institution at a time when the implications of multiple defeats across Southeast Asia were not yet assimilated. Some within the high command of the Indian Army initially believed that the INA was in some manner a continuation of the “Sikh problem” that had been evidenced previously by the earlier mutinies. To some degree this was justifiable as many of the original INA recruits were Sikhs, as was its first leader, Mohan Singh. However, successful INA recruitment among other POW classes was widespread. The scope and structure of the second INA was wider still. It included civilian recruits and Bose’s INA cannot be characterised as a Sikh led or Sikh dominated movement.

There was something approaching a presumption of guilt directed towards Sikh troops at this stage, articulated in a secret report in November 1942:

> Ever since the mutiny of the Sikh squadron of the Central India Horse in July 1940, a few months after the R.I.A.S.C. mutiny in Egypt in which Sikhs were heavily involved, a certain stigma of suspicion has been borne by the Sikh community.

[160] David, S., *Mutiny at Salerno 1943: An Injustice Exposed*

> The Sikh is a quick witted individual who will indulge intrigue and political activities if he is at all worried about the security of his community. [161]

The second point links the alleged "Sikh problem" back to the issue of the Pakistan declaration of 1940 and its impact on Sikh politics. One other issue that may have in some way reinforced the "Sikh problem" narrative was the high number of desertions from Sikh units in May and June 1942 especially from Eastern Army. There were 58 cases of desertion with arms of which 35 were from Eastern Army.[162] However, the traumatic nature of the civil and military exodus from Burma at this time would have taxed the morale of any formation. Receiving tens of thousands of emaciated and starving refugees and the tired remnants of Burcorps were hardly conducive to good morale, particularly among recently raised, inexperienced troops, regardless of martial class.[163] The report refers to a letter from the commanding officer of the 7/14th Punjab Regiment, Colonel Lawrence, who points to the drop in quality of recruitment rather than politics as the cause of the increased number of desertions in his battalion:

> He states that the dregs of various classes are getting in to the Army; they have no sense of "izzat" or shame, they have no guts, and do not stop to consider that by committing certain crimes they are letting down their family, their class, their Regiment and the Army as a whole.[164]

Colonel Lawrence's comments may have been somewhat harsh given the chaotic nature of some of the retreating forces from Burma that his troops were witnessing at the time. This included significant numbers of deserters and disorganised rear echelon troops but he was clearly not pointing the finger at a "Sikh problem" of political dissent.

If the INA was not a "Sikh problem" then what was it? It was neither inspired by Congress nor the Muslim League and certainly not by the Ghadr, or some Kirti Kisan flavour of Communism. In its first manifestation it resulted from Japanese efforts to undermine the Indian Army and to promote a military arm of an Indian independence movement similar to the Burma Independence Army created in Burma.[165] These initiatives paid lip service to Japan's idea of the Southeast Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which became an increasingly threadbare cloak for Japan's imperial ambitions. This Japanese-led initiative found fertile ground in the legitimate

[161] IOR L/WS/2/44, *Note on Sikhs, 6th November 1942* , Appendix A, p.3
[162] IOR L/WS/2/44, *Note on Sikhs, 6th November 1942*, Appendix A, p.2
[163] IOR L/WS/2/44, *Note on Sikhs, 6th November 1942*, Appendix A, p.3
[164] IOR L/WS/2/44, *Note on Sikhs, 6th November 1942*, Appendix A, p.5
[165] Bayly, C., Harper, T., *Forgotten Wars, The End of Britain's Asian Empire*, pp. 13-14

discontent, confusion and anger that affected Indian Army troops in the aftermath of traumatic defeats in Malaya and Singapore. There is no evidence of a continuum of dissent linking the emergence of the INA to earlier mutinies.

Despite the fact that Bose was a former member of the Congress leadership, he retained little connection and derived no residual mandate or authority from that organisation in his efforts to create the means to achieve Indian independence by military means. For Bose, it seems to have been something of a personal quest, thwarted and blunted at first in Italy and Germany, then nullified completely by the INA's final defeat in Burma. Only in death did Bose achieve a degree of the political success that he sought in life, when the mishandling of the INA trials at the Red Fort created a groundswell of public support for the defunct INA and its former members. His reputation as a standard bearer for a more militant form of independence struggle has grown over the decades since independence but this has more to do with his continued political relevance than any military achievements. If internal dissent within India had coincided more closely with external dissent then matters may have come to a head sooner. Despite their strong opposition to the continuance of British rule, most Congress political leaders had few illusions about the motives of the Axis powers in the Second World War and they were not aligned with Bose or the war aims of an INA sponsored by Japan. As for the INA's impact on the Indian Army, it may well have caused more difficulties for the Indian Army after its demise than before.

6. CHAPTER 6 - MORALE, HEALTH AND WELFARE

Achieving and maintaining high morale presents different challenges in conscript armies compared with a volunteer professional army but some solutions may be similar. The volunteer chooses to join up and may be attracted by status, remuneration, welfare conditions and opportunities to learn valuable skills leading to a brighter future. The conscript has few choices, and his or her morale largely depends on mitigations put in place to make conscription less unpalatable. Both are susceptible to the positive influences of patriotism, military success, fighting for a just cause, propaganda, primary group cohesion, esprit de corps and effective leadership. Both may be susceptible to negative factors including, poor welfare, weak leadership, defeats, casualties, inactivity, injustices and external subversion.[1] Given the presence of both British and Indian troops within the Indian Army, the institution had to manage the morale of British conscripts and Indian volunteers and each component presented different challenges. The approach to morale was being revolutionised in the largely conscript British Army from 1942.[2] The Indian Army adopted many similar initiatives and the approaches tended to converge on this reformed citizen army model.

Morale within British and imperial forces has received much attention within the military and from academics.[3] It is helpful to define the meaning of "morale" and to recognise that it is unlikely to be objectively measurable.[4] There are many definitions available and extensive discourse on the subject but Jonathan Fennell suggests one that is both apt and contemporaneous, offered by Field Marshal Montgomery in 1946, "*…endurance and courage in*

[1] Roy, K., *Discipline and Morale of the African, British and Indian Army Units in Burma and India During World War II: July 1943 to August 1945*. *Modern Asian Studies* 44(6): pp. 1255–1282. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010),

[2] Broad, R., *The Radical General: Sir Ronald Adam and Britain's New Model Army, 1941-1946*, Fennell, J., *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to Victory*, The changes within the British Army were in part brought about by the Adjutant General, General Sir Ronald Adam, and also much influenced by the methods of B. L. Montgomery in the North African campaign.

[3] French, D. , *"Tommy is no soldier": The Morale of the Second British Army in Normandy, June-August 1944* Journal of Strategic Studies Volume 19:4, pp. 154-178 (London ,Routledge, 1996), Jones, E, Ironside, S., *Battle Exhaustion: The Dilemma of Psychiatric Casualties In Normandy, June–August1944.* The Historical Journal, 53, 1, pp. 109–128 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), Roy, K., *Discipline and Morale of the African, British and Indian Army Units in Burma and India During World War II: July 1943 to August 1945*, pp. 1255–1282, Barkawi T, *Peoples, Homelands, and Wars? Ethnicity, the Military, and Battle among British Imperial Forces in the War against Japan:* Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 134-163 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), Barkawi T, *Culture and Combat in the Colonies: The Indian Army in the Second World War*: Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 325-355 (London, Sage, 2006), Bartov, O., *Indoctrination and Motivation in the Wehrmacht: The Importance of the Unquantifiable,* Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 16-34, (London ,Routledge, 1986)

[4] Hardy, B., *Morale: Definitions, Dimensions And Measurement* (Cambridge, University of Cambridge, 2009), pp. 31-41

supporting fatigue and danger … the quality which makes men go forward in an attack and hold their ground in defence."[5]

We must also assess the extent to which morale is measurable.[6] Morale cannot be measured empirically but modern human resource management does offer a range of methodologies developed for the measurement of employee morale.[7] Arguably the initial impetus for this branch of business management was the Second World War, as combatant governments sought to monitor and improve both military and civilian morale. In the context of British imperial forces, the adjutants general of several of the Commonwealth forces introduced methods of monitoring morale and initiatives such as Mass Observation attempted to do so for civilians.[8]

One common methodology has been the use of standardised questionnaires and opinion sampling. Anyone whose employer has used a staff survey will be aware that such surveys are often partly aimed at measuring employee morale. In the Indian Army context the survey approach required unit adjutants and attached intelligence offices to fill in questionnaires designed to assess the morale of their unit.[9] It hardly needs to be pointed out that such methods were not immune to subjective influences, as officers were to some extent assessing their own effectiveness. Measurement of morale was neither empirical nor objective but such limitations do not necessarily negate the value of survey results. Large samples helped to mitigate the innate weaknesses in method. Social historians have found the Mass Observation

[5] IWM 99/1/2 Major General Raymond Briggs Papers, *Paper by Field Marshal Montgomery, 'Morale in Battle: Analysis', 30 April 1946*. For a wider discussion of the definition of morale see, Hardy, B., *Morale: Definitions, Dimensions And Measurement* (Cambridge, University of Cambridge, 2009), Fennell, J., *Re-evaluating Combat Cohesion: The British Second Army in The Northwest Europe Campaign of the Second World War* (London King's College Defence Studies Dept., 2015)

[6] Hardy, B., *Morale: Definitions, Dimensions and Measurement* (Cambridge, University of Cambridge, 2009), pp. 41-48, Hardy also provides a good assessment of how morale can be defined and the methods by which morale can be measured.

[7] An in depth study of current techniques and services designed to measure and improve employee morale would take up several PhD theses and is outside the scope of this research.

[8] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*, Broad, R., *The Radical General: Sir Ronald Adam and Britain's New Model Army, 1941-1946*, Mass Observation was a British government initiative that gathered date from 1937 until the early 1950s. The Archive in maintained and made available by the University of Sussex.

[9] The original questionnaires no longer exist as far as I am aware and this is unsurprising, given their sensitive subject matter. The information was analysed, summarised into weekly and monthly intelligence reports and then widely used as the basis for discussion. See, IOR L/WS/1/1375, *Morale Committee, 1943-1945*, IOR L/WS/2/71, *Morale reports, India Command and SEAC*, IOR L/WS/1/1357, *Morale of British troops in India, 1943*, *IOR* L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale, 3 parts in 4 files, 1943-1948*, IOR L/WS/1/902, IOR L/WS/1/903, IOR L/WS/1/904, L/WS/1/905 AG liaison letters to and from India, 1944-1949

data an invaluable source but it must be remembered that material of this kind is based on the subjective observation and the unverified selective opinions of contributors.[10]

Much of the discourse in relation to armed forces in the Second World War has concentrated on conscripts rather than volunteer troops, not least because few participating forces were all-volunteer.[11] Before 1939, the British and Indian armies were comparably small, volunteer, professional armies. The British Army was transformed into a large conscript force on two occasions in the First and Second World Wars.[12] The Indian Army remained a volunteer force throughout but grew much larger in both world wars. Jonathan Fennell has suggested that the ranks of the Indian Army were filled with "economic conscripts".[13] There may have been some validity to this in new recruiting areas but it was never that simple.[14] As the war economy expanded army recruiting was increasingly competing with other more lucrative options and the economic drivers for recruitment were correspondingly weaker. British troops attached to the Indian Army were increasingly conscripted but Indian troops remained exclusively volunteers and yet remuneration cannot have remained the only factor in the latter case. Morale and welfare policy differences and similarities between the two are worthy of attention.

Indian Army morale was discussed and analysed extensively at the time, particularly in relation to the defeats in Malaya, Burma and the first Arakan campaign. Maintaining good morale was no longer achievable by applying approaches that had prevailed in the pre-1939 army. More elaborate solutions were required and the template was largely adapted from contemporary reforms in the British Army. Twelve-fold expansion changed both its character and its constituency as it required recruits from regions not previously or not recently regarded as fertile recruiting grounds. This broader net drew in many who would not previously have envisaged an army career. The ways and means to maintain good morale within the Indian Army had to evolve too. Changes were necessary responses to the greater size, diversity and the technical

[10] http://www.massobs.org.uk/, The Mass Observation social research organisation, initiated 1937, running throughout 1939-45 and to the early 1950s. The Mass Observation Archive is currently in the care of the University of Sussex's Special Collections.

[11] The Indian Army became by far the largest all volunteer army to participate in the conflict, in terms of its Indian component. The Issue of morale within the conscript or "Citizen" British Army has been discussed widely in recent years, Notable works include: French, D., *Raising Churchill's Army, The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945*, Fennell, J., *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to Victory*, Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*, Hart, S.A., *Colossal Cracks: Montgomery's 21st Army Group in Northwest Europe, 1944-45* (Mechanicsburg, Stackpole, 2007), pp. 20-41.

[12] The British Army remained a partly conscript force for some 15 years after the Second World War, to meet the extended commitments of the end of Empire and the Cold War.

[13] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*, pp. 66-69

[14] Tan. T.Y, (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, Deshpande, A., *British Military Policy in India, 1900-1945: Colonial Constraints and Declining Power*

demands of modern warfare. Convergence on the British Army model was also a response to the tensions that arose as a result of differentials in pay and conditions that emerged between Indian and British troops and commissioned officers in particular.

Health is an important welfare issue, intimately related to morale but it is examined separately because of its considerable significance. Military historians tend to focus on battle casualties but in the pathogenic climates that prevailed in many parts of Southeast Asia, the greater concern for armed forces was and still remains the impact of non-battle casualties. In tropical conditions the risks to health from disease, infection and environment related dietary deficiencies outweighed the risks of battle. Malaria was endemic in Assam, Burma, Malaya and most base areas in India. Whilst malaria had the greatest impact on military efficiency, other tropical diseases and medical conditions had debilitating consequences. Non-battle casualties persistently outnumbered the battle casualties. However, spectacular improvements in the health of the Indian Army between 1943 and 1945 had practical benefits for operational effectiveness beyond what has been widely recognised so far.

Indian Army welfare improved during the Second World War. The correlation between welfare measures and morale is worthy of study. The traditional approach defined and managed by the regimental centres needed to change, to become more flexible and less of a localised prerogative. Welfare improvements underpinned morale in larger formations at division, corps and army level and this required centralised policy and provision. For example, the regiment could do little to directly influence welfare arrangements in transit camps or overseas deployments. Welfare became a wider political issue because expanded forces were visible across India and it was no longer a matter for the Punjab, Nepal and the North West Frontier. However, regiments still maintained strong links with their traditional recruiting grounds and the communities from which their recruits were drawn. Whilst recruitment from other areas increased, the relationship with traditional recruiting areas remained important.

Much has been written about how morale within the Indian Army was influenced by events and the contemporary politics but this has largely been of a narrative nature.[15] There has been little detailed analysis that could be described as similar to the work done on the British Army by

[15] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*, Allen, L., *Burma : The Longest War 1941-45*, Barkawi T., *Culture and Combat in the Colonies: The Indian Army in the Second World War*: (Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Apr., 2006), pp. 325-355

David French, Steven Hart and Jonathan Fennell.[16] There is a need for detailed analysis of the kind provided by Fennell's *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to Victory.* One notable contribution is an article by Kaushik Roy that explores some of the same sources examined here.[17]

Fennell's work is partly narrative, as it sets out to describe the nature of a morale problem and then describes the efforts to address that problem. The first chapter, Morale Crisis and Recovery, argues that the Eighth Army suffered a crisis in morale in 1942 and describes the remedial steps taken to retrieve that situation. Fennell's more recent *Fighting the People's War,* includes discussion of morale within the Indian Army and comparative observations with the other main imperial and commonwealth forces.[18] Slim presented a similar narrative with regard to the Burma campaign in *Defeat into Victory.* Fennell's phrase "Morale crisis and recovery" might have been an eminently appropriate chapter title in Slim's *Book II: Forging the Weapon*.[19] Daniel Marston's *Phoenix from the Ashes* examines the recovery narrative but in the context of detailed assessment of specific units. [20] In the case of units that were not newly raised Marston charts a similar recovery course but with greater emphasis on training than morale or welfare. However, Fennell has provided a depth of analysis for the drop in Eighth Army morale and subsequent recovery that occurred in Egypt in 1942-43, not yet offered for the Indian Army.

