

**THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE
INDIAN ARMED FORCES: RECRUITMENT,
TENURE AND RESETTLEMENT**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, "The Second World War and the Indian Armed Forces: Recruitment, Tenure and Resettlement", submitted by Narender Yadav for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, has to the best of our knowledge not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university. This is his original work.

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Abbreviations

AHQ	Army Headquarters
AICC	All India Congress Committee
AIRO	All India Reserve of Officers
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BECO	British Emergency Commissioned Officer
BOR	British Other Rank
CGO	Civilian Gazetted Officer
CGS	Chief of General Staff
CIB	Central Interview Board
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CO	Commanding Officer
CRP	Crown Representative Police
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
CSD	Council of State Debates
DCA	Directorate of Civil Aviation
DGE&T	Directorate General of Employment and Training
DGIMS	Director General Indian Medical Services
DGR&E	Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment
DPR	Director of Public Relations
DSC	Defence Security Corps
DSS&AB	District Soldier, Sailor and Airmen Board
DSSC	Defence Services Staff College
ECO	Emergency Commissioned Officer
FPSC	Federal Public Service Commission
GDRO	General Duty Recruiting Officer
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOI	Government of India
GSO	General Staff Officer
GTO	Group Testing Officer
HDMOD	History Division of Ministry of Defence
HMSO	His Majesty's Stationary Office
HO	Hostilities Only
HQ	Headquarters
IADC	Indian Army Dental Corps
IAF	Indian Air Force
IAFVR	Indian Air Force Volunteer Reserve
IAMC	Indian Army Medical Corps
IAO	Indian Army Order
IAOC	Indian Army Ordnance Corps
IATC	Indian Air Training Corps
ICO	Indian Commissioned Officer

ICS	Indian Civil Service
IECO	Indian Emergency Commissioned Officer
IEME	Indian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
IGSC	Indian General Service Corps
IHC	Indian Hospital Corps
INA	Indian National Army
IOR	Indian Other Rank
IP	Indian Police
ISF	Indian State Forces
ITF	Indian Territorial Force
JUSII	Journal of United Service Institution of India
KCIO	King's Commissioned Indian Officer
KCO	King's Commissioned Officer
KGRIMS	King George's Royal Indian Military School
LAD	Legislative Assembly Debates
MGO	Master General of Ordnance
NAI	National Archives of India
NCE	Non-Combatant Enrolled
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
OTS	Officers Training School
PSB	Provincial Selection Board
QMG	Quartermaster General
RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
RIAF	Royal Indian Air Force
RIASC	Royal Indian Army Service Corps
RIMC	Royal Indian Military College
RIN	Royal Indian Navy
RINR	Royal Indian Naval Reserve
RINVR	Royal Indian Naval Voluntary Reserve
RPF	Railway Protection Force
SCRC	Services Convalescent Rehabilitation Centre
SIB	Special Investigation Branch
SRLO	Services Resettlement Liaison Officer
SSB	Service Selection Board
TOP	Transfer of Power
UOTC	University Officers Training Corps
VCO	Viceroy's Commissioned Officer
WAC (I)	Women Auxiliary Corps (India)
WRIN	Women Royal Indian Navy

Introduction

The Second World War was the largest war ever fought. It involved all the continents across the seas and oceans. India served as a base, storehouse and a large recruiting ground for the War especially in the Middle East and South East Asia. But, the Indian political conditions for the War were not as favourable as they were during the First World War. In recognition of the support extended by India during the First World War, the Secretary of State for India declared in August 1917 that “The policy of His Majesty’s Government is the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of British Empire.” Unfortunately, this declaration remained only on paper. On the contrary, the Rowlett Act and the massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh in 1919 provoked widespread violence and Martial Law was imposed by the Government to suppress the public outburst. Khilafat Movement, Non-Cooperation Movement, the boycott of Simon Commission, Dandi March, Civil Disobedience, etc. made the Indian freedom struggle revolutionary. The Round Table Conference had also culminated in a fiasco. Hence, the political climate in India in the 1930s was grim and anti-British.

In such an atmosphere the British government declared India’s participation in the Second World War unilaterally without consulting the Legislative Assembly and Indian political leaders. On the other hand, all other countries of the Empire were allowed to settle the question of participation in the war by a free vote of their respective legislatures without any interference from the British Government. Thus, declaring India a belligerent country without its consent, created a storm of protest in the Indian political circle.

The Congress Working Committee held a meeting and issued a statement that India could not associate herself in a war that was said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom was denied to her.¹ The Committee demanded a declaration of war aims, especially with reference to India to seek Indian co-operation. But when the Viceroy issued a declaration, it referred to the speech of the British Prime Minister² that had reference only to Europe and nothing to India. The war aims of the

¹ ‘Statement Issued by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha, 14 September 1939’, J.P. Kriplani, *Congress and War Crisis* (Allahabad, All India Congress Working Committee, 1940.), pp. 14-9.

² ‘Declaration of His Excellency the Viceroy’, 17 October 1939, *Congress and War Crisis*, pp. 40-9.

British, in fact, were different for Europe and India. In Britain they were fighting for the safety of Europe and to safeguard democracy. But in India, they projected that war was being fought for the protection of women and children and India's security. Their main objectives of war which they propounded in Europe as protection of democracy clashed with their own treatment to Indian democracy.

Disappointed with the ambiguous approach of the government, the Congress decided to ask its ministries in various provinces to resign. The Party passed a resolution in its Ramgarh session and declared its disapproval for any assistance in War efforts. It further declared that neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be voluntary contributions from India.³

Contrary to the stand taken by the Indian National Congress, some political parties expressed their support to the British. The Punjab and Bengal government pledged unconditional support. Indian rulers also affirmed their loyalty to the King Emperor and placed their all resources at the disposal of the British Crown.⁴

The Congress opposition to the War, which was initially verbal, culminated in individual Satyagraha in October 1940 under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. Though the Movement was non-violent, the Government threw thousands of protesters into prison. With the entry of Japan in December 1941, the War assumed serious dimensions. The British Government that was anxious to secure Indian support, sent Sir Stafford Cripps in March 1942, with the proposal of a Dominion status and a Constituent Assembly for India after the War. The offer was not agreed to.

Meanwhile, the Japanese Army after capturing Malaya and Burma, was advancing towards India. At the same time, the Congress launched Quit India Movement on 8 August 1942. The Government banned the Congress and arrested

³: 53rd Session, Indian National Congress, Ramgarh', 19 & 20 March 1940, *Resolutions passed by the Congress, All India Congress Committee: Indian National Congress, March 1940 to September 1946* (Allahabad, Swaraj Bhawan, Year- n.d.), pp. 1-2.

⁴ Messages started coming even from 31 August and continued for coming weeks after the declaration of the War. Messages were from the Ruler of Chithral, Khan of Kalat, Maharaja of Sikkim, Jam of Lasbela, Raja of Alirajpur, Rana of Dholpur, Maharana of Gondal, Mirs of Hunza & Nagir, Nawab of Kharan, etc. The External Affairs Department issued 26 lists for conveying thanks to rulers who sent their messages of loyalty and support in the War. File No. 902(2)-G, 1939, General Branch, External Affairs Department, National Archives of India (henceforth NAI).

most of its prominent leaders. It also confiscated its funds in the banks.⁵ As a consequence, violent riots erupted in several parts of the country. Government property was badly damaged and railway tracks were uprooted especially in the United Province and Bihar. The Quit India Movement crippled the British government machinery in several parts of India. Communications to Assam at a crucial juncture when supplies and men were required in numbers, were cut for several days together. The authorities tried to curb the protests by ordering the military and police forces against the people. Fifty- seven battalions of the Army were deployed to quell the internal disturbances.⁶ When trained military manpower could not be made available, recruits from the training battalions were also called out for deployed for railway protection and internal security duties.⁷ Indian police personnel dealing with the disturbances were awarded Indian Police Medals for shooting at the Congress workers and sympathizers and dispersing the mobs.⁸ People came out in streets even in Delhi, the national capital. The Government deployed large police force, but when the situation went out of control, the Army was called in.⁹ Meanwhile, revolutionary leader Subhash Chandra Bose, who had escaped earlier from India, re-organised the Indian National Army. It further stammered the British Indian Government.

The impact of political events on the Indian armed forces, especially on recruitment during the War, has been dealt with in the first Chapter of this Thesis. However, the defence forces of India were not ready to bear the brunt of this modern War. The defence forces of British India included the Royal Air Force, units of the British Regular Army, the Indian Army, the Auxiliary and Territorial Forces, the Indian Army Reserve and the Indian State Forces. Except for the State Forces, all these forces were placed under the control of the Commander-in-Chief, who also served as the Defence Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Army was

⁵ *Resolutions passed by the Congress, All India Congress Committee: Indian National Congress, March 1940 to September 1946*, p. 138.

⁶ Home Department, GOI to Secretary of State for India, 5 September 1942, vol. II, in Mansergh, Nicholas (ed.), *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India; The Transfer of Power 1942-47, Vol. 12* (London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1970), (henceforth TOP).

⁷ GS Branch, GHQ Letter No. 6302/SD 4, 5 October 1942, HDMOD.

⁸ Police Medals were awarded for such action in the United Province, Bihar and Bombay. For example see Notification No. 171-H, Part I, 10 October 1942, *Gazettes of India*; Notification No. 185-H, Part I, 31 October 1942, *Gazettes of India*; Notification No. 192-H, Part I, 14 November 1942; Notification No. 39 & 40/H, Part I, 16 January 1943, *Gazettes of India*, etc.

⁹ *War Diary of HQ Delhi Area*, File No. 601/535/WD/Pt A, HDMOD.

organized in three commands viz. the Northern, Southern and Eastern Commands. Each command had a number of districts and independent brigades under its jurisdiction.¹⁰ Besides, the fledgling Indian Air Force barely included a squadron and the Navy a few vessels. Prior to the Second World War the role of the Indian armed forces was fivefold:¹¹

- a) Maintain law and order in India and to suppress any possible rebellion.
- b) Maintain the status quo vis-à-vis the tribes on the North-West Frontier.
- c) To repel sporadic attacks by hostile naval or air forces with co-operation with the Indian Air Force and Navy.
- d) Defend India against the attacks by minor powers like Afghanistan,
- e) Defend the Imperial outposts in the Middle East and the Far East area, as bastions of India's external defence.

The role of the Indian Army was limited; it did not contemplate any large expansion. In 1939, it was a small force equipped with outdated weapons. It had no mechanized infantry, modern guns or tanks and lacked mobility. The Indian Artillery, which was a new phenomenon for the Indian troops,¹² had only four Indian field batteries grouped into 'A' Field Brigade.¹³ It was only on the eve of the War that it was strengthened with some mountain batteries transferred from the Royal Artillery.¹⁴ Indian Artillery thus included about 26 mountain batteries and four field batteries at the outset of the War. It was largely horse drawn and no effort was made for its mechanization and modernisation.

The Cavalry was mostly horsed. At the outbreak of the War, out of a total 18 regiments, only three were recommended for modernization.¹⁵ Some remained horsed

¹⁰A.G. Boycott (ed.), *The Elements of Imperial Defence* (Aldershot, Gale & Polden, 1936), pp. 260-3.

¹¹Sri Nandan Prasad, *Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation, 1939-45* (New Delhi, Historical Section, 1956), pp. 12-3.

¹²After the mutiny of 1857, the Indian Artillery was abolished during the 1861 re-organisation of Indian Army. Maj Donovan Jackson, *India's Army* (London, 1940), p. 3.

¹³ Director of Artillery, Army HQs, *History of the Regiment of Artillery: Indian Army* (New Delhi, 1971), pp. 45 & 51. The Indian artillery at the outbreak of the War had 26 Mountain batteries and one Field Regiment consisting four field batteries. The generic title 'The Regiment of Indian Artillery' was conferred upon this new arm on 1 November 1940. *Expansion of the Armed Forces*, File No. 601/9060/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁴ *History of the Regiment of Artillery*, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Expansion of the Armed Forces, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9049/H, HDMOD; *Report of Expert Committee on Defence of India, 1938-39*, para 275. The Committee was chaired by the Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield and submitted its Report in January 1939 (henceforth the Chatfield Committee Report).

even a year after the beginning of the War.¹⁶ Maj Gen Gurbachan Singh Sandhu records in regimental history: “even after the war broke out and equipment started to trickle in for the Indian Army, Indian Armour remained starved of modern armoured vehicles until the closing stages of war.”¹⁷

The Indian Infantry had 18 regiments in 1939.¹⁸ Each regiment on an average had six battalions including one regimental depot. The Gurkha regiments were, however, not organized in the consecutive order, and had ten regiments of two battalions each.¹⁹ The Indian Infantry thereby consisted of a total 97 battalions.²⁰ The RIASC, which included MT, Supply, Animal Transport, Remount, Veterinary, etc., too was again a small force with a total strength of about 21,000.²¹ The Sappers and Miners had three different Corps based on the old Presidency system.²² Pioneer battalions had been demobilized back in 1932 and their left over strength was amalgamated with the three Corps of Sappers and Miners.²³ The Indian Ordnance had about 40,000 items of stores and clothing in its inventory but of 1918 vintage.²⁴ The Willcox Committee while pointing out the shortage of modern equipment at the outset of War, stated, “lack of equipment seriously delayed the expansion of Indian Army in the earlier stages of this [Second World War] War.”²⁵

The Indian Air Force was a small force comprising a squadron equipped with old aircrafts that had almost become obsolete in any of the European Air Forces. The Royal Indian Navy had five sloops, a trawler, a survey ship and a petrol vessel in its charge. Most of these carried old outdated armament and were overdue for re-arming

¹⁶The 19th Lancers were the last regiment of horsed cavalry to shed its horses at the end of 1940.

¹⁷Maj Gen Gurbachan Singh Sandhu, *The Indian Armour* (New Delhi, Vision Books, 1987), p. 21.

¹⁸Since Lord Kitchener’s reorganization of Indian Army in the early 1903 when units were renumbered consequently in all Indian bases, the Army was reorganized after the First World War in 1921. Regimental system was introduced and a total 19 regiments were provisioned. The Carnatic battalions were regimented in the 3rd Madras Regiment, but were disbanded in 1923.

¹⁹Jackson, *India’s Army*, p. 6.

²⁰Chatfield Committee Report, para 275.

²¹The total strength of Supply, MT and Animal Transport Branch was 21,072 (Supply- 4540, Animal Transport-11,250 and MT- 4887) at the outbreak of the War. *Expansion of Armed Forces, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9056/H, HDMOD.

²²At the outbreak of the War the Sappers and Miners had three branches each of Madras, Bengal and Bombay with the Indians, having the strength of 3054, 3206 and 2956 IORs, respectively. *Expansion of Armed Force- Indian Engineers, 1939- 1945*, File No. 601/9051/H, HDMOD.

²³However, two Road Construction Battalions of the Pioneers were still in existence. *Ibid*.

²⁴P.N. Khera, *Technical Services: Ordnance & IEME* (New Delhi, Historical Section, 1962), pp. 2-20

²⁵*Reorganization of the Army and Air Forces in India*, Para 3. It is a Report of the Committee chaired by Lt Gen H.B.D. Willcox, report submitted in October 1945 (henceforth the Willcox Committee Report).

and refitting.²⁶ The Indian State Forces were organized in Class 'A', 'B' and 'C' categories. Of these, Class A only could compare with the regular Army.

The strength of Indian armed forces was inadequate to handle any war like situation. In July 1939, the Indian army comprised 5046 commissioned officers, including 2538 British Army officers on attachment. There were 141,826 soldiers, including Viceroy Commissioned Officers, 32,768 non-combatants and 7667 gazetted and non-gazetted civilians.²⁷ Of the commissioned officers only 528 were Indians. The Artillery had only 15 Indian officers.²⁸ The Royal Indian Navy comprised 114 officers and 1732 ratings.²⁹ There was almost no reserve of officers till the early 1939.³⁰ The ratings were mostly Indians but the officers were predominantly British. The IAF, which was a fully Indianised force, consisted of only 16 officers and 144 other ranks with nine Wapitis IIAs in its inventory.³¹ There were about 46,947 Indian State Force personnel including the officers.³²

The general perception in India was that the Indian defence expenditure was disproportionate to the resources of the country. It was believed that the cost of maintaining British troops in India was a burden of which India should be relieved. Further, the question of modernization of the Indian armed forces had been haunting the authorities since long. In view of this, an Expert Committee on Defence of India was appointed under Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield in September 1938.

The Committee submitted its report to the Government on 30 January 1939. It made comprehensive recommendations on aspects of modernization, rearmament and employment of defence forces in India during the next five years. The committee allocated troops for frontier defence, coast defence, internal security and external defence by a general reserve, and emphasized that the external defence of India was a

²⁶ *Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, September 1939-December 1943, File No. 601/10588/H, HDMOD.

²⁷ *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vol. I, Compiled by the Statistical Section, Directorate of Inter Service Statistics, 1942.

²⁸ *Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, September 1939-December 1943, File No. 601/10588/H, HDMOD.

²⁹ Lt D.J.E. Collins, *The Royal Indian Navy 1939-45* (New Delhi, Historical Section, 1964), p. 12.

³⁰ It was only in the early 1939 that a reserve was constituted in the Royal Indian Navy that consisted of two categories i.e. the Royal Indian Naval Reserve (RINR) and the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RINVR). RINR was confined to professional Seamen and RINVR was open to all. *Commissioned Officers*, File No. 601/12160/H, HDMOD.

³¹ S.C. Gupta, *History of the Indian Air Force, 1933-45* (New Delhi, Historical Section, 1961), p. 37.

³² *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vol. I, pp. 2-3.

joint responsibility of the British and Indian forces. The General Reserve meant for External Defence was to be approximately one division, organized into three self-contained brigade groups under the headquarters of the Deccan district. It also included a mobile division. The Committee recommended a reduction in the strength of British troops in India as well as in the Indian troops for greater efficiency. As for the Royal Indian Navy, the Committee desired the construction of four 'Bittern' class escort vessels and rearming of the 'Indus' and 'Hindustan'. It hoped that the first squadron of the Indian Air Force would take complete shape by the end of 1940, however, had nothing to recommend. The Committee also debated over the reorganization of Ordnance Factories so as to make India self-sufficient in munitions. It finally recommended the reorganization and expansion of seven of the existing ordnance factories and construction of a new factory for the manufacture of T.N.T.

The recommendations of the Committee were accepted, but before the government could begin to work on the modalities, War clouds began to hover. By the time the Report officially published on 5 September 1939, the War had already begun on 3 September.

Historiography

Soon after the outbreak of the War, the Secretary of State for India cabled the Viceroy to ensure that all records pertaining to the War were maintained with care. The experience of the First World War had given them a lesson that the records pertaining to the War were of immense value and must ever be ready for future plans and policies. Meanwhile, guidelines for the preparation of War Diaries were published in an Indian Army Order.³³ The Order contained the information as to who should prepare the War Diary and what information should it contain. It stipulated that important information that was likely to prove valuable for future organization, administration, and training or could be of historical value should find place in the War Diary.³⁴ In 1943, an idea was floated to set up an office that could take on the task of writing the battle accounts of the War. Brigadier W.E.H. Condon who was engaged in drafting the War Despatches of the India Command, proposed to the Chief of the General Staff, GHQ (I), that a Historical Section needed to be established in

³³ 'War Diaries', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1079 of 1939; 'War Diaries', *Indian Army Order*, No. 597 of 1940.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

India on the pattern of those existing in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa to write the history of the War. The proposal of Brigadier Condon could not be implemented immediately as the manpower situation was critical. However, Condon was asked to take up the matter again when the situation eased. Thus, in early 1945 when the proposal was made again, it was accepted.

Brigadier Condon was asked to study the working of the Historical Sections in UK, Italy and Austria. Thus, the Historical Section, India, under the Defence Department, was established in July 1945 with Major General T.W. Corbett, CB, MC as the Director with the objective to write the history of the Indian armed forces during the Second World War. By March 1946, the Section was well staffed with Editors, Narrators, etc. The history of the War was planned in seventeen volumes divided into three series covering 'the Campaigns in Western Theatre', 'Campaigns in Eastern Theatre' and the 'Organisation and Administration'. Besides, seven more volumes dealing with the 'Medical' aspect were envisaged. In addition, the volume 'India and the War' was intended to cover all aspects of the War related to Indian participation. These 25 volumes were researched and written under the supervision of Bisheshwar Prasad, General Editor,³⁵ who also served as the first Indian Director of the Historical Section.³⁶

These volumes broadly cover the role of the Indian armed forces during the Second World War. Most of the books cover the operational history while others deal with administrative matters such as Ordnance and Organization of the armed forces during the War. Subjects explored in the present Thesis such as the life of soldiers in the armed forces, discrimination towards Indian officers and men, and the resettlement of demobilized soldiers after hostilities ceased, hardly find any mention in any of these volumes. The other subject that has been extensively researched for this Thesis relates to the 'issues of recruitment'. This, however, have been detailed in some of the volumes produced as official history.

³⁵ These official histories were published mostly in the 1950s and the early 1960s.

³⁶ Bisheshwar Prasad became the Director of Historical Section in April 1948 taking charge from Brigadier Condon who took charge from Maj Gen Corbett in 1946.

S.N. Prasad, in one of the volumes of the official history entitled 'Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation, 1939-45'³⁷, has discussed the expansion, organization and demobilisation of the Indian Armed Forces in detail. Prasad divided his scholarly work in four parts. The First part deals with the constitutional position of the Indian armed forces and the international scenario. It also delineates the condition of the Armed Forces before the outbreak of the War. It explores the issues such as the budgeting, structure and deployment of the Army. Besides Army, it also handles the Royal Indian Navy and Air Force, their composition, strength, ships and aircrafts in the inventory. The second part is of greater value from the point of view of the present Thesis. It addresses issues such as of the expansion of the Army, Navy and Air Force separately and details year wise recruitment and expansion of each service. It states that the year 1942 registered the highest number of recruitments. About seven lakh recruits were enrolled in this year. Prasad also discusses the factors which affected the expansion. The expansion mainly suffered from shortage of war equipment and vehicles supplies for which India mainly depended on the UK. Once the supply was rendered in adequate quantity, expansion progressed rapidly. Many Divisions/Regiments were raised and deployed on the war front. This part also gives detailed information about the milking away of Viceroy Commissioned Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers from the existing units to form new battalions. It adds that throughout the War period, Punjab remained a significant supplier of manpower and followed by Madras and the United Province. It also deals with the Navy and Air Force. Here Prasad emphasizes on the commissioning of various vessels and the enrolment of ratings. The third part narrates the story of demobilisation. Year wise targets were fixed to achieve results. It also discusses principles, the procedures for demobilisation and various other facets of machinery in operation. The fourth part speaks about the structure of the Defence Organization. Prasad has ably dealt with the expansion of military divisions and other formations, as well as the expansion process governing the Air Force and Navy.

Another volume of the official history entitled 'History of Indian Air Force, 1933-45',³⁸ written by S.C. Gupta also speaks of recruitment. Gupta while addressing the operational role of the Indian Air Force in the campaigns of the Second World

³⁷ Sri Nandan Prasad, *Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation, 1939-45* (New Delhi, Historical Section, 1956).

³⁸ S.C. Gupta, *History of the Indian Air Force, 1933-45* (New Delhi, Historical Section, 1961).

War, also covered the recruitment aspect of this Service. He says that owing to the shortage of trained aircrews, civilians with some flying experience were offered commission. But as the demand increased, the intake dried up. Consequently, recruitment with the help of Director of Civil Aviation had to be resorted to. Indian Air Training Corps was raised at universities to fetch educated men for technical branch in other ranks. But the scheme did not succeed. Ground Duty Recruiting Officers were sent to interview prospective officer candidates at universities and colleges. Gupta intended to mainly focus on the growth of the Indian Air Force and the part played by this Service in campaigns during the Second World War. He, therefore, has covered the recruitment to the Indian Air Force in a cursory manner. Also, the scope of Gupta's study is limited to the Air Force. Moreover, both Prasad and Gupta has missed the crucial issue of recruitment pertaining to the strategy. Prasad merely touches this point briefly and argues that Paid Recruiters were deployed to stimulate the enlistment.

Anirudh Deshpande has ably addressed some of the issues of Indian armed forces in his scholarly work 'British Military Policy in India, 1900-1945'³⁹. The Indianisation of the officer cadre of the Indian army has been studied extensively in his work. He also covers the modernization aspects of the Indian armed forces during the inter war period. While addressing the issues of recruitment and demobilisation, he has dealt with points of the strategy and policy of the government. He also addresses the issues such as advertisement and propaganda to recruitment. While detailing with the propaganda aspect he writes that a positive sex appeal had to replace negative images like the one showing a failed recruit being rejected by a girl. Deshpande also argues on some issues like the Navy's recruitment. As intended, he has ably brought out some points of the strategies and policies of the recruitment. Aspects of the practical implementation of the policies, however, still need to be addressed. Sometimes what laid in the policy was not followed practically in the recruitment fields. Thus, there developed a lack of coordination between the written policy and practicability. For example, policies guided the age criterion for different corps of the armed forces. But as there was no documentary evidence required for most of the recruitment, the criterion was at times set aside by recruiting authorities.

³⁹ Anirudh Deshpande, *British Military Policy in India, 1900-1945: Colonial Constraints and Declining Power* (New Delhi, Manohar, 2005).

Further, the recruiting officers were struggling to keep pace with the large demand and the candidates wanted to get in, thus resulting in a situation where both manipulated in collusion and just recorded what suited to the policy.

A few other scholars also have worked on the recruitment to the Indian Armed Forces. F.W. Perry's work 'The Commonwealth armies'⁴⁰ has a chapter on recruitment to the Indian Army covering the First and Second World Wars. But it does not comment on the core issues of the subject. Most of his work on recruitment during the Second World War is based on S.N. Prasad's work 'Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation'. Another military historian, David Omissi presents a well-researched work 'The Sepoy and the Raj.'⁴¹ He sketches the main features of the British recruiting strategies from post mutiny to the outset of the Second World War. Military Historian, Kaushik Roy, has made a monumental contribution to the historiography of the Indian army. His well-researched work 'The Brown Warriors of the Raj'⁴², too brought out aspects of recruitment to the Indian army. Roy covers the period from 1859 to 1913. He discusses the Martial Race theory extensively. He especially studies the caste handbooks written for recruiting different castes. He also presents a debate on the 'Balance Recruitment theory'. A very recent article by Roy, probes the recruitment to the Indian army during the First World War also.⁴³ He brings out as how the demand of war brought about innovations in the theory and practice of recruitment during the First World War. He adds that the class recruitment system was shifted to the territorial recruitment system to keep pace with the demand.

These researchers have studied recruitment and sometimes related issues prior to the period of the present study. Owing to the changed circumstances and time, much had changed on the eve of the Second World War. Therefore, the present work would be quite different from the work of the these scholars.

Also, the perception and aspiration of recruits have remained understudied. With the help of interviews and autobiographies, I have tried to explore these aspects,

⁴⁰ F.W. Perry, *The Commonwealth armies: Manpower and organisation in two world wars* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988).

⁴¹ David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (London, Macmillan, 1994).

⁴² Kaushik Roy, *Brown Warriors of the Raj: Recruitment & the Mechanics of Command in Sepoy Army, 1859-1913* (New Delhi, Manohar, 2008).

⁴³ Kaushik Roy, 'Race and Recruitment in the Indian Army: 1880-1918', *Modern Asian Studies*, no. 47, Part I, Jan 2013, pp. 1-38.

particularly the experience of the recruits with the selection process. The view point of the parents and relatives of those who joined the military service has also been taken into account. The working pattern of the officer selection board was much criticized. Indians believed that the boards were unduly strict. The British authorities, however, argued that India lacked the officer material. The arguments put forth by both sides have been debated in this Thesis.

Another aspect of this research deals with the various aspects of 'Soldiers' Life' in the armed forces during the Second World War. Some of the scholars touches a few aspects of this subject. Kaushik Roy, while examining the reasons for loyalty of Indian soldiers to the British, covers the morale of the Indian Army in South East Asia during the Second World War.⁴⁴ He details the factors that adversely affected the morale of the Indian soldiers. The Japanese onslaught and repeated victories demoralized the Allies, including Indian soldiers. Roy discusses that in the case of Indians, morale and loyalty were interlinked. If the morale was low, there were more chances of disloyalty. Roy also explores the British political and military elite's perception about the fidelity of the Indian soldiers and their anxiety to maintain it in troubled times. After the first Arakan operations, the morale of the Indian troops began to rise. Many factors, besides the military success contributed to this. Roy refers to measures like welfare, recreation, medical, leave, care of the families back home, children education grants, grant for daughters' marriage, etc. boosted up the morale of the soldiers. Roy concludes that British officers were thus able to manage the continuous loyalty of the Indian soldiers through monetary and non-monetary mechanisms. This article presents an excellent study of the morale of soldiers deployed in South East Asia during the Second World War. The life of soldiers, however, finds passing reference in Roy's work while dealing with aspects related to loyalty.

T.R. Moreman in his work entitled 'The Jungle, the Japanese and the British Commonwealth Armies'⁴⁵ covers the aspects of doctrine and training in the jungle warfare. He addresses the causes that rendered the British Commonwealth armies ill prepared for jungle fighting when the Japanese attacked in December 1941. Moreman

⁴⁴ Kaushik Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Indian Army during World War II', *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 73, no. 2, Apr 2009, pp. 497-529.

⁴⁵ T.R. Moreman, *The Jungle, the Japanese and the British Commonwealth Armies: Fighting Methods, Doctrine and Training for Jungle Warfare* (London, Frank Cass, 2005).

further examines the gradual process of learning, adapting and producing appropriate doctrine and system of training for jungle warfare that occurred in the Indian Army. He intelligently carves out the doctrine and training aspects and their evolution with regard to the fighting in Malaya, Burma and eastern India. The points enunciated by Moreman indeed are more of operational nature than the soldiers' life.

The other aspects that this research deals with, are the cases of discrimination in the Indian armed forces during the War. This area is understudied. Jeffrey Greenhut's research 'Sahib and Sepoy: An Inquiry into the Relationship between the British Officers and Native Soldiers of the British Indian Army'⁴⁶ addresses the questions as whether White officers were essential to lead the soldiers of the Indian army. Sources utilized from the First World War prove the necessity of White officers. Greenhut argues that without the leadership of white officers, Indian soldiers felt demoralized and they just could not fight. But when led by a white officer, they did splendid work. He describes the relationship of Indian soldiers with a White officer as that of parents and children. White officers indeed believed that they were the key to the battle performance of an Indian unit, and therefore they were against the granting of the King's Commission to Indians. He asserts that what they failed to realize was that they had created a system which guaranteed this outcome. He adds that the educated Indians who might conceivably have filled in for such a role were systematically excluded from the Army through the martial race theory and no Indian was ever given an opportunity that might have enabled him to replace a British officer. Greenhut ends his study detailing that the British preoccupied mind had adverse reports about the performance of Indians as an officer. The seeds of discrimination were indeed cultivated through this thinking pattern of the British officers. My enquiry into this issue fills the vacuum not intended by Greenhut.

Kaushik Roy also refers to the relationship of the British officers with Indian soldiers.⁴⁷ He opines "the British ECOs who joined the Indian army towards the end of the war were less racially prejudice towards their Indian colleagues than regular British officers of pre-1939 Indian Army. The reason was probably that they were not

⁴⁶ Jeffrey Greenhut, 'Sahib and Sepoy: An Inquiry into the Relationship between the British Officers and Native Soldiers of the British Indian Army', *Military Affairs*, vol. 48, no. 1, January 1984, pp. 14-9. In this article Greenhut wrongly identifies Philip Mason as an officer of the Indian Army who joined it during the Second World War. Mason, indeed, was an ICS and was posted to the Defence Department as a Deputy Secretary and further rose to be Joint Secretary.

⁴⁷ Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context', pp. 497--529.

public school products but came from a lower social background". Roy also writes that the relationship of British officers with Indians improved towards the end of the war. He mentions the sensibility of the British COs towards the religion and customs of Indian soldiers. *Jawans* too appreciated the sensibilities of their officers and wrote to their homes in glowing terms. Roy thus touches the relationship of British officers with Indian officers and men but does not discuss it elaborately. Roy indeed intended to address the issue of the morale of Indian soldiers and its affect on their loyalty to the Raj, something that he did meticulously. The issue of discrimination thus just had passing reference.

Tarak Barkawi also touches the issue of discrimination in his article 'Culture and Combat in the Colonies: The Indian Army in the Second World War'⁴⁸ The article deals with the fusion of two cultures: the societal culture to which Indians belonged and the organizational culture which trained them for the Army. He further deals with the societal discrimination unleashed against the Indian officers by the British. He says that the discontent of Indian officers was a result of discrimination that led to the formation of the Indian National Army. Barkawi's main thrust is on the cultural analysis of the regular military institution and the way these mould people from diverse backgrounds into soldiers. The subject of discrimination is dealt with cursorily and is limited to the societal discrimination. Further, he builds up his theme on the basis of biographies without taking into account the view of the Government and also that of the Indian legislators. Barkawi also did not intend to study other aspects of discrimination. He also did not take up discrimination prevalent in the ranks.

Omar Khalidi in his article 'Ethnic Group Recruitment in the Indian Army: The Contrasting Cases of Sikhs, Muslims, Gurakhas and Others'⁴⁹ debates the discrimination against Muslims in the Indian armed forces. He states that besides physical features, the Indian classes which were subservient and docile were regarded as martial whereas others that were seditious to the British policies were kept out of the Army. Khalidi classifies the Indian battalion system in three categories: 'one class', 'fixed class', and 'mixed class'. One class denotes a single class regiment,

⁴⁸ Tarak Barkawi, 'Culture and Combat in the Colonies: The Indian Army in the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2006, pp. 325-55.

⁴⁹ Omar Khalidi, 'Ethnic Group Recruitment in the Indian Army: The Contrasting Cases of Sikhs, Muslims, Gurakhas and Others', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 74, no. 4 (Winter, 2001-2002), pp. 529-52.

fixed class refers to class company system and mixed class refers to units composed of all classes mixed together. He further states that Corps like the Army Supply Corps, Army Medical Corps, Signals, Artillery etc., were composed of mixed classes.⁵⁰ Khalidi's main concern is, however, the post-Independence Indian army and thus skims through the conditions in the pre-Independent Army. Writing on the discrimination against Indian Muslims in the post-Independence period, he points out that despite loyalty to the service and the nation, Muslims are not being given their due in terms of recruitment and promotion (to higher officer ranks) in the Indian Army. While referring to Sikhs, he says that recruitment of Sikhs has come down in post-Independent Indian Army due the policy of regional quota system adopted by the Government to provide adequate representation to all classes. He also delves into the issues of the Gorkhas and the recruitment of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in post-Independence Indian Army. Addressing the non-secular and discriminatory policies of the Indian armed forces, Khalidi quotes Admiral J.G. Nadkarni (former Chief of Naval Staff, Indian Navy): "sympathy for Hindutva is far more widespread amongst senior officers than suspected. One has reason to believe that under their immaculate uniforms, a large number of senior officers wear a saffron vest...." Khalidi further says that Admiral Bhagwat was sacked because his wife was a Muslim lady. In the conclusion, he asserts that the Indian armed forces in their present shape do not mirror the social diversity of the Indian population and the declared policy of the State to make it representative of national demography. Thus, Khalidi emphasis the non-secular and discriminatory system of the post-Independence Indian armed forces, with special reference to Muslims.

As regards to the 'Resettlement' issue, it cropped up only at the end of the War. It was indeed a big problem to resettle more than a million soldiers after demobilisation. This aspect has largely been untouched. This thesis seeks to explore this issue in all its manifestations.

⁵⁰ However, the Indian Artillery was not a mixed class corps. It had a largely class battery system during the War and also before the war started. Even some of the artillery units during the War were composed of exclusively a single class or caste. Thus, Khalidi wrongly refers to Indian Artillery as of a mixed class composition. See Director of Artillery, Army HQs, *History of the Regiment of Artillery: Indian Army* (New Delhi, 1971), pp. 42-6.

Objectives of the Present Research

At the outset of the Second World War, the strength of the Indian Armed Forces was about two lakh. It rapidly rose during the War to over two and a half million. The British took various measures to meet the large manpower demand of the Indian Armed Forces. This research seeks to explore some crucial aspects of the British recruitment policy, and the strategy, adopted to achieve the objectives. The Indians responded to the recruitment call for various reasons. The research thus explores why did Indians present themselves before the Recruitment offices? Further, there was a large rejection rate in the selection of officers. Indians thought that the British authorities were unduly strict in the selection of Indians in the officer cadre. The British, however, said that there was a shortage of officer material in India. Thus, the pattern of selection of officers and arguments thereof is also studied. Secondly, this research endeavours to explore the life of the Indian soldier in the armed forces. The vagaries of nature and the fatigue of War coupled with the anxiety of home sometimes posed difficult problems for them. Malaria was rampant especially in South East Asia and other diseases also reduced his strength. What problems did Indian soldiers face are further investigated in this research. Moreover, as the strength of the defence forces increased during the War, cases of indiscipline also spiked. The research thus also probes the disciplinary aspect of Indian soldiers during the War.

Working with British soldiers during the War, Indian soldiers registered some complaints of racial discrimination. The kind of discrimination the Indians faced, the attitude of the British authorities to them and the consequences thereof have been addressed in the third section of this research. Further, after the War a large number of Indian soldiers were demobilised. They expected to be resettled in some kind of civilian jobs. The resettlement schemes launched by the government for the demobilized soldiers have been researched in this section of the research. This thesis also probes jobs that were usually available to the soldiers and how they undertook these.

Chapters

The present thesis would include the four chapters. Besides, an Introduction at the start of the thesis and a Conclusion at the end would also follow. The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter One: Issues of Recruitment

When the Second World War broke out, the strength of the Indian armed forces was about two lakhs. After the declaration of War, the reservists were immediately recalled for duty, and Territorial battalions were embodied. But as the War advanced, it needed more manpower. Recruitment of fresh manpower thus became imperative. This Chapter seeks to explore, the policies and the strategy that the British adopted to recruit the men from India for the War. Did their policy have consistency? Though there was enough human resource in India by virtue of its large population. But to the British, most of the Indian classes had not been amenable to the ways of the Army. Did they have any change in their Martial Race recruitment policy during this War? Further, it was a time when India was struggling for its freedom. There had been a number of political movements and agitations for the independence of the country. Hence, what was the reaction of political parties as also leaders of different communities? What was their stand to the recruitment for the War? Also how were the men who participated in political agitations treated by the recruiting authorities? This Chapter also investigates as to how the demands for manpower were met and also how the problems of recruiting were tackled? What were the essential qualifications for recruitments, especially for officer grade? Further, there is another mute question as to what were the perceptions of men who joined the armed forces? Did political agitation or any other factor have an effect on the view of the armed forces? This Chapter also seeks to compare the recruitment process of this War with that of the First World War.

Chapter Two: A Taste of Soldiery

This Chapter probes into the various aspects of the life of the Indian soldiers in the military mechanism during the Second World War. The Chapter seeks to explore the response of the Indian soldiers to the mobilisation, the difficulties that they faced in various war zones. Further, the morale factor was vital to the War. The factors, which affected the morale of the soldiers, have also been explored in this Chapter.

It was a prolonged war that continued for about six years. Soldiers stayed away from their families. Most of the soldiers were married and did not get any leaves even for two years on a stretch and sometimes more. Did marriage break down or was

there infidelity on the part of the wife of the soldier? Also how did the authorities react to it?

The Army is said to be a highly disciplined force. Although an institution may take a thousands steps to make the system error-free but men are bound to make mistakes and create nuisance. What sort of offences did the Indians commit and how did the military authorities respond to these? Such questions have also been investigated in this part of the thesis. Desertion from the military camp was considered to be an act of indiscipline and its severity increased if it was committed when the Army was fighting a war. What was the nature of the problem of desertions during this War? What were its various implications? Also, how did the military authorities respond to it? Further, war zones especially in the Far East and South East Asia, were the disease-ridden terrains. What kind of diseases did the Indian army face? How were these tackled? The issues of the Indian Army have also been compared with those of the British Army with whom the Indians were deployed and with whom they fought shoulder to shoulder.

Chapter Three: Race Abuse and Discrimination

Discrimination against Indians in the armed forces mainly started with the opening of the officer cadre for Indians after the First World War. The British officers did not like the Indian as their comrades in the mess or elsewhere. This raises a question: Why did the British not like the company of Indians as officers? But, when the political will of granting commissions to Indians in the Indian Army was imposed, they did not have any option. They now started exploring other options like finding out ways of keeping Indians aside. What were these options that they resorted to? The outbreak of the Second World War compelled the British to recruit Indians in large numbers. With an increase in strength, the cases of discrimination also increased. How did the British officers behave towards their Indian counterparts? There might be several aspects of discrimination. The Chapter, besides the above questions, also investigates various dimensions and manifestations of discrimination that the Indians suffered. Another question that can be raised is whether such discrimination existed in the other two services also, on lines similar to those in the Indian Army. Further, there is the pertinent issue of whether discrimination had any impact on the functioning of military mechanism and whether the British adopted any measure to redress

discrimination? How did the Indians respond to it and what were the eventual results? Questions related to such discrimination have been addressed in this part of the thesis.

Chapter Four: Demobilisation and Resettlement

After the end of the War, large numbers of soldiers not required for peace time establishment were to be demobilised. This Chapter probes the issues relating to the demobilisation machinery as also how did it work? What was the process of demobilisation? How many soldiers were demobilized after the War and how many remained in service? Who suffered the demobilisation more? This part of the thesis also addresses resettlement issues after the demobilisation. What kind of jobs were the demobilized soldiers willing for? What were their options and also what options did they actually exercise? These questions on resettlement of the soldiers are addressed in this part of the thesis.

Chapter One

Issues of Recruitment

Prospects of the impending War against Germany made the British involve her overseas colonies to assist the Allied forces in their War efforts. Mobilisation of the Indian armed forces commenced at a slow pace at the time of the outbreak of hostilities but the expansion became inevitable with each passing day. The possibility of a Russian attack on India through Afghanistan was always being pursued. The Middle East, where vital British interests were involved, was also under threat. The political climate in India was further demanding more troops for internal security. Besides, Germany partially closed down the sea routes to India that were used for supplying the resources. Subsequently, the Japanese involvement brought the War much nearer to India.

These factors necessitated a large expansion of the Indian armed forces during the War. The peace time recruitment policies could not stand ground. This led to a number of changes in the recruitment policies intermittently to keep pace with the demand. How did the British cope with the new situation? What were the new options? What were the challenges before the British War efforts? How was the mobilisation dealt with? Which specific policies and strategies were adopted pertaining to the recruitment of the Indians? These are some of the aspects that need detailed understanding. The recruitment to Indian armed forces was not an imperial strategy alone but also reflected the interest of natives who responded to the call of the recruiting officers for a variety of reasons. These are some of the issues that have been addressed in this chapter.

Mobilisation

On the eve of the War in April 1939, the Army Headquarters (HQ) issued a letter to all concerned departments about the possibility of mobilisation in the event of a war. It, however, clarified that in the early stages, a major part of the Army in India would stay on a normal peaceful basis. As the clouds of War deepened in August 1939, Army HQ informed the Army Commanders that the mobilisation would be gradual and that its progress should largely depend on the international situation. At the same

time it stated that some services like Ordnance, Supply and Transport, and Censorship may have to be mobilized at an early date.¹

After the declaration of War, things started moving as per the plan envisaged by the General Staff Branch. The Depots² concerned with the mobilisation of units accordingly sent their demands of personnel to the Army HQ. These demands were scrutinized by the Adjutant General Branch at the Army HQ in the light of reinforcements available with the concerned Depot. If the number of available trained recruits fell short, the Depot Commanders were asked to make up for the deficiencies out of the trained men from the Depot's permanent staff, and call up reservists to replace them.³ The units, which were earmarked for mobilisation, could also recall their 'Extra Regimentally Employed' (hereafter ERE) staff to make up for the shortage.⁴ Accordingly, a number of military officers in Political Service were either recalled by their regiments or they themselves volunteered to return to their units.⁵ The units already posted overseas were provided with half of the authorized establishment of its reservists, including a proportion of specialists, who were called up by their Training Battalions in September 1939 under the authority of Army HQ. The policy thus commenced with a progressive recall of reservists to complete the unit establishment.⁶ Since the 'General Mobilisation' was not ordered in India, the

¹*Mobilisation in India*, a monograph prepared by Adjutant General Branch after the War, year n.d., printed and 'For Official Use Only, pp. 4-5, at History Division, Ministry of Defence (henceforth HDMOD).

² Training Centres were called as Depot. Each regiment had their separate Depot i.e. Training Centre. Besides training, the Depot also looked after the miscellaneous administration of all the battalions of the regiment and also housed the regimental records. These were thus also called as Regimental Centres. However, all the training centres were not necessarily the regimental centres. This was because sometimes a regiment or corps might have more than one training centre at different locations but one regimental centre.

³ Indian reserve was classified in two categories i.e. Regular reserve and Supplementary reserve. Regular reserve consisted of men who had completed minimum prescribed colour service and were transferred to reserve. Supplementary reserve furnished a reserve of tradesmen with objects to complete the requirements of certain branches and arms of the Indian army on mobilisation that were not provided or partially provided, the regular reserve. Supplementary reserves were not required to undergo any training in peace. *Regulations for the Army in India*, July 1937, corrected up to April 1942, reprint 1942 (Delhi, Manager of Publication, Government Press, 1942), rules 262 & 281; Indian Reserve Act, No. IV of 1888 & Indian Reserve Rules - 1925, *Manual of Indian Military Law*, 1937, corrected up to April 1942 (New Delhi, Manager of Publication, 1942), pp. 425-30.

⁴*Expansion: Extra Regimentally Employed Aspect*, a monograph prepared by the Adjutant General Branch after the War, year n.d., p. 5, HDMOD.

⁵ Political Officers were appointed out of Indian Civil servants, and Army Officers with six years of service in the regiment.

⁶ *Expansion: Extra Regimentally Employed Aspect*, p. 5; Recalling of officers of the 'Army in India Reserve of Officers belonging to Category 8-Medical (Recruiting Staff) was published in *Gazette of India: Extraordinary, Simla, September 11, 1939*.

Army was mobilized gradually on as and when required basis.⁷ The 'First Reinforcements' thus were found from the existing permanent staff and trained recruits, available at the Depots. However, in the case of some technical arms, where no such resource was available, the services of reservists were immediately used for the intended role.⁸

Armies generally depend on their reservists in the initial stage of a war to complete unit establishments, replace wastages, and for raising new units. Reserves thus constitute the resource for expanding an army at a faster pace. The larger the number of reservists, the more rapid would be the expansion as the reservists could be recalled at a short notice and needed little or no training. Reserves thus sustain the army in a battle position, till new recruits and emergency commissioned officers could be trained for war.

At the beginning of this War, the recruitment policy of the Indian Army lacked clarity as the role Army had to play was not yet defined. Recruitment was made on ad hoc basis as the actual requirement and war wastages could not be assessed properly. It was visualized that necessary trained reinforcements should become available, if the eventuality arises. The anticipation, however, resulted in a steady overflow of reservists. When many of the recalled reservists became excess and could not be posted to units, they had to be sent back to their homes to ease the congestion in Training Battalions.⁹ Having refreshed in knowledge for about three months, they were explained the reason of their dispersal.¹⁰

But, with a rapid spread of the war in April 1940, an immediate need was felt to rebuild the reserves. May 1940 onwards, the reservists were again recalled at a faster pace.¹¹ By the end of 1940, most of them had re-joined the colours. At this

⁷*Recruitment Reports from Outbreak of War to 21 October 1939*, pp. 2-3, File No. 601/10582/H , HDMOD.

⁸*Reinforcements*, a monograph prepared by Adjutant General Branch after the War, year n.d., printed and 'For Official Use Only', pp. 2-3, HDMOD.

⁹Under 1922, Re-organisation of the Indian Army, every Regiment was made a group of some battalions. One of these battalions in each Regiment was entrusted with the job of training the recruits for the rest of the battalions of the Regiment. The battalions training the recruits were thus termed as Training Battalions. However, some of the regiments still called it Depot.

¹⁰*Mobilisation in India*, p. 6.

¹¹*Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India, vol. 1*, (Simla, Manager, Government of India Press, 1942), pp. 62-3. The Statistical Review shows an upward trend of strength in training establishments immediately after the break out of the War, which gradually dwindled in subsequent months, and again started swelling after April 1940.

stage, the Infantry reservists were able to meet the mobilisation requirement substantially. But in the case of Technical Corps deficiency could not be resolved as these had highly insufficient reserves. Moreover, services like the Army Remount Department faced a peculiar situation as they had no reserve in the other ranks.¹² Meanwhile some Territorial battalions, which were provisioned in the reorganization of the Indian Army in 1922,¹³ were embodied almost completely within a year after the War started. All these battalions were further regularized after 15 September 1941 and converted into permanent battalions.¹⁴

By the middle of 1940, the Indian Army HQ began to gather momentum in view of the increasing demand of troops in the Middle East. Further, with a growing threat on India's eastern frontier, in February 1942 it was decided to place all units other than static and training units, in a state of readiness. However, the units that were required to move were given appropriate time as considered necessary by the Army HQ. But in July 1942, the policy was altered to give at least six weeks' time to a unit to complete its mobilisation plan.¹⁵ To get ready in the prescribed time, units were provided with Mobilisation Pamphlets, containing readymade information on the material and other necessities required at the time of the mobilisation.¹⁶ These also contained guidelines regarding the type of personnel required to be sent for training battalions, the names of such training centres and their locations for imparting specific types of training, and also many other aspects relating to a mobilisation. The pamphlet also provided guidance with regard to procedures for recalling the personnel back

¹² *Mobilisation in India*, pp. 14-6.

¹³ 'Organisation of Indian Territorial Force', *Indian Army Order*, No. 879 of 1922, Also see *Gazette of India*, Notification no. 1998, dated 1 December 1922. The policy of 1922 provided provision for Territorial Battalions. There were of two types i.e. Provincial battalions and Urban battalions (University Training Corps also counts in ITF, since it did not have any liability for military service, it is not detailed here). Out of a total of 31 such battalions at the outbreak of the War, only six were Urban battalions. All the Provincial Territorial battalions were converted into Regular battalions during the War and no new Territorial battalions were raised after August 1940 till the armistice. The six Urban battalions, however, did not fare well and, therefore, were not converted into a Regular one. One of them was even disbanded at the peak of the War. *Reorganisation of the Army and Air Forces in India*, 1945 (henceforth Willcox Committee Report), para 89, Appendix J.

¹⁴ *War Department, History Head-2, Indian Territorial Force, 1939-45*, p. 4, File No. 601/9050/H, HDMOD; 'India's Territorials Become Regulars', *Fauji Akhbar*, 30 August 1941, p. 26. Various regimental histories mention about their Territorial battalions that usually were the 11th Battalion in regimental system. Most of these Territorial battalions were embodied and were subsequently converted into Regular battalions.

¹⁵ *Mobilisation in India*, pp. 14-6.

¹⁶ Army Headquarters prepared these pamphlets by culling the details from the Indian Army Orders and mobilisation Regulations etc.

from leave and dispatch of families to home or at Temporary Depot etc. The pamphlets greatly helped the commanding officers in their duties.

Thus in the early stages of war mobilisation was confined to existing manpower in the shape of permanent staff and men under training at training battalions. Subsequently, it was extended to reservists, territorial battalions, and ERE personnel, etc. Later when the need for troops increased, it necessitated recruitment in large numbers to cater to the wastages, reinforcements, and the raising of new units.

Recruitment

The recruitment pattern of the Indian Army underwent numerous changes during the Second World War. Prior to 1932, the method of recruitment required calling up the aspiring candidate, who came to the regimental depot, at his own expense. He was medically examined and interviewed and if found suitable placed in a waiting list for enrolment. The family tradition or the army connection was the backbone of this system of recruitment. The regimental officers spent some time in their recruitment areas to meet old pensioners and interviewed prospective recruits. This enabled the officers to familiarize themselves with the customs and traditions of their soldiers and served as a link with the recruiting areas of the regiment. In 1932, this system was centralized so as to meet the demands of an emergency, and thus recruiting came to be monitored by the Adjutant Generals Branch. However, the regimental recruitment system continued on a small scale. The family connection also continued to influence the recruitment. The Army had a limited establishment before the War and there was a lot of manpower in India even in the enlisted classes, who desperately wished to join the Army.

Soon after the War was declared, the recruiting offices were flooded with prospective recruits. Hundreds of letters and applications from various sources were received at the Adjutant General Branch daily offering to join the service. But, the expansion at early stages of the War was at a modest scale and the men rushing to the recruitment offices were turned away after registering their names. Besides, each and every letter was also replied individually.¹⁷ Thus the sanctioned establishment did not

¹⁷*Recruitment Reports from Outbreak of War to 21 October 1939*, File No. 601/10582/H, HDMOD; *Recruiting for the Defence Services in India*, a monograph prepared by the Adjutant General Branch after the War, year n.d., p. 15; Garhwal Regimental history records “on the outbreak of war large

undergo any major change till the end of March 1940. The strength started increasing gradually after April with increasing demand from the Middle East.¹⁸

It was soon realized that to turn away a large number of recruits without giving them any hope of service at a later date would adversely affect future recruitment. A policy was, therefore, adopted to register the names of prospective recruits at recruiting offices. They were even paid subsistence and travelling allowance for presenting themselves at recruiting offices and were sent back with the candid explanation that there was no vacancy as on that date and that they would be called up as and when vacancies arose.¹⁹ But this system faced risks as the men registered sometimes became the targets of political propaganda and pleading parents, and were thus lost by the Army. To prevent this loss of prospective recruits, the Recruit Registration Scheme was abandoned and a new policy was framed to hold the recruits rather sending them back home. To implement this policy, Recruit Reception Camps were formed in June 1941²⁰ for the recruits likely to be dispatched to training establishments.²¹

In December 1941, a new War front emerged in the Far East. The Japanese forces in a very short time captured Singapore and Malaya and compelled the Allied forces to surrender. The Japanese then attacked Burma. Rangoon, the capital of Burma, fell within a month. The Japanese then made a move towards India and forced the British to retreat. British forces were already stretched much beyond their capacity in Europe and the Middle East due to the rapid German advance. A large number of Indian troops were also deployed there. With the opening of a new War front in the East, it became necessary to augment the strength of the Army. The British visualized

numbers of volunteers came into Lansdowne to enlist, but for the first six months or so the strength of the Training Battalions were strictly limited and so the surplus, if medically fit and otherwise suitable, could only be registered and returned to their homes to be called up later", Lt Gen Sir Ralph B. Deedes, *The Royal Garhwal Rifles, vol. II, 1923-1947* (New Delhi, Army Press, 1962), p. 160; In still another case, when the CO of 2nd Lancer, Lt Col Vaughan on outbreak of war toured the recruiting ground of the regiment in south east Punjab, youngsters flocked in numbers for enlistment. Brig E.W.D. Vaughan, *A History of The 2nd Royal Lancer: From 1922 to 1947* (London, Sifton Praed, 1951), p. 58.

¹⁸ *Statistical Review of Personnel Army of India*, vol. I, pp. 2-5 & 31-3, HDMOD.

¹⁹ First registration target was fixed to 25,000 but in August 1940, it was increased to 30,000. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 8.

²⁰ With the introduction of 'Recruit Reception Camp', the policy of 'Recruit Registration Scheme' was abandoned. *Reinforcement*, a monograph prepared by Adjutant General Branch after the War, year n.d., printed and 'For Official Use Only', p. 5, HDMOD.

²¹ In the beginning training centres did not have enough space and staff to accommodate more recruits. Thus, Recruit Reception Camps held the recruits until vacancies existed in training establishments.

the need for the creation of a large force in India because it was situated closer to the War front and had a large population.²²

However, the fast increasing demand of manpower could not be met by the existing flow of recruits in India. In a Joint Conference on Recruiting held at the General HQ in March 1942, the Adjutant General lamented that ‘the situation has become reversed since the outbreak of War, then there were more recruits forthcoming than we could house and now we have means but recruits although coming forward in large numbers are still insufficient for our purpose.’²³ In the prevailing circumstances drastic changes were to be initiated in recruiting policies.

To begin with, the existing administrative set-up for recruitment needed to be geared up. The obstacles in the way of recruitment had to be tackled. The martial races though initially sufficed the need, but started drying up when the intensity of the War increased. The British bias towards the martial race theory posed a serious hindrance in the recruitment process as the British authorities were still reluctant to enlist the non-martial classes.²⁴ Further, India lacked industries and also technical manpower that were required for the mechanization of the Indian armed forces. India being an agricultural country with a high rate of illiteracy, the necessary manpower for the officer cadre was not available substantially. Some educated young men were even not inclined to volunteer for the military service.²⁵ Further, some educated men, who could fit in the officer cadre, were discouraged by the call of some Indian political parties against the British War effort. The on-going political movements, especially the Quit India Movement further kept away many people from donning the

²²Lord Samuel stated in the House of Commons on 15 February 1942 that India had a population of about 40 crore that was one-sixth of the total human resources of the world. He added that India could produce between 1.5 and 2 crore soldiers and they could work in South- East Asia. *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 16 February 1942, p. 3; Question was again raised in the House of Commons on 5 March 1942. Secretary of State was asked as why he was unable to recruit a large number of men in India at a stage when a war front had emerged in the East. He was also asked to explain as to who was responsible for this slowness, he or authorities in India. *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 6 March 1942.

²³*Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD.

²⁴Maj Gen S.F. Irvine, ‘India’s Watchword Readiness’, *Journal of United Service Institution of India* (hereafter JUSII), LXXVI, 323, April 1946, pp. 192-203. The essay was presented during the Second World War, but published later in April 1946.

²⁵*Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, September 1939- December 1943, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

uniform.²⁶ A large number of desertions were another cause of alarm for the military authorities.²⁷

In any case the recruitment had to move forward, as the need for manpower was mounting every day. The administrative system was reorganised. Provisions for the expansion of existing recruitment offices and the creation of new ones already existed in Recruiting Regulations.²⁸ The recruitment officers, medical officers, etc., were thus made available from All India Reserve of Officers (AIRO), earmarked for the purpose by Army Headquarters. Qualified workshop officers could now assist the technical recruiting staff in recruitment and conducting trade tests of technical recruits. New recruitment branches were planned in different Recruitment Areas to recruit the maximum number of persons needed to meet the large demand.²⁹ Thus the strength of the recruitment staff started expanding in response to the growing needs of the time. New posts of Recruiting Officers, Assistant Recruiting Officers, and Recruiting Medical Officers were created. Assistant Technical Recruiting Officers were appointed and posted in recruitment offices to enable the recruitment of technical manpower.³⁰

In June 1941, a Recruiting Directorate was formed, under the Adjutant General Branch, to look after the manpower requirement of the Indian Army.³¹ But, the conflicting claims of all the three Services created a problem of competition in the beginning for the recruits.³² A new policy was, therefore, framed to amalgamate the

²⁶ Quit India Movement widely disrupted the communication in Bengal, Bihar and the United Province, requiring the use of 57 battalions in internal security duties before the order was restored. Noting of Chief of General Staff, No. 55399/MO2, 26 August 1942, HDMOD; Home Department, GOI to S/S India, 5 September 1942, vol. II, *TOP*; According to General Slim, Bihar was so internally disturbed that a whole British division was deputed to tackle the internal problem. Field Marshal Sir William Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London, Cassell and Company, 1956), pp. 135-8.

²⁷ During the War from 1939 to 1945, there were 360,045 desertion cases in the Indian armed forces. For more details, see Desertion in Chapter 2 of this Thesis.

²⁸ *Recruiting Regulations, India, Part II (War), 1938* (New Delhi, G.O.I. Press, 1938), p. 1.

²⁹ *Fauji Akhbar*, 25 January 1941. The publication of *Fauji Akhbar* was started in 1909 by then Defence authorities of India to publish news relating to the Indian Army. Later, with the inception of the Indian Navy and Air Force, it started covering these services also. During the Second World War, *Fauji Akhbar* was published weekly and its editor was Major Ross Lewin. The number of print copies of *Fauji Akhbar* multiplied than the peace time period and rose to more than a lakh at its peak during the War. The publication of this paper continued till date except some interruption during late 1940s and early 1950s. Now this publication is called 'Sainik Samachar'.

³⁰ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 7-8.

³¹ The recruitment of Army was earlier looked after by the Adjutant General Branch designated as A.G. 2. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 1.

³² Reorganization of the Army and the Air Force Committee felt contented while reporting that the army recruitment did not suffer from competition with the police forces despite the fact that large scale

recruitment of Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force with some exceptions.³³ A system of priority was followed to induct available men of a particular qualification into Service or Arms, on a need basis. This not only prevented undesirable inter-service competition but also proved economical, as the concerned staff of three services worked in close cooperation for a common objective.³⁴ In March 1943, the recruitment of Women Auxiliary Corps was also combined with the Recruiting Directorate,³⁵ and this led to the appointment of one women recruitment representative in some recruitment offices. With an increasing demand of medical personnel, British authorities created a 'Recruitment Section' under Director General Indian Medical Services (DGIMS) to recruit medical officers. This section was also assigned the responsibility of recruiting nurses, dentists, and chemists.³⁶

The policy of amalgamation of recruitment for the three services was found to be rewarding. The Navy and Air Force, which were lagging in their recruitment effort, found it particularly useful. The Navy benefitted more, but the problem of recruitment to the Air Force persisted. The measures taken so far were helpful but not fool proof because the rivalry between the technical and the non-technical recruiting staff continued.³⁷ It is notable that even after creating the 'Directorate of Recruiting' and implementing the 'amalgamation of recruiting' policy, Regimental Recruiting Parties continued to visit their recruiting areas for special drives. But, this practice followed in consultation with the Directorate of Recruiting and Recruiting Officers

police recruitment was undertaken in United Province and Bihar due to internal disturbances. Besides the existing Police strength, more than 12,000 and 12,500 candidates in U.P. and Bihar each were recruited during the War period. *Reorganization of the Army and Air Forces in India* (henceforth Willcox Committee Report), para 108 & Appendix O.

³³ Recruiting organizations of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force were amalgamated w.e.f. 1 December 1941. 'Amalgamation of Recruiting Organisations for all Services', *Indian Army Order*, No. 2157 of 1941. However, recruitment of 'Boys' and 'Artificer Apprentice' in Navy was not amalgamated until November 1942 and early 1945, respectively. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 23.

³⁴ *Reinforcements*, p. 4.

³⁵ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 1.

³⁶ Lt Col B.L. Raina (editor), *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War 1939-45: Medical Services* (New Delhi, CISHS, 1953), pp. 99-102. Recruitment to the 'Indian Medical Service' and 'Indian Medical Department' was earlier done by the 'Personnel Section' of DGIMS. It was split into two branches each for IMS & IMD after the War started. By the end of 1940, it was combined and recruitment of Medical Officers, Nurses, Dentists and Chemists etc. were placed under the 'Recruitment Section'.