6.1 Morale

A brief overview of the fluctuations of Indian Army morale will provide context for a more detailed examination of specific aspects of morale. The primary focus will remain on India, Burma and Malaya but some relevant examples will look elsewhere. Matters to be examined include the impact of expansion, political factors including the "Quit India" crisis of 1942, the defeats of 1942-43, remedial improvements in 1943-44, the "Forgotten Army" myth in 1944-45 and underlying motivations of Indian Army troops. Welfare will be discussed separately.

Idle hands are rarely good for morale and efficiency. However, in the period between the world wars the Indian Army was rarely idle and a series of challenging, largely successful campaigns were undertaken on the North West Frontier. Frontier warfare fluctuated between low intensity

[16] French, D., *Raising Churchill's Army, The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945,* Hart, S.A., *Colossal Cracks: Montgomery's 21st Army Group in Northwest Europe, 1944-45*. Fennell, J. , *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to Victory*
[17] Roy, K., *Discipline and Morale of the African, British and Indian Army Units in Burma and India During World War II: July 1943 to August 1945*. Modern Asian Studies 44(6): pp. 1255–1282.
[18] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*
[19] Ibid., pp. 122-196
[20] Marston, D.P., *Phoenix from the Ashes*

policing, counter-insurgency, punitive campaigns and occasional peaceful interludes. The most significant campaigns were the Third Afghan War and smaller but nonetheless significant conflicts in Waziristan, Mohmand and elsewhere.[21] Across India, there were periods of political instability and the Army was frequently required to act "in aid of the Civil Power". There was little opportunity for lassitude and the Indian Army and its British contingent maintained a higher level of readiness and activity than British home based forces. Such an active and effective colonial army was unlikely to suffer low morale or instability and there is little evidence to suggest it did, with a few possible exceptions related to the political situation.[22] Despite the slow pace of Indianisation and a lack of modern weaponry and other resources, Indian Army morale was generally good in September 1939. The contraction of the Army between the world wars had resulted in the disbandment of several regiments and battalions, notably the Madras Pioneer battalions.[23] This must have had some localised impact on morale, albeit temporary, especially in the case of regiments that were being reduced in size by the disbandment or battalion mergers.[24]

Declaration of war was naturally expected to lead to extensive deployment in active roles for the Indian Army, as it had done in 1914. Initial expectations of frenetic preparations and active deployment were unfulfilled for many units. Some sources suggest disappointment was felt within the Indian Army during the Phoney War period. It seemed that the Indian Army would not be required to fight in Europe and there were few other active roles envisaged at this stage. The lack of clearly defined active roles does seem to have affected morale negatively. To some, inaction made little sense, for example the 1st Punjab Regiment,

> *This extraordinary notion seems to have had its origin in Whitehall, but whatever its origin it undoubtedly had a most depressing and harmful effect on the morale and keenness of the British officers and the Indian officers and men of the Army, and it was not until the war had been in progress for nearly a year that this cloud began to lift*.[25]

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[21] General Staff Army Headquarters, , *Official History of Operations on the N.W. Frontier 1920-35, Parts I, II and III* (Delhi, Government of India, 1945), General Staff Army Headquarters, **,** *Operations in Waziristan 1919-1920* (Delhi, Government of India, 1924), General Staff Army Headquarters, **,** *Official History of Operations on the North-West Frontier Of India 1936-1937* (Delhi, Government Of India, 1938). All reprinted (Uckfield, Naval & Military Press in association with Imperial War Museum)

[22] Tan. T.Y, (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 141-280, Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, pp. 451-452

[23] Chenevix-Trench, C., *The Indian Army, and the King's Enemies 1900-1947*, pp. 115-116

[24] Much of the scaling back from the First World War establishment was achieved by the disbandment of war raised battalions in established regiments. Further reductions were made in the early 1930s as a result of the global economic depression that afflicted both Britain and India.

[25] Quereshi, Major M.I., *History Of The First Punjab Regiment, 1759-1956 (*Aldershot, Gale & Polden, 1958), p. 277

Such perceptions among Indian officers and troops would not have been helped by the recall of many of the best British Army battalions from India and their replacement in most cases by inexperienced Territorials.[26] Numerous secondments of Indian Army officers to the British Army would also have had a negative effect. One such example was Major H.L. "Taffy" Davies, who was seconded to Britain but in November 1940, marooned in Iceland, at which point his case was raised by General Auchinleck with General Muspratt at the India Office.[27] This temporary exile of an effective battalion commander would have done little for his morale or his battalion and it illustrates the potentially disruptive nature of poorly managed secondments. It was as if the Indian Army's British contingent was being cherry-picked while the rest, notably including its Indian officers and other ranks were left on the side-lines.

Several units were deployed to Egypt, Hong Kong, Malaya and elsewhere. With no immediate opportunities for action, the initial experience for some soldiers was uneventful. Italy declared war on the 10 June 1940 and Indian troops at last had opportunities to show their mettle. Following the success of Operation Compass, partly led by Indian infantry, morale was high among attached Indian troops within Western Desert Force.[28] Operations in East Africa were developing quickly by the end of 1940 and the 4th and 5th Indian divisions played leading roles. If the conditions at Keren were not unfamiliar to old North West Frontier hands, the opponent was. Indian troops achieved considerable success after initial setbacks, against an Italian opponent that was less inclined to trade ground for the avoidance of casualties than Frontier tribes often were. [29] Indian divisions deployed in North Africa continued to play prominent roles throughout the campaigns that culminated in the capture of the remaining Italian and German forces in Tunisia in 1943 and they continued to make a substantial contribution to the Italian campaign.[30]

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[26] For example the 1st Battalion of the Border Regiment was recalled to Britain as described in the following interview, IWM Sound Archives 910, *Interviewee/speaker - Private David Lloyd George Griffiths, South Wales Borderers 1938-42* (London, IWM, 1977-04-13).

[27] JRL AUC/102: *Letter 5/11/40 General Sir Sydney Muspratt to Auchinleck, Complaint regarding treatment of Major (Acting Lt. Colonel) H.L. Davies (Later, Major General)* (Manchester, Auchinleck Papers, John Rylands Library). Davies was later to be an outstanding staff officer and he played a key supporting role with Slim in the Fourteenth Army.

[28] Playfair, Major-General I.S.O., *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Military Series: The Mediterranean and Middle East, Volume I, The Early Successes against Italy (to May 1941)* (London, HMSO, 1954), pp. 257-275

[29] Prasad, B. D. , *East African Campaign, 1940-41 (Official history of the Indian armed forces in the Second World War,1939-1945)* (Combined Inter-Services Historical Section India & Pakistan, Longmans Green, 1963), pp. 92-121,

[30] Pal, D., *The campaign in Italy, 1943-45 (Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-1945. Campaigns in the Western theatre)* (Combined Inter-Services Historical Section India & Pakistan, Longmans Green,1960)

Some units sent to Egypt and Hong Kong in 1939-41 were involved in the incidents discussed in Chapter 5 but these acts of dissent and mutiny were localised and limited in scale. There is no evidence of widespread discontent and the swift and aggressive official response to these incidents did not appear to generate wider ill-feeling within the Indian Army. However, there were factors that were generating more widespread dissatisfaction. These included the petty institutional racism, directed most conspicuously against Indian commissioned officers in Malaya before the outbreak of war against Japan.[31]

A perennial bone of contention was the apparent pay differentials between British and Indian officers on overseas service.[32] Other background issues included the increasing concerns felt by Sikhs after the Moslem League declared its intention to demand a separate state of Pakistan.[33] Such a state was likely to include predominantly Sikh areas of the Punjab and presented a threat to the security of Sikh families and communities in several important recruiting areas. The gripes that were common in any army were not helped by the rapid and sometimes disruptive expansion that was underway from mid-1940. For example, regimental centres rarely had the accommodation, equipment or facilities to handle greater numbers of recruits and transit camps were even less commodious at this stage of expansion.[34]

Defeat in Malaya resulted in two Indian infantry divisions going into captivity and the events of Farrer Park at the time of surrender had damaging consequences for the morale of those involved and more widely within the Indian Army.[35] Some who joined the INA cited racial discrimination as one of their reasons for low morale and it is clear that earlier instances of prejudice shown in Malaya had cut deeply for some. Surrender affected morale in the British, Australian and Indian armies in many ways but one problem, specific to the Indian Army, was the separation of British officers from Indian troops at the surrender. It weakened morale for troops who remained loyal. The absence of most officers meant that POWs had lost the notional guardians of their rights and welfare as prisoners. However, the two tier structure of the Indian Army command structure mitigated this as most VCOs stepped up admirably and did what little they could to protect POWs in their care, under trying and sometimes barbaric

[31] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Sundaram, C.S., *Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets: Disaffection among Indian Troops in Singapore and Hong Kong 1940-1, and the Formation of the Indian National Army* (Chapter 4), pp. 129-140.
[32] IOR L/MIL/7/19146, *Indianisation : Rates of Pay of Indian Commissioned Officers of the Indian Army and the Indian Air force*
[33] Tan. T.Y (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 296-300
[34] Anon. , *Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, A Short History 1939-1945*, pp. 95-111
[35] See Chapter 3. The 9th and 11th Indian Infantry Divisions were augmented by replacements and additional formations drawn from other Divisions and regimental centres in India.

conditions. Two notable personal accounts reveal how difficult it was to maintain any semblance of cohesion and morale under such circumstances.[36]

The loss of Hong Kong resulted in experienced, capable Indian troops surrendering after a hard fought but hopeless battle. Most accounts agree that the Indian troops in Hong Kong fought well and the impact of the surrender on wider morale was limited.[37] Larger defeats in Malaya and Burma had more telling consequences. The Sittang Bridge disaster in Burma would have been a severe knock for any formation but for the inexperienced 17th Indian Infantry Division the morale impact was especially hard.[38] There were instances of desertion by Indian troops but in most cases it was Burmese troops who deserted, often to return home and protect their families.[39] Burmese troops attached to the 1st Burma Division were fighting on home ground in the midst of obvious and rapid civil disintegration. The spectre of inter-communal violence must also have lain heavily on the minds of Burmese troops, mostly drawn from minority groups in Burma's divided society.[40] It is perhaps more surprising that not all the units drawn from Burma's minorities disintegrated.[41] The remnants of Burcorps that limped into Assam had to their credit mostly retained cohesion but the grossly inadequate reception arrangements resulted in an almost complete collapse in morale and wellbeing after their arrival in India.[42] This was a shameful episode in the history of the Indian Army and a clear failure by those accountable in Eastern Army.[43] It was a state of affairs that was avoidable and which resulted in excessive non-battle casualties among the exhausted and disease-weakened troops.

To some observers the rapid sequence of imperial defeats were seen as precursors to imminent collapse of the British Empire and many assumed that India would be the next domino to fall. Civil panic ensued in parts of Bengal, Ceylon, and locations along the eastern seaboard. Calcutta was bombed for the first time and the inadequate air defences and air raid precautions became obvious, as it had been earlier in Rangoon.[44] The Quit India campaign was in some

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[36] Crasta, J.B., *Eaten by the Japanese: The Memoir of an Unknown Indian Prisoner of War*, Prasad, S., *The Gallant Dogras, An Illustrated History of the Dogra Regiment*, *Account of Havildar Rattan Singh MM. 3/17 Dogra Regiment*, pp. 65-65

[37] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I, The Loss of Singapore*, pp. 119-151

[38] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 1-90

[39] Ibid., p. 74

[40] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, p. 17

[41] Ibid. The 1st Burma Division included units largely formed from Indian recruits as well as Burmese.

[42] Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 126-130. See also, Carmichael, P., *Mountain Battery*, pp. 227-236

[43] For a deeper assessment of Irwin's character, see: Lyman. R., *The Generals: From Defeat to Victory, Leadership in Asia, 1941-45*, pp. 143-186

[44] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History: War and Society in Colonial India*, Kamtekar, I., *Chapter 11 The shiver of 1942*, pp. 340-344. See also, Raina B.L, *Medical stores and equipment (Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45. Medical services)* (Combined Inter-Services Historical Section India & Pakistan, Orient Longmans, 1963), p. 418

respects the Congress Party's attempt to exploit the impending collapse but it was pre-empted and the ruling institutions of India proved to be less fragile and demoralised than was perhaps expected. The title "The Shiver of 1942" was adopted by Indivar Kamtekar for his study of the combined impact of the Quit India movement and the widespread panic that ensued in mid-1942, when a Japanese invasion of India was expected imminently.[45] He describes the spasm of panic and sliding morale that widely affected civilian India and parts of government too.[46] Whilst civil society and the Government of India were deeply rattled the Indian Army remained steady. Perhaps it was too busy responding to external threats and the Quit India insurrection for collective introspection to be possible.

The next jolt to confidence in and within the Indian Army was the failed first counter-offensive, the first Arakan campaign.[47] In some ways the impact of failure was greater because it was unexpected. Troops were available and training and equipment levels were improving. At face value the Raj was no longer on the back foot. The modest objective of re-taking the coastal strip of northern Arakan and the important airfield at Akyab seemed within grasp when a patrol reached Foul Point, within sight of Akyab, on 22 December 1942.[48] Then, all went horribly wrong. The 14th Indian Infantry Division, supplemented by several additional brigades, failed to achieve its objectives. On paper at least, this was a well trained and equipped division by the standards of the time. It had recently benefitted from some jungle warfare training exercises devised by Brigadier Stewart, of Argyll's fame.[49] After a period of stalemate and costly but fruitless frontal attacks on Japanese positions at Donbaik, it was destined to fall victim to the all too familiar Japanese tactics of infiltration and road-block.[50] The division was forced to retreat in disarray. Battle casualties in the retreat were relatively low but malaria cases soared. This surely signified falling morale, given that the easiest way to fall out of the line was to *forget* personal anti-malaria precautions.[51] General Slim pointed to the damage to morale as being the most serious issue:

[45] Roy, K., Editor, *Themes in Indian History*, Kamtekar, I., *Chapter 11 The shiver of 1942*, Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*, pp. 132-141, Tan. T.Y, (Than Tai Yong), *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 281-302

[46] See also, Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 256-275.

[47] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour*, pp. 253-269, pp. 331-360

[48] Allen, L., *Burma : The Longest War 1941-45*, p. 97

[49] Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle: Training the Indian Army During the Second World War* (War & Military Culture in South Asia), pp. 144-145. See also, WO 172/467, *HQ 14th Indian Division War Diary, May 1942* , WO 172/448 , *Jungle Warfare Courses, 11th July 1942*

[50] Allen, L., *Burma : The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 100-106

[51] The consequences of such an omission could be fatal if it resulted in a severe bout of cerebral malaria rather than a less serious fever. Inexperienced troops may not have fully appreciated the risks.

> Malaria had taken a heavy toll, far above our battle casualties, and we had lost a good deal of equipment. Neither these serious losses nor the abandonment of territory was as damaging as the loss of morale. It was no use disguising the fact that many of the British and Indian units which had fought in Arakan were shaken and depressed. As so often happens, too, the troops in the rear areas, who greatly outnumbered those at the front, suffered even greater decline in morale.[52]

The morale impact of these setbacks outweighed any practical consequences on the ground. Within India, in Britain and amongst some allies, doubts were being voiced about the capability and resilience of the Indian Army.[53] The internal crisis in confidence was more relevant for troop morale but internal doubts were less prolonged than external doubters may have surmised at the time. The reforms introduced by Wavell, Auchinleck and others took began to deliver benefits and by late 1943 the turnaround was gaining momentum. Action to address training weaknesses, improved malaria precautions, better equipment and more general welfare improvements began to make a difference. However, this was not yet translated into results. With few external signs of progress, reputational damage to the institution lingered.