³⁷ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 12.

concerned.³⁸ The Navy also sent sundry recruiting parties, including three Naval officers to tour the country for the purpose.³⁹

Besides recruiting men from British Indian Territory, the Recruiting Directorate also looked for recruits in the Indian States.⁴⁰ However, the method of approach to different Indian States differed. In some States the approach of recruitment was through a Resident or Political Agent while in other States the Durbar or the Officer Commanding of the State Forces was approached directly. Still, in some States, recruitment authorities directly approached even the junior officials of the State for recruitment. But in all cases, the States' claim on the prospective recruits for the State Forces was always given preference.⁴¹ For this reason, recruitment from some States was prohibited because the potential recruits preferred the Indian Defence Services rather than the State Forces as the former assured good salary and better living standards.⁴² A policy was also framed under which the rulers of the State could recruit the personnel, provide them accommodation, and train them using their own resources while the Government of India would defray the cost. These personnel could then be enlisted in the regular army and paid by the Government.⁴³ States could also recruit men for the State Forces from British India with the approval of GHQ. The ceiling was, however, twenty-five per cent of their total authorized strength of the

³⁸ 'Recruitment Tours by Unit Recruiting Parties', *Indian Army Order, No. 1340 of 1941*; 'Recruitment by Regimental Recruiting Parties', *Indian Army Order, No. 720 of 1944*; 'Regimental Recruitment', *Policy Compendium*, Amendment List No. 4, 1943, issued by A.G. Branch, (Calcutta, G.O.I. Press, 1943), Chapter 46, Section 8. Such Regimental Recruiting parties even advertised their recruiting plans in Fauji Akhbars. One of these kinds of Party of 11 Sikh Regiment visited their recruiting area to recruit the men for the Regiment. It was led by Major C.W.M. Morris of the Regiment. *Fauji Akhbar*, 8 February 1941.

³⁹ *Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, p. 5, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD.

⁴⁰ Indian States undoubtedly expressed their loyalty and sincerity to the Raj since the War scenario emerged by writing letters and messages to the British authorities in India and wished to place their men and material for War disposal.

⁴¹ *ISF War Manual*, Secret and in printed form, compiled by the HQs of the Military Adviser in Chief, Indian State Forces (Simla, GOI Press, 1942), p. 8. According to Shiva Rao, the Indian States of Bhopal and Hyderabad had the rights even before the War to recruit their soldiers from outside their own borders and going as far as the tribal areas of the North-West frontier. This was not granted to any Hindu State. Shiva B. Rao, 'After the War in India', *Pacific Affairs*, University of British Columbia, vol. 18, No. 2, June 1945, pp. 169-79.

⁴² *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 12; 'Desertions- Indian State Forces', *Indian Army Order*, No. 2178 of 1941. Havildar Chhaju Ram of Patiala State Force pointed out less salary and facilities in the State Forces. He revealed that we (soldiers of the State Forces) all wanted to be absorbed with the Indian Army and even wrote a letter to the Commander-in-Chief in this regard. *Interview, Havildar Chhaju Ram*, 9 December 2008. Havildar Chhaju Ram was in Patiala State Force initially and was later transferred to the Punjab Regiment of the Indian Army.

⁴³ *Note on Expansion of Defence Services, September 1939- December 1943*, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

Force. This could be relaxed if the number of State Force units serving with His Majesty's forces was large.⁴⁴

The administrative set-up also necessitated changes in the old system of supplying recruits. The War Regulations provided for a system in which recruits could be made available on the basis of the demand placed by Training Depots to the Recruiting Offices.⁴⁵ The demand for non-technical recruits was to be placed by the Depots to the Recruiting Office through the District HQ, who carried out a check whether the demand was in accordance with unit's War Establishment. Likewise, the demand for technical recruits was to be placed through the Command HQ.⁴⁶ This system of direct demand worked satisfactorily as long as the requirements were moderate. But once the requirements increased manifold, this system proved ineffective. The demands of the Depots could never be met in full. The users started exaggerating their demands hoping that the larger the demand the greater would be the supply.⁴⁷

The system was, therefore, discontinued and was replaced by a new system in September 1942. Under the new arrangement all demands for technical personnel were controlled centrally by the Recruitment Directorate. In 1944, a new department called the 'Manpower Directorate' was created. The demand for technical men was now routed to the Directorate of Recruiting through the Manpower Directorate, which scrutinized the demand.⁴⁸

The system of recruiting men was totally different from the system adopted during the First World War. During the First World War, a class recruitment system was adopted under which recruiting officers from each of the martial classes recruited men for the Indian Army. However, the system had to be changed to that of a territorial recruitment in December 1917 to keep pace with the demand. Provincial Recruitment Boards comprising district officers were formed to help the centralized

⁴⁴ To recruit men for the ISF from British India, the State needed to send their demand to GHQ India specifying the vacancies and the class State Force required. GHQ, in turn, forwarded the demand to the Recruiting Offices. States needed to seek permission from the GHQ if they wanted to recruit men directly. *ISF War Manual*, p. 8.

⁴⁵ *Recruiting Regulations, India, Part II (War), 1938*, Appendix A.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. iii.

⁴⁷ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Up to September 1944, demands were placed monthly but after October 1944 it was quarterly keeping in view the next three months anticipated requirements.

recruiting divisions and this was found very helpful.⁴⁹ The Quota for each province and district was fixed and they needed to provide the number of recruits fixed for them.⁵⁰ In the Second World War, the Directorate of Recruiting not only looked after the recruitment of whole Indian Army centrally but also of the Indian Navy and Air Force.

Recruiting technical manpower in India was indeed difficult, particularly when the reserves were negligible.⁵¹ Even during the First World War the demand for skilled technical manpower posed a difficult problem.⁵² India being a largely agricultural country, lacked industries and thus had a small number of men with technical skill. Technicians were not easily available. Among the few, who could be potential recruits, many preferred railways, private commercial firms, and rising industries during the War.⁵³ The raising of a unit with the technical personnel thus proved a daunting job. The Indian Army reflected this in being an un-modernized force, lacking technical training facilities and adequate cadre from which an expansion could flow. Due to the shortage of skilled manpower, British authorities started training men for the services. If the skilled men were in short supply, skilled instructors were even more so, especially the instructors who could teach in the language of the recruits.

Efforts were, therefore, made to obtain engineering students from colleges and universities to train them for the Army. Many colleges and universities were approached for the purpose but the outcome was not encouraging. To meet the shortage, boys were enlisted and a battalion of about 1,000 boys was raised in November 1941 to produce highly skilled tradesmen.⁵⁴ But this enterprise was time-consuming, particularly when the need was immediate. The problem of technical recruiting was further aggravated by a large number of wastages, especially in the

⁴⁹ Kaushik Roy, 'Race and Recruitment in the Indian Army: 1880-1918', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 47, Part I, Jan 2013, pp. 1-38.

⁵⁰ M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War* (Lahore, Superintendent, Government of India Press, 1922), pp. 33-5.

⁵¹ *Reinforcements*, p. 4.

⁵² Government of India, *India's Contribution to the Great War* (Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, 1923), p. 87.

⁵³ P.N. Khera, *Technical Services: Ordnance & IEME* (New Delhi, Historical Section, 1962), p. 129.

⁵⁴ *Expansion of Armed Forces: Indian Engineers, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9051/H, HDMOD. These boys were also to produce potential VCOs and NCOs, but for this the scheme was not successful as they were not found having leadership qualities. However, they produced good tradesmen for technical Corps.

Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force. For example, the Air Force suffered nearly 60 per cent wastages to its peak in the mid-1944,⁵⁵ the reason being that much of the good stuff out of the limited stock was exhausted by the other services.

Civil and civ-mil centres for technical training were opened to mitigate the dire need of technical manpower. The civ-mil centres under the aegis of the Labour Department imparted eight months technical training to the recruits.⁵⁶ But services such as the Indian Army Ordnance Corps still faced much difficulty in finding recruits. A conference was held on 23 July 1941 to find a solution. It was attended by representatives of the Ordnance Corps, the Adjutant General Branch, and the Labour Department, among others. It was decided to persuade the recruits already in training centres to opt for the Ordnance Corps by propaganda and other means. The conference even suggested that in the event of all such measures proving ineffective, in order to ensure the supply of candidates to the Ordnance Corps, conscription could be considered.⁵⁷

The Japanese threat in the Far East augmented the technical manpower requirement of the Indian armed forces manifold. Some strong policy measures were now considered necessary to harness technical manpower that was available with the erstwhile limited industries of India. As a strong measure, the National Service (Technical Personnel) Amendment Ordinance was issued in January 1942. This Ordinance empowered the Central Government to ask the industries in India to release the technical personnel who wish to seek employment in the Indian Armed Forces as soldiers or civilians. The Ordinance also ensured the right of such volunteers who joined the armed forces, to re-join their industry after the War.⁵⁸ The measure, however, did not succeed as many people did not like to leave their stable livelihood. As a special measure in January 1943, the Central Government appealed to the Provincial Governments and the Indian States to ask their educational staff to impress upon the educated candidates to join the technical services of the defence forces. These Governments were also authorized to recruit educated persons themselves for

⁵⁵ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 74.

⁵⁶ Personal Notes for IEME Officers (Restricted), *IEME Blue Book Series*, No. 5, p. 12; Willcox Committee Report, para 20.

⁵⁷ *Summaries for the Committee of Council*, vol. V (3 Jul – 25 Sep 1941), pp. 41-2, File No. 601/7006/H, HDMOD.

⁵⁸ *Hindustan Times*, 31 January 1942.

the army.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, as a short-term policy, suitable Indian Other Rank (henceforth IOR) craftsmen serving with the Workshop Branch (later IEME) were selected for specialist courses. It was estimated that between 1943 and 1946, a substantial number of Indian Armament Artificers would be trained.⁶⁰

Simultaneously, the civ-mil plan was going well. By November 1943, there were 83 civ-mil centres with 38,000 men under training. Of these 20,000 men were enrolled personnel.⁶¹ The plan went well and a total of 75,000 enrolled trainees were supplied from civil and civ-mil centres to the Army.⁶² However, this figure was much less than what was needed. The recruitment for technical branches, thus, remained much below the requirement. To handle the problem of technical recruits further, various Corps of the Army even enlisted boys with a modicum of primary education. These boys were given education and training to fit into the job of specialists.⁶³ Indian Railways assisted by providing a good number of skilled manpower to the Indian Army.⁶⁴ Help also came from civil contractors dealing with technical manpower. Some technical Corps even lowered the minimum qualification standard desired for a job to attract more recruits.⁶⁵ But some services found it hard to get things going in the lowered educational standard of recruits. These services thus had to raise the required qualifications.⁶⁶ A high educational standard was also maintained in some other technical trades, which required better level of understanding and involved writing work. Age limit for trained technicians varied in different Corps but ranged between 18 and 45 years during the War.⁶⁷

⁵⁹*Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 60.

⁶⁰ IEME Blue Book Series No. 5 (Restricted), *Personal Notes for IEME Officers*, p. 12.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁶²*Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 62-3 & 66. These 75,000 men were provided both by Civil and Civ-mil centres. Civil centres worked solely under the Labour Department to train men for technical duties like in Ordnance, war production factories, armed forces, etc. Civ-mil centres had enrolled trainee thus these were being control both by the Army and the Labour Department. Civil centres besides providing technically trained persons to war production civil industries also supplied such manpower to the armed forces.

⁶³ Willcox Committee Report, para 19.

⁶⁴*Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 58-9.

⁶⁵Signal Corps lowered the qualification of its operator trade from pre-War 7th Jamat to now 4th Jamat. No. 2507/3/SD 1(b), 16 November 1945, *War Times ICOs: The Progress of Indianisation, 1945*, 601/7179/H, HDMOD.

⁶⁶Mechanical Transport Units raised their educational qualification standard from 4th Standard to 6th Standard. *Fauji Akhbar*, 15 February 1941 & 22 February 1941. IAOC at first did not specify any educational and physical standard for its recruits. Later 4th standard of education was made mandatory. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 58-9

⁶⁷*Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 55-6.

Finding soldier clerks for the Army was also very difficult. The job demanded a good educational standard. During the War to help the military administration at the Army Headquarters, formations and army units, a large number of clerks were required. In September 1941, the Technical Recruiting Officers reported that if steps were not initiated to improve the terms and conditions for clerks the recruitment would break down.⁶⁸ They added that the terms of service for clerks were not sufficiently attractive to compete with other services that also required educated men.⁶⁹ In view of the above, in March 1942, a policy was framed to enrol the clerks directly in the rank of havildar with a lower grade pay. To stimulate the recruitment, Central and Provincial Governments were persuaded to reserve a percentage of permanent clerical and other posts for candidates with approved War service.⁷⁰ These inducements did not attract many and hence the supply still remained lower than the requirement. The policy was altered to enlist men with lower educational standard to fit them in jobs by imparting additional training. But this also did not yield appreciable results.⁷¹

To mitigate the shortage of clerks, an enlistment plan for women was envisaged. Women Auxiliary Corps (India) was thus raised in April 1942⁷² to take on staff and clerical duties in peace areas. This facilitated the diversion of suitable clerks in fighting services to the War front. The Women Auxiliary Corps (India) was, therefore, called as an asset to the Extra Regimentally Employed establishment.⁷³ This was the second instance when Indian women found entry in the armed forces during the War. In the First World War also women found space in the Indian Army. When a shortage of doctors in the Indian Medical Service could not be met due to a paucity of medical professionals in India, women doctors were recruited for the treatment of patients in Indian Army.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁷¹ *Expansion of the Armed Forces, 1939-45*, 601/9056/H, HDMOD.

⁷² Ordinance No. XIII of 1942, *Gazette of India*, 9 April 1942; Defence Department Notification No. 724 & 725, *Gazette of India*, dated 25 April 1942.

⁷³ *Expansion: Extra Regimentally Employed*, pp. 6-7. At the peak of its strength WAC(I) provided 515 officers and 4,298 auxiliaries to the ERE establishments.

⁷⁴ S.D. Pradhan, 'Indian Army and the First World War', DeWitt C. Ellinwood and S.D. Pradhan (ed.), *India and World War I* (New Delhi, Manohar, 1978), pp. 49-67. The Indian army, however, already had 90 women nurses when the First World War started and their strength increased to 900 by the end of that War. In contrast the total strength of WAC(I) in November 1944 was 9,478 of which 2,289 were

By the year 1944, the supply of clerks was short by 10,000. Measures such as the militarization of the Corps of Clerks and resort to British and Anglo Indian low medical category personnel⁷⁵ also failed to bridge the gap. The lowering of educational standards and the inducement of pay did reduce the shortage but the problem persisted throughout the War.⁷⁶

Though no educational qualification was prescribed for non-technical recruits, the large demand for men could not be met by the enlisted classes. The recruitment was, therefore, thrown open to men of all classes (including non-martial classes) in March 1941.⁷⁷ Consequently new regiments such as the Chamar Regiment, Lingayat Battalion, Mahar Regiment were raised even out of classes considered untouchable then.

Meanwhile, the shortage of Non Commissioned Officers (henceforth NCO) and Viceroy Commissioned Officers (henceforth VCO) became unmanageable. The military authorities, therefore planned to enlist the boys in each regiment and corps of the Indian Army. The prescribed age limit ranged between 13 ½ and 17 years. A fair standard of education and physical development was also prescribed, though this was relaxed later. The institution of boys' units in training centres began with the Corps of Engineers at the end of 1941; it was subsequently adopted by other Arms and Services.⁷⁸ Initially, the intake of boys was fixed at one company in each regiment. The boys were intended to grow into potential NCOs and at least specialist soldiers in active battalions.⁷⁹ The plan, however, did not meet the desired success as the battalions preferred experienced soldiers.

British, 3,252 Indian and 3,937 Anglo Indian. Reply to Starred Question No. 703, 21 November 1944, LAD.

⁷⁵Of a soldier on being declared low medical category was discharged from service. Now, policies were altered to transfer such persons from active units to garrison battalions, training and duty companies etc. 'Disposal of Indian Personnel not considered Suitable for Service with Active Units', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1153 of 1941.

⁷⁶*Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 56-7.

⁷⁷A Resolution was also moved by Pandit Kunzru. 'Recruitment of all Classes for the Indian Army', 6 March 1941, CSD.

⁷⁸Willcox Committee Report, paras 759-60. The Reorganisation Committee recommended that the career of the best ex-boys be followed carefully and they should be encouraged and assisted to take what openings were provided for commissioning from the ranks. Some of these boys proved highly intelligent and were commissioned in the Indian Army. One such person Rai Singh who joined as a boy got commissioned in 1946. He performed brilliantly and got a Mahavir Chakra in 1967. He rose to the rank of Brigadier. *Personal Interview with Brigadier Rai Singh*, February 2010.

⁷⁹Garhwal Rifles had initially an establishment of 250 boys. Deedes, *The Royal Garhwal Rifles*, p. 161; Boys training company of 19 Hyderabad had an establishment of 150 boys. K.C. Praval, *Valour Triumphs: A History of the Kumaon Regiment* (Faridabad, Thompson Press, 1976), pp. 98-9; Col R.D.

To mitigate the shortage of non-technical manpower further, garrison companies were raised out of re-employed ex-servicemen, over-age recruits, and serving low-medical category soldiers. They relieved many fighting fit men of the Army to move out to the War fronts. These garrison units performed duties such as the security of POW Camps, defence of airfields, protection of railways, and internal security matters, etc.⁸⁰

Recruitment for Services such as the Cavalry was handicapped for want of weapons. The Cavalry was being modernized. It had shed its horses but did not receive the tanks till the later stages of the War. The expansion of Indian Armour was thus at a slow pace.⁸¹ During the First World War, sufficient numbers of recruits for the Cavalry were difficult to find because only financially well-off persons could join it due to its Silladari system.⁸² The recruitment to Cavalry later known as the Armoured Corps was, therefore, handicapped for want of horses in the First World War and tanks during the Second World War.

The Navy recruited its ratings mainly in three categories termed as Active Service, Short Service, and Hostilities Only (henceforth HO).⁸³ It needed fairly educated men between 17 ½ and 26 years of age. The qualification differed as per the requirement of different trades. A person who had the ability to read and write in Hindustani or English, could apply for trades like stokers, seamen, cooks or topasses. To join the Navy as a writer (ship's clerk), a matriculation certificate with proficiency in typing was essential. For communication branches such as signal and wireless code graphics, only matriculates could apply.⁸⁴ Recruits for stewards and sick birth attendants were required to have passed at least the sixth standard of education while signalmen, wireless operators and other technicians were required to have studied at least till the ninth standard.⁸⁵ Besides the ability to write legibly, communication skills

Palsokar, *The Grenadiers: A Tradition of Valour* (Jabalpur, Grenadier Regimental Centre, 1980), p. 251.

⁸⁰ *Expansion of Armed Forces- Armoured and Infantry, 1939-45*, File No.601/9049/H, HDMOD.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, File No.601/9049/H, HDMOD; Maj Gen Gurbachan Singh Sandhu, *The Indian Armour* (New Delhi, Vision Books, 1987), p. 21.

⁸² Pradhan, 'Indian Army and the First World War', pp. 49-67.

⁸³ *Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, September 1939- December 1943, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

⁸⁴ *Fauji Akhbar*, 18 January 1941; *Fauji Akhbar*, 15 February 1941; *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 7 September 1941.

⁸⁵ *Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, p. 4, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD; *Fauji Akhbar*, 15 February 1941.

in English were also mandatory for communication branches. The Navy also recruited boys between the ages of 15 and 17 years. The detailed information and application forms could be obtained from HMIS Signal School in the case of communication branches, HMIS Bahadur for the boys and RIN Depot, Bombay, for the rest.⁸⁶ Besides, in July 1941, the Navy also got approval from the Government of India to establish a training school for junior boys between the ages of 14 ½ and 15 ½ years. The school with a capacity of 200 boys was to start from January 1942.⁸⁷ Now boys between 14 and 15 ½ years of age with the eighth standard of education could apply for HMIS Dilawar.⁸⁸ The policies were, at times, altered to provide relaxations in qualification, age and physical standard as per the requirement of service.⁸⁹ The Navy clearly emphasized in its recruitment advertisements that the ratings would be provided with non-vegetarian rations only.⁹⁰

Merchant ships provided HO ratings to the Indian Navy.⁹¹ Civ-mil Centres like Pilani supplied the potential Artificers. This centre offered a six-month engineering course to intermediate science students from all over India who wished to join the Navy as Artificers.⁹² A competent staff of three RIN officers and 25 civilian instructors directed the preliminary training, after which recruits were sent to HMIS Shivaji for a year's advance course before the beginning of their service in the Navy. To spare the men of RIN for the War fronts, authorities employed wives of serving RIN officers in substantial numbers to assist in the code and cipher departments, and also secretarial services. A beginning was made at Bombay and it was later extended to other ports of RIN. Meanwhile, in 1941, the Women RIN (WRIN) service, was

⁸⁶*Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 7 September 1941.

⁸⁷ Chinna Creek near Karachi was selected for establishing the School. *Summaries for the Committee of Council*, 7th August 1941, Defence Co-ordination Department, p. 52, vol. V, File No. 601/7006/H, HDMOD..

⁸⁸*Fauji Akhbar*, 14 March 1942. Such advertisement repeated in many succeeding issues of *Fauji Akhbars*.

⁸⁹At the beginning of the War, the minimum height required was 5 feet 4 inches. In February 1942, it was relaxed to 5 feet 2 inches for all trades of the Indian Navy. A year later it was further relaxed to 5 feet only for the communication branch, writers, sick berth attendants. No physical standard was laid down for ratings 'Hostilities Only', the recruits needed to be fit for active service. Similarly in July 1943, upper age limit for 'Writer' was extended to 30 years and August 1944 to 35 years. Artificers, and also Cooks, Stewards and *Topasses* up to 35 years could now join the Navy. Similarly, relaxation in educational qualification was also extended as per the demands of the recruits. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 24-5.

⁹⁰*Fauji Akhbar*, 12 April 1941; *Fauji Akhbar*, 19 April 1941.

⁹¹*Note on Expansion of Defence Services, September 1939- December 1943*, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD. By the end of November 1940, 1,322 ratings out of a total recruitment of 4,058 for the Indian Navy, were recruited from the Mercantile Marine.

⁹²War Department, Government of India, *India's Part in Fifth Year of War*, p. 5.

opened to suitable European civilian women. Gradually, the WRIN was extended to women of Indian origin also and in the course many Indians and Anglo-Indians joined the service.⁹³

With the Indian Air Force the problem was somewhat different as it was a totally mechanized force. It needed the men who could keep the aircraft airworthy. In order to handle the sophisticated equipment, the Air Force required well-educated men in its ranks. After the beginning of the War, an expansion plan for the Indian Air Force as envisaged in 1940, which provided for raising four squadrons by April 1942.⁹⁴ In 1941, the target was raised to ten squadrons.⁹⁵ To meet the War time demand, the Air Force restructured certain recruitment policies. Under the new policy, recruitment to the regular cadre of ranks were stopped. From June 1940, it started recruiting men for the duration of the War, and thereafter if required.⁹⁶ A Recruitment Scheme was drawn up and the plan was to recruit 2,000 ground staff to meet the need of the expansion.⁹⁷ The recruitment was to be carried out by a Touring Board consisting of a president, a technical adviser and a medical officer. Besides, the Provincial Governments and the Indian States were also invoked to deal with preliminary selection to screen out unsuitable candidates and refer the selected ones to the Central Board. Physical criteria remained the same as for the Other Ranks in the Army but the recruits were required to be matriculate in the age group of 18 to 22 years. By February 1941, 38,000 applications had been received but only 600 of them were found suitable for the final training.⁹⁸ In order to accelerate the recruitment of ground duty staff, Indian Air Training Corps (IATC) was formed in February 1943. But the experience was not encouraging as the average Indian student carried an impression that a service in the ranks of the IAF meant a loss of prestige and status.⁹⁹

⁹³*Women's Royal Indian Naval service: Monograph, 1947*, p. 1, prepared by A.A.H. Campbell, File No. 601/10849/H, HDMOD. In June 1943, WRINS became the part of WAC(I), but these women continued serving in the RIN.

⁹⁴*Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, September 1939- December 1943, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

⁹⁵In June 1941, the Government agreed to raise the IAF as a ten squadrons force. This decision was announced later in the Legislative Assembly in November 1941. 'Proposal for Review of Policy Governing the Wartime Expansion and Development of Indian Air Force', a Memorandum by AOC, India, 29 August 1944, *Post War Defence Service: Re-organisation Committee*, File No. 601/10587/H (Secret), HDMOD; *Fauji Akhbar*, dated 8 November 1941.

⁹⁶*Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 72-4.

⁹⁷*Hindustan Times*, Delhi, 28 February 1941.

⁹⁸*Council of State Debate*, 27 February 1941.

⁹⁹Statement on Table by C-in-C, 19 November 1943, CSD. The IATC formed in February but scheme came into operation from April 1943.

With an increasing demand for manpower in the IAF, the lower age limit was fixed at 17 ½ years and the upper age limit at 38 years in November 1943. The standard of education was also relaxed for certain trades. Candidates were now required to answer simple questions, and speak and write in English.¹⁰⁰ Recruitments were first carried out by the IAF Recruiting Officers posted to various recruiting offices. These officers toured the recruiting areas to fetch men for the IAF. The recruiting responsibility was later assumed by the Directorate of Recruiting and thus Air Force officers were attached with the Army Recruiting Offices.¹⁰¹

Recruitment of officers was a more difficult task. Prior to the War, there were few vacancies for officers for Indians. The selection was done through Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) in the case of direct candidates¹⁰² and through service channels for the Other Ranks of the Indian Army. In the Indian Military Academy, 60 vacancies were reserved for the Indian Army and 20 for Indian State Forces annually. This intake entered the Academy in two half-yearly terms of equal numbers. Out of the 60 vacancies, 30 were filled through open competition and 30 by cadets from the ranks of the Regular Army, Auxiliary and Territorial Forces, excluding the University Training Corps. Of the 30 vacancies from the open competition, 15 each were filled on a half yearly basis. Of these 15, the first 12 went to the candidates' standing in the order of merit. The remaining three were reserved for nomination by the Commander-in-Chief, from among the candidates who had qualified but failed to make the merit list. Candidates could indicate their order of preference for technical and non-technical arms of the Army and also for RIN and IAF.¹⁰³

There was no qualification as such demanded for the exam. The applicant had to be in good mental and physical health and free from any deformity that could interfere with his efficient performance of duty as a commissioned officer. He needed

¹⁰⁰ S.C. Gupta, *History of the Indian Air Force, 1933-45* (Delhi, Historical Section, 1961), p. 37.

¹⁰¹ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 72-4.

¹⁰² The application for direct candidates when advertised by Federal Public Service Commission, it was to be forwarded through the Collector or Deputy Commissioner of the district in which the parents of candidates resided. In case of Calcutta, the application was to be made through the Commissioner of Police. The candidate if a resident of the Indian State, his application was to be processed first in the Darbar of the State that would forward it to the Resident or the Political officer for further submission to FPSC. Cadets of PWRIMC, Dehradun were to submit applications directly through their principal.

¹⁰³ *Committee on the Indianisation of the Officers Ranks of the Indian Army*, pp. 37-9, File No. 601/12810/H (Secret), HDMOD. The advertisement of vacancies through FPSC was also published in the *Gazette of India* time to time. The eligibility, pattern of exam, etc. were published with complete details.

to satisfy the FPSC that he was suitable in all respects for the commissioned rank. The application form was to be obtained by paying Rs 7.8 and a lordly sum of Rs 50 had to be deposited in the treasury if his form was accepted by FPSC.¹⁰⁴ The exam was a combined one for all the services; however, some examination tests were different for the Navy.¹⁰⁵ For the Army, the exam was conducted in two parts. Part one carrying 1,400 marks, was compulsory while part two had some options, of which a candidate was required to select a total value of 800 marks.¹⁰⁶ For qualifying the exam a candidate had to score fifty per cent marks (1,100) in total. At least 175 marks had to be scored in the interview. Upon joining the Indian Military Academy, a candidate could volunteer for a technical arm provided he passed the examination in mathematics. Candidates thus selected were trained for Woolwich Wing and after two terms if the Commandant found their performance satisfactory, they were sent to Woolwich for technical training.¹⁰⁷ The Army Cadets from the ranks were selected after attending a course of 18 months at Kitchener College, Nowgong. A certain number of boys from King George's Royal Indian Military Schools (KGRIMS) were also nominated directly to the Kitchener College without passing through the ranks. The age limit for open competition to Indian Military Academy was 20 years, but for Army cadets it was 25 years.¹⁰⁸ At the beginning of the War, there were few Indian commissioned officers in the Army.¹⁰⁹

After the outbreak of War, the existing system could not meet the large demand for officers. To deal with the situation, the Regular Commission to the Indian Army was discontinued. In January 1940, an Emergency Commission was introduced

¹⁰⁴ For example see Resolution No. 270, *Gazette of India*, 4 May 1935; Resolution No. 525, *Gazette of India*, 21 May 1938; Resolution No. 618, 13 May 1939 in File No. F10/1/39 E, 1939, Federal Public Service Commission, NAI.

¹⁰⁵ Like army candidates needed to take Elementary Mathematics as a compulsory paper and Lower Mathematics as an optional whereas for the Navy there was no paper for Elementary Mathematics but Lower Mathematics was compulsory. Again Geography was compulsory for the Army but optional for the Navy exam etc.

¹⁰⁶ Part I had subjects- Interview and Record 500 marks, English Language 300 marks, and General Knowledge, Elementary Mathematics and Geography, each of 200 marks. Part II had subjects like French or German, Lower Mathematics, Higher mathematics, Indian History, English History, etc. each of 300 marks. Resolution No. 618, 13 May 1939, File No. F10/1/39 E, 1939, Federal Public Service Commission, NAI.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Committee on the Indianisation of the Officers Ranks of the Indian Army*, p. 37, File No. 601/12810/H (Secret), HDMOD. With the inauguration of the Kitchener College, the age limit for army cadets was reduced to 23 years for entry in that college. The training at the Academy was of 2 ½ years. The fee at the Academy was Rs 3,850 but it was free of cost for army cadets.

¹⁰⁹ In July 1939, two months prior to the beginning of the War there were a total of 5,046 officers in the Indian Army. Of these 528 were Indians. *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India, vol. I*, pp. 2-3.

for the period of the War, and even afterwards if required.¹¹⁰ However, selection continued for some time through the FPSC with some changes. The vacancies were advertised as before but it was mentioned that as a War measure, selected candidates, on successful completion of course, would be granted emergency commission in the Land Forces.¹¹¹ Rules were framed to waive off the fee related to examination and also the training cost at the Academy. The cadets were now to be treated as ‘Army Cadets’ for the purpose of pay, travelling, medical care, clothing, etc.¹¹² The exam pattern was changed and now a separate exam was provisioned for each wing of the Indian Military Academy. For ‘Technical Arms’, the examination was divided into three parts and a candidate needed to score 1,150 marks. But, the criteria for ‘cavalry and infantry’ remained as before the War. The restriction on vacancies, which was fifteen before the war, was done away with. It now depended on the discretion of the Governor General in council.¹¹³

Meanwhile, ‘Volunteer Registers’ were opened at the Headquarters of each District or Independent Area. Candidates aspiring to join the Army were supposed to enter their names in this register. These registered candidates were screened by the District or Independent Area Commander and the selected candidates were then referred to the Central Interview Board (henceforth CIB), formed in Delhi.¹¹⁴ The candidates, finally found successful by CIB, were sent to the Officers Training Schools (OTS) for training.¹¹⁵ Recruitment for the Army through FPSC was discontinued after some time but the Navy continued its recruitment for the Executive

¹¹⁰ ‘Commissions in Indian land Forces’, *Army Instructions (India)*, No. 12 of 1940.

¹¹¹The Notice of advertisement immediately after the War mentioned that the selected candidates would be granted Emergency Commission and not the Regular Commission. Notice, No. 1571, *Gazette of India*, 25 November 1939.

¹¹²Resolution No. 1572, *The Gazette of India*, 25 November 1939; Resolution No. 730, *The Gazette of India*, 18 May 1940; Resolution No. 1766, *The Gazette of India*, 23 November 1940, etc.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ CIB was composed of a Chairman who was a civilian officer appointed by Adjutant General, a Vice Chairman who was a military officer and two temporary members who were Indian gentlemen co-opted for each session. In subsequent months two more boards of CIBs were set up. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 30.

¹¹⁵As per the 1940 Plan, the training of future officers for Indian Army was to take place at four Training Schools in India. OTS Mhow was to provide training to cadets for Indian emergency commission officer at the rate of up to 1,000 cadets every six months. OTS Belgaum to provide training to British cadets recruited in India at the rate of 300 cadets every four months. OTS Bangalore to provide training to British cadets and also overflow of OTS Belgaum at the rate of 600 cadets every six months. IMA Dehradun was to train Indian cadets at the rate of 150 per 18 months. *Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, September 1939- December 1943, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

and Engineering branches through FPSC throughout the war.¹¹⁶ With the spread of hostilities, the demand for officers increased and so did the number of applications from the aspiring candidates. Due to an increase in the number of candidates and the vacancies, the District Commanders found it difficult to deal with the candidates. They were, therefore, relieved of the responsibility, and the work was assigned to Provincial Selection Board (henceforth PSB), formed by the end of 1940. The Provincial Boards now screened the candidates through committees formed locally at the headquarters of each division and referred the selected candidates to CIB for the final selection.¹¹⁷ This procedure was laid down only for the Army but after December 1941 the other two services also adopted the same as recruitment to all the three services was amalgamated.¹¹⁸ Serving personnel of the Army and candidates from military preparatory schools, however, continued to go through the District Commanders.¹¹⁹

No minimum qualification was prescribed for the Indian Emergency Commissioned Officer (henceforth IECO) candidates.¹²⁰ However, British candidates joining the Indian Army as an Emergency Commissioned Officer (BECO) should be in possession of a school certificate of Oxford and Cambridge Board or an equivalent or higher qualification. In the case of Indians, a candidate was required to be educated and intelligent with fluency in the English language. He was also expected to bear a good personality and the ability to command the respect and obedience of Indian soldiers, the capacity to assume responsibility, as also adaptability and tactfulness.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Advertisement for permanent vacancies for the Navy continued to appear in Gazette of India. For example see Resolution No. 1964, *The Gazette of India*, 29 November 1941; Resolution No. 1844, *The Gazette of India*, 19 December 1942, etc. However, there was no such Notice or Resolution of advertisement for the Army in Gazette of India for inviting applications after May 1941.

¹¹⁷ *Summaries for the Committee of Council*, 11th September 1941 (Most Secret), Defence Co-ordination Department, p. 103, vol. V, File No. 601/7006/H, HDMOD. Each Divisional Committee of Provincial Selection Board (PSB) was chaired by local commissioner or equivalent officer and consisted of members, including senior military and police officers and a senior member of the respective Provincial Education Board. 'Recruitment of Officers', *Fauji Akhbar*, 13 December 1941.

¹¹⁸ 'Recruitment of Officers', *Fauji Akhbar*, 13 December 1941. Prior to the CIB pattern, officers in the Naval Reserve were selected by means of personal interviews at Naval Headquarters. Upon amalgamation and introduction of the CIB pattern, the Navy's final selection was done by the Naval Board, Director of Reserve, Bombay that became redundant with the formation of the Service Selection Board. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 20.

¹¹⁹ 'Amalgamation of Recruiting Organisations for all Services', *Indian Army Order*, No. 2157 of 1941. Military preparatory schools were like Kitchener College, Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College, Dehradun School, etc.

¹²⁰ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 29.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*; Gunner, 'The Indian Educational System in Relation to the Requirement of the Defence Forces', *JUSII*, LXXII, Jan-Oct 1942, pp. 147-50.

Indeed, many Indian candidates applying for the emergency commission possessed even a university degree. However, large numbers who joined were matriculates.¹²² But the minimum qualification standard for eligibility criteria attracted questions. Even at a highlevel conference on recruitment, which was personally presided over by the Adjutant General, Lt Gen WHG Baker in March 1942, this question came up. It was pointed out that the minimum qualification for the recruitment of direct VCOs was matriculation certificate whereas no minimum qualification was laid down for emergency commissioned officer.¹²³

The desired age ranged between 18 and 32 years for Indian candidates. This could, however, be relaxed up to 40 years for technical or special qualification holders. For the Indian Army Ordnance Corps, the prescribed age was between 20 and 40 years. To meet the immediate demand, the Emergency Commission was thrown open to All India Reserve of Officers if within the prescribed age limit.¹²⁴ Still, the shortage of officers in the Indian Army forced the British authorities to introduce compulsory service for British subjects in India from August 1940. At first the age limit was determined between 19 and 35 years but it was further relaxed to 40 years to keep pace with the demand.¹²⁵ Similarly, the age for recruitment of Medical Officers was raised to 45 years from the pre-war 32 years. It could be further relaxed to 50 years by recruiting authorities in special or exceptional cases.¹²⁶

To meet the demand for officers further, the duration of training at the Military Academy was shortened to speed up the entry of cadets into the Army. Training period for cadets already in the Military Academy, was reduced from 30 months to 18

¹²² Willcox Committee Report, para 27 & Appendix E. According to Willcox Committee Report, out of total selected candidates 91.7 percent candidates were matriculates and above. This calculates to a figure of 8.3 percent as non-matriculates and others.

¹²³ *Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD. In the Conference many other senior officers like Secretary, Defence Department, Director Recruiting, etc. were also present. With regards to the minimum qualification, the war time notification published in Gazette of India for emergency commission also does not reflect any minimum qualification for the candidates. See Resolution No. 1766, *The Gazette of India*, 23 November 1940.

¹²⁴ *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, 15 February 1940. The age limit for All India Reserve of Officers to apply for Emergency Commissioned officers was 20 ½ to 35 years in cavalry, infantry, artillery, engineers, signals and RIASC and 25 to 50 years in Ordnance Services.

¹²⁵ *Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, September 1939- December 1943, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD. The total number of Europeans thus commissioned or undergoing training for the Indian Army by the end of 1940 was 1,922. The strength of Indians on the same conditions was 620 (excluding IMS).

¹²⁶ Raina, *Medical Services*, p. 105. The age limit was raised from 32 to 45 years in July 1940. After February 1941, it could still be relaxed if the Medical Recruiting authorities considered it.

months. Fresh cadets taken as emergency commissioned officers were to be trained in six months.¹²⁷ The duration of the Course of Defence Service Staff College was also cut short from one year to six months so as to spare the maximum number of officers for the War.¹²⁸ Prior to the War medical graduates of some Indian universities were not allowed to apply for Indian Medical Corps. But in July 1941, the restriction was waived to encourage recruitment. Candidates whose father had a foreign nationality could also apply for commission in the Indian Medical Corps now.¹²⁹

After December 1941, recruitment to the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force, which had hitherto been carried out by separate organizations, came under the Directorate of Recruiting, Adjutant General Branch. Candidates could now state their choice of service with preference and those unable to get the first choice could go for the second or the third choice. It was hoped that the new system would lead to uniformity in the standard of candidates selected for the Defence Services. It was also hoped that this would reduce the wastage that had been taking place due to the failure of many cadets to stand the rigours or standards of a particular service.¹³⁰ The CIB was also gradually replaced by the pattern of United Kingdom's Service Selection Board from February 1943, when the conversion of CIB into the Experimental Board was first made.

However, there was always a great paucity of officer material. The lack of education was considered the greatest hurdle in finding out officer material. A faulty education system further aggravated the problem. To deal with this problem, pre-cadet schools were set up to develop the character, physique, general knowledge and familiarity with English to assist Indian candidates in clearing the Board.¹³¹ University Officers Training Corps (henceforth UOTC) was also expanded to enrol a larger number of cadets in this Corps.¹³² A section for cadets was added in the Royal

¹²⁷ *Summaries of the Committee of Council*, 20th June to 3rd October 1940, pp. 14-5, vol. I, File No. 601/7006/H (Secret); *Fauji Akhbar*, dated 2 August 1941.

¹²⁸ Lt Gen S.D. Verma, *To Serve With Honour: My Memoirs* (Kasauli, 1988), p. 60; B.K. Narayan (ed.), *Genera J.N. Chaudhuri: An Autobiography, As Narrated to B.K. Narayan* (New Delhi, Vikas Publishers, 1978), p. 115.

¹²⁹ Raina, *Medical Services*, p. 105. The entry of such men started in July 1943.

¹³⁰ 'Recruitment of Officers', *Fauji Akhbar*, 13 December 1941.

¹³¹ 'Amalgamation of Recruiting Organisations for all Services', *Indian Army Order*, No. 2157 of 1941; 'Training of Indian Officer Cadets', *Fauji Akhbar*, 25 July 1942, p. 12.

¹³² In 1942, as a part of campaign to obtain Indians for Emergency Commissions, the University Training Corps was re-designated as University Officers Training Corps (UOTC). By 1st January 1945, it swelled from pre-war seven battalions and three companies to eleven battalions and three companies

Indian Military College in January 1941, adding 100 more boys to the existing strength of 250.¹³³

But the steps taken to mitigate the manpower shortage, still fell short of the target. The War in the eastern front further necessitated a massive increase in manpower. British authorities therefore, initiated further steps to meet the demand of the Army. Secondment of Army officers to the IAF was discontinued in later 1941.¹³⁴ The officers due for retirement were retained in service by raising the retirement age.¹³⁵ Further, to tackle the shortage of technical officers, the non-technical officers were asked to submit the details of their technical qualifications and experience and if found suitable, they were transferred to the technical corps.¹³⁶ The large shortage of officers with technical qualifications further needed some measures. In December 1942, General Headquarters wrote letters to the principals of engineering colleges asking for their help in persuading suitable candidates to apply for commissions in the technical branches of the Indian army. The results were considerable and the army could get some engineering officers from these colleges.¹³⁷

To attract Indian candidates, they were further assured that a good percentage of post war appointments in Central and Provincial Services would be kept reserved for ex-officers.¹³⁸ In this way, efforts were made to divert the attention of potential candidates from lucrative and permanent civil posts. A Joint Conference held at General Headquarters recommended that appointments in Central and Provincial Governments should be made on a temporary basis during the War period. It also suggested that after the end of the War, approved military service should be taken into

comprising 6,000 cadets. But results of UOTC were not encouraging and only few cadets offered themselves for emergency commissions. Willcox Committee Report, paras 30-2.

¹³³ Arun Prakash, *The Young Warrior: A History of the Rashtriya Indian Military College* (Dehradun, 2004), p. 267.

¹³⁴ 'Secondment of Indian Commissioned Officer', *Indian Army Order*, No. 295 of 1941. At the beginning of the War, to mitigate the dire need of IAF officer cadre, it was decided that the army officers who wish to join IAF for the period of War could do so.

¹³⁵ Retirement age of Major and below rank of officers was raised from pre-War 47 years to 55 years, Lt Col 50 years to 55 years, Colonel 55 years to 58 years, Maj Gen 57 years to 60 years and Gen 60 years to 62 years. 'Retirement- Indian Army Officers', *Army Instructions (India)*, No. 114 of 1942.

¹³⁶ 'Transfer of Officers from Non-Technical to Technical units of Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1372 of 1941.

¹³⁷ The letter was written to the Principals as H.N. Kunzru suggested to the Defence Department. A total of 50 names were received from the colleges, of which 30 persons were selected for the final interview, and 14 were finally found suitable for training in the Army. Reply by General Hartley of Question No. 152, 3 April 1943, *CSD*.

¹³⁸ *Fauji Akhbar*, 29 November 1941, p. 12.

account while making permanent appointments.¹³⁹ Linlithgow, the Governor General wrote to the Secretary of State that ‘We are as you know pledged to reserve 50 per cent of vacancies in ICS and IP [Indian Police] to be available after war for candidates with war service. I believe most satisfactory solution of present problems as you and I see then would be to announce 100 per cent reservation of vacancies in both services as from next year.’¹⁴⁰ Linlithgow further added that ‘This would leave us uncommitted as regards to continuance of recruitment after war, while furnishing stimulus to recruitment to Defence Services in meantime.’¹⁴¹ Recruitment to civil posts on a permanent basis was, therefore largely suspended in 1942, so that the attraction of a settled civil career did not impede the free flow of candidates to the Army. This was done mainly because the type of officers required by the Army often applied for permanent appointments in civil posts.¹⁴²

To cope with the shortage, selected VCOs were commissioned after training in Officer Cadets Training Units.¹⁴³ Selection from the other ranks was also resorted to. The teams of Officers Selection Boards’ also visited far-flung war zones to test eligible Indian other ranks for commission.¹⁴⁴ Further, if a civil candidate accepted for emergency commission in the Indian Air Force and Navy, in the course of the training, failed to come up to the requisite standards, he was made eligible for commission in the Indian Land Forces.¹⁴⁵ The cadets who had been discharged from the IAF or Navy earlier for similar reasons, could also apply for the Indian Army now.¹⁴⁶ Indian Army Ordnance Corps, created a new cadre called ‘Civilian Gazetted Officers’ in July 1942. Departmental candidates, with fair intelligence were promoted

¹³⁹*Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, p. 11, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD.

¹⁴⁰ Linlithgow to Amery, 22 May 1942, vol. II, *TOP*.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Reply to Question No. 5, 8 November 1944, *CSD*; 16 November 1944, *CSD*.

¹⁴³ From December 1940 to 15 July 1943, a total of 935 VCOs and ex-VCOs were granted Emergency Commissions in the Indian Army. Reply by C.M. Trivedi, Secretary, War Department, Starred Question No. 160, 3 August 1943, *LAD*.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Officer Selection’, *Fauji Akhbar*, 27 February 1945. Commissioning occurrences in Gazettes of India for the Years 1943, 1944 & 1945 show that a number of emergency commissions were granted to Indian other ranks.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Indian Army Commissions’, *Fauji Akhbar*, 28 February 1942.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

to accelerate the intake in this cadre.¹⁴⁷ Civilian Store Keepers were allowed to apply for commission in the Ordnance Corps and many of them were selected.¹⁴⁸

British authorities explored some other avenues also to meet the deficiency of officers in the Indian army. Besides introducing 'National Service Act for European British Subjects in India', policies were also made to commission the British Other Ranks in the Indian Army.¹⁴⁹ Thus, a substantial number of officers for the Indian Army were recruited from the United Kingdom. The British also got about 650 officers for the Indian Army during the War from other colonies. Of these, Australia supplied the highest number of officers to the Indian Army.¹⁵⁰

As far as commissioning in the Indian Navy is concerned, the officer cadre of this service was opened to Indians in 1932.¹⁵¹ The recruitment was done through competitive exam conducted by the Federal Public Service Commission. The boys between 17 ½ and 19 ½ years were considered eligible for the exam.¹⁵² Only a small number of Indians were commissioned between 1932 and 1939.¹⁵³ In early 1939, a reserve was constituted to grant commission both to Indians and Europeans in two categories, viz. Royal Indian Naval Reserve (henceforth RINR) and Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve (henceforth RINVR). RINR consisted of professional seamen and marine engineers who were officers and warrant officers of the Merchant Marine service. The RINVR recruited the officers directly from the civilians, and no previous experience at sea was necessary for them.¹⁵⁴ There was a plan to grant

¹⁴⁷ Khera, *Technical Services*, p. 134. This provision proved valuable, though initially authorities were susceptible about its success.

¹⁴⁸ Reply by General Hartley to Question No. 153, 3 April 1943, *CSD*; Khera, *Technical Services*, p. 135. However, promotion to Civilian Gazetted Officers and selection of many to commissioned rank of the Corps, led to exhaustion of pre-War Civilian Store Keeper cadre.

¹⁴⁹ The Bill was passed in April 1940. See *LAD*, 1 April 1940.

¹⁵⁰ In June 1944, the C-in-C attempted to obtain 600 officers from Australia and in the end 168 were seconded. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 31-2.

¹⁵¹ Before 1932, the Indian Navy was almost manned by Europeans, although recruitment was open to Indians but conditions were such that no Indian was to be appointed as a commissioned officer. Prior to 1932, the first Indian to be appointed as Sub Lt was D.N. Mukerjee in January 1928. He was a qualified Marine Engineer and was recruited by the Secretary of State for India in England where he was temporarily living at the time of recruitment. *Commissioned Officers*, p.1, File No. 601/12160/H, HDMOD.

¹⁵² *How to Become an officer in the Royal Indian Navy*, a monograph prepared by RIN for information of Indian youth who wished to join the Navy, (Calcutta, 1938), p. 10, Various Notifications from time to time in Gazette of India also reflects the selection process for the Navy. For example see Resolution No. 342, 22 May 1936; Resolution No. 619, 13 May 1939; *Gazette of India*.

¹⁵³ On 3 September 1939, there were only 40 Indian officers in the RIN that consisted of both the Regular and Reserve. *Commissioned Officers*, p. 3, File No. 601/12160/H, HDMOD. .

¹⁵⁴ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 20.

permanent commissions in both these categories but due to the breakout of the War only Temporary Commissions were granted.¹⁵⁵ The regular commissions in the Navy also continued but on a diminishing scale.¹⁵⁶ Initially, the recruitment was made through a Naval Selection Board. After the constitution of Provincial Selection Boards and Central Interview Boards, candidates were first interviewed by them and selected ones were then referred to the Naval Board at Bombay for the final selection. But after the formation of Service Selection Board, the Naval Board of Bombay became redundant.¹⁵⁷ The shortage of officers in the RIN subsequently led to the opening of the commission rank in RINVR to deserve ratings in 1944.¹⁵⁸

The Indian Air Force (IAF) was a highly technical force. It required qualified persons for the recruitment of pilots and observers. After the outbreak of the War, the Regular Commission in IAF was suspended and temporary commission for matriculates in the age group of 18 and 22 years was introduced. A scheme called the Indian Air Force Voluntary Reserve (henceforth IAFVR) was launched under which temporary commissions were granted.¹⁵⁹ The candidates selected under this scheme were required to have undergone flying training and gained experience from civil flying clubs. Such persons were invited to join the Air Force and even a railway warrant was attached with the invitation sent to them.¹⁶⁰ They were given direct commission in the IAFVR, without any elementary training.¹⁶¹ But by early 1940, the supply of such candidates dried up and the authorities had to make a search in colleges and universities for fresh candidates. The Directorate of Civil Aviation (henceforth DCA) helped the IAF in training as well as in supplying the prospective

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Recruitment of Europeans in the RIN was conducted both in UK and India. In the UK the officers were selected by Secretary of State for India. *Commissioned Officers*, File No. 601/12160/H, HDMOD.

¹⁵⁸ *India's Part in the Fifth Year of War*, 1944, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Indian Air Force Volunteer Reserve was created by an Act of 1939. Act No. XXXVI of 1939, *The Gazette of India*, 23 September 1939. The IAFVR plan was at first suggested by the Chatfield Committee, in the meantime war broke out. However, all commissions in the IAF after 9 January 1942 were termed as Emergency Commissions. *Committee on the Indianisation of the Officers Ranks of the Indian Army*, File No. 601/12810/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁶⁰ Air HQs Letter No. 9772/1269/P, dated 11 November 1939, in www.bharatrakshak.com, accessed on 15 February 2013. By this letter five candidates who had flying experience were invited to join IAF.

¹⁶¹ P.C. Lal was among the first of such a batch who were given a commissioned rank directly without any training. Lal, Air Chief Marshal P.C. (ed. by Ela Lal), *My Years with IAF* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1986), p. 18.

pilots.¹⁶² In July 1940, when the Government sanctioned a scheme of 300 pilots for the IAF, the DCA was tasked to achieve the target set by the Government.¹⁶³ A Selection Committee comprising one representative each from the DCA and IAF was constituted under Sir Padamji Ginwala. The Committee visited the country extensively in October and November 1940. It emphasized the importance of good education, including proficiency in English and general knowledge. The Committee weeded out applicants who were unlikely to prove their worth in the final interview. After rigorous screening, it interviewed 835 candidates. More than 40 per cent candidates were found medically unfit and finally 129 were selected.¹⁶⁴ An Expansion Note meant for the Viceroy stated that since the outbreak of the War in September 1939 and till November 1940, about 20,000 applications for different vacancies were received by the IAF recruiting authorities. Of these applicants only 157 officers for pilots and the observation branch, and 497 airmen for technical trades could make to the training centres.¹⁶⁵ Despite a hard selection process, wastages in flying at training schools remained very high and therefore a shortage of officers in the IAF continued.¹⁶⁶

After an amalgamation of recruitment to the three services, the DCA Board ceased to exist. The recruitment to the Services now came under the Directorate of Recruiting. The number of candidates opting for flying, however, declined. To boost up the recruitment, selected Air Force officers were deputed to visit schools and colleges but the results were not encouraging.¹⁶⁷ During 1942, the recruitment for the flying branch in IAF caused a lot of anxiety. The upper age limit was, therefore, raised to 28 years.¹⁶⁸ Between June and August, against the monthly demand of 70

¹⁶² DCA assisted by providing training to 75 pilots by July 1940, of which 33 were eventually commissioned. *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, 28 February 1941.

¹⁶³ The scheme besides 300 pilots also planned for 2,000 mechanics to be trained by DCA. *Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, September 1939- December 1943, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD; *Finance Member's Statement on the Financial Position*, 1940, p. 5, File No. 601/7005/H, HDMOD. Finance Member mentioned the plan of 300 pilots and 2,000 mechanics for IAF and about the help from DCA.

¹⁶⁴ Reply to Question No. 36 & Press Note, 27 February 1941, *CSD*; *Fauji Akhbar*, 1 February 1941, p. 15. According to *Hindustan Times*, Ginwala Committee received 17,000 applications of which 1,300 were selected for interview and eventually 129 were found suitable. *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, 28 February 1941.

¹⁶⁵ *Note on Expansion*, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* The wastages at times went up to 50 per cent.

¹⁶⁷ *Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, p. 5, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD. However, Punjab and North West Frontier Province showed fair result.

¹⁶⁸ *Hindustan Times*, 9 June 1942. In this Paper, the age criterion was advertised as between 18 and 28 years.

pilots, only about 15 per month could be selected. In the circumstances radical changes in recruitment policy became necessary. The Provincial Governments were asked to assist the IAF in recruitment. Officers Training Schools that were imparting training to the cadets for the Indian Army were ordered to transfer those volunteer cadets to the IAF who wish to join it. Instructions were also issued to all recruiting agencies to encourage recruitment for the IAF. A heavy publicity drive was launched to improve the situation.¹⁶⁹

Owing to unsatisfactory aircrew recruitment, the IATC, which did not prove its worth in recruiting ground duty staff for IAF, was converted into pre-entry organization for recruitment of officers in the General Duty (Pilot) Branch.¹⁷⁰ The trainees, recommended by the IATC and university authorities for appointment as officers, were not required to appear before the Provincial Selection Board and went straight to the Officers Selection Board. But the rejection rate at the Board was very high. It was realized that candidates were not coming forward in good numbers. This led to the creation of some posts of General Duty Recruiting Officers' (henceforth GDRO) in September 1943. These GDROs toured the colleges and universities in their assigned areas and recommended candidates for examination by SSB.¹⁷¹ They carried out some sort of screening to assess the potential candidates.

To deal with the crisis further, entry to airmen was opened in commissioned rank in all branches of the IAF.¹⁷² However, airmen of technical trades were preferred in technical branch, low medical category technical trades airmen and airmen with non-technical trades were considered for the administrative branch of the IAF.¹⁷³ Due to the poor standard and diminishing supply of civilian candidates, 'IAF Selective Testing Boards' were formed in December 1944 to visit IAF Stations to interview potential airmen for commissioning especially in the flying branch.¹⁷⁴ It was viewed that serving airmen would prove more successful than civilians. The airmen between

¹⁶⁹ *Summaries of the Committee of Council*, 20th June to 3rd October 1940, pp. 14-5, vol. I, File No. 601/7006/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁷⁰ Indian Air Training Corps (IATC) was formed in February 1943 (came into operation in April 1943) to accelerate recruitment of ground duty staff in the IAF. But the experience was not encouraging as the average Indian student carried an impression that service in the ranks of IAF meant a loss of prestige and status.

¹⁷¹ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 68-71.

¹⁷² 'IAF Commission from Ranks', *Fauji Akhbar*, 9 January 1943.

¹⁷³ 'Commissioning of Combatant Indian Airmen', *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 296 of 1944.

¹⁷⁴ Letter No. u.o. No AHQ(I)/09536/MNG-I dated 25 November & 2 December 1944, *Measures to Improve GD Recruiting*, File No. F/181, HDMOD.

17 ½ and 28 years of age were appealed to grab this opportunity and learn to fly.¹⁷⁵ The Boards recommended the selected candidates for further interview by Officer Selection Board in consultation with the commanding officer of the airman. It was also decided to resume the secondment of suitable Indian Army officers to the IAF flying Branch.¹⁷⁶ Despite all efforts, the recruitment of pilots lagged far behind the demand and the gap continuously increased.¹⁷⁷ The expansion scheme, under which 10 squadrons were to be raised, required 267 pilots but by August 1944. However, India could produce only 176 pilots. The shortage of pilots was met by the Royal Air Force of Britain and also men from the British dominions.¹⁷⁸

Officers Selection Board - Unduly Strict?

It would be seen that the selection rate for officers in the defence forces was very low. Despite the fact that the War needed large numbers of officers to man the Indian armed forces, the criteria of selection seem to be very strict. The Ginwala Committee selected only 129 candidates for IAF flying branch from among many thousands.¹⁷⁹ When T.N. Ghadiok (later Air Marshal) visited the Selection Board in 1942, about 100 candidates had come to face the Board at Rawalpindi. Only eight were cleared by the Board.¹⁸⁰ Sinha (later Lieutenant General) writes that out of a total of 60 candidates who appeared before the SSB, only 12 were selected.¹⁸¹ This was after the initial screening already done by the PSB. These figures even do not include the rejection after medical examination. Thus, if counted from the initial stage when candidates appeared before the PSB, the success rate would hardly be a few per cent. After selection some were rejected during the training. According to an official figure,

¹⁷⁵ *Administrative Instruction No. 31*, dated 25 Jan 1945, File No. F/172 (Confidential), HDMOD.

¹⁷⁶ *Letter No. u.o. No AHQ(I)/09536/MNG-I*, 25 November 1944, *Measures to Improve GD Recruiting*, File No. F/181, HDMOD. The secondment of Indian army officers to IAF was in vogue in early years of War but was discontinued in 1941. 'Secondment of Indian Commissioned Officer', *Indian Army Order*, No. 295 of 1941.

¹⁷⁷ Proposal for Review of Policy Governing the Wartime Expansion and Development of Indian Air Force, 29 August 1944, *Post War Defence Service: Re-organisation Committee*, File No. 601/10587/H (Secret), HDMOD. In 1943 against a demand of 650 supply was 381, in 1944 against demand of 590 supply was 266.

¹⁷⁸ By August 1944, nine squadrons had been raised which needed 237 pilots of which India produced 176 pilots and the rest 91 were taken from the RAF or the British Dominions. *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁹ *Fauji Akhbar*, 1 February 1941, p. 15; According to Hindustan Times Ginwala Committee received 17,000 applications of whom 1,300 were selected for interview and eventually 129 were found suitable. *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, 28 February 1941.

¹⁸⁰ *Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, 15 November 2008.

¹⁸¹ Lt Gen S.K. Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1992), p. 36.

‘it takes 50 applicants to produce one officer.’¹⁸² The Willcox Committee too reported that ‘out of every hundred applicants coming before Provincial Selection Board, only two or three eventually commissioned.’¹⁸³ The measures adopted to increase the intake of officers were appreciable, but the rejection rate of the Selection Board always remained high. The evaluation shows that about 75 per cent candidates were rejected by the Central Board. This was after the filtering made by the Provincial Boards that too rejected between 50 to 75 candidates that appeared before it.¹⁸⁴

The selection process of the officers at the selection boards caused much consternation among the Indian circles. Some Indians believed that the selection boards were unduly strict in selecting the officers. Some others thought that the right type of Indian candidates was not coming forward to join. Rao Bahadur Siva Raj, a Member of Central Legislative Assembly, who had also been a member of the Officers Selection Board, blamed the Board for rejecting the candidates whose fathers did not have a good social standing or military tradition.¹⁸⁵ The representatives of scheduled castes complained that the candidates belonging to their castes were not even called for interview because of their social standing.¹⁸⁶ There were even complaints by the old veterans of Punjab that the young men from the region were not being taken in the officer cadre whereas the sons of men who had no military traditions were being given commissions.¹⁸⁷

The Central Interview Board, which conducted the selection of officers in India, however, pleaded that there was a shortage of candidates with requisite qualifications in India.¹⁸⁸ The authorities asserted that ‘the best results are obtained by shifting large quantities of sand to produce a few grains of gold and there is no pocket of nuggets [martial or non-martial] to draw on.’¹⁸⁹ M.V. Kalikar, a Member of the Council of State, who was closely supporting the British recruitment efforts in India,

¹⁸² *Note on Expansion of Defence Services*, File No. 601/10588/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁸³ Willcox Committee Report, para 27.

¹⁸⁴ *War Department History, Head 2, Recruitment*, File No. 601/9055/H, HDMOD.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Resolution RE Recruitment of Schedules Castes to the Key Service of the Indian Army’, 19 November 1943, *LAD*.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 564-79.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Emergency Commissions: One of the Methods of Preparation’, *Fauji Akhbar*, 27 June 1942, p. 6. In this article, the authorities used the propaganda method to address the complaints of Punjab veterans on the issue that their sons were not given commissions while boys from non-martial classes were taken.

¹⁸⁸ Statement by C.M. Trivedi, Secretary, War Department, 15 March 1943, *LAD*.

¹⁸⁹ *Note on Expansion of Defence Forces*, File No. 601/10588/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

did not see any dearth of suitable candidates for the officer cadre.¹⁹⁰ He reminded the House of a statement made by the Commander-in-Chief in 1933 on the floor of the House. At that time, the then Commander-in-Chief had failed to take more than 60 men annually as according to him there were not adequate number of suitable candidates in India. Kalikar asserted that the theory of 1933 has been exploded in this War as thousands of Indians were finding their way into the officer cadre of the Army.¹⁹¹ H.N. Kunzru, too blamed the British authorities on this issue. He cited in a contemporary article that ‘the increase in the number of Indian officers [during the War] has been large enough to disprove the pre-war assumption that India could not supply an adequate number of officers for her Army.’¹⁹² Kalikar earlier pointed out that racial discrimination, maltreatment and distinction made between martial and non-martial classes were the root causes that discouraged suitable young Indians from joining the Army.¹⁹³ Pandit Kunzru, emphasized that ‘political situation in the country [India] is responsible to no little extent for the unwillingness of qualified Indian young men to offer themselves more freely’.¹⁹⁴ He also added that he had heard that the shortage was no less due to the dissatisfaction of Indian officers with the treatment they were getting in the units.

The Ginwala Committee, which was assigned the task for recruiting the officers for flying duties in IAF, emphasized that good standard of education, proficiency in English and good general knowledge enable the selected candidates to absorb the instruction given to them. It commented that many candidates who wanted to join as an officer did not appreciate what they were applying for but were merely interested in jobs. The Committee though found a number of candidates with university degrees, but objected to their lack of qualities of character and social standing.¹⁹⁵ An almost similar view was expressed by the Air Officer Commanding (AOC), IAF after three years. In a conference in 1944, the AOC appreciated the

¹⁹⁰Statement by M.V. Kalikar, 26 March 1943, *CSD*.

¹⁹¹ Statement of M.V. Kalikar while moving a Resolution ‘Recruitment of Officers for Civil Administration during the War’, 16 November 1944, *CSD*.