Within the Burma theatre, there was one redeeming influence on morale that coincided with the defeat in the Arakan. Orde Wingate's Chindit force had ventured far behind Japanese lines and demonstrated that adequately trained imperial troops could operate in the jungle at least as well as the Japanese.[54] Despite very limited strategic and operational dividends, Operation Longcloth succeeded in two respects. The operation proved the potential of supply by air in Burma. Churchill took Wingate to the next Allied conference in Quebec as a totemic symbol of this successful operation. Attendees were duly impressed. However, the Chindits were predominantly British troops as Wingate was dismissive of the value of Indian troops for his operations. On 17 August 1943, at the Quadrant Conference, Wingate disparaged the Indian Army by describing it to the Combined Chiefs of Staff as "that system of outdoor relief".[55]

Wingate's derogatory views on the Indian Army did not extend to British born Indian Army officers, as several of his best officers were Indian Army, notably including Mike Calvert, Walter Lentaigne and John Masters.[56] Nor did his prejudices deter him from demanding,

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[52] Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 161
[53] See Chapter 2
[54] Calvert, M., *Fighting Mad, One Man's Guerrilla War*, Allen, L., *Burma : The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 116-149, Fergusson, B., *Beyond the Chindwin*
[55] Sykes, C.**,** *Orde Wingate: A Biography*, p. 455. To describe the Indian Army as a system of welfare would have been deeply offensive to many within the army but Wingate's comments were not widely reported at the time.
[56] Calvert, M. , *Fighting Mad, One Man's Guerrilla War*, Masters, J., *The Road Past Mandalay*

unsuccessfully, that the 26th Indian Infantry Division should be added to already ample forces allocated to the second Chindit campaign.[57] Whilst Wingate utilised several Indian Army officers as column leaders, he largely disregarded their better informed opinions of Indian troops, with one exception, his willingness to use Gurkhas.[58] Despite Wingate's attitude, Operation Longcloth had a positive influence on Indian Army morale, as it began to erode the myth of Japanese invincibility. The myth was comprehensively refuted by the 1944 campaigns. However, there is evidence that Wingate's somewhat dismissive attitude towards managing the health of his Chindit forces had negative effects on their morale.[59]

Other than minor, temporary successes, the Indian Army had not yet demonstrated it could defeat Japanese troops in battle.[60] This was surely one of the root causes of low morale. The defeats inflicted on Japanese troops in 1944, first in the Battle of the Admin Box and then at Kohima and Imphal, erased the myth of Japanese invincibility.[61] No better antidote to fragile morale could have been found and from then until August 1945, Indian Army morale was in the ascendant. First in defence and subsequently in a series of spectacular offensives, the India Army demonstrated that it could meet Japanese with force, agility and panache. The old myth that Indian troops could only perform to their best under British officers and stiffened with British troops was also buried. Throughout 1945 the numbers and roles of British troops within the 14th Army were rapidly diminishing due to repatriation of the longest serving British troops and Indian officers were taking on more roles in the fighting arms.[62]

The formation that more than any other experienced the fluctuations in Indian Army fortunes was the 17th Indian Infantry Division, latterly known as the "Black Cats". It fought in the Burma Campaign from the start and played a leading role to the end. Unusually it was under the same commander for most of that time, Major General David Tennant 'Punch' Cowan. This division faced extinction at the Sittang Bridge but it survived and played a dogged role throughout the retreat from Burma, the longest retreat in the history of both the Indian and British armies. A revitalised 17th Division was again in peril during the early phases of the battle for Imphal in

[57] Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 218-219
[58] Farwell, B., *The Gurkhas*, pp. 216-221, James, H. & Sheil-Small, D., *The Gurkhas* (London, MacDonald, 1965), pp. 203-208
[59] Harrison, M., *Medicine and Victory: British Military Medicine in the Second World War*, pp. 201-213
[60] The first day of fighting at Kota Bharu is a good example, Farrell, B.P, *The Defence and Fall of Singapore, 1940-1942*, pp. 154-159, pp. 154-159, Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I, The Loss of Singapore*, pp. 182-189
[61] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, Callahan, R., *Triumph at Imphal-Kohima: How the Indian Army Finally Stopped the Japanese Juggernaut*, Keane, F., *Road of Bones, The Epic Siege of Kohima, 1944*, McCann, J., *Return To Kohima*, McLynn, F., *The Burma Campaign, Disaster Into Triumph, 1942-45*, Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, Edwards, L, *Kohima, The Furthest Battle*
[62] Singh, V.K. Major-General, *Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers*, p. 102

1944 but it achieved immortality in the dash for Meiktila in 1945, the masterstroke at the centre of Slim's Operation Extended Capital.[63] The Black Cats remain one of the most prestigious formations in the post-independence Indian Army. The morale of this division took more knocks than most but it came back stronger and more effective each time, albeit with substantial infusions of new recruits.[64] If any formation demonstrated the recipe for building and rebuilding good morale, it was the 17th Indian Infantry Division.

6.2 Evidence

Much of the above narrative of the turnaround in morale within the Indian Army is based on anecdotal evidence. Subjective assessment is not necessarily baseless or unreliable as virtually all morale assessments are based on such judgements, even if they are partly supported by empirically measured indicators. It is difficult to measure morale objectively, as terms such as 'high', 'good', 'low', 'fragile' or 'poor' are not quantifiable. They remain subjective terms, even if their usage is framed, as is often the case, by surveys conducted in similar ways to modern Human Resource management survey methods. It is possible to measure what may be assumed to be symptoms of poor morale, such as sickness rates or disciplinary offences but poor morale itself is an abstract concept, albeit one that can have tangible consequences. Jonathan Fennell has encapsulated the problem by pointing to the 'nebulous' nature of morale:

> There are relatively few reliable primary or secondary sources that assess levels of morale in armies. …..this makes it extremely difficult for historians to make connections between battle outcomes and that most nebulous of military factors – morale.[65]

From mid-1942 the Adjutant General in India, Lieutenant General Sir William H. G. Baker, established a quarterly review and reporting process that sought to assess morale within the Indian Army, attached troops in India and later within SEAC.[66] The reports illustrate the inevitable imbalance between objectivity and subjectivity as they were predominantly based on feedback sampling. The report for the period ending on 30 April 1943 indicates that information

[63] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume III, The Decisive Battles*, pp. 235-248, pp. 297-312, pp.329-342, Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume IV, The Reconquest of Burma*, pp. 267-268, Allen, L., *Burma : The Longest War 1941-45*, pp. 425-458

[64] It should be remembered that Burcorps had sustained 13,463 casualties in the retreat from Burma and the 17th Division had to be reformed after the Sittang Bridge disaster. Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, p. 638

[65] https://defenceindepth.co/2015/08/12/a-statistically-robust-way-to-measure-military-morale/, *Defence In Depth: Research From The Defence Studies Department, King's College London* (London, King's College, 2014-2019), *Fennell, J., A Statistically Robust Way to 'Measure' Military Morale!* (12 August 2015). See also: Fennell, J., *Re-evaluating Combat Cohesion: The British Second Army in The Northwest Europe Campaign of the Second World War* (London King's College Defence Studies Dept., 2015)

[66] IOR L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale, 3 parts in 4 files, 1943-1948*

had been collated and surveyed from some 7,000 “Unit, Formation and other Monthly Intelligence reports”.[67] The sample size increased in later reports and the morale reports were based on feedback from several thousand officers. The initial sources were listed in the first report:[68]

a) Military Intelligence Directorate, bi-monthly reports
b) Chief Civil Liaison Officer’s monthly reports
c) Middle East field censorship reports
d) Points raised by members of the Committee and Branches in G.H.Q.

In the early reports, the only empirical indicator that was discussed was the number of trials and courts martial held under the British and Indian Army Acts. The rest was largely subjective assessment collated from officer feedback under headings such as “Confidence”, “Contentment” and “Relations between Officers, VCOs NCOs and Men”. Later reports introduced refinements and additions but followed a similar template.[69] Another useful source was the Morale Reports for India Command and SEAC, collated by the Director of Military Intelligence, and mainly sourced from information provided by Civilian Liaison Officers, security intelligence and censorship reports.[70] Given the overlap in sources, similar information is repeated and the analysis corroborates the narrative from the Morale Committee which suggests there was a degree of administrative cooperation between the two.

Whilst large scale opinion sampling added credibility to the Morale Committee conclusions, the subjective nature of the majority of the input should be treated with some caution. For example, an inadequate commander was unlikely to report that low unit morale was a direct consequence of his own poor leadership. Whilst front line units were likely to be under constant oversight and such an issue would soon be identified, a remote depot in India was unlikely to receive the same scrutiny. Transit camps were a common source of discontent, particularly if fresh arrivals were mixing with jaded old hands in need of rest and yet there is barely any mention of transit camp morale issues in the reports.

It might reasonably be expected that the low point in Indian Army morale would have been during and in the aftermath of the defeats in Malaya and Burma. However, some evidence presented below suggests that the lowest ebb was reached in 1943, in the aftermath of the

[67] Ibid., Item 123
[68] Ibid., *First Quarterly Report, November 1942 to January1943.*
[69] Ibid., *First Quarterly Report, November 1942 to January1943.*
[70] IOR L/WS/2/71, *Morale reports, India Command and SEAC*

failed first Arakan campaign. Anecdotal evidence points to a significant drop in morale at this stage but finding corroborative evidence is not easy.

6.2.1 Censorship Summaries

Contemporary morale assessment was carried out as part of the censorship process and was reliant on the analysis of troop correspondence sampling. Jonathan Fennell undertook extensive research on censorship reports for the majority of the imperial armies and this has offered valuable insights.[71] For example, he has identified measurable fluctuations in morale within 21st Army Group before, during and after the Normandy campaign.[72] This research shows wide variations over relatively short periods and a correlation between morale and the performance of British and Canadian formations in the key battles.[73] However, there is not sufficiently granular source data to undertake a similar assessment for the Burma campaigns. The available censorship reports should be treated cautiously as summary analysis of correspondence was subjective and the quality of assessments was dependent on sample size, diligence of the analysis and any pre-conceptions of the analyst. I have been unable to identify archive holdings of original correspondence, and it would appear that neither has Kaushik Roy in preparing his noteworthy article on the morale of Indian, British and African troops.[74] Research in this area must rely on the available morale reports and censorship related comments in the intelligence summaries.[75]

6.2.2 Courts Martial

The Adjutant General in India's Committee on Morale regarded serious disciplinary cases as a useful morale indicator and reported statistics in its quarterly reports.[76] The data included desertion, absence without leave, insubordination and various degrees of assault. Two longstanding trends that were evident before 1939 were a seasonal increase in offences in the unbearably hot months in India and a consistent tendency for offences as a percentage of

[71] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*
[72] Ibid., pp. 479-502
[73] Ibid., pp. 512-519
[74] Roy, K., *Discipline and Morale of the African, British and Indian Army Units in Burma and India During World War II: July 1943 to August 1945*. Modern Asian Studies 44(6): pp. 1255–1282
[75] IOR L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale,* IOR L/WS/1/69, *Intelligence: weekly letters between MI War Office and MI India, 1939-1940,* IOR L/WS/1/423, *Intelligence: Indian censorship, 1940-1944,* IOR L/WS/1/72, *Intelligence: weekly letters between MI War Office and MI India, 1939,* IOR L/WS/1/202, *Intelligence: War Office weekly commentaries, 1940-1944,* IOR L/WS/1/317, *Monthly Intelligence Summary 1940 (to 5th April 1943),* IOR L/WS/1/393, *Intelligence: Middle East Intelligence Centre daily summaries, 1940*
[76] IOR L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale*

headcount to be higher for British troops than Indian. The latter difference in the period up to 1942 was striking but it was gradually narrowing from 1939.[77]

Percentage of Crime to Total Strength:

British Service:	***Summary:***
1936-37	***0.7***
1937-38	***0.7***
1938-39	***0.6***
1930-40	***0.8***
1940-41	***0.8***
1941-42	***0.8***
Indian Troops:	***Summary:***
1936-37	***0.2***
1937-38	***0.1***
1938-39	***0.2***
1939-40	***0.4***
1940-41	***0.5***
1941-42	***0.4***

However, from 1942 overall numbers of serious offences committed by Indian troops overtook those of British troops, with a notable peak in offences in the first half of 1943.[78] The peak in offences prosecuted under the Indian Army Act was 307 in March 1943, at a time when temperatures were rising but not yet in the hottest April-June period.[79]

Trials under the Army Acts, February to July 1943:[80]

1943	***Army Act (BO/BOR)***	***Indian Army Act (IO/IOR)***
Feb	***126***	***254***
March	***145***	***307***
April	***163***	***278***
May	***111***	***196***
June	***127***	***186***
July	***195***	***259***

This seems to indicate a statistically significant rise in offences among Indian troops in the first half of 1943 at the time when a dip in morale has been identified widely in anecdotal sources. A corresponding rise appears for British troops in March and April but the second peak in July

[77] Ibid., Item 130, *For the Three Months Ended 30th April, 1943*,
[78] Ibid., Item 141*, The Adjutant in India's Committee on Morale of the Army in India, For the Three Months Ended 16th July1943*, Item 117
[79] Ibid, Item 141*, The Adjutant in India's Committee on Morale of the Army in India*, Item 117, *For the Three Months Ended 16th July1943*. Note: The start of the hot season varies in different regions of India, as does the start of the monsoon period.
[80] These numbers are absolute totals and not pro-rated to the number of troops in each contingent.

seems less easy to explain as this was after the hottest period and morale was allegedly improving.

6.2.3 Sickness Data

Trends in the sickness statistics do not seem to have been systematically reported as an indicator by the Morale Committee but they were widely acknowledged as being relevant. Some well-placed observers, including General Slim, felt that the high levels of malaria infection were in part down to low morale and consequent, perhaps deliberate, failures of precautionary measures.[81] An easy way out was to go sick and there was ample opportunity to become genuinely ill in a tropical climate. A neglected minor scratch could soon ulcerate, a failure to guard against mosquitos, or missing one's Mepacrine dose, would almost certainly result in malaria. Spiralling malaria rates provided circumstantial evidence and there is no shortage of anecdotal assertions, not least from the commanders who were dealing with the consequences of low morale. However, to deliberately court the malarial mosquito carried serious risk, as cerebral malaria could be deadly.[82]

The difficulty in proving direct correlation between sickness and morale was that Indian Army medical services were under considerable strain in 1942-43 and there were other factors driving the prevalence of common tropical diseases. The Adjutant General, Adam went so far as to conclude that medical provision was at the point of collapse in August 1942,

> *I was horrified with the situation as regards Medical Services in India. The Indian Medical Service has broken down……I am afraid that there will be a complete breakdown of medical services in war.*[83]

Spikes in the incidence of common diseases such as dysentery and malaria were inevitable, irrespective of morale. However, peak infection rates in most active service formations, broadly correlated with the low points in morale during late 1942 and early 1943. Whether or not low morale was a causal factor was unlikely to be proven at the time and even less likely in retrospect. The notable improvements in medical welfare from this low point are discussed later in this chapter.

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[81] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 206-210, Doulton, Lieut.-Col. A.J.F., *The Fighting Cock, Being the History of the 23rd Indian Division, 1942-1947*, Reprinted by Naval & Military Press, pp. 28-29
[82] Evans, C., *A Doctor in the XIVth Army*, p.63
[83] KCL Adam 3/6/1, *Report by the Adjutant General on his tour of the Middle East, India and West Africa, August 1942*, p. 5

6.2.4 Suicides

Perhaps understandably suicide rates were not considered as an official morale indicator and the statistical significance of relatively small numbers may be open to question. However, analysis of the available data does seem to suggest a correlation with fluctuations in army morale. The available data is for British Indian Army officers and warrant officers. It includes recorded deaths within these groups and indicates cause of death where determined.[84] Individuals in the armed services committed suicide for a variety of reasons and it would be unwise to infer that the suicide rate alone is compelling evidence of low morale in 1943. However, my research does show there was a notable increase in the suicide rate amongst British Indian Army officers in 1943 and it was an increase that was predominantly in India, not in operational theatres. The table below has been collated from the source data and shows deaths officially determined to be suicides but numbers are not adjusted for army expansion:

Year	***Total***	***India***	***Elsewhere***
1939	***1***	***1***	***0***
1940	***4***	***1***	***3***
1941	***8***	***6***	***2***
1942	***9***	***7***	***2***
1943 *Total*	***17***	***16***	***2***
January-June	*9*	*8*	*1*
July-December	*8*	*7*	*1*
1944	***5***	***3***	***2***
1945	***9***	***4***	***5***
January-August	*4*	*2*	*2*
September-December	*5*	*2*	*3*
1946	***9***	***6***	***3***
1947	***0***	***0***	***0***

Source: [85]

The suicide rate in 1943 was nearly double that of any other year of the conflict. It is also notable that once the reforms to training and welfare began to take effect along with the hard fought victories of 1944, the suicide rate dropped to its lowest since 1940 despite the Army's peak in troop numbers in 1944. The data should be treated with caution, due to the small number of cases as a percentage of overall numbers but it does seem to support the hypothesis that 1943 was the low point in morale. Suicide carried considerable stigma, not least because attempted suicide remained a criminal act under English Law and the figures only show cases recorded as suicide. There were numerous reported cases of deaths by accidental drowning

[84] IOR L/MIL/14/143, *Indian Army Officers Casualty Returns: Alphabetical lists of casualties by death among British officers and warrant officers of the Indian and Burma Services - 3 Sep 1939-30 Jun 1948*
[85] Ibid.

and accidental, self-inflicted shooting that may suggest some possible suicides were not recorded as such to protect reputation and family.[86]

6.3 Influences on Morale

Events in the Burma campaign demonstrate the obvious truisms that success improves morale and repeated failure leads to lower morale. However, the route to high morale was not based on short term unsustainable successes and a rapid reversal of fortune could be even worse for morale than a less exalted fall. For example, the pendulum-like experience in North Africa was that the Western Desert Force reached El Agheila, in February 1941 and the Eighth Army again did in January 1942 but each time they were thrown back in disarray.

For high morale to be sustainable it required firm foundations, in the form of consistently effective training, leadership, communication and sensitive handling of welfare issues. Montgomery was able to turn around the fortunes of the Eighth Army in Egypt with these and other changes, including better equipment, improved intelligence and increased numerical advantage. The Indian Army and its new standard bearer, the Fourteenth Army, needed to rebuild both reputation and morale. The Fourteenth Army may not have enjoyed similar access to ample supplies of the latest equipment that the Eighth Army or 21st Army Group did but increasingly from 1943 it got what it needed. Nor did it always enjoy numerical superiority, as the logistical constraints of the supply routes in Assam, East Bengal and Burma imposed limitations on the forces that could be deployed and maintained in the field. The number of divisions actively deployed on operations Capital and Extended Capital was prescribed by unusually extended supply lines, supplemented by finite air transportation resources. Supply dictated that the Fourteenth Army could only deploy two thirds of the available divisions.[87] The other ingredients required for good morale were very similar to the more widely researched Montgomery methodology.

An army works most effectively when it achieves a necessary level of unity and cohesion despite any pre-existing divisive factors within its make-up. The Indian Army had no shortage of diversity factors and efforts to create an overall unity of purpose were essential to achieving sustainable high morale.[88] If we accept the premise that unifying factors make a contribution to unit cohesion and were closely associated with good morale, then fulfilment of the underlying

[86] The total recorded for accidental death s by drowning and by self-inflicted shooting is 24 each. The vast majority of fatalities were in India, 19 and 15 respectively. Peak years for both were 1942 and 1943.
[87] Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 380
[88] See Chapter 4

goodwill "contract" between the soldier and the institution was central to achieving this aim. This can be better illustrated by Slim's perceptive observations on the foundations of good morale:

> I remember sitting in my office and tabulating these foundations of morale something like this:
>
> 1) Spiritual
>   a. There must be a great and noble object.
>   b. Its achievement must be vital.
>   c. The method of achievement must be active, aggressive.
>   d. The man must feel that what he is and what he does matters directly towards the attainment of the object.
> 2) Intellectual
>   a. He must be convinced that the object can be attained; that it is not out of reach.
>   b. He must see, too, that the organisation to which he belongs and which is striving to attain the object is an efficient one.
>   c. He must have confidence in his leaders and know that whatever dangers and hardships he is called upon to suffer, his life will not be lightly flung away.
> 3) Material
>   a. The man must feel that he will get a fair deal from his commanders and from the army generally.
>   b. He must, as far as humanly possible, be given the best weapons and equipment for his task.
>   c. His living and working conditions must be made as good as they can be.[89]

Some points seem especially relevant to an institution as diverse and potentially disunited as the Indian Army but these principles were relevant to any army. The reasons for being prepared to fight were probably different for British and Indian soldiers, as they were for most of the nationalities contributing to the imperial war effort.[90] The close association of unity and cohesion with morale does not necessarily suggest that good morale equates to unity or vice-versa but there are influences common to both and to a degree they are symbiotic. Maintenance of unity of purpose within the Indian Army was one of the foundations of maintaining good morale. Conversely, if diversity deteriorated into friction and disunity then

[89] Slim, William, Field Marshal Viscount, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 208-209

[90] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*, pp. 52-91. Jonathan Fennell has discussed in some depth the differing motivational factors across the main imperial contingents.

morale would suffer, as indeed happened in Malaya in 1941 with regard to instances of racial discrimination.[91]

Effective and inclusive communication was at the centre of efforts to improve morale and to create the required unity of purpose and cohesion. Much effort went into improved communication within Fourteenth Army and Southeast Asia Command. Practical initiatives included the SEAC daily newspaper and the equivalent Fauji Akhbar weekly newspaper for Indian troops. Senior commanders also spent more time visiting formations and engaging with the troops.

It is widely acknowledged that "Uncle Bill" Slim was able to establish a uniquely personal rapport on his tours of the formations attached to Fourteenth Army, not least because he could communicate with informal fluency in both Urdu and Gurkhali.[92] The right language was only part of Slim's approach and his manner was unassumingly direct and seemed impromptu in making speeches or simply chatting to his troops.[93]

SEAC Supreme Commander Lord Louis Mountbatten was justly proud of his own efforts to visit forward units and for the most part these had a positive effect on morale.[94] The best intentions sometimes fell flat, however, as recounted by Private George Mawson of the 26th Division, to his daughter Iris Oakey:

> Mountbatten visited 26th Division somewhere well behind the line in early 1944. Dad was with 1st Lincolns, 26th Division. They were ordered to muster for a parade. Mountbatten flew in, on-route from Delhi. A marquee had been erected in the jungle and trestle tables with white cloths and silver service. Mountbatten sat down to lunch and drinks with the divisional officers. After the lunch he stood on a box and addressed the men and told them what a great job they were doing. He was covered in medals. He then flew back to Delhi. There were a lot of angry mutterings in the ranks because they were living on army rations and because they had been ordered to parade in their dress

[91] See Chapter 5
[92] Slim, William, Field Marshal Viscount, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 184-187
[93] Miller, R., *Uncle Bill: The Authorised Biography of Field Marshal Viscount Slim*, pp.237-238
[94] Mountbatten, Admiral, The Lord Louis, Ziegler, P. Ed., *Personal Diary of Admiral The Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 1943-1046*
, pp. 42-49.

> uniforms and look spick and span. Dad said, 'Mountbatten was bloody great for morale. He probably got another bloody medal just for turning up.'[95]

Troops not attached to active formations tended to miss out on communication and welfare in general if they were in transit, rest or reinforcement camps but the issue was recognised by both Slim and Auchinleck and measures were initiated, "One of the great weakeners of morale had been the state of the rest and reinforcement camps. … Almost without exception I found these places depressing beyond words."[96] Part of the solution was to attach rest and reinforcement camps to the active divisions so that they were no longer orphans when it came to resources and quality of welfare and administration.[97] However, it was much less clear whether these benefits reached as far back as the typical transit camp in the Deolali area or to other backwaters of India.[98]

Improved training effectiveness had a positive influence on morale, especially so from late 1943. There was much effective training happening prior to 1943 but it gained new impetus in volume, tempo and quality. New Indian divisions that had not been thrown into action prematurely had extended periods of working up to the required levels of efficiency and had benefitted from extensive, realistic training. Divisions raised in 1940 and 1941 had in most cases trained hard for desert warfare and it was those that were then thrust into a quite different environment that initially struggled. The misfortunes that befell the 14th Indian Division and the attached brigades of the 26th Indian Division in Arakan were in stark contrast to the less truncated learning curve of the 20th Indian Division which had ample opportunities to train in realistic jungle conditions in Ceylon and Assam before its defining first successes in the Imphal battles of 1944.[99]

The central driver for shifting perceptions from the old Indian Army to the new was the modernising influence of a well-defined, systematically implemented and well disseminated training doctrine. Dissemination of good training practice through guidance pamphlets was a

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[95] The Personal recollection of former Private George Mawson, recorded by his daughter, Iris Oakey, on 12 April, 2009.
[96] Slim, William, Field Marshal Viscount, *Defeat into Victory* (London, Cassell & Co, 1956), p. 190
[97] *Ibid*, pp. 190-191
[98] The author's father, Fred Hicks attributed his stay of several weeks in hospital in India to the very poor conditions in a Deolali transit camp in mid-1945. He said the food was so bad that he felt no compunction in stealing better food from the officers mess kitchen but the combination of poor diet and disease still resulted in his weight falling to 7 ½ stone by the time he was admitted to hospital in late 1945.
[99] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume II*, *India's Most Dangerous Hour*, p. 47, p. 194, p.242

well-established method but it was revitalized from 1942, showing dividends from 1943.[100] Much excellent research has been done on Indian Army Training, notably by Alan Jeffreys of the Imperial War Museum.[101] He has highlighted better training and shown how it led directly to improved performance. This was a movement that was evangelised by its leading proponents including Tuker, Savory and Slim.[102]

Training policy changes in 1942-1943 included the introduction of jungle warfare schools and of two dedicated training divisions.[103] This raised confidence and morale by disseminating consistent doctrine, tactics, battle drill and thoroughness in preparation for jungle warfare.[104] Improvements were also partly achieved by slowing the pace of front-line deployment. In some respects it was a simple case of *more haste and less speed*. Troops going into action with confidence in the preparation and training that they had undergone were more likely to weather the inevitable shocks and setbacks of a fluid battle, such as the fighting retreats that occurred in the initial phase of the Imphal battles.[105]

There can be no doubt, whether in defeat or victory, that the influence of outstanding senior leadership, of the kind provided by Slim and several of his corps and division commanders, was central to raising and sustaining good morale. However this was far from being the story of a few great men, as effective leadership at all levels was critical. The scale of Indian Army expansion was such that good leadership skills had to be fostered and not merely expected from less experienced ECOs and VCOs, rather than the KCOs and KCIOS who had enjoyed a long learning curve in peacetime. However, not all commentators felt that Emergency Commissioned Officers were instilling confidence, as illustrated by this observation in April 1943:

> In some field units Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers do not appear to hold the full trust of their men. Many I.E.C.O.s are now drawn from classes which the pre-war Indian Soldier does not consider to be “martial” and he resents that they should quickly

[100] War Office Publication, *The Jungle Book, Military Planning Pamphlet Number 9 (India)* (4th Edition – September 1943) Also known as Japanese In Battle Part 2 (W.O 36), Government Publication, Military Intelligence Directorate, *Japanese In Battle, Part 1 Enemy Methods* (Delhi, Manager of Publications, May 1943) War Office Publication, The Jungle Book, Military Planning Pamphlet Number 9 (India) (4th Edition – September 1943) Also known as Japanese In Battle Part 2 (W.O 36) Rowan-Robinson, Maj.Gen. H., Jungle Warfare (London, Hutchinson, 1944)
[101] Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle: Training the Indian Army During the Second World War* (War & Military Culture in South Asia), pp. 130-156
[102] Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*, Slim, W, *Unofficial History*, Tuker, Lieut.-General Sir F., *While Memory Serves*
[103] Jeffreys, A., *Approach to Battle*, pp. 161-168
[104] Ibid., pp. 163-168
[105] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume III, The Decisive Battles*, p. 197-329

> become captains and command men of the traditional army classes, among whom in the old days a captaincy was a rare honour. [106]

The morale report went on to pose the unresolved question whether these observations were honest conviction or an indication of envy or conservative prejudices. The learning curve for a new breed of younger VCOs, Indian NCOs and conscripted British NCOs was similarly steep and it was inevitable that rapid expansion would create resentments. There is little to suggest that once the newer officers had gained experience and training these issues had any widespread negative impact on morale.

The battle of the Admin Box in 1944 is often seen as the turning point in Indian Army fortunes.[107] The Japanese tried their now familiar tactics of infiltration and ambush but this time they met steadfast opposition supported by the priceless advantage of air supply. However, for success to be achieved, the forces involved had to sweep the myth of Japanese invincibility from their minds and gain confidence in their own ability. Training support troops in rear echelons to fight effectively when under threat was a key factor. Air supply undoubtedly helped morale too in situations where troops were surrounded. Being surrounded no longer meant being deprived of supplies. Another consideration that must have come into play was fear of capture. By mid-1942 the Japanese had a reputation for mistreatment and murder of prisoners. This reputation was confirmed during the Admin Box battle by the murder of patients and medical staff when the field hospital was briefly overrun.[108] This and other atrocities bolstered determination to fight on and from mid-1942 there were no large-scale surrenders of Indian Army troops in the Burma campaign. In Slim's opinion, "Such an outrage only steeled the resolve of our men".[109]

From 1939 the pace of Indianisation within the officer corps accelerated with the end of the segregated unit scheme, originally known as the "Eight Unit Scheme".[110] This rapid shift in the position of the Government of India must have positively influenced Indian officer morale but increasing the pace of Indianisation did not necessarily mean equality of opportunity. Friction developed around two issues, pay and the privileges that came with officer status. In a conscript army, pay would rarely be seen as a motivating factor but it can be the source of endless gripes

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[106] IOR L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale, Report for the Three Months Ended 30th April 1943. p. 5 Item 125*
[107] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume III, The Decisive Battles*, pp. 133-159
[108] Allen, L., *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45*, p. 183. Thirty one patients and four doctors were murdered between the 7 and 9 February 1944
[109] Slim, William, Field Marshal Viscount, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 276
[110] IOR L/MIL/7/19147, *Indianisation*, Item 24. See also Chapter 4 The Institution: Unity and Diversity

if it is seen to be unreasonably low.[111] It was an important factor In the Indian Army particularly in a country where poverty was widespread and the army was traditionally seen as a route to financial security and status.[112]

Well before the Admin Box action provided immutable proof of successful transformation, the real turning point was achieved through innumerable and often uneventful patrols undertaken through the jungles of the Assam/Burma border.[113] Confidence and rising morale was built over time and was not dependent on one notable success.

6.4 Health

6.4.1 Medical Services

Improvements in morale were the result of many factors but the rise in morale would not have counted for much if disease had continued to cause high turnover in active formations. The medical resource challenges were summarised by John Connell,

> The medical establishments of Fourteenth Army were lower than those of other British armies in Africa or Europe; and the actual strengths were gravely below even this reduced establishment. When Slim took command, there were 21,000 hospital beds, all occupied, under his Director of Medical services. To nurse these seriously sick and wounded men there were 414 nursing sisters - one nurse to every hundred beds by day or night. [114]

However, it was the reduction in demand for acute medical services that had the most impact. Improved medical and prophylactic arrangements reduced the attrition due to malaria and this meant that training improvements and the learning curve were less likely to be disrupted by sickness. Medical advances, combined with intensive jungle warfare training both changed the Indian Army's self-perception and the reality of its capabilities. [115]

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[111] See Welfare: Pay later in this chapter.
[112] Tan. T.Y, *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 122-123
[113] Doulton, Lieut.-Col. A.J.F., *The Fighting Cock, Being the History of the 23rd Indian Division, 1942-1947*, pp. 39-45
[114] Connell, J., *Auchinleck - A Critical Biography* (London, Cassell, 1959), pp. 773, See also: Slim, W. Field Marshal Viscount, *Defeat into Victory* (London, Cassell, 1956), pp. 177-178
[115] See *Welfare: Medical Services* later in this chapter.

Available data for the Indian Army in the eastern theatres of war shows that disease caused far higher casualty rates, especially so in the early campaigns. In 1943, for each single battle casualty there were 120 men being evacuated for sickness. At worst, the consequences were that replacements could not be trained and deployed fast enough to keep fighting formations up to strength.[116] The more pernicious impact of diseases such as malaria was that it eroded the cohesion and effectiveness of units, as well-trained troops were sick for extended periods and were often replaced by inexperienced recent recruits. The impact of disease on the Indian Army was hardly novel and it had been an even greater problem in earlier conflicts.[117] What was novel for tropical conditions and jungle warfare was the degree of improvement demonstrated by the Indian Army.