¹⁹² H.N. Kunzru, ‘Defence of India’, *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 233, May 1944, pp. 6-11.

¹⁹³Statement by M.V. Kalikar, 26 March 1943, *CSD*.

¹⁹⁴Statement by Pandit H.N. Kunzru. 25 March 1943, *CSD*.

¹⁹⁵*Fauji Akhbar*, 1 February 1941, p. 15. The Ginwala Committee pointed out that if a university degree was taken as eligibility criteria, it could not be a fair guide to a candidate’s suitability. The Committee rather reported, younger boys with relatively lower academic qualifications, having the other qualities of character and social standing proved better candidates.

educational standard of Indian candidates but stated that they lacked in self-reliance, confidence and ingenuity. He also pointed out that they were not dependent practically or in thought.¹⁹⁶

The Willcox Committee found fault with the education system in schools and universities where teaching imparted only bookish knowledge just for passing the examination. It did not emphasize the training on building character, independence of thought, sense of duty and responsibility, and quality of leadership which were highly expected from an officer material.¹⁹⁷ The public school education in Britain, on the other hand, emphasized the overall development of a boy and therefore, it supplied a large number of officers to the armed forces. This India lacked. A military analyst asserted that though a large number of graduates were offering themselves for the Emergency Commission, the standard of education in many cases was too low and that it was not possible to turn them into efficient officers in a short condensed course of training.¹⁹⁸ He pointed out that general knowledge, power of observation, inquisitiveness and alertness were sadly lacking in Indian candidates. The Commander-in-Chief, General Auchinleck, consented to improve the selection process but refused to compromise on the quality. Agreeing to the Boards' selection criteria he stated 'I cannot agree to, and that is lowering of the standard or return to the old slapdash system of selection by a fifteen minute interview by the Board'.¹⁹⁹

It would thus appear that political considerations, discrimination, non-attractive terms of service, war calamities and a lack of public school education in India influenced both the number and quality of men seeking commission. Some schools which were modelled on the British public school pattern, imparted quality education. These schools produced a good number of officers during the War.²⁰⁰ Potential candidates when given an environment to learn and improve, proved

¹⁹⁶ *Note on IATC*, August 1944 to October 1945, F/177 (Confidential). The Conference was held in August 1944. Air Officer Commanding expressed his concern over high rate of rejection by the Board but refused to reduce the standard of the Board.

¹⁹⁷ Willcox Committee Report, para 28.

¹⁹⁸ Gunner, 'The Indian Educational System in Relation to the Requirement of the Defence Forces', in *JUSII*, vol. LXXII, Jan-Oct 1942, pp. 147-150.

¹⁹⁹ *D.O. letter from C-in-C General Auchinleck to Governor, NWFP; Secretary, War Department; & AOC (India)*, 12 January 1945, *Note on IATC, August 1944 - October 1945*, File No. F/177, HDMO.

²⁰⁰ RIMC provided 157 officers to the Indian armed forces between December 1939 and May 1945. Prakash, *The Young Warrior*, pp. 536-7. According to Lt Gen Nanda, who was studying in Doon Public School when he joined the Indian Army in 1943, Doon School Produced at least 59 officers between 1941 and 1945. Lt Gen T.B., *A Life of Passion: Story of a Sapper* (New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2009), pp. 135-6.

successful. This applied to men commissioned from ranks.²⁰¹ The percentage of recruitment from among the civilian applicants also depended on the intensity of the War. When the War situation was grim for the British in 1941 and 1942, the percentage of successful candidates picked up but when the fortunes of the War turned favourably in 1944, the authorities became very selective.²⁰² Despite the criticism of the selection process in India, British authorities claimed of not lowering the standard of the Selection Board. But the pressure of more demand of officers definitely affected the quality. It is evident from the fact that after the War when Emergency Commissioned Officers faced the Service Selection Boards for permanent commission, a high percentage of ECOs could not clear the Board.²⁰³ It happened despite the fact that vacancies existed and commissions were being given to the men from ranks of the Indian army.²⁰⁴ The fact of having men out of almost the same number of candidates with heavy fluctuations in vacancies in different situations, also support this view.²⁰⁵ However, it applied to both the Indian and British war time officers. The same was the case with the 'War Services Selection Board' which was constituted after the War to interview, test and select civilian officers from among the thousands of IECOs, who were going to be retrenched. Many failed in the psychological tests. T.N. Kaul, an ICS and a Member of this Board, states that the main reason was the lack of control over the English language. The British psychologists could not cross over the language barrier.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Gazettes of India shows lot of commissions from the ranks of armed forces during the war period.

²⁰² Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 36. According Lt Gen Sinha who got commission in Indian army in 1944, in 1941-42 the standards of recruitment as officers in the Army was greatly relaxed and almost everyone who applied was taken in provided he was medically fit, but in 1944 the British became selective. However, this view is not shared by the Air Marshal who joined the IAF in September 1942, at the peak of the War. According to the Air Marshal, despite the fact that the Japanese had pushed the British back, the forces did not sacrifice their standard. In his batch of about 100 candidates who went for interview, only eight were selected. *Personal Interview with Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, dated 15 November 2008.

²⁰³ *Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, 15 November 2008. According to Sinha, out of about 13,000 ECOs, only 450 were finally selected for permanent commission in 1945 and 1946. Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, pp. 66-7. Total officers in the Indian army at the end of the War were about 41,500 of which about 30,000 were British. There were about 37,000 Emergency Commissioned Officers of which 9,500 were Indians. Willcox Committee Report, para 26.

²⁰⁴ Dafedar (later Maj) Abhe Ram was commissioned in 1946, Hav (later Maj) Hansraj was commissioned in 1946, Boy (later Brig) Rai Singh was commissioned in 1946. The Gazettes of India of the period has many notifications that mentions commissions from the ranks.

²⁰⁵ The ratio of recruitment differed with the requirement and intensity of the War.

²⁰⁶ T.N. Kaul, *Reminiscences: Discreet & Indiscreet* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1982), pp. 105-7.

Working of Officers Selection Board

As mentioned earlier, no qualification was prescribed for an officer candidate. He was expected to satisfy the selection Board of his suitability for officer rank. During a conference on recruiting the issue was raised that for VCOs a matriculation standard was required but for an IECO no standard was laid down.²⁰⁷ It was replied that a selector, while selecting an officer candidate had to see whether the person could be trusted for the lives of his countrymen? Would they rely on him and follow him? Further, could he follow the instructions in English? When candidates were tested on these parameters, the academic qualification as good as it might be, could not be a sound reason for passing a candidate as a potential ECO.²⁰⁸

In the initial stage of the War, after selection by the District Commander, the Central Board conducted an interview of 10 to 15 minutes and decided the suitability of the candidates for the armed forces. When the district commander found it difficult to deal with the large number of candidates, its work (except for the commission from the ranks) was shifted to the PSB. The Central Interview Board continued as earlier, but, there continued to be many wastages in the training establishments, partly due to a shortened training period and partly due to an inefficient selection process. This led to the adoption of a scientific selection process, which could assess the potential of the candidates as officers correctly. The Central Interview Board was, therefore, replaced by a new selection board called Service Selection Board (henceforth SSB). The Provincial Selection Board, which consisted of civilian officers of the district assisted by a military officer, interviewed the candidate at the preliminary stage. They usually asked questions related to common sense and general awareness. For example, Sinha (later Lt Gen) when interviewed by the Provincial Board was asked questions such as where was Pearl Harbor, how did it figure in the War, etc.²⁰⁹

The candidates found successful by PSB were routed for final selection to SSB. SSB conducted three types of tests called non-verbal, verbal and reasoning. These tests were aimed to assess the candidate's personality by a Psychiatrist and a Group Testing Officer (henceforth GTO). The psychiatrist used three methods of assessment: a written test where candidates imagination was given a free run,

²⁰⁷*Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, p. 9, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 35.

observation of behaviour in a group and his own special type of interview based on professional training. The aim was to find out the essential soundness of a man's nature and his reaction to opportunities. The Group Test on the other hand was devised to see the practical capacity of the candidate and his influence on his fellows. This test was conducted by a Captain or Major in SSB called GTO. The candidates were divided into groups of 10 and each group was placed under a GTO. The GTO spent time with the men of his group, dined with them and observed them in the camp and the ante room. He also asked them to undergo group and individual tests. The tests aimed to examine the common sense, practical approach, initiative, resourcefulness, guts and leadership quality of the candidate (see photos 1.1 to 1.4). The President of the Board conducted a personal interview of the candidate to assess his qualities and character. Finally, the comments of each examiner were discussed in a conference and everyone expressed his views on each candidate frankly. The President compiled the comments of all examiners and declared the successful candidates who were to go for medical examination.²¹⁰

Harnessing Manpower

Recruitment to the Indian armed forces was made on a very large scale during the Second World War. The Defence Services organizations had, therefore, to seek help from different agencies. Some of these agencies were a part of the Government machinery whereas others were private in nature. The Labour Department particularly made substantial contribution to the recruitment process. A number of Civ-mil and Civil Centres worked under the aegis of this Department all over the country.

These Centres recruited the prospective candidates and provided them technical training so to augment the technical strength of the armed forces.²¹¹ Industrialists like G.D. Birla lent buildings and machines to some of these technical training establishments for the duration of War.²¹² Indian Railways also

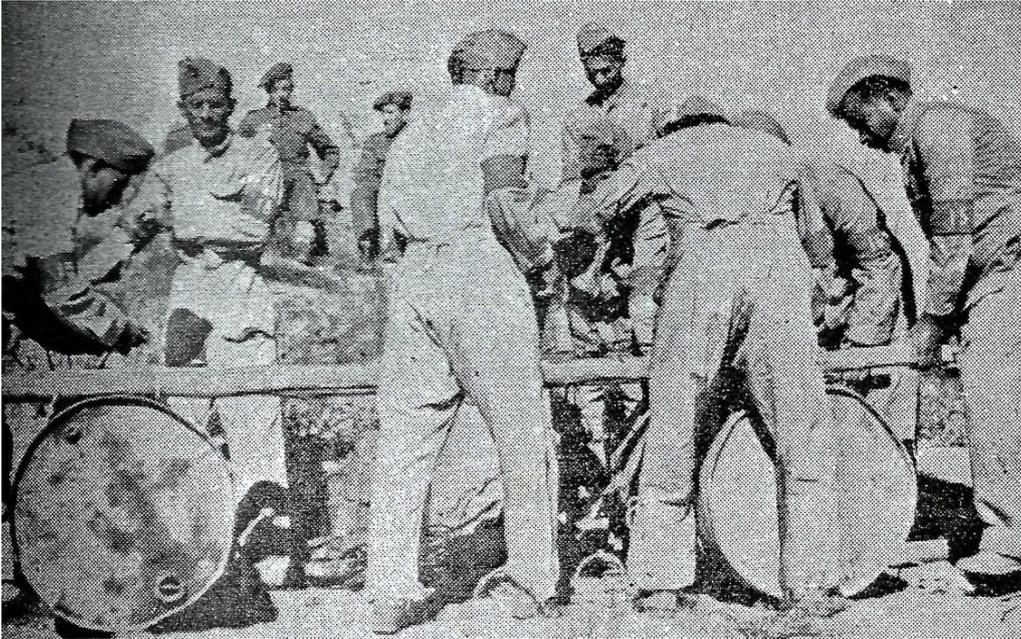
²¹⁰ 'Recruitment of Officers', *Fauji Akhbar*, 13 December 1941; 'Emergency Commissions: One of the Methods of Preparation', *Fauji Akhbar*, 27 June 1942; 'Officer Selection', *Fauji Akhbar*, 27 February 1945; Gideon, 'A New Method of Selecting Army Personnel', *JUSII*, LXXIII, 312, October 1943, pp. 419-29; Maj Gen F.M. Moore, 'Selection of Personal Prejudice', *JUSII*, LXXVI, 323, April 1946, pp. 157-68; M.D. Sharma, 'The Problem of fixing Criteria for SSB Selection', *JUSII*, CIX, 457, July-September 1979, pp. 271-7; Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, pp. 35-6.

²¹¹ Total 158 Civil, Civ-mil and Civ-naval Centres worked during the War under the Labour Department. These centres trained 29,707 men. The Civil Centres, however, include the technical manpower for Government factories also. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, Appendix P.

²¹² *India's Part in Fifth Year of War*, p. 5.

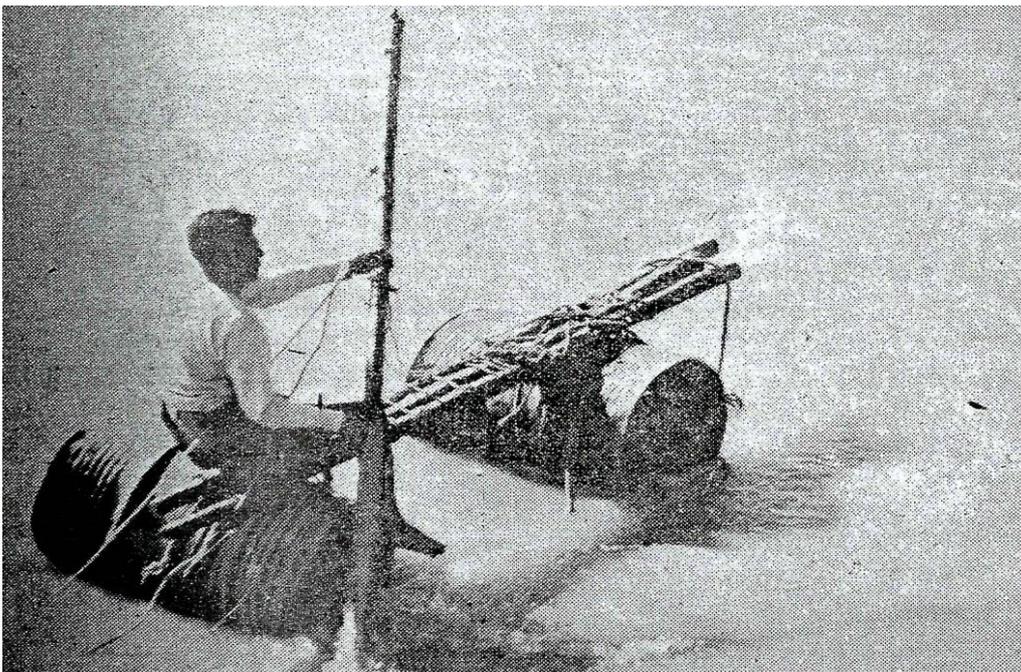
Service Selection Board Examining the Officer Candidates

Photo 1.1



Let's make a raft

Photo 1.2

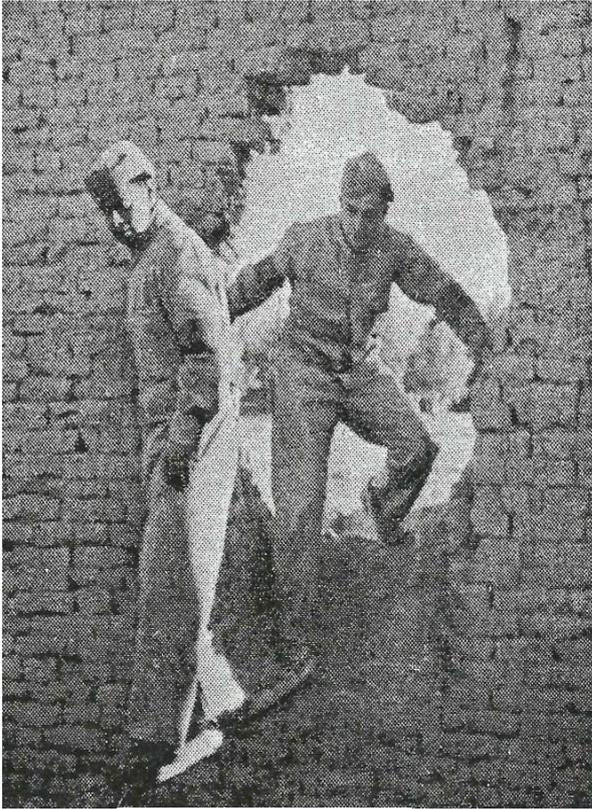


Bon voyage

Source: *Fauji Akhbar*, 27 February 1945.

Service Selection Board Examining the Officer Candidates

Photo 1.3



Are you a Blondin ?

Photo 1.4



Is it seaworthy ?

Source: *Fauji Akhbar*, 27 February 1945.

provided trained technical personnel to armed forces during the War. Railway Workshops further assisted by conducting trade tests of technical recruits.²¹³

In 1941, serious difficulties were faced in meeting the increased demand for all kinds of non-combatants. Rules were amended and ex-servicemen were recruited for such duties.²¹⁴ Women sweepers were recruited for static establishments like training centres, depots and hospitals, etc. in order to relieve the men sweepers for non-combatant duties at the War front.²¹⁵ However, shortage continued and was further intensified manifold when India was developed as a base for South-East Asia Command in 1943. At this juncture, some private contractors, including canteen contractors came forward to help. They assisted in recruiting combatants for all categories as they knew the type of personnel required by the Army. These contractors worked in tandem with the recruiting organization and supplied substantial non-combatants.²¹⁶ Indian Tea District Labour Association provided labourers from their tea gardens. Provincial and District Labour Supply Committees, set up in January 1944, co-ordinated to supply civilian labour from their areas and also advised the Government on matters relating to pay and allowances of such labour. Besides, the contractors were engaged on projects of vital importance to the war efforts.²¹⁷ Local people were also taken from Indian administered front areas like Nagaland and Meghalaya for operations in Kohima and Imphal. These locals besides working as coolies and sentries also acted as spies and guides in unknown hilly and jungle areas to which they were well acquainted.²¹⁸ To cope up with the large demand of MT drivers, civil firms and driving schools like 'United Motors' and 'French Motor Cars' provided trained drivers and also imparted training to the army recruits.²¹⁹

Sometimes, assistance from the other arms or services was found to be of great help. The Navy needed a large number of men when a Landing Craft Wing was introduced in it. The RIN manpower review recorded 'without conscription, and with all services having their own particular claims for manpower, solution of the problem

²¹³ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 15-6.

²¹⁴ 'Employment, Re-employment and Retirement', *Army Instructions (India)*, No. 10 of 1941.

²¹⁵ 'Female Sweepers', *Army Instructions (India)*, No. 207 of 1942.

²¹⁶ *Expansion of Armed Forces, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9056/H, HDMOD.

²¹⁷ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 15-6.

²¹⁸ W.A. Willcox, *Chindit Column 76* (London, Longman, Aug 1945), p. 7.

²¹⁹ *Expansion of Armed Forces, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9056/H, HDMOD.

seemed remote.²²⁰ At this juncture the generous assistance of the Indian Army, which supplied 2,306 men to meet the naval requirement, proved invaluable.²²¹ The Indian Army also provided some volunteers from the Garhwal Rifles to the Navy in 1945 and these men were found very useful.²²² The Indian Army even loaned a substantial number of officers to the Indian Navy and Air Force.²²³ Similarly, the manpower crunch in a Corps of Army was at times solved by assistance from other Corps. When the Indian Artillery needed a large manpower for its immediate expansion in order to create some anti-tank and anti-aircraft units, the Indian Infantry transferred 12 battalions to the Artillery for immediate conversion.²²⁴

Policies were also framed to sustain the manpower available with the armed forces, both as recruits and experienced soldiers. To this end the Government enacted many laws. The Ordinance of 1940 empowered the National Service Labour Tribunals to conscript certain types of technical personnel for service in the Army. Another ordinance provided compulsory transfer of Army personnel from one corps to another as per the need of the time. An ordinance of 1941 made the civilians serving in the Army subject to the military law. Another Law empowered the military authorities to retain those soldiers who were due to be discharged or were seeking voluntary discharge, during the War.²²⁵ Steps were also initiated to stop wastage by disallowing discharge for reasons of unsuitability. Under this policy a recruit found unsuitable for a particular arm of service to which he was enrolled, could not be discharged. The commandant of the Training Establishment was given the authority to transfer such persons to another arm or stream in which he could perform satisfactorily. Such recruits could even be transferred to non-combatant category.²²⁶ Similarly the persons who got enrolled by quoting a wrong caste now could be held in the Army provided he did not prove to be a menial.²²⁷ The class composition of the

²²⁰ *RIN Manpower Situation, 1939-45*, p. 15, File No. 601/7188/H, HDMOD.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 27.

²²³ During the War, the Army seconded and loaned 258 officers to the Indian Navy and 12 to the Indian Air Force. *Expansion: Extra Regimentally Employed Aspect*, p. 11.

²²⁴ Letter No. u.o.11374/RAI, 5 December 1943, *Expansion of Armed Forces, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9060/H, HDMOD. The infantry battalions transferred to artillery for example were- 8/5 Mahratta Light Infantry and 9/5 Mahratta Light Infantry converted to 4 & 5 Anti-Tank Regiments in January 1942, 15 & 16 Punjab to Anti -Tank Regiment in August 1942, etc.

²²⁵ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 37.

²²⁶ *Indian Army Order*, No. 2063 of 1943. This, however, did not apply in cases of discharge on medical and disciplinary ground.

²²⁷ Discharge of Recruits, in Policy Compendium, issued by AG Branch, Chap. 17, Section 3.

infantry battalions were revised to accommodate new classes as the existing castes dried up.²²⁸ Enrolled non-combatants, if they became surplus due to any reason, were also ordered to be retained in service and not be discharged.²²⁹ A similar order for the Enrolled Non-combatants was passed in Indian Air Force also.²³⁰ Some of the trades like tailors and boot-makers, which fell under the category of non-combatants, were converted into combatants after their medical examination and suitable training.²³¹ This provided an alternative to the unit commanders to use such personnel in combatant roles as and when needed.

Further, with the large demand of the War, the recruitment policies were relaxed to cover more candidates within the eligibility criteria. In 1941, Recruiting Medical Officers were authorized to accept the recruits with minor physical defects such as enlarged spleen, squint, small hydrocele, varicoceles, stammering, etc.²³² 'Borderline' cases that the recruiting officer was not authorized to consider prior to the War were now brought under the prescribed standard. The policy of 'door-step' enlistment was encouraged.²³³ After the Japanese attack in South-East Asia, the medical standard was further lowered in October 1942. The Recruiting Medical Officers were authorized to accept the recruits with even venereal diseases. Such recruits were sent to the military hospital for treatment and if cured within 14 days, they were routed to the training centres.²³⁴ Likewise, potential recruits with skin ailments like scabies was also allowed to be enrolled if they were found well above the minimum physical standard. However, the borderline cases were rejected.²³⁵

There seem to be a trend in relaxing or tightening eligibility criteria depending upon the intensity of the War and requirement of manpower. When Allies suffered a heavy defeat, they craved for larger manpower, and thus relaxed the age limit. But

²²⁸Class Composition, G.H.Q. Letter No. 2558-2-A.G. 2(a), 6 January 1942 & also No. 2558/5/A.G. 2(a), 12 January 1942, *Policy Compendium*, prepared by A.G. Branch, Amendment List No. 4, 1943, (Calcutta, GOI Press, 1943), Chapter 46, Section 11.

²²⁹'Disposal of Enrolled Combatants', *Indian Army order*, No. 1154 of 1941.

²³⁰'Disposal of Enrolled Combatants', *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 103 of 1941.

²³¹'Combatisation of Tailors and Boot-makers', *Indian Army Order*, No. 533 of 1945.

²³²*Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 112-4.

²³³Major E.A. Hamlyn, 'A Sidelight on Recruiting', *JUSII*, LXXI, 304, July 1941, pp. 280-5.

²³⁴This policy lay its root in the investigation which revealed that in June 1942, out of 568,061 recruits examined medically, 12,826 were rejected for venereal disease. Presuming that two-thirds of these rejected recruits were fresh cases of gonorrhoea, of whom, six per cent might be resistant to treatment. Thereby approximately 8,000 recruits could possibly have been saved for the Army in that year.

²³⁵*Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 112-4.

when they started winning the battles, the age criteria was tightened.²³⁶ Similarly, physical standards like height, weight, etc., were also relaxed and tightened from time to time.²³⁷ This happened with other Services also. For example, the rejection rate on medical grounds in the IAF was less than 22 per cent in 1944. This crossed over 26 per cent in 1945.²³⁸

The fact of some forced recruitment also cannot be overruled. This is evident from the fact that when traditional recruiting areas exhausted, British authorities looked for nomadic home-loving tribes of Punjab. Force was occasionally used to overcome the reluctance of these men in joining the forces.²³⁹ Periodic district quota allotted confidentially to a commissioner in of each district in the Lahore region was found satisfactory by the conference headed by the Adjutant General.²⁴⁰ According to Talbot, some village officials were also ordered to produce a certain quota of recruits and were threatened with suspension if they failed to meet it.²⁴¹ The testimony of K.C. Yadav also supports this view. Yadav, belonging to a soldier family of Punjab (now Haryana) was a young child but could understand what was happening around him. He claims to have seen and listened during the War period that some able bodied men in his and surrounding villages, run to hide in the crop-laden fields to avoid the village officials recruitment drives to fetch the youth for the Army.²⁴²

Factors Affecting Recruitment

The British authorities followed a strict policy in recruiting the men who had participated in anti-British political movement. A notice by the Adjutant General Branch was incorporated in the Army Orders from the very outset of the War restricting the recruitment of persons who were found participating in political

²³⁶ *Recruiting Regulations (India)*, Part I (Peace), 1939, Section V, Para 36; 'Age Limits in the Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1200 of 1941; *Indian Army Order*, No. 1441 of 1942; 'Physical Standard and Age Limit for Enrolment', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 6 of 1944; 'Candidates for Commission rejected by Service Selection Board', *Indian Army Order*, No. 825 of 1945.

²³⁷ 'Physical Standard', *Indian Army Order*, No. 851 of 1941; *Indian Army Order*, No. 1441 of 1942; *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 6 of 1944.

²³⁸ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 125.

²³⁹ Ian A. Talbot, 'The Second World War and Local Indian Politics: 1939-1947', in *The International History Review*, vol. 6, No. 4, (Nov 1984), pp. 592-610.

²⁴⁰ *Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD.

²⁴¹ Talbot, 'The Second World War and Local Indian Politics: 1939-1947', pp. 582-610.

²⁴² *Interview, Prof. K.C. Yadav*, 10 October 2011.

demonstrations.²⁴³ In one instance, a person who cleared the preliminary exam for commission, including the medical examination, but the CID report revealed that he had participated in a State Civil Resistance movement that was organized by the Hindu Mahasabha. It was also revealed in the report that he remained a ‘Satyagrahi’ prisoner for some time. His application for the grant of emergency commission was, therefore, rejected by the District Commander. Shankar R. Date, Secretary, Maharashtra Provincial Hindu Mahasabha, wrote a letter to the Secretary to the Governor General asking him that participation in Satyagraha movement should not be made a handicap to military service.²⁴⁴ The case was referred to the Adjutant General Branch at Army HQs. The Adjutant General took up the matter with the Military Intelligence Branch for advice.²⁴⁵ The Military Intelligence pointed out that “no one who is so politically minded as to get arrested and imprisoned for a political offence is considered suitable for a commission.”²⁴⁶ However, the Additional Secretary, Richard Tottenham, pointed out that politics was not an incurable disease. He thought that suitability in all other respects and the will to get recruited should reasonably be regarded as a symptom of recovery.²⁴⁷ However, the Adjutant General feared that “an officer with ‘political past’ including a spell in jail, would be an object of admiration among many of his brother Indian officers and could hardly avoid becoming a centre of intrigue.”²⁴⁸ He also feared that such elements could cause a mutiny in the Army. He, therefore, straightway objected to the recruitment of such persons. He also emphasized that if any such person had already entered the army, he be discharged immediately.²⁴⁹ Thus, persons with such political past were refrained from seeking entry in the Army.²⁵⁰ However, some persons seem to have made their

²⁴³ Notices, No. B-51560/A.G. 8, September 1939, *Indian Army Order*, Year 1939.

²⁴⁴ Letter from Shankar R. Date, Secretary, Maharashtra Provincial Hindu Sabha to Secretary to Governor General, 2 November 1940, *Commissions and Political Offences*, File No. 601/10508/H, HDMOD.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Adjutant General Branch Note, 7 December 1940.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Note by Military Intelligence, 10 December 1940.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Notes by Additional Secretary, 13 & 14 Jan 1941.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Note by Adjutant General Branch, 24 Jan 1941.

²⁴⁹ Indeed at least two persons NCOs Deoki Nandan Bhargawa and Niranjana Singh, in two separate incidents were found to have been associated with the Congress movement before enlistment in the Army. They were thus discharged from Service in March and July 1943, respectively. *Monthly Intelligence Reports*, 10 March 1943 & 13 July 1943, File No. Misc/4142/H, NAI.

²⁵⁰ Note by Adjutant General Branch, 24 Jan 1941, *Commissions and Political Offences*, File No. 601/10508/H, HDMOD; A.H.Q. Letter No. B/62176/A.G.-8, dated 16 July 1941; *Policy Compendium*, prepared by AG Branch, No. 4, 1943, (Calcutta, GOI Press, 1943), chapter 18, section Section 7.

way to the armed forces.²⁵¹ Perhaps either they were not registered prisoners or their verification was not done properly by the police department.

Seasonal and climatic factors also affected the availability of recruits at different times in different parts of the country. During ploughing and harvesting, farmers got engaged in their fields and were reluctant to come forward for enlistment. During seasonal epidemics like malaria, plague and cholera, recruiting officers avoided visiting such regions. Even if authorities in some cases desired to traverse, recruits were found prone to diseases and, therefore, medically not fit. Diseases, such as malaria, led to a high percentage of rejection due to enlarged spleen and loss of weight. During the season of festivals, fairs and marriages, the recruiting slackened. Finding Muslim recruits in the month of Ramzan could rarely produce any fruitful purpose. Climate also affected the recruitment adversely as the movements became difficult. If the rains were good, recruiting parties found their movement to the countryside difficult. If combined with agricultural activity, it was an adverse factor. However, to recruit educated candidates, the period after the annual exam was found most suitable.²⁵²

Recruiting Policies and Ground Realities

The recruitment policies though framed during peace time, were amended time and again during the War according to the needs of the time. But the problems persisted.²⁵³ Recruiting authorities were either too hard pressed or too casual in implementing these policies. Thus it provided grounds for deficiencies. For example, the age criterion was laid down for different services and corps, and was amended as per the demand of manpower. But largely no birth registration rules followed in India and in most cases the recruits did not possess any birth certificate. Moreover, the recruits did not have any educational certificate also. Thus, age as was told by the

²⁵¹ Uncle of Maj Gen Paul, whom the police was searching for his active political movement, made his way without being noticed to the Army. However, he was caught after a year for his anti-British activities in the Army and thus was dismissed from service. Maj Gen M.K. Paul, *Little Man from East: Marching through Tumultuous Decades* (New Delhi, Harman Publications, 2009), pp. 32-4. The autobiography of some officers who joined during the Second World War also claims to have participated in the Indian political movement when they were at school or college.

²⁵² *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, pp. 38-9.

²⁵³ Army Instructions guided the recruiting authorities to cross check the age of a person with their school certificates. But if a candidate did not have any school certificate or other documentary proof, the Instructions contained no guidelines for such cases and left on the discretion of enrolling authority to assess the age of the candidate on his own.

recruits was trusted and taken into account without any efforts to cross check.²⁵⁴ Even in cases where educational or some other certificate was submitted, the age declared by the candidate was recorded in the service dossiers. There were thus possibilities that some candidates could be well outside the prescribed age limits. They merely declared their wishful ages and entered the defence forces. Ranjan Dutt (later Air Vice Marshal) who was commissioned in the IAF in August 1940, overstated his age by one year to join up.²⁵⁵ Ganfort, a man from Karachi enlisted in 1941 as cook in the Indian army. He stated his age as 40 years though he had celebrated his 70th birthday by the time of recruitment. The medical officer very well could make it out but chose to ignore. Ganfort later at the time of demobilisation in November 1945 revealed that he had served during the First World War and that he stated his age 42 years when he joined the Army during the First World War.²⁵⁶ Sometimes even recruiting authorities did not ask the age of the candidate and recorded it on their own to bring him within the eligibility criteria. Sri Ram (later Naib Subedar) when reported for the recruitment in the artillery boys entry scheme in early 1945, was not asked about his age. Recruiting authorities wrote what they thought him fit.²⁵⁷ He states that the British needed men and men needed jobs, so both had no problems in manipulating the age to fit in the rules criteria. The recruiting authorities and candidates both thus conveniently violated the recruitment rules.²⁵⁸ As in most cases no formal qualification was required, there was no documents to verify it. Sri Ram also states that he knew many men who were well outside the age criteria but were taken in the Army by citing wishful ages.²⁵⁹

Even prior to the War, in peaceful conditions, when the demands of recruits were not pressing, such cases used to take place. When Mangal Singh (later retired as Havildar) approached the recruiting office for enlistment in 1935, he was 17 years of

²⁵⁴ *Interview, Subedar Risal Singh*, 9 December 2008; *Interview, Captain Ishwar Singh*, 20 December 2008; *Interview, Havildar Chhaju Ram*, 9 December 2008; *Interview, Jemadar Sri Ram*, 19 May 2012.

²⁵⁵ www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/Personnel/Tributes/1072-Ranjan-Dutt.html; accessed on 4 February 2012. Air Vice Marshal Ranjan Dutt was 17 years old but stated his age as 18 years to fit into the age criteria of Air Force then.

²⁵⁶ 'Still Serving at 75', *Fauji Akhbar*, 13 November 1945, p. 17.

²⁵⁷ *Interview, Nb Sub Sri Ram*, 19 May 2012. Sri Ram approached for boys entry. He still did not attain the age of recruitment as a boy. Recruiting Havildar wrote what suited to rules.

²⁵⁸ *Regulations for the Army in India*, 1937, corrected up to October 1944, reprinted in 1945, instruction 414. This Regulation mentioned punishment for false statement at the time of enrolment which could be up to three months Rigorous Imprisonment.

²⁵⁹ *Interview, Nb Sub Sri Ram*, 19 May 2012. According to Sri Ram, the men even of the ages like 35 & 40 from his village got enlisted by quoting less age.

age. On being asked about his age by the recruiting authority, he stated his original age. The recruiting personnel asked him if he wrote his age as 18 years, he could be taken. Accordingly Mangal Singh stated his age as was suggested by the recruiting authority to fit into the eligibility criteria and thus he was enrolled.²⁶⁰ However, it was not only in India that such fallacies took place. Recruits lied about their age even in Britain, and recruiting officers turned a blind eye to it so as to find enough men to fill the vacancies. When Kenneth Black tried to enlist in Huddersfield Regiment of British Army in 1949 he was only 17. The recruiting sergeant told him to go outside, walk around the building, and if he was seventeen and a half when he came back, the sergeant would get things going.²⁶¹

In the selection of Lt Gen Sinha, the Board appeared to be regulation-minded. After clearing the Provincial Board in 1944 when Sinha was to face the Service Selection Board, the Secretary of the Provincial Board informed him that he still had a few months to complete the stipulated age for selection, and his name therefore, would be forwarded to the Central Board (later SSB) on his completion of 18 years of age. Sinha represented to the Commander-in-Chief requesting his intervention so that he could attend the interview. He also wrote that he would join the training centre on completion of the prescribed age. The Secretary, C-in-C, in turn wrote to the Board for necessary consideration. Sinha thus was called for interview and on being declared successful, joined the Army after completion of 18 years of age.²⁶²

It appears that if candidate mentioned the age in the application form and authorities did not point it out at the initial stage, it was difficult to amend it especially when the candidate himself might not be interested in doing so. In all cases documents had to be as per regulation, practicability might be a different case. Further, it was the time when the pace of recruitment had gone down and the British needed a limited manpower making them a bit choosy. Hence, they might not have been desperate in taking the men, thus making them pretty strict. Naturally, when the War ended, the requirement dwindled drastically and much of the existing manpower was also to be demobilized, the policies were reverted to the pre-War pattern. IECOs

²⁶⁰ *Interview, Havildar Mangal Singh by James Holland*, see [mhtml:file:///F:\Mangal Singh \(Indian\).mht](mhtml:file:///F:\Mangal Singh (Indian).mht), accessed on 25 April 2010. Havildar Mangal Singh joined the Signal Corps of the Indian Army in 1935. He belongs to Moga district of Punjab.

²⁶¹ David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People, c 1870-2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, reprint 2008), p. 34.

²⁶² Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 35-7.

thus willing to go for regular commission when they mentioned less age in the application forms for permanent commission to fit into the eligibility criteria, were brushed aside. Their application forms were checked thoroughly with the service records already held with the Adjutant General Branch and false cases were rejected.²⁶³

There were also instances that candidates mentioned the wrong caste to get enlisted. Chamars and Balmikis of Punjab Province, were not generally enrolled in the Army. Some prospective candidates of these castes therefore, declared themselves as Mazhabi Sikh to seek enrolment.²⁶⁴ The recruiting authorities even sometimes paid casual attention in recording the names of the recruits in dossiers.²⁶⁵

In some cases, the recruiting authority even recruited men who had deserted or left the service. There seems to be no effective mechanism to cross check such cases though rules existed on the subject. A person, who deserted from the Kumaon Regiment when it was to embark overseas, got himself selected after a few months in Indian Army Supply Corps.²⁶⁶ Also, a cadet who was thrown out of the Air Force Training School on disciplinary grounds, got selected for the Indian Army as a commissioned officer.²⁶⁷ Still, a Sikh joined RIN and deserted it in January 1941. He got himself re-enlisted in April to leave it again on some religious grounds.²⁶⁸ The policy, however, strictly banned the re-enrolment of the cases that were discharged due to misconduct.²⁶⁹ Sometimes, the recruitment did not follow fairness. This was observed in Women's Royal Indian Naval Service (henceforth WRINS). Personal influence or appearance of the female candidates seems to have worked in their

²⁶³ 'Regular Commissions in Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 51 of 1946.

²⁶⁴ Policy Compendium, by A.G. Branch, Amendment List No. 4, 1943, Chapter XVII, Section 3; Statement of Piare Lall Kureel in Central Legislative Assembly, Resolution RE Recruitment of Scheduled Castes to the Key Service of the Army, 19 November 1943, *LAD*.

²⁶⁵ When Chhaju Ram (later retired as Havildar) was asked about his name by the recruiting officer, he replied 'Singh Ram'. After all the recruiting formalities, his name was announced as Chhaju Ram. Singh Ram questioned the wrong appearance of his name in recruiting officer's list. But his appeal was set aside. Recruiting authority mocked it up and told him that from that day he was Chhaju Ram. Thereby the name of Singh Ram became Chhaju Ram after almost eighteen years of his age and it remained forever. *Interview. Havildar Chhaju Ram*, 9 December 2008.

²⁶⁶ *Interview with the Deserter*, 9 December 2008. Name of the individual not quoted to avoid embarrassment to the individual.

²⁶⁷ Air Chief Marshal Dilbagh Singh, *On the Wings of Destiny* (Delhi, KW Publishers, 2010), p. 6.

²⁶⁸ Intelligence Summary, 6 September 1942, *War Diary of HQ 14 Indian Division*, File No. 601/243/WD, Part I, HDMOD.

²⁶⁹ Re-enrolment after Sentence of Imprisonment, AHQ Letter No. B/62306/A.G. 2, 16 July 1940, in Policy Compendium, prepared by AG Branch, Amendment List No. 4, 1943 (GOI Press, Calcutta, 1943), Chap. 46, Section 1; *Recruiting Regulations, India, Part II (War)*, 1938, para 76 (d).

recruitment. Interviewing male officers generally got influenced by the looks of the female candidates rather than by their capabilities and selected them. To eliminate this favouritism and improve the selection process, WRINS officers' recruitment was subsequently brought under the Officers Selection Board.²⁷⁰

Different Games of Recruitment

While analyzing the recruitment efforts of the British authorities in India, it could be said that there were two Indian opposite forces working on this issue. Some Indian leaders were urging the Indian people not to support the British war efforts by any means.²⁷¹ The influence of the Congress was so much that a BBC official who visited India in the second half of 1942 mentioned in his memorandum to the Cabinet that "India, outside the Punjab and the States, is united against us [British] at the very moment when we most require its co-operation in the running of a campaign in Burma."²⁷² Some other Indian leaders were pleading in the Council of State and Legislative Assembly to recruit more persons from their area or community.²⁷³ The latter category were not only whole heartedly supporting the recruitment efforts but in fact there seems to exist a competition among Indians who could more effectively persuade the British by showing the traditional loyalty of his area or class to the British empire.²⁷⁴ The representatives of the depressed classes too voiced their demands of raising their battalions. Soon after the outbreak of the War, on 13 September 1939, Rai Sahib Hari Prasad Tamta, MLA and leader of depressed classes, while addressing a rally of the people of his class at Almora, appealed to the Viceroy to raise a battalion of depressed classes. He even made an appeal to his community to stand by the British Government and render all assistance in the successful execution

²⁷⁰ *Women's Royal Indian Naval service: Monograph, 1947*, p. 2, File No. 601/ 10849/H, HDMOD. The selection before this was carried out by the Commanding Officer at the first stage and then followed by the Area Commander.

²⁷¹ Congress and its political movements were against the war efforts. The British Indian official reports are full of the details under title 'Congress Anti-War Movement'. *Summaries for the Committee of Council and Minutes of the Committee*, vol. V, (3 Jul to 25 Sep 1941), File No. 601/7006/H, HDMOD.

²⁷² Enclosure to Letter from Amery to Linlithgow, 3 November 1942, *TOP*. Memorandum written by the BBC official was forwarded to Linlithgow by Amery with this letter.

²⁷³ Resolution moved by David Devadoss for 'Enlistment of Madrasis in the Indian Army and Indian Air Forces', 13 September 1938, *CSD*; Resolution moved by Pandit H.N. Kunzru on 'Recruitment of all Classes for the Indian Army' 6 March 1941, *CSD*; Cut Motion moved by Govind V. Deshmukh, on 'Policy of Recruitment to the Army, Navy and Air Forces in India', 10 March 1941, *LAD*.

²⁷⁴ Supporting the recruitment efforts, Sir Ziauddin Ahmad claimed to have sent 600 men from his area as Emergency Commissioned officers by first quarter of 1943. 12 March 1943, *LAD*; M.V. Kalikar, took great pains to bring the Indian men to armed forces. Statement by M.V. Kalikar, 26 March 1943, *CSD*. Many others also pleaded in the Council of States and Legislative Assembly and gave some examples to prove the credibility of their regions or class.

of the War.²⁷⁵ The president of Kori community while speaking in a conference organized by his caste men at Lucknow on 2 and 3 December 1939, demanded the recruitment of his class in the Indian armed forces. He urged the Government to raise an exclusive battalion of his class.²⁷⁶ All India Jatav Youth League passed a resolution in their Annual Conference at Agra demanding recruitment in the Army, Navy and Air Force.²⁷⁷ A resolution was moved in the Legislative Assembly by Piare Lall Kureel in November 1943, urging the Governor General in Council that “the key service of the Army should be thrown open to members of all the scheduled castes and that the military service should not be the monopoly of a few privileged classes.”²⁷⁸ Mahars, a scheduled caste of Central Province and Berar, also demanded the raising of a Mahar battalion. They repeatedly petitioned for their inclusion in the Army List.²⁷⁹

Savarkar, exhorted the Marathas to join the armed forces. He further intimated the Viceroy that his party Hindu Mahasabha “has been actively and effectively working in persuading the Hindus by thousands to join the army, Navy and Air Force.”²⁸⁰ He also assured the Viceroy that his party would continuously be doing so in future also, irrespective of the constitutional issues. A local leader of this party even wrote a letter to the Viceroy supporting the candidature of a person who had taken part in a Satyagraha agitation.²⁸¹ The communist Party of India whole heartedly supported the War efforts and termed this War as the Peoples’ War.²⁸² The ruling party of Punjab (Unionist Party) went farther and forwarded a proposal to the Government of India suggesting that persons who were not supporting the War effort

²⁷⁵ ‘Depressed Classes and War: Leader Appeals to Help his People’, *The Pioneer*, Allahabad, 16 September 1939, p. 12.

²⁷⁶ Lecture of Lotnagam, President Kori Conference, 2 & 3 December 1939, *United Province Kori Conference*, (Lucknow, Kanya Kunj Press, 1939). Kori, a Scheduled Caste community spread mostly in North India had a population of more than one million in 1939.

²⁷⁷ File No. D.21/42-R. 1942, Secretariat of the Governor General, NAI.

²⁷⁸ ‘Resolution RE Recruitment of Scheduled Castes to the Key Service of the Army’, 19 November 1943, *LAD*.

²⁷⁹ Maj Gen S.P.P. Thorat, *The Regimental History of the Mahar MG Regiment* (Dehradun, Army Press, 1954), p. 11.

²⁸⁰ Dr Savarkar to the Marquess of Linlithgow, 30 October 1942, vol. III, *TOP*.

²⁸¹ Letter from Shankar R. Date, Secretary, Maharashtra Provincial Hindu Sabha, to Viceroy, 2 November 1940, *Commissions and Political Offences*, File No. 610/10508/H, HDMOD.

²⁸² Shiva Rao, ‘After the War in India’, in *Pacific Affairs*, University of British Columbia, vol. 18, No. 2, June 1945, p. 178.

should be denied the voting rights.²⁸³ Both the theories, however, worked in some particular areas.

In the United Province, Bihar and Bengal, opposition to the War efforts continued and a very limited numbers of recruits came from there. The political agitation, especially after August 1942, further disrupted the transport and communication system, thus putting a break on recruitment drive. But, in areas like Punjab, Madras, etc., recruitment went on in the way the British needed manpower and India had enough of it (See Appendix I). Further, India was a poor country and many families in rural areas who lived half starved were keen about joining the armed forces.

Why did Indians join the Armed Forces?

Indians joined the armed forces in many hundred thousand. They largely belonged to rural areas whose occupation was agriculture. Some men came from urban India especially the technical lot. Indian officers were usually from educated families. There were several different reasons for their joining the armed forces. Efforts are made in this section to probe the perception of Indians who joined the forces.

A Subedar of 19 Hyderabad Regiment says, “Half of the village used to sleep empty stomach in the night. I was busy ploughing in the field for a good crop. But, I was not the kind of stuff who could continue this hard labour in the field and even that was not appreciated by family members, so I wanted to get rid of this’.²⁸⁴ One day when his father got angry with him for his lack of interest in agricultural work, he dashed to a recruiting rally in a nearby town without informing his parents and got enlisted in the Army in June 1941. The story of a Havildar of Punjab Regiment was not different from that of the Subedar. The Havildar’s peasant family was experiencing tough time to make livelihood out of the agricultural income. He was tilling in the field with his father when he noticed a group of boys going for a

²⁸³ *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 8 January 1942, p. 5. Further when the business community held a strike against the Punjab Government bill of tax on sales, the Unionist Part did not care. Its Karyavahak Minister, Sir Chhotu Ram even explained that the tax was regulated so that the money levied by this tax could be used to support the classes that were supporting the War efforts. *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 31 January 1942, p. 2.

²⁸⁴ *Interview, Subedar Risal Singh*, 9 December 2008. Maj Gen Sir John Megaw, President, India Office Medical Board and Medical Adviser to the Secretary of State for India, 1933-39, writes that most Indians got inadequate food and that there was largely malnutrition. John Megaw, ‘The Health of India’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, vol. 94, No. 4713 (15 March 1946), pp. 242-57.

recruitment rally from alongside the field. Tying his bullocks to a tree, he joined the group of prospective recruits and was enrolled in the Punjab Regiment.²⁸⁵ Honorary Captain Ishwar Singh who joined the Indian Artillery during the War, cites his reason for joining the army as the poor economic condition of the family.²⁸⁶

Thus, hard labour combined with the scarcity of rain and less produce pushed these men to the military profession. Atul Yadav in his thesis on the soldiers of Haryana, the region to which the above soldiers belong, states that in the absence of assured water for irrigation, the area was prone to droughts and famines. These factors made the people accustomed to the vagaries of nature and to the attendant hardships, and hence prompted many to seek enrolment in the Armed Forces.²⁸⁷ The Willcox Committee also noticed that the highest rate of recruitment came from the areas that were economically depressed, and where pay and pension were widely relied on for supporting families and relations.²⁸⁸

When enquired from Subedar Risal Singh as to why he didn't seek employment as railway labour which was available near his village at the upcoming railway track, he said the work did not suit his caste.²⁸⁹ It was despite the fact that to some extent the high cost of casual labour is considered to have induced the farmers and landlords to dissuade their sons and tenants from offering for enrolment.²⁹⁰ Kaushik Roy based on his conversation with some Second World War Jat veterans of Daryaganj, an urban area in Delhi, states an almost similar story. According to Roy, most of these veterans joined the Army because no other job was available and soldiering was considered more prestigious than being porters or waiters.²⁹¹ The findings of the Willcox Committee suggesting "the army had been able in this War to compete with the wages offered by contractors"²⁹² does not, however, seem to

²⁸⁵ Interview, Havildar Chhaju Ram, 8 December 2008.

²⁸⁶ Interview, Honorary Captain Ishwar Singh, 20 December 2008.

²⁸⁷ Atul Yadav, *Valour Unlimited: Haryana and the Indian Armed Forces* (New Delhi, KK Publications, 2009), p. 3. During early 1942, the situation in Hisar (a district of the then South East Punjab and above interviewed soldiers also belonged to nearby districts) was so critical that due to drought people had to eat the bark of trees mixing it with grains. Being starved many people left for some other places in search of food, many youth joined the armed forces. *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 15 February 1942, p. 6.

²⁸⁸ Willcox Committee Report, para 17.

²⁸⁹ Interview, Subedar Risal Singh, 9 December 2008.

²⁹⁰ *Recruiting for the Defence Services in India*, p. 46.

²⁹¹ Kaushik Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Indian Army during World War II', *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 73, No. 2, April 2009, pp. 497-29.

²⁹² Willcox Committee Report, para 16.

concede with this argument. Men from some of the castes preferred jobs of the Army. To some classes labour indeed was not the job to be taken up even when needed for livelihood at any cost. They were apprehensive that it would downgrade their social status. Other jobs were not easily available neither did they have the qualifications for such jobs. Thus, military profession was the only option which maintained their position in the walks of social life.

Caste prejudice also prevented some classes to join some specific Services in the Armed Forces. Many classes did not feel comfortable with RIASC (Animal Transport). Timorousness to animals, religious objections to handle animal litter and animal transport were considered some snags in this Corps.²⁹³ Brahmins found it difficult to serve as sick berth attendant, cook, steward and *topasses* in the Indian Navy because of the nature of the duties contrary to their tradition. The Navy, therefore, had to change its policy and decided to ban the recruitment of Brahmins to these trades. Going further, the Navy also decided not to engage Brahmins in the Supply Branch (Ration) where they would be called upon to handle certain food which did not suit their religion.²⁹⁴

Some Hindus joining the Army as cooks refused to cook meat. Rules were, therefore, framed to obtain a certificate from them to cook meat.²⁹⁵ Such rules had already been framed in the Indian Air Force.²⁹⁶ Similarly men recruited for sweeper trade from the Madras Presidency posed a serious problem. After enrolment, many of them complained that they were not of the sweeper caste. The recruiting authorities in Madras presidency, therefore, resorted to a practical test in cleaning public latrines at the time of recruitment.²⁹⁷ On the contrary, when the Labour Battalion was raised, some wanderers who had run away from their homes got recruited. The Officer Commanding of the battalion received numerous letters from anxious relatives asking about their absent offspring and absconding husbands.²⁹⁸ Sometimes Indian men from

²⁹³ *Expansion of Armed Forces, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9056/H, HDMOD.

²⁹⁴ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 26.

²⁹⁵ 'Recruiting Cooks', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1199 of 1944.

²⁹⁶ 'Recruiting Cooks', *Air Force Orders (India)*, No. 131 of 1941.

²⁹⁷ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 52.

²⁹⁸ Mugger, 'Raising a Labour Battalion', *JUSII*, vol. LXXII, No. 306, Jan 1942, pp. 80-3.

well-to-do families also dashed to the recruiting office and joined the defence forces without intimating their family members for a long time.²⁹⁹

For some Indians, the Army was an honourable profession since generations. The glamour of uniform was a powerful attraction for them. Major Hansraj joined the ranks in mid-1941 when he was studying for matriculation. His father was a Dafedar in Hudson Horse who used to visit village, mounted on horse in a smart military uniform. Hansraj was attracted towards the uniform and the lifestyle which he visualized in the Army.³⁰⁰ However, according to Major Hansraj the immediate reason was the tussle with the hostel superintendent in the college that led him and one of his friends to leave college and dash to the recruitment office. Maj Gen Mitha joined the Army in December 1941 as he thought that the military would provide him an adventurous and glamorous life and the Army uniform would attract lovely girls.³⁰¹ Naib Subedar Sri Ram joined the Indian Artillery as his father had already served in the regiment. He liked the military profession and his father also wanted him to get into it. His maternal uncle, who himself was serving in artillery, took him to Artillery Centre Ambala and got him enlisted in artillery boys entry scheme in early 1945. However, Sri Ram also stated that family tradition as also poor economic condition of the family led him to the Army.³⁰² Major Abhe Ram of the 2nd Lancer says that the Army was the ultimate profession and sooner or later he had to join it.³⁰³ This man from south east Punjab (now Haryana) already had two brothers in the same regiment. Lt Gen P.S. Bhagat who was commissioned barely two months before the commencement of the War had the same story. His two elder brothers were already in the officers cadre of the Indian Army.³⁰⁴ There are many such examples where family

²⁹⁹ 'Notice of the Adjutant General', *Indian Army Order*, July 1943. In this Notice the Adjutant General pointed out that letters were being received from some well-to-do families asking if their ward was in the Army. He appealed to the soldiers who had not intimated their family about their joining Army to do that.

³⁰⁰ *Interview, Major Hansraj Singh*, 4 October 2009.

³⁰¹ Maj Gen A.O. Mitha, *Unlikely Beginnings: A Soldier's Life* (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 44.

³⁰² *Interview, Naib Subedar Sri Ram*, 19 May 2012. He joined the Artillery boys entry in May 1945 and was demobilized after three months in August 1945 because of cease-fire. Subedar Ram re-joined the Artillery in 1946.

³⁰³ *Interview, Major Abhe Ramon* 2 December 2009. He joined 2nd Lancer in the ranks in 1939. Besides his two brothers who were serving in the same regiment, his father also retired as Dafedar from the 2nd Lancer. It was a family of military tradition. Abhe Ram's son is also a colonel in the Army.

³⁰⁴ Lt Gen Mathew Thomas (ed.), *Lt Gen PS Bhagat: A Biography* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1994), pp. 1 & 21.

tradition led a number of youths even in a single family to join the forces.³⁰⁵ Havildar Anand Padalkar from a village near Kolhapur studied up to class fourth. He admitted to have followed the footsteps of a number of young men from his village and nearby, who had joined either the Maratha Light Infantry or the Bombay Sappers and Miners. This seventeen-year-old young man was collected by a recruiting team along with fifty others from his area and brought to Kirkee. Being literate, he was taken in the Sappers.³⁰⁶ Hence, to some the pride of the military profession was more important than the material gain.

Some men responded to the call of a particular service. The son of a landlord from Rawalpindi, later an Air Marshal in the Indian Air Force, joined as a pilot, perhaps because he was attracted by the talk of a wing commander who visited his college to persuade the educated men to join the Air Force.³⁰⁷ So was Y.V. Malse (later Air Marshal), who was studying in Ferguson College in Pune and responded to the call of Indian Air Force for pilots from Pune University.³⁰⁸ R.D. Katari (later Admiral) trained on the Training Ship Dufferin for merchant marine had long cherished a desire to join the Indian Navy. He even tried to get an entry in the maiden batch of Indians for the Indian Navy but luck did not favour him. The War gave him a chance to fulfil his desire and he joined the Indian Navy immediately after the War broke out.³⁰⁹ These educated men belonged to well-to-do families and could have explored other avenues also. However, they preferred to respond to the call of a particular service.

Still many joined the commissioned rank because besides good payment, the officers' rank provided social status.³¹⁰ The status of a commissioned rank in the defence forces indeed attracted many educated youths in pre-War Indian army also.

³⁰⁵ For example four sons of a First World War veteran, ex-havildar from Punjab were serving in the Army in 1941. The fifth also wished to enlist soon. In another example, the five sons of Lt Rai Bahadur Ram Chandra, a veteran of the First World War, joined the Indian armed forces during the Second World War. Three daughters and two sons of Sirdar Arjan Singh, who himself was an officer commanding of a civ-mil Unit, joined the Indian armed forces during the Second World War. There are many such examples in the issues of Fauji Akhbar. For example see, 'A Good Record', *Fauji Akhbar*, 19 April 1941, p. 27; 'A Family's Proud Record of Service', *Fauji Akhbar*, 3 July 1945, p. 21; 'Photos of Rahmat Khan and his Sons', *Fauji Akhbar*, 18 September 1945, p. 20; 'A Proud Family', *Fauji Akhbar*, 19 February 1946, p. 11.

³⁰⁶ Thomas, *Lt Gen PS Bhagat: A Biography*, p. 41.

³⁰⁷ Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok, 15 November 2008.

³⁰⁸ Jagan Pillariseti, *Air Marshal YV Malse: A Tiger Pilot Remembers*, www.bharatrakshak.com, accessed on 3 November 2011.

³⁰⁹ Admiral R.D. Katari, *A Sailor Remembers* (New Delhi, Prabhat Prakashan, 2012), pp. 14-7 & 29-31.

³¹⁰ Wavell to Linlithgow, 24 Feb 1943, *TOP*.

This is evident from the fact that some boys from very affluent families who could not succeed in joining the officer cadre through the highly competitive exam conducted by Federal Public Service Commission, embraced the second option. Young men like Dilip Chaudhuri, Ranbir Bakshi, Badhvar, Iftikhar and others joined as sepoy in the Indian Army to compete for the officer cadre through reserved vacancies of other ranks.³¹¹

Some Indians seem to have taken the British to their words. An Indian Lieutenant of Indian Army wrote in his letter: "I have joined the army to serve my country... This is the people's war. Everybody should try to drive the fascist Jap from our country... It is the duty of every Indian to volunteer himself to join the war."³¹² Bhandari Ram also joined the ranks of Indian Army during the Second World War after getting influenced by the British propaganda urging the Indians to join the armed forces to safeguard their country. He says that "War had started and British needed men. It was our duty to join Army and protect our country as if British lost we shall be ruled by other masters."³¹³ He adds that if we help the British in the War efforts and prove our mettle, we can ask them for our much due birth right 'Freedom' after the War. Maulana Azad also writes that the defence forces had recruited a large proportion of young men from different provinces and social classes during the War and that the young men joined the armed forces as they believed that the British would keep their word after the War and India would be free.³¹⁴ Aney, a Member of the Viceroy's expanded Council, while addressing the students of a college at Jabalpur urged the students to have a patriotic heart. He clarified that if India succeeded in raising and organizing its military forces on proper lines during this War then it would be hard for anyone in this world to suppress the Indian voice and demands.³¹⁵

³¹¹Narayan, *Genera J.N. Chaudhuri: An Autobiography*, pp. 81-2. Maj Gen Partap Narain, *Subedar to Field Marshal* (New Delhi, Manas Publications, 1999), p. 109. All these men belonged to very affluent families and joined with the aim to get commission through ranks vacancies. Many of them reached to a very high rank of the Army.

³¹² An extract from the letter of an Indian Lieutenant recorded in Censor, in 'Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944 and January 1945', *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA, Branch 'A'*, p. 14, File No. 601/80/WD/Part I, HDMOD.

³¹³*Interview, Private Bhandari Ram*, <http://www.youtube.com>- Timewatch: The Forgotten Volunteers of World War II, accessed on 26 May 2011. He won the British highest gallantry award Victoria Cross during this War.

³¹⁴ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 1988), p. 133.

³¹⁵ *Hindustan Times*, 5 October 1941.

Lt Col Phythian-Adams, an officer of Madras Regiment, worked as a Civil Liaison Officer in the Madras Presidency and South Indian States during 1940-45. He travelled through his area extensively to look after the welfare of the families of the soldiers and also to encourage the youth from the region to join the Army. Phythian-Adams claims to afford the first hand information with regard to the motives of the Madrasi recruits to join the forces. According to him, what impelled the Madrasi recruits in the early days of the War, was a spirit of adventure and a chance of going overseas, something many of their fathers had done during the First World War. He further adds that subsequently, the fall of Singapore and the imminent threat of the Japanese landing at Madras, spurred the Madrasis with patriotic feelings. They now had a desire to do something to defend their homes from the horrors of invasion.³¹⁶ However, he owed the recruitment more to the economic conditions of Madras but cites that this reason attributed not till the later stages of the War.³¹⁷ Sir David Devadoss advocating the enlistment of Madrasis in the Indian armed forces moved a resolution in the Council of States in September 1938. He stated that, “Unemployment question in Madras is a pressing question. Educated young men are starving due to unemployment. Such men if drafted into the army, the Presidency [Madras Presidency] as a whole will be benefitted.”³¹⁸ Govindswami, from Madurai in Tamil Nadu who enrolled in the Army during the Second World War, stated in an interview that he joined the Army mainly because of poverty.³¹⁹ A contemporary article, while detailing the selection of officers to the armed forces says that the depressed economic condition of educated youth of India was also a factor. It adds that “after three years’ full university training, a young man is extremely fortunate if he can command a salary of eighty rupees per month.”³²⁰ T.N. Kaul, an ICS and District Magistrate of Unnao (United Province) during the War, who actively supported the nationwide recruitment drive to armed forces, too writes that the economic reason as the main cause of people joining the armed forces. Citing his own district Unnao, he

³¹⁶Lt Col E.G. Phythian-Adams, *The Madras Regiment, 1758-1958* (Coonoor, Ave Mariya Commercial Printers, 1981), pp. 266-7.

³¹⁷*Ibid.*

³¹⁸‘Enlistment of Madrasis in the Indian Army and Indian Air Forces’, 13 September 1938, *CSD*.

³¹⁹Quoted in Kevin Blackburn, ‘Recalling War Trauma of the Pacific War and the Japanese Occupation in the Oral History of Malaysia and Singapore’, *Oral History Review*, vol. 36, No. 2, Summer 2009, p. 245. On the request of the Second World War veteran Interviewee, his identity is not disclosed and a pseudonym Govindswami is given to the Veteran by Anitha who conducted the interview.

³²⁰Gideon, A. ‘New Method of Selecting Army Personnel’, *JUSII*, LXXIII, 312, October 1943, pp. 419-29.

adds that widespread unemployment and poverty made the young men to come forward in large numbers.³²¹ Further, the Women Auxiliary Corp (India) was the first ever experience of Women Army in India. It was mostly joined by Anglo Indian girls. Most girls were driven by financial considerations.³²²

Poor economic conditions and unemployment were the two major factors that impelled many Indians to join the ranks in the Army. The Willcox Committee too was of the view that the principal motive for enlistment in the Army during the war was often economic.³²³ Of the early twentieth century, Greenhut writes that the army offered an excellent career, food, a reasonable salary and a decent pension.³²⁴ He adds that there were other non-quantifiable aspects, such as uniforms, traditions, solidarity in regiments and occasional adventures. The view held its efficacy even during the Second World War, though partially. It was a temporary recruitment for the war period during the Second World War that would not make one eligible for pension. Also it was not the time for occasional adventures. It was a full blown world war that rather offered a long separation from family, rigorous hardship and the fear of loss of the limbs or even life. However, during the First World War when men faced the same problems, according to Pradhan, the men joined the Army due to war incentives and family tradition.³²⁵ But political India was not against the war efforts then. There was only mild and limited opposition to the War during the First World War.

In the IAF, for some it was the love of flying machines. The War offered them a good opportunity to turn their dream into reality. Four Engineer brothers Aspy, Jehangir, Ronnie and Minoo joined the Indian Air Force as they were in love with the flying machines.³²⁶ Air Commodore Ratnagar wanted to pursue a career as a pilot in civil Aviation. He had even started taking flying lessons at a civil flying club and accumulated about 100 hours of flying experience. But flying training was too costly and the financial resources of his family were already stretched. The events unfolding during the Second World War offered him an opportunity to fulfil his dream. He

³²¹ Kaul, *Reminiscences: Discreet & Indiscreet*, p. 98. Kaul was District Magistrate of Unnao district from 1943-45.

³²² Frank Thomas, an Anglo Indian Legislator put up this point in the Legislative Assembly on 16 March 1943. Statement by Frank Thomas, 16 March 1943, *LAD*.

³²³ Willcox Committee Report, para 16.

³²⁴ Jeffrey Greenhut, 'Sahib and Sepoy: An Inquiry into the Relationship between the British Officers and Native Soldiers of the British Indian Army', *Military Affairs*, vol. 48, No. 1, January 1984, pp. 14-9.

³²⁵ S.D. Pradhan, 'Indian Army and the First World War', pp. 49-67.

³²⁶ War & Grief, *The Times of India*, 21 August 1941, p. 19.

therefore, joined the IAFVR in June 1940.³²⁷ Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal too turned to the IAF to justify the money his father had spent on him to obtain a civilian pilot licence. During the vacations in September 1939 when he was in India, he got a letter from the Air Headquarters inviting him to join the Indian Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Lal mentions that it was “the prospect of being paid to do that for which my poor father spent money on me.”³²⁸ The smart uniform and attractive peak cap not only attracted young men but young ladies as well. The War to India seemed to be at a distance and the danger thus far away. Keeping all this in mind, after the consent of his parents, Lal appeared before the Air Force Selection Board in October 1939 at Safadarjung in Delhi and got selected.³²⁹

Some people, however, joined the forces for no particular reasons. Dilbagh Singh (later Air Chief Marshal) was studying in a College at Lahore when he joined the IAF in January 1944. He did not have any childhood ambition or so of joining the Air Force. He had not even seen an aeroplane from close quarters. He wanted to become a professor of chemistry. With the progress of the War, many of his friends joined the Indian Army, however, it did not create any desire or inclination in him to do so. But, it was the advertisement in ‘The Tribune’ in October 1943, which he incidentally saw. He approached the Recruiting Office nearby and got selected. He writes that his joining the Indian Air Force was accidental.³³⁰ Similarly, O.P. Mehra (later Air Chief Marshal) wanted to go for a Doctorate in History. He had completed his Master’s in History and was looking for a scholarship for Ph D but his father’s conversations with one of his friends in which his father was expressing his difficulty of running the house on his meagre pension, led Mehra to change his decision and find a job. The Second World War offered the opportunities of joining the forces; Mehra thus went through the process of recruitment and joined the IAF in November 1940.³³¹

But J.F.R. Jacob had a strong reason to join the Army. Being a Jew himself, he was quite appalled at the Nazi invasions and the atrocities on Jews. Studying for his

³²⁷ Jagan Pillarisetti, *Air Commodore HS Ratnagar: Lysanders to Hurricanes*, www.bharatrakshak.com, accessed on 3 November 2011.

³²⁸ Lal, *My years with the IAF*, pp. 7-8.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8 & 16.

³³⁰ Dilbagh Singh, *On the Wings of Destiny*, pp. 1-2.

³³¹ Air Chief Marshal O.P. Mehra, *Memories: Sweet and Sour* (New Delhi, KW Publishers, 2010), pp. 11-4.

graduation at Saint Xavier's College, Calcutta, he made up his mind to go and fight. He faced the interview and got selected but did not share this with his parents till he received his joining letter in mid-1941.³³²

Still others like Lt Gen Sinha joined the Indian Army in 1944, as war offered an opportunity to get into the Army and weaken the British imperialism from within. To him, even if India got independence by non-violent means, still the nation would need the army to defend itself. The young Indians by joining it could acquire experience and expertise.³³³ Samar, a revolutionary freedom fighter whom the Police was searching for, too made his way concealing all his credentials to the Army direct as a Havildar Clerk. His nephew, Maj Gen Paul claims that he was asked by his revolutionary group to join the Army as being a Havildar Clerk, he would be posted to some headquarters and would be privy to secret and sensitive information.³³⁴ Studying in engineering, Harjinder Singh (later Air Vice-Marshal) too had something of this sort in his mind back in 1931. He joined the Indian Air Force as an airman, as he knew that the country one day would get independence and would need its own Air Force.³³⁵ Subhash Chandra Bose also urged the Indians in early 1942 to join the Indian Army for this reason. After having reached Germany, Bose started airing his view points on German Radio. According to a letter by the Chief of the General Staff (India), Bose in his broadcast urged the Indians to join the Indian Army in large numbers as "in the last phase of the national struggle, the Indian Army will have to play an important role."³³⁶ It is, however, difficult to say as how far it had any impact in this regard. But according to one British officer of the Indian Army who rose to Brigadier rank during the War, the old Indian officers were apolitical while Indians who joined during the War had increased interest in politics. He recalled a group of

³³² Lt Gen J.F.R. Jacob, *An Odyssey in War and Peace: An Autobiography* (New Delhi, Roli Books, 2011), pp. 5 & 7.

³³³ Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 37.

³³⁴ Maj Gen M.K. Paul, *Little Man from East: Marching through Tumultuous Decades* (New Delhi, Harman Publications, 2009), 32-4. According to Paul, after training Samar was posted to Headquarters, but was caught after a year by the authorities for his past revolutionary activities. He was extremely tortured and unbearably harassed by authorities in jail.

³³⁵ A.L. Saigal (ed.), *Birth of an Air Force: The Memoirs of Air Vice Marshal Harjinder Singh* (New Delhi, Palit Publishers, 1977), p 34.

³³⁶ *Extracts from Letters addressed to the Organizer Congress Northern Zone, 1943, File No. 601/10569/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.*

Indian officers who had regularly been tuning in to the Japanese English language broadcasts.³³⁷

Why didn't Indians join the Armed Forces?

Many youngsters, who could be good candidates, did not opt for the armed forces as a career deliberately. Lord Samuel hoped that India being a country of about 40 crore people, could produce between 1.5 and 2.0 crore soldiers.³³⁸ Why then the supply always remained far behind the demand? The Ginwala Committee, formed to select pilots for the Indian Air Force pointed out that one third of the candidates who were found suitable for the interview, did not respond to the call of the committee.³³⁹ A contemporary article also pointed out that the best material of the universities and schools was not coming forward to join the armed forces.³⁴⁰ The Indian political environment seems to be one of the reasons that dissuaded some educated youth. The situation was totally different during the First World War when India, including its political leaders, rallied in favour of King Emperor.³⁴¹

During the Second World War, many college students, particularly in Bihar expressed strong resentment against the British rule. They wanted to get rid of the British even if they were to be ruled by some other master. The students used to say “*Agar Gulami Hi Karni Hai to kandhe Badal Badal Kar Kareng.*”³⁴² Even among the men who had joined, a few were influenced by the prevailing political environment and did not like to continue. An officer wanted to leave the Indian Air Force because his Congress minded ideology did not permit him to stay any longer. He resigned from the IAF at Lahore citing political reason.³⁴³ In another case, a young Parsee Lt Dadachanji, who had studied in England, volunteered for the war time emergency commission. However, he did not like the orders which put him on internal security duty as it would have forced him to shoot his own countrymen. He also resigned his

³³⁷ Stephen P. Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1971, reprint 1990). p. 135. Cohen writes this based on his interview with a British Brigadier of Indian army in 1963.

³³⁸ *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 16 February 1942, p 3.

³³⁹ *Fuaji Akhbar*, 1 February 1941, p. 15.

³⁴⁰ Gunner, ‘*The Indian Educational System*’, pp. 147-50.

³⁴¹ *India's Contribution to the Great War*, p. 61.

³⁴² Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 28. ‘If we have to remain slaves we should at least change the shoulder carrying the burden’.

³⁴³ Saigal, *Birth of an Air Force*, pp. 178-9. CID also intercepted his letters and found his contact with Indian political circle.

commission citing political reasons.³⁴⁴ A similar case of an Indian store man of the Indian Army was also mentioned in a report.³⁴⁵ Some others who joined the Army but found to have been associated with political movements, were immediately discharged from the service.³⁴⁶ The Army Headquarters was apprehensive of the continuous increasing demand for discharge on political ground.³⁴⁷ Field Marshal Wavell while writing to Linlithgow feared that an increasing number of Indian officers hold strong nationalistic views. He also suggested that the clerks and technicians recruited recently from educated political minded class were the most uncertain elements and could present the greatest problem in the event of incidents such as Gandhi's death due to fast.³⁴⁸ Statistics available in the Review also supports the political links of Indian soldiers with Indian political parties. During the year 1943, a total of 153 men were wasted out from the Indian Army due to their sympathies with the Congress movements. During the same year, another 175 men were wasted due some other political cause (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1

Wasted out from the Army due to Congress Sympathies/Political Activities

Year	Trained Men	Recruits	Non-Combatants	Total
1943	48	92	13	153
	70*	50*	55*	175*
1944	49	82	24	155
1945	29	18	12	59
1946	708	02	42	752
Grand Total				1,294

(Source: *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vols. I-IV, 1942-47).

Note: In the Statistics of 1943 (vol. II) there were two columns for wastage due to political activities. These were (i) Congress Sympathies, (ii) Other Political Causes*. Since 1944 (vols. III & IV), these two columns were merged in one and were termed as "Waste out due to 'Political Activities'".

³⁴⁴ Linlithgow to Amery, 1 September 1942, vol. II, *TOP*; Amery to Linlithgow, 5 October 1942, vol. II, *TOP*; Wavell to Linlithgow, 24 February 1943, vol. III, *TOP*.

³⁴⁵ Amery to Linlithgow, 5 October 1942, vol. III, *TOP*.

³⁴⁶ In two separate incidents, two NCOs Deoki Nandan Bhargawa and Niranjana Singh were found to have been associated with the Congress movement before enlistment in the Army. They were thus discharged from Service in March and July 1943, respectively. *Monthly Intelligence Reports*, 10 March 1943 & 13 July 1943, File No. Misc/4142/H, NAI.

³⁴⁷ Letter No. AHQ No. B/62176/12/A.G. 8, dated 30 July 1941, in Policy Compendium, Amendment List No. 4, 1943, compiled by A.G. Branch, GOI Press, Calcutta, 1943. Army HQ in this letter besides being apprehensive of such increasing cases also suspected that some soldiers seemed to be striving discharge on the pretext of their association with Indian political parties. It directed the unit authorities to investigate the veracity of the case before recommending discharge on such grounds.

³⁴⁸ Wavell to Linlithgow, 24 Feb 1943, vol. III, *TOP*. Wavell, however also pointed out that many such Indian officers indeed realized the necessity of defeating the Axis Powers before India's freedom could fully be achieved.

Thus there were number of soldiers who did not like political ideology of the British Indian Government and had such resentment to resign their commission due to political reasons. They being in the Army still might held their connections with Indian political movements. It is very likely that many such Indians might have stayed away from the recruiting deliberately due to the political reasons. The Willcox Committee also pointed out that political motives and adverse home influences kept back some who could otherwise have been suitable.³⁴⁹

The formation of the Indian National Army (henceforth INA) was also an adverse factor in the recruitment efforts. Linlithgow, the Viceroy, once planned to confiscate the property of men who joined the INA, but stepped back as it would give an adverse publicity in the recruiting areas to which the soldiers of INA belonged.³⁵⁰ However, it is difficult to gauge as to how many restricted themselves from joining the armed forces due to the INA factor. Large numbers of desertions too seem to have made some prospective recruits and their parents resistant to the armed forces. The deserters on reaching their villages, at times, spread defeatist news and depicted the military life as bitterly tough and unbearable, etc. This discouraged the eligible youths from joining and their parents from sending their wards to the armed forces.³⁵¹

The other factor which dissuaded the candidates from coming forward was the racial and economic discrimination prevailed in the Indian Army. This led to discontentment among the serving Indian Commissioned Officers affecting the recruitment with the result that the best type of young Indians did not come forward in sufficient numbers.³⁵² According to a view, star students of the university still preferred good posts in the Government civil service and business houses.³⁵³ Certainly, highly educated persons did not like the armed forces as a career. This

³⁴⁹Willcox Committee Report, para 27.

³⁵⁰Linlithgow to All Provincial Governors, 7 May 1943, vol. II, *TOP*.

³⁵¹*RIN Manpower Situation, 1939-45*, File No. 601/7188/H, HDMOD. According to this File, desertion provided hostile recruitment and subversive propaganda. Also Personal Interviews with two Second World War Deserters.

³⁵²*Express Letter, GOI, War Department to The Secretary of State*, File No. 601/10604/H, HDMOD. Kalikar, too pointed out in the Council of State that discrimination of martial and non-martial, disparity in pay between the British and Indian officers, and the behaviour of British officers to Indians was like that of rulers for the ruled in the Indian Army. This was one of the reasons that many eligible Indians do not opt for Indian Armed Forces. Statement by M.V. Kalikar, 26 March 1943, *CSD*. Pandit Kunzru also mentioned in the Council that the political situation of India and discrimination in the Army, made many qualified Indians to not join the Army. Statement by Pandit Kunzru, 25 March 1943, *CSD*.

³⁵³Gunner, 'The Indian Educational System in Relation to the Requirement of the Defence Forces', in *JUSII*, vol. LXXII, Jan-Oct 1942, pp. 147-50.

problem was previously pointed out by Sir Simon also in his report which says that “those races which furnish the best sepoy are emphatically not those which exhibit the greatest accomplishments of mind in an examination. The Indian intellectuals has, as a rule, no personal longing for an army career.”³⁵⁴

The Views of the Parents and Relatives

Parents too had different views for their wards about joining the armed forces. The parents of T.N. Ghadiok (later Air Marshal) did not want him to join Air Force because flying was comparatively a new concept in India. The Army was an acceptable kind of norm to his parents but they were scared about the Air Force.³⁵⁵ In the early phases of the War, a good number of prospective pilots confided in Warrant Officer Harjinder Singh (later Air Vice-Marshal) at Kanpur that parents were opposing their plans of taking up flying as a career.³⁵⁶ Air Commodore Vachell felt that India was going through the same stage that was experienced in the United Kingdom some years ago when the right type of boys were often discouraged by both school masters and parents from joining the Royal Air Force.³⁵⁷ He explained to the Joint Recruiting Conference that besides a lack of high physical and educational standard, reluctance of right kind of candidates due to this reason contributed difficulties in the IAF recruiting.³⁵⁸ The Air Force was such an uncertain element for most Indians that many people assumed going to war with the Air Force meant certain death.³⁵⁹ No. 6 Squadron deployed in Burma suffered the heaviest casualties and lost eight pilots between June 1943 and July 1944.³⁶⁰ Similar was the loss of No. 1 Squadron in the Burma operations and likewise of others.³⁶¹ It could have been a matter of reluctance for any parent. It was a matter of concern to even the C-in-C, India, General Auchinleck that he brought out in his Demi Official letter to the

³⁵⁴ *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, vol. 1, (London, 1930), p. 116.

³⁵⁵ *Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, 15 November 2008. Air Marshal kept his joining Air Force a secret for many days.

³⁵⁶ Saigal, *Birth of an Air Force*, p. 115.

³⁵⁷ *Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, p. 4, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ Saigal, *Birth of an Air Force*, pp. 115-6.

³⁶⁰ D.O. letter from C-in-C General Auchinleck to Governor, NWFP, Secretary, War Department; & AOC (India). 12 January 1945 (Personal and Confidential), *Note on IATC*, August 1944 to October 1945, File No. F/177, HDMOD.

³⁶¹ According to Air Marshal Ghadiok other than Commanding Officer there were only four pilots who came back from Burma Operation in No. 1 Squadron. All other squadrons engaged in operations also had their share of losses. *Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, 15 November 2008.

Secretary, War Department and AOC (India).³⁶² However, despite the fact of the war eventuality some parents supported the cause of their sons joining the IAF as pilots. Parents of Malse (later Air Marshal) supported him when he wished to join the Air Force.³⁶³

V. Longer, who had recently completed his masters in English literature in late 1930s, was persuaded by the Vice-Chancellor of his University to join the Army. He agreed, but the application form fell in the hands of his mother and she did not want her son to get into the Army at a time when the War was becoming disastrous. She tore off the application form.³⁶⁴ The mother of R.D. Katari (later Admiral) expressed her grave concern of his son joining the Indian Navy when the War had started. His wife, who was to deliver their first baby within a few days, was most unhappy.³⁶⁵ Similarly, the aunt of Dilbagh Singh (Air Chief Marshal) was very unhappy about his joining the Air Force. Besides her thought that flying was a dangerous profession, she was also fearful of the fact that it was the War time. She tried her best to dissuade him, however, his uncle supported and even helped him with his intellectual guidance.³⁶⁶ *Fauji Akhbar* also reported that mothers generally were reluctant to send their sons especially to the Air Force.³⁶⁷ Teachers of Lt Gen Sinha felt that the Army was not meant for people with good academic record and considered it a wastage of talent. They wanted Sinha to go for post graduation and excel in studies. His parents were, however, happy but had concerns about his safety.³⁶⁸ Sinha's college friends were surprised and implied him of being a turncoat as despite holding an anti-British viewpoint, he had decided to serve the British and that too despite Mahatma Gandhi's call for a boycott of the War effort.³⁶⁹

³⁶²D.O. letter from C-in-C General Auchinleck to Governor, NWFP, Secretary, War Department; & AOC (India), 12 January 1945 (Personal and Confidential), *Note on IATC*, August 1944-June 1945, File No. F/177, HDMOD.

³⁶³Pillariseti, *Air Marshal Y.V. Malse*, www.bharatrakshak.com, accessed on 3 November 2011.

³⁶⁴ Longer though could not be restricted for long and he joined the Army some years later. *Interview, Colonel V. Longer*, 8 March 2010.

³⁶⁵ Katari, *A Sailor Remembers*, p. 31. Katari, however, somehow persuaded them and joined the Indian Navy.

³⁶⁶ Dilbagh Singh, *On the Wings of Destiny*, p. 3. During the course of four days of interview at Central Selection Board, Rawalpindi, a British recruiting sergeant asked Dilbagh Singh to bring the following day, a certificate issued by the British to his father or forefather of their having served in the British service with loyalty etc. On this his uncle guided him if they ask again of such certificate tell them "I don't want to be selected on the merits of my forefathers", and it really astonished the recruiting sergeant.

³⁶⁷ 'Recruitment Teams's Campaign', *Fauji Akhbar*, 6 November 1945, p. 12.

³⁶⁸ Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, pp. 36-7.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Facts and Figures

The strength of Indian army increased manifold during the War period. By the end of the War, it rose to well over two and a half million. The Infantry as the largest force composed of 492,096 men while the Indian Armoured Corps had 43,080 men by September 1945.³⁷⁰ The Indian Artillery, which was a small force at the start of the War, expanded to the strength of 83,986 by the cessation of hostilities.³⁷¹ Indian Engineers also had a sharp increase. It was composed of 30 units at the outset of war and expanded to the strength of about 250,000 in 700 units.³⁷² Indian Pioneer Corps was also a small force when the War started. It rapidly rose to 175,961 and was composed of 400 companies by the end of the War.³⁷³

The strength of the regular Indian army increased about tenfold during the War. The increase was proportionally higher than the First World War when it was rose from 201,083 in August 1914 to 1,440,337 in December 1918.³⁷⁴ Some the corps that took birth during this War, also expanded rapidly. IEME, which was raised in 1942, swelled to 17,500 men by September 1945.³⁷⁵ Similarly, the Indian Intelligence Corps formed in 1942, reached to a total of more than 6,500 by the end of the War.³⁷⁶

Women were first time recruited in duties other than medical and nursing. WAC(I) had a considerable strength by the end of hostilities. A total of 15,527 WAC(I) were recruited during the War period. Besides, the Indian Air Force rose from its strength of 160 (Indian officers and men) at the outset of War to 26,614 (excluding officers) by August 1945.³⁷⁷ To recruit a large number of Indians for the armed forces during the War, 800 officers and 9,000 others worked in the recruiting organisations³⁷⁸ (For strength of Indian Army see Table 1.2 and also Appendix 3).

³⁷⁰ *Statistical Review of Personnel Army of India*, vol. III, pp. 86-7.

³⁷¹ *Fauji Akhbar*, 31 August 1946, p. 14.

³⁷² 'RIE Demobilisation', *Fauji Akhbar*, 28 September 1946, p. 25.

³⁷³ *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vol. III, pp. 86-7; *India's Part in the Sixth Year of War*, compiled by War Department, GOI, p. 29.

³⁷⁴ S.D. Pradhan, 'Indian Army and the First World War', pp. 49-67.

³⁷⁵ *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vol. III, pp. 86-7.

³⁷⁶ *India's Part in the Sixth Year of War*, p. 30.

³⁷⁷ Gupta, *History of the Indian Air Force*, p. 37.

³⁷⁸ 'Indians Helping the Forces', *Fauji Akhbar*, 4 Sep 1945, p. 17

Table 1.2
Strength of the Indian Army

Period	Regular Army*	AFI / ITF	WAC (I)	ISF
1 July 1939	228,907	21,096 / 15,398	--	46,947
1 July 1940	268,425	21,640 / 20,217	--	54,622
1 July 1941	575,378	21,688 / 29,198	--	54,269
1 July 1942	1,136,153	20,822 / --	898	66,672
1 July 1943	1,674,883	20,492 / --	6020	86,800
1 July 1944	1,912,289	15,821 / --	9084	91,512
1 July 1945	2,049,317	15,527 / --	11,528	97,860

(Source: Compiled from Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India, vols. I–III)

*Regular Indian army includes IORs, VCOs, ICOs, KCIOs, British officers and British other ranks posted to the Indian army, civilians posted to the Indian army. It excludes ITF, AFI, ISF, WAC (I), Nepalese and the Burmese army attached to the Indian army.

There were 528 Indian Officers (including KCIOs and ICOs) before the War started in 1939 and it increased to a total strength of 13,076 Indians by July 1945.³⁷⁹ If the strength of Indian officers at the outset of the War were to be compared with their strength at the end of the War, the increase in percentage is enormous. The Indian Army officers increased 200 times, Navy 70 times and Air Force 102 times of its pre-War strength.³⁸⁰

The South-East Asia command of Allied Powers at its peak had more than one million troops represented by nine countries. Of this strength well over 700,000 were provided by the Indian Army. The British numbered more than 183,000 (including officers and ORs serving with the Indian army and other forces). Besides, there were 77,000 West Africans, 18,000 Americans and 10,000 troops from the Burmese Army. Of the 27 Victoria Crosses won in the Burma campaign, 20 were won by officers and men of the Indian army. Also, 210,000 Indian troops were deployed in countries like Africa, Italy, Iraq and Iran etc. at the end of the European war. Still, about 120,000

³⁷⁹ *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vols. I–III.

³⁸⁰ Army: 1 Oct 1939, 696, 1 Jul 1945, 13, 947; Navy: 1 Oct 1939, 19, 1 Jul 1945, 1337; Air Force: 1 Oct 1939, 16, 1 Jul 1945, 1638. See Prasad, *Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organisation*, Appendix 2

were engaged in static duties of which 62,000 were deployed in the North-West Frontier.³⁸¹

By the end of the War, more than 59 classes and sub-classes had been recruited in 543 different trades and employment of the Indian Army (see Appendix 2 for class recruitment). These men were supplied by 254 districts of British India and 192 different States and Agencies under the British Indian empire.³⁸² Some classes supplied a very high percentage of recruitable men. For example, Mazbhi and Ramdasia provided more than 94 per cent of the men of recruitable age. Some other classes also provided a good number of men to the armed forces.³⁸³ In the regions, Punjab hit the list with 617,411 and Madras came next with 475,984 men to the armed forces during the War.³⁸⁴

Conclusion

The men from the enlisted classes in India, looked at the start of the War as an opportunity to seek a job of social status. Non-enlisted classes equally welcomed the opening of the Army recruitment to them. However, the reasons attributed to the entry of Indians in the armed forces were widely different. Unemployment and poor economic condition largely contributed their entry into the armed forces. Men of some castes preferred jobs in the armed forces over labour that was available nearby. Supplementing meagre agricultural income of the family was an added advantage to the peasants.

Kaushik Roy mentions that the salary and the hope of gaining glory encouraged Indians to join the British-controlled colonial Indian Army.³⁸⁵ I would add that the respect to the military profession in India and the scarcity of any other job were the motivating factors for the Indian youth to join the forces. Poor economic conditions, high and rising prices, scarcity of food and intermittent droughts further compelled the Indian peasants to join the armed forces. Friction with parents / family

³⁸¹ 'Indian Army's Part in the War', *Fauji Akhbar*, 11 Sep 1945, p. 6.

³⁸² *Release Regulations: Indian Army and Women's Services*- India, (Simla, Government of India Press, 1945), Appendices o, p & q. The trades and employments were in large numbers. For example there were eight types of cook trades and 23 types of driver trades (i.e. Bullock, Buffalo, Camel, Horse, Mule, Carne, M.T. etc., drivers)

³⁸³ Willcox Committee Report, Appendix C. Kumaonis provided 53 per cent, Pathans 51 per cent of their recruitable age.

³⁸⁴ *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, p. 139.

³⁸⁵ Kaushik Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context', pp. 497-529.

members or school authorities sometimes became the immediate cause of recruit as huge employment opportunities had opened the way to disobey them. In some cases even men who were absent and absconding from home, got the way to the army without intimating their parents or relatives. The fact of some forced recruitment also cannot be overruled.

While the prevailing anti-British sentiment, political considerations and agitations, discrimination, desertion, the raising of Indian National Army, non-attractive terms of service, war calamities and reluctance of parents were some dissuading factors to the recruitment. The Political environment restricted some men from joining the ranks while it influenced the educated youths to abstain from the recruitment process. The political factor, however, applied more in Bihar, Orissa and the United Province, and it was hardly applicable to Punjab, Madras and the North West Frontier.

To keep pace with the large demand, the recruiting administrative system was tuned up. Recruitment to technical trades posed more difficulty. Relaxations in qualifications and age, and the lowering of medical and physical standards were resorted to meet the demand. Wastages in training centres of some technical trades, however, led to the raising of qualifications again even at a time when the War situation was worse. Recruiting policies, otherwise were relaxed and tightened according to the intensity of the War and the availability of manpower with the armed forces. Seasonal and climatic factors further affected the pace of recruitment. Participation in political agitations like 'Satyagraha' rendered the candidates unsuitable for the armed forces.

The success rate of officer candidates depended on the intensity of the war. However, as an average, out of about fifty candidates only one got commission.³⁸⁶ The Officers Selection Board was, therefore, throughout criticized by the Indian people for being unduly strict. The military authorities, however, pleaded that India lacked officer material and also that the right type of candidates were not coming forward. The lack of public school education in India influenced both the number and quality of men seeking commission.

³⁸⁶This includes a high rejection rate by the selection board and rejections on medical grounds and wastage during training.

The strength of the Indian armed forces increased about tenfold during the Second World War that was proportionally a greater increase than the First World War when it swelled sevenfold. Non-availability of horses posed a difficulty in the recruitment for the cavalry during the First World War while a shortage of tanks delayed the expansion of Armoured Corps during the Second World War. This War opened opportunities for women also. However, Indian women had already found entry in the medical and nursing branches of the Indian army during the First War. They leapt a step forward now and were recruited in numbers in a special Corps for women [WAC(I)] to perform the duty of clerks, operators, secretariat and ciphers, etc. and released a lot of combatant men in the armed forces to fight at the war fronts. This war also opened the door to some depressed classes to enlist in combatant forces for the first time when exclusive regiments like the Chamar Regiment and Lingayat Regiments were raised. Some other regiments of depressed classes like the Mahar Regiment, and the Mazhbi and Ramdasia Regiment were re-raised after a long pause.

Chapter Two

A Taste of Soldierly

Introduction

During the Second World War, Indian troops were engaged in various theatres of War, but they were deployed in the largest numbers in Middle East, Far East and South East Asia. The British first moved Indian troops to the Western Desert to protect British oil interests. Subsequently, when the political scenario in Iraq turned against the British, Indian troops were diverted to Basra in 1941.¹ However, the largest number of Indian troops was deployed in South East Asia to fight against the Japanese.

Indian soldiers were exposed to multifarious experiences while fighting in various theatres of war and among people of various castes, creeds and nationalities. Military life was generally tough. It was, however, depicted heroically to inspire the young to join the forces and spur those who were already in the military mechanism. The life in services was painted in attractive terms by way of advertisements and propagandas. Propaganda publications like '*Fauji Akhbar*' and '*Tiger Strikes*' are full of colourful news about the War and soldiers.² But long marches, unending fatigue, difficult geographical terrain, battle casualties, etc. were the hurting experiences. Fighting in dense forests and deserts, encountering the menace of wild animals and insects added to their discomfort. Separation from families for long periods disturbed their minds and morale. Welfare mechanism was evolved to win their loyalty and also to keep the soldiers in a healthy frame of mind in adverse war situations. The cases of indiscipline were, however, natural in so large an army. Among others, desertions disturbed the authorities the most. Disease especially in South East Asia was a big challenge for the authorities. However, it was not that stress, strain and battle fatigue

¹ In the spring of 1941, insurrection by pro-German Rashid Ali Gailani (in Iraq) against the pro-British Regent threatened the whole British position in the Middle East. The authorities in India immediately sent a brigade to Basra and reinforced it with two more brigades.

² *Fauji Akhbar* and *Tiger Strikes* were the official publications of the Colonial Government of India. *Fauji Akhbar* started publishing in 1909 and continued till the Independence of India. It was a weekly publication containing news on the Indian armed forces. The *Tiger Strikes* was published during the Second World War period in some volumes. This contained the details of operations conducted by the Indian armed forces in different theatres of the War.

were only the life of a soldier, while suffering stress, there were some funny moments also.

Questions arise that what difficulties that the Indian soldiers had to face in the different theatres of war; how did they live in different war zones? What were their rations? Did the separation from family affect their life? How did the authorities try to overcome this problem? What were the disciplinary transgressions of the soldiers? What were the punishments? Did the authorities resort to some measures to control these? Which diseases were more prevalent in the theatre of war, etc.? Besides these questions, I have tried to investigate if these issues had any effect on the combat capability of the unit and the Army. I have also tried to make a comparative study of these issues with the soldiers of other countries fighting in the same theatre of war and also with the experience of Indian soldiers during the First World War.

Sentiments of Indian Soldiers

The beginning of the Second World War in September 1939, generated a great deal of excitement in the Indian Army. Young officers were elated at the prospect of seeing active service outside the country. Despite the risk of being killed, wounded or taken POWs, the war was also seen as an opportunity to attain glory and fame. A medal for gallantry provided not only glamour but also pecuniary benefits and prospects for higher promotion. But India being a colony of the British, there was no feeling of patriotism. The zest of fighting was, therefore, more due to the pride of the profession rather than for any over-riding patriotic reason.³

However, life in the Indian cantonments had not yet changed to war situation. In most units, except those that had to be mobilized, life continued as before. Soldiers kept busy in their routines like drills, maintenance of weapons, taking care of horses, training and sports. Officers besides their normal regimental duty spent time on sporting, hunting, social gatherings and dinners with fellow officers and friends. Life usually revolved around clubs that provided facilities like swimming pool, indoor games, tennis, squash, dances and social gatherings. The custom of 'calling on' was in vogue even in the early phases of War when new arrivals dropped cards in the 'not at

³ Maj Gen (INA) M.Z. Kiani, *India's Freedom Struggle and the Great INA: Memoir of Maj Gen Mohammad Zaman Kiani* (New Delhi, Reliance Publishing, 1994), p. 1; Maj Gen A.S. Naravane, *A Soldier's Life in War and Peace* (New Delhi, APH Publishing, 2004), p. 25.

home' boxes and were invited for dinner by married officers at their residence. Dinner nights and guest nights were the attractions of officers mess. Officers of other units and regiments were also invited on guest nights. Ladies were discouraged from using the mess except on Sunday band concerts and annual ladies guest nights during Christmas.⁴

The routine at General's Headquarters, Simla, also remained unchanged. The social life was plentiful. Despite uncomfortable news from the war zones, officers enjoyed most weekends. They had enough time for families, played tennis, visited friends' and went out on picnics and other excursions. The Defence Headquarters still shuttled between Simla and Delhi in October and April, respectively.⁵ J.F.R. Jacob (later Lt Gen) who visited HQs Simla in the Summer of 1941 in connection with his interview for the Army, was quite surprised. He asserts "It seemed incredible that with the war in Europe at a critical stage, Army Headquarters was still oriented to such a peace environment."⁶ This complacency was, however, shattered with the Japanese threat in later 1941. Things started changing now. The year of 1942 was the most eventful worldwide. With the expansion of the Indian armed forces, Army HQs also expanded. There was a large demand of officers and men. Manpower thus started trickling in with greater speed. By 1943, the atmosphere of the Headquarters had changed completely.⁷

⁴ The memoirs and biographies of the veterans are full of these stories and details about their routines in the early phases of the War. For example see Lt Gen R.A. Loomba, 'My first year with the Madras Sappers', *Journal of the Institution of Military Engineering*, vol. 41, No. 4 (October 1989), pp. 33-6; Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, pp. 28-31 & 34; Philip Warner (ed.), *Auchinleck: The Lonely Soldier* (London, Buchan & Enright, 1981), p. 38.

⁵ Lt Gen S.D.Verma, *To Serve With Honour: My Memoirs* (Kasauli, Longwood, 1988), pp. 27-8. Verma was on posted strength of the QMG Branch at GHQ as a Staff Captain in 1940.

⁶ Lt Gen J.F.R. Jacob, *An Odyssey in War and Peace: An Autobiography* (New Delhi, Roli Books, 2011).

⁷ Lt Col (later Maj Gen) Rudra, a senior Indian officer posted to the Directorate of Military Intelligence at General Headquarters, Delhi, in 1943, was quite busy. He got a tented accommodation and his wife found it extremely difficult to stay in the summer of June. He had to shift and share an accommodation with one of his friends of the Indian Air Force. There was no social life, no sports and other excursions. Maj Gen D.K. Palit (ed.), *Major General AA Rudra: His Service in Three Armies and Two World Wars* (New Delhi, Reliance, 1997), pp. 265-86. Lt (later Commodore) King, Royal Indian Navy (RIN), who held a staff duty appointment during this period at RIN HQs, too narrates a similar story. According to him, there was no accommodation for even officers in Delhi. Large numbers of personnel were required for administrative and staff duties. Existing peace residential units could not suffice the ever increasing requirement of the personnel. The officers had thus to resort to tents for residential purposes. Even the prestigious Imperial Gymkhana Club, which had rooms for residence purposes, was overcrowded now and one had to wait for months to find a room there. Cmde A.F. King, *My Service in the Royal Indian Navy* (New Delhi, CAFHR, 2007), pp. 28-35.

Initially the British authorities could not anticipate India's large participation in the War. Most units and establishments, including Army HQs, therefore, continued to follow the routine. However, the units, which had been ordered to embark, were making efforts to update their establishment in manpower, vehicles, equipment, etc. Some preparatory training was also imparted to these units.⁸ It may be mentioned here that though some units had been dispatched overseas earlier the Army in India changed to war footing only in mid-1941.

When units were asked to embark, there was a lot of euphoria. Men, who had families in the regimental quarters, were asked to drop them at their villages. Officers were also ordered to leave their families in their hometowns or at a selected place of residence.⁹ Captain (later General) Chaudhuri uses the term 'abandoned wife' for such ladies as the term was in vogue among the British officers of the Indian army.¹⁰ Soldiers going to the War were advised to make family allotment of their salaries so that families received money every month. The 2nd Lancer moved from Sialkot in January 1941 as a part of the 3rd Indian Motor Brigade. A special train carried the regiment to Bombay via Delhi. Soldiers were excited with the idea of going to War. As most of the soldiers belonged to the areas adjacent to Delhi, their relatives came to see them off at the Delhi railway station. Brigadier Vaghan, who was commanding the 3rd Motor Brigade, recalls "the atmosphere was no sentimental but of exhortation."¹¹ The old men of whom many were veterans, wanted their sons to uphold the family and regiment's honour.¹² Sowar Abhe Ram of the 2nd Lancer was

⁸ Brig E.W.D. Vaughan, *A History of The 2nd Royal Lancer: From 1922 to 1947* (London, Sifton Praed, 1951), pp. 56-7. Brig Vaughan had commanded the 2nd Lancer from March 1938 to Jan 1940. He was Colonel Commandant of the Unit throughout the War. He commanded the 3rd Indian Motor Brigade, which went to action in April 1941 to the Middle East. The 2nd Lancer moved under the Brigade to the War.

⁹ Government of India, Defence Department (Army Branch), Letter No. 53094/Q. 3 dated 13 May 1940 & 29 May 1941, *War Diary of 'A' Branch- 9th Indian Division*, File No. 601/228/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD; Palit, *Major General AA Rudra*, pp. 247 & 257. Mangal Singh from Moga district of Punjab was enrolled as a driver in the Signals branch of the Indian army in 1935. He served with the 4th Indian Division Signals Regiment in North Africa during the Second World War and witnessed the battle in the Western Desert. When his unit received orders for overseas, he and some of his friends who had families at the Karachi Contonment, were asked to leave their families to their villages. One of his colleagues took the wives of men from nearby villages with him in order to leave them at their villages. See James Holland's interview with Mangal Singh, [mhtml://F:\research SWW\Mangal Singh \(Indian\).mht](mailto://F:\research SWW\Mangal Singh (Indian).mht), accessed on 9 January 2011.

¹⁰ 'Abandoned wife' was a term used by the army officers for wives whose husbands were overseas. B.K. Narayan (ed.), *General J.N. Chaudhuri: An Autobiography, As Narrated to B.K. Narayan* (New Delhi, Vikas Publishing, 1978), p. 117.

¹¹ Vaughan, *A History of The 2nd Royal Lancer*, pp. 61-2.

¹² *Ibid.*

also visited by his brother at the station. Abhe Ram says that the atmosphere at the Delhi station with the kith and kin of most soldiers, who had come to see them off, was quite exciting and pleasant.¹³ The train departed with rousing cries of ‘*Ram Chandar Ji –Ki Jai.*’¹⁴ The scene was like that the soldiers were greatly enthusiast to go for fighting and their near and dear were bidding them a heroic farewell.

When the ‘Scinde Horse’ was embarked for the Middle East in April 1942, the men were eager for the voyage. The ship rang with loud slogans of ‘*Sat-sri-akals*’ and ‘*Allah ho Akbar*’.¹⁵ Lt (later Lt Gen) Loomba, stationed at Banglore, reports that when he moved with his unit for overseas deployment in September 1940, the departure was ‘quite a gala affair’. The band played music while families and friends bid farewell.¹⁶ However, during the sea journey a mixed response was seen as some suffered from sea sickness.¹⁷ The routine of the soldiers on board ship started with early morning. The 15 Indian Infantry Brigade consisting of 1/14 Punjab and 2/9 Jat moved from Bombay to South East Asia by sea. The routine of soldiers started at 6 A.M. with clearing their beddings. At 7 A.M., they were asked to attend physical training, at 9 A.M. breakfast, 10.30 A.M. daily inspection which was followed by a lecture.¹⁸

At times, the living conditions in overcrowded ships were inhospitable. Open decks, poor toilet arrangements, badly cooked food and stench nauseating smell made the soldiers uneasy during the journey. Lt (later Lt Gen) J.F.R. Jacob, who travelled from Bombay to Basra in August 1942, was a witness to this.¹⁹ Sea sickness further troubled the soldiers. It was more troubling in monsoon conditions. In May 1945, when Lt Sinha embarked from Calcutta for Rangoon along with 4/12 Frontier Force Regiment, he and his many men had high sea sickness. Monsoon conditions made the voyage in Bay of Bengal very rough. Besides, the Colonel of the ship imposed strict

¹³ Interview, Major Abhe Ram , 2 December 2009. Sowar (later Major) Abhe Ram joined the Army in 1938.

¹⁴ Vaughan, *A History of The 2nd Royal Lancer*, p. 62.

¹⁵ The Scinde Horse Regiment, *The Scinde Horseman: Special War Number*, Autumn 1940-January 1946, p. 13.

¹⁶ Loomba, *My first year with the Madras Sappers*, pp. 33-6.

¹⁷ Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, p. 49.

¹⁸ ‘Summary of Events’, March 1941, *War Diary of 15 Indian Infantry Brigade*, File No. 601/313/WD/Part A, HDMOD.

¹⁹ Lt Gen J.F.R. Jacob, *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation* (New Delhi, Manohar, 1997), p. 15. Lt Gen Jacob was commissioned in the Regiment of the Artillery, Indian Army, in 1942. He served in the Middle East and South East Asia among other places during the War.

physical training and other activities. Sinha felt glad that he had chosen to join the Army and not the Navy.²⁰

Some soldiers were afraid of the idea of going overseas to war. Home sickness, stay at an unknown country, taxing war conditions and the scare of eventuality haunted their minds. When a battalion of 19 Hyderabad was moving from Secunderabad for embarkation from Bombay, about 10 soldiers deserted.²¹ Desertions also disturbed the Commanding Officer of the 5th Sikh Regiment while moving from Quetta to Madras in 1939 for embarkation. He feared that during their journey through Punjab, some soldiers might feel home sick and desert.²² About 20 soldiers of the 22nd Indian Infantry Brigade which was to embark for overseas in March 1941 overstayed their leave and turned deserters.²³ Ten soldiers of the Chamar Regiment also deserted from the unit due to home sickness.²⁴

Some soldiers, who believed in the old Hindu myth that crossing the seas was irreligious, felt very apprehensive. When the 21 Field Company of Bombay Engineers embarked from Bombay for the Middle East in September 1939, they were superstitious and apprehensive that calamity could befall them while crossing the sea. There was no *pandit* with the Company who perhaps could allay the fears of the soldiers.²⁵ Sometimes soldiers became victims of political propaganda. A squadron of Central India Horse mutinied while embarking from Bombay as it had been brain washed by the *Kirti Lehar*.²⁶

While embarking for overseas, no one on the ship was told about the destination of the voyage. Soldiers were instructed not to write to their homes about

²⁰ Lt Gen S.K. Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1992), p. 50. Sinha, an officer of the Jat Regiment was commissioned in the Indian Army in 1944. During the war he served in South East Asia.

²¹ *Interview, Deserter, 8 December 2008.*

²² Lt Gen Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty: A soldier Remembers* (New Delhi, Lancer, 2000). p. 86. Lt General Harbaksh Singh (1913-1999) was commissioned in the 5 Sikh regiment in 1935. He was taken POW during the battle in Malaya in 1942. The 5 Sikh consisted was composed of Sikh class who belonged to Punjab.

²³ 'Summary of Events', March 1941, *War Diary of 9th Indian Division*, File No. 601/227/WD/Part A (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁴ *The Chamar Regiment*, File No. Misc/9885/H, NAI.

²⁵ Lt Gen Mathew Thomas (ed.), *Lt Gen PS Bhagat: A Biography* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1994), p. 48. According to the Willcox Committee the religious teacher was forbidden in the field area. Willcox Committee Report, para 686.

²⁶ Brig A.A. Filose, *King George Own Central India Horse* (London, William Blackwood, 1950), pp. 21-3.

their impeding departures.²⁷ The security regulations desired that “port of embarkation and destination, will always be regarded as most secret.”²⁸ Capt (later Lt Gen) Harbakhsh Singh, who embarked from Madras with his 5th Sikh Regiment in 1939, states that they did not know whether the ship would take them to Malaya or the Middle East. The Captain of the ship had been given a secret envelope which was to be opened only after ship had travelled for 24 hours in the sea.²⁹ Many other officers who boarded ships from the Indian embarkation headquarters confirm this.³⁰ The secrecy of the destination was also maintained in the ships which carried the British troops to the overseas war zones. When Driver (later Corporal) Crawford moved from the UK to join the Eighth Army at Egypt, the men on board continued to speculate their destination. It was only at Aden that they could have an idea of their destination, though officially they were still not informed about it.³¹ In the Australian Army also destinations were not disclosed.³²

However, contrary to rules and practices, in some cases the information leaked out and percolated to the troops even before they boarded the ship. Capt Chaudhuri, who was to board a ship at Bombay in October 1941 to join as GSO (3) of the 5th Indian Division, recalls that “though our destination was supposed to be secret, everyone from canteen contractors to General knew it was Port Sudan they were destined to.”³³ Gen (INA) Mohan Singh relates that when his Battalion 1/14 Punjab moved on overseas duty from Secunderabad, “while the Station Staff of Secunderabad and particularly all the officials in the harbour and the crew of the ship knew, where

²⁷ ‘Corps Routine Order’, 5 September 1941, *War Diary: 3 Indian Corps*, File No. 601/207/WD, Pt I (Secret), HDMOD; Kiani, *India’s Freedom Struggle*, p. 8.

²⁸ A.H.Q. letter No. 49860/S.D. 1(Secret), 17 January 1941, *Policy Compendium*, G.S. Branch, 1941.

²⁹ Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty*, p. 88.

³⁰ Brig Jasbir Singh (ed.), *Escape from Singapore*, (New Delhi, Lancer, 2010), p. 16; Kiani, *India’s Freedom Struggle*, p. 8; Col Kanwaljit Singh & Maj H.S. Ahluwalia, *Saragarhi Battalion: Ashes to Glory- History of the 4th Battalion the Sikh Regiment*, (New Delhi, Lancer, 1987), p. 63; Vaughan, *A History of The 2nd Royal Lancer*, p. 62.

³¹ Driver Robert John Crawford, *As Narrated to Maj John Dagleish, I was an Eighth Army Soldier* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1944), p. 19. Driver Robert John Crawford was a lorry driver at the Thames (UK) before the War. He joined the RASC as a driver when the War started. He moved by ship from UK to Egypt in August 1941 to join the 1st Armoured Division, a part of the Eighth Army. The ship carried troops via Cape, Aden (Yemen) and the Suez to Egypt. Crawford served with the Eighth Army in the Western Desert during the War.

³² Gavin Long, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945: Series One, Army, vol. I, To Benghazi*, (Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1952), p. 68.

³³ B.K. Narayan (ed.), *General JN Chaudhuri: An Autobiography, As Narrated to B.K. Narayan* (New Delhi, Vikas Publishing, 1978), p. 120.

the convoy was bound to, we the soldiers, most concerned, were kept in dark, at least that was the intention of Army HQ.’³⁴

Occasionally, the type of clothing, equipment, camouflaging material, precautionary measure for particular weather and diseases, and training imparted to a unit before the departure could give the soldiers especially officers, an idea of the war zones. Mohan Singh laments that “yet AHQ [Army HQs] kept believing that they had kept the secret well-guarded.”³⁵ In any case, this did not indicate the port and the place that the troops were destined to. Still, if somebody got to know about it he was not to disclose it to anyone, including relatives and friends by any means. Violations, if any, were severely dealt with. One Jemadar, who mentioned the destination of his unit in a letter was court-martialled and dismissed from service.³⁶ Such cases were given wide publicity through Routine Orders with a view to alert other soldiers of the sensitivity of the matter.³⁷

War Fatigue

In the early years of War, the Indian troops were mostly sent to the Middle East to safeguard the British oil interest there. After the Japanese entry into the War, many units of the Indian Army were sent to the Far East and South East Asia. Both these regions were extremely difficult geographically and climatically.

In the deserts of the Middle East, days were scorching hot while the nights were chilling cold. On 19 May 1940, the Division Commander of the 4th Indian Division, located in Egypt reported that the weather there had not been kind and that the dust storm reminded of the ‘loo’ in the Punjab.³⁸ *Khamsin*, the hot wind, blew at 110 degrees across the Western Desert at a speed of 30 to 40 miles an hour.³⁹ Officers

³⁴ Mohan Singh, General (INA), *Soldiers Contribution to Indian Independence*, (New Delhi, Army Educational Store, 1975), p. 47. Mohan Singh, an officer of the 1/14 Punjab Regiment of the Indian Army was commissioned from the ranks. He was a Captain when his unit got scattered in Malaya after Japanese attack, some struggled, including Mohan Singh while others were made POWs. He formed the Indian National Army (INA) in 1942 out of Indian POWs in the Japanese hands and became the commander of that Army.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ ‘Corps Routine Order’, 5 September 1941, *War Diary: 3 Indian Corps*, File No. 601/207/WD/ Pt I (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁷ ‘Routine Order - 9th Indian Division’, 12 September 1941, *War Diary of ‘A’ Branch- 9th Indian Division*, File No. 601/228/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁸ ‘4 Indian Division News Letter’, 19 May 1940, *4 Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁹ Crawford, *As Narrated*, p. 48.

and men usually had to resort to tents. The area was full of sand with scanty trees. Occasional patches of grass could only be seen. When moving in vehicles on muddy paths, the area was clouded with dirt and dust which that choked the nose and mouth. The blowing sand got into everything, including eyes, noses, hair and even food. Birds and wild animals were rarely seen.⁴⁰ While recollecting his experience of 1941 in the Western Desert, Crawford, driver of RASC in the Eighth Army writes, “My life was to be sand, sand, sand and then more sand for months and months ahead.”⁴¹ He adds “it was impossible to drive in ordinary column of route, one lorry behind another, and we [drivers] adopted an inverted ‘V’ formation, one lorry behind another, each lorry driving in the rear and perhaps 200 yards to the side of the lorry in front.”⁴²

Tents were pitched to stay during the nights. Sometimes the troops spent nights in the open area. But, it was not easy to sleep under the open sky. A battery of the Indian artillery while moving from Basra to Baghdad after an extremely hot day decided not to pitch their tents during the night. When they slept in open, all suffered, shivering in the cold throughout the night.⁴³ Temperature in the desert of Arabia, though very hot during the day, gets very cold during the nights.

Further, long marches in the deserts for deployment were very exhausting. Sometimes men fainted due to fatigue. The 4th Indian Division felt elated that during their practice march of 26 miles in the desert not even one person fainted. In view of the threat to the Mediterranean Coast, the 10th Indian Division moved through sandy areas from Iraq to the Western Desert in mid-1941. On reaching the Mediterranean coast, vehicle movement was to be guarded from the air attacks by the Axis powers. As and when the Axis aircrafts were suspected, all men and officers moved away from the main road with their vehicles and dispersed in utter confusion. The Axis had air superiority while the Allies hardly had any anti-aircraft artillery or air force to deal with the situation initially.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, pp. 56-7 & 70. Naravane moved from Basra to Tripoli in the last month of 1941, he writes he did not come across a single bird or wild animal in his whole journey.

⁴¹ Crawford, *As Narrated*, pp. 19-20.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 22.

⁴³ Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, p. 51.

⁴⁴ A Lt Col of the 4 Indian Division addressed all men and staff of the Division in an article stating that the enemy was winning battles and the campaign by two principal weapons i.e. the tank and the dive bombers, which the Allies hardly had in the Middle East. He, therefore, emphasized on Street Fighting. *4 Indian Division Paper*, May-Aug 1942, File No. 601/10439/H, HDMOD.

When the convoy halted for the night, the normal drill for officers and men was to dig a trench for protection against air attack and enemy shelling. Captain (later Lt Gen) Verma, moving with the 10th Division as a Staff Officer writes that “to save ourselves the trouble of jumping in and out we used to put our beddings in the trench and sleep there.”⁴⁵ Further, during the march the troops carried loads needed for operations. Indian troops marched nine miles to fight the battle of Tunis in May 1943, each one carrying arms and equipment and extra ammunition besides digging implements, wireless sets and signalling equipment.⁴⁶

Night marches for operations, recces or retreats were very taxing as these were to be done in total silence protecting themselves from being observed by the enemy. This was difficult in desert areas bereft of any natural obstacles where anything could be seen from a long distance. During the intense firing of German troops at Matruh in June 1942, 3/5 Mahrattas deployed in the area had no option but to withdraw. The troops had to walk silently for 21 miles in the night before being lifted in transport by their British comrades. After this long exhaustive night march, while being taken in transport, one of their trucks was targeted by the Germans and broke down. Some Indian soldiers died, while some others had to run for miles in search of a friendly post.⁴⁷ On other occasion when elements of 3rd Indian Motor Brigade moved its convoy from Mersa Matruh (Egypt) to El Adem (Libya) on 30 March 1941, it was ‘nose to tail’ without lights. The march imposed considerable strain and some drivers fell asleep. A truck, thus, ran into the ditch.⁴⁸ At the El Mechile (troops further moved from El Adem to El Mechile), some troops spent a sleepless night while preparing in for a move. Still, when the Brigade was surrounded by Rommel’s Afrika Korps, a large numbers of men were made POWs.⁴⁹ A small group under Major Rajendersinhji could alone make it to a friendly post after three days of sleepless march.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Verma, *To Serve With Honour*, pp. 31 & 37.

⁴⁶ *Battle of Tunis*, May 1943, File No. 601/10329/H, HDMOD.

⁴⁷ *Misc Papers Relating to 3/5 Mahratta Light Infantry in North Africa*, File No. 601/10153/H, HDMOD.

⁴⁸ Vaughan, *A History of The 2nd Royal Lancer*, pp. 77 & 103.

⁴⁹ *Interview, Major Abhe Ram*, 2 December 2009. Abhe Ram was posted with the 2nd Lancer as Lance Dafedar, a regiment that was part of the 3rd Indian Motor Brigade.

⁵⁰ Germany’s Afrika Corps was in the area, which forced the Allies Forces to work in the night to escape from being spotting. Vaughan, *A History of The 2nd Royal Lancer*, pp. 87-92.

Scorpions and snakes were continuous dangers in places like Kassala.⁵¹ Snake bite was not an uncommon incident.⁵² Lice, beetles, centipedes and flies made life in the Western Desert more unpleasant. An officer of Central India Horse recalls that ‘sand storm and flies’ were the two factors which made the life in desert unpleasant.⁵³ Flies were huge in numbers at places like Tobruk. Crawford mentions “Flies produced more casualties than the Germans.”⁵⁴ It may sound like a joke but the flies definitely tortured men the most. They settled on food like a cloud and one had to hold a piece of cloth or paper in one hand and food in the other while eating. Still, some made their way into the mouth with the food.⁵⁵

Men and vehicles in the deserts of the Middle East lost their way and did not know where to go as sand storms obliterated the road marks.⁵⁶ Compass also could hardly help. During the move of the 3rd Motor Brigade from Mersa Matruh to El Mechille, the sun was considered to be the most reliable and accurate guide.⁵⁷ Vehicles often got stuck in the minefields. A patrol of 4 Indian Division was so trapped in the German mines that no man could escape safely. The Division Commander reported that “it is extremely difficult for patrols to get to grips in the Desert.”⁵⁸ Sometimes, the desert areas were track marked with vehicles tyres to deceive the Allied vehicles by the Germans and Italians. When the troops followed these tracks they were struck by mines.

The scarcity of water was a big problem in the deserts of the Middle East. During the movement of the 4th Indian Division to Egypt in August 1940, only one gallon water was issued for all purposes to a man per day.⁵⁹ Though the quantity was

⁵¹ Kassala is a place in the Northern Region in the eastern area of Sudan. The 4th and 5th Indian Division were deployed in the area in the early 1941 to fight the Italians. Bisheshwar Prasad (General Editor), *Official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War: East African Campaign, 1940-41*, (New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1963), pp. 36-49.

⁵² Letter from Lt Bhagat to his fiancée dated 5 December 1940. Thomas, *Lt Gen P.S. Bhagat*, p. 64.

⁵³ Filose, *King George V's Own Central India Horse*, p. 221.

⁵⁴ Crawford, *As Narrated*, pp. 33-4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ ‘Report by Division Commander’, *4th Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H, HDMOD; Filose, *King George Own Central India Horse*, p. 221.

⁵⁷ Vaughan, *A History of The 2nd Royal Lancer*, p. 67. Considering the problems of finding ways in the Western Desert, the Army HQs envisaged a plan and ‘Compasses, Sun’ were sent to units in the deserts to be made use of it and he also instructed the commanders to train its personnel in using the device. GHQ Letter No. 1483/II/SD2 (Secret), 10 September 1942, *Policy Compendium*, GS Branch, 1942.

⁵⁸ 4th Indian Division Liaison Letter, 15 November 1941, *4th Indian Division in the Middle East*, No. 610/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

⁵⁹ 4th Indian Division News Letter, 31 August 1940, *4th Indian Division in Middle East*, No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

in tune with the prescribed norms,⁶⁰ but in hot desert climate it was hardly sufficient. Moreover, the drinking water supplied to the troops at places like El Adem was salty. When it was used for making tea, “the milk curdled and fell in great lumps to the bottom of dixies.” Gradually, soldiers learned to drink this tea.⁶¹ When in Sudan, Lieutenant Bhagat wrote to his fiancée, “Troops even had to drink water which could not be used for bathing and water used for wash was almost mud.”⁶² At some places the water was not sufficient even to wash the utensils and mess tins properly. It led to consumption of some sand with the food.

Water was hardly available for taking bath and one had to remain contented in face wash.⁶³ Continuous sand storm, however, aggravated the urge for bath.⁶⁴ Field Service Book pamphlets issued at the start of the War, instructed the officers in command to arrange for a hot bath for all ranks at least once in every ten days.⁶⁵ It was necessary for the cleanliness and hygiene of the personnel. But the authorities were helpless. In places where the coast was reachable, sea water was the option and soldiers managed to get one bath every day.⁶⁶ But the salt water bath left the skin in a terrible condition.⁶⁷ This luxury even was not, however, available to the troops deployed away from the sea. It was not possible for them to be driven daily to the coast for the bath. But, weather conditions fuelled the strong urge in soldiers for it. Once a barrel of liquor left by the Italians was found by Central India Horse near Sidi Barni. An officer used it for taking a good bath as the liquor was considered of poor quality and thus unfit for drink.⁶⁸ Another officer when got a chance was too desperate to be in water and was seen sitting in the sea reading a book.⁶⁹ The officers fighting in Egypt looked for a chance to visit cities like Alexandria (a city in Egypt on Mediterranean coast) and Cairo and stay in the best hotel there. They used to fill the

⁶⁰ Regulation recommended at least one gallon of water for each man for drinking and cooking purposes. Billets, Camps and Bivouacs: Camp Cooking and Water Arrangements, *Field Service Pocket Book*, Pamphlet No. 5, 1939 (London, 1939), pp. 30-1.

⁶¹ Crawford, *As Narrated*, p. 23.

⁶² Letter written by Lt Bhagat to his fiancée (later his wife) on 19 October 1940 while he was fighting with the Italians at Gallabat in Sudan, in Thomas (ed.), *Lt Gen PS Bhagat*, pp. 55-6.

⁶³ Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, p. 55.

⁶⁴ Filose, *King George V's Own Central India Horse*, p. 221.

⁶⁵ *Field Service Pocket Book*, Pamphlet No. 10 (London, His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1939), p. 13.

⁶⁶ 4th Indian Division News Letter, 9 August 1940, 4th *Indian Division in Middle East*, No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

⁶⁷ Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 132.

⁶⁸ Filose, *King George V's Own Central India Horse*, p. 232.

⁶⁹ 4th Indian Division News Letter, 9 August 1940, 4th *Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

bath tub with water in the hotel, got into it, and soap the dirt off the weeks' fighting.⁷⁰ The Regimental history of Central India Horse recorded that "after spending some days in the desert of Middle East, soldiers learnt the value of water."⁷¹

Water was, however, plenty in other theatres of War like Malaya, Burma and North-East India, but quality was not always good and men often got sick after drinking it.⁷² Unlike Middle East, the vegetation was abundant in South East Asia and the Far East. These were, however, sources of some other types of troubles. The veins and creepers made movement extremely difficult. Heavy rubber plantation in Malaya caused poor visibility. The Malaya garrison of 80,000 men seemed strong but was capitulated in no time after the Japanese attack. Singapore fell on 15 February, Rangoon on 7 March and Andaman and Nicobar on 23 March 1942.

At first, Malaya was strafed and bombed by the Japanese aircraft while their guns boomed on the ground. This compelled the Allied soldiers to seek refuge in dug grounds. Capt Wilson Stephens who served with a Gorkha unit near Singapore in February 1942, writes that the whole earth shook due to the heavy Japanese bombardment, oil installations were set ablaze, brightening the sky for miles and troops were forced to lie low in slit trenches full of mud and water.⁷³ The Japanese also used Chinese crackers that confused the Allied troops.⁷⁴ Their tactics of outflanking and surrounding the Allied forces, split them in small groups and caused heavy casualties. Many fell in the Japanese hands.⁷⁵

The 8 Infantry Brigade was attacked by the Japanese in Malaya. During the retreat, while the Brigade was crossing the bridge on the Kelantan river, it was blown off by a sapper. Consequently two companies could not make their way to the other side. It was night time and the Japanese broke all hell loose over the stranded two

⁷⁰ Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 132; Verma, *To Serve With Honour*, p. 39; Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, p. 70.

⁷¹ Filose, *King George V's Own Central India Horse*, p. 221.

⁷² Sahib Dad tells his Second World War story, in mhtml://F:\research SWW\BBC, accessed on 9 January 2011. Sahib Dad belonged to Jarrul Kalan in Jammu and Kashmir and joined the RIASC in 1942. He fought the War in Burma.

⁷³ Maj J. Wilson Stephens, Malaya Campaign: The First and Last Weeks, *JUSII*, vol. LXXVI, No. 323, April 1946, pp. 169-79. Major Wilson was a Staff Captain with a Brigade fighting in Malaya in 1941-42.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ During the Japanese attack on Malaya, Harbakhsh Singh writes that British commanding officers left their men in the lurch at this critical juncture. Instead of being punished, military authorities welcomed them and recommended them for the Victoria Cross. Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty*, pp. 95-8.

companies. All their attempts to cross the river were frustrated by the Japanese. The Japanese also used star-shells to probe the stranded men. Companies thus suffered heavy casualties before they could make their way to the other side of the river, the next day.⁷⁶ Men of Mohan Singh's battalion when scattered by the Japanese attack, found themselves surrounded by water due to heavy rain. The whizzing Japanese vehicles forced them to remain silent while standing in the water for more than 24 hours in an unknown jungle.⁷⁷ These men wandered unshaven, unwashed and wounded in dishevelled uniforms for many days and nights in the jungles, without food bearing the severity of the weather. They were scared of the enemy, wild tribes and could fall prey to wild animals. They depended on the jungle resources for their survival and looked for a secure place to hide themselves from the enemy.⁷⁸ There are many such stories where a group of troops wandered for days together without food bearing such severity.⁷⁹

The Japanese forces were well equipped with modern weapons and were well trained for jungle warfare. The Allies particularly the Indian Army, was not trained for such warfare. In some cases units and formations, such as the brigades of 17 Indian Division, trained for fighting in the Middle East, were diverted in sea to Burma and Malaya. According to Sir John Smyth, the Division Commander, these troops that were half trained even for desert warfare were thrown into a jungle battle against the best trained jungle fighters in the world.⁸⁰ Their equipment was unsuitable for jungle warfare and the men still wore khaki shorts and shirts. The vehicles were still painted Middle East 'Yellow Stone' colour.⁸¹ The deficient air force and artillery support further weakened the Allied effort here. Lt Col Wheeler says that the Japanese strategic mobility and tactical infiltration was amazing. They infiltrated through the

⁷⁶ Jasbir Singh, *Escape from Singapore*, pp. 27-9. The companies left out were from 4/19 Hyderabad and 1/10 Baluch Regiment.