There were two main causes of widespread non-battle related casualties in the East. The first was the endemic prevalence of tropical diseases in the main theatres and in many parts of India too. The most significant disease in terms of its impact on military efficiency was malaria but there were many other diseases and conditions that debilitated or killed previously fit troops. The list of common diseases and conditions varied in each region but the most widespread ailments included malaria, dysentery and diarrhoea, typhoid, typhus, hepatitis, anaemia, venereal diseases, sepsis and a range of other tropical diseases, often simply classified statistically as NYD, "not yet diagnosed".[118]

The battle against malaria is still far from won decades later. The first available weapon was quinine but other tools for effective control and suppression were becoming available by 1941. This was fortunate as the primary source for quinine was the Netherlands East Indies and once the Japanese captured these islands the Allies were dependent on synthetic alternatives, mainly Mepacrine.[119] The aim was to control and suppress malaria as eradication was impossible. Three main measures were adopted, one method of attack and two prophylactic. Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane (DDT) was first used as an insecticide against malarial

[116] Slim, W. *Defeat into Victory*, p. 177. Note that some sources quote the ratio as 130:1, for example, Gracey 2/28/2, *Report entitled, 'Medical History of 20th Indian Infantry Div. in the Burma Campaign, 1st Jun. -31st Aug. 1945', including details of terrain, climate, hospitals and medical services.*, p. 11

[117] Mason, P, *A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men*, pp. 434-437. Disease mortality rates were even higher in the early nineteenth century, whether in the field or at base, pp. 137-139. Harrison, M., *Medicine and Victory: British Military Medicine in the Second World War,* pp. 11-12, Olusoga, D., *The World's War*, pp. 131-132, Brown, M., *1918, Year of Victory* (London, Sidgewick & Jackson/IWM, 1998), pp. 168-173, Peterson, R. K. D., *Insects, Disease, and Military History: The Napoleonic Campaigns and Historical Perception.* American Entomologist, 41: pp. 147-160. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), Peterson, R. K. D, *Insects, Disease, and Military History: The Napoleonic Campaigns and Historical Perception. American Entomologist* (Oxford, Oxford University Press,1995) Volume 41, pp. 147-160

[118] KCL Gracey 2/28/1, *Medical History of 20th Indian Division 1st December 1944 – 31st May 1945*, p. 11, KCL Gracey 2/2, 33 *Indian Corps: Account of Operations Vol. 3, December 1944 to March 1945, Medical Services*, p. 85. Note that Mepacrine was also widely known as Atebrin.

[119] Harrison, M., *Medicine and Victory: British Military Medicine in the Second World War,* p. 140

mosquitos towards the end of the Second World War. XXXIII Corps records show that it was introduced in their area in September 1944, just in time for the advance down the notoriously disease-ridden Kabaw Valley.[120] Other less effective insecticides had been widely used from around 1942.[121] In other theatres US armed forces took a lead in systematic anti-malarial insecticide use through the *Malaria Control in War Areas* (MCWA) organisation that operated from 1942.[122] In Assam and Burma, however, eradication of malaria-carrying mosquitos was a practical impossibility. Prophylactic measures against endemic malaria were more likely to be effective and remain so today.[123]

The most effective chemo-prophylactic treatment was Mepacrine which had been available since the 1930s. It was effectively a synthetic form of quinine, widely used for many years. However, having a suitable drug available was no solution to the malaria problem unless it was manufactured and administered systematically to those at risk. The malarial reduction success story for Indian Army troops deployed in Assam and Burma was the methodical and sometimes draconian discipline applied to ensure that essential medication was taken regularly. From 1943 any failure to take Mepacrine became a disciplinary matter and an officer could be stripped of his command if he did not ensure compliance by his troops.[124]

The approach to treatment of malaria cases was also transformed. The previous policy of sending patients back to base hospitals had resulted in delayed treatment, extended periods of sickness and overcrowded hospitals. By establishing Malaria Forward Treatment Units (MFTU), closer to the front, medical teams could expedite effective treatment, get men off the sick roll sooner and reduce the load on acute hospitals. The MFTU also acted as something of a deterrent to deliberate failure to take Mepacrine. Unfortunately Mepacrine turned the skin yellow which did not help its popularity and unfounded rumours that it caused impotence were an even greater problem.[125] However, the MFTU did ensure that a dose of malaria was no longer a ticket to a long rest in a comfortable hospital, far from the war.

Despite malaria control measures it remained a thorn in the side of Indian Army formations in Burma. Analysis of detailed medical data for the 20th Indian Infantry Division provides useful

[120] KCL Gracey 2/2/2, XXXIII Indian Corps: Account of Operations Vol. 2, 22nd Jun. 1944 to16th Dec. 1944, p. 140
[121] https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/about/history/index.html, *The History Of Malaria, An Ancient Disease* (Atlanta, Center For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2017)
[122] Ibid.
[123] Https://Www.Researchgate.Net/Publication/40453906_malaria_In_Assam_A_Challenge, *Malaria In Assam: A Challenge (Delhi*, Indian Journal of Community Medicine, 34(2): 94-6, April 2009). This article presents recent 2009 research on the management of malaria in the modern Indian Army.
[124] McLynn, F., *The Burma Campaign, Disaster Into Triumph, 1942-45*, p. 182,
Slim, William, Field Marshal Viscount, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 178-179
[125] Miller, R., *Uncle Bill: The Authorised Biography of Field Marshal Viscount Slim*, pp. 236-237

perspectives on healthcare efficacy in an efficient, well led formation.[126] For the period from 1 December 1944 to 31 May 1945 malaria still accounted for just over 20.1% of all non-battle casualty admissions within this division.[127] The next most common causes of admission were diarrhoea, dysentery and enteric disorders at 12.5%, and minor sepsis cases at 10.3%. These three major causes of medical admissions accounted for more than 42% of non-battle casualties. They were common ailments in a tropical environment that varied from the dense jungle of Assam to the open scrub of the Shwebo plain in Burma. Over this period there were 2,345 battle casualty admissions and no less than 5,605 admissions not due to battle injuries. These figures were still high but two quotes from the report for the period to May 1945 give an impression of how considerable improvements were achieved compared to 1942-1943:

> The ratio Battle Casualties to sick for this theatre was 1:130 in 1943 and 1:19 for 1944. For this Div. and its attached troops it was 1:2.4 as compared to 1:2.9 for the corresponding period last year.
>
> Malaria incidence was 14% of total admissions, a drop from 29% for the corresponding period last year [1943]. For both periods the troops were on suppressive Mepacrine. The difference is due to the increased morale, increased malaria consciousness of the Commanders and better Mepacrine discipline of the troops. In 1942, the overall figure for this theatre was 70% and for 1944, 36%.[128]

In such an enervating, pathogenic environment the improvements were unlikely to match those achieved earlier in the Western Desert but they were outstanding nonetheless and perhaps this is why Mark Harrison somewhat understates the successes achieved in Burma.[129] The other factor in making comparisons between theatres is that aggregated data for the whole theatre will tend to average out the differences, whereas data for the arguably typical 20th Division in Fourteenth Army shows the degree of progress at the sharp end, where it mattered most.

Effective medication, combined with better education and discipline with regard to precautions, drastically reduced the impact of malaria in an actively deployed division moving across Burma, but the disease could still cause more than a thousand casualties in six months. The monsoon

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[126] KCL Gracey 2/28/1, *Report entitled, 'Medical History of 20th Indian Infantry Div. in the Burma Campaign, 1st Dec 1944-31st May 1945, including details of terrain, climate, hospitals and medical services*., KCL Gracey 2/28/2, *Report entitled, 'Medical History of 20th Indian Infantry Div. in the Burma Campaign, 1st Jun. -31st Aug. 1945', including details of terrain, climate, hospitals and medical services*.
[127] Ibid., p. 11
[128] Ibid., pp. 10-11
[129] Harrison, M., *Medicine and Victory: British Military Medicine in the Second World War,* For the Western Desert campaign see, pp. 84-108, For Burma see, pp. 193-223

arrived on the 1 May 1945 and this must have increased the malaria rate but no monthly breakdown of the data is available to prove this hypothesis. For the period from 1 June 1945 to 31 August, 1945, the malaria rate reduced somewhat but was still 17%.[130]

Considerable progress was made in the treatment of other diseases. For example the widespread incidence of anaemia, particularly among Indian troops, was traced to vitamin deficiencies that could be treated with a specially formulated Liver extract. [131] Ronald Girdwood, a young doctor attached to GHQ India, was able to prove that the alleged incidence of malnutrition among relatively well fed troops was due to vitamin deficiencies preventing the effective absorption of nutrients, rather than a symptom of battlefield stress, as some, including Slim had thought.[132]

Treatment of battle casualties and infections was also much improved during 1944 by the increasingly widespread availability and use of Penicillin.[133] Despite such advances, survival rates were still dependent on effective triage protocols, rapid evacuation and treatment. The use of light aircraft to evacuate casualties has been widely highlighted as an improvement but the forward treatment of casualties at the earliest opportunity, closer to the front line, was equally important for stabilisation of trauma casualties.[134]

6.4.2 Prisoners of War

There is ample evidence that disease and mortality rates among prisoners of war held by the Japanese far outstripped battle casualties in the early campaigns. For prisoners held by the Japanese the threats included inadequate nutrition, poor medical provision and dire sanitary conditions.[135] Conditions were exacerbated by dietary deficiencies, over-work and contaminated water supplies.[136] Common tropical diseases presented even greater risks.

[130] Ibid., p. 10
[131] Girdwood, R.H. , *Travels With a Stethoscope: A Physician Looks at the Twentieth Century*, pp. 66-72. Girdwood, R.H., *Some Contributions to the Study of the Megaloblastic Anaemias and Other Conditions Associated with Disordered Metabolism of Cyanocobalamin, Pteroylglutamic Acid and Related Substances* (Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh, 1954)
[132] Ibid., p. 71
[133] KCL Gracey 2/2/2, XXXIII Indian Corps: Account of Operations Vol. 2, 22nd Jun. 1944 to16th Dec. 1944, p. 141
[134] Ibid., pp. 139-141
[135] IWM Sound Archives 5196, Interviewee/speaker 2nd Lt. George Stanley Gimson, Recorded 1981/08/19, This officer's account of captivity is particularly revealing on the impact of disease and the limited treatments available.
[136] Ibid., Gimson refers to instances of internal organ damage caused by abrasive silt in unfiltered river water, for example.

Treatable, survivable diseases became killers in the absence of anything better than primitive medical treatments and a dearth of suitable medicines.[137]

For many, surrender to the Japanese proved to be more deadly than fighting on in hopeless circumstances. Detailed analysis of Gurkha and Dogra casualty rates, collated by Ashok Nath, provides stark evidence of higher mortality among POWs than in units that were in the thick of many battles. The 3rd Battalion of the 17th Dogra Regiment had been present at Kota Bharu on the first day of the Japanese invasion of Malaya and had sustained the loss of 40 killed and 51 wounded up to the surrender in Singapore. During three and a half years of captivity under the most trying conditions no less than 438 died and a further 15 died after liberation and release.[138] The 1st Battalion of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles earned battle honours for some of the hardest fought actions of the war, including, Sittang and Kyaukse in 1942, Tuitum, Imphal, and Bishenpur in 1944 and Meiktila, Rangoon Road, Pyabwe and Pegu in 1945. Yet its considerable casualty rates of 158 Killed, 228 Died and 624 Wounded, remained well below those suffered by the Dogras in captivity.[139]

Medical provision for Japanese held POWs was largely dependent on primitive improvisation. Very limited supplies of suitable medicines were accessible and none of the innovative treatments emerging within the Allied medical services were available. Lieutenant Gimson described in some detail the improvised treatments and preventative measures devised by doctors among the captives.[140] For example the formulation of yeast extracts and vitamin supplements to address deadly dietary deficiencies, such as beriberi.[141] Gimson observed cases of dysentery, malaria, cholera, beriberi, sepsis and obvious signs of malnutrition.[142] He quoted a death rate of nine per day in his camp at Chunkai in September 1943, which had reduced from 20 per day in the previous month. Some 1,200 of a camp population of 6,500 were medically unfit and admitted to hospital. On hospital admission, any inmate deemed to have less than 50% chance of survival was not given any of the very limited drug supplies.[143]

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[137] Several POW personal accounts describe the meagre medical arrangements and the depredations of disease, Crasta, J.B., *Eaten by the Japanese: The Memoir of an Unknown Indian Prisoner of War*, Twigg, R., Survivor on the River Kwai: The Incredible Story of Life on the Burma Railway, Steel, C. Ed. Best, B., *Burma Railway Man: Secret Letters From a Japanese POW* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2004), Felton, M. , *The Coolie Generals: Britain's Far Eastern Military Leaders in Japanese Captivity*, Lomax, E., *The Railway Man*, Urquhart. A., The Forgotten Highlander: My Incredible Story of Survival During the War in the Far East

[138] IOR WZOR1992a88-17, Collated by Nath, A.: *17th DOGRA Regiment, a Register of casualties for World War II, Govt. of India* (Stockholm, Himalayan Institute, 1992)

[139] IOR WZOR1992a88-3, Collated by Nath, A.: *3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles, a Register of casualties for Second World War, 1939-45* (Stockholm, Himalayan Institute, 1992)

[140] IWM Sound Archives 5196, Interviewee/speaker 2nd Lt. George Stanley Gimson, Recorded 1981/08/19

[141] Ibid., Reel 2 and Reel 5

[142] Ibid., Reel 5

[143] Ibid., Reel 5

Gimson also recalled deep resentment against a Japanese demand to deprive the sick of food too, thus starving them to death.[144]

6.4.3 Age

Wartime expansion led to rapid promotion for suitable officers and a war lasting six years resulted in some relatively young officers attaining senior command.[145] Conversely, peacetime financial strictures during the two preceding decades inevitably resulted in slower promotion.[146] For example, despite considerable promise and recognition, Slim only attained the substantive rank of lieutenant-colonel at the age of 47, in 1938. This future Field Marshal was contemplating the prospect of middle-aged retirement and an alternative career.[147] However, the Indian Army had its share of less outstanding officers in the middle ranks, sometimes past their prime by 1939, physically and in some cases mentally. Long service in frequently challenging climates across India and in Far Eastern postings put added strain on the middle-aged and less than fit officer.

Similar issues applied to VCOs and NCOs and to some extent lower ranks. When Lieutenant-Colonel Slim took command of the 2/7th Gurkhas in 1938, he noted that many VCOs and NCOs were overweight and past their prime:

> There are a lot of unpleasant jobs to be done as my two predecessors were all for a quiet life and peace in their time. Today for instance I had to tell two worthy Gurkha Havildar-Majors that they could not become officers because they were over 40 years old.[148]

The demanding conditions from mid-1940 led to many older officers being taken out of active roles and reassigned to administrative roles, training or retired from the service. However, at a time when an unprecedented expansion of the Indian Army was under way and experience was at a premium, many older British officers and recalled reservists were retained for good reasons, despite age and occasional infirmity. Staying on and doing one's bit sometimes cost

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[144] Ibid., Reel 3
[145] For example, the first two Indian Army Divisions to be deployed overseas, the 4th and 5th, were commanded by General officers born in 1885, when they first went into action. As the conflict developed they were led predominantly by officers in their mid-forties.
[146] *Compiled from official records by direction of the Secretary of State*, *The Indian Army List April 1939*, (Delhi, Defence Dept. GOI, 1939). A general survey of The Indian Army lists shows that the rate of officer promotion was very slow in the 1930s in part as a consequence of the austere financial situation for the Government if India.
[147] Miller, R., *Uncle Bill: The Authorised Biography of Field Marshal Viscount Slim*, pp. 114-115
[148] Ibid., p. 115-116.

lives. An unavoidable consequence of extended service was an increased incidence of deaths in non-combatant roles. These were often attributed to the common age related illnesses and the diseases and afflictions that carried greater risk to those over 45. India Office records show rising mortality among officers, aged 45 and over, from conditions including, heart disease, Cirrhosis, Emphysema, Heat-Stroke, Cerebral Haemorrhage and recurrent malaria.[149] From 1942 until 1945 there were never less than 20 officer fatalities per year from these conditions with most deaths occurring in India not in active theatres.[150]

[149] IOR L/MIL/14/143, *Indian Army Officers Casualty Returns*
[150] Ibid.

Officers Over 45 - Dying of heart disease, Cirrhosis, Emphysema, Heat-Stroke, Cerebral Haemorrhage and Malaria:

Year	*Total*	*India*	*Elsewhere*
1939	*2*	*2*	
1940	*1*		*1*
1941	*7*	*3*	*4*
1942	*25*	*18*	*7*
1943	*23*	*19*	*4*
1944	*22*	*19*	*3*
1945	*23*	*20*	*3*
1946	*10*	*7*	*3*
1947	*5*	*4*	*1*
Total	*118*	*92*	*26*

Of 118 Indian Army officers who died from these causes during the Second World War only five were Prisoners of War. This seems surprising but cause of death information may not have been accurately recorded, given the lack of medical provision and the dislocation of units in captivity. There were a further 15 deaths in the immediate aftermath of the conflict that may also have been attributable to overwork in a taxing climate.