⁷⁷ Mohan Singh, *Soldiers Contribution*, pp. 64-5.

⁷⁸ A band of Indian sepoy led by a Jemadar wandered for days together in dilapidated conditions and met Wilcox in the Naga Hills in March 1943. Wilcox, *Chindit Column* 76, p. 28.

⁷⁹ For example: *Notes of Regimental History of 1/14 Punjab Regiment*, recorded by Subedar Major Baboo Ram, File No. 601/639/H, HDMOD. Baboo Ram was the Subedar Major of the 1/14 Punjab during the Malaya Campaign in Dec 1941-Jan 1942; *Malaya Campaign- 4/19 Hyderabad Regiment in Operations*, by Col E.L. Wilson, pp. 2-3, File No. 601/707A/H, HDMOD.

⁸⁰ Brig Sir John Smyth, *The only Enemy: An Autobiography* (London, Hutchinson, 1959), pp. 174-8; *History of 17 Indian Division, July 1941 to December 1945* (Calcutta, Thacker's Press, 1946) p. 1.

⁸¹ *History of 17 Indian Division, July 1941 to December 1945*, p. 1.

areas which were considered almost impossible to negotiate.⁸² Thus, the Japanese made full use of 'surprise', the most effective weapon of war.⁸³

Soon, a grave threat loomed large over India both by land and sea. There was an exodus of refugees from Burma to India. Thousands of Indians were already made POWs in Malaya and the administration of the country was taken over by the Japanese army. The civil administration in Burma also collapsed within a short time. The employees left their jobs to save their lives. While moving from Toungoo to Lashio in February 1942, the driver and fireman of a train deserted, leaving it overloaded with refugees, soldiers and some IAF men stranded. At this critical juncture, Warrant Officer Harjinder Singh and Sergeant Cabinetmaker of the IAF with uncommon intelligence drove the train to Lashio.⁸⁴

Burma Corps consisting 17 Indian Division which badly suffered in the Japanese attack, had to withdraw from Burma. While retreating, they suffered unending hardships. Hills, dense forests, rivers and swamps posed grave threat to the soldiers. Thorny and poisonous plants obstructed the movement of men. For days together men lived on short of ration and without any clothes to change. The men of the 1st Sikh Regiment, when attacked and surrounded by the Japanese in March 1942, were found filthy, hungry, weary and utterly bewildered. They had no food and sleep for four days while marching through dense jungles.⁸⁵ South East Asia though was not the a desert area, but the dust of moving convoys while retreating in 1942 via Tamu to India, here too choked the nose and mouth. The movement of unlimited vehicles crushed the soil of half-built roads, making it like that of a desert. The drivers of the Army ferried the troops and refugees, clinging to the vehicles even for 18 hours every day.⁸⁶ It was desired to withdraw to India before the rain started. Men carried the load of equipment but had no blankets, waterproof sheets and mosquito nets and this

⁸² Lt Col G.T. Wheeler, 'Burma: A New Technique of Warfare', *JUSII*, vol. LXXII, No. 306, Jan 1942, pp. 220-28.

⁸³ War office, Military Training Pamphlet, No. 23, 1942, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁴ A.L. Saigal (ed.), *Birth of an Air Force: The Memoirs of Air Vice Marshal Harjinder Singh* (New Delhi, Palit Publishers, 1977), pp. 126-8; Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal (ed. by Ela Lal), *My Years with IAF* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1986), p. 27.

⁸⁵ Lt Col P.G. Bamford, *1st King George V's Own Battalion: The Sikh Regiment, 1846-1946* (Aldershot, Aldershot, 1948), pp. 81 & 85.

⁸⁶ Hugh Tinker, 'A Forgotten Long March: The Indian Exodus from Burma, 1942', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 6, No. 1, March 1975 pp. 1-15. In May 1942, Hugh Tinker was with one of the Indian army units deployed at Palel, the place through which the Army retreated. He witnessed the scene in person.

exposed them to the vagaries of nature. During the retreat a distance of about 1,000 km was covered by the troops in five months and most of it on foot. The retreating 17 Indian Division records that “it was a race against the weather, ... against starvation, ...and against the enemy.”⁸⁷

By mid-May, heavy monsoon started adding to the problems of soldiers, who were already exhausted. The area was flooded. The rains though settled the dust but made the road slippery and muddy thus turning them into graveyards for trucks. Almost all machines, vehicles and weapons were grounded. Rains also posed a severe threat to the health of the soldiers. Slim records of mid-May, “on that day [12 May 1942] our rearguard was leaving Kalewa and our main body toiling up into the hills. From then onwards retreat was sheer misery. Ploughing their way up slopes, over a track inches deep in slippery mud, soaked to the skin, rotten with fever, ill fed and shivering as the air grew cooler, the troops went on, hours after hour, day after day. Their only rest at night was to lie on the sodden ground under the dripping trees, without even a blanket to cover them.”⁸⁸ Slim was thus most concerned of three enemies, viz. the Japanese, hunger and the Monsoon.⁸⁹ Groups of refugees making their way alongside the army further horrified the scene. The Army had no responsibilities of the refugees, they however did get whatever help they could in those trying circumstances. Doctor Desmond Stoker of the 57th Indian Field Ambulance, who moved along with a group of refugees to India, recalled that there were corpses within every hundred yards and the smell of dead bodies was felt throughout the retreat. He adds that out of the total of 33,000 who began the journey, about 20,000 lost their lives while moving along the Hukawng Valley.⁹⁰

Hugh Tinker, who was with an Indian army unit, operating between Palel and Tamu, says, that “units were demoralized and had almost disintegrated.”⁹¹ The humming of Japanese aircraft, firing and bombing unnerved the soldiers and confused them. At any suspicion of the enemy, the soldiers would waste their ammunition in

⁸⁷ *History of 17 Indian Division, July 1941 to December 1942*, pp. 18-20. It was feared that if rains broke out, the road would become a quagmire; delays in withdrawal would further exhaust their ration and it would also provide time to the Japanese to lay ambush against the Allied Forces.

⁸⁸ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 109.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁹⁰ Quoted in Mark Harrison, *Medicine and Victory: British Military Medicine in the Second World War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 193.

⁹¹ Tinker, ‘A Forgotten Long March’, pp. 1-15.

indiscriminate firing, without knowing the location of the enemy position. They withdrew, demolishing the bridges, destroying the equipment that could not be carried and sinking the river crafts so that the enemy may not use them. In such bewilderment, while crossing the river Sittang (in Burma) in February 1942, many soldiers of 17 Indian Division were left stranded, many became casualties, some lost their way and only a small number could make it to their units by swimming or using improvised bamboo rafts.⁹² During the retreat, their boots gave out, clothing had turned into rags and beard had grown. Even Corps Commander Slim had his beard grow during the retreat.⁹³ When the troops reached Imphal, they had hardly any strength left. Corps Commander Slim writes that “they had endured casualties, hardships, hunger, sickness, and above all the heart breaking frustration of retreat to a degree that a few armies have suffered.”⁹⁴

The severity of nature continued to torment the soldiers even afterwards. Bert Smith, a journalist with South East Asia Command, wrote of the Fourteenth Army fighting in Burma “Around these parts [Burma] most of the trees are teak, and the undergrowth is so dense that swiftest and most silent advance is monkey-fashion swinging from bough to bough.”⁹⁵ The 16 Baluch Regiment patrolling in the Arakan area in October 1944 reported, “going difficult due to waist high grass and thick jungle bordering chaung.”⁹⁶ To maintain secrecy, soldiers while moving for operations seldom talked, and communicated only in whispers. Smoking cigarettes was forbidden.⁹⁷ The jungle provided a good camouflage to both sides and any noise or smoke might have invited trouble from the enemy.

The terrain in South East Asia was very difficult. In the absence of proper roads, railways or water transport, movement through jungles with arms and equipment was very tough. Many a time soldiers had to move through mule tracks and foot paths. Patrol parties of the 25 Indian Division found it very difficult to

⁹² While crossing the Sittang river in Feb 1942, the 17 Indian Division decided to blow off the bridge leaving many soldiers on the other side of the river. *History of 17 Indian Division*, pp. 7-8.

⁹³ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 108.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁹⁵ Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December, 1944 and January 1945, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA*, Branch ‘A’, File No. 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

⁹⁶ Telegram from 25 Indian Division to 15 Corps, 29 October 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part III, HDMOD. In the telegram, the 25 Indian Division mentioned the report of 16 Baluch to its Division HQs (i.e. 25 Indian Division) about the toughness of Arakan.

⁹⁷ Wilcox, *Chindit Column 76*, pp. 11-2 & 40.

negotiate the bamboo jungle of Arakan. It was getting thicker as they advanced deeper. At times passage had to be made by cutting the trees, bushes and undergrowth.⁹⁸ While moving across the chaungs the soldiers needed to hold on to the ropes in their hands. Their socks shrank because they were never dry, the whiskers grew overnight on their boots and fungus dimmed the binoculars. They moved dragging their mud-clogged feet on hillsides that were shrouded with mist for days together. Landslides threatened to carry away their belongings and also posed a risk to their lives.⁹⁹ Soldiers if left alone, could get lost in the dense jungle. Referring to Burma, Slim says, that “some of the world’s worst country, breeding the world’s worst diseases, and having for half of the year at least world’s worst climate.”¹⁰⁰ M.Z. Kiani, who was posted in Malaya in 1941-42, also says that fighting was very difficult in Malaya marked by dampness, swamps, mysterious darkness and mosquitoes.¹⁰¹

While there was rarely any animal that could be seen in the western desert, various kinds of strange animals were encountered in the jungles of Burma and Malaya. Moreman writes, that “to newcomers the sights and sounds generated by the teeming insects, animals, lizards and birds inhabiting the depths of the jungle were confusing, frightening and disorientating.”¹⁰² Besides, the Japanese use of various types of strange cries to frighten, confuse and impress upon the strength of soldiers was also troublesome.¹⁰³ The roar of tigers in Arakan was most frightening. Leeches, monkeys and snakes were main difficulty for the troops. Leeches were a great menace. The 25th Indian Division reported to its Corps HQs that each man of one of its patrolling party in the banks of chaungs in Arakan region collected about a dozen leeches.¹⁰⁴ Leeches sometimes even found their way to the intimate parts of a man.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Telegram from 25 Indian Division to 15 Corps, 30 June 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

⁹⁹ *Narrative of 25 Indian Division in Arakan Campaign*, p. 14, File No. 601/3687/H, HDMOD.

¹⁰⁰ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 169.

¹⁰¹ Kiani, *India’s Freedom Struggle*, p. 9; *Malaya Campaign- Narrative*, prepared by Lt Col L.V. Fitzpatrick, Commanding Officer of 1/14 Punjab Regiment, File No. 601/639A/H, HDMOD. Lt Col Fitzpatrick commanded the 1/14 Punjab during the Malaya Campaign in 1941-42. Kiani was also part of this Battalion during the Campaign.

¹⁰² T.R. Moreman, *The Jungle, the Japanese and the British Commonwealth Armies at War, 1941-45: Fighting Methods, Doctrine and Training for Jungle Warfare* (London, Frank Cass, 2005), p. 3.

¹⁰³ Summary of Events, June 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part III, HDMOD.

¹⁰⁴ Telegram of 25 Indian Division to 15 Corps, 30 June 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part II (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁰⁵ Wilcox, *Chindit Column 76*, p. 11.

Soldiers carried wet salt to remove them from the body whenever these happened to get stuck to them.¹⁰⁶

Digging trenches, practising air raid precautions, mock war drills, dispersing and camouflaging vehicles and other equipment, route marches, range firing practice and physical drills were a part of daily life for the soldiers.¹⁰⁷ Battle inoculation to accustom the troops of being under fire was also practised.¹⁰⁸ Patrolling was a dangerous job indeed. Patrol platoons in South East Asia enlisted the services of locals to guide them in hilly and dense jungles about the tracks, Japanese locations and also sometimes help in carrying some of their baggage. Sometimes, the locals gave exaggerated information that misguided the troops. To illustrate, the 23 Brigade, which patrolled the Kohima area in early 1944, was told by the locals that the Imphal-Kohima road had been cut, Kohima had fallen and the Japanese paratroopers had landed at Lumding and Dimapur.¹⁰⁹ This proved to be a false report. Patrolling in the hilly areas was again an arduous job.¹¹⁰

During close battles bayonets were freely used in all theatres of War. The war cries, screaming and flash of weapons were frightening.¹¹¹ Destroyed tanks and guns and dead bodies could be seen scattered in the battle zones.¹¹² In fact, "To think the very same body had life and enjoyed himself a few hours before was preposterous."¹¹³ The danger of being stuck in booby traps and landmines aggravated the fear. It was depressing for soldiers to watch from trenches that their colleagues were moaning in pain after getting injured but were helpless. Any thought of saving the wounded was to invite grave danger.¹¹⁴ The churning of moving vehicles and intermittent firing aggravated the horror of the battle. The devilish noises and strafing and bombing by

¹⁰⁶ Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 57. Besides salt, lighted cigarettes was also a good method to remove the leeches from the body. Routine Order- 9th Indian Division, Appendix 'A', 1941, *War Diary of 'A' Branch, 9th Indian Division*, File No. 601/228/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁰⁷ Reports, in *4th Indian Division in the Middle East*, 1940, File No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁰⁸ Summary of Events, 28 & 29 April 1943, *War Diary of 'G Branch' - 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁰⁹ Wilcox, *Chindit Column 76*, pp. 4-6.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-2.

¹¹¹ 17 Indian Division had several bayonet encounters during its fighting with the Japanese in Feb 1942 in Burma. *History of 17 Indian Division*, p. 7; Citations for Victoria Cross winners of the Second World War, in Jaswant Singh and Manvendra Singh, *Till Memory Serves: Victoria Cross Winners of India* (New Delhi, Rupa, 2007).

¹¹² *Misc Papers Relating to 3/5th Mahratta Light Infantry in North Africa*, File No. 601/10153/H (Secret), HDMOD; Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, pp. 74-5 & 87.

¹¹³ Thomas, *Lt Gen P.S. Bhagat: A Biography*, p. 82; Crawford, *As Narrated*, p. 22.

¹¹⁴ Verma, *To Serve with Honour*, pp. 37-8.

enemy planes made the soldiers hide in trenches.¹¹⁵ Troops, who had more exposure to bombing, were getting most efficient in digging. ‘We are slowly sinking into the ground’, said a report.¹¹⁶ The help of Sappers and Miners was taken to dig in the trenches in the rocky areas.¹¹⁷ The slit trenches near the coastline in Malaya often got filled with water due to high tides. Besides, snakes often crept into those trenches and soldiers were always scared of them.¹¹⁸

By the second half of 1944, the Allied forces superimposed their authority over the Japanese. They were on the run now. The 25 Indian Division fighting in Arakan instructed its units to carry out deep and intensive patrolling in the enemy held areas. This led to a number of clashes between the Japanese troops and the Indian patrol parties. The Division further instructed the troops that every active operation should precede with aggressive patrols and in no way any patrol be defensive. The Japanese were not that much strong now. They started avoiding the clashes with the Allied patrol parties. The tide of the War, thus, was turning towards the Allied powers. The life of the soldiers was in no way less cumbersome even now but they had gained their morale and fought with alacrity.¹¹⁹

Life in the Indian Air Force was also busy. The pilots of the Air Force squadrons deployed in South East Asia had to conduct reconnaissance for the Army regularly. Navigation in these areas was difficult and forced landing was almost impossible. The ground staff had to work day and night to maintain the airworthiness of the aircraft. Flying in the mountains and valleys with dense vegetation through the gaps in the ranges with outdated aircraft in hot humid climate was extremely difficult. There were no proper airfields. Aircrafts thus had to land without any landing aids. If a forced landing became necessary, there was hardly any chance for survival.¹²⁰ No. 6

¹¹⁵ *Misc Papers Relating to 3/5th Mahratta Light Infantry in North Africa*, File No. 601/10153/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹¹⁶ 4th Indian Division News Letter, 9 August 1940, *4th Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹¹⁷ 4th Indian Division News Letter, 20 September 1940, *4th Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹¹⁸ Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty*, p. 89. According to Harbakhsh Singh, if someone got bitten (which was usual), there were orders to kill the snake to determine its lethality, but it hardly satisfied the man bitten if its bite was harmless.

¹¹⁹ 25 Indian Division Instructions, 14 November 1944 & 25 Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Summary, 14-20 November 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part III, HDMOD.

¹²⁰ Lal, *My Years with IAF*, p. 27.

Squadron, lost nine pilots between June 1943 and June 1944.¹²¹ No. 1 Squadron, which landed in Imphal in January 1944 with 20 pilots, was left with only four pilots of the original lot, after a year of operations.¹²² Keeping the aircraft flying in such a situation was really a tough task. Some pilots, who survived crashes, found themselves stranded in the enemy area. Only a lucky few could make a safe return, others were lost in the dense jungles or were caught by the enemy. However, in comparison to the Army, which fought in difficult terrains, “life in Air Force was relatively easy.”¹²³ At a peace station, life was near normal. Soldiers were allotted married accommodation, if available at the station. Bachelors along with married, who were not accompanied by their families, lived in the bachelors’ quarters. In the evenings, Kings health was drunk. While dining in the mess, seniors occupied the head of the dining table while juniors sat towards the tail. Air warriors dined with the utmost decorum.¹²⁴

The sailors of Indian Navy, who worked closely with the Royal Navy also had a tough going. German ‘U’ Boats had shattered the myth of the invincibility of the Royal Navy in the initial stages of the War. Subsequently, Japanese too played havoc with the ships of the Allied Forces. Many British ships considered invincible were sunk and sailors were killed. In the very first month of the War about 40 ships (including merchant ships) were sunk by the Germans.¹²⁵ The Royal Navy as well as Indian Navy both had a tough time. The ships of RIN that sailed for patrolling always apprehended some danger. Sailors and officers were holed up in the duty place for 15 hours a day. The magnetic mines, which were laid in the water from the air and from submarines posed a grave danger, as there was no way of telling when and where you would encounter them.¹²⁶ Sailors at sea, sometimes had to encounter the bomber aircraft overhead, ready to destroy the ship like a vulture attacking its prey. In the situation the ship could either speed up or retaliate by opening up all weapons and anti-aircraft guns. Sub Lt (later Vice admiral) Krishnan reports that “if it is bad luck your ship get a hit, then damage control party desperately running and doing their bit

¹²¹ *History of No. 6 Squadron RIAF*, pp. 1-3, compiled by Pilot Officer H. Mayadas, 1945, File No. 601/7609/H, HDMOD.

¹²² Gp Capt Ranbir Singh, *Marshal Arjan Singh: Life and Times* (New Delhi, Ocean, 2002), p. 44; *Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, 15 Nov 2008.

¹²³ *Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, 15 Nov 2008.

¹²⁴ Lal, *My Years with IAF*, pp. 18-9.

¹²⁵ VAdm N. Krishnan, *A Sailor’s Story* (Bangalore, Punya Publishing, 2011), p. 45.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 49.

if ship could be saved from sinking.”¹²⁷ He adds that during such critical moments everybody prayed to God for survival.

War Scare

Some soldiers were scared of the War. They felt restless and even cried when the enemy aircraft strafed or tanks and artillery guns fired. An airman with an Indian Air Force squadron used to cry during air raids. According to Corporal (later Wing Commander) H.K. Patel “Every time there was a raid, you know, he laid shivering in the trench and crying away like hell. Literally crying!”¹²⁸ During the same operation, a sergeant of the Squadron refused to fly as an air gunner. Warrant Officer (later Air Vice Marshal) Harjinder Singh writes, “he looked pale and jittery and would just not go.”¹²⁹ One havildar of the Army, who used to be the first to run deep into the trench at every air raid and come out at last would restlessly shout the name of God and would make even the men besides him uneasy.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, a bomb fell straight over the havildar in the trench, killing him on the spot and wounding others nearby.

Behaving in a cowardly manner was considered an offence under the Indian Army Act,¹³¹ and in some cases when the matter was reported disciplinary action was taken. Three cases pertaining to the Indian army for ‘misbehaving in such a manner as to show cowardice’ were tried by a court martial in the Middle East.¹³² Slim, the Indian Corps Commander in South East Asia, too writes that when the morale was not high some men reported sick and invited malaria deliberately by not taking precautionary measures. To them, sickness was a cheap price to avoid the vagaries of

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 70-4

¹²⁸ Conversations with Wing commander H.K. Patel, mhtml:file://F:\researchSWW\A World War Two Pilot’s Story, accessed on Jan 2011. Interestingly, this man bravely saved a wounded man by withdrawing him to safety amid firing by enemy aircraft. When asked why he used to cry when actually he was so brave, he said “you think I am afraid of myself? I am a married man, I have got a child, I am worried about them. What will happen to them if I am gone”.

¹²⁹ Saigal, *Birth of an Air Force*, p. 132.

¹³⁰ *Interview, Subedar Risal Singh*, 9 December 2008.

¹³¹ Indian Army Act 1911, Section 25 (b) read as – any person subject to this Act who commits any of the offences, that is to say “in presence of an enemy, shamefully casts away his arms or ammunition, or intentionally uses words or any other means to induce any person subject to military law to abstain from acting against the enemy, or to discourage such person from acting against the enemy, or misbehaves in such a manner to show cowardice”. Indian Army Act (Act VIII of 1911), Section 25 (b), p. 155, *Manual of Indian Military Law*, 1937, corrected up to April 1942, (Delhi, Manager of Publications, 1942).

¹³² Three Indian soldiers were tried by court martial on the charge of ‘Misbehaving in such a manner as to show cowardice’, *War Diary of Legal Branch: Force Headquarters, Middle East*, File No. 601/150/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

the war front.¹³³ The Statistical Review of Army in India too records a number of cases of malingering during the War.¹³⁴ However, there could be some more such cases which went unreported and unregistered. A policy letter in this regard advised the medical officers to check the cases of malingering and recommended immediate disciplinary action in such cases.¹³⁵

Worries of Infidelity

Sometimes battle fatigue was added with the mental stress of intimate personal life. Soldiers who were married or had a fiancée back home, at times got apprehensive of losing them, because of long separation. They feared that wives could get married to someone else, involved with some other men or could be abducted. There were instances when girls married some other persons in the absence of any news of their fiancée at war.¹³⁶ Infidelity of wives continued to be a serious problem throughout the War.¹³⁷ In April 1942, a RASC driver tried to commit suicide at Tobruk as he received a letter from his wife seeking divorce. She had fallen in love with another man. The news spread like wild-fire and almost all soldiers suffered depression, thinking that their own wives or sweethearts might do the same.¹³⁸

The censoring of letters of British soldiers fighting in South East Asia Command revealed that they were angry with newspaper reports on Italian prisoners of war in England that they were going around with English women and enjoying themselves.¹³⁹ There was also news that American soldiers were marrying the British girls and that American Societies were presenting wedding robes to British brides,

¹³³ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 178.

¹³⁴ A total of 343 offences of malingering and maiming, producing or aggravating disease were recorded between 1 October 1941 and 30 September 1945 against the Indian officers and men. *Statistical Review of Personnel*, vol. II, p. 112 & vol. III, pp. 200-3.

¹³⁵ Malingering, *Policy Compendium*, prepared by AG Branch, Amendment List No. 4, 1943, Chapter 36, Section 4.

¹³⁶ In one case, the wife of an officer listening no news for years together, married another man. But the officer was POW and came back to know the bad news. Maj Gen Partap Narain, *Subedar to Field Marshal* (New Delhi, Manas, 1999), p. 89.

¹³⁷ Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944 and January 1945, p. 10, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA*, Branch 'A', File No. 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

¹³⁸ Crawford, *As Narrated*, p. 40. According to Crawford it was only with passing of time and frequent letters from wives that settled the minds gradually to rest.

¹³⁹ Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944, and January 1945, p. 10, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA*, Branch 'A', 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

marrying the American soldiers.¹⁴⁰ Authorities tried to pacify the soldiers calling it an ‘egg story’ but without success.¹⁴¹ General Chaudhuri narrates: “the war caused a number of disruptions in the marriages of the British officers. After the War, I found there had been a considerable reshuffle of partners and in meeting again one had to ask after the health of wives with caution.”¹⁴²

Such incidences could be more with British soldiers as the Indian conservative society provided limited scope for such occurrences. However, as per the reports on the morale of the troops in South East Asia, the cases of infidelity and desertion by the wives of Indian soldiers also increased with the longer period of separation.¹⁴³ There were also instances when wives of Indian airmen got married or got involved with other men when their husbands were away on the war front.¹⁴⁴ Captain Kartar Singh, a representative of Sialkot district in the meeting of Punjab Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen’s Board raised the point of abduction of wives of the soldiers who were away on military duties. He emphasized that strict action should be taken against a man who abduct the woman of a soldier.¹⁴⁵ Such incidents affected the morale and combat efficiency of the soldiers adversely. The Air Force authorities pointed out that considerable difficulty existed in past in “(a) preventing Indian airmen’s wives going through a ceremony of marriage with another man often under compulsion. (b) in punishing persons guilty of committing adultery with or abducting Indian airmen’s wives: especially where the airman concerned was serving overseas or in an operational areas.” It further reads “Although, such acts are criminal offences under Indian Penal Codes, the courts were formerly unable to try such offences except on complaint filed in the court by the husband... This position has now been rectified by the Code of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment) Act, 1943”.¹⁴⁶ The amendment

¹⁴⁰ Fourteenth Army Security Intelligence Summary, 1 to 30 September 1944, *War Diary of GS Branch, HQ 14th Army*, File No. 601/156/WD/Pt XV-A (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁴¹ The egg story that in a box of eggs if one is rotten it spoils many, but that does not mean that all are rotten or broken. Fourteenth Army Security Intelligence Summary, 1st to 31 August 1944, *War Diary of GS Branch, HQ 14th Army*, File No. 601/156/WD/Pt XV-A (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁴² Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 117.

¹⁴³ Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944 and January 1945, p. 18, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA, Branch ‘A’*, File No. 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Abduction of Indian Airmen Wives – Punishment of Offenders’, *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 230 of 1944.

¹⁴⁵ *Proceedings of a meeting of the Punjab, Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen’s Board*, 10 April 1944, held at Government House Lahore, File No. F/204, HDMOD.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Abduction of Indian Airmen Wives – Punishment of Offenders’, *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 230 of 1944.

provided provision in the Law for aggrieved husbands who were away on military duties. According to the provision, in case the military duties of a soldier precluded to enable him to make such a complaint (of adultery or abduction of his wife) in person, some other person authorized by him might make a complaint on his behalf. The aggrieved soldier needed to authorize someone in writing which should be certified by his commanding officer.¹⁴⁷ Orders were issued to the commanders of the units to ensure that this information brought to the notice of all Indian other ranks and was explained carefully to them.

Morale report, Air Force Order and amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure are the strong proof of the occurrence of such incidences with Indian soldiers. The interviews with the soldiers, however controverts this point. According to the interviewees there was little scope for such incidents in Indian social set-up. The wife of soldiers lived in villages in a joint family system and had little chance of breaking the marriage. The society in general also did not accept infidelity.¹⁴⁸

However, in the case of some soldiers who were made POWs by the Japanese and later joined the INA, no news reached the family for years. In such cases, some parents remarried their daughters.¹⁴⁹ Such remarriage cases can be compared with the very recent case of Kargil war, which came into limelight in 2004, when Sapper Arif of Indian Army was released by Pakistan after five years in a Pakistani prison as prisoner of war. Back home he found that his wife Gudiya was married to a person named Taufiq.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Section 198 of the Code of Criminal Procedure was amended accordingly. A new section 199-b was added to the Code. See Act XXXVIII of 1943, in *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 230 of 1944. The Air Force Order was published with the complete version of the Amendment in the Code.

¹⁴⁸ Interview, Hony Capt Ishwar Singh, 20 December 2008; interview, Major Abhe Ram, 2 December 2009.

¹⁴⁹ Interview, Umrao Singh, 21 December 2010. Umrao Singh's (born in 1921, died in 2011) brother-in-law (sister's husband) was in the Army and after being made a POW, he joined the Indian National Army. Umrao's family waited for years when they got no news, they tried to marry Umrao's his sister with the younger brother of her husband but she refused straightway and told that she could exercise the option only after knowing with certainty that her husband was no more. Her husband came back after the War. Umrao Singh, however, claims that in a few cases, some parents remarried their daughters after waiting for 2-3 years.

¹⁵⁰ During the Indo-Pak conflict of Kargil in 1999, Sapper Arif was made a POW by Pakistan. When there was no news of Arif from anywhere, including the Indian Army for years, the parents of Gudiya (the woman who was married to Arif in 1998) married her to a person named Taufiq. In 2004, Sapper Arif was repatriated to India and found his wife married to another man. The Merdia interviewed all the parties, including Gudiya, Sapper Arif, Taufiq, their families and also Muslim Ulemas. Ultimately Gudiya was given the chance as to whom she would like to prefer. She opted to revert back to Arif as his wife. The case seemed unique but it was not the new as such cases had happened at the time of

Lighter Moments

Going overseas also provided an opportunity to see the world. Having spending time in tough and rough areas, there were also places that were full of life. After spending time in the deserts of the Middle East, the 2 Field Brigade of the Indian Army reached North Palestine in early 1942, and found it full of vegetation where fruits like orange grew in abundance.¹⁵¹ An Indian Division on reaching Cyprus, found the climate very pleasant. Unlike the other coasts, that the soldiers had seen so far, the beaches of this region provided glorious swimming. Local wines and brandy added to the pleasure of good climate.¹⁵² During deployment in Egypt, Indians along with European troops were given leave to visit cities like Cairo and Alexandria, where men could dine and drink in restaurants and hotels, visit cinema halls and go on sight-seeing. Soldiers were even given short leaves for a week to visit temples and Pyramids, etc.¹⁵³ During the leave they could occasionally be seen arm-in-arm with soldiers of South Africa, New Zealand and other Allied partners strolling through the streets of Cairo enjoying the donkey ride.¹⁵⁴ During their deployment in Abyssinia, Syria and Western Desert, the Pyramids and Sphinx remained the favourite attraction for the Indian soldiers. Guides were also provided to brief the soldiers about the historical importance of these places.¹⁵⁵ The men and officers of the Machine Gun Battalion of Rajputana Rifles were granted 10 days leave at Dekheila near Alexandria to visit the locality.¹⁵⁶ Some leave parties of the 4 Indian Division, comprising Indian Muslim soldiers, visited Jerusalem.¹⁵⁷ Punjabi Mussalmans of 4/11 Sikh were also given leaves to visit Jerusalem when the Battalion was at Haifa in the last quarter of 1942. Almost all Muslims of the 4/11 Sikh had the opportunity to pay at least one visit to the holy city.¹⁵⁸

Second World War also. However, due to the lack of media and education these cases could not attract such attention.

¹⁵¹ Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, p. 64.

¹⁵² Verma, *To Serve With Honour*, p. 39.

¹⁵³ Photographs of Indian soldiers enjoying their leaves, watching the Pyramids of Egypt and visiting other places. No. 1687-96, Egypt, vol. I, August 1941 to March 1942, *Photographs of World War II*, HDMOD; Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, p. 70. Subedar Risal Singh also mentions that Indian soldiers were given a week leave to visit the places. He along with some of his colleagues visited Cairo. *Interview, Subedar Risal Singh*. 9 December 2008.

¹⁵⁴ No. 1687-96, Egypt, vol. I, August 1941 to March 1942, *Photographs of World War II*, HDMOD.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Machine Gun Battalion of Rajputana Rifles*, File No. 601/10355/H, HDMOD.

¹⁵⁷ 4th Indian Division News Letter, 19 May 1940, 4th Indian Division in Middle East, File No. 601/10293/H, HDMOD.

¹⁵⁸ Kanwaljit Singh & Ahluwalia, *Saragarhi Battalion: Ashes to Glory*, p. 114.

After the capture of Asmara (capital of Eritrea) in April 1941, the men of 4/11 Sikh Regiment and some others were sent on leave to the city. Regimental history records that men “could be seen queuing up outside the many watchmakers’ shops which are to be found in this well-planned modern town, anxious to buy watches while the exchange was favourable.”¹⁵⁹ However, restaurants, cafes and food shops of Asmara were out of bounds for them, because Asmara was already short of food articles and could hardly meet the requirement of the locals.¹⁶⁰ In May 1943, When Scinde Horse was deployed at Quiara (Iraq), all personnel were allowed a fortnight leave at Shaqlawa, a Leave Camp for the Allied Forces. Personnel who were interested in bathing and sightseeing went off to the famous Rawanduz. Many officers and VCO parties went to the Kurdish hill country, and were received with great hospitality by the local tribes. Some spent their leave on a mule trek with a party of Kurds.¹⁶¹ During the summers, the leave parties spent their days swimming in the river Tigris.¹⁶²

The life of soldiers in the Far East was quite comfortable before the Japanese attack. After the routines, jungle training and some exercises, they could get time for social activities. The value of the Indian rupee was good and many officers purchased their own cars. In the weekend, officers visited historical places, temples and the Sea View Hotel.¹⁶³ But after the capture of Singapore, things changed. The Indian forces were now fighting the war in Burma along with the Allied partners. In Burma, due to war conditions, there was no place that could refresh the Allied soldiers, including Indians. Most British and American servicemen belonged to towns and they looked for some place where they could enjoy modern facilities after a spell in the jungle. Calcutta besides being nearer to the war zone had cinemas, restaurants, clubs and other facilities. It also served as a transit camp for SEA troops and had high rush of men. Grand Hotel, with all the modern facilities was hired to serve as an officer

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁶⁰ Antony Brett-James, *Ball of Fire: The Fifth Indian Division in the Second World War*, Chapter VI, <http://ourstory.info/library/4-ww2/Ball/fire04.html>, accessed on 17 June 2012. The shortage of food articles was so much that even the 3/12 Frontier Force Regiment offered to surrender one fifth of their milk ration for the children of Asmara.

¹⁶¹ The Scinde Horse Regiment, *The Scinde Horseman: Special War Number*, Autumn 1940- January 1946, pp. 27-8.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Jasbir Singh, *Escape from Singapore*, pp. 17-8.

transit camp.¹⁶⁴ Calcutta also became the leave centre for all the Allied forces, including Indians.¹⁶⁵ A number of Leave Hostels were opened here for the troops. Besides, many hotels sprang up and provided modern facilities at a very reasonable cost. Indian Air Force officers fighting in SEA also rushed to Calcutta whenever they got leave. One could enjoy the city, eat good dishes and dance with the beautiful girls. Pilot officer (later Air Marshal) Ghadiok says that “Every after three months, pilots were given 15 days off. During my tenure I got three times 15 days off.”¹⁶⁶ Lieutenant (later VAdm) Krishnan of the Indian Navy states: “When a thousand men share common danger, suffer the same hardships, experience the same fears, there springs a spirit of camaraderie, a common bond of friendship and a sense of togetherness. Thus within the bonds of good order and naval discipline, we enjoyed a degree of latitude that was free and easy and that the life was quite enjoyable.”¹⁶⁷

Amidst all the fatigue and tension, soldiers took out time to enjoy even the dangerous situations. Gunners of No. 1 Squadron, IAF while flying at Toungoo (Burma) in early 1942, threw empty beer bottles from the air at the Japanese troops. This made a whistling sound similar to a dropping of bombs. The gunners enjoyed this game.¹⁶⁸ The pilots and gunners of the Squadron desperately waited for their turn to take up sorties.¹⁶⁹ In an incident, two airmen of the said Squadron had a bet to go completely naked from trench to barrack and back while the Japanese aircraft were raiding the area. An airman while doing this even wandered to the adjacent trenches of the seniors and won two annas.¹⁷⁰ Such lighter moments certainly provided relief to the soldiers.

¹⁶⁴ Sinha while going to his unit in Burma, spent quite a few days here and found it quite comfortable. Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁵ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 134. Slim also had concerns that besides good things, Calcutta also offered less reputable relaxations, running down the whole scale of vice from doubtful dance halls to disease-ridden dens of perversity. The problem was to provide wholesome amusements in such abundance that the soldier would not be lured into these darker by-ways.

¹⁶⁶ Interview, Air Marshal Ghadiok, 15 November 2008.

¹⁶⁷ Krishnan, *A Sailor's Story*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁸ Saigal, *Birth of an Air Force*, p. 124. The aircrafts of the Indian Air Force were such that it provided scope for the items to be thrown down from inside the canopy. Japanese mobility was very fast and they moved in small groups initially. These groups did not have anti-aircraft guns etc. Further, by the time these groups realised, the aircrafts went away. This was, however, not possible when the Japanese advanced in Burma in strength and with all weapons.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁷⁰ Conversations with Wing Commander H.K. Patel, p. 5, mhtml:file://F:\researchSWW\A World War Two Pilot's Story, accessed on Jan 2011.

In the Middle East, officers, whenever they got time, went on hunting though in that barren land hardly any wild animals and birds could be seen. They sometimes used vehicles to chase the prey like gazelles for amusement and sport.¹⁷¹ Captain Naravane reports that once his orderly came rushing to say that a duck had just landed on the perimeter wire of the camp. He quickly went out with his 12 bore shotgun to see the bird in the heart of the desert. The thought of a duck for dinner was too great. Within seconds, the duck was aimed at and brought to mess and provided for a delicious dinner. Early next morning, an old cook of the 2nd Lancer, which was located besides Naravane's artillery regiment in the same campus, was seen enquiring whether anyone saw a duck in the compound. The hunted duck was indeed a pet of the colonel of 2nd Lancer.¹⁷² Loading animals like mules and bullocks in trucks for taking them to the front though irksome was very amusing. Mules seeing the ramp would buck, kick and jump back, fully confused and perturbed. About half a dozen muscular men would push, pull and man handle the recalcitrant animal to the truck. All used to enjoy such adventurous moments.¹⁷³ When troops had gained the confidence by 1944, they would joke, swear and promise the fearful end of the Japanese adventure.¹⁷⁴

Barrack Life

To accommodate the troops, the billets, close billets, bivouacs, camps, trench shelters and dugouts, etc. were provided depending upon the topography and war situation in the area. On selecting the accommodation for the troops, the area commander considered the availability of water, cooking facilities, toilet arrangements, and also protection against enemy air raids.¹⁷⁵ However, during the war most of these requirements could be met only to a limited extent. Indian Soldiers in Malaya were accommodated in huts, built in a wooden frame on stilts with thatched roofs. Deep holes in the wooden ground served as toilets. In 1941, 1/14 Punjab Regiment was lodged in huts built around the thick rubber plantations at Sungei Patani.¹⁷⁶ The 5th

¹⁷¹ Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, p. 58.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁷³ Wilcox, *Chindit Column* 76, pp. 8-9.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ 'Billets, Camps and Bivouacs, Camp Cooking and Water Arrangements', *Field Service Pocket Book*, Pamphlet No. 5, 1939 (London, His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1939), pp. 1-32.

¹⁷⁶ Kiani, *India's Freedom Struggle*, p. 16; Jasbir Singh, *Escape from Singapore*, p. 16.

Sikh Battalion at Ipoh also lived in a similar accommodation. Each officer was lodged in a separate hut and provided with mattress, pillow and a Dutch-wife.¹⁷⁷

Tents were mainly used in the Middle East to accommodate the soldiers. These were further camouflaged to prevent enemy attacks. Sometimes local buildings were also used as barracks and offices for units and formations. At times, houses in the locality were acquired to accommodate officers and men.¹⁷⁸ Deep trenches, buckets or screened latrines were used for toilets.¹⁷⁹ At Cyprus in the Mediterranean also Indian soldiers were mostly accommodated in tents and bivouacs. Vacant hutments were also utilized whenever available.¹⁸⁰

Tents and tarpaulins were widely used to accommodate soldiers on the war fronts in Burma. However, if these were in short supply, the Army had to resort to local resources.¹⁸¹ South East Asia had abundance of bamboos and these could be used for making bashas. The soldiers in this area thus lived mostly in such accommodations. Living in straw huts without electricity, proper water supply and even basic facilities made the life primitive.¹⁸² During operations troops had to seek shelter in trenches. As a safeguard from air attacks, 25 Indian Division in Arakan instructed its personnel to dig slit trenches as near to the sleeping areas as possible. It further instructed its men to dig trenches in the bashas where they slept. Sand bags could be kept around in a way that the central passage of the basha could be used as a shallow trench.¹⁸³ But heavy rains in this part of the world made such shelters unfit to live in. The sodden trenches and leaky bashas thus became the reality of Burma fighting.¹⁸⁴ Field Service Regulations, however, advised against long stays in dug

¹⁷⁷ Dutch-wife is a term used for a cylindrical pillow held between the knees while sleeping to keep the groin well ventilated in a tropical climate. It was in vogue in Malaya during those days. Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty*, p. 89; Kiani, *India's Freedom Struggle*, p. 17.

¹⁷⁸ *11 Indian Infantry Brigade Papers*, File No. 601/10442/H, 1940-41, HDMOD.

¹⁷⁹ Brigade Standing Order, 12 July 1941, *War Diary of 20 Indian Infantry Brigade*, File No. 601/314/WD/Part A-2, HDMOD.

¹⁸⁰ 7 Division Administrative Order, 5 February 1943, *War Diary of 7 Indian Infantry Division*, File No. 601/317/WD/III (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁸¹ Minutes of Conference, 11 July 1944, *War Diary of HQ 33 Corps*, File No. 601/197/WD/Part II B (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁸² *History of No. 6 Squadron, IAF*, File No. 601/7609/H, HDMOD.

¹⁸³ Routine Order, 9 June 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part III, HDMOD.

¹⁸⁴ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 178.

outs. This could adversely affect the health of the troops and was detrimental to the discipline and morale of the soldiers.¹⁸⁵ But there was no other way.

Ration

There were some 30 different kinds of ration scales applicable to the 14th Army in South East Asia. These were based partly on religion, region and the deployment of men.¹⁸⁶ In the Middle East, it was broadly divided into two categories called ‘hard scale’ and ‘operational scale’ ration. Some of the ration items like meat were marked ‘For Hindus’ and ‘For Muslims’ keeping in view the religious affiliations.¹⁸⁷ Extra rations were issued to personnel, such as signallers, cyphers, etc. whose work entailed night duties.¹⁸⁸

Slim, the Army Commander of the 14th Army, found the scale of ration sanctioned to troops in South East Asia reasonable but pointed out the deficiency in its supply. Atta and rice were in short supply while fresh vegetables rotten before reached to the troops. Indian soldiers did not like tinned meat. The supply of fresh meat was hardly possible. Slim writes about the position of the 14th Army in 1943: “the supply situation was indeed so serious that it threatened the possibility of offensive.”¹⁸⁹ Problems in the supply arose because till the late 1943, India was still following the peace time system of financial control under which the contracts for the supplies were given and supply was made by the contractors. This process consumed a lot of time. But in early 1944, when this system was changed, the supplies became satisfactory.¹⁹⁰ However, the rainy season of 1944, again posed a problem. Fresh vegetables were very short in supply. As a measure, the 25 Indian Division ordered its formation and unit headquarters to institute vegetable gardens wherever possible. The headquarters followed the instructions.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ Billets, Camps and Bivouacs, Camp Cooking and Water Arrangements, in *Field Service Pocket Book*, Pamphlet No. 5, 1939 (London, His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1939), pp. 30--31.

¹⁸⁶ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 175--6.

¹⁸⁷ General’s HQ (India), Adjutant General Branch, Liaison Letter, No. 56945/S.D. 1, 8 September 1941, *4th Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁸⁸ 25 Indian Division Routine Order, 9 June 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part III, HDMOD.

¹⁸⁹ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 175--6.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Summary of Events, June 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part II, HDMOD.

In the deserts of Baghdad, officers got tinned soup, sausages and boiled potato while men were given dal and roti for dinner. In the breakfast all got tea and parathas.¹⁹² The monotony of the supply of rations in the officers' mess was occasionally augmented by unofficial purchases, if the unit was located at a place near some town. The 2nd Field Regiment, when located at T2 in Syria, purchased special ration for the mess from Deir-e-Zor, a city in Syria. They could even procure local brandy.¹⁹³ But when the Regiment was deployed at Khataba (near Cairo) along with the 3rd Motor Brigade in early 1942, the food supplied hardly had any variations. A visit to Cairo and a good meal there in some restaurant alone provided some relief.¹⁹⁴ During the battles, British soldiers mainly depended upon bully beef and biscuits.¹⁹⁵ The Indian soldiers, however, lived on *Shakkarparas*,¹⁹⁶ the home made ration. Besides being very nourishing, this was easy to carry and could be consumed for many days without getting rotten. *Shakkarparas* were also considered the most suitable ration for troops on patrol duties.¹⁹⁷ Units carried their rations during the operations. They also carried the reserve ration and could even indent for emergency ration.¹⁹⁸ Water from unchlorinated sources was not to be used. Soldiers were also warned about the danger of getting eatables from hawkers during the operations.¹⁹⁹

A soldier's kit comprised mess tin, mug, etc. Units also carried utensils for cooking and other purposes. Loss of such items during operations was common. In such circumstances, if stationed in South East Asia, officers and men used tumblers made of bamboos for drinking water. Bamboos, abundantly available in Burma jungles, were also used as toast racks in the mess besides tables, chairs, rest lounges and rafts to cross rivers. During operations in Kohima, soldiers occasionally used hollow horns as drinking vessels as was the custom with the Nagas.²⁰⁰

¹⁹² Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, pp. 51--52.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 69--70.

¹⁹⁵ Crawford, *As Narrated*, p. 77.

¹⁹⁶ *Shakkarparas* are made of wheat flour and sugar. Water and sugar is first mixed in the flour in a way such that the small rectangular or square pieces can be made out of it. These pieces are then fried in boiling oil.

¹⁹⁷ *4th Indian Division Papers*, January--April 1942, File No. 601/10438/H, HDMOD; Summary of Events, December 1941, *War Diary of 3 Indian Division*, File No. 601/207/WD/Part II (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁹⁸ Admin Instructions, 16 Nov 1944, *War Diary of 51 Indian Brigade*, No. 601/341/WD, part I (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁹⁹ Brigade Administrative Instructions, 16 April 1941, *War Diary of 20 Indian Infantry Brigade*, File No. 601/314/WD/Part I, HDMOD. The Brigade was at Basra in Iraq.

²⁰⁰ Wilcox, *Chindit Column* 76, p. 80.

Troops were also issued free cigarettes. During December 1941 and January 1942, more than two billion Cigarettes were dispatched from India for the use of British and Indian troops.²⁰¹ Sometimes cigarettes were gifted to the units by local people. The 4/11 Sikh Regiment, when entrained for Sudan in April 1941, was presented with 10,000 cigarettes by the merchants of the town.²⁰² However, initially Indian soldiers were not accustomed to cigarettes. They found the ration cigarette rather throaty and liked to smoke the home made *biris*. Indian soldiers posted to Egypt in 1940 reported a shortage of *biris*. They felt delighted when this was supplied to their canteen.²⁰³ However, gradually they developed some interest in cigarettes also. But preferred the cigarettes made of Indian tobacco while British troops liked the cigarettes made of imported tobacco.²⁰⁴ Subsequently, some Indian soldiers too developed the taste for Neptune and London brands of cigarettes. These were, thus provided to Indians also in the South-East Asia command.²⁰⁵ As the time passed, *biris* became less popular. According to Lt Gen Bresford-Pierse, the Commander of the Artillery in the 4th Indian Division “with the passage of time almost all the troops who went to Middle East adopted cigarette in place of *biris*.”²⁰⁶ Soldiers from Punjab even carried *Hukkas* to the war fronts like Burma and Arakan and enjoyed smoking in groups.²⁰⁷ (See Photo No. 2.2)

Liquor was liked by the soldiers. Wilcox, a Column Commander of an Indian brigade deployed in North East India writes of a soldier that “gentlemen is one who never refuses a kiss, a drink and a fight.”²⁰⁸ Drinks also mitigated the exhaustion of mobilisation and the fatigue of war.²⁰⁹ In November 1943, when a Gorkha unit marched for the whole night and also the following day, they were served with hot meal and rum in the evening to comfort them.²¹⁰ When 4/16 Punjab was at Toranto (Italy) in 1944, heavy rain turned the camp into a quagmire and caused bronchitis

²⁰¹ *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 29 Jan 1942, p. 4.

²⁰² Kanwaljit Singh & Ahluwalia, *Saragarhi Battalion*, p. 75.

²⁰³ Report of the Division Commander to Army HQs (India), 3 May 1940, 4th *Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H, HDMOD.

²⁰⁴ Reply by C.M. Trivedi, the War Secretary, Starred Question No. 1757, 10 April 1945, *LAD*.

²⁰⁵ GOC-in-C Conference, 13-14 September 1946, *War Diary of HQ 23 Indian Division*, File No. 601/246/WD/Part XX, HDMOD.

²⁰⁶ *Lt Gen Bresford-Peierse's Note*, File No. 601/10358/H, HDMOD.

²⁰⁷ Photos of soldiers smoking Hukkas can be seen in various contemporary issues of *Fauji Akhbar*.

²⁰⁸ Wilcox, *Chindit Column* 76, p. 9.

²⁰⁹ Naravane, *A Soldier's Life*, pp. 55 & 57.

²¹⁰ *Notes on Point 5151- Pimpi Operations*, 28 November 1943, File No. 601/10033/H, HDMOD.

Indian Soldiers at War Front

Photo 2.1



Madrassi gunners clean their gun

Photo 2.2



Men of 10th Baluch sit down to smoke a “hukka” in Burma

Source: *Fauji Akhbar*, 24 June 1944.

among the troops. Rum ration to the troops here did wonders and put most of the sufferers on the feet.²¹¹ On some occasions, even when the unit was at war, liquor parties were organized. Prior to the Christmas of 1944, the 4/11 Sikh was at San Marino attacking the enemy at the Cassette farmhouse. When the Battalion got some respite from the operations on Christmas, the VCOs held a party, and issued extra sweets, rum or cigarettes to the rank and file.²¹² The scarcity of liquor could be compensated by the local brand of the area. The Chindits, when operating in Nagaland, used *dzu* (local Naga liquor made of rice) that was abundantly available in the Naga homes.²¹³

Morale

The morale of the Allied forces, including Indians was a problem in the Middle East as they were not adequately equipped to fight a well-armed German army initially. Rommel dominated the battlefield, made many prisoners of war and forced the Allied Forces to retreat. The Japanese attack on the Far East and South East Asia made the situation worse. As Perry asserts: “in its experiences of 1941 to 1943 the Indian Army acquired the habit of defeat. It had come to believe that the enemy could not be defeated.”²¹⁴ Defeat, heavy casualties, the failure of offensives, hardships and frustrations were the causes for the low morale.²¹⁵ Milking of experienced troops from a battalion in order to provide trained manpower to newly raised battalions adversely affected the combat capacity and the morale of the soldiers.²¹⁶ Delays in reinforcement also affected the morale of the units.

The soldier left his depot in India in a fighting fit state, morally and physically. It took him days and sometimes weeks, before he reached a Forward Reinforcement Holding Unit by rail, road and sea.²¹⁷ By the time he reached, he was only half of his

²¹¹ *4/16 Punjab Regiment in Europe*, File No. 601/10362/H, HDMOD.

²¹² Kanwaljit Singh, & Ahluwalia, *Saragarhi Battalion*, p. 125.

²¹³ Wilcox, *Chindit Column* 76, p. 80.

²¹⁴ F.W. Perry, *The Commonwealth Armies: Manpower and Organisation in Two World Wars* (Manchester, MUP, 1988), p. 112.

²¹⁵ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 153-61.

²¹⁶ Lt Gen Sir Ralph B. Deedes, *The Royal Garhwal Rifles, vol. II, 1923-1947* (New Delhi, Army Press, 1962), p. 63.

²¹⁷ Lt Sinha after passing out of the OTS Belgaum was posted to the Regimental Centre. After a few days he was to join his Regiment 7/9 Jat. On being sent from the Regimental Centre, he reported to Movement Control Office at Calcutta who was to arrange his onward movement to his Battalion at Burma. At the Movement Control Office there was a long queue for embarkation and one had to wait for months together. There was no systemic check on what the officers were doing and the officers stayed on without any work passing their time in the city and around. Sinha stayed here for a quite

original self. He had been physically exhausted, forgotten some of his training and had lost parts of his kit. At times, he collapsed before he reached the war front for fighting. He was to be reconditioned at Reinforcement Units before being sent forward. The Reinforcement Monograph records: “these were temporary units, not highly administered. Not only was the reconditioning them below normal standards, but unless it was highly organized in the matter of hygiene, men got malaria, which further damaged their morale and efficiency.”²¹⁸ Frequent cancellation of leave trains kept the soldiers stranded at railway platforms sometimes for days in South East Asia. This upset the morale of the soldiers going on leave.²¹⁹ Rumours of defeat also demoralized the soldiers. Especially when the Line of Communication was too long as news travelled a long way and got distorted in its journey. To combat this, the 4 Corps, fighting in South East Asia in 1944, started a daily newspaper called ‘Platoon Sheet’. It was one sheet paper published in English on one side and in Roman Urdu on the other. The paper carried daily news to combat rumours and boost the morale of the soldiers. It was well received and everyone eagerly waited for it.²²⁰

British authorities initiated some steps to prop up the spirit of the soldiers. These included welfare activities, recreation, local leave, visits of dignitaries and better interaction between officers and men. Gallantry awards were given in numbers to boost the morale of the soldiers. Sometimes these awards were even conferred in person by the senior military commander to the recipients in a large gathering or ceremonial parades of the soldiers at the war fronts. The British also tried to boost up the morale of the soldiers by propaganda means. When the Japanese aircrafts started attacking the Allied Army in Malaya, a rumour was floated that the Japanese aero planes were made of bamboos and paper, like their homes, and that the Japanese would not be able to bomb accurately as they had poor eyesight.²²¹ Troops were

some time and somehow managed to jump the queue to embark for his destination. He reached Rangoon after a long voyage, had to stay with 4/12 Frontier Force for quite a long time as his unit was in operations in the capture of Rangoon and there was not sufficient convoy to send him to his unit. It thus took him more than three months to join his battalion from the date of departure from the Regimental Centre. Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, pp. 47-55.

²¹⁸ *Reinforcements*, a monograph prepared by the Adjutant General Branch after the War, year n.d.p. 9, HDMOD.

²¹⁹ Special Leave Trains were started from places like Assam, Chittagong etc. These trains usually ran late and were sometimes cancelled due to administrative reasons. ‘Summary of Events’, June 1944, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/Part III, HDMOD.

²²⁰ ‘4th Corps Monthly Security Intelligence Summary’, 20 May 1944, *War Diary of HQ 4 Corps ‘G’ Branch*, File No. 601/186/WD/Part XXV (Secret), HDMOD.

²²¹ Kiani, *India’s Freedom Struggle*, p. 21.

further lectured and impressed upon by experienced officers that the Japanese artillery was inferior and their heavy mortar fire was very inaccurate.²²² In the first half of 1943, when the 15 Corps failed in its offensive in Arakan, the rumours were spread through the press that Wingates and the Allied forces had penetrated in the Japanese area. The story, thus spread among the troops to convey the message that they had defeated the Japanese. In fact, Wingate's Long Penetration Campaign was not a success and it suffered one third of its troops who went missing in the Burma jungles. Slim found that this skilful propaganda distracted the attention from failure in Arakan and contributed in raising the morale of the troops.²²³ The operational problem was, however, overcome when the Command was reorganized and Allied superiority was established through successful patrolling and operations. The rapid advance of the Allied forces in Burma, the increased attacks on Japanese occupied territory and the American naval victories in the Pacific added to the confidence of the soldiers.²²⁴

A report based on secret contacts with Indian casualties at the Combined General Hospital and Transit Camp, Khartoum, revealed that 60 per cent of the wounded soldiers wanted to go straight to their units to fight the battle again after recovery while 40 per cent were reluctant to join the battle hazards any further. The first category comprised NCOs and other young soldiers, while the second included severely wounded and aged soldiers.²²⁵ Battle casualties thus adversely affected the morale of many soldiers. On the other hand, when the Allied forces started inflicting casualties on the Japanese soldiers in 1944 and established their superiority, the morale of the soldiers went sky high.²²⁶ Long periods of inactivity tended the soldiers' mind to think of his home and the natural desire for leave. This inactivity thus

²²² *A Short Account of the Part played by 6/14 Punjab Regiment in Malaya in February 1942*, prepared by Lt G.V. Davidson of 6/14 Punjab Regiment' File No. 601/633/H, HDMOD.

²²³ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 163.

²²⁴ Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944, and January 1945, pp. 3, 7 & 14, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA, Branch 'A'*, 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

²²⁵ *Morale of Indian Casualties: HQs Sudan Troops*, 601/10437/H (Secret), 1941, HDMOD. Informal secret contacts were made to Indian soldiers wounded in battle at Keren and belonged to about a dozen Indian units of 4th and 5th Indian Divisions.

²²⁶ '4th Corps Monthly Security Intelligence Summary', 20 May 1944, *War Diary of HQ 4 Corps 'G' Branch*, File No. 601/186/WD/Part XXV (Secret), HDMOD.

demoralized the soldiers, while successful operations unfolded a purpose before him and boosted his morale.²²⁷

Soldiers liked their letters the most. Delay in mail by post offices was most unwelcome. A report on the morale of the Indian soldiers at Eritrea recommended that young men with energy should be placed in post offices dealing with soldiers letters to ensure the fast delivery of letters.²²⁸ Soldiers were given the facility to send some free letters in a month. They could send free air mail letters on festivals like Diwali, Holi, Id, etc.²²⁹ Despite snow, rains, difficult terrains, etc. the Army Postal Service made the best efforts to deliver mail regularly even in forward lines.²³⁰ Interestingly, the relaxed censorship was found a great morale raiser for the British soldiers.²³¹ Lack of welfare amenities also depressed the morale of Indian soldiers.²³² Mobile canteen service, however, is believed to have raised the morale of the soldiers.²³³ Further, conditions back at home, if not satisfactory also demoralized the soldiers. When prices of foodstuff rose high soldiers felt worried about their homes. But in 1944 when they realized that the government was making efforts to control the price of foodstuff, their morale began to rise.²³⁴

Leave

The system of leave at the units on the war front and overseas was that the leave vacancies were allotted to units by formation HQs as and when the situation permitted. It also depended on how much space was available in public transport like trains, MT vehicles, ships, etc. to carry the soldiers home. The CO of the unit then

²²⁷ 'Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944, and January 1945', p. 1, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA, Branch 'A'*, File No. 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

²²⁸ *Morale of Indian Casualties: HQs Sudan Troops*, March 1941, File No. 601/10437/H (Secret), HDMOD.

²²⁹ *Summaries for the Committee of Council*, 7th August 1941, Defence Co-ordination Department, p. 53, vol. V, File No. 601/7006/H (Most Secret), HDMOD.

²³⁰ D.O. Letter from Capt R.W. Munro to Col A.E. Cocksedge, 13 June 1945, *Indian Army Postal Service in CMF*, File No. 601/10433/H, HDMOD.

²³¹ 'Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944, and January 1945', p. 5, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA, Branch 'A'*, File No. 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

²³² *Morale of Indian Casualties: HQs Sudan Troops*, March 1941, File No. 601/10437/H (Secret), HDMOD.

²³³ 'Mobile Canteen Raised Morale', *Fauji Akhbar*, 14 December 1946, p. 19. This service was facilitated in SouthEast Asia theatre of war.

²³⁴ '4 Corps Monthly Security Intelligence Summary', 3 Feb 1944, *War Diary of HQ 4 Corps*, File No. 601/186/WD/ part XXI (Secret), HDMOD.

decided about the soldiers to be sent. At times, even after getting leave vacancies, the movement could be delayed or cancelled owing to non-availability of transport.²³⁵ In the Western Theatre, a criterion was fixed for the grant of leaves. Soldiers serving in the Mediterranean could get two months leave after two years of deployment there, while soldiers serving Iraq could get one month leave after every one year. But these rules were subject to some restrictions. At any time a unit in the Mediterranean could not send more than six per cent of its strength, while in Iraq this criteria was three per cent, and in Cyprus about two per cent. It further depended on the situation of the war and if necessary the leave could be stopped completely.²³⁶ The Adjutant General in his circular to all Formations overseas categorized leaves in two categories: Ordinary and Compassionate Leaves.²³⁷ Ordinary Leave was given in normal routine as and when the situation permitted, subject to many other factors as mentioned above. Compassionate Leave was granted in special cases, such as mishaps or tragedy in the family of a soldier.

The families of IORs often sent fictitious telegrams in order to enable the soldiers to get compassionate leaves.²³⁸ Prior to the start of the War, the most common compassionate ground for seeking casual leave among Indian soldiers was the 'house-fallen-down' story.²³⁹ According to Lt Col Johnstone, it was much better than the British equivalent of my 'grandmother-is-dead' story. He adds that grandmothers have been known to die successfully several times.²⁴⁰ Indian soldiers too started learning the habit of their British counterparts in availing the compassionate leaves during this War. The request for such leave could, however, be verified through the civil authorities of the concerned district if the commanding officer had some suspicion.²⁴¹

²³⁵ 'Monthly Intelligence Report', *The Chamar Regiment*, February 1943-October 1946, File No. Misc/4142/H, NAI; Reply by C.M. Trivedi, War Secretary, to Starred Question No. 1757, 10 April 1945, *LAD*.

²³⁶ 'Newsletter of 7 Indian Infantry Brigade', 23 June 1942, *4 Indian Division Paper*, May-August 1942, File No. 601/10439/H, HDMOD; Statement by the C-in-C in reply to Question No. 25, 2 August 1943, *CSD*.

²³⁷ Adjutant General Branch Letter No. B/78715/1/A.G./ (C.2) (Secret), 1 October 1941, *4th Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H, HDMOD.

²³⁸ 'Intelligence Summary', *War Diary of HQ 15 Corps- GS Branch*, File No. 601/188/WD/Part VII (Secret), HDMOD.

²³⁹ The houses in Indian villages were usually made up of unbaked bricks with thatched roof. These could fall anytime in the event of even a small storm and usually during rain.

²⁴⁰ Lt Col E. Johnstone, 'Ten Days in the Jhelum Hills', *The Indian Army Ordnance Corps Gazette*, vol. 23, No. 6, June 1945, pp. 195-200.

²⁴¹ Reply to Starred Question No. 17, 26 July 1943, *LAD*.

The Adjutant General empowered the Force Commanders overseas to use their discretion as to who among their soldiers was to be given leave, as per the merits of the case.²⁴² Married officers usually got the preference in leaves.²⁴³ Sometimes, a soldier did not get leave even for more than two years and remained away from his family. The Commander of the 4 Indian Division seemed apprehensive about the leave position of the troops in his Division. He attached a long unit-wise list of men of the Division who did not get leave for more than two years. He requested the General HQs, India, to carve out some plan to solve this urgent problem.²⁴⁴ Capt Verma's wife delivered a son, but Verma could see his child only when he was three years old.²⁴⁵ Sometimes a soldier was denied leave even for his own marriage. Flying Officer P.C. Lal was called back from leave in December 1941 just before two weeks of his scheduled marriage.²⁴⁶ The marriage had to be postponed. To facilitate the travel of soldiers fighting in South East Asia, Special Leave Trains were started in mid-1944. These trains ran from Assam to Punjab, Dehradun, Bombay and Madras.²⁴⁷ Many a time these, however, ran late or were cancelled, leaving the soldiers stranded at railway platforms.

Women and Indian soldiers

With the opening of the War front in SEA, there was a heavy flow of soldiers in Calcutta from various countries. Newspapers carried news that residents of some houses in Calcutta were being evicted from their houses for accommodating brothels for the military.²⁴⁸ Delhi too reported to have witnessed the growth of hotels at an alarming rate for use as brothels and gambling dens.²⁴⁹ General Hartley refused in the Council of State of any such arrangement by the Army. He, however, admitted that the Government of India was informed by the Provincial Government of Bengal that with the arrival of a large numbers of troops, brothels had sprung up in various localities in Calcutta. He said, there was no question of turning the residents out of

²⁴² Adjutant General Branch, Letter No. B/78715/1/A.G./ (C.2) (Secret), 1 October 1941, in *4th Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁴³ P.S. Bhagat's letter to Mohini on 6 January 1941 when he was in Sudan, in Thomas, *Lt Gen P.S. Bhagat*, p. 70.

²⁴⁴ 4 Indian Division Liaison Letter, 15 November 1941, *4th Indian Division in the Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H, HDMOD.

²⁴⁵ Verma, *To Serve with Honour*, p. 42. Verma got leave after more than three years.

²⁴⁶ Lal, *My Years with IAF*, p. 25.

²⁴⁷ *War Diary of 14th Army*, 1944, File No. 601/155/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁴⁸ *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 11 January 1943, p. 8.

²⁴⁹ Question No. 110, 10 March 1943, *CSD*.

their houses to make way for such establishments nor was any action initiated in this direction.²⁵⁰

As the soldiers were living away from their wives for long durations during the War and some were unmarried, some felt the need to meet their sexual needs. Soldiers of South Africa, when sent to leave centres at Ranchi and Calcutta, were reportedly in a desperate search for women. Indians, however, were not too obsessive in this regard,²⁵¹ but some did hunt for women. Some of them seemed to have had enjoyed sex with women when given leave to visit places like Alexandria and Cairo in the Middle East. Doctors checked both the men and prostitutes medically before and after sex.²⁵² Deputy Director Hygiene, recorded in January 1942 that about 45,000 Allied soldiers were visiting the brothels in Cairo every month. A brothel was also said to have been set up at the behest of the Army at Tripoli. Condoms, washing facilities and mercury ointment were provided to those who visited it.²⁵³ In an incident, three Indian soldiers of an Indian Brigade even brought a woman inside the camp area of the Brigade. The information somehow leaked out. All the three men along with the sentry on duty at gate were severely reprimanded for an 'act prejudicial to good order and military discipline'.²⁵⁴

The Intelligence Summary of August 1944 of the 14th Army reported that in South East Asia, Indian soldiers' search for women was the cause of some incidents.²⁵⁵ Some of them even visited red-light areas. Though such areas were declared out of bounds for all soldiers in the Unit Routine Orders, every now and then. Some ignored the orders and found their way to prostitutes. The Military Police kept an eye on the red- light areas and apprehended the soldier who happened to be there. In one incident two men of Sam Manekshaw's unit were nabbed by the Military

²⁵⁰ Reply to Question No. 61, 24 February 1943, *CSD*; Question No. 109, 10 March 1943, *CSD*; Question No. 110, 10 March 1943, *CSD*.

²⁵¹ Kaushik Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Indian Army during World War II', *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 73, No. 2, April 2009, pp. 497-529.

²⁵² Interview, *Sub Risal Singh*, 9 December 2008. Risal Singh claims to have seen this and some of his acquaintances visited such places.

²⁵³ Harrison, *Medicine and Victory*, pp. 104-5.

²⁵⁴ 'Daily Orders', 16 October 1944, *War Diary of 24 Indian Infantry Brigade*, File No. 601/316/WD/I (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁵⁵ 'Fourteenth Army Security Intelligence Summary', 1st to 31 August 1944, *War Diary of GS Branch, HQ 14th Army*, No. 601/156/WD/Pt XV-A (Secret), HDMOD.

Police from a red- light area in Burma and brought to the Battalion. Sam, being their Company Commander trialled them and punished one of the guilty soldiers.²⁵⁶

Indian officers, who were an educated lot, enjoyed the dance and company of the girls whenever they got a chance. In April 1941 in Malaya, many Indian officers had memorable evenings in the Hotel Cathay. They were entertained by “the prettiest girls of the Island wearing skirts with extra long slits.”²⁵⁷ About the same time when at Ipoh, the officers of 14 Punjab Regiment spent their evenings dining out in the town. They also used to visit dancing halls, hire dancing girls known as ‘Taxi Girls’ and danced with them.²⁵⁸ The military commanders, however, discouraged the practice of dancing with such girls or paid hostesses at public places in military uniform.²⁵⁹ Such recreation could also be enjoyed in the Western Desert. At leave station Khartoum in Sudan in February 1941, officers could go for dance and cabaret with girls at night. Capt Bhagat, when admitted in the Base Hospital, Khartoum, wrote to his fiancée Mohini in February 1941 that, “I usually go for a dance and cabaret at nights, but I do not feel like dancing at all. The girls here are so artificial that talking to them is a strain let alone dancing.”²⁶⁰ Capt Naravane and his colleagues passed through Tel Aviv enroute to Jerusalem, “their eyes enjoyed seeing the Sea of Galilee and shores of the sea with beautiful recreation areas with bathing beauties taking a sun bath on the shores of the lake.”²⁶¹

A few Indians had even developed relationships with the women in abroad. A company commander of 4/19 Hyderabad, was found living with his German friend in his jungle training camp in Malaya.²⁶² An Indian officer fell in love with an Italian woman when he was deployed at the southern Italian port city of Naples. The affair

²⁵⁶ Maj Gen Subhi Sood (ed.), *Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw* (Noida, SDS Publishers, 2006), pp. 15-6. However, after awarding punishment Manekshaw thought he has been too harsh to the soldier. He, therefore, called him again and asked him “tumhara Paisa vasool hua?”, (were you able to get your money’s worth). The soldier replied “No Sir, the CMP (Central Military Police) landed up before anything could happen”. Both Manekshaw and the soldier had a hearty laugh.

²⁵⁷ Brig Chandra B. Khanduri (ed.), *Thimayya: An Amazing Life* (New Delhi, Knowledge World, 2006), p. 60.

²⁵⁸ Kiani, *India’s Freedom Struggle*, p. 14.

²⁵⁹ ‘3 Corps Routine Order’, 20 June 1941, *War Diary of 3 Indian Corps*, File No. 601/207/WD/Part A (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁶⁰ Thomas, *Lt Gen P.S. Bhagat*, p. 84

²⁶¹ Naravane, *A Soldier’s Life*, p. 64.

²⁶² Khanduri, *Thimayya: An Amazing Life*, p.

culminated in marriage.²⁶³ An Indian Army NCO from Rohtak, Punjab (now Haryana), while fighting in France developed an affair with a French woman. He married her in September 1944 in a Church there.²⁶⁴ Another NCO of RIASC romanced with a girl in Cairo. Interestingly, the girl could not speak or understand any language except Arabic while the man knew only Urdu. However, they managed their affairs. While coming back to India in 1945, he married her and brought her to his home in Bareilly.²⁶⁵

Discipline

‘Discipline’ is basic to the men in uniform and sets them apart from the civilians. Military personnel was forbidden to speak or appear before the press, publish any material, take part in any political movement or demonstration, receive any gift from civilians, join any private employment, lend or borrow money and involve himself in dishonesty.²⁶⁶ He was bound to military rules for twenty-four hours. The military code gave immense power to seniors over their subordinates, and soldiers were not to forget the fact. Extra publicity was asked to be given to the sentences of some serious offences, especially related to the Indian soldiers.²⁶⁷ The regiment and formation war diaries and historical reports are full of such routine orders, which reminded soldiers of this fact. However, an institution may take thousand measures to keep its human power under discipline but man is bound to make mistakes and create nonsense. It though can be dwindled by strict discipline and a high level of motivation. Indian soldiers were also not an exception to this. Some of the indisciplinary activities during the War period were of a trivial nature and while others were just crimes. However, the military authorities took cognisance of the word ‘crime’ in armed forces in April

²⁶³ ‘Interview with Italian Woman Who Married an Indian Soldier’, <http://www.adnkronos.com/AK/English/CultureAndMedia/?id=1.0.140436016>, accessed on 12 July 2010. Indian Emergency Commissioned Officer Birender Lall developed an affair with an Italian woman when he was deployed in Italy during the War. He later married her. Lall joined the Indian Army in 1943.

²⁶⁴ ‘Jai Lal’, *Fauji Akhbar*, 17 July 1944, p. 5.

²⁶⁵ ‘I.O.R.’s Romance’, *Fauji Akhbar*, 25 May 1945, p. 12.

²⁶⁶ Regulations for the Army in India, 1937, reprint 1942, (Delhi, Manager of Publications, 1942), Chapter VII, Rules 331-40. Some of the work like publishing the material, appearing before press could be done but only after proper permission from the concerned military authority.

²⁶⁷ Court Martial- Publication of Findings and Sentences, AHQ Letter No. B/59602/2/A.G. 8, 4 March 1940, *Policy Compendium*, prepared by AG Branch, Amendment No. 4, 1943, Chapter 34, Section 2; Indian Army Order also instructed the military authorities to bring to the notice of all personnel about the court martial convened, the offence and also the sentence thereof. ‘Court Martial- Convening Order’, *Indian Army Order*, No. 343 of 1943.

1944 and supplemented it with the word 'military offence'. Orders were passed to refrain from using the word crime for normal offences in official documents.²⁶⁸

Incidence of crimes among the Indian troops increased rapidly with the outbreak of the War and the expansion of the armed forces. During the year 1938-39, the number of persons convicted by court martial under the Indian Army Act was 238. In 1939-40, the figure almost doubled. As more and more men joined the Indian Army the number of convictions increased until it reached its peak in 1944-45 to 15,120.²⁶⁹ According to the Statistical Review of Personnel between 1 October 1941 and 30 September 1945, among other offences, 2,116 cases of theft and 288 cases of murder were recorded against Indian officers and men.²⁷⁰ The spread of war also led to an unprecedented increase in the number and scale of Government contracts. This provided scope for fraud, bribery and corruption. By 1943, fraud and corruption in contracts had reached to alarming proportions and this led to the creation of a Special Investigation Branch (SIB).²⁷¹ Since its inception in September 1943 to 31 December 1945, the SIB dealt with 5,734 cases of corruption and arrested 6,453 persons, recovering property worth 28 million rupees.²⁷²

There were two kinds of Sheet Roll entries for punishment in the service document of a soldier. These were: Red entry and Black entry. Red entry punishment was usually awarded for serious offences while Black entry punishment was awarded for trivial nature of offences. A conviction by court martial, forfeiture of seniority of rank, severe reprimand, imprisonment, field punishment on active service, confinement to lines exceeding 14 days, forfeiture of Good Conduct Pay and also pay and Allowances, etc. were counted in Red entry while punishment of a trivial nature like field punishment, extra duties, confinement to line less than 14 days, etc. were counted in the Black entry.²⁷³

²⁶⁸ 'Discontinuance of Word Crime', *Indian Army Order*, No. 732 of 1944.

²⁶⁹ *Discipline*, a monograph prepared by Adjutant General Branch after the War, year n.d., p. 1, HDMOD.

²⁷⁰ *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vol. II, p. 112, vol. III, pp. 202-3 & vol. IV, pp. 204-14.

²⁷¹ *Discipline*, pp. 3-5. The Special Investigation Branch (SIB), which came into being in September 1943, worked in military organization and was a parallel to the CID of civil Police.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁷³ *Regulations for the Army in India*, 1937, reprint 1942 (Delhi, Manager of Publications, Delhi, 1942), Chapter VII, Rule 352.

Driving vehicles in a negligent manner, over-speeding, riding bicycles carelessly, loss of pay book and identity disc, negligence in loading rifles, etc., were the common offences committed by men of the 1/19 Hyderabad Regiment during their stay in Baghdad in the late 1941. Punishments for offences were usually seven days of field punishment or forfeiture of proficiency pay for three months. Usually, negligent driving and over-speeding were considered trivial offences and led to field punishment. But negligent handling of weapons was taken seriously and led to forfeiture of pay. Sometimes seemingly small mistakes also invited harsh punishments. For example, a mason failed to take masonry tools while doing the work of a mason at war front, was awarded forfeiture of proficiency pay.²⁷⁴ He was treated as a warrior coming to battle without his rifle. A clerk during deployment in the Middle East was given seven days 'confined to lines' as he "helped himself to a comrade's food without permission".²⁷⁵ However, a study of War Diaries and other records reveals that the most common charges framed against the Indian other rank were 'disobeying the lawful command of his superior' and 'an act prejudicial to good order and military discipline'. Mess waiters and cooks were more prone to the former charge while combatant soldiers framed more on the latter charge. The most common offence among the officers [ECO, ICO, KCIO and KCO] was drunkenness and it invited the punishment of a severe reprimand.²⁷⁶

Strict discipline was maintained when confronting the enemy on the front. Instructions were issued verbally and also in writing regarding the do's and the don'ts. The punishments mostly related to 'acts prejudicial to good order and military discipline'. These included sleeping during sentry duty, drawing water from an unauthorized place while on patrol duty and quitting the post without being properly relieved. Such negligence on the war front, trivial as it might seem, could lead to disaster and was therefore, severely punished.²⁷⁷ In February 1942, in Iraq, when a

²⁷⁴ 'Part II Orders', 29 November 1941 & 24 December 1941, *WD 1/19 Hyderabad Regiment*, File No. 601/5581/WD/Pt I (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁷⁵ 'Part II Order', 17 October 1941, *War Diary of HQ 2nd Echelon*, File No. 601/19/WD/Part I, HDMOD.

²⁷⁶ 'Discipline Officers', GHQ, No. B/57451/AG 8, 25 March 1941, *Policy Compendium*, Amendment List No. 4, 1943, compiled by A.G. Branch, GOI Press, Calcutta, 1943.

²⁷⁷ 'Part II Orders', 29 November 1941 & 24 December 1941, *WD 1/19 Hyderabad Regiment*, File No. 601/5581/WD/Pt I (Secret), HDMOD. During the war circumstances these are the grave offences, which may lead to a complete annihilation of the troops. For example Flt Lt W.A. Wilcox mentions the attack on the Japanese post by Chindits in Tseminyu, Nagaland, in early 1944 where the Japanese guard was sleeping making the way of attack easy for Chindits. Due to the sentry's slackness, many

sepoys failed to drain the radiator of an engine while going off from night duty, he was punished with 28 days rigorous imprisonment by the commanding officer.²⁷⁸

Being grossly insolent to the superior was taken seriously and severely punished. If such indiscipline was committed by a VCO, the severity of punishment increased and the offender could be court martialed, reduced in rank or even dismissed from service.²⁷⁹ An ICO or VCO would usually be punished with a forfeiture of seniority for promotion or reprimand or severe reprimand, depending upon the offence. An NCO was usually punished with the forfeiture of Good Service Pay and Good Conduct Pay and sometimes deprivation of the acting rank. The sepoys could be imprisoned, confined to lines, given field punishments and extra duties.²⁸⁰ Since, the Indian other ranks received a small pay, it was considered that a small amount of fine would also affect them. It was further viewed that the IORs morale was always affected by money troubles, the commanding officers were, therefore instructed that maximum fine in terms of money be seldom exercised while awarding punishment to IORs.²⁸¹ The superior in command could reduce any punishment awarded to an officer or men, or waive it off completely if he found it excess or illegal and not as per the existing rules.²⁸²

Serious offences, such as murder, rape and fraud, which in peace time were handed over to civil courts were now tried by a court martial.²⁸³ Incidentally, offences among the troops increased after the disbursement of pay for the month. In fact “after pay days outbreaks of crime and drunkenness were to be expected.”²⁸⁴ Similarly, after a battle when the Lines of Communication were not well organized, the rates of crimes like murders, rapes and lootings etc, increased.²⁸⁵ Cases of theft like selling

Japanese became casualty, only a few could run to save their lives and the post was captured. Wilcox thus reminds that sleeping on the post as “an unforgivable crime in any man’s army. Wilcox, *Chindit Column 76*, pp. 49-50.

²⁷⁸ ‘Part II Order’, 4 February 1942, *War Diary of 2 Echelon*, File No. 601/6/WD/part I (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁷⁹ ‘Part II Order’, 8 & 15 January 1942, *War Diary of 1/19 Hyderabad Regiment*, File No. 601/5581/WD/Pt I (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁸⁰ *Regulations for the Army in India*, 1937, corrected up to October 1944, reprinted in 1945, instruction 406.

²⁸¹ ‘Discipline: IORs’, *Indian Army Order*, No. 731 of 1944.

²⁸² *Regulations for the Army in India*, 1937, reprint 1945, instruction 408.

²⁸³ *Discipline*, p. 1.

²⁸⁴ Muggler, ‘Raising a Labour Battalion’, *JUSII*, vol. LXXII, No. 306, January 1942, pp. 80-3.

²⁸⁵ *Discipline*, p. 4. Fourteenth Army’s Intelligence Summary too points out that opportunities of crime at the Lines of Communication were greater than in the forward areas. ‘Fourteenth Army Security

petrol, however, had no specific time. Stealing petrol and selling it to civilians for money was the most common crime among Indian soldiers. The punishments usually were rigorous imprisonment for three years.²⁸⁶ But if this offence was committed by a commissioned officer, he was cashiered.²⁸⁷

The military personnel awarded with imprisonment for a few days were kept in confinement at Quarter Guards, while persons with imprisonment for more than 60 days could be transferred to the Indian Military Prison and Detention Barracks depending upon the merits of the case.²⁸⁸ The crime of murder was also not uncommon among Indian troops. The punishment for this crime was death usually by hanging and was implemented very fast.²⁸⁹ However, if death caused was unintentional and not because of some sort of revenge, feud, etc., but due to negligence like rash driving of vehicles, the punishment was restricted usually to one year imprisonment.²⁹⁰ The analysis of the records like War Diaries and Army Orders indicates that crimes like stealing army items and selling it to civilians for money was more among the corps like RIASC, IHC and IAOC while crimes like murder were more among the infantry troops.

Rules for indiscipline were similar in all the three services. But, the Indian Air Force dealt differently with the cases of indiscipline. When a sergeant of IAF refused to fly as an air gunner in Burma operations in February 1942, he was sent to another flight of the squadron and asked to act as a bearer to other senior NCOs, polish their shoes and run errands etc. Later he was also reduced in rank.²⁹¹

At times military vehicles carried civilians for money. A military truck carrying five civilians without any permission was caught by military police during a

Intelligence Summary', 1 to 30 September 1944, *War Diary of GS Branch, HQ 14th Army*, File No. 601/156/WD/Pt XV-A (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁸⁶ For example see 'Court Martials- Indian Army' in *Indian Army Orders*- No. 476 of 1943; 477 of 1943 & 560 of 1943, etc.

²⁸⁷ 'Court Martial- Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1634 of 1943.

²⁸⁸ 'Indian Military Prisons, Air Force Prisons and Detention Barracks', in *Indian Army Orders*, No. 1256 of 1944, 112 of 1945 and 337 of 1946. The behaviour of the prisoners at the Indian Military Prison was closely watched and reported to the Commandant quarterly. If there seemed to be improvement and it was considered that the man had come to the standard, he was sent back to unit even before the completion of the sentence awarded.

²⁸⁹ For example see 'Court martials-Indian Army, in *Indian Army Orders*- 1241 of 1943; 1287 of 1943 & 1372 of 1943, etc.

²⁹⁰ 'Court Martials- Indian Army', *Indian Army Orders*, No. 1950 of 1945 & 2005 of 1945.s

²⁹¹ Saigal, *Birth of an Air Force*, p. 132.

road check. The driver when tried for the offence, admitted having charged Rs 4 per person. He also admitted to have done so on many occasions. Authorities were apprehensive that some enemy agents could take lift in military transport and move along the military personnel to gather information in military areas.²⁹²

The cases of selling military provisions to civilians also came to light. A VCO and three IORs were arrested in the Imphal area for selling military rations and military clothing in bulk.²⁹³ Reports were also received that *Hasheesh* of *Ganja* leaves were being purchased from shopkeepers by some IORs in the Manipur State. As the smoking of such intoxicants adversely affected physical and mental efficiency, the State and civil authorities were asked to take severe action against any person selling it to the troops.²⁹⁴ Cases of stealing money were also reported and two Indian soldiers were charged for stealing Rs 7,600 and Rs 500, respectively, in Burma.²⁹⁵

During the War a number of cases of mutiny were reported. Central India Horse, believed to have been motivated by the Fifth Columnists, refused to embark for overseas duties in 1940.²⁹⁶ A Coast Artillery Battery of the Indian Artillery, composed of men from Bengal, mutinied in 1943.²⁹⁷ The Jat and Ahir companies of 4/19 Hyderabad Regiment mutinied because their company commander Capt Zahir was removed from the appointment by the CO in Malaya.²⁹⁸ Besides these mutinies, there were many mutinies in which a bunch of soldiers ranging from 3-10 personnel mutinied for different reasons. Indian Army Orders show a number of cases where Indian soldiers were charged for mutiny. The punishment for mutiny was severe. It was considered similar to be waging a war against the King. Besides dismissal from service, those accused of mutiny were transported for life and many a time were sentenced to death.²⁹⁹

²⁹² '4 Corps Security Intelligence Summary', 1-29 February 1944, *War Diary of HQ 4 Corps*, 'G' Branch, File No. 601/186/WD/ Part XXIII (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁹³ '4 Corps Intelligence Summary', 20 June 1943, *War Diary of HQ 4 Corps- G Branch*, No. 601/186/WD/Part XIV (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁹⁴ '4 Corps Security Intelligence Summary', 1-29 February 1944, *War Diary of HQ 4 Corps*, 'G' Branch, File No. 601/186/WD/ Part XXIII (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁹⁵ 'Fourteenth Army Security Intelligence Summary', 1 to 31 August 1944, *War Diary of GS Branch- HQ 14th Army*, File No. 601/156/WD/Pt XV-A (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁹⁶ Filose, *King George V's Own Central India Horse*, pp. 210-4.

²⁹⁷ 'Court Martial- Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 2019 of 1943; Willcox Committee Report, para 753.

²⁹⁸ Khsanduri, *Thimayya: An Amazing Life*, p. 62.

²⁹⁹ 'Court Martial-Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 766 of 1945.

Kaushik Roy while comparing the offences committed by soldiers in the India Command between July 1943 and August 1945, writes that IORs (including VCOs) were more disciplined than the BORs. But the ICOs were less disciplined than the British officers because their grievances centred around service issues like pay differences and racial discrimination.³⁰⁰ However, between November 1944 and January 1945 in the South East Asia Command, at least 11 British officers were tried, but no Indian officer was registered for the same. In the case of other ranks, more Indians were tried than the British by court martial during the same period.³⁰¹ But it has to be kept in mind that in the SEAC, there were more Indian other ranks than the BORs and more British officers than the Indian officers. Hence, the percentage of offences might be different. British soldiers were more prone to insubordination than the Indians while the latter were more prone to dishonesty and committed more number of crimes like murder. While East and West Africans deployed in this theatre of War, were more mutinous and violent to their superiors.³⁰²

The conflicts between the soldiers and civilians were not uncommon. The soldiers moving in groups many a time misbehaved with railway officials, vendors and co-passengers. They were reluctant to show the railway ticket or warrant to the railway officials on demand. Several times they gave false names and service particulars when caught travelling without ticket.³⁰³ They sometimes refused to pay the price for the items bought from a vendor or hawker. When such cases were reported to the unit commanders, disciplinary action was seldom initiated against them. There were also complaints that military personnel were not allowing the passengers to enter the general compartments, not reserved for the military personnel. The military authorities passed instructions to the soldiers not to involve in any dispute and be courteous,³⁰⁴ but they seemed not to pay much attention to these

³⁰⁰ Kaushik Roy, '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*, vol. 44, No. 6 (2010), pp. 1255-82. In India Command there were 70,000 soldiers guarding the North West Frontier and 130,000 troops on internal security duties.

³⁰¹ 'Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944, and January 1945', pp. 3 & 16, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA, Branch 'A'*, File No. 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 16, 21 & 22.

³⁰³ 'Discipline of Troops Travelling by Train', *Indian Army Orders*, No. 398 of 1944 & 207 of 1945.

³⁰⁴ 'Indiscipline of troops travelling by Train', *Indian Army Order*, No. 458 of 1943; *Indian Army Order*, No. 1670 of 1943.

instructions.³⁰⁵ This resulted in clashes between the soldiers and the railway employees and other civilians, intermittently. Fed up with such complaints, the military authorities passed an Order strictly instructing the Movement Control Staffs, Military Police and all military personnel travelling by trains that they would not refuse the entry of the civilians even in the compartments reserved for military passengers only.³⁰⁶

Sometimes severe clashes developed between a group of soldiers and civilians. In an incident, in September 1944, some soldiers of the Military Observation Corps molested a woman at Parvatodipeta (near Chicacole in the Madras Presidency). A severe clash followed between the villagers and the soldiers resulting in the death of two villagers. The matter was investigated by the local Civil and Military Police and the soldiers were handed over to the civil authority for trial.³⁰⁷

Desertion

Desertion in military parlance is the act of leaving the military without permission.³⁰⁸ Desertion has ever existed in professional armies but its intensity had been different in different circumstances. Before the Second World War, the strength of the Indian army was limited, and man management was of a high standard.³⁰⁹ The working and living conditions in the Army were liked by all. Recruitment from the so called martial classes, having long military traditions, further reduced the chances of desertion. Running away from unit in any condition was treated as a slur for relatives, caste and also the village. Desertion was considered as a cowardice act.³¹⁰ The deserter could neither command respect in his soldier dominated society nor could he

³⁰⁵ Statement of Incidents reported to GHQ regarding the misbehaviour of troops at Railway Stations, Starred Question No. 98, 12 November 1943, *LAD*; Harassment of Civilian Passengers by Military Men at Railway Stations, Starred Question No. 543, 17 November 1944, *LAD*; 'Discipline of Troops Travelling by Train', *Indian Army Order*, No. 207 of 1945.

³⁰⁶ 'Discipline - Troops Travelling by Rail', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1028 of 1945.

³⁰⁷ Question No. 107, 17 November 1944, *LAD*.

³⁰⁸ A soldier absented himself from duty for a period of 60 days without any sufficient reason was termed as a deserter. 'Indian Army Act 1911', Section 126, *Manual of Indian Military Law 1937*, corrected up to April 1942, (Delhi, Manager Publications, 1942); *Army Instructions (India)*, No. 220 of 1941.

³⁰⁹ *Desertion*, a monograph prepared by Adjutant General Branch after the War, year n.d., p. 1, HDMOD.

³¹⁰ A Dafedar of Lancer had three real brothers and also some cousins from his village in the same regiment. In total they were 15 from the same village. Besides many others of his community in the regiment also belonged to his nearby villages. Most of the men of his community in the regiment had family relationship with each other in their villages. *Interview, Dafedar (later Maj) Abhe Ram, 2nd Lancer, 2 December 2009.*

escape his apprehension. The problem of desertion before 1939 was thus almost non-existent in the Indian Army.³¹¹

The unprecedented expansion of the Indian armed forces during the War led to large scale desertions. It increased rapidly with each passing year.³¹² Between 1939 and 1945, a total of 360,045 desertions were counted.³¹³ The figure of desertion of the Indian army was highly alarming. In the British Army, which had more manpower than the Indian Army during the War, a total of 99,382 soldiers deserted from September 1939 to August 1945.³¹⁴

The rate of desertions in the Indian army varied in different arms. Surprisingly, the Armoured Corps and the Infantry, which bore the brunt of the offensive and had a comparatively tough life, saw lesser desertions. The Royal Indian Army Service Corps (RIASC) was more vulnerable. The men and recruits of the RIASC, Animal Transport, on an average deserted more than any other corps or service.³¹⁵ During this War, Indian Navy too lost large manpower due to desertion.³¹⁶

Desertion was, however, not confined to a particular service or regiment. But some regions had more desertions than the others. As Pathans of Trans Border region, at a point of time, deserted in such large numbers that the Government of India had to stop their further recruitment. During the First World War also, the Pathans deserted in large numbers and their recruitment had to be stopped.³¹⁷ Recruitment of some new classes in Sind and Baluchistan was also stopped when it was found that desertions almost equalled the enrolments.³¹⁸

There were many reasons for desertion from the armed forces. Family problems was the main reason for much of the desertions. But, for the recruits lack of

³¹¹ *Desertion*, p. 1.

³¹² *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vols. I-IV. The desertion table in the volumes of the Review show continued increase in the desertion numbers.

³¹³ A total of 268,539 Combatants and 91,503 Non-combatants deserted during the War. *Desertion*, p. 1

³¹⁴ David French, 'Discipline and the Death Penalty in the British Army in the War against Germany during the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 33, No. 4, 1998, pp. 531-45.

³¹⁵ *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vol. II, pp. 95-104; vol. III, pp. 178-95.

³¹⁶ *RIN Manpower Situation, 1939-45*, prepared by Staff Officer to Flag Officer Commanding, p. 7, File No. 601/7188/H, HDMOD. According to this Record, the Indian Navy recruited about 43,000 men during this War. Of these 18,500 were lost due to desertion and discharge. Desertions had a larger proportion than discharge.

³¹⁷ Letter of Governor General to Secretary of State, 27 October 1940, File No. F/831/H, HDMOD; Filose, *King George V's Own Central India Horse*, p. 50.

³¹⁸ *Recruitment for the Defence Services*, p. 46.

martial tradition, strict discipline, bad administration and the hard training contributed substantially to the desertions.³¹⁹ Recruits thus had a higher rate of desertions than the trained manpower in the Army. (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.1
Desertion of Trained Manpower, Recruits & Non-Combatants: Army

Year	Trained Manpower	Recruits	Non-Combatants
1943	31,983	51,527	18,227
1944	42,946	36,059	31,523
1945	37,170	20,225	31,686
1946	14,747	3,007	11,529

(Source: Compiled from *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vols. I-IV)

In the Navy too, many recruits found it difficult to adjust to the tough routine of the training establishment. In one instance when naval training establishment could not accommodate a large number of recruits, a bungalow at Varsova near Bombay was converted into a temporary lodge as emergency measure in early 1943. On the outbreak of the monsoons, congested conditions under which recruits were forced to live and work, resulted in an alarming rise in desertions.³²⁰ The Indian Air Force also suffered a high rate of desertions at the training centres. According to Harjinder Singh (later AVM) “about 30% of recruits deserted within one month of training.” The rough tent life, harsh treatment of BOR instructors and false promises by recruiting officers were the main causes of desertions by the IAF recruits.³²¹ According to the Willcox Committee, when a recruit joined the Army, his first contact with the military life started with the Recruit Reception Centre or the Recruitment Station. But the unsuitability of these centres led to a number of desertion of the recruits.³²²

The rate of desertion was also linked with the intensity and circumstances of the War. When the morale was low in 1943, the rate of desertion was high but in 1944 when the tide of War turned in favour of the Allies, the situation changed. In 1945, it

³¹⁹ Adjutant General was apprehensive of the large desertion rate among the recruits of the Army. He therefore wrote letters to all training centres of the Army to look into the matter for preventive measures. Letter from Adjutant General to All Training Units, Centres and Depots, Letter No. 2833/A.G.- 2 (a-1) dated 16 November 1942, *Recruiting for the Defence Services in India*, Appendix-I.

³²⁰ *RIN Manpower Situation, 1939- 45*, File No. 601/7188/H, HDMOD.

³²¹ Saigal, *Birth of an Air Force*, p. 170-2. Harjinder Singh was President of the Recruits Training Centre during the later part of the War.

³²² Willcox Committee Report, para 106.

was reduced gradually and in 1946 desertions came down drastically.³²³ Linking low morale with desertion, Gen Slim writes that in 1943 “unbroken records of defeat [in Burma] had brought the morale in large sections of army to a dangerously low ebb.... In September 1943 there was depressingly high incidence of desertions from drafts moving up the line of communication.”³²⁴

There were various other reasons for desertions. The Sikhs of Punjab deserted because they feared that in their absence, the Muslims of the area would occupy their property and harass their families. Sometimes better employment opportunity in civil life prompted desertions. Assamese and Bengalis were recruited in the RIASC (MT) in good numbers in 1943. But many of them deserted in large numbers after completion of their driving training because employment opportunities for drivers were available in Assam on better terms. Owing to this, the recruitment of these people had to be stopped in July 1944.³²⁵ A large number of Hostility Only (HO) ratings of the Royal Indian Navy deserted to earn lucrative pay in merchant shipping.³²⁶

Desertions in some cases were due to the fear of the War. Naturally many desertions took place when units got orders to leave the country for the battle-field.³²⁷ A sepoy of the Workshop Branch deserted after inoculation when his unit was preparing to embark for overseas.³²⁸ The Indian Army Orders has numbers of such occurrences where the men deserted the unit when they were ordered to embark for overseas.³²⁹ About 10 soldiers of an Indian battalion deserted from the Secunderabad Railway Station when their unit was moving to Bombay for embarkation for overseas. The deserters pleaded homesickness to save themselves from punishment, in such

³²³ *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, . II, pp. 95-104, vol. III, pp. 178-95, vol. IV, pp. 174-203. Also see Table 1.1 of this Chapter.

³²⁴ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 180-1. Statistical reports too support Slim’s version. According to Statistical Review, desertions among the trained men power in September 1943 was 3,163, which was much higher than any previous months figure of 1943. *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vol. II, pp. 106-7.

³²⁵ ‘RIASC (MT) Expansion’, *Expansion of Armed Forces, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9056/H, HDMOD.

³²⁶ During the War 9,000 HO ratings were recruited in the Navy. Over 1,800 deserted. The desertions occurred mainly at times when Merchant service rates of pay increased. *RIN Manpower Situation, 1939-45*, p. 20, File No. 601/7188/H, HDMOD.

³²⁷ Army HQs Letter No. AHQ No. B/53639/II/A.G. 8, 20 October 1939, *Policy Compendium*, compiled by AG’s Branch, (Calcutta, GOI Press, 1941).

³²⁸ ‘Summary of Events’, November 1942, *War Diary of 25 Indian Division*, File No. 601/269/WD/part I, HDMOD.

³²⁹ For example see ‘Court martials- Indian Army’, in *Indian Army Orders*, No. 448 of 1943 & 816 of 1943.

cases.³³⁰ However, in many cases the thought of separation for a long period from family and friends was the reason. The CO of 5 Sikh suspected that the love for home could prompt the soldiers to desert when the battalion was moving through Punjab, the home of the soldiers, for overseas.³³¹ Even the British soldiers deserted from the ship which was embarked from England to join the 8th Army. According to Crawford their desire to be present on land again led them to desert.³³² The reward for recruitment led some men to make desertions a business. They made money by repeatedly deserting and enrolling under different names. False promises made by the recruiting staff, poor man management and lower standards of discipline, particularly in newly raised units, aggravated the problem of desertions.³³³

In some cases caste prejudices made the soldiers to desert. In the Animal branch of the RIASC, men were expected to tend to the mules. Besides feeding and bathing the animal, they had to dispose their excreta with hands. Some soldiers considered the work below dignity for their caste.³³⁴ Sometimes love affairs also caused desertions from the unit. A sepoy of the Chamar Regiment deserted his company when it was moved from Myingyen to rejoin the Battalion at Rangoon. The sepoy was in love with a woman in Myingyen and, therefore, deserted the regiment to live with her.³³⁵ The desertions, however, were comparatively very low when units were deployed in foreign lands. Men, when overseas, had no knowledge of the country and the way to reach their homes, they therefore rarely deserted from there.

The Indian Army Act provided for some strict measures to deal with desertions. It read “any person subject to this Act [Indian Army Act] who deserts or attempts to desert the service shall on conviction by court martial, be punished with death, or with such less punishment as in this Act mentioned.”³³⁶ The person who harboured the deserter was also liable to severe punishment. It was the responsibility

³³⁰ *Interview, a Second World War deserter.* (The identity of the soldier is kept reserved to prevent embarrassment to him).

³³¹ Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty*, p. 88.

³³² Crawford, *As Narrated*, p. 19. Some British soldiers deserted from a ship in which Crawford was moving from England to join the 8th Army in August 1941.

³³³ *Desertion*, p. 3.

³³⁴ ‘RIASC (MT) Expansion’, *Expansion of Armed Forces, 1939-45*, File No. 601/9056/H, HDMOD.

³³⁵ *Monthly Security Intelligence Report*, 12 September 1946, *Misc/4142/H*, NAI.

³³⁶ ‘Indian Army Act (Act VIII of 1911)’, Section 29, *Manual of Indian Military Law*, 1937, corrected up to April 1942, (New Delhi, Manager of Publications, 1942).

of the Unit, to which the soldier was posted, to inform the local police of the area to apprehend the deserter.³³⁷

The colonial rulers of India, the British, however abolished the death penalty for desertions in their own army in 1930. Hence, no British soldier was executed for desertions during the Second World War. The sentence for the desertion in the British army was three to five years of imprisonment. The military commanders of the British army, especially in 1941-42 when desertions were on the rise in their army, pleaded strongly for reintroduction of the death penalty at least during the War period. They also added that many coward soldiers preferred the comforts of the prison as a sentence for desertion than the fatigue and the dangers of War. Such internees claimed to have feelings that after the government would grant a general amnesty, they would be released. But the political leadership of Britain feared that legislation for death penalty for desertions if brought in the Parliament at that critical juncture, it would offer great scope for enemy propaganda.³³⁸ Thus, even after the provision of death penalty for desertions in the Indian Army Act, it was rarely exercised unless it was coupled with crimes like murder, betrayal, etc.

The punishment for desertion differed from case to case. It depended on whether the deserter was a recruit, or had deserted from active war zones, or accompanied service arms and also the circumstances of the desertion. In some cases, however, severe disciplinary action was initiated against the deserters. When three men of 8/6 Rajputana Rifles deserted, they were tried by court martial in July 1942 and awarded 12 months rigorous imprisonment followed by dismissal from service.³³⁹ Similarly, when two sepoy of the Chamar Regiment deserted in September 1943, they were convicted by a summary court martial. Disciplinary action was also initiated against the guard commander and the sentries who were on duty at the time of the desertion.³⁴⁰

The punishment for desertions was more severe if a soldier deserted to avoid war service, deserted with weapons or deserted to join the enemy to wage a war

³³⁷ *Regulations for the Army in India*, 1937, reprint 1945, rule 438.

³³⁸ David French, 'Discipline and the Death Penalty in the British Army in the War against Germany during the Second World War', pp. 531-45.

³³⁹ 'Summary of Events', July 1942, *War Diary of 8/6 Rajputana Rifles*, File No. 601/5338/WD (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁴⁰ *Monthly Intelligence Report*, 13 October 1943, *Misc/4142/H*, NAI.

against the King. A sepoy of 11 Sikh Regiment was awarded 14 years of rigorous imprisonment by a General Court Martial when he deserted to avoid war service in Baghdad in 1941.³⁴¹ A sepoy of the Frontier Force Regiment too was awarded 14 years rigorous imprisonment in 1942 when he deserted with service weapons from the train when his unit was on its way for embarkation to overseas for the War.³⁴² A sepoy of the Baluch Regiment was awarded the punishment 'transportation for life' in April 1943 for the offence of desertion coupled with theft.³⁴³ A Naik of Burma Rifles was sentenced to death in August 1943 as he deserted twice from his unit.³⁴⁴ Similarly two Muslim sepoys of 4/8 Punjab Regiment on guard duty in Indonesia in 1946, deserted with their weapons to join the Indonesian Army. They were awarded death punishment in absentia.³⁴⁵ If a soldier realized that his desertion was wrong and rejoined the unit of his own, his punishment was reduced. A havildar of 2 Echelon in Iraq, who had deserted in June 1942, rejoined his unit after three months in September. His desertion was treated as absence without leave by the military court and was awarded six months rigorous imprisonment only.³⁴⁶

The implementation of the provisions of the policies, however, seem to have been in some cases only. In most ordinary cases of desertions, the military authorities neither had too much time nor interest to hold the deserters. They, however, followed the policy guidelines and took up the matter to verify the veracity of the statement of the deserters. But they rarely had the will, mechanism and the interest in such uninterested persons.³⁴⁷ It is proved by the fact that only about a quarter of the deserters could only be restored to the Army. (See Table 2.2).

³⁴¹ 'Court Martial-Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 2177 of 1941.

³⁴² 'Court Martial-Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 448 of 1943.

³⁴³ 'Court Martial-Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1672 of 1943.

³⁴⁴ 'Court Martial-Indian Army', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1862 of 1943.

³⁴⁵ Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, pp. 73-5. According to Sinha, these men responded to the call of Islam by the Indonesian Army.

³⁴⁶ *War Diary of 2 Echelon in Iraq*, File No. 601/6/WD, part I, HDMOD.

³⁴⁷ *Interview, two Second World War deserters*. They deserted in separate incidents. Both were caught by the authorities. When apprehended and tried, they pleaded homesickness and some tragedy at home. This was enquired and after some time, they along with many others were allowed to go home. One of them even again joined the Army after a year.

Table 2.2
Desertion and Restoration: Year Wise

Year	Combatants		Non- Combatants	
	Deserter	Restored	Deserter	Restored
1942	51,092	5,447	11,819	1,319
1943	81,257	17,321	19,250	3,450
1944	80,897	17,428	31,809	5,937
1945	58,217	16,473	32,879	6,682

(Source: Compiled from the *Statistical Review*, vols. II, III & IV)

As far the impact of desertions on the armed forces is concerned, it made the authorities to go for recruitment again and again. The training and experience imparted on the mustered deserted soldiers could not be compensated by any means. Desertion also affected the fighting spirit of fellow soldiers. If the number of desertions was high in a particular unit, it compromised the operational capability of the unit. Apprehending deserters and the trial and punishment process was again a time consuming and expensive exercise. Further, the deserters on reaching their villages, pleaded with the eligible youths and their parents against joining the Army.³⁴⁸ RIN Manpower Review too records that “The desertion readily produced hostile and subversive propaganda and had an adverse effect on the recruitment.”³⁴⁹

The Government adopted some measures to reduce the figure of desertions. Policies were framed to introduce rewards for apprehending a deserter.³⁵⁰ In 1942, an Amnesty Scheme was introduced under which deserters who were unattested recruits were given general pardon.³⁵¹ The Adjutant General instructed the commanding officers of the training units and depots to be lenient on deserter recruits who came back for training on their own. He desired that a letter should be written to the parents of recruits about the desertion. If a parent brought the recruit to the training centre, he should be treated with especial courtesy, thanked personally by the commanding officer and assured that no punishment would be given to the recruit. Orders were passed that such parents/relatives who brought back the recruit deserter would be

³⁴⁸Interview, *Subedar Risal Singh*, 9 December 2008; *Interviews, two Second World War Deserters*, 9 December 2008. Adjutant General Branch too was apprehensive about the ill effect of desertions on potential recruits. GHQ No. B/57081/A.G. 2 (a), 25 September 1940, *Policy Compendium*, AG’s Branch, (Calcutta, GOI Press, 1941).

³⁴⁹*RIN Manpower Situation, 1939-45*, File No. 601/7188/H, HDMOD.

³⁵⁰ ‘Reward for the apprehension of Deserters’, *Army Instructions (India)* No. 70 of 1941.

³⁵¹ *Desertion*, p. 2.

given free conveyance to their home. The Adjutant General also recommended that VCOs and NCOs be personally made responsible for the incidence of desertions in their commands. The system of reward or censure to them could further reduce the cases of desertions.³⁵² This policy did influence some parents. In one case when a person deserted, his father brought him back to the training centre. The soldier thus stayed in the service.³⁵³

To mitigate the rate of desertions of the recruits, commanding officers of the training battalions were instructed to treat the new recruits lightly for 7-10 days when they report to the training establishment. They were to be given *bara khana*, taken out for sight-seeing, amusement, *tamashas*, cinemas, dances, PT display, water gymkhana, etc. The vaccination and inoculation was to be postponed for some days.³⁵⁴

In 1943, when the rate of desertion broke all previous records, 'Deserter Recovery Scheme' was launched. The deserters who had under four months of service were classified as harmless and ignorant. A pardon was granted them provided their conduct was satisfactory after surrender. Village officials were advised to check the Leave Passes of the soldiers on leave and encourage them to join their units immediately if they had overstayed or had deserted. Going further, the name of the persons sponsoring the recruit was mentioned in the enrolment form of the recruit.³⁵⁵ This helped in tracing the deserter. An apprehension reward of Rs 5 for an ordinary deserter and Rs 25 for the armed deserter was also sanctioned. Further, civil and military police undertook combined drives in the areas where large numbers of deserters were suspected to be hiding.³⁵⁶ If a person was found to be harbouring a deserter, he was taken to task and if he was a government pensioner, rules were framed to stop his pension.³⁵⁷

³⁵² Letter from Adjutant General to All Training Units, Centres and Depots, Letter No. 2833/A.G.- 2 (a-1), 16 November 1942, *Recruiting for the Defence Services in India*, Appendix- I; *Proceedings of Conference at General Headquarters on 19th, 20th and 21st March 1942*, p. 15, File No. 601/7016/H, HDMOD; 'Free Conveyance of Parents who brings back Deserters;', in *Indian Army Orders*, No. 241 of 1944 & 2214 of 1945.

³⁵³ *Interview, Naib Subedar Sri Ram*, 19 May 2012. According to Sri Ram, the deserter was the son of a Numberdar of his village. The Numberdar personally took the deserter soon to his unit.

³⁵⁴ Letter from Adjutant General to All Training Units, Centres and Depots, Letter No. 2833/A.G.- 2 (a-1), 16 November 1942, *Recruiting for the Defence Services in India*, Appendix- I.

³⁵⁵ 'Prevention of Fraudulent Enlistment', *Indian Army Order*, No. 633 of 1944.

³⁵⁶ *Desertion*, p. 2.

³⁵⁷ *Indian Army Order*, No. 1683 of 1943.

Despite all these measures success in apprehending deserters was not encouraging. At the end of the War, many thousand of deserters were still at large and it presented a formidable problem for regimental centres.³⁵⁸ To regularize the large number of cases of desertions, the Commander-in-Chief dismissed all the deserters from service (except those who deserted with arms or to avoid active service) who had deserted before 1 April 1946, and were still absent. The arrest warrant issued by the police against the deserters were thus cancelled.³⁵⁹

Diseases

A high standard of health and a low incidence of sickness were considered to be important signs of efficiency in the military service. The commander of each formation was responsible for the health of his troops and for taking necessary measures for the prevention and mitigation of disease.³⁶⁰ But owing to lack of resources, sanitary material, medical facility and difficult terrain, the measures failed. Troops suffered from many health problems besides war injuries.

Dysentery and 'Desert Sores' were common in the deserts of the Middle East.³⁶¹ Soldiers deployed in East Africa were more prone to yellow fever.³⁶² Malaria, diarrhoea, dysentery, jaundice, Singapore Ear and Foot and skin Infections were more common in South East Asia and the Far East. 'Infective Jaundice' was a disease spread by a germ found in the urine of infected rats, which contaminated food, soil and water.³⁶³ Yarkan jaundice was considered more dreadful. It infected the Army at Malaya more often. This too spread through rats that contaminated the water of ponds and rivers and infected the soldiers when they used this water for drinking and bathing. The Indian Division HQs at Malaya, therefore, instructed all its units and formations to keep all the ponds and rivers out of bounds for all ranks to stop this disease from spreading.³⁶⁴ The Singapore Ear was caused by an infection of the skin

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

³⁵⁹ *Fauji Akhbar*, 8 March 1947, p. 10.

³⁶⁰ *Field Service Pocket Book: Medical Services* (London, His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1939), p. 5.

³⁶¹ '4th Indian Division News Letter', 9 October 1940, *4 Indian Division in Middle East*, File No. 601/10293/H, HDMOD.

³⁶² 'Yellow Fever', *Indian Army Order*, No. 687 of 1943.

³⁶³ 'Routine Order', 1941, *War Diary of 'A' Branch- 9th Indian Division*, File No. 601/228/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD; *History of 4/19 Hyderabad Regiment: The battle of Slim*, a brief written by Lt Col Clough, File No. 601/707/H, HDMOD.

³⁶⁴ 'Battalion Routine Order', 16 August 1941, *War Diary of 1/14 Punjab Regiment*, File No. 601/5495/WD (Secret), HDMOD.

sodden with moisture and Singapore Foot was a fungus infection of the foot caused by infected mats, duck-boards and wet floors.³⁶⁵ Dysentery and diarrhoea spread due to unhygienic living conditions and took 6-18 per cent toll of the total sick casualties in South East Asia. East Africans suffered more due to dysentery and diarrhoea in the region than any other troops. Soldiers were asked to maintain a very high standard of hygiene and sanitation to avoid such diseases.³⁶⁶ Besides, cases of mental illness were also in significant numbers. Sometimes, war fatigue and depression were so troublesome that some soldiers became very mentally ill.³⁶⁷

Deficiency in manpower caused by malaria posed a grave problem for the Army in South East Asia. It took an average 23.5 days to treat an Indian soldier suffering from Malaria.³⁶⁸ Routine Orders of almost every unit and formation advised the men on taking precautions like using mosquito net, anti-malaria cream, full sleeved shirts, long trousers, etc.³⁶⁹ Still, the effective strength of units came down when rains started in 1942 and the disease spread. The Japanese attack further affected the administrative and medical set-up. Besides, men also suffered from prolonged strain, fatigue and privations.³⁷⁰ Even at hospital in places like Ranchi where troops arrived by the summer of 1942, the sick took shelter in the verandas of hospitals and sometimes under trees awaiting admission. Some patients died in the squalid discomfort of these places.³⁷¹

The 1/11 Sikh of 17 Indian Division suffered a lot in 1942 in Burma when a large number of its men contracted malaria and diarrhoea. Most of them were evacuated to the hospital, while many were sent on leave.³⁷² The Division itself fell in the grip of malaria and 25 per cent of its all ranks were afflicted by the disease.³⁷³ Garhwal Rifles, deployed in North East India in the early 1943, also records the

³⁶⁵ 'Routine Order', 1941, *War Diary of 'A' Branch, 9th Indian Division*, File No. 601/228/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ 'Tracing of Indian Army Personnel: A Notice', in *Indian Army Orders*, 1945.

³⁶⁸ 'Utilisation of Hospitals', 1944-45, *Report of Operational Research Group: HQ 14th Army*, pp. 11-2. In July 1943, a Research Directorate was formed. An Operational Research Group was added to it in September. The Group was tasked to examine the lessons of the War after study and analysis.

³⁶⁹ For example- 'Routine Orders', 1941, *War Diary of 'A' Branch- 9th Indian Division*, File No. 601/228/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD; 'Routine Order', 16 August 1941, *War Diary of 1/14 Punjab Regiment*, No. 601/5495/WD (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁷⁰ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 34.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

³⁷² Lt Col P.G. Bamford, *1st King George V's Own Battalion*, p. 93.

³⁷³ *History of 17 Indian Division*, p. 22.

growing incidence of malaria. Unfortunately, neither mepacrine nor quinine was available and several deaths occurred from a cerebral type of this disease.³⁷⁴ Lack of medical facilities further aggravated the situation. It is notable that the army expanded many fold in SEA while medical services and supplies grew scantier. Efforts were made to educate the troops through pamphlets, lectures and demonstrations on Malaria.³⁷⁵ The Malaria Forward Treatment Units were raised for preventive measures as well as fast treatment of the cases.³⁷⁶ Steps were also initiated to train the soldiers in jungle warfare and also impart them training in preventive health measures. Still, in South East Asia, for every battle casualty there were 120 sick from tropical diseases and in most cases suffering from malaria in the monsoon of 1943.³⁷⁷

Slim felt that it was no less the duty of unit commanders to look after the discipline of their soldiers as a preventive health measures. As a measure against malaria, mepacrine was compulsorily administered to each man twice a day for three days in a week. Slim was of the view that there was not much use of medical professionals if the daily dose of mepacrine was not taken by the troops. Following preventive health measures strictly, he even sacked three commanders who were found to have not been taking mepacrine doses. This made the rest understand what was to be done.³⁷⁸ A Special Army Order was also brought out advising the procedure and intake of Mepacrine in Units posted malaria-infested zones. It fixed the responsibility on the commanding officers to detail an officer to take a parade daily after the meal in the evening to ensure that every soldier was taking his dose of mepacrine. According to the procedure, each soldier in the mepacrine parade would take the tablet in his mouth and swallow it with water and shout his name confirming he had taken his dose. The men on guard or other duty were also to take this medicine at their respective posts. The dose of mepacrine was to start 14 days before the units

³⁷⁴ Deedes, *The Royal Garhwal Rifles, vol. II*, p. 122.

³⁷⁵ *Quarterly Liaison Letter from CGS to CIGS*, 1942, File No. 601/7446/H, HDMOD.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Though Anti-Malaria Units were started raising in July 1940 but the pace of the raising such units was very slow until the Japanese attack and only six units were raised till December 1941. With the Japanese attack, Anti-Malaria Units got momentum and by the end of 1942, further 21 more such units were raised. With the expansion of forces further, 53 Anti-Malaria Units were added in 1943. *Statistical Review of Personnel: Army of India*, vol. I, p. 86 & vol. II, p. 188-9.

³⁷⁷ Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten* (New York, Harper & Row, 1985), p. 251.

³⁷⁸ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 180. Rules were framed, which provided disciplinary action against the commanding officer of the units who failed to check the control of malaria in their units. 'Malaria Control', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 53 of 1945.

were to move to malaria area and 28 days after it moved back to non-malaria zone or termination of the transmission season.³⁷⁹

As to the effect of the strict rules, it can be seen in a report on the health of the 26 Indian Division. The Division, which came under Slim's 14th Army, was deployed in Arakan for operations. It had 4,212 cases of malaria between May and August 1944. The Division Commander ensured the administration of the mepacrine doses to all men and officers in parades before dusk and issued necessary directives in October 1944 in this regard. Strict ant-malaria drills were followed by all units of the Division. The cases of malaria, which were 1,289 in October, sharply declined and came down to 260 in November and 104 in December. By April 1945, the monthly rate of malaria cases came down to 72.³⁸⁰ The effect of measures largely contributed to the declining rate, but it is also to be seen that December to April was not the malaria season. Malaria spread more in rainy season. Hence, non-malaria season was also a big factor in reducing the figure. Further, the discovery of D.D.T. (dichloro diphenyloroe thane) and its extensive use by the forces in South East Asia in the second half of the War, also reduced the number of malaria cases considerably.³⁸¹

However, summing up, 30-40 per cent of the sick casualties were caused by malaria in the South East Asia theatre of War during 1944-45. The gravity could be visualized by the fact that 30 per cent of the officers' beds, 40 per cent of the BORs beds and 45 per cent of IORs beds in hospitals in the South East Asia were occupied by malaria cases. According to a report, more casualties were caused by malaria than war in the 14th Army. Further, the patients of malaria occupied more beds in the hospitals than the injured in the battles.³⁸² During 1944-45, 0.21 per cent of the total death casualties of Indian troops in SEA was due to malaria. The BORs though had less cases of the malaria sickness but more death casualties because of this disease than the IORs. A Total of 0.31 per cent British soldiers died due to malaria.³⁸³ The

³⁷⁹ 'Suppressive Treatment of Malaria by Mepacrine', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 17 of 1945.

³⁸⁰ 'Malaria Control- 26 Indian Division'. *Fauji Akhbar*, 7 August 1945, p. 6.

³⁸¹ 'Health of the Army', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 15 of 1946. D.D.T. was discovered in 1939 by two Swiss Chemists, Dr Paul Langer and Dr Paul Muller. It took some time to reach this insecticide in the War zones.

³⁸² Utilisation of Hospitals, 1944-45, *Report of the Operational Research Group, HQ 14th Army*, pp. 9-10; Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 161. According to Ziegler, in 1943, the malaria rate was 84 per cent of the Army strength in South East Asia, it fell to 13 per cent by 1945. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 251.

³⁸³ Manpower Wastages, Part II.

infantry suffered more from malaria because of its deployment in jungle, patrolling activities and trench life.³⁸⁴

Venereal Disease

The name of Venereal Disease (henceforth VD) has been proverbially associated with armies. VD spreads mainly due to sexual contacts with the infected person. During the War the spread of VD was natural. The soldiers usually stayed away from their wives for long periods and some visited prostitutes for sex. An upsurge of the disease was seen at its peak during the years of the War. During the Second World War, the cases of VD rose with speed due to the mobility of the armies. In the Indian Army the lowest pre-War rate of 7.5 per thousand went up to 49.8 per thousand in 1943. Throughout the war, the incidence of the disease remained above 40 per thousand. With the end of hostilities it again started sliding down and was 46.6 in 1946.³⁸⁵ With the demobilisation of soldiers, the incidence of the disease rapidly declined and reached to 24 per thousand in 1949.³⁸⁶ Incidentally, the reports of Operational Research Group on the 14th Army fighting in SEA shows that the spread of VD was more among Indian troops than the British. The East African troops, however, still had more percentage than the British and Indian troops.³⁸⁷

The cases of VD usually increased when unit authorities became lenient and soldiers were frequently left to visit outside locality in civil areas, markets, etc. The 9th Indian Infantry Division when it embarked for overseas in March 1941, 20 cases of VD broke out on board the ship. It was considered that soldiers had contracted the disease during their stay in Secunderabad prior to the departure.³⁸⁸ The 25 Indian Infantry Brigade posted at Basra in the mid-1941 had many cases of VD. At one time in July more than five patients of the Brigade were admitted in the hospital because

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, section I.

³⁸⁵ *Annual Report on Health of Army in India*, 1960, compiled by Army Statistical Organisation, Army HQs, (New Delhi, 1963), p. 24. Operational Research Group on medical conditions of the 14th Army too reported almost similar percentage (it reported 5 per cent VD of the total sick cases) of VD among Indian soldiers within the 14th Army. 'Utilisation of Hospitals', 1944-45, *Report of Operational Research Group, HQ 14th Army*.

³⁸⁶ *Annual Report on Health of Army in India*, p. 24. VD among the British troops in the Middle East per thousand was 39 in 1939, 34 in 1940, 40 in 1941, 26 in 1942, 16 in 1943, 16 in 1944 and 24 in 1945. Harrison, *Medicine and Victory*, p. 102.

³⁸⁷ Utilisation of Hospitals, 1944-45, Appendix A, *Report of the Operational Research Group, HQ 14th Army*.

³⁸⁸ *War Diary of 9 Infantry Division*, March 1941, File No. 601/227/WD Part A, HDMOD.

they had contracted venereal disease.³⁸⁹ VD accounted at a large scale among the British and Indian troops of the 4 Indian Division in the Middle East. The Division approached the medical authorities for some measure to reduce the number of cases.³⁹⁰ The rate of infection of VD among the British soldiers can be linked to the infidelity of their fiancées and wives. When the incidence of such infidelities came to light, the cases of venereal disease increased in the unit.³⁹¹

At times soldiers were cautioned through routine orders and lectures advising them not to visit prostitutes. Even different routine orders declared the red light areas of the city nearby out of bounds for the soldiers. A routine order of 9 Indian Division deployed in Malaya in 1941 reads: “venereal disease is wide-spread among prostitutes in Malaya. All ranks are warned of the probability of infection.”³⁹² The order further instructed the unit authorities for carrying out fortnightly check of the soldiers to combat the disease. Similarly, when an increasing number of cases of venereal diseases were known in the brothels of Cairo, these were placed out of bounds for a period of one month for all ranks.³⁹³ The official version might strictly prohibit the soldiers from going to prostitutes, the authorities, however knew that many soldiers would not follow this. Therefore, as a preventive measure, condoms and prophylaxis were facilitated especially to British soldiers even since the start of the War. Further, there were curious queries from the British youth joining the armed forces about the best prophylaxis to prevent VD during the sexual intercourse.³⁹⁴ They followed the theme ‘use prophylaxis, defeat the Axis’.³⁹⁵ British men indeed were more educated than the Indians and their modern society facilitated them to be aware and adopt such preventive measures. They, therefore, used the prophylaxis during the sexual intercourse with a prostitute or other woman while in service during the War. On the other hand, the Indian youth coming from conservative families where sex out of

³⁸⁹ ‘Daily Orders’, 26 July 1941, *War Diary of 25 Indian Infantry Brigade*, File No. 601/317/WD/A-1, HDMOD.

³⁹⁰ ‘7 Indian Brigade Newsletter’, 23 June 1942, *4 Indian Division Papers*, May-Aug 1942, File No. 601/10439/H, HDMOD.

³⁹¹ ‘Report on the Morale of British, Indian, and Colonial Troops of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, for the Months of November, December 1944, and January 1945’, p. 10, *War Diary of HQ ALF SEA, Branch ‘A’*, File No. 601/80/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁹² ‘Routine Order’, 1941, *War Diary of ‘A’ Branch- 9th Indian Division*, File No. 601/228/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁹³ ‘Summary of Events’, 2 February 1942, *War Diary of GHQ, 2 Echelon*, File No. 601/1/WD, part I (Secret), HDMOD.

³⁹⁴ Harrison, *Medicine and Victory*, pp. 102-4.

³⁹⁵ Yasmin Khan, ‘Sex in an Imperial War Zone: Transnational Encounters in Second World War India’, *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 73, Spring 2012, pp. 240-58.

marital relationship was taboo rarely knew of such measures. But when they got a chance to see the world, some of them could not control their urge and visited the women. The rate of VD, therefore among British soldiers was less than the Indian soldiers who otherwise visited comparatively less to such women. Use and knowledge of prophylaxis made a significant difference.

Further, soldiers were reluctant to report sick when they contracted VD. Some occasional lectures about the seriousness of the disease, however, at times made them to come forward to take treatment.³⁹⁶ Concealment of venereal disease was against the regulations and a person under Army Act was supposed to report sick immediately on contraction of the disease.³⁹⁷ On being diagnosed, the person contracting VD would not be allowed to go on local leave until he had fully recovered.³⁹⁸ The Proficiency Pay of the soldier was forfeited on contraction of VD. It was not restored until the man was declared medically fit to resume duty and also the commanding officer certifying that his performance was satisfactory after recovery from the illness.³⁹⁹

VD took a toll of an appreciable chain of manpower largely on account of the time taken in diagnosis and treatment of the disease. The hospitals at the war front rarely had specialists to diagnose and treat the VD cases. Patients in South East Asia theatre of War for example had to be evacuated to Comilla or Dacca. A sepoy of Indian Engineers was admitted at 26 CCS (Tamu in Burma) on 31 October 1944. He was diagnosed as suffering from penile sore and referred to 41 IGH Imphal where he reached on 1 November. This hospital again routed the patient to 51 IGH Agartala. From Agartala, he was sent to 74 IGH Comilla, the definite place of diagnosis and treatment where he reached on 6 November. The man thus shuttled among four different hospitals and travelled about 800 miles to get the treatment for primary syphilis.⁴⁰⁰ Like wise a VCO of the 14th Army was admitted to 26 CCS Imphal on 25

³⁹⁶ 'Monthly Intelligence Security Report', 14 March 1946, *The Chamar Regiment*, File No. Misc/4142/H, NAI.