If some other ranks were past their best in 1939, the age demographic was also influenced by the recall of reservists to fill gaps in the ranks. Many older NCOs and VCOs were retained longer than would have been the case in peacetime, as there experience was valued in regimental training companies.[151] As the expansion programme peaked, there was a gradual weeding out process with older, less fit soldiers being transferred to garrison battalions or retired.[152] Demobilisation is outside the scope of this research but extensive planning and preparations were done to ensure the eventual transition to civilian life would be as smooth as possible.[153]

6.5 Welfare

6.5.1 Pay

[151] Anon., *Fourteenth Punjab Regiment, A Short History 1939-1945*, pp. 95-111
[152] Ibid., pp. 92-94
[153] Ibid., p. 104

British Army pay rates became a contentious matter with the arrival of the more generously paid, better dressed and better fed American troops in the UK in 1942-44.[154] It was not so much the pay rate that was at issue but comparability and pay differentials. Similar problems arose in comparison with pay rates in British industry but stringent wage and price controls mitigated these issues somewhat in Britain. The Indian Army was dogged by similar complaints in relation to the British Army in India and comparability with unregulated pay in India's burgeoning defence industries. Discontent with pay differentials between British and Indian officers dragged on far too long and led to resentment among Indian officers.

Price and wage controls did not apply in India so wartime inflation was a major issue. The Government of India increased the money supply in order to pay for the war. The inevitable inflationary pressures were further exacerbated by the lack of price controls, unlike the tightly controlled and rationed British war economy. Resulting inflation eroded the purchasing power of both troops and their dependents throughout India.[155] Food shortages and inflation in particular had catastrophic consequences in Bengal but it was an issue that also affected army morale. Whilst the Indian Army did not actively recruit from the famine affected areas, its wider impact resulted in many troops being increasingly worried about the wellbeing of their families in the Punjab and elsewhere due to the diminishing value of remittances home and food price inflation. Quarterly morale reports highlighted this issue throughout 1943-44:

> The economic situation and its effect on their families continues to be a major anxiety in the minds of Indian Troops. Besides the question of pay and family allotment, the major problem is food. [156]

In 1939 the British soldiers in India had recently benefitted from modest improvements in pay and conditions but not the Indian Army.[157] The seemingly intractable problem was the differentials in gross pay that applied between Indian and British commissioned officers of the same rank, seniority and role. In 1939 basic pay rates were different and it did not help that ICO

[154] Reynolds, D., *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945* (London, Harper-Collins, 1996) Reprinted (London, Phoenix, 2000, pp. 151-154. The pay differentials between American and British troops in Britain were substantial the general welfare arrangements for US troops were also noticeably to a higher standard. It is worth noting that higher US Army rates of pay were an issue in India too: IOR L/WS/1/1355, *India - British troops in India - welfare etc., 1942-1944*, Items, 24-34

[155] Khan, Y, *The Raj at War, A People's History of India's Second World War*, pp. 89-90, Raghavan, S., *India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945*, pp. 347-352

[156] Collingham, E.M., *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food*, pp. 141-154, IOR L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale*, Item 77, *Quarterly Report, 15th January 1944*, Raghavan, S., *India's War*, p. 351

[157] French, D., *Raising Churchill's Army, The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945*, pp. 51-52

pay rates applicable in 1940 had not been revised since 1932 or that peacetime promotion was extremely slow,

> *The pay of ICOs was fixed in 1932 (M3643/32 flagged) and has since remained unchanged at the rates shown in the table below except that promotion to Captain now takes place at 8 years instead of 9 years.*[158]

Despite increasing dissatisfaction, the 1932 pay scales for ICOs were not reviewed until November 1941.[159] Further revisions occurred in 1942 and 1944.[160] Initially, the Government of India deemed this complaint easy to resolve by adjustments to basic pay rates but gross pay differentials remained, leading to continued dissatisfaction. Such anomalies were the result of the allowances granted to British officers serving overseas that applied to British officers in India. Indian officers serving in India were deemed to be serving at home and therefore not entitled to equivalent payments. The trail of official correspondence dragged on throughout the war but the dissatisfaction and sense of injustice among Indian officers remained.[161] That Auchinleck should still have to argue the case for transparent parity in 1944 was indicative of stubborn institutional conservatism and resistance to change that prevailed far too long.[162]

6.5.2 Amenities and Entertainment

For both Indian and British troops attached to the Indian Army the adequate provision of recreational amenities and entertainment lagged behind expectations throughout the conflict. It was inevitable that *guns* came before *butter* but the Morale Committee recognised this persistent deficiency was bad for morale.[163] The report for April 1943 included a list of areas subject to common complaints, including mail delays, canteens run by allegedly profiteering contractors, inferior cigarettes, shortages of wireless batteries, mobile cinemas and razor blades. Similar complaints might well have emerged in the British Army at home but these issues persisted longer in India and Burma. The lack of mobile cinema equipment was still causing widespread complaints in 1945.[164] Another hardy perennial was the slowness and discomfort of rail transportation within India, mainly due to the overloaded state of the

[158] IOR L/Mil/7/19146 *Indianisation: Rates of Pay of Indian Commissioned Officers of the Indian Army and the Indian Airforce,* Memorandum M9005/40-191, 23/9/1940
[159] Ibid., Item 141
[160] Ibid., Items 75 and 61
[161] Ibid., IOR L/Mil/7/19147, *Indianisation.*
[162] IOR L/Mil/7/19146, *Indianisation : Rates of Pay of Indian Commissioned Officers* – Memorandum M13218, 1944
[163] IOR L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale, Report for the Three Months Ended 30th April 1943*. p. 5 Items 129-130
[164] IOR L/WS/2/279 Welfare and Amenities. War Cabinet Papers, 44/670 and 44/671

network.[165] It must be remembered that very few British troops had any wish to be in India and this remained the case throughout the war and attention was drawn to this issue repeatedly: "Service in India is universally unpopular.[166] Service in India is disliked by British troops.[167] British personnel dislike service in India, [168] Efforts were made to address welfare issues but all too often tangible improvements were only forthcoming when the war in Europe was drawing to a close. For example, resources were put into addressing mail transportation delays and onward delivery to forward units.[169] However, air mail only became widely available when more long range aircraft were released from European commitments.[170]

The pervading impression from the India Office papers is that troop welfare engendered little sense of urgency before late 1943 and few determined remedial actions before 1944. A letter from one British soldier in India to Emmanuel Shinwell MP, in September 1942, triggered extensive correspondence between Shinwell, Amery, Wavell and several senior officers.[171] The unnamed correspondent complained of Raj social snobbery and the exclusion of other ranks from up-market hotels, some cinemas and cabarets.[172] Whilst the response from Amery was broadly sympathetic, the papers show that most of the senior officers consulted were dismissive. The reality was that class mattered in India at least as much as it did in Britain at the time and Tommy Atkins was no more welcome in the best hotels than any jawan would have been. It might have seemed to some that little had changed since Rudyard Kipling wrote *Tommy.*[173] Steps were still being taken in India to resolve similar issues in 1945, which suggests that attention should have been given to the substance of such complaints rather than dismissal.

A further impression is that what priority there was, was given to the welfare of British other ranks, despite efforts by the Commander- in-Chief, Auchinleck, and others to ensure broad equality of amenities and welfare was provided to Indian troops and was seen to be so. His good intentions were slow in translating into visible progress. New amenity scales approved by Auchinleck and circulated by the Government of India on 13 April 1945 highlight some of the

[165] IOR L/WS/2/71, *Morale reports, India Command and SEAC*, December 1944, Item 12
[166] IOR L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale, 1948, 1st Quarterly Report, November 1942-January 1943*, Page /(b).
[167] Ibid., *Report for the Three Months Ended 30th April 1943*. p. 1
[168] Ibid., *Inter-Service Morale Survey No.1 For the Quarter May, June, July 1944.* Item 3
[169] Baker, R, *Burma Post* (Worthing, Churchman, 1989). This personal account by the officer commanding the mail services for IV Corps, offers a useful insight into the efforts to improve mail services and to maintain those improvements during the advance into Burma.
[170] Ibid., p. 54
[171] IOR L/WS/1/1355, *India - British troops in India - welfare etc., 1942-1944*
[172] Ibid., Item 53, 9th September 1942
[173] Kipling, R. , *Barrack Room Ballads and Other Verses* (London, Methuen, 1892), p. 6

measures being made to improve the welfare of Indian Troops. However, this was very late in the day.[174] The document notes that, "Approximately 60 per cent of Indian Troops at present are capable of reading simple Urdu and in addition there are large and increasing numbers of literate personnel from S. India now in the Indian Army."[175]

One may wonder why it had taken until April 1945 for the appetite of Indian troops for leisure reading to be recognised. Page two set an aspiration for parity with British troops in live entertainment provision for Indian troops and the next page stated, "The C-in-C has decreed that the standard of comforts for the IOR in clubs and institutes must be brought into line with that for BORs." Auchinleck had been demanding equality of provision for more than a year at this late stage, as restated by Lieutenant Colonel Wakeham of the Welfare Directorate on the 15 November 1944, Opinions differ as to the "standard" required but H.E. The C-in-C has stipulated that Welfare for Indian troops should be on the same scale as for British troops.[176] Wakeham clearly thought that to-date troop welfare for Indian troops had not met this standard despite funds being available. He laid the blame squarely on commanding officers who failed to understand the welfare and amenity needs of their charges and yet the progress seems to have been very slow.

Regardless of prevailing colonial hierarchies, one salient difference between the two groups may well have been that British troops could complain to their elected MP, but Indian other ranks had no equivalent recourse. Increased complaints to MPs led to the services' welfare fact-finding tour led by the Earl of Munster in October 1944.[177] This in turn drew Churchill's attention to the issue. He perhaps also had an eye on the likely need for a General Election once Germany had been defeated and the large scale transfer of troops from the European theatre to the East that might coincide with such an election. Churchill issued a directive on "Morale and Welfare in the Far East" in November 1944 and this led to a redoubled impetus to improve arrangements.[178] Commitment of more resources made the difference and perhaps this was unlikely until Germany had been defeated and the prospect of many more British troops and airmen being sent east became reality. Where imported supplies such as cinema projectors were required it was not within the prerogative of individual formations to improve the

[174] IOR L/WS/1/1723, *Amenity scales for Indian and Colonial troops, 1944-1947*, Items 57-64
[175] Ibid., *New Scales of Amenities for Indian Troops,* Item58
[176] Ibid., Item 63
[177] Hansard, 20th December 1944, Volume 134. https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1944-12-20/debates/aa519cd8-c45e-49fe-84e6-61be9c586a21/BritishForcesInTheFarEast.
[178] IOR L/WS/2/279, *Welfare and Amenities*. War Cabinet Papers, 44/670 and 44/671. Note that Munster's statement to the House on 20th December, 1944, included a commitment that the Prime minister's personal representative on troop welfare, Lieutenant-General King would visit India and report back on progress.

supply of entertainment and amenities. Nonetheless extensive efforts were made to improve the situation at the local level.

Few stars of stage, screen and wireless ventured to India and Burma under the ENSA banner but notable exceptions were Vera Lynn and Noel Coward.[179] The 1970's television series, *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* was not, however, based on the activities of ENSA but on a local initiative to bring entertainment to the troops in India and Burma by *The Royal Artillery Concert Party*.[180] A more broadly based initiative was the Bengal Entertainment Services Association (BESA), founded in 1942 by civilian volunteers and incorporated into ENSA in 1944.[181] BESA lacked the access and influence of ENSA and had been limited to local concert party tours with little external contribution from performers and stars in particular. However, BESA's operations did include touring concert parties of Indian entertainers for Indian troops.[182]

6.5.3 Family Welfare

Family welfare provision had traditionally been a focus of attention within the Indian Army. There were well established arrangements for support of soldiers' families, veterans and for remittances of part of army pay to nominated family members. Regimental recruitment had largely been from the same martial race localities and this allowed strong bonds to build up over decades, supported by the recruitment process, and through social and economic assistance that was channelled via District Soldiers Boards (DSB) and local government mechanisms.[183] During the Second World War this network of arrangements came under considerable strain, due to the scale of army expansion. Indian troops serving overseas were more likely to be worried about their families as they were unlikely to get home leave for long periods.

Attached British troops were naturally concerned for their families too, especially when so far from home. This was one reason why service in India and Burma was unpopular. The imagined risk to wives and sweethearts from those "overpaid, oversexed and over here" American troops seemed to loom large at one stage but this was played down as a morale issue.[184] British Army pay was low and this led to considerable concern about remittances but at least there were

[179] Lynn. Dame V., *Some Sunny Day: My Autobiography*, pp. 161-195
[180] Perry, J., *A Stupid Boy, The Autobiography of the Creator of Dad's Army*, pp. 156-226.
It Ain't Half Hot Mum was a BBC television comedy, broadcast between 1974 and 1981, that followed the lives of an army concert party, whilst gently lampooning the British in India. One of the script writers, Jimmy Perry, had served in India with the Royal Artillery Concert Party, 1945-1947.
[181] IOR L/WS/1/1718, *Welfare ENSA, 1944-1947*, Items 360-367
[182] Ibid., Item 297
[183] Tan. T.Y, *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 152-170
[184] IOR L/WS/1/939, *AG in India's Committee on Morale*. The issue is raised in many of the quarterly reports.

price controls and rationing in Britain, so no Tommy had cause to fear that his family would go without essentials.

The lack of effective rationing in India and the very limited use of price controls, combined with the impact of the Bengal Famine on food prices and general wartime inflation, meant that Indian troops were justifiably more worried about family welfare. In March 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Wakeham stated that, "Undoubtedly their greatest concern is the Welfare/living conditions/expenses of their families."[185] Two official agencies were tasked with ameliorating the causes of these concerns, the Civilian Liaison Officers (CLO) and the long established DSB network. Wakeham set out the stark scale of the challenge, referring to the CLO team:

> It has done wonders in the short time it has been in existence, but unfortunately it is grossly under-staffed and is feeling the strain, consisting as it does, of only 36 officers to cater for the home and family troubles of some two millions serving men (of all three services) plus all pre-war ex-service men and the large number who have passed through the Services during 5 years of war.[186]

A DSB infrastructure originally designed to cope with veterans, and the families of an army with an establishment of 200,000, supplemented by so few CLO resources, was manifestly inadequate to meet the needs of an institution that was many times larger, despite the best efforts of those involved. This was especially so in the light of wartime strains on a largely unregulated economy and the food crisis of 1943-44. Tan Tai Yong has argued that family welfare issues and the influence of the food crisis upon soldiers' families were factors in the accelerating breakdown of the Garrison State.[187] Whilst he may have overstated the case, the Indian Army and behind it the Government of India, had undoubtedly shown conspicuous inability to look after its own. Too often the institutions intended to provide protection and support were seen to be reacting to events which had already impacted on soldiers' families.

Given the reverses suffered by Indian Army troops in Malaya and Burma there was much work to be done to raise morale. This effort gained momentum from 1943. Quantifying fluctuations in morale is difficult in the absence of comprehensive censorship records but I have identified several indicators that suggest the low point in Indian Army morale was not 1942 but following failures in the Arakan campaign in 1943. The approach to troop welfare seems to have lagged

[185] IOR L/WS/1/1723, *Amenity scales for Indian and Colonial troops, 1944-1947, New Scales of Amenities for Indian Troops,* Item 63
[186] Ibid., Item 63
[187] Tan. T.Y, *The Garrison State, The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947,* pp. 291-296

behind similar efforts in European theatres and only really gained traction in 1945. The role of improved healthcare in the turnaround in fortunes has long been recognised but I have argued that it was a major factor in improving performance of the Indian Army. Without it the benefits of transformational improvements in training might have been negated by spiralling sickness rates.

7. CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION

The Indian Army in 1939 was a widely respected institution but somewhat specialized in the role of imperial policing and frontier defence. Within India it was regarded as an elite institution that conferred prestige and a good career on recruits from modest backgrounds. It provided overseas garrisons across the Empire but its main roles in India were guarding the North West Frontier and policing in aid of the civil power. Equipment scales were light and experience of mechanisation, armour, modern artillery or recent developments in tactics, strategy and doctrine were limited. By 1945 it was almost 12 times larger and demonstrably capable of all-arms deployments against some of the most tenacious opponents in challenging environments. Transformation was not achieved by greater numbers and modern equipment alone. It required root and branch restructuring of its organisation, recruiting base, doctrine, training, healthcare, welfare and leadership. Change was achieved when the assumed certainties of empire and colonial rule by consent were rapidly fading, and demands for independence could no longer be ignored. This remade institution soon faced new challenges of demobilisation, civil sectarian strife, end of empire and partition into three emerging states.

Study of the Indian Army has predominantly focused on military history but this research has looked at the institution through the prism of five chosen themes. How it responded to the momentous transformation required during the Second World War reveals much about its resilience and openness to change. It also reveals institutional weaknesses in what remained a deeply conservative organisation in some respects. Ideas were in some cases seeded by similar transformation in the British Army but the radical transformation of training was led and defined from within. Ideas of the past such as Martial Race theory lost influence and it became a stronger, more diverse institution with firmer foundations for its post-independence successors. Success in the Burma campaigns of 1944-45 demonstrated how considerable its transformation was.

Chapter 2 shows that wider perceptions of the Indian Army suffered during the Second World War, particularly in the period from December 1941 to late 1943. Improved performance began to make a positive impact from mid-1943 but the turnaround in external perceptions lagged behind reality. Wider recognition was minimal until the decisive victories at Kohima and Imphal provided tangible evidence. The army's self-image suffered too and this affected morale particularly at the end of the failed first Arakan campaign. This does not seem to have had a sustained effect, nor did it result in serious shortfalls in volunteer recruitment in India.

Acceptance of the imperial burden was not just waning in India. Burma and India were unpopular postings for British conscripts. This seems to have had less to do with politics than warfare, welfare, climate and homesickness. The reputation of the Indian Army would have made little difference to such considerations. For the British soldier, the unfamiliar sights, different culture, enervating climate, widespread poverty and starvation on the streets of Bengal would have seemed alien. What little contact there was with home involved sporadic often delayed mail and there were few familiar comforts or entertainments. British officers were also less likely to see future career prospects in an India that was demanding independence.

Negative perceptions of the institution among those responsible for the higher direction of the war effort reached a low point in 1943 and there was some risk that the Indian Army might have been side-lined with diminishing roles. Performance improvements came rapidly from late 1943 but acknowledgement of these improvements was slow in London. The British Army had also demonstrated alarming signs of failure in 1941-1942 and was on its own learning curve. The performance of new British formations was frequently inconsistent until El Alamein and matters were in crisis in the summer of 1942 after defeats at Gazala and Tobruk.[1] However, the low point for the British Army was earlier and signs of recovery therefore, occurred sooner. Performance of the Indian Army was distinctly patchy until late 1943 with the exception of the best and most experienced formations in North Africa. Performance against the Japanese was poor and unlikely to inspire confidence before 1944. The Indian Army was exceeding most expectations during 1944 and 1945, when it achieved notable successes in Burma but strategically more important events elsewhere gained wider publicity. The turnaround therefore received less recognition than it deserved.

Chapter 3 suggests that imperial forces were better prepared in 1939 in materiel terms than wartime and post-war narratives suggest but Indian Army expansion lagged behind British Army preparations. Even if the need for expansion was not yet obvious, the inadequacy of mobilisation planning was a crucial deficiency. While British mobilisation was moderated by the assumption that there was unlikely to be a need for a continental army on the scale of 1916-18, this assumption weighed even more heavily on the Indian Army. It delayed detailed expansion planning and activity until mid-1940. The collapse of France in June 1940 negated this assumption and the crisis further escalated when Italy declared war and Japan made belligerent

[1] Fennell, J., *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to Victory*, pp.21-26

demands for the Burma Road to be closed.[2] The consequences of inadequate contingency planning and delay dogged new Indian Army formations well into 1943 and impaired performance throughout the 1941-43 period of setbacks and defeats. The political consequences included the missed opportunity to channel the initially supportive outlook of many Indians into the war effort. Delay also gave Congress the initiative to promote opposition and non-cooperation.

Belated but rapid expansion had deleterious effect on the quality and performance, not least in 1941 and 1942 when most new battalions and larger formations were raised, in the teeth of shifting priorities and reactions to successive crises. The negative impact of milking was identified as a factor at the time but it was not the only issue affecting performance. Milking may well have been the obvious approach by which new units could be rapidly formed around experienced cadres of officers, VCOS and other ranks but was it the right approach? No viable alternative was proposed or adopted at the time. Milking did not occur in the units committed to the Middle East and this inevitably caused further concentration of its damaging impact on units, in India, Burma and Malaya. By December 1941, some battalions in Malaya had been milked repeatedly and this occurred at a time when the qualitative deficits could not be rectified in time. Inadequately trained replacements were arriving in the last few weeks before 7 December and in the days that followed. They often proved to be liabilities, not assets.

Milking was undoubtedly corrosive to many battalions. It may have seemed the only option but other solutions could have been tried. For example double battalions that retained the integrity of the established battalion whilst attaching inexperienced additional companies might have been workable, if less flexible. Rapid redeployment of half-trained units between formations was also inordinately disruptive to cohesion, training and formation integrity. Indian Army expansion was subject to constantly shifting priorities. Unavoidable changes were driven by events, most significantly the entry of Japan into the war. However, plans for armoured and airborne formations blew hot and cold and this was perhaps only partly a consequence of changing imperatives.

Transfers of inappropriately or inadequately trained troops were too often made in response to shifting priorities across several theatres, with disastrous results in some cases. The widely recognised lack of adequate preparations for a war against Japan resulted in necessarily hasty and reactive responses to rapidly unfolding events. Redeployments from one formation to another and sometimes back again disrupted formation training for new divisions but it also

[2] Woodburn Kirby, Major-General S., *The War Against Japan, Volume I, The Loss of Singapore*, p. 45

interfered with essential efforts to build esprit de corps and confidence. In more stable circumstances the impact was manageable but in the first few months of 1942 especially, it had corrosive effects on several new formations. The splitting up of divisions and brigades before they were adequately prepared risked disruption to training programmes and damage to morale. It could affect morale in well-established divisions such as the 4th and 5th Indian divisions but the impact on new divisions was far greater if they had not yet achieved acceptable levels of efficiency, confidence and resilience. The problem of subsequent disbandment of newly raised battalions to provide replacements for established units also impacted unit morale.

The shortage of experienced commissioned officers was a serious issue. The Indian Army continued to suffer the consequences of previous decades when Indianisation was pursued too timidly, in the face of institutional resistance and prejudice. Manpower shortages in the British Army meant sufficient experienced British officers to fill the gap were unlikely to be forthcoming and the supply of King's Commissioned Indian Officers was inadequate. The shortfall was filled with Emergency Commissioned Officers sourced from both the British and Indian armies. The average ECO/ECIO lacked the depth of training and experience that KCIOs had, not least because wartime officer training programmes were truncated. KCIO cadets who completed their course at Dehra Dun in December 1940 were the product of two candidate intakes, who but for the war-time reduction of the course from five to three terms, would have passed out in May and December 1941.[3] The shortage of suitable VCOs and NCOs was no less an impediment, further exacerbated by diversity and language issues as the recruitment net was cast more widely. Any compromise on VCO quality could be uniquely damaging to the integrity and efficiency of a battalion.[4] Good VCOs could mitigate the failings of inexperienced officers but an inadequate senior VCO could destabilise the entire battalion.

Before 1939 KCIO selection standards were more exacting than the British Army but improved selection processes delivered tangible benefits within the British Army from 1942. Late adoption of similar improvements by the Indian Army, combined with curtailed training schedules, cannot have helped. Better selection methods opened the way for the most capable candidates and helped to achieve better leadership quality overall. The rapid pace of ECO/ECIO induction put pressure on the individual. Dilution of experienced officer cadres, due to milking and casualties,

[3] IOR L/MIL/7/19145 *Commissions for Indians Report on quality of cadets at the IMA,* M3516, 9/5/41
, Memo from IMA *Dehra Dun - Results of the final passing out examination, December 1940*. N The cadets who completed their course in December 1940 were the output of the last two terms who, but for the war-time reduction in the length of the course from 5 to 3 terms, would have passed out in May and December 1941

[4] See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the damaging consequences that could ensue if VCO appointments were affected by nepotism or inefficiency.

meant that ECOs and ECIOs were often thrust into a less supportive environment than in peacetime. In a global conflict there was little time or capacity for the pre-war, gradual and sympathetic mentoring that John Masters described.[5]

Progress towards improvement was uneven. Failures required hard lessons to be assimilated and addressed by constant remediation. In the wake of the shambolic end to the first Arakan campaign there were those who demanded radical action. Lieutenant General Irwin brought no credit to himself by exemplifying the bad workman who blames his tools but his observations regarding the weaknesses in Indian Army morale in mid-1943 retained some validity. His comments were starkly summarised by Alanbrooke,

> *I was appalled at listening to what he had to say as regards the morale of the troops and their inferiority complex in relation to the Japs. We shall have to do something very drastic to get matters right.* [6]

The Indian Army was already doing "something very drastic". Irwin's interview with Alanbrooke was on the 9 July 1943 but several essential components of the solution were already falling into place under Wavell's stewardship, or about to be initiated by Auchinleck, who succeeded as Commander-in-Chief on the 26 June 1943.[7] After ignominious failures in the Arakan the pace of progress was rapid and sustained.

Regardless of reforms, the new cohort of divisions, approved under the 1941-42 plans, greatly benefitted from that most precious commodity, time. If the 23rd Indian Division or the 20th Indian Division had been thrust into the maelstrom of high intensity warfare in mid-1942 their fates were unlikely to have been any better than earlier disasters but the Japanese assault petered out in eastern Assam with the monsoon of 1942 and there was no invasion of Ceylon by sea. These and other divisions learned their trade and became effective whilst holding relatively untested defensive postures and in proximity to ideal training grounds for jungle warfare. Time and strategic indecision in the China Burma Indian (CBI) theatre allowed these divisions and their contemporaries an extended period of working up, which often included low intensity action and aggressive patrolling, before they saw high intensity battle. Improved training regimes, equipment, medical services and better logistics all played a part but without the time to implement these improvements, the end result might not have been improved performance.

[5] Masters, J., *Bugles and a Tiger, My Life in the Gurkhas*, pp. 102-118
[6] Alanbrooke, Field Marshal Lord, Danchev, A., Todman D., ed., *War Diaries 1939-1945*, p. 428
[7] IOR L/MIL/7/15550, *Appointments on C. in C. in India*, Memorandum.

The learning curve was no leisurely exercise. The ill-prepared and inadequately trained 20th Indian Division of early 1942 was in regular patrolling contact with the Japanese by mid-1943 and was fighting crucial engagements near Imphal in the spring of 1944. In comparison, some British Army divisions formed in 1940 did not see action until 1944 in Normandy and the same applied to many American troops.

Rapid expansion, hasty, sometimes piecemeal deployment and inconsistencies in training and doctrine were damaging, and new, inadequately formed divisions paid the price in 1941 and 1942. Not all was failure and disaster prior to 1943. Some units within the ill-fated 9th and 11th Indian Divisions achieved notable local successes and in some cases maintained cohesion and efficiency during the retreat to Singapore. However as formations these inexperienced divisions lacked resilience and flexibility. Local successes were achieved by the 2nd Battalion of the Argyll Regiment.[8] Some Indian battalions also proved capable and stayed the course until the surrender in Singapore. Dogged resistance by the 4/19th Hyderabad and the 3/17th Dogra battalions at Kota Bharu was a credit to these inexperienced units, considering both had been milked multiple times. However, fleeting instances of success did little to offset the overall fragility of formations that were neither ready for war nor adequately supported.

Some of those responsible for strategic direction of resources did not regard expansion of the Indian Army into a versatile modern army as either achievable or desirable. This was the subject of repeated outbursts by Churchill but he could be equally disparaging about the British Army. Alanbrooke does not seem to have had strong views either way but it is also fair to say that he at no time seems to have considered further expansion of the Indian Army as part of the solution to the British Army's manpower shortages. Ultimately, the result of this unprecedented expansion did not disappoint but success took longer than it should have.

To expand on the scale required by global war, the Indian Army had to broaden its recruiting base and become a more diverse institution and this has been explored in Chapter 4. The change was embraced comparatively willingly within the institution but it coincided with a period when Indian society went through momentous changes in world war and its aftermath. The years since 1945 have seen even greater change in the new states of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and later in Bangladesh. This post-independence transformation of the culture, governance, economy and approach to diversity of the independent states makes it increasingly difficult to assess the impact of wartime social changes in isolation. To determine how these changes affected the institutional culture of the Indian Army in an empirical or objective manner is even

[8] *Moffat, J. & Holmes McCormick, A., Moon Over Malaya, A Tale of Argylls and Marines*

more problematic. Whilst the Indian Army remained less diverse than wider Indian society, its constituency crossed many of the fault lines in Indian society and encompassed potentially divisive issues. Considerable efforts were made to ensure that diversity was handled sensitively.

Institutional fault lines were longstanding but expansion required wider recruitment and this meant that questionable Martial Race based recruitment policies became unsustainable. The India Army underwent transformation during the Second World War and in many respects it can be seen as two contrasting institutions, in some ways based on tradition and yet radically evolved. The pre-war institution was never static but its evolution to relative modernity had been retarded by several factors, cultural, political, doctrinal, economic and material. The rate of change in the Indian Army before 1939 had been too slow and the negative consequences were soon revealed in the heat of conflict, for example by the shortage of Indian officers. Many wartime changes were revolutionary not evolutionary and this resulted in both gains and losses.

Managing greater diversity was never overtly defined as policy but the need for it was implicit in wider recruitment. The institution made adjustments to cater for different languages and regional dietary requirements for example. Adaptation was one thing but maintaining unity and cohesion was the greater challenge. Cohesion could no longer be fostered through narrow recruitment from unified social groups, tightly defined by ethnicity, regional identity, religion, or by nationalism, as in a nation state army. Nor could it rely on localised recruitment based on outmoded dogmas of Martial Race. Increased diversity was a necessary and arguably healthy consequence of expansion on the scale required in wartime. The foundations for maintaining cohesion and mitigating the risks of disunity prior to 1939 were Martial Race theory, respect for religion, culture, diet, clan and family tradition, izzat, commonality of language, loyalty to officers and the regiment, professionalism and attention to welfare. Of these, most remained valid with the exception of Martial Race, which nonetheless retained influence.

Many wartime adjustments were made to manage increased diversity, with added impetus from 1943 as the balance of recruitment shifted towards new classes. Systematic improvements in training and doctrine were primarily aimed at improving military effectiveness, but generally improved army education standards indirectly helped in managing diversity. Training, combined with improvements in communication and propaganda, helped to reconcile the unhappy British soldier to his unpopular posting far from home. More importantly it helped soldiers from many different backgrounds to value and contribute to the strengths of a uniquely diverse and multi-faceted Indian Army at a time when unity of purpose was essential. Such efforts helped to

preserve army cohesion by managing divisive issues and mitigating potential causes of friction but without a clear way forward to independence some issues remained intractable.

The Indian Army never had been as isolated from political influences as many of its leaders may have hoped or believed. Neither Indian soldiers nor officers were politically naïve to the degree assumed in some pre-war narratives, such as the outmoded recruitment handbooks. Fear of Communist inspired subversion voiced by senior commanders and officials in response to the three mutinies discussed in Chapter 5 has to some extent been taken at face value by historians and this is understandable.[9] Whilst acknowledging the risks of contradicting the views of those on the ground at the time I have challenged this narrative. Communist organisations may have exerted some influence but at this stage of the independence struggle Communism was peripheral to events. The Ghadr movement and its indirect successors presented a limited threat to imperial interests compared with Congress non-cooperation, or the INA taking up arms for independence. Closer examination of the primary sources suggests that the military and civil authorities were too quick to exaggerate external influences in a manner that was repeatedly demonstrated by the security authorities in both Britain and India over several decades. In peacetime this had unfortunate consequences for pluralistic politics but in wartime it risked dangerous misdirection of intelligence resources at a critical juncture. Perceived threats were given too much weight and real threats were in some cases ignored, misconstrued or downplayed.