³⁹⁷ *Regulations for the Army in India*, 1937, reprint 1942, Chapter VII, rule 343.

³⁹⁸ *Regulations for the Army in India*, corrections issued up to October 1944, reprint 1945, Chapter VII, Section 384.

³⁹⁹ 'Restoration of Proficiency Pay', *Army Instructions (India)* No. 89 of 1942.

⁴⁰⁰ 'Utilisation of Hospitals', 1944-45, Appendix 6, *Report of the Operational Research Group, HQ 14th Army*. VDs were mostly consisted of syphilis and gonorrhoea.

October 1944. It took him 12 days to reach Comilla through various military hospitals to get the treatment for VD.⁴⁰¹

The VD, therefore, was considered a big threat to the soldiers' health and a further detrimental to combat effectiveness of the unit. Besides, condoms and prophylaxis, the authorities also wanted the soldiers to know about the grave danger of contracting such diseases. Two films each in English and Urdu were prepared on VD describing its disastrous affect. The English film was named as 'Happiness Deferred' while Urdu version was named as 'Mitha Zahar' (sweet poison). The copies of the film were sent to all units and formations. Orders were also passed that all personnel should be shown this film and also that it should be repeated every three months.⁴⁰²

Conclusion

Soldiers initially saw the War as an opportunity to get accelerated promotion, war allowance and medals. However on mobilisation, there were mixed responses. Some were desperate to move, others were homesick and apprehensive of war calamities. Still, some others could not control their minds and deserted during the movement of their units. Destinations were officially kept secret, however, news usually percolated to the troops. But they were not supposed to share it. Soldiers were also instructed not to write about their locations even to their homes. If some violated these instructions and was caught, disciplinary action was initiated against him.

The life of the soldiers was hectic during the War. They were busy in fighting battles, digging positions, trenches, camouflaging the guns, vehicles and other equipment, overhauling weapons, laying mines, patrolling the areas and guarding his own camp. Still, when there was time, he was given training for warfare. The war vagaries led to rigorous manoeuvre, extensive physical and mental strain and sometimes a number of casualties.

Jungle and desert, where Indian forces were mostly deployed, posed their own kinds of problems. Desert was always dry while the jungle was always wet. Sand storms made life difficult in the desert; cool and humid weather and intermittent

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² 'Venereal Disease Propaganda Film', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1834 of 1945.

showers made it bitterly tough in tropical regions. Drinking water was a problem at both the theatres of War. Flies continuously tortured the soldiers in the desert while leeches and mosquitoes created a lot of problems in the jungles. The climate, animals and insects were thus no less enemy than the real enemy at the War.

As far as the effect of different terrains on warfare is concerned, the troops could be spotted easily by the enemy and became easy targets in the desert. Jungles were a bit friendly in this respect. But in jungles one did not know how close the enemy was anchoring to one's location and therefore, it was always threatened of unexpected events. Also water loggings, swamp and a lot of rivers and nullahs made the advance and retreat extremely difficult. The life of the soldiers in battlefields was sometimes full of spirit while at other times it full of disappointment and depression. The morale depended on victory and defeat, though the leadership of the commander and other factors like problems at home and disease, etc., also contributed to it.

The scarcity of rations in the mess could be compensated by having meals at towns in the Middle East. There was no other way to compensate it in Burma. The supply of rations had a direct affect on the combat capability of the troops. At times the supply, especially of fresh rations, in South-East Asia was alarmingly low. Slim feared that it would threaten the possibilities of offensive. The system of the leave mechanism divided the leaves in two categories. Ordinary leave was given as and when the situation permitted while compassionate leave could be given on extreme compassionate grounds. Ordinary leave was governed by a percentage criteria provisioned separately for each theatre of the War. However, it also depended on other factors like the circumstances of the War, availability of transport, marital status of the soldier, etc. The most common ground for compassionate leave by Indian soldiers was 'the house fallen down story' while the British cooked up the story of 'grandmother is dead'. During this War, Indian troops also started following the plea of their British counterparts for compassionate leave.

Continuous defeat, heavy casualties, hardships, delays in letters and mails, milking away of experienced troops and delay in reinforcements demoralized the soldiers. Cancellation of leave trains also frustrated those who were going on leave. To combat the morale factor a local newspaper was started. To prop up the spirit of the soldiers further, some steps like welfare activities, recreation, local leave, visits of

dignitaries and better interaction between officers and the men, were initiated. Gallantry awards in numbers could also boost the morale of the soldiers. These awards were even conferred in person by the senior military commander to the recipient in a large gathering or ceremonial parades of the soldiers at the war fronts. Propaganda means were also resorted. Long periods of inactivity made the soldiers homesick while successful operations gave them a purpose and boosted his morale.

Separation from wife, worries about extra-marital relations as well as the marriage of wives with other men during their long absence, sometimes, haunted the minds of the soldiers. Authorities were most concerned about it and initiated an amendment in the Code of Criminal Procedure to help out such persons. When at war zones in other countries, some Indian soldiers did hunt for women and had sex with them and also visited the brothels. A few others developed relationships with women at overseas and culminated their affairs in marriage.

Economic offences like selling military items to civilians for money, corruption, bribery, etc. were more prevalent among the personnel of Corps, such as RIASC, IHC and IAOC whereas criminal offences were more common among infantry troops. British soldiers were more prone to insubordination than the Indians while the latter were more prone to dishonesty and committed more number of crimes. While during the same time, Africans were more mutinous and violent to their superiors. Likewise, desertions were more in supporting services like the RIASC than the fighting services like the Infantry and armoured corps. As far the area is concerned, soldiers like Pathans of NWFP deserted more than the soldiers of other regions. Further, recruits had a high rate of desertion than the trained manpower.

Rampant diseases took a heavy toll and patients of malaria occupied more beds in the hospitals than the injured in battles. Medical facilities were scantily available to the ailing. The large number of desertions from the army was prompted by homesickness, difficult military life, depression and the fear of eventuality. Desertions were more prevalent among the recruits at the training centres. Experienced soldiers mainly deserted during embarkation for overseas. However, the chances of desertions were rare when units were deployed at overseas zones, far away from the soldiers' home in India. The desertions were less in infantry units, especially, which comprised pre-War enlisted classes (except the Pathans) while it was more in

Corps like the RIASC, which had a mixed class composition and had most of the men from non-enlisted classes. Cases of infidelity were more prevalent among the wives of British soldiers than Indians. More British soldiers visited women for sex, but cases of Venereal disease were more among Indian soldiers. This was because of a lack of knowledge about the use of prophylaxis by Indians soldiers.

Chapter Three

Race Abuse and Discrimination

Introduction

‘Discrimination’, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary means the practice of treating somebody or a particular group of society less fairly than others. It could be based on grounds of race, region, religion, gender, etc. Discrimination on the basis of race was practised by the British military personnel, who treated the Indians as inferior.

The issues of discrimination in the army mainly became evident with the entry of Indians into the officer cadre that had till an exclusive preserve of the English men. Indian officers faced discrimination in many forms while serving in the armed forces. When World War II started, the strength of the Indian armed forces increased and so did the number of cases of discrimination. Indians generally remained suspect in the eyes of the British. This chapter deals with various kinds of discrimination practiced in the Indian armed forces and the attitude of Indian officers towards it, the British stand on the issue and measures taken to resolve the problem. The consequences of discrimination have also been probed. Further, it is also argued that some British officers were as fair to the Indians as to the British personnel.

It was mainly the peasants who formed the ranks of the British Indian Army. They were sturdy and robust to bear the physical and mental strain of military drills, war manoeuvres and operations in jungles, mountains and deserts. They were mostly uneducated ploughmen who followed the orders of the superiors with complete loyalty until their religious and social prejudices were interfered. British authorities also knew that the Indian army was the institution that was holding up the British rule in India. If they antagonize the Indian troops, they could shake the long cherished empire as had happened in 1857. Thus, besides mustering them for their rule, they never spared any efforts to let the soldiers feel that they were a special privileged class. Every effort was made to enlist the loyalty of the Indian soldiers to their Battalions and the Raj. The soldiers too felt that they were well looked after by their masters. These peasant soldiers had little concern for the cause they were fighting for, and were just happy with their pay, respect in society and the affection of their

officers.¹ They were devoted to their officers and through him to the regiment. The *izzat* (respect) of the regiment was dear to his heart, more than the salary he got.

The British trained them in such a way that loyalty to the regiment and Crown became their motto. Good service conditions, food, prompt justice, welfare measures, awards and rewards for heroic deeds, strengthened their loyalty. British officers took keen interest in their soldiers, learnt their language and familiarized themselves with their culture, beliefs and practices. They identified themselves with the regiment and indeed felt proud to be associated with it.² Religious customs of the soldiers were respected. To illustrate, when a Sikh Regiment went out on a march in peace time, the *Granth Sahib*, the sacred book of the Sikhs, was carried along at the head of the Regiment.³

The concept of *izzat* was ingrained in their minds from the very first day of the training and during the passing out parade they were made to swear by it. The oath ceremony was held in such pomp and splendour, with the beating of drums and in the presence of senior officers swearing to the respective religious books, that everyone felt proud of being a part of the prestigious service, and if an occasion arose demanding a breaking of the oath, it would not have been easy to do that without troubling one's own senses. These simple peasant soldiers, who got in inheritance from their cultural environment of rural society the spirit of obeying the elders and keeping their words always and every time even unto death, rarely dared to break this oath of allegiance to the regiment and through it to the Crown. It was imbibed in these peasant soldiers that their good deeds and sacrifice would inspire the coming generation and that their name would be inscribed in history.

They were reminded of the regiment reputation on each and every occasion. The concept of *izzat* was further strengthened by organizing sports, games and other competitions. Colours were presented to the units by high dignitaries on different occasions and it was considered a great honour for the unit. Soldiers were taught to keep this colour flying through their good character and conduct. The units always

¹ David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (London, Kings College, 1998), pp. 59-75.

² For example if the officer belonged to the Punjab Regiment, he would call himself a Punjabi, if to Madras, Madrasi and so on.

³ *Indian Studies*, published by United Publications, Delhi, (Consulted at Rare Books Collection, Patiala University, Patiala), pp. 170-1; Lt Col P.G. Bamford, *1st King George V's Own Battalion: The Sikh Regiment, 1846-1946* (Aldershot, 1948), p.74.

strived to earn the colour by showing valour in the battlefield. Soldiers who brought laurels to the regiment were ceremoniously rewarded at the parade ground. On the other hand, soldiers who sullied the image of the regiment were punished. Hence the ‘organizational culture’⁴ also became a sort of religion for the soldiers.

Further, the British displayed a ‘paternal’ image and therefore addressed the ‘sipahi’ as ‘jawan’ whose welfare was the specific concern of the British officer.⁵ The White officer was considered *mai-bap* (like parents), who the *jawans* thought would never harm them. Thus, a combination of loyalty and expectation “knit them in a close bond, from which the rest of the world was excluded.”⁶ British officers were generally just, fair and sensitive and respected the religious belief and customs of the soldiers. They were kind enough to their men, but would never allow any undue leverage. They maintained a child-parent relationship with their men.⁷ General Chaudhuri writes: that “there was a respect for the officers not because they were British but because the British had generally shown themselves to be equally just, fair-minded and competent.”⁸ Sowar (later Major) Abhe Ram quoting his British Company Commander says, “Major Acworth [Company Commander] used to say, I have three fathers. One my biological father, second my colonel commanding officer and third is Subedar Major Shish Ram who has trained me for my cavalry duties.”⁹ General Chaudhuri, admiring the sense of duty and incorruptibility of the British officers states that they had genuine affection for the little group of men they commanded and that it was an affection that was amply repaid by the Indian men.¹⁰ An Indian soldier seldom complained against his British officer for being inconsiderate. The behaviour of British officers towards the Indian rank and file was humane and in return they commanded great respect from their men.

⁴ Tarak Barkawi addressed the issues of organisational culture in his article. Tarak Barkawi, ‘Culture and Combat in the Colonies: The Indian Army in the Second World War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, no. 41, 2, pp. 325-55.

⁵ Vivien Ashima Kaul, *The Bengal Army (1858-1894): Structure, Ideology and Social Order*, Ph.D Thesis (unpublished), CHS, JNU, 1998, p. 8.

⁶ Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men*, (London, Jonathan Cape, 1975), p. 406.

⁷ Interview, Subedar Risal Singh, 9 December 2008; Interview, Major Abhe Ram, 2 December 2009.

⁸ B.K. Narayan (ed.), *General JN Chaudhuri: An Autobiography as Narrated to BK Narayan* (New Delhi, Vikas Publishing, 1978), p. 82.

⁹ Interview, Major Abhe Ram, 2 December 2009.

¹⁰ Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 47.

The bonhomie between the British officers and the Indian rank and file almost continued till India got Independence. But the opening of commissioned ranks to Indians after the First World War brought about a drastic change in the attitude of the British officers. They were reluctant to accept Indians in commissioned ranks. Indeed, British officers loved to be masters not colleagues or subordinates to Indians. In the early twentieth century, “The white officers who led Indian soldiers believed that they were inherently, racially, superior to the Indians.”¹¹ The security factor might have been the other reason. Earlier, in 1878, Wolseley had said that “reserving military command exclusively for ruling class [British] provides much safety to the empire.”¹² He added that while we drilled all in our pay to be good soldiers, we studiously avoided running the risk of educating any to be officers in anything more than in name, so that none should be found capable to lead should the British element at any time or from any cause whatever be withdrawn from the regimental establishment. We reaped the full benefit of that system when Bengal army mutinied.”¹³ Hence, the British did not open the commissioned ranks to Indians for a long period of time.

Army Starts taking Indians’ in the Officer Cadre

At the dawn of the twentieth century, in 1902, Curzon conceived an idea to open the commissioned rank of the Indian Army to Indians, but not to place them in command, rather to place them in the service of Viceroy for ceremonial purpose. The Imperial Cadet Corps that Curzon thus formed was for the princes of the Indian rulers. This again raised the image of the British Empire when the sons of Indian rulers in Imperial Cadet Corps performed aide-de-camp and staff duties to the Viceroy during the Delhi Darbar.¹⁴ This scheme, however, did not last long.

¹¹ Jeffrey Greenhut, ‘Sahib and Sepoy: An Inquiry into the Relationship between the British Officers and Native Soldiers of the British Indian Army’, *Military Affairs*, no. 48, 1, 1984, pp. 15-18.

¹²G.I. Wolseley, ‘The Native Army of India’, *The North American Review*, no. 127, 263, Jul-Aug 1878, pp. 132-156.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Chandar S. Sundaram, ‘The Imperial Cadet Corps and Indianisation of the Indian Army’s Officer Corps, 1897-1923: A Brief Survey’, *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* (henceforth JUSII), vol. CXXXIX, No. 577, July-September 2009. The officers of the Corps, consisting of Indian princely and noble houses, were attached to the Viceroy’s Darbar for ceremonial purposes. They were considered to be posted in Extra Regimental billets and used as aide-de-camp and on staff of General Officers, and were not to command anybody. One of the cadets even raised his voice as they would not get any real commission in this way. Pradeep P. Barua, *Gentlemen of the Raj: The Indian Army Officer Corps, 1817-1949* (New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2008), pp. 9-15.

After the First World War, the officer cadre was opened to Indians to meet the growing aspirations of the Indian people. Indians indeed had been demanding for some time that they be given the opportunity to serve in the Indian Army on the same terms and conditions as enjoyed by the Britishers, and also as a reward for their services in the War.¹⁵ The British officers vehemently opposed this concept.¹⁶ They expressed the doubt that a “large influx of Indians as officers in place of the British would have a detrimental effect on the efficiency of the fighting machine upon which India depended for security,” and also that “if Indians are commissioned, British boys would be reluctant to join the Indian army.”¹⁷ Further, they were sceptical about sufficient number of Indians with the desired quality forthcoming for commission.

According to Philip Mason, General Rawlinson expressed his uneasiness more than once in his letters and diaries. Rawlinson mentioned “people are frightened, ... old officers say they won’t send their sons out to serve under natives.”¹⁸ General Cobbe drew a scheme under which he advocated the establishment of a Dominion Army in India. He suggested that this Dominion Army could exist side by side with the existing army and could be officered entirely by the Indians.¹⁹ When their plea did not work, they influenced upon segregating Indian officers by introducing an Indianised unit scheme in 1923. Under this scheme, Indian officers would be posted to eight Indianised units reserved for them.²⁰ It was done on the pretext of the limited experience of Indian officers and to test the practicability of successful Indianisation in the Army.²¹ It was officially said that the scheme would

¹⁵*Committee on the Indianisation of the Officers Ranks of the Indian Army*, pp. 3-4, File No. 601/12810/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p. 454.

¹⁹*Committee on the Indianisation of the Officers Ranks of the Indian Army*, pp. 8-10, File No. 601/12810/H (Secret), HDMOD.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 15. It was planned to replace the British officers of these units gradually with Indians. These were six infantry battalions and two cavalry regiments. *Report of the Indian Sandhurst Committee* (henceforth Skeen Committee Report), pp. 10-11.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14; Skeen Committee Report, pp. 10-11. Maj. Gen Rudra cites that segregating the units for Indians was a negative remedy. Most of us (Indian officers) believed that the real cause was that the British were reluctant to serve under the command of Indians, which would be inevitable under the existing open system of postings. To avoid this, Indians were posted to some earmarked units with no new British entrants being sent there, so that the unthinkable would be avoided. Maj Gen D.K. Palit (ed.), *Major General A.A. Rudra: His Service in Three Armies and Two World Wars* (New Delhi, Reliance Publishing, 1997), p. 138. According to General Chaudhuri, the scheme of segregation was much criticized and he too felt that. However, years later he felt that the policy produced good results, not for the reason that the British prepared it but because being together with Indian officers established

give 'a fair chance' to Indians to show that such units could be just as efficient as those which were headed by British officers.²² The British also pleaded that it would provide Indianness in mess life.

The segregation scheme became extremely unpopular with the Indians. It was disliked by the Indian public in general and the Indian officers who were directly affected.²³ Indian officers thought that the segregation scheme confined them to some units unlike the British officers who had the option to select the units of their choice. Even family connections in selecting the units on commission were lauded in the case of British officers but Indians had little option.²⁴ According to Rudra, British Indian military authorities did not forget to keep the best Indian regiments reserved for British officers. Except for one or two, the worst units by reputation were earmarked for the Indianisation. Some of them were considered among the dregs of the Indian infantry at that time.²⁵ The segregation scheme continued till the beginning of the Second World War.²⁶ However, in 1933 some more units were added to the scheme.²⁷ This somewhat satisfied the ego of the British officers.

Some British commanding officers, however, continued their efforts of 'wrecking the Indianisation experiment, losing no opportunity of deprecating Indian officers' and sending the best Indian officers away from their battalions on extra regimental postings.²⁸ This was against the very essence of the Shea Committee that in its very first lines of conclusion emphasized: "The Committee desire to record their [Committee's] strong opinion that the success of any scheme of Indianisation must depend very largely upon securing the goodwill and safeguarding the interests of the fine body of Indian officers of the existing type, to whom India is deeply indebted."²⁹ British officers indeed joined the Indian Army because it offered higher pay and a

their own identity that in scattered British units would have been minimal and also swamped by the British officers. Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 54.

²² Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p. 455.

²³ Skeen Committee Report, pp. 18-9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Palit, *Major General AA Rudra*, p. 138.

²⁶ It was decided in early 1941 to post Indian officers throughout the Indian Army. 'Postings of ICOs throughout the Indian Army', *Army Instructions (India)*, No. 76 of 1941.

²⁷ In 1933, the total units marked for Indianisation rose to 12 infantry and 3 cavalry units. *Commissioned Officers*, Appendix A, File No. 601/12160/H, HDMOD.

²⁸ Palit, *Major General AA Rudra*, p. 181.

²⁹ *Indianisation of the Indian Army* (Shea Committee Report), 1922, pp. 8-9.

lower cost of living. Besides, “life in India offered a romance and quasi-aristocratic status which was no longer possible in British Army.”³⁰

When Indian officers started joining the Indian Army, they posed a challenge to the unfettered British aristocracy. The British feared that Indians also would gradually take over their vacancies. The British officers were not prepared to accept Indians on equal terms. They did not like the Indians to be their colleagues, live in the same mess and get acquainted with their weaknesses and strong points. Hence their obsession was coupled with many such factors. Their demand for separate Indianised units was intended to keep the Indians away. On the issue of separate units, the Indianisation Committee (Shea Committee, 1922) with Lt Gen MacMunn as a Member had strongly advocated for ‘the goodwill and safeguarding interests of Indian officers’. But in the early 1930s, MacMunn appears to be favouring a discontented group of British officers by putting forth his view: “the mixed mess on the whole would have been best for all, but as it seemed that any such step would alienate the better British boys from the Indian Army, the segregation policy appeared unavoidable and was adopted”³¹ Besides, British officers also nursed the apprehension that on becoming seniors, Indian officers could command the units making British officers work under them.³²

The Indianisation of the Army was a political decision prompted by the political development in India. When a political will is imposed due to some or the other reason and if it effects a particular community or a group of communities adversely, all these groups, who has the tradition to enter the system, see the new opening as rivals. They also get rebellious in their thoughts. Sometimes, these thoughts are even not controllable and are put into action. Besides, people of the same group or race already in the system also resists. Despite these oppositions, when the new category enters the system taking the privileges offered due to political considerations, they face anguish from the people already in the organization. The case turns worse if the new entrants were previously considered servants and ruled, and looked down upon as inferiors by a majority of the people already in the existing

³⁰Greenhut, ‘Sahib and Sepoy’, pp. 14-9.

³¹ Lt Gen Sir George MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India* (Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1933, reprint, 1979), pp. 346-7.

³²*Committee on the Indianisation of the Officers Ranks of the Indian Army*, p. 14, File No. 601/12810/H; MacMunn, *The Martial Races*, pp. 346-7.

system. This leads to discrimination. The new entrants would face a sort of social boycott, pinching comments, derogatory remarks, incapacitation and non-cooperation. Memoirs and biographies of Indian officers who joined in the 1920s and 1930s speak through some or other story of such remarks and discriminations. Most people already in the system did not like to mix with the new arrivals. Disadvantages of lack of knowledge, tradition, adequate training and atmosphere would get them coded as incompetent. This is what happened with Indian officers when the British political declaration reserved some seats and made the way for Indians in the commissioned ranks. The British saw Indians as their servants and inferior to them. At first there was complained that India did not have adequate candidates with officer like quality. Even selection for ten reserved seats too became difficult. There was also complained that right quality of candidates were not coming forward. On opening of Indian Military Academy in 1932, seats also increased to 60. Earlier when authorities were finding it difficult to select even ten men, now found difficult to get 60 men with officer potential in whole India. Persons who entered the forces after start of Indianisation faced discrimination because of prejudiced mindset of the already existing groups.

Discrimination: Officers

The exigencies of the Second World War forced the British Indian Government to recruit more Indians in the officer cadre of the Indian Army. With this large intake the segregation scheme could not function and in the changed circumstances Indian officers had to be posted in all Indian army units.³³ A strange situation developed in the Army. On one side the British needed more Indians to help them win the War and, on the other, British officers disliked their presence in the units and the mess. Besides, the British and the Indian officers had different tastes and likings. As the number of Indians grew, the discrimination that had existed since the beginning of the Indianisation, became rampant. British officers thought that the Indian officers were intruding in their reserved domain while Indian officers complained that despite fighting for the British cause they were being neglected. There also was a large difference in the pay of British and Indian commissioned officers. After having put many years of service, senior Indian officers became due for promotions and eligible

³³ Letter No. W-390/M.S.3, 18 November 1940, *Policy Compendium* (M.S. Branch), 1941; 'Posting of ICOs throughout Indian Army', *Army Instructions (India)*, No. 76 of 1941.

to command the battalions. But the British were never happy to assign command to Indian officers.

Even the role of Indian units and troops got lesser recognition than the British fighting the same battle. Writing of such discrimination, Brig Yadav cites the painful siege of Kohima by the Japanese in which both Indian and British troops suffered and fought alike. He writes: “the 4 RWR [Royal West Kent Regiment, a British unit] has received the encomium it deserves, the Indian units which were there from the outset and had displayed unprecedented tenacity and courage in the face of murderous onslaught by the Japanese have been ignored.”³⁴

This kind of discrimination by the Whites was not exclusive to the Indian Army. In the U.S. Armed Forces, Blacks were not accepted easily. In the beginning they were recruited in small numbers, and were used as labourers and coolies. Hardly any Black was commissioned. Manpower shortage of the First World War opened the way for Blacks in large numbers. Being less than 11 per cent of the total population of the USA, Blacks provided more than thirteen per cent of total the US soldiers. But the Blacks less than one (0.7) per cent of the army officers’ strength were commissioned during that War. Indeed most of them were placed with the Blacks units.³⁵ Further, the Black officers and men were not given adequate training like the Whites.³⁶ Black units were mostly employed in labour and other fatigue jobs.³⁷

There was a sharp decline in the strength of Blacks in the US army after the First World War. At the start of the Second World War, there were only five Black officers in the US regular Army. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the Black strength again started swelling in the rapidly expanding US Army. But the discrimination continued. Though the US Government policy did not bar them in any way, but when they were recruited mixing them with the Whites was a great difficulty. When at War abroad, theatre commanders generally expressed reluctance

³⁴ Brig H.S. Yadav, *British Lions and the Indian Masters* (Delhi, Manas Publications, 2004). p. 106.

³⁵ L.D. Reddick, ‘The Negro Policy of the United States Army, 1775-1945’, *The Journal of Negro History*, no. 34, I, January 1949, pp. 9-29.

³⁶ Charles H. Houston, ‘Critical Summary: The Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces in World Wars I and II’, *The Journal of Negro Education*, no. 12, 3, Summer, 1943, pp. 364-6.

³⁷ L.D. Reddick, ‘The Negro Policy of the United States Army, 1775-1945’, pp. 9-29.

in accepting Black units.³⁸ “Strangely, the Army felt that it had made enormous concessions when it agreed to use Negroes [Blacks] in all of its services. At the same time, Negro leaders were intensely disappointed in that the racial quota had thus been established and the formulas ‘separate but equal’ was explicitly made the policy of the American Army.”³⁹

During the Second World War, Indian officers suffered discrimination at the hands of their British colleagues and senior officers. British officers in many cases did not like the company of Indian officers. British commanders did not have any trust in the capability of Indian officers. Sometimes British politicians too seemed to have spoken disparagingly against Indian soldiers. There were instances where British officers passed sarcastic remarks against Indian officers and wanted to get rid of them. Major General Tucker, Commander 4 Indian Division, wrote in his Demi Official letter to another Major General stating: “certain Indian Commissioned Officers have proved unsatisfactory. It seems to be exceedingly difficult to get rid of them.”⁴⁰ He added, “Is it possible to have a more efficient Weeding Out process before officers are sent to active units and for it to be made easier to get rid of them quickly if they prove unsatisfactory.” Major General Partap Narain referring to an incident says that Brigadier Callahan while criticizing the summing up of the day’s exercise of jungle warfare training near Murree shouted rudely to the Indian Brigade Major, “What do you bloody Indian dogs know about war.”⁴¹ The Indian Major felt hurt and resigned from the Army. A British Commanding Officer on receiving a new officer’s draft from India lamented in the presence of Indian Commissioned Officers: “a lot of monkeys at first sight.”⁴² In early 1940, on his return from UTC, Madras, when Thimayya did not write a letter about his joining the battalion to his commanding officer, which he was expected to do, his commanding officer Colonel Stuart blurted angrily: “If you think, Thimayya, you have temerity to think that you and other Indians can be good officers, you are sadly mistaken; your behaviour proves it

³⁸ Henry L. Stimson, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp. 461-4. Stimson worked on high portfolios in the US Government. He was Secretary of War from 1911 to 1913, Secretary of State from 1929-1933, again Secretary of War from 1940-1945.

³⁹ L.D. Reddick, ‘The Negro Policy of the United States Army, 1775-1945’, pp. 9-29.

⁴⁰ DO Letter from Maj Gen Toker to Maj Gen Baker, Letter No. 1/AHQ, 4 April 1943 (Confidential), File No. 601/10346/H, HDMOD.

⁴¹ Maj Gen Partap Narain, *Subedar to Field Marshal* (New Delhi, Manas, 1999), p. 88. Partap Narain writes that Captain Iqbal Krishna was officiating as the Brigade Major of the Jungle Warfare Training Brigade near Murree.

⁴² Letters about Discrimination, 1942, File No. 601/10247/H, HDMOD.

otherwise. You people just don't have it in you."⁴³ On another occasion, when Thimayya's battalion was sailing for Singapore in August 1940, Indian officers sleeping on the upper deck during the night were insulted in front of other men and British officers who also slept there.⁴⁴ British politician Major Milner, a Member of Parliament in the House of Commons, commented that most of the Indian soldiers sent overseas were idiots (*Ganwar*). Many of them had never shot from a rifle in their lifetime.⁴⁵ A British officer said to an Indian Commissioned Officer (henceforth ICO): "you can never get anything good out of an Indian."⁴⁶ Lt Col P.H.M. Cann, who commanded an Indian Army battalion during the War, wrote: "many ICOs have failed badly and have been passengers in a unit and a permanent worry to their commanding officers."⁴⁷

These racial comments of the British were not confined to the army, Air Force and Navy officers also suffered a similar fate. According to an Indian Air Force officer, there were always comments like: "Indians do not know how to fly, like they [British] said Indians cannot be submariners."⁴⁸ Lt Sen, a Naval officer, while citing racial discrimination in RIN stated before the RIN Enquiry Committee: "British officers considered the Navy as their monopoly and considered the Indian Reserve officers as intruders."⁴⁹ They did not like the company of Indian officers, and did not even conceal their dislike and freely discussed in the mess.⁵⁰ In an incident, an Indian Sub-Lieutenant of the Indian Navy was even kicked by a British officer. The latter, however apologized when the Indian officer did not take this indignity and wanted to have a fight with him.⁵¹ At the Air Force stations that were commanded by British

⁴³ Brig B.C. Khanduri (ed.), *Thimayya: An Amazing Life* (New Delhi, Knowledge World, 2006), p. 57.

⁴⁴ Perturbed by this, Thimayya sought an interview with the CO and submitted that, 'the morale of the Indian officers had succumbed to the lowest' and out of desperation he was prepared to resign his commission and leave the service. The CO prevailed on Thimayya's good sense and calmed him down. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴⁵ *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 26 February 1942, p. 1. Lord Samuel, however, stated in the Commons that Indian Army was doing an excellent job in the Middle East. *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 16 February 1942, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Letters about Discrimination, December 1942, File No. 601/10247/H, HDMOD.

⁴⁷ *War Time ICOs: The Progress of Indianisation*, Letter No. 2507/3/SD 1(b), 16 November 1945, File No. 601/7179/H, HDMOD.

⁴⁸ *Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, 15 November 2008.

⁴⁹ *Report of the RIN Commission of Enquiry*, 1946, Para 470. The Commission of Enquiry that was set up to probe the reasons of naval mutiny was chaired by Sir S. Fazl Ali, Chief Justice of Patna High Court. Members were Justice K.S. Krishnaswami Iyengar, Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan, VAdm W.R. Patterson and Maj Gen T.W. Rees.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, para 434; 'RIN Demobilisation Procedure Criticised', *The Times of India*, 10 May 1946, p. 3.

officers, the IAF officers and men suffered untold misery and humiliation.⁵² In fact, discrimination against Indian officers largely depended on the individual nature of the British commanding officers.

Some White officers even disliked sharing common utilities with their Black comrades. Captain Naravane recalls that in April 1942, when at Mersa Matruh in the Western Desert, all the officers of his formation were allowed to go to the cleared portion of the beach for bathing and swimming. A British officer present there said, “he would have liked a portion of the beach reserved for whites only as he disliked the smell of black ‘bodies’ swimming in the same portion of the beach.”⁵³ On one occasion, a commanding officer while going to a function asked a junior White to accompany him asking the ICO to go in a truck.⁵⁴ When the 5th Battalion of the Sikh Regiment was in Malaya, the local Raja invited British officers of the unit for a drink and dinner party at Perak. The Commanding Officer, Lt Col Parkins, instead of insisting the Raja to invite Indian officers, took all the British officers with him leaving the Indians behind.⁵⁵ In mid-1941, a club in Ipoh barred the Indians but British officers of the unit were welcomed there. This was greatly resented by Indian officers.⁵⁶ Even in India the entry of Indian officers at many clubs was prohibited. Lt Col Prem Bhatia, who worked on the personal staff of Lady Mountbatten was stopped at the gate of ‘Saturday Club’ (Calcutta) when the Lady invited her staff to lunch with her in the club. The Pathan watchman of the club told Bhatia firmly, yet politely, that *Kale Admi* (Black people) were not permitted into the Club premises.⁵⁷

Indian officers, since the 1920s had categorized the Indian army cantonments in two categories i.e. friendly and sticky (non friendly). For instance, Quetta was

⁵² Air Cmde A.L. Saigal (ed), *Birth of an Air Force: The Memoirs of Air Vice Marshal Harjinder Singh* (New Delhi, Palit Publishers, 1977), p. 197.

⁵³ Maj Gen A.S. Naravane, *A Soldier's Life in War and Peace* (New Delhi, APH Publishing, 2004), p. 72.

⁵⁴ Letters about Discrimination, 1942, File No. 601/10247/H, HDMOD.

⁵⁵ Lt Gen Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty: A soldier Remembers* (New Delhi, Lancers, 2000), p. 93. Harbakhsh Singh also writes that there was racial discrimination in Malaya where in many club parties, only Whites were allowed. British commanders did not object to it and continuously attended along with their subordinate British officers whereas Indians were left behind. This disappointed the Indian officers and they nurtured a grudge against their British commanders.

⁵⁶ Maj Gen (INA) M.Z. Kiani, *India's Freedom Struggle and the Great INA: Memoir of Maj Gen Mohammad Zaman Kiani* (New Delhi, Reliance, 1994), p. 14.

⁵⁷ Narain, *Subedar to Field Marshal*, pp. 83-4. Narain did not mention the date of the incident but it was during the period of war when Mountbatten was the Commander of SEAC. As is evident from the fact that Prem Bhatia served the army from 1942 to 1945. See <http://www.prembhatiastrust.com/pb.htm>, accessed on 15 February 2013.

considered to be a friendly cantonment as there was no restriction on Indians to join the clubs, whose membership conferred the right to use facilities like library, bar, dance, tennis and other games. But, Peshawar was considered an unfriendly station as Indians were not allowed to become members of the Peshawar club. Verma wondered if it was the same crowd of Britishers and Indians “service personnel who moved from one cantonment to the next.”⁵⁸ Some British commanders, however, had started initiating steps to resolve these issues, and by the start of War all restrictions on Indians joining the military clubs had formally gone, but at some places in India, this racial discrimination lingered, making Indian officers feel humiliated.⁵⁹ Capt Partap Narain (later Maj Gen) while looking for the reasons of discrimination by British officers in the clubs states that one of the reasons was that the Indians eyed their [British] ladies while leaving their own at home.⁶⁰

Prior to the World War, during the early phases of Indianisation, when the officer cadre was dominated by British officers, Indian food was seldom cooked and served in the messes. General Srinagesh confirms that Indian food was seldom served and listening to Indian music was invariably discouraged. He adds, “everything Indian was frowned upon.”⁶¹ Indian officers despite their liking for native food did not complain because they were too junior and too less in number to raise their voice.⁶² Even in Indianised battalions, Indian officers would not easily get Indian food and nor could they listen to Indian music in the mess.⁶³ Gen Kiani says, “there were disputes in the Indianised units Messes as to what food to cook- European or Indian, and what musical programme to put on radio- from London or from Delhi”.⁶⁴ During the Second World War when thousands of Indians were commissioned and their strength increased substantially, they started demanding Indian food and other facilities of Indian tastes in the officers’ messes. However, the condition seemed not to have improved. Lt Sinha, posted at the Jat Regimental Centre Bareilly in Jan 1945, found hardly any Indian dish in the mess. Indian officers usually looked for *Desi Khana* and

⁵⁸ Lt Gen S.D. Verma, *To Serve With Honour: My Memoirs* (Kasauli, 1988), pp. 16 & 22.

⁵⁹ Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 51.

⁶⁰ Narain, *Subedar to Field Marshal*, p. 83.

⁶¹ Brig Satish K. Issar (ed.), *General S.M. Srinagesh* (New Delhi, Orient Paperback, 2009), p. 294.

⁶² Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 72.

⁶³ Palit, *Major General AA Rudra*, p. 183.

⁶⁴ Kiani, *India's Freedom Struggle*, p. 43.

rushed on their bicycles to a restaurant at the railway station for dinners.⁶⁵ Racial discrimination prevailed in the Indian Navy also. The RIN Commission of Enquiry reported: “colour bar in all its grim nakedness was present and influenced the conduct of Europeans towards Indians.”⁶⁶ Indian music on radio was discouraged in Naval messes also.⁶⁷ Whenever an Indian officer complained about discrimination, it was not redressed.⁶⁸

Insulting comments were made against Indian officers in the Air Force mess also. Recollecting one of the incidents in a squadron of IAF during the War, Air Marshal Ghadiok says:

“...an Indian pilot couldn’t take these [derogatory] comments gently. He took the jeep, went to airfield and at night got into Hurricane, started it up and took off in darkness. At night he beat up the mess in some low aerobics. The British authorities (commanding officer) threatened it to shoot down unless he landed. He was immediately locked up. He was violent. They tied his arms so tightly that circulation to his right hand stopped and when he left Air Force, his right hand didn’t work properly.”⁶⁹

The officer could not control his emotions and got violent. British racist officers did not permit Indians in the IAF to swim in the pool until the last day of the week, after which the water was changed.⁷⁰ If an Indian dared to challenge such discrimination he was compelled to leave the service.⁷¹

No Redressal

The discrimination indeed caused discontent among Indian officers. Some raised this issue with the higher authorities, while some chose to quit the service. The issue was echoed by Indian Legislators as well. But, no one from the Government or the top

⁶⁵ Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 47. According to Sinha out of 60 officers at the Jat Regimental Training Centre, there were nine Indian officers.

⁶⁶ *Report of the RIN Commission of Enquiry*, 1946, para 454.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, para 476.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 480(d). Sub Lt Sultan wrote thrice to the Admiral to seek an interview over the issue of racial discrimination, but he was denied. Being fed up, he ultimately resigned his commission.

⁶⁹ *Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok*, 15 November 2008.

⁷⁰ Aditya Arya and Indivar Kamtekar, *History in the Making: The Visual Archives of Kulwant Roy* (Collins, 2010), p. 26. Kulwant Roy who joined IAF in 1941 as an Aerial Lensman, faced discriminatory policies of the British during his service in IAF.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* Discriminatory policies of the British compelled Roy and some of his colleagues to leave the IAF.

military commanders seemed to agree publically that there was any discrimination in the armed forces. M.V. Kalikar raised the issue in the Council of State stating that he had come across cases where highly educated young Indians in the armed forces were maltreated and British officers behaved like rulers to the ruled.⁷² Pandit Kunzru, on the basis of complaints he got and believed, labelled the Indian Army as the chief agency that fostered racial feelings.⁷³

General Hartley, flabbergasted with the utterances, firmly stated that the Indian Army was a symbol of Indian unity and that it was the chief agency that fostered racial fellowship.⁷⁴ But Hartley too was aware of the fact long before it was raised in the Council of State. Owing to continuous complaints of discrimination by Indian officers, he even issued an official note in March 1942. In that Confidential note, he asked all the formation commanders to impress upon their commanding officers to look into the matter and not to allow any discrimination against Indian officers.⁷⁵ Gen Montgomery, Commander Eighth Army, also circulated a letter to all his commanders of Indian regiments and formations, advising them to stop discrimination towards Indian officers under their commands.⁷⁶ In January 1943, a pamphlet was prepared perhaps for the guidance of senior British officers proceeding to India. It cautioned them to “be correct and courteous at all times in dealing with Indians; it is their country and, although it may take some time to know their social grades and customs, if this is remembered it will help in dealings with them.”⁷⁷ Field Marshal Auchinleck, who took over as Commander-in-Chief (henceforth C-in-C), India, in 1943, also took the matter seriously. In August 1943, he posted an Indian officer, Lt Col S.D. Verma to the Adjutant General Branch to deal with the genuine complaints of discontented Indian officers.⁷⁸

⁷² Statement by M.V. Kalikar, 26 March 1943, *CSD*.

⁷³ Statement by H.N. Kunzru, 25 March 1943, *CSD*. Kunzru belonged to United Province, Northern, Non Muhammedan Category. He raised this issue during the debate on the Finance Bill.

⁷⁴ Statement by General Hartley, 26 March 1943, *CSD*.

⁷⁵ Letters about Discrimination, Appendix B, 9 March 1942, File No. 610/10247/H, HDMOD.

⁷⁶ Letters about Discrimination, 1942, a circular issued by Gen B.L. Montgomery, Commander Eighth Army, General Headquarters, Middle East, on 18 December 1942, File No. 601/10247 / H, HDMOD.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Pradeep P. Barua, *Gentlemen of the Raj: The Indian Army Officer Corps, 1817-1949* (New Delhi, Pentagon), 2008, p. 82.

⁷⁸ Verma, *To Serve With Honour*, pp. 40-1. Verma, however did not discuss in his autobiography as what were the complaints and how he dealt with them.

Double Standards

Indian officers and men were not treated at par with their British equivalents. Indian officers, except those commissioned from Sandhurst, were not given the power to command and also the authority to punish the British other ranks.⁷⁹ On the contrary, officers of other British commonwealth forces could be taken into the British Army and could even command the British troops.⁸⁰ Generally, Indian officers were not even given the command of Indian units. Further, Indians had the complaints that they were usually kept away from crucial appointments. Lt Col (later Major General) A.A. Rudra, who served as an adviser to the Commander-in-Chief on promotion and appointment matters, during the Second World War observed: “senior Indians in the army felt that they were being denied their rightful promotions and appointments.”⁸¹ Muhammad Azhar Ali once raised this issue in the Central Legislative Assembly stating that Indian officers were not being appointed as commanding officers.⁸² Gen Wavell, while broaching the issue with the C-in-C, pointed out that at least in two cases Indian officers had been superseded by the British. Elaborating further, he explained that in one such case the CO told the Indian officer that a man with more experience in desert war has been promoted and that he would be kept in mind for promotions in future. But when the new establishment came into force, this officer was sent quietly to the Reinforcement Camp, with the flimsy consolation that he was being sent on a really hard and responsible assignment of the regiment, but without promotion indeed.⁸³

According to Rudra, a vast majority of Indian officers with twenty or more years of service were serving as Majors while their contemporary and even junior British officers had become Colonels and Brigadiers.⁸⁴ Major General Eustace D’Souza says that a famous officer of the Indian Army who was sent to Italy in 1944, was not given promotion and command of a battalion because he was an Anglo-

⁷⁹ Indian Commissioned Officers who were commissioned from the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, and also Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers did not have these powers and authorities. However, the Indian officers commissioned from Sandhurst known as King Commissioned Indian Officers (KCIOs) had these.

⁸⁰ Colonel C.P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army, 1939-1945* (Ottawa, Minister of National Defence, 1948), pp. 294-6.

⁸¹ Palit, *Major General AA Rudra*, p. 265. Rudra was appointed to this post in about mid-1943.

⁸² Statement by Muhammad Azhar Ali, 19 November 1943, *LAD*.

⁸³ Letters about Discrimination, 1942, File No. 601/10247/H, HDMOD.

⁸⁴ Palit, *Major General AA Rudra*, p. 279.

Indian.⁸⁵ In rare cases when command was given to an Indian officer, junior officers did not like to work under an Indian commander. A South African Major even made an appeal to his British superior that he should not be commanded by an Indian. Amazingly, this South African instead of being punished, was transferred to serve under a British officer elsewhere.⁸⁶ As a matter of policy, Indian officers posted at Service Selection Boards could not interview British cadets. When Lt Col Mangat Rai, posted at SSB Lonavala, objected to this system, he was posted out within six months notwithstanding the fact that his Commandant, Colonel Portway, fully supported his cause.⁸⁷

The Indian Air Force that was considered to be a fully Indianised force also suffered similar discrimination. In another instance two Indian Squadron Leaders were even replaced from the command of the Indian Air Force squadrons not because they were unsuitable or incapable or due for posting, but because these squadrons happened to get British pilots more than 50 per cent of the total strength.⁸⁸ When the issue was raised by an Indian politician, the AOC (India) diplomatically explained that the replacement was made owing to shortage of Indian pilots. When the Secretary, War Department, wrote a Demi Official letter to this AOC, expressing his concern over the matter, the latter clarified his position by sending an extract to the policy decision.⁸⁹ The message was clear that it was the confidential policy of the British that mixed squadrons, which contained more British officers than the Indians, should be commanded by British officers.

Frank Anthony, an Anglo-Indian Legislator, blamed the British for racial discrimination against Anglo-Indian girls serving with the Women Auxiliary Corps (India). He complained that Anglo- Indian girls who dominated the Corps in strength were not being given their rightful dues. He wondered if the ranks and promotions in

⁸⁵ Transcript of Interview with Maj Gen D' Souza by Archana Masih, see <http://news.rediff.com>, accessed on 25 November 2009.

⁸⁶ Lt Gen B.M. Kaul, *The Untold Story* (Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1967), p. 68.

⁸⁷ Narain, *Subedar to Field Marshal*, p. 87.

⁸⁸ Demi Official letter from Secretary, War Department to AOC (India), 23 August 1944, *Policy: IAF/RAF Officers to Command IAF Squadrons*, 1944, File No. F/179, HDMOD.

⁸⁹ Demi Official letter from AOC (India) to Secretary, War Department (Personal and Confidential), *Ibid.*

the Women Corps were not determined by educational qualification and specialized knowledge but according to communal bias.⁹⁰

Staff Duties

Indians were even denied sensitive postings. In June 1940, Major J.N. Chaudhuri on his own request was posted to the 5th Indian Division as the General Staff Officer (henceforth GSO) 3 (Operations), Colonel Messervy of the Division made him GSO 3 (Chemical Warfare) and placed a British officer in his place. According to Chaudhuri, “Operations had to handle a number of top secret matters and just then he [Messervy] did not think it appropriate to have an Indian officer in the post.”⁹¹ Similarly, the Military Operations Directorate at the Army Headquarters was an exclusive preserve of British officers and even clerks posted there were all British.⁹² In sensitive staff duties in the Directorate of Military Intelligence and Military Operation, there were hardly four per cent Indian officers. The British authorities’ plea that there was a shortage of experienced Indian officers and it led to their meagre representation in staff duties, does stand ground as the Adjutant General Branch and the Quartermaster General Branch had more than twelve per cent Indian staff officers.⁹³ It is obvious that the British had little trust in Indian officers when it came to assigning duties of sensitive nature.

Indian Commissioned Officers of equivalent rank and service were given less salary than British officers. There was a 20-30 per cent difference between the pay of Indian Commissioned Officers and British officers of the Indian Army.⁹⁴ The difference could even increase depending upon the marital status and number of children of a British officer. For example, a comparison drawn by an Indian Legislator revealed that a British married Captain got Rs 775 against Rs 610 by an

⁹⁰ Frank Anthony, an Anglo Indian Legislator, put up his argument during the debate on the Indian Finance Bill. Statement by Frank Anthony, 16 March 1943, *LAD*.

⁹¹ Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, pp. 116-9.

⁹² Lt Gen S.K. Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1992), p. 77.

⁹³ In November 1943, only 2.7 per cent Indians were doing Staff Duties in Military Operations Directorate, and 3.57 per cent in Military Intelligence Directorate. However, it was not the case that there were an acute shortage of trained Indian staff officers, as the other department of Army HQs had a substantial number of Indian officers performing the Staff Duties. For example 12.5 per cent Indian were doing Staff Duties in Quartermaster General Branch, and 14.25 per cent in Adjutant General’s Branch. Reply by C.M. Trivedi, Secretary, War Department to Question No. 162, 15 November 1943, *LAD*.

⁹⁴ The difference of pay varies in each officer’s rank. It, however, falls in the range of 20-30 per cent.

Indian Commissioned Officer of the same status. Similarly, a British Major got Rs 1,105 against Rs 850 by an Indian and a British Lt Col got Rs 1,450 against Rs 1,105 by an Indian.⁹⁵ Indian Commissioned Officers raised this issue many a time.⁹⁶ The discrimination in pay was objected to by some senior Indian Air Force officers also.⁹⁷ The issue of discriminatory pay structure in the Army was also raised in the Council of States and the Legislative Assembly.⁹⁸ Sensing the discontent among Indian officers, the British attempted to convince Indian Officers that the pay in respect of both Indian and British officers was identical. Even a circular was accordingly issued to this end earlier in October 1942 with the hope that the feeling of discrimination among Indian officers would be allayed.⁹⁹ But the feelings of hurt continued to persist and no amount of explanation or argument succeeded in convincing Indian officers. The issue even impelled Pandit Kunzru, who had recently visited the Indian Army in the Middle East, to move a resolution in the Council of State. While moving the Resolution, he pointed out that the discrimination in the pay of Indian officers fighting side by side with British officers in same battle field and undergoing the same hardships was unjustified. However, if serving in India, the case might be different as Indians were at home whereas the British were serving abroad. He objected that when both were serving out of their own territories, the disparity in pay was discriminatory. Moreover, both categories of officers were required to pay the same mess bill.¹⁰⁰

C.M. Trivedi, Secretary, War Department, also refused to accept publically the discrimination meted out to Indian officers. On a question raised by K.S. Gupta in the Legislative Assembly regarding the discontent among Indian officers due to discriminatory treatment by European officers, Trivedi refuting the charges emphasized that there was no discrimination against Indian officers and that both

⁹⁵ Mr Frank R. Anthony figured out in the Legislative Assembly on 16 March 1943, the discriminatory pay to Indian officers over the British officers. 16 March 1943, *LAD*; Also 16 November 1944, *LAD*; Also see *Army Instructions (India)*, No. 76 of 1941.

⁹⁶ Express Letter, GOI, War Department to the Secretary of State and Minutes of Meetings, File No. 601/10604/H, HDMOD.

⁹⁷ *Policy: IAF/RAF Officers to Command IAF Squadrons*, 1944, File No. F/179, HDMOD. When AOC (India) asked senior Indian officers of IAF their views on some policy matter, Indian Air Force officers did not lose the chance of mentioning their grievances about pay and promotion issues over their British counterparts even working in the same Indian squadrons.

⁹⁸ The issue of discriminatory pay was raised by Members in both the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. See debates for details: 16 March 1943, *LAD*; Starred Question No. 649, 21 November 1944, *LAD*; Starred Question No. 665, 21 November 1944, *LAD*; 3 August 1943, *CSD*.

⁹⁹ Express Letter, GOI, War Department to The Secretary of State and Minutes of Meetings, File No. 601/10604/H, HDMOD.

¹⁰⁰ Resolution by Pandit H.N. Kunzru on Pay and Status of Indian Commissioned Officers Serving Abroad, 3 August 1943, *CSD*.

Indian and British officers were treated alike. He assured K.S. Gupta that he would investigate the matter if provided with any proven case of discrimination.¹⁰¹ But Trivedi indeed had to accept the differences in the pay scales between Indian and British officers just after three days of his earlier statement. He stated that representations on the issue were received by the War Department and the matter was under consideration.¹⁰² The matter, however, remained under consideration but the pay scales of British ECO and Indian ECOs, and also KCOs and Indian regular ICOs, put on the table on 21 November 1944 was still discriminatory.¹⁰³ Moreover, additional pay called 'Japanese Campaign Pay' was suggested for British officers during this month for which Indian officers were not entitled.¹⁰⁴

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief, gave a serious thought to this discrimination in pay and called for urgent remedial treatment.¹⁰⁵ Governor General subscribing to the C-in-C's view proposed that the basic pay of the ICOs should be raised to the level of the pay of British officers of the Indian Army. He also suggested that the ICOs when serving overseas, should get an expatriation allowance equivalent to the Indian Army allowance, drawn in India and overseas by British officers of the Indian Army.¹⁰⁶ Finance Member Raisman was, however, unable to agree to this proposal as it would have meant an additional burden of Rs 70 lakh annually on the Government. To this must be added the cost of comparable increase in RIN, IAF and other corps also. It was also pointed out in the minutes that ICOs were getting adequate salary that could be compared favourably with other Class I Central Services. If the proposal on the pay of ICOs was accepted, they would not only be paid in excess of all Central Class I Services in India but also more than British military service officers in overseas theatres. Raisman, himself an ICS also pointed out: "on a long view it would be most unwise to give officers of the Fighting Services

¹⁰¹Reply by C.M. Trivedi to Starred Question No. 809, 1 April 1944, *LAD*.

¹⁰²Frank R. Anthony put up such a systematic question before Trivedi that the answer revealed the discrimination before the Assembly. Starred Question No. 822, 5 April 1944, *LAD*.

¹⁰³Reply by C.M. Trivedi, War Secretary to Starred Question No. 649, 21 November 1944, *LAD*. The pay scales of British ECOs and Indian ECOs and also KCOs and Indian regular ICOs, was also put on the table along with the reply.

¹⁰⁴Letter from Amery, the Secretary of State to Wavell, Governor General of India, 16 Nov 1944, vol. V, *TOP*. According to this letter, C-in-C Auchinleck, however, did not agree with this proposal. He emphasized that if this pay is to be given, all Indian officers and men should also be granted this, otherwise it would cause another issue of discrimination.

¹⁰⁵Express Letter, GOI, War Department to The Secretary of State and Minutes of Meetings, File No. 601/10604/H, HDMOD.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*

better prospects than men in the Superior Civil Services [ICS].”¹⁰⁷ The C-in-C, however, was of the view that the Indian Commissioned Officer saw his basic pay substantially less than the British officer despite shouldering the same responsibility and similar expenses. The C-in-C was, therefore “convinced that regard must be had to human factor as well as to logic; so long present feeling exists there is a grave danger of a steady and increasing growth of a strong body of embittered opinion amongst ICOs.”¹⁰⁸ Secretary to the GOI agreed with the financial and other implications but, “urged that whatever the consequence of the proposal may be, the feeling of racial discrimination among ICOs is so acute that it must be removed.” Going further, he suggested an increase in the existing emoluments of married officers and also the grant of Burma Campaign Pay to Indian officers.¹⁰⁹ The Governor General also recognized the pinch of the financial burden but he regarded it as a relatively small price for the removal of the grievance and decided to take up the issue with Secretary of State for India.¹¹⁰

But, it was too late and the year 1944 was heading towards its end.¹¹¹ Ultimately, the case was considered in early 1945 and the pay of Indian officers was revised with retrospective effective from November 1944. The discrimination in pay between the British and Indian officers was tried to be removed. Under this revision Indian officers were given the same basic rates of pay as that of the British officers, excluding the Indian Army allowance. Marriage allowance was also made applicable and an expatriation allowance was also granted to Indian officers serving overseas.¹¹² *Fauji Akhbar* carried the news in its issue of April 1945 stating: the “Pay of ICOs be raised, being equal to British officers.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁷Wavell to Amery, 19 October 1944, vol. V, *TOP*. In this letter Wavell among other things informed Amery about the meeting that took place to look into the discriminatory pay of ICOs comparing to British officers of the Indian Army.

¹⁰⁸Express Letter, GOI, War Department to The Secretary of State and Minutes of Meetings, File No. 601/10604/H, HDMOD; Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p. 511.

¹⁰⁹Perhaps it was the ‘Japanese Campaign Pay’ (here wrongly quoted as Burma Campaign Pay) that had recently been introduced for British officers. See Letter from Wavell to Amery, 19 October 1944, vol. V, *TOP*.

¹¹⁰Express Letter, GOI, War Department to The Secretary of State and Minutes of Meetings, File No. 601/10604/H, HDMOD.

¹¹¹Pay to Indian Commissioned Officers, Letter No. No 35516/AG/Cord, 29 October 1949, *Commissioned Officers*, File No. 610/12160/H, HDMOD.

¹¹²*Ibid.*

¹¹³*Fauji Akhbar*, 17 April 1945, p. 5.

Other Ranks

Indian other ranks also suffered discrimination. Barracks with concrete floors were allotted to British soldiers whereas Indians lived on raw floor barracks, which needed regular smearing with cow dung and mud. British soldiers had fans in their barracks, but the facility was not extended to Indian soldiers.¹¹⁴ The space authorized lighting in the barracks of British troops was five square feet per watt but in the case of Indian troops it was eight square feet per watt.¹¹⁵ If the troops were to be accommodated in tents, ten BORs were to stay in a tent of 1600 lb size while in case of Indians 12 IORs were to be accommodated in a tent of the same size. If Indian followers were to live in the tents, the numbers increased to 16 for the same tent. Similarly, during the line of march and manoeuvres, 16 BORs were accommodated in one tent of 160 lb, while in the case of Indians the strength increased to 20 IORs or 25 Indian followers.¹¹⁶

Further, family accommodations too were discriminatory. The quarters of a British sergeant had ample space comprising rooms, dining hall, kitchen and a cook's room, etc., almost all fitted with fans and lights whereas an Indian havildar got a single bedroom with a combined kitchen and dining hall.¹¹⁷ Further, the Indian Havildar was not authorized for a fan and was provided with a single 15 watt lamp in his quarter. Even in hospital wards, British troops were authorized one ceiling fan per two beds while Indians were authorized one ceiling fan per four beds.¹¹⁸ British troops travelling by train were given a 2nd class ticket while Indian troops were given a third class ticket.¹¹⁹ Indian soldiers were served with two meals a day, in the morning and the evening, respectively. The British other ranks were served with three meals a day, in the morning, afternoon and evening. There was a huge difference in the cost of the

¹¹⁴Interview with Honorary Captain Umrao Singh, Timewatch: The Forgotten Volunteers of World War II, <http://www.youtube.com>, accessed on 26 May 2011. Umrao Singh was enrolled in the Indian Artillery in November 1939. He won the British highest gallantry award Victoria Cross while fighting in Kaladan Valley in December 1944. Also see *Army Regulations, India: Barrack Synopsis*, 1935, Appendix E, pp. 10-11, 18-9. There was no change in the Regulation after 1935 in this regard.

¹¹⁵*Army Regulations, India: Barrack Synopsis*, 1935, Appendix E, pp. 10-11, 18-19.

¹¹⁶*Tentage Regulations, India*, (Calcutta, Army Department, Central Publication, Branch, 1931), Appendix 2, p. 36.

¹¹⁷*Army Regulations, India: Barrack Synopsis*, Appendix E, pp. 10-11, 18-19.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 50-1.

¹¹⁹*Defence Service Regulations (India): Passage Regulations*, 1940, amended and annotated suitably till 1942, pp. 35-36; 'RIN Demobilisation Procedure Criticised', *The Times of India*, 10 May 1946, p. 3; Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 39. According to Lt Gen Sinha: Officer Cadets, VCOs and BORs travelled in the Second Class. Indian Non Commissioned Officers travelled in the Intermediate Class whereas Indian sepoy's travelled in the Third Class of the train.

meal of Indian and British other ranks. Indian soldiers ate ration costing fifteen paise per day whereas the cost of a British soldier's ration was ten times higher.¹²⁰ BORS were issued with free razor blades and tooth brushes while these items were not issued to IORs.¹²¹ There was no dental medical facility for Indian troops prior to 1940. Still, one Dental Officer was sanctioned for every 5,000 Indian troops whereas in the case of the British, a Dental officer was sanctioned for 2,000 troops. Dentures were only permitted to British troops.¹²²

At times Indian soldiers were not provided the basic facilities. Once about 80 Indian clerical personnel who were shifted from the 2nd Echelon building to Shampollion (near Alexandria), were not given *charpoy*s and were forced to sleep on the ground for about two months. These soldiers felt particularly discontented and complained that such insulting treatment was never given to the British ranks.¹²³ While speaking on a resolution, Indian legislators blamed British authorities for differential treatment in providing basic amenities to Indian soldiers. Abul Qaiyum, a Legislator, pointed out that Indian soldiers were fighting for the British to help them 'to retain their ill-gotten gains', and therefore, it should be the duty of the British to treat them at par with British soldiers.¹²⁴

The British did not like the presence of Indian Air Force Other Ranks around their work place. Thomas, who joined the Indian Air Force in the ranks in December 1939, writes about an incident of Royal Air Force at Karachi: "in clear and blunt terms we [Indian Air Force airmen] were told that we would only be hindrance in the hangers."¹²⁵ This happened even when senior British military officers admired the IAF personnel for their hard work, competency and commitment.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Reply to Starred Question No. 461, 16 November 1944, *LAD*. The cost of Indian soldiers' meal was 15 paise per day and that of the British other rank Rs 1.5 per day.

¹²¹ 'Your Queries Answered', *Fauji Akhbar*, 29 June 1940, p. 10. This question of discrimination was raised by some Indian personnel and they demanded reply. However, the query was conveniently ignored and not answered.

¹²² Willcox Committee Report, paras 573-6. The Committee pointed out that no distinction should be made in this respect between Indian and British troops. To treat the Indians, the Indian Army Dental Corps came into existence in 1943. However, the sanctioned strength remained the same.

¹²³ *War Diary of GHQ 2nd Echelon PAI Force*, File No. 601/1/WD/Part I (Secret), HDMOD.

¹²⁴ Harsh Condition of Service in Middle East and Italy, 9 April 1945, *LAD*.

¹²⁵ Sqn Ldr P.J. Thomas, *Memoirs of No 8 Squadron, IAF*, www.bharatrakshak.com, accessed on 4 November 2011. Sqn Ldr Thomas joined the Indian Air Force Volunteer Reserve as an airman in Wireless & Electrical Mechanic trade in December 1939. Later he got commissioned in the technical branch of the IAF.

¹²⁶ Pushpindar Singh, *Sikh Pilots in the Indian Air Force in World War Two*, pp. 1-12, www.bharatrakshak.com, accessed on 9 January 2011.

British officers while with the Royal Navy treated their ratings candidly but while with the Indian Navy, they behaved harshly with the Indian ratings.¹²⁷ Lt Ranjit, an RIN Indian officer awaiting release in May 1946 stated, “99 per cent of the Indians in the service felt that there was colour discrimination in the RIN.”¹²⁸ He gave a number of examples in which the Indian ratings and even officers were subjected to various indignities by British officers. According to an Ordinary Seaman of Battleship Talwar, British officers used abusive language for Indian ratings and also harassed them.¹²⁹ While writing of the Indian Navy, H.N. Kunzru stated even “comradeship in the war has failed to kill racial prejudice.”¹³⁰ Indian ratings raised the issues of poor service conditions, rations and pay, etc. time and again. There were mutinies in this small force due to the discontent of the ratings. Naval authorities used harsh measures to discipline them, which further worsened the relationship between Indian ratings and British officers.¹³¹ The Commission set up to enquire the cause of the Naval Mutiny of February 1946 commented:

“The basic cause of the mutiny in our opinion was widespread discontent among the naval men, arising mainly from a number of service grievances which had remained unredressed for some time and were aggravated by the political situation. Without this discontent, the mutiny would not have taken place.”¹³²

Even the British rankers behaved rudely with the Indian other ranks. It is reported that an Indian soldier was slapped and even a Viceroy Commissioned Officer was abused by a British Sergeant.¹³³ When the matter was raised by the VCO, only an Indian Commissioned Officer was available at the base and he found himself helpless.