The Indian Army and Government of India security and intelligence agencies developed something of a corporate neurosis about the risk of Communist entry-ism. In reality the risk was limited and relatively inconsequential for most of the war years. However, the risk was briefly material and its consideration justifiable in the aftermath of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. Once the Soviet Union was attacked by Germany in 1941, the British Empire and the Soviet Union were thrust into a strained alliance for mutual survival, the risks substantially diminished. From that point the threat of Communist subversion became irrelevant to the successful prosecution of the war and to protection of the Indian Army from malign external influences. This remained true, at least until the Soviet Union was no longer at risk of defeat and by then the writing was on the wall for British India, for other more pressing reasons. Potential disruption of the war effort by Congress non-cooperation and the Quit India campaign presented far greater threats. Widespread acts of mutiny perpetrated by those who took up the cause of the INA, presented a

[9] Roy, K., Editor, *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars*, Mazumder, R.K., Chapter 16, *From Loyalty to Dissent: Punjabis from The Great War to World War II*, pp. 484-485
Tan T.T., *The Garrison State*, pp. 287-288

potentially grave threat to the Indian Army and its imperial defence role. In comparison, the potential risks of Communist subversion of the Indian Army were derisory.

Chapter 6 has examined morale and welfare within the Indian Army. Morale took several heavy knocks from 1941 to 1943 and it was inevitable that it would take time to recover. The organisations conceived to augment the Adjutant role in monitoring and addressing morale and welfare issues were slow in development and in making progress. General Auckinleck's reappointment as commander-in-chief in 1943 was far from being the sole cause of improvement but he drove renewed efforts, not always successfully, alongside other senior officers who understood the Indian Army, its needs and its capabilities. Further momentum came increasingly from the UK political arena and was a sign that representative government was at least responsive to British troops if not Indian. The lack of political channels for representation of Indian troops meant that their welfare interests lagged behind those of British troops in India. However, the lessons of 1941-43 were shaped for new kinds of warfare and the close link between morale improvements, the practicalities of good healthcare and welfare provision, effective training, adequate preparation, fairness and effective communication were increasingly recognised.

The positive influence of that most enlightened and modernising Adjutant General, Ronald Adam, should not be underestimated. His influence on the turnaround within the British citizen Army was also to benefit the Indian Army, despite his limited time in India. These improvements took longer to take effect. Modern, standardised methods of officer selection, the strong focus on welfare and his determination to put fairness and openness of communication at the centre of the British Army had a powerful, albeit slower impact on the Indian Army too.

In my view the role of improved healthcare in the turnaround in the Indian Army's fortunes has been understated. I have argued that improvements in healthcare and the management of malaria in particular in the India/Burma theatre were central to manifestly improved performance from the end of 1943. There was little benefit in training improvements or better equipment if non-battle casualty rates outran the army's capacity to provide suitable replacements. If too many well-trained soldiers were in hospital with malaria and half-trained recruits were being pushed to the front too soon then performance suffered, as was the case in the first Arakan campaign.

The five chosen themes of this research shed light on areas of wartime transformation that are sometimes seen as secondary but were central to the remaking of this military institution. They

are also interrelated and complimentary. External and internal perceptions of the Indian Army had a bearing on troop morale and on the army's ability to attract sufficient recruits. Expansion required ample numbers of suitable, willing volunteers, drawn from a population that was undergoing unprecedented political, economic and social change. Wartime demands also necessitated a long-overdue retreat from Martial Race dogma based recruitment policies. The Indian Army needed to widen its recruitment base to avoid exhausting the available supply of recruits from traditional sources. Widening the base increased diversity and this carried some risk that cohesion would be weakened by internal tensions and division. If anything, the evidence suggests that increased diversity was beneficial once the challenges of catering for it were addressed. Increased diversity did not appear to result in more dissent and acts of mutiny were rare in the period after recruitment was widened. On the contrary some observers felt that dissent was a bigger problem among some of the allegedly most martial classes.

7.1 Where to next?

The five themes explored herein are equally relevant to the 1945-47 period of imperial transition to the independent states. Further research in this period has to some extent been addressed by Daniel Marston in *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj.* [10.] Given their many similarities, further comparative study of the British Army and Indian Army in terms of their expansion, management of discipline, morale, welfare and institutional development during the Second World War also represent fertile ground. Comparative study with other forces within the British Empire is also a promising area of research as shown recently by Jonathan Fennell.[11]

Within the five chosen themes there are subjects which deserve greater attention. Further exploration of the role of both military and civil medical services in Southeast Asia during the Second World War is overdue. I have made the case for the impact or improved medical provision on the turnaround of the Indian Army and this was paralleled by similar improvements for US and Australian troops. The deterioration and collapse of previously limited medical services in the occupied countries also deserves attention. Whilst the story of the Bengal Famine is one of unrelenting tragedy, the belated role of the Indian Army in relief efforts has received only limited attention.

I have been conscious that the subject of diversity in the Indian Army and behind that, diversity in the Indian subcontinent is a huge subject, often referred to but rarely addressed directly.

[10] Marston, D.P., *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*
[11] Fennell, J., *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War*

Wars have a tendency to unpick the seams in the fabric of nations and this undoubtedly happened in India, with tragic consequences in 1947-48 and beyond. The Indian Army could only seek to mitigate the risks of such an unravelling within its own ranks and to avoid inflaming wider sensitivities and to a degree it succeeded, at least until 1947. The Second World War did not cause Partition but it created many of the ingredients that led to violent Partition.

Whilst I have touched on the political context in several aspects of this research, the complex relationship between the Government of India, the India Office and the War Cabinet is worthy of more attention. Some notable work has been done by Catherine Wilson in this area.[12] The importance of India to the imperial war effort, the role of India as a strategic base and the interwoven complexities of the independence struggle have all received some attention. However, the engine room of imperial governance of India was at least as much under strain as the Indian Army. How it responded to this stress deserves further examination.

There is no definitive account of the Indian National Army and much of the published material has limitations in terms of perspective and balance. The paucity of archive material imposes some limitations but the subject deserves some dispassionate reassessment. Perhaps it requires greater distance in time from the emotive political aspects that still retain currency in modern Indian politics.

Finally, the emphasis on the British component of the Indian Army and other imperial forces deployed in Burma has taken too much attention for too long away from the greater contribution made by Indian troops. This needs to be addressed in future histories of both the campaigns and the political, institutional and social context. The passage of time has largely taken the generation that could have provided more oral history sources and there are precious few written accounts from the Indian perspective. There may be untapped primary sources to emerge from neglected regimental archives or other less obvious sources but it is for the academics of India and Pakistan to engage more and to lead the way in finding new insights into a part of India's history that has been relatively neglected in favour of the Independence struggle and post-1947 events.

[12] Wilson, C.A.V., *Churchill on the Far East in the Second World War: Hiding the History of the 'Special Relationship'* (London, MacMillan, 2014)

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AUC/97	Letter 19/10/40 Auchinleck to Montgomery, *Regarding his dealing directly with War Office in officer selection: 19/10/40*
AUC/98	Letter 19/10/40 Auchinleck to Lt. General H.C.B. Wemyss, C*omplaint that Montgomery is 'kidnapping' officers*
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AUC/103	Letter 11/11/40, Reply from Auchinleck to Muspratt
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AUC/194	Telegram 10/05/41 Wavell to War Office – *Pointing out divergence of view between Wavell and Auchinleck regarding Iraq*
AUC/199	Letter 11/05/1941 Auchinleck to Linlithgow, *Regarding Slim replacing Fraser*
AUC/200	Letter 11/05/1941 Auchinleck to Linlithgow, *Re parochial view of Middle East Command*
AUC/214	Telegram 16/05/41 Linlithgow to Amery expressing annoyance at Wavell's description of IA troops sent from India as "untrained"
AUC/216	Telegram 16/05/41 Linlithgow to Auchinleck suggesting more 'European' troops in Basra
AUC/226	Letter 17/05/41 Dill to Auchinleck, thanking him for letter of 12/5/41 (Draft appreciation)
AUC/231	Telegram 25/05/41 Linlithgow to Amery*, Re lack of equipment for Indian Army in India*
AUC/293	Telegram 14/08/41 Amery to Auchinleck, *Confirming 1942 expansion plans have been approved*
AUC/326	Telegram12/09/41 Auchinleck to Dill, *Requesting recall of 5th Indian*

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AUC/340	Letter 17/09/41 Auchinleck to Amery, *Reply to letter of 14/8/41 and views on Indian Army reorganisation plans*
AUC/348	Letter 23/09/41 Amery to Auchinleck, *Re Indian Army manpower shortages*
AUC/363	Letter 23/9/41, Amery to Auchinleck, *Re Officers from UK for Indian Army expansion*
AUC/365	Letter 3/10/41, Amery to Auchinleck, R*e airborne troops*
AUC/474	Letter 26/11/41 Messervy to Auchinleck, *4th Indian Division at Sidi Omar*
AUC/555	Telegram 15/12/41 Auchinleck to Amery, *Reorganisation of Indian Army*
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AUC/1037	Letter 18/09/43 Auchinleck to Brooke, *Referring to report by General N.M.S. Irwin*
AUC/1041	Letter 11/11/43 Amery to Auchinleck, *Expression of thanks for Indian Army assistance with famine relief in Bengal*
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AUC/1046	Letter 23/12/43 Auchinleck to Amery, *Reply to correspondence item AUC/1041*
AUC/1050	Letter 20/01/44 Auchinleck to Alanbrooke, *Referring to Sir Ronald Adam's report* (Item AUC/1045)
AUC/1056	Letter 16/05/44 Auchinleck to Wavell *Enclosing report on Anglo-US relations*
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Adam, General Sir Ronald, (1885-1982)

- Adjutant General,1941-1946

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Adam 3/6/1	Report by the AG on his tour overseas August 1942
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Adam 3/6/4	Report by the AG on his tour overseas Jan-Feb 1945
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Alanbrooke, Field Marshal, Alan Francis, 1st Viscount Alanbrooke of Brookeborough (1883-1963)

- Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1941-1946

Alanbrooke 6/2/9	Gen Sir John Greer Dill's correspondence with Lt Gen Claude John Eyre Auchinleck, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Norway, 1940 May 30-1940 June 2.
Alanbrooke 6/2/10	Chief of Imperial General Staff semi-official file, 4b: Gen Sir John Greer Dill's correspondence between Lt Gen Sir Claude John Eyre Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief, India, 1941 Feb 5-1941 Jun 26.
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Alanbrooke 6/2/13	Chief of Imperial General Staff semi-official file, 4e: including letters to Brooke from Gen Sir Claude John Eyre Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, 1942 Feb 7-1942 Jul 3.
Alanbrooke 6/2/14	Chief of Imperial General Staff semi-official file 4f: including telegrams to Lt Gen Thomas William Corbett, Chief of General Staff, Middle East, from Lt Gen Archibald Edward Nye, 1942 Jul 6-1943 Mar 27
	Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 6 Jul 1942, and to Gen Sir Claude John Eyre Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East
Alanbrooke 6/2/15	Chief of Imperial General Staff semi-official file 4g: including Brooke's correspondence with FM Sir Archibald Percival Wavell, Commander-in Chief, India and Viceroy of India, 1943 Feb 20-1944 Dec 15
Alanbrooke 6/2/16	Chief of Imperial General Staff semi-official file 4h: correspondence between Brooke and Gen Sir Claude John Eyre Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief, India, 1945 Feb 14-1945 Oct 30
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Brooke-Popham, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert, (1878-1953)

- Commander-in-Chief Far East, 1940-1941

B.P. 6/1/5	Brooke-Popham to Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee
B.P. 6/1/44	Far-Eastern Command Situation Report - 18th December 1941
B.P. 6/2/2	Brooke-Popham to Maj Gen Sir Hastings Lionel Ismay, Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, and Deputy Secretary (Military) to the War Cabinet: Letter 15th Nov 1940
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Dill, Field Marshal Sir John Greer, (1881-1944)

- Chief Imperial General Staff 1940-1941

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Dill 3/1/16	Papers on India including paper on airborne divisions for India, 17 Sep 1941 and note on Indian military problems, 10 Oct 1941
Dill 3/3/1	Dill to Sir Archibald Percival Wavell, Personal letters, 1935-44

Gracey, General Sir Douglas David, (1894-1964)

- General Officer Commanding 20th Indian Infantry Division, 1942-1947

Gracey 1/1	Memorandum: Gracey to Officers of 20 Indian Infantry Div. on Policies for Training
Gracey 1/2	Notes made by Gracey on the raising of 20 Indian Infantry Div.
Gracey 1/3	Correspondence: Gracey and Maj Gen Henry Finnis, Military Secretary, General Headquarters, India, relating to a difference of opinion over the appointment of officers for various battalions
Gracey 1/4	Correspondence: Gracey and Lt. Gen. G.A.P. Scoones, General Officer Commanding IV Corps, relating to the reorganisation of 20 Indian Infantry Div. after its transfer from Ceylon to India.
Gracey 1/5	Appreciation of the situation on IV Corps front, by Lt. Gen. G.A.P. Scoones, G.O.C. 4 Corps, 20th Sep. 1943
Gracey 1/6	Appreciation of the situation on IV Corps front, by Lt. Gen. G.A.P. Scoones, G.O.C. 4 Corps, 15th Oct. 1943
Gracey 1/7	Memorandum: Gracey to Brig. David Alan Laurance Mackenzie, 32 Indian Infantry Bde, Brig Stuart Greeves, 80 Indian Infantry Bde and Brig Paul Theodore James, 100 Indian Infantry Bde, 20th Indian Infantry Div., Detailing divisional policy concerning the welfare of Allied troops stationed in India and the extent to which military news should be reported to them.
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	James, 100 Indian Infantry Bde, 20 Indian Infantry Div, detailing the current situation of Allied forces against Japanese forces in the Chin hills and Falam and Tiddim areas, Burma.
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Gracey 2/23	Reports on operations and patrols made around the Monywa, Budalin and Ukhrul road areas, Burma. Sent to Gracey from various units of 32 Indian Infantry Div, 6th Aug. 1944 to 7th Aug.1945
Gracey 2/24	20th Indian Division Battle Instruction No. 19th Sep. 1944 -19th Nov. 1944
Gracey 2/25	Joint Appreciation of Situation to Cover Offensive Action in Burma during Autumn 1944', by Lt. Gen. M. G. N. Stopford, XXXIII Indian Infantry Corps and Air Commodore S. F. Vincent, Air Officer Commanding 221 Group RAF, 29th Sep. 1944
Gracey 2/26	Account by Brig. D. A. L. Mackenzie, commanding 32nd Indian Infantry Bde., 20th Indian Infantry Div. describing the operations of 32 Indian Infantry Bde, Apr. 1944 to Jun. 1945
Gracey 2/27	Notes on the coordination of tanks and infantry, issued by Headquarters, 20th Indian Infantry Div.16th Nov.1944.
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Hutton, Lt. General Sir Thomas Jacomb (1890-1981)

- General Officer Commanding Burma, 1941-1942

Hutton 2/4	Memoranda and Correspondence
Hutton 2/5	Notes on the construction of Indo-Burma Road by Colonel. MacFeat 1941
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Hutton 2/11	Appreciation by Lt. Gen. Hutton GOC Burma Army, Rangoon,10th Jan 1942
Hutton 2/13	Correspondence with C.in C. India and Supreme Commander ABDACOM

Messervy, General Sir Frank Walter Messervy, (1893-1974)

- General Officer Commanding, 7th Indian Infantry Division
- General Officer Commanding, IV Corps

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Messervy 3	*Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme allied Commander SEA 1943-45* (London, HMSO,1951)
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- General Staff Officer 1, Indian 10 Infantry Division, Iraq, 1941
- Commanding Officer, Indian 20 Infantry Brigade, Iraq, 1941
- Commanding Officer, 16 Infantry Brigade, Ceylon, 1942
- Brigadier General Staff Indian IV Corps, 1943

- General Officer Commanding, Indian 23 Infantry Division, Burma, 1943-1945
- General Officer Commanding Indian XXXIV Corps, Malaya, 1945

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- From Slim to Russell, 30th April 1957
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- Lieutenant General James Gavin, 19th January, 1957
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