¹²⁷ VAdm N. Krishnan, *A Sailor's Story*, (Banglore, Punya Publishing, 2011), p. 93.

¹²⁸ *Report of the RIN Commission of Enquiry*, 1946, Chapter IX; ‘RIN Demobilisation Procedure Criticised’, *The Times of India*, 10 May 1946, p. 3.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ H.N. Kunzru, ‘Defence of India’, *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 233, *Indian Speaking*, May 1944, pp. 6-11.

¹³¹ Maj Gen V.K. Singh, *Contribution of the Armed Forces to the Freedom Movement in India* (New Delhi, United Service Institution of India, 2009), pp. 105-8. In 1942, there were four cases of mutiny in RIN. The issues centred around the demand for higher pay, food problem, scale of ration, accommodation, religious overtones and ill treatment.

¹³² *Report of the RIN Commission of Enquiry*, 1946, para 685, NAI.

¹³³ In an incident a British Sergeant slapped an Indian Havildar and abused Risaldar Major as *Gulam* without a fault of these Indians. Capt Gurbachan Singh Mangat, *The Tiger Strikes: An Unwritten Chapter of Netaji's Life History* (Ludhiana, Gagan Publishers, 1986), pp. 22-23. Capt Mangat was taken POW with the 3 Indian Motor Brigade in Egypt. He later joined the INA.

The Commandant when later reported, scolded the Sergeant stating, “why did you need to utter *Gulam* in front of a VCO when we all know this fact.”¹³⁴ When cases of such improper behaviour by the British Other Ranks were reported to the Commander of the 14th Army, he got furious. He ordered his Administrative Officer, Maj Gen Williams to write to all formation commanders under the 14th Army that such behaviour would not be tolerated and that if such cases came to his knowledge, defaulters would be subjected to disciplinary action by Court Martial.¹³⁵ He ordered that the BORs particularly would avoid the use of coarse and offensive language and would never threaten any IOR. He reminded everybody that: “tolerance and good temper and ability to see the other person’s point have always been the genius of the British race.”¹³⁶

There was much difference in the pay between the British and Indian Soldiers. A British Private who had put up more than one year of service and was deployed in the Middle East received Rs 66.10 as pay and this could rise to Rs 118.10 if he was married and even more if he had children. The pay of an Indian Sepoy in the same situation was Rs 30, irrespective of whether he was married or had children. Similarly, the pay of a married British Sergeant was Rs 276 but an Indian Havildar was paid Rs 50.¹³⁷ The IORs of Signal Corps, who were better educated and worked alongside the BORs, also suffered discrimination in salary, rations and living conditions.¹³⁸ According to Lt Gen S.K. Sinha, British soldiers got higher pay, more perquisites and better facilities than the Indian soldiers and this reminded the Indians of their dependent status.¹³⁹ Further, in 1944 War Service increments were introduced for BORs and British officers but Indian VCOs and IORs were not given any such increment.¹⁴⁰ Such discriminations must have generated a dislike for the British among the Indian soldiers. A propaganda letter captured by the authorities claimed that the Indian soldiers hate their British officers because of their discriminatory

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹³⁵ Discipline: British Ranks’ Behaviour Towards Indian Ranks, No. 2045/98/A (Secret & Confidential), 31 July 1944, *War Diary of 14th Army*, File No. 601/155/WD/Part I, HDMOD.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Statement of Table put up in the Council of State on 2 August 1943 by Commander-in-Chief, Indian Army, 2nd August 1943, *CSD*. For huge differences in pay between Indian and British other ranks, also see pay structure provided by C.M. Trivedi in Legislative Assembly. Answer to Question No. 802, 5 April 1944, *LAD*.

¹³⁸ Maj Gen V.K. Singh, *Contribution of the Armed Forces to the Freedom Movement in India*, pp. 131-5.

¹³⁹ Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁰ Wavell to Amery, 19 October 1944, vol. V, *TOP*.

treatment. It further claimed that this hatred was assuming a national character.¹⁴¹ However, though there were feelings of disappointment in the heart of the Indian soldier due to discriminations, the said statement at that point of time seemed to be an exaggeration.

Were the British Fair to Indians?

The discrimination between the British and Indian other ranks was of a generally administrative nature. The behaviour of the British other ranks towards their Indian counterparts was, however, a matter of concern. Perhaps, the British officers had little say in this. Indian other ranks often appreciated their British officers and some even felt proud to work under them.¹⁴² Jemadar Gurdas Singh found his British officers highly dedicated and dutiful. He was even inspired by their dedication.¹⁴³ Honorary Captain Ishwar Singh finds his British commanding officer just and fine.¹⁴⁴ Atul Yadav in his research on 'Haryana Soldiers' concludes on the basis of his interviews with the veterans about the behaviour of British officers with the Indian other ranks that the response was somewhat ambivalent, however "tilted slightly in favour of British officers."¹⁴⁵ Subedar Risal Singh categorically said that British officers were perhaps trained in their Academies in such a way that they were cautious while dealing with Indian soldiers and had a regard for their habits and customs.¹⁴⁶ Even war time training instructions at the Officers Training Schools also emphasized that the British officer's primary duty was to take an interest in the welfare of the *jawans* under him. Without a cordial officer-soldier relationship, all training was bound to be useless. Learning of Urdu was considered useful so that officers could communicate freely with their Indian troops.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ *Extracts from Letters addressed to the Organizer Congress Northern Zone*, No. DMI/4746 (Most Secret), 18 March 1943, File No. 601/10569/H, HDMOD. The letters believed to be written by Congress as its propaganda mean.

¹⁴² Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context', *The Journal of Military History*, no. 73, 2, April 2009, pp. 497-529.

¹⁴³ *Interview, Jemadar Gurdas Singh* conducted by his Grandson, www.youtube.com/watch?v=uU7koCL-97A, part 1 to 4, accessed on 18 May 2012. Gurdas Singh joined the Indian Army during the Second World War and fought the War overseas.

¹⁴⁴ *Interview, Honorary Captain Ishwar Singh*, 20 December 2008.

¹⁴⁵ Atul Yadav, *Valour Unlimited: Haryana and the Indian Armed Forces* (New Delhi, KK Publications, 2009), p. 207. According to Yadav, veterans who served both under British and Indian officers appreciated both but a bit more the British officers.

¹⁴⁶ *Interview, Subedar Risal Singh*, 9 December 2008.

¹⁴⁷ Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context', pp. 497-529.

As regards to the discrimination against Indian officers, some senior British officers were equally fair both to Indians and the British. Air Marshal Ghadiok says, “Sqn Ldr Jaffery [CO of his Squadron] was a very fair minded person.”¹⁴⁸ While appreciating his British commanding officer, Krishna Rao writes that he was affectionate towards him.¹⁴⁹ Major (later Lt Gen) B.M. Kaul, who commanded the Motor Transport Regiment in Arakan, had many British and other colonial officers working under him. He mentions: “no one gave me any trouble except a South African Major.”¹⁵⁰ Lt Col (Later Lt Gen) Thorat who commanded the 2/2 Punjab Regiment at Arakan in 1944-45 writes that he was though initially apprehensive about the behaviour of the British officers but they proved to be loyal and affectionate.¹⁵¹ General Chaudhuri writes that he never had any problem with any British officers who worked under him and were senior to him.¹⁵² Appreciating Maj Gen Heath, Commander 4th Indian Division (Middle East in 1941), writes that Heath sincerely wanted Indian officers should to get experience and prove themselves. Heath selected Captain J.N. Chaudhuri as his GSO 3 not only because he liked him but also because he wanted Indians to prove and it was only possible if they were given the opportunity.¹⁵³ The commanding officer who once rebuked Thimayya was also fair while writing his report, “A most attractive personality with charming manners, cool under all circumstances.”¹⁵⁴ Jacob, while appreciating the fairness of his brigade commander mentions that he promoted him to the rank of Major keeping a British senior Captain aside. He completely believed in his ability and did not discriminate between the Indians and the British.¹⁵⁵

There are many more such instances. Lt Gen S.D. Verma writes that he never felt discrimination from the British officers. On an occasion at Bombay when being a native he was prohibited from entering a civil swimming club, he resisted and finally

¹⁴⁸ Interview, Air Marshal T.N. Ghadiok, 15 November 2008.

¹⁴⁹ General K.V. Krishna Rao, *In the Service of the Nation: Reminiscences* (New Delhi, Viking, 2001), pp. 11-2.

¹⁵⁰ Kaul, *The Untold Story*, p. 68.

¹⁵¹ Lt Gen S.P.P. Thorat, *From Reville to Retreat* (New Delhi, Allied, 1986), p. 62.

¹⁵² Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 99.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 125-6.

¹⁵⁴ Khanduri, *Thimayya: An Amazing Life*, p. 64.

¹⁵⁵ Lt Gen J.F.R. Jacob, *An Odyssey in War and Peace: An Autobiography*, p. 16. It was the time when Jacob was a Captain and fighting in his Artillery unit at Arakan. His CO wrote to Brigade Commander to post a Major to his unit. He also wrote that there were no competent officers among the British officers in the unit to be promoted. Jacob, an Indian officer, was too junior. Brigade Commander who had seen Jacob in action decided to promote him keeping aside senior British Captain who even threatened to commit suicide if the junior Indian was promoted before him.

disobeyed the discriminatory rules of the Club. His fellow British officers even supported him in this adventure.¹⁵⁶ Likewise when General Platt, Theatre Commander, Sudan, was told about the discriminatory treatment against Indian officers at local clubs he said: “Who do these bloody people think they are? If Indian officers are good enough to fight for the King, they are good enough to be made members of any club in the Sudan.”¹⁵⁷ He added, “anymore of this nonsense and I’ll put every club out of bounds to the army which will soon shut them [Clubs] down.” Thus, he got the matter resolved. Capt Sinha (later Lt Gen) was posted as a General Staff Officer to a brigade in 1945 towards the end of the war in Burma. There were only two Indian officers, including Sinha, in the Brigade Headquarters. Sinha writes, “we were not discriminated against in any manner.”¹⁵⁸ Sinha also could not do without wondering about the very fair dealing of his British commanding officer.

When at Pegu, Salim, an Indian officer was listening to Indian music on radio at the officers’ mess, a British Captain walked in and switched off the radio saying that Indian music could not be played at the officers’ mess. He also used offensive language. Salim, outraged over the incident, threw the radio at the British officer who, however, dodged it. The matter reached the commanding officer, who said nothing to Salim but reprimanded the British Captain and asked him to apologize for his wrong doing. Orders were passed that whoever came to the mess earlier could switch on whatever programme he liked.¹⁵⁹ In another incident when a British Brigadier threw out the luggage of Lt Col Bhatia from a first class compartment of the train at Baghdad, General Wilson, took a serious view of the issue. Wilson not only made the Brigadier to apologize but also demoted him to Colonel rank.¹⁶⁰ John Prendergast, who commanded the 3rd Rajputana Rifles during Fourteenth Army’s offensive in Burma, had many Indian officers in his battalion. He claims to have spared no effort to make Indian officers feel at home and even insisted that both Indian and English food should be served in the mess.¹⁶¹ Pilot Officer (later Air Chief Marshal) Lal

¹⁵⁶Verma, *To Serve With Honour*, pp. 8 & 13. Verma writes that he, however, had many curious and hostile stares from other bathers as their pool was being polluted by a native.

¹⁵⁷ Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*, p. 130.

¹⁵⁸Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 62.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁶⁰Narain, *Subedar to Field Marshal*, p. 88.

¹⁶¹Quoted in Roy, ‘Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context’, pp. 497-529.

writes, “Indian officers were free to take part in all the activities of the mess as equals, and there was no colour bar, nor any tension.”¹⁶²

It may not be out of place to mention here that some Indian officers also avoided the company of Indian officers. According to Sinha, the CO of his battalion, an Indian officer “distanced himself from the Indian officers and liked to be in the company of British officers only.”¹⁶³ Even an Indian officer, commissioned from the ranks, openly favoured the men of his class. Ultimately, the commanding officer of the unit had to post him out of the battalion.¹⁶⁴ Such discrimination against the Indian ranks hardly could be seen against any British officer.

The reports of discrimination made by some officers were not always true. Lt Gen S.D. Verma recollecting his Sandhurst days (1927-28) says:

“I do not recall any particular instance of racial discrimination at Sandhurst. We as a people, are perhaps over-sensitive to expressions used by English speaking white races to describe non-whites. Often they are not meant to be offensive but employed as words of common usage. For example, most of them used the words natives and nigger, without giving it a second thought we feel insulted, but never think twice about referring to an African a *Hubshi*, or call and refer to our own ‘low caste’ citizens by all sorts of derogatory names”.¹⁶⁵

There was also a view that Indians were less capable than the British. Brigadier T.H. Angus, Director of Military Training, recorded that young Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers compared unfavourably with British Emergency Commissioned Officers in Officers Training Schools in broadness of view, education and intelligence.¹⁶⁶ He also noticed that in these schools the Indian cadets tended to be nervous about shouldering responsibilities, and expected encouragement and

¹⁶² Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal (ed. Ela Lal), *My Years with the IAF* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1986), p. 19. Lal writes of Risalpur where he was posted in the early 1940.

¹⁶³ Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁴ Narayan, *General JN Chaudhuri*.

¹⁶⁵ Verma, *To Serve With Honour*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁶ Brig Angus provided the performance chart of the Indian ECOs comparing them with British ECOs as : (i) BB (well above average) British 2.07 per cent, Indian 1.36 per cent; (ii) B (above average) British 16.6 per cent, Indian 7.6 per cent; (iii) C (average) British 75.33 per cent, Indian 76.84 per cent; D (slightly below average) British 5.6 per cent, Indian 14.1 per cent; DD (well below average) British 0.4 per cent, Indian 1.1 per cent. MO No. 2507/3/SD 1(b), 16 November 1945, *War Time ICOs: The Progress of Indianisation*, File No. 601/7179/H (Secret), HDMOD.

reassurance on their efficiency.¹⁶⁷ Maj Gen Chappel, M.G. Infantry, suggests that recruitment of the wrong social type, with limited education and poor background as was seen in the War time Indian officers. He, however, points out that little knowledge of English was the cause for their poor results.¹⁶⁸ Brigadier of General Staff Branch was also of the opinion that most of the problems with the Indian ECOs arose due to their poor knowledge of English.¹⁶⁹

But that might not be the case with all the arms and services, and also all British officers might not have shared such views. Like Brigadier WHG Beard, the Director of Military Intelligence, who found most of his Indian ECOs in the Censorship branch of the Army Postal Service highly qualified. He even appreciated their capability for having more potential than even their British counterparts.¹⁷⁰

Discrimination Analysed

The comments on the behaviour and dealing of the British are of a mixed nature. Some had good experiences with their British comrades and seniors while others had genuine complains. There were cases where an Indian officer felt discriminated by a British officer but was dealt with fairly by another British officer. Sometimes, it depended on the nature and temperament of a particular officer who could be as harsh or as fair to a British officer as to any Indian. But being from another race, an Indian could certainly take them as behaving harshly or discriminately towards him. However, while scolding an officer for his mistake, if the senior accused the whole of his race, it did sound racial. Also, without giving a second thought, when some British officers passed derogatory comments even on the first sight of an Indian officer, it is more unfair. Some of the racial comments disturbed an Indian officer so much that he could not do without resigning his commission. Doubting the capability of any race is totally prejudiced, as every thoughtful mind knows that by good training and environment any race from any part of the globe could be mustered in the military mechanism. Further, sometimes an average British officer due to his long tradition may be superior to an Indian officer but as regards courtesy and good manners, he can make no such claim.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *M.G. Infantry*, File No. 601/7178/H, HDMOD.

¹⁶⁹ GS Branch No. 2507/3/SD 1(b), 16 November 1945, *War Time ICOs: The Progress of Indianisation*, 601/7179/H (Secret), HDMOD.

¹⁷⁰ *War Time ICOs: The Progress of Indianisation*, 601/7179/H (Secret), HDMOD.

Also, there cannot be double standards in pay and perks. The appointments and commands also cannot be a preserve of some specific class. Thus, discrimination undoubtedly prevailed in the Indian army and the number of cases increased with the expansion of the armed forces after the outbreak of the War. In other words as the strength of Indian officers started increasing, they could dare to speak against it, something which hardly happened earlier. Steps were taken to deal with it especially when it seemed to be becoming a threat. The thinking process of the authorities was persistently stimulated further by Indian legislators and leaders. Most of the senior British officers took it very seriously, only a few others ignored or laughed it off. Discrimination was deep seated in the minds of some Indian officers. The political climate in India also provided a supporting role to their feelings. They, therefore, rallied the officers and men when they got the chance and thus discrimination became one of the potential causes of the formation and expansion of the Indian National Army.¹⁷¹

Racial discrimination also continued against the Blacks in the American armed forces during the Second World War. They were still formed in separate units and even divisions in the infantry. They were still deployed usually on less important jobs and normally operational assignments were not given to the Black units. Segregation practices, especially against Black officers in the mess, barracks, officers' club and even at duty posts and the advancement of their career had a demoralizing effect.¹⁷² As a matter of policy, all the branches of the US army were opened for the Blacks, but they still were kept separately. Trust, confidence and fairness lacked in the behaviour of White officers, the reason being their fear of the Blacks incapability in combat effectiveness and the fear of losing out their preserve of the exclusiveness of Whites in the officer cadre of the US army.¹⁷³ However, with the intensity of war on the rise,

¹⁷¹ Several officers cited the difference in treatment in the Indian Army between its Indian and British officers as an important reason for joining the INA. Cohen cites Shah Nawaz Khan testifying at his trial that in the Indian army not a single officer was given the command of a Division and only one Indian was given the command of a Brigade. Lack of talent was not the reason but the British were cautious in their Indianisation programme. Later when the INA was formed many felt that their caution was justified. But it can also be argued that giving more authority to Indians would have made them more loyal, even when they were captured. Stephen P. Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 209.

¹⁷² P.L. Prattis, 'The Morale of the Negro in the Armed Services of the United States', *The Journal of Negro Education*, no. 12, 3, The American Negro in World War I and World War II, Summer 1943, pp. 355-63.

¹⁷³ Charles H. Houston, 'Critical Summary', pp. 364-66.

the cases of discrimination started receding. Many factors worked their way. The worldwide changing scenario that was against the racial factor contributed enormously. Blacks' newspapers raised the issue every now and then, always making leaders concerned about the problem. Black leaders and also the men and officers in the forces resented such racial discrimination.¹⁷⁴ Besides, some fair minded whites believed that the army must make full use of the "great asset of the coloured men of the nation."¹⁷⁵

Dimensions of Discrimination

Discrimination against Indian officers may broadly be categorized in four categories. These were racial, social, economical and professional. The British considered themselves racially superior to Indians and much of the discrimination in the Indian army was the result of this racial syndrome. For their supposed racial inferiority Indians were often called Blacks. They were not accepted by the British as equals and were treated as poor in intelligence and strength. Some White officers did not like the company of the Black race in the mess and elsewhere. They could like the blacks as the ruled but not as comrades. The racial syndrome thus dominated the mindset of some British officers.

Social discrimination was far more rampant. For this reason, they were not allowed entry in elite clubs. Even in battalion messes they were ill treated. In many cases Indian food and music was restricted. Instructions were passed from time to time by higher commanders against such practices. In a few cases stern action was taken against the defaulters. Clubs in Indian cantonments had already formally been opened. Time is the best healer, the British gradually started accepting Indian officers in these clubs. Still, in some civilian clubs, Indians were not permitted, but the change in the attitude of the British officers was clearly visible. They supported their Indian comrades defying this discriminatory system and helped them to enter forcibly and enjoyed together. The young Britishers, who joined during the Second World War, indeed were less prejudiced. The social discrimination gradually receded and almost ceased by the end of the Second World War barring a few incidents. The increasing

¹⁷⁴ Howard H. Long, 'The Negro Soldier in the Army of the United States', *The Journal of Negro Education*, no. 12, 3, 'The American Negro in World War I and World war II', Summer, 1943, pp. 307-15.

¹⁷⁵ Henry L. Stimson, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, pp. 461-4.

strength of Indian officers, circulars and instructions by higher commanders, and change in the attitude of the British officers due to war circumstances, all contributed to it.

Economic discrimination prevailed in the pay and perks admissible to Indian officers. Native officers and other ranks of equal seniority and status were given far less pay than their British equivalents, simply because they were Indians. Many kinds of perks given to British men and officers were just not allowed to Indians. However, in 1945 some measures were initiated to remove the disparity in pay and perks in the armed forces.

With regard to the power of the command of the British troops, because of some problems in the mixed composition at the HQs, steps were initiated in early 1942. When Indian officers served as staff officers in mixed formations, they faced numerous difficulties as they did not have the power to command the British troops, which in turn proved detrimental in maintaining discipline and efficient discharge of duties by an Indian.¹⁷⁶ In April 1942, a message from the Defence Department (India) to the Secretary of State proposed to remove the restrictions placed on the power of the ICOs to command and punish the British other ranks but the proposal was shelved in view of some opposition.¹⁷⁷

Discrimination in promotion also continued for long. Promotion of junior officers up to the rank of Major, generally involved no discrimination, but the promotion of senior Indian officers to the rank of Lt Col, which authorized an officer to command a unit, was not always just. This issue was often raised by Indian Legislators as well. Meanwhile, the political climate in India and the pressure generated by the Indian National Army was working on the minds of British authorities. Many of the KCIOs had put up a number of years of service and had substantial experience.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, KCIOs were the lot that the British considered to be the most loyal among Indian officers.¹⁷⁹ They had the power to command both the British and Indian troops and their pay was equivalent to British officers. They

¹⁷⁶Amery to Linlithgow, 28 July 1942, *TOP*.

¹⁷⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸KCIOs (King Commissioned Indian Officer) were those officers who were commissioned prior to 1 January 1935, most of them being passed out from Sandhurst.

¹⁷⁹Sinha, *A Soldier Recalls*, pp. 79-80.

fostered the view that the British though were giving promotion and command of units to their British counterparts, and sometimes juniors, but they were being discriminated against.¹⁸⁰ The Commander-in-Chief, therefore, besides resolving the discrimination of pay between ICOs and British officers, decided to remedy the grievances of KCIOs. Lt Col Rudra, his adviser on promotion and appointment matters, cites: “He [Auchinleck] had been put out by the implied bias against Indian officers and that he wanted to put things right.”¹⁸¹ He asked Rudra around the first half of 1944 to prepare a panel of six Indian Majors for promotion to the rank of Lt Col.¹⁸² Consequently, six Indians were promoted in the next few months.¹⁸³ These appointments enabled a number of Indian officers to command battalions.

Meanwhile, in October 1944, the British unit *viz.* 8 York & Lancaster Regiment that constituted 51 Indian Brigade along with two Indian battalions, was taken out of the Brigade,¹⁸⁴ and was replaced by an Indian battalion, thus making it a purely ‘All-India Brigade’.¹⁸⁵ It was for the first time in the annals of the Indian army that an Indian Brigade was composed purely of Indian units, while in operations. Otherwise, it had been the declared policy of the British that the Indian Brigade was to include at least one British unit.¹⁸⁶ However, with the progression of the war when British troops fell short, Gorkha battalions were sometimes posted to the Indian Brigade. This was a precaution to safeguard against a possible anti-British collusion by the Indian units.

In November 1944, three battalions, *viz.* 16/10 Baluch, 2/2 Punjab and 8/19 Hyderabad were commanded by Lt Col L.P. Sen, Lt Col S.P.P. Thorat and Lt Col

¹⁸⁰ Khanduri, *Thimayya: An Amazing Life*, p. 83.

¹⁸¹ Palit, *Major General AA Rudra*, p. 280.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* Rudra suggested Thimayya, Thapar, Thorat and Tara Singh Bal and two others.

¹⁸³ It was the first time that so many Indian Majors were promoted to Lt Col rank within a very short time.

¹⁸⁴ *War Diary 51 Indian Brigade*, File No. 601/341/WD, HDMOD.

¹⁸⁵ The 51st Indian Brigade acquired the name ‘All-India Brigade’ for two reasons. First, usually every Indian Brigade consisted of two Indian battalions and one British or Gorkha battalion. This was a precaution the British took to safeguard against a possible anti-British collusion by Indian units. In the 51st Brigade, all the three battalions were Indian. Secondly, these all were commanded by Indian officers. Thorat, *From Reville to Retreat*, p. 64.

¹⁸⁶ Sir Ashley Eden recommended in 1879 that each Indian Brigade would have two British and two Indian battalions (then called regiment). Each Cavalry Brigade would have a British regiment and two Indian regiments. *Report of Sir Ashley Eden’s Commission on the Indian Army*, 1879, para 64; The reorganization of 1912 too provisioned that each brigade of infantry as well as cavalry was to be composed of one British and two Indian regiments. *Army in India Committee*, 1912, vol. I, pp. 6 & 9. Regulations of 1923 also repeated this policy. *War Establishment, India*, vol. I, 1923, GOI, pp. 224-6.

K.S. Thimayya, respectively, became part of the 51 Brigade.¹⁸⁷ The Brigade fought in Arakan and gave a good account of itself in the battle of Kangaw.¹⁸⁸ Mountbatten termed this battle as ‘the bloodiest battle of Arakan’.¹⁸⁹ The three Indian commanders proved their mettle and all the three were even awarded with Distinguished Service Order for their exceptional leadership in the Kangaw battle.

In the second half of 1944, three Indian Squadron Leaders of the Indian Air Force were promoted to the rank of Wing Commander and one Lieutenant Commander of the Indian Navy as a Commander.¹⁹⁰

This trend was not exclusive to India. In the USA, one Black was promoted to Brigadier-General and ten Blacks as Colonels. In the spring of 1945, racially mixed infantry units were formed under the command of a Black and a White General and deployed in the operations on the Western Front. “The experiment was a sensational success.”¹⁹¹ Blacks won high praise for combat duty, when platoons of the Black infantry volunteers were assigned to the depleted White infantry companies.¹⁹² It was for the first time that Black soldiers felt that they were treated as soldiers and not as coloured soldiers.¹⁹³ “The performance of these volunteers was highly rated by the white soldiers with whom they fought, a fact that had some bearing on the post-war Army decision to assign one Negro [Black] battalion to otherwise white regiments.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁷Thimayya was commissioned on 4 February 1926 and promoted to Lt Col on 19 August 1944. Thorat was commissioned on 30 August 1926 and promoted to Lt Col in later 1944. L.P. Sen was commissioned on 27 August 1931 and promoted to Lt Col on 2 November 1944.

¹⁸⁸ Kangaw lies on the costal side about 50 miles south of Myohaung, the ancient capital of Arakan (in Burma). It was the only route of withdrawal for the Japanese army and, thus was important to both the Japanese and the Allied forces.

¹⁸⁹War Department, India, Monograph on 25 Indian Division speaks that of something like 2500 Japanese at Kangaw, less than 500 survived. War Department, Director of Public Relation, GOI, *The Story of 25th Indian Division*, p. 24. Lt Gen Thorat, then commanding officer 2/2 Punjab writes: ‘on 27 January began the battle of Kangaw which was to last for a fortnight and claimed the blood of two thousand men. Thorat, *From Reville to Retreat*, p. 66.

¹⁹⁰*Commissioned Officers*, File No. 601/12160/H, HDMOD; *Fauji Akhbar*, 2 January 1945.

¹⁹¹Reddick, ‘The Negro Policy of the United States Army’, pp. 9-29.

¹⁹² Alfred H. Hausrath, ‘Utilisation of Negro Manpower in the Army’, *Journal of the Operations Research Society of America*, no. 2, 1, February 1954, pp. 17-30; L.D. Reddick, ‘The Relative Status of the Negro in the American Armed Forces’, in *The Journal of Negro Education*, no. 22, 3, Summer, 1953, pp. 380-7.

¹⁹³Reddick, ‘Negro Policy of the United States Army’, pp. 9-29.

¹⁹⁴Hausrath, ‘Utilisation of Negro Manpower’, pp. 17-30. The basic principle of segregation, however, held in the US Army until just before the Korean incident of 1951.

Conclusion

There are irrefutable evidence in World War II records that top military authorities and their civilian counterparts in the Defence Department, all knew about the discrimination, but there was a reluctance to accept the truth. It had prevailed in the Indian Army since the beginning of Indianisation. The British indeed prevented the Indians from commissioned ranks for a long time primarily due to reasons of security to the British empire. The British officers of the Indian army on the other hand did not want Indians to be their colleagues and infiltrated into their privacy. But when political will was imposed after the First World War, they had little option. The feeling of racial superiority started reflecting in their behaviour. Segregating Indian officers in separate Indianised units was also a part of their strategy. Restriction to clubs, racial derogatory remarks and a general dislike for Indians, etc. haunted the mind of Indian officers. To begin with, it was racial in nature, but after Indian Commissioned Officers came into existence in 1935, the pay and perks also became discriminatory. The ICOs knew of it but could not dare to mention it. During the War, the strength of Indian officers increased and so did the discrimination. A large number of Indians joined as Emergency Commissioned Officers, but their pay was far too less than their equivalent British ECOs.

KCIOs by this time had acquired substantial experience and some had undergone the staff course. War exigencies brought fast promotions to the British officers, but KCIOs felt marginalized. They were not given promotions and rarely the command of battalions. Even duties of some sensitive nature were also kept away from them. This led to the emergence of professional discrimination. KCIOs, who were senior Indian officers, had the grudge as they were not being given promotions and command of the units. ICOs and IECOs complained that their pay was far lesser than the pay of British officers of the Indian Army.

The voice raised against all these discriminations, was given a good support by Indian legislators and leaders. British top military authorities knew that cohesion between Indian and British officers was very necessary for combat effectiveness and success in the war. They, therefore, issued circulars and instructions to the formations and units commanders to tackle this problem or face court martial. They, however, rarely took any stern disciplinary action. British authorities indeed adopted a sort of

lip service and this was because they had their own problems. They wanted the Indians to be pacified but at the same time they could not afford to annoy the British officers. Stern action could have irritated the British officers but no action could have demoralized the Indian officers. Consequently, the creation of the Indian National Army and defection of some Indian officers to it, became examples of resentment. The authorities thus adopted the middle path under which circulars, warnings, instructions and oral orders, etc. were issued time and again, but rarely initiated strict action against defaulters. However, these actions with no result also had some affect. Commanding Officers gauged the importance of the issue and tried to be fair in their dealings. They started to address the discriminatory treatment, if any in the mess and elsewhere. Commanding officers usually dealt with this problem tactfully and without harming the sentiments of the British officers.

Racial discrimination started receding gradually. Increase in the strength of Indian officers, instructions and orders issued by military authorities against discrimination and also the less discriminatory mind of young ECOs, brought about a change in the attitude of British officers. Some of the issues like discriminatory pay and perks of ICOs and IECOs, were still to be resolved. At first efforts were made by the Government and military authorities to convince Indian officers that there was no discrimination. It was explained that British officers were drawing more pay because they were serving away from their country. But, the authorities could not convince as why pay difference existed when both British and Indian were serving outside India.

The Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy now gave serious thought to the issue. The economic burden was, however, a matter of concern but in no way more important than the redressal of discontent at a time when there was a war. In early 1945, all economic discrimination between the British and Indian Commissioned Officers and the ECOs and IECOs were thus addressed. The promotions and command of units also followed. Some Indian officers were promoted to the Lieutenant Colonel rank and this opened the door of command of battalion to more Indian officers. Some officers of the Navy and Air Force were also promoted to equivalent ranks. Indian officers were assigned the command of Indian battalions. Going further a brigade was composed of all Indian battalions and moreover commanded by Indian commanders, for the first time in the history of the Indian

Army. The British myth that Indians as officers did not have the guts and also that if Indian men were not led by White officers then they lost their morale, was superbly broken here.¹⁹⁵ All the battalions of 51 Indian Brigade that fought the fierce battle of Kangaw, brought laurels and all the three Indian COs were awarded with Distinguish Service Order for their leadership.

The measures of the British to address these discriminations were stimulated by the fear of discontent among Indian officers, irritating questions by Indian legislators, political unrest in the country and the formation of the Indian National Army and defection of some officers to it.

As regards the other ranks, British officers maintained good relations with IORs. But IORs always nursed the complaints that they were not treated at par with the BORs in terms of pay, perks and amenities and facilities. The hurt feelings of the Indian naval ratings found manifestation in the mutiny in 1946. The IAF and Signal Training School also sympathized with the Naval mutiny, with the former going on strike and later revolting. The mutiny in all the three services worked as an alarm bell to wake up British authorities. The sword that had helped the British to rule over India had lost its sharpness indeed.

¹⁹⁵ Greenhut citing the First World War writes, "If British were right, Indian units which suffered heavy officers losses would do much worse than British units under same conditions... What made British officer essential was his inherent superiority." He also cites Lord Roberts, retired C-in-C, who visited Indian units in France, "with British officers they [Indian Soldiers] fight splendidly; without them they will not do much." Greenhut, 'Sahib and Sepoy', pp. 14-9.

Chapter Four

Demobilisation and Resettlement

For countries which resorted to conscription during the Second World War, demobilisation was not a problem as the conscripts could rejoin their earlier vocation easily. But in India a large number of volunteers joined the armed forces for earning livelihood than for any other reason. They had no ensured job to join after release from service. Further, the men who joined the military service during the War were still young.¹ In most cases, they were not more than thirty years of age at the time of demobilisation and needed some job for a livelihood. This Chapter seeks to explore the demobilisation process and resettlement of soldiers after the War.

Demobilisation

Demobilisation is the process by which the armed forces, raised to war strength to meet the needs of a war or emergency, are reduced to the establishment required for its peace commitment. The process can also be defined as re-mobilisation for peace. Demobilisation after the Second World War became necessary in India because the country did not require such a large force during peacetime. Further, the economy could not afford to maintain it.

The authorities had started considering the issue of demobilisation as early as 1941. In August, the Defence Department (India) asked the British Government for details about the organization they had already established for the purpose.² The Demobilisation Section was established in September 1941. A Reconstruction Section later named as Resettlement Section was added to it in July 1942. Consequently, the section was re-designated as Directorate of Demobilisation and Reconstruction.

Towards the end of 1943 when the tide of war began to turn in favour of the Allied powers, a detailed plan for Demobilisation and Post War Resettlement was realized. Under the new dispensation, the Demobilisation Directorate was separated

¹ The age criteria for recruitment were different for various corps and services and it was further relaxed or tightened depending upon the requirement and intensity of the War. It was 17 to 30 years for fighting arms like the Infantry and Armoured Corps, 18 to 45 years for technical Corps, 13 ½ to 17 years for different boy's entry, 18 to 32 years for Emergency Commissioned Officer, etc. *Recruitment for the Defence Services in India*, Appendix W.

² Summary for the Committee of Council for the Week Ending 28 August 1941, Defence Co-ordination Department, p. 80.

from Resettlement and brought under the newly created Man Power Planning Directorate in the Adjutant General's Branch in mid-1944. The Demobilisation Directorate then started preparing regulations, etc. for demobilisation of troops.³

The demobilisation could, however, be undertaken only after ascertaining the quantum of force to be required after the War. To ascertain this, a Committee was appointed in November 1944 under the chairmanship of Lt Gen H.B.D. Willcox. The Committee submitted its report in October 1945.⁴ Meanwhile, due to the pressing need of the time, the War Committee (India) had already deliberated over the future size and composition of the Indian Army in consultation with the Chief of Staff as well as the Willcox Committee.⁵ It concluded that the forces could not be demobilized immediately after the cessation of hostilities. Some forces were required for post war occupation and some others were to return India gradually. The armed forces in India could only be demobilized in a phased manner.

The Boards were constituted to interview the Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers (henceforth IECO) who aspired for a regular commission. These were expected to tour various places, including those outside India for this purpose.⁶ The units considered not required in post-War scenario were to be disbanded while units identified for retention were required to be reconstituted with a fresh intake of men. It was, therefore, estimated that the process of starting demobilisation would take between six months to one year. It was, however felt that recruits at the training establishment could be demobilized immediately.⁷ In fact, the War Department on cessation of hostilities with Japan, had proposed to the Viceroy that demobilisation of recruits estimated to be 120,000 in different training centres could commence on 1 October 1945 and completed within a month's time. They also suggested that the Demobilisation of personnel other than recruits could commence

³*Demobilisation of the Indian Army*, a monograph prepared by Adjutant General Branch after the War, Year n.d., printed and 'For Official Use Only', pp. 1-2, HDMOD.

⁴*Reorganisation of the Army and Air Forces in India*, the report of the committee chaired by Lt Gen H.B.D. Willcox (henceforth Willcox Committee Report), (New Delhi, Government of India Press, 1945).

⁵ *Demobilisation Plan*, File No. 601/10605/H, vol. I, p. 91.

⁶ 'Regular Commissions in the Indian Army', *Special Indian Army Order*, No.22, 1945.

⁷ Letter of the Adjutant General addressed to C.G.S., Q.M.G. & M.G.O., No. u.o. 47063/Demob, 29 March 1944, in *Resettlement Policy*, File No. F/819, HDMOD.

on 15 November 1945 and be completed by the end of May 1946.⁸ The proposal was accepted and authorities started planning accordingly.

As stated earlier, the IECOs were interviewed by Service Selection Boards for regular commission. However, a large number of IECOs could not clear the Board. A pre-selection officers' training school was, therefore opened at Dalhousie to train the IECOs who were not graded high enough for regular commission by the Service Selection Board. It gave them another chance to prove their fitness before the Selection Board.⁹

Meanwhile, on 4 October 1945, Demobilisation of Indian Army Plan 287 directed the release of 1,592,000 Indian personnel in a phased manner 831,000 during the first six months, 459,000 during the next six months and 302,000 during the subsequent six months.¹⁰ Further, the target for demobilisation was fixed at 850,000 men by 31 July 1946,¹¹ but in reality only 830,000 men could be demobilized by this date.¹² After the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945 and by the end of December 1946, a total of 1,252,765 personnel of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force were demobilized. These included 17,842 from the Navy and 12,953 from the Air Force. A total of 4,069 Indian Army units were disbanded and 53 units of the Indian State Forces were returned to their respective States.¹³ The strength of the regular Indian Army, including WAC(I) as on 1 July 1945 was indeed 2,049,203. It came down to 399,302 by 1 July 1947.¹⁴ The strength of the Indian Navy came down from 37,863 to 15,001 men during the same period.¹⁵ The Indian Army was reduced by some 74,000 men per month during this period. Besides the manpower, the animal stock with the

⁸ *Demobilisation Plan*, File No. 601/10605/H, p. 358; 'Demobilisation of Indian Army', *The Times of India*, 18 September 1945, p. 1.

⁹ 'Pre-Cadet College Results', *Fauji Akhbar*, 3 July 1945, p. 12; 'Regular Commission', *Journal of the Indian Armed Forces Review*, vol. 1, no. 2, February 1947. This Journal was published by the Directorate of Personal Relation, Defence Department.

¹⁰ *Demobilisation Plan*, File No. 601/10605/H, p. 358; 'Demobilisation of Indian Army', *Times of India*, 18 September 1945, p. 1.

¹¹ 'Demobilisation', *Fauji Akhbar*, 2 October 1945, p.3; 'Demobilisation from Services', *Fauji Akhbar*, 13 July 1946, p. 11.

¹² 'Demobilisation', *Fauji Akhbar*, 14 September 1946, p. 11.

¹³ 'Over 830,000 Demobilised', *Fauji Akhbar*, 14 September 1946, p. 15.

¹⁴ *Statistical Review of Personnel Army of India*, vol. IV, p. 59. This figure, however, does not include commissioned officer ranks.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

armed forces was also demobilized. By May 1946, more than 70,000 army animals had been demobilized.¹⁶

In the Indian Air Force, the demobilisation of officers, particularly the pilots remained comparatively less as the Government had decided to maintain the ten squadrons strong IAF in peacetime as well. The C-in-C in reply to a question in the Council of State in April 1946 stated, “of the 1384 Indian officers of the R.I.A.F., 955 have signified their desire to serve on and it is the intention to retain as many of these as posses the requisite qualifications and can be fitted into the final post-war establishment”.¹⁷

Rules for the release of men and officers of the Indian Army were based on the Regulations prepared for the release of British soldiers in the UK.¹⁸ These were altered to suit Indian conditions and thus release regulations were framed for the Indian Army.¹⁹ Soldiers to be released from the service were briefly divided into three classes as follows:

Class A personnel - Those who were surplus to requirement;

Class B personnel - Those released to undertake specified employment of national importance;

Class C personnel - Those who were released on compassionate grounds.

To begin with, the recruits at training establishments who had put in more than six months of service were released with release benefits. The recruits with less than six months service were simply discharged from service. The men placed in low medical category or the men above fifty years of age and married women were also released immediately. The others were offered the option to go home or defer their service till the time there was a requirement or serve as a regular in the Army. Pre-War soldiers who had become eligible for pension were pensioned of. Those who had not earned pension but were found unsuitable for Army service were transferred to the reserve if there was a vacancy. The idea was to retain a young, contented, efficient and well-balanced post-war Indian army.

¹⁶ ‘Army Animals Demobilised’, *Fauji Akhbar*, 1 June 1946, p. 15.

¹⁷ ‘Indian Air Force to be Strengthened’, *The Times of India*, 19 April 1946, p. 1. See debates 18 April 1946, *CSD*.

¹⁸ *Regulations for Release from the Army - 1945* (London, His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1945).

¹⁹ *Release Regulations: Indian Army and Women’s Services - India* (Simla, Manager: Government of India Press, 1945).

Many NCOs and VCOs who had earned accelerated acting promotion during the War or were granted Emergency Commission had to revert to their earlier rank as their promotion was temporary.²⁰ Many of them, preferred to quit rather stay back in a lower rank.²¹ Further, there were cases where some personnel were discharged by mistake. This caused embarrassment to authorities and such persons had to be called back to service.²² It may be recalled that the system of demobilisation of the Indian army after the First World War was different. The demobilisation was carried by the disbandment of complete units and the commanding officers of the units were themselves given the responsibility of demobilisation. But after the Second World War, the responsibility of demobilisation was assigned to regimental/demobilisation centres.

The soldiers to be demobilized were classified as deferred, regular or demobilized, keeping in view their wish, requirement of the service and the criteria fixed for it.²³ Units and Formations were asked to prepare their release rolls. The service of the soldiers who wanted deferment could be extended by six months to two years subject to the requirement of the service.²⁴ However, there was a stage when more IORs were willing to serve than required. In such an event, the authorities followed the age and service criteria for elimination. This criteria, however not necessarily applied in all demobilisations. It also depended on which class/caste would stay and which would go out. A case in point is the Chamar Regiment. The first time the Chamars, a scheduled caste, got the chance to be recruited in combatant force was when the Chamar Regiment was raised in 1942. Maj H.L. Dawe, officiating commanding officer of the 1st Battalion of the Regiment reported in April 1946 that eighty-five per cent of the men of his battalion had a great ambition to stay in service.²⁵ But the regiment was disbanded and men were discharged despite the fact that many of them fell well within age and service criteria.

The war emergency was ended officially on 1 April 1946 and most of the surplus soldiers were demobilized within a year. Units posted in India that were not

²⁰ 'Release of VCOs and EICOs who were Commissioned from VCOs or Ranks', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 140 of 1945; 'Demob News and Notes from G.H.Q.', *Fauji Akhbar*, 30 October 1945, p. 5.

²¹ Maj Gen Gurbachan Singh Sandhu, *The Indian Armour* (New Delhi, Vision Books, 1987), p. 245.

²² 'Irregular Release', *Indian Army Order*, No. 375 of 1946.

²³ *Release Regulations: Indian Army and Women's Services, India*, paras. 50-58.

²⁴ 'Deferment Scheme for Indian and British Armies', *Fauji Akhbar*, 24 July 1945, p. 6.

²⁵ *Intelligence Report: Chamar Regiment*, File No. Misc/4142/H, NAI.

required to become a part of peacetime Army, were disbanded and their men were passed to the Demobilisation Centre. Those units that came back from overseas duty, if not required for peacetime Army, were also disbanded and the men were routed to the Demobilisation Centres. However, men of such disbanded units who wanted to serve more, if found suitable, were transferred to their respective regimental centres, other battalions or arms of service, based on the requirement indeed.

Care was taken that the Demobilisation Centres did not become congested and left sufficient space for the incoming flow of men for pre-release training and subsequent release.²⁶ Still, these centres had a challenging job in hand. To illustrate, Garhwal Regiment's Demobilisation Centre initially released 25 men per day. This rate of release increased to 40 men per day in 1946. A total of 177 officers, 6352 Other Ranks, 535 non-combatants enrolled and 16 boys were demobilized by the Garhwal Regimental Centre.²⁷ The job was indeed difficult. Lack of management and drive in demobilisation, could produce negative results. A case in point is that of the Indian Navy where an unmanaged and immature demobilisation plan contributed to the reasons of the R.I.N. Mutiny.²⁸

The authorities had to tackle many more issues. India could not follow a uniform pattern of demobilisation like in the UK.²⁹ Because different regiments and services were asked to demobilize men from different castes, classes and regions in different proportions. This indeed posed a grave problem to the authorities.³⁰ Further in some cases, due to operational and other requirements a person or a group had to be retained. In some cases the wish of the soldier had to be given sympathetic consideration. However, this largely depended on the requirement of service as also the suitability of the person.

A soldier was to pass through a Demobilisation Centre, which in most cases was a Regimental Centre or Depot of the Corps that also kept his accounts and records. The Officers and VCOs being demobilized were given a letter of thanks

²⁶ 'Demob News and Notes from G.H.Q.', *Fauji Akhbar*, 30 September 1945, p. 5.

²⁷ Lt Gen Sir Ralph B. Deedes, *The Royal Garhwal Rifles, Vol II, 1923-1947* (New Delhi, Army Press, 1962) p. 178.

²⁸ *Report of the R.I.N. Commission of Enquiry*, para 691 (5), NAI; 'RIN Demobilisation Procedure Criticised', *The Times of India*, 10 May 1946, p. 3.

²⁹ In the U.K conscription was adopted. Men in most cases wanted to go home immediately after the armistice. Uniform pattern of demobilisation therefore worked well there.

³⁰ 'Demobilisation of the Indian Army', *Fauji Akhbar*, 23 April 1946, p. 7.

usually at their demobilisation centre for having rendered service during the War.³¹ The Demobilisation Centres needed to explain to the soldiers as to what were their dues and how these were calculated. If a soldier had any doubt, the discrepancy could be brought to the notice of officer concerned and be settled on the spot.³² The men thus usually were sent home from these Centres after settling their account and fully satisfying them on this matter. It was indeed a lesson the British learnt from the First World War. During that War a large numbers of soldiers were discharged without settling their accounts and this caused a lot of discontentment among the IORs.³³

In the UK, the system of demobilisation was slight different. Dispersal Units were established there at many places. The men released were required to go through such Units nearest to their homes. The establishment of these Dispersal Units had no relation to the Record Offices, pay offices or depots and was quite separate from them.³⁴

As far as benefits on release are concerned, all military personnel who had rendered a minimum of six months of service after 3 September 1939, were given some benefits on demobilisation. The personnel of Class A category, who were released after their services were not required, got the highest benefit. They got fifty-six days release leave, overseas service leave (one day's leave for each month of service overseas), war gratuity and free conveyance to home. A sepoy of the Indian Catering Corps who had joined the Army at the outset of the war and was demobilized in May 1947, got Rs 330 in all.³⁵ Class B personnel were given twenty-one days' release leave while Class C personnel were not given any release leave. During the said leave period, soldiers were entitled to pay and allowances at the same rate as admissible to them during the preceding year of release.³⁶ The gratuity depended on the number of months the service was rendered during the War.³⁷ The

³¹ 'Indian Army Release', *Indian Army Order*, No. 294 of 1945. The letter was typed in English as well as vernacular languages suited to the language of VCOs and was signed by the Commander-in-Chief.

³² *Release Regulations: Indian Army and Women's Services - India*, paras 180-4 & 878.

³³ *Demobilisation of the Indian Army*, p. 4.

³⁴ *Regulations for Release from the Army - 1945*, paras 801-31.

³⁵ 'Queries Answered', *Fauji Akhbar*, 4 February 1950, p. 23. The sepoy in this issue of *Fauji Akhbar* states about the total benefit he got on demobilisation and asks why he was not eligible for pension.

³⁶ *Release Regulations: Indian Army and Women's Services - India*, para 410-19.

³⁷ 'War Gratuities for Personnel of Indian Services', *Fauji Akhbar*, 3 July 1945, p. 11. The amount of gratuity depended on the last rank held and also on the number of months the war service was rendered for. For example, a Sepoy was entitled to one rupee and two anna gratuity per month for each month of war service. A havildar was entitled to two rupees and eight annas, a subedar major to ten rupees, a

gratuities extended to service personnel were exempted from income tax.³⁸ The men before release were told about the balance due to them and also as to how this amount was reached at, like arrears of pay, deferred pay, war gratuity, etc.³⁹

On demobilisation, the benefits of service were paid to soldiers in cash. Ironically, many soldiers were robbed; pick-pocketed or tricked out of their money during their homeward journey.⁴⁰ The soldiers were, therefore, instructed not to fall prey to men who ask for their demobilized benefits in the name of arranging the good investment scheme or arranging employment, etc. The Air Force even brought out an Air Force Order in this regard and asked its personnel to be aware of such frauds.⁴¹ Still, many men of all the forces after serving so hard in difficult terrain and tense war environment went home without a penny.⁴²

The administrative machinery was hard pressed and could not handle this massive demobilisation exercise smoothly. Sometimes soldiers were hospitalized due to war injuries or general illness and demobilized from hospital, sometimes prisoners of war were repatriated and demobilized, sometimes missing soldiers who had been declared dead reappeared and were deprived of or delayed in their pension benefits. Even some soldiers who were interned for some crime but hospitalized due to some reason, were released by the hospital with some demobilized benefits although a court martial had disqualified and forfeited all such benefits.⁴³

There were numerous cases of discrepancies in pension. A large number of pension petitions thus came up where demobilized soldiers complained against arbitrary payments. This led to a number of pension petitions from demobilized soldiers in which they complained against arbitrary payments. The Government found it difficult to handle. It, therefore, through an Ordinance constituted a 'Pension

captain for thirty-five rupees, a colonel for fifty rupees, etc. The equivalent ranks of RIAF and RIN too were given the same amount.

³⁸ 'Gratuities exempt from Income Tax', *Fauji Akhbar*, 4 September 1945, p. 17.

³⁹ 'Queries Answered: Pay etc. Accounts', *Fauji Akhbar*, 19 February 1946, p. 6.

⁴⁰ *Demobilisation of the Indian Army*, p. 11.

⁴¹ 'Investments in Post War Schemes', *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 272 of 1945.

⁴² *Demobilisation of the Indian Army*, p. 11.

⁴³ 'Resettlement- Preparation and Disposal of employment Index Card', *Indian Army Order*, No. 244 of 1946.

Appeal Tribunal' with powers to tackle such cases.⁴⁴ However, cases pertaining to pension benefits continued to be reported in various issues of *Fauji Akhbar*.⁴⁵

Resettlement

Resettlement of soldiers after the demobilisation posed a serious problem before the Government after the Second World War. Earlier during the First World War, the issue was comparatively easy to handle as a large number of soldiers came from the rural areas of Punjab.⁴⁶ Big irrigation projects undertaken for the cultivation of vast lands and distribution of it among demobilized soldiers, mitigated the problem of resettlement in that area. The lands were awarded to the soldiers elsewhere also.⁴⁷ Further, district committees were formed to help soldiers who desired an employment. Jobs like those of peons, chowkidars, office orderlies, etc. were offered to the demobilized soldiers. Business firms and chambers of commerce were approached to adjust the ex-soldiers in jobs with them. Some demobilized soldiers in Punjab were given a one-year teachers' training and were employed as teachers in primary schools.⁴⁸ Divisional recruiting officers acted as a link between the employers and ex-soldiers who wanted jobs. Employment and Labour Boards were set up by Provincial Governments to adjust the demobilized soldiers with technical skill. However, the demand for employment after the First World War was much less. A majority of men belonged to the agricultural class and preferred their old profession of agriculture.⁴⁹

But during the Second World War, peace time armed forces expanded by about tenfold.⁵⁰ Men were recruited from different areas and not much land was available for distribution among the demobilized soldiers. The problem of resettling thus became an all India problem. Meanwhile, men in all the three services had acquired a greater degree of technical skill. The Navy and Air Force had expanded

⁴⁴'Pensions Appeal Tribunals', Ordinance No. XLVI of 1945. This Ordinance was also published in the annexure to Pension Appeal Tribunal, in *Indian Army Orders*, No. 2534 of 1945 & *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 244 of 1946.

⁴⁵ A numbers of cases can be seen in various issues of *Fauji Akhbar* in 1947 and also thereafter, where soldiers raised their queries and expected some expert to help them out.

⁴⁶ Of the total 683,149 combatant troops recruited during the First World War, 349,688 (sixty per cent) belonged to Punjab. Tan Tai Yong, 'An Imperial Home-Front: Punjab and the First World War', *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 64, No. 2, April 2000, pp. 371-410.

⁴⁷ Government of India, *India's Contribution to the Great War*, (Calcutta: Government of India Press, 1923), p. 252.

⁴⁸ Tan Tai Yong, 'Maintaining the Military Districts: Civil-Military Integration and District Soldiers' Boards in the Punjab, 1919-1939', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 28, No. 4, Oct., 1994, pp. 833-74.

⁴⁹*India's Contribution to the Great War*, (Calcutta, p. 252).

⁵⁰ During the First World War it expanded seven-fold.

faster than the Army, and technically trained personnel of those services posed their own particular resettlement problems.

Initial Steps towards Resettlement

The issues of resettlement of soldiers were raised many a time in the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly as early as 1943. Members in both the Houses expressed concern on the availability of post-war jobs for the demobilized soldiers and enquired about the plan, if any, envisaged by the Government. Sir F.E. James, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, wanted the Defence Member to report on the matter.⁵¹ M. Ghiasuddin also expressed his concern over resettlement plans. He reminded the Government that many private firms were earning profits by supplying material to the Government and suggested that these firms should be given contracts on the promise that they would employ a certain number of demobilized personnel.⁵² Sir Devadoss, a Member of Council of State, was more anxious in this regard. He said that the demobilized soldiers would return with the feeling that they had served the country and if they were left unemployed, they could be the worst material for making mischief in the country.⁵³ Sir Firoz Khan Noon, Defence Member and Chairman of Reconstruction Committee, while calling the resettlement plan a necessity, pointed out in the first meeting of the Policy Committee on Resettlement and Re-employment in late 1944:

“There was no doubt that all the men concerned [men who joined armed forces during the War] have become accustomed to a far higher standard of living than before they joined the Army and have acquired a considerable amount of education and skill. Many of them had seen other countries and their outlook had widened. In the circumstances, unless the men returned to better conditions, there was a risk of their constituting a leaven of discontent instead becoming a stable and progressive element in the community.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Sir F.E. James enquired in the Assembly about the Resettlement Plan, 11 March 1943, *LAD*.

⁵² Statement by M. Ghiasuddin, 16 March 1943, *LAD*.

⁵³ Statement by Sir Devadoss, 25 March 1943, *CSD*.

⁵⁴ Record of the First Meeting of Policy Committee No. 1 on Resettlement and Re-employment, held at New Delhi on 29 February 1944, p. 21.

Resettlement plans for the personnel to be demobilized after the War was initiated in 1942 with the formation of the Directorate of Demobilisation and Reconstruction. In 1943, the work of resettlement was transferred to the Directorate of Welfare and Amenities. In 1944, a separate organization called the 'Directorate of Resettlement' was created to look after the needs of demobilized soldiers and also to liaise with the civil authorities in the matter. Representatives of the RIN and RIAF and also Women Auxiliary Corps (India) were included in the staff of the Resettlement Directorate. The Directorate thus became an Inter-Service Organisation. It was assigned the responsibility to advise Central and Provincial Governments in matters relating to the resettlement of the released soldiers. As the end of the War drew nearer, the work of the Directorate increased as manifold. Additions thus were made to the staff.

After the end of the War, nine posts of 'Services Resettlement Liaison Officers' (SRLOs) were created and located at the headquarters of the Provincial Governments. They were to ensure that the interests of ex-service personnel were kept in view in all post-war planning and development schemes of the Provinces and the States. They also needed to arrange for the details in connection with the agricultural training of ex-servicemen by the provinces, watch whether ex-servicemen were employed in the provinces, canvass the big employers of labour in the interest of ex-servicemen and explore scopes of resettlement in the provinces. They indeed were to liaise with the Provincial and State departments on behalf of the Resettlement Directorate.⁵⁵

Further, to make the atmosphere conducive in post-war period and also to reward for the loyalty of the soldiers, many awards were conferred upon some selected VCOs. About 200 VCOs were honoured with the honorary commission of the rank of Lieutenant.⁵⁶ Further, the Governor General in Council also sanctioned 12,500 Jangi Inams to the men of Indian Army, Navy and Air Force. Of these 12,024 were reserved for the Army. The award became effective from 1 January 1946 and carried an honorarium of Rs 20 for VCOs and Rs 10 for IORs per month of one's

⁵⁵ 'Responsibility of Resettlement Directorate: Appointment of Service Resettlement Liaison Officers', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1320 of 1945.

⁵⁶ 'Honorary Commissions for VCOs', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1070 of 1946.

life.⁵⁷ Besides, titles like ‘Bahadur’ and ‘Sardar Bahadur’ were also conferred upon the VCOs.⁵⁸ These awards were a token for their loyalty to the Raj during the most taxing period.

Jobs, Men wanted to go?

In most cases men demobilized were quite young. They needed some employment for the livelihood. The War Diary of the Indian Army deployed in the Iraq Force records that soldiers were anxious about chances of getting jobs after their demobilisation on the cessation of hostilities.⁵⁹ They knew the position of India where civilian jobs were scarcely available. They however, had hopes that the Government might do something for the resettlement of ex-soldiers in civil life. They could recall the last war when many soldiers were granted land and were established in colonies especially in Punjab. Steps like opening of Employment Index Cards and various circulars and orders and the issues of *Fauji Akhbar* containing news about post war plans, impressed on them that further that some jobs would be available for the personnel with war service.

Among the men who joined the Army in the other ranks, 70 per cent belonged to the agricultural class, 12 per cent to the village artisan class and the rest 18 per cent to the urban youth. In a survey to determine the job requirement of servicemen after demobilisation, a questionnaire was given to about 100,000 servicemen in 1,000 units in July 1945. The questionnaire was distributed proportionally in all arms and services.⁶⁰ The replies thus compiled indicated that about 35 per cent soldiers wanted to return to their ancestral occupation of agriculture while about 31 per cent wanted to join industrial employment. (See Table 4.1)

⁵⁷ ‘Post War Awards - Jangi Inams’, *Indian Army Order*, No. 1071 of 1946; ‘Your Queries Answered’, *Fauji Akhbar*, 29 June 1946, p. 10. The names of the persons who were awarded ‘Jangi Inams’ published in groups in different issues of *Fauji Akhbar* in 1946.

⁵⁸ The Gazettes of India of 1946 and also the Army Orders of 1946 are full of such awards and their details.

⁵⁹ ‘Summary of Events’, January 1945, *War Diary of HQ North Iraq Force*, File No. 601/267/WD, HDMOD.

⁶⁰ *Resettlement*, a monograph prepared by the Adjutant General Branch (India) after the War, Year n.d., printed and ‘For Official Use Only’, p. 23, at History Division, Ministry of Defence (henceforth HDMOD).

Table 4.1
Jobs Demobilised Soldiers wanted to get in

Employment Desired	Percentage
Agricultural employment	35.26
Industrial employment	31.30
Already had assured jobs (Other than agriculture)	8.74
Clerical or other non-technical employment	7.35
Employment as Mechanical Transport Drivers	7.14
Employment in technical profession	4.31
Employment as domestic servants	3.84
Employment as teachers	1.05
Pass matriculation and desire service on that basis	1.01

(Source: *Resettlement*, p. 23)

Interestingly, among 82 per cent of the men who came from agricultural and related occupation, only about 35 per cent wanted to return to their previous profession. About 85 per cent of those who aspired for employment preferred a government job. Most of the men who learnt driving vehicles preferred to be drivers in civilian life. A good numbers of men wanted to join clerical and other related jobs. Rarely some of these men, who were in a very small number, were matriculates and wanted to join teaching.⁶¹

Pre-release Training

After the end of a war, it takes time to formulate policies for demobilisation. The men cannot be sent home en mass as authorities need time to clear their dues. The administrative machineries thus had their limitations. During the First World War also, soldiers could be demobilized only a year after the end of hostilities. This period of one year was a total waste. The authorities learnt a lesson from this experience.

After the end of Second World War, the authorities planned to use this interval between the end of the War and demobilisation to train and educate the personnel for re-employment and better civil life.⁶² Pre-release training thus was planned. Pre-release training as its name implies, was a training given to men and women before

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Draft of Reconstruction Committee of Council: Post War Development Policy, p. 14, prepared in 1944, *Resettlement Policy*, File No. F/819, HDMOD.

release from service.⁶³ It was intended to prepare servicemen for their return to civil life. To achieve this end, the training covered subjects like education, rural reconstruction, cotton industries and other courses in trades. The duration of the training could vary according to the nature of work being taught. Besides, every man released was also made literate in his vernacular. Training was also imparted in matters affecting health, hygiene and sanitation, etc.⁶⁴ There was indeed no concept of pre-release training in the Indian Army prior to the Second World War. In 1943, the Government of India sanctioned Rs 425,000 for promoting Welfare Education, including training in crafts and village industries for Indian soldiers in the India Command and overseas. Since 75-80 per cent of the soldiers belonged to the agricultural and related classes, the improvement of agriculture was stressed. Lectures on matters connected with health, hygiene, sanitation, better seeds, manure pits and animal husbandry had already been started in battalions whenever possible.⁶⁵ Visits were also planned for soldiers to local agricultural and industrial centres. A model exhibition village was set up near Lahore. It was prepared to demonstrate good and bad villages by showing elementary methods of sanitation, pictures of fields sown with good and indifferent seeds, pictures of common pests, statements of milk yields, photographs of selected types of cattle and other livestock, etc. Gradually, all the training centres, about 110 in number,⁶⁶ also started establishing agricultural demonstration plots. Military Farms also helped in running short agricultural courses. Provincial Governments also conducted some courses on improved methods of agriculture and rural reconstruction.⁶⁷

The pre-release training was divided into Compulsory and Voluntary Training. Compulsory Training included basic education, health, hygiene and sanitation. Tours were also arranged for exhibitions showing village uplift and rural reconstruction work. Voluntary Training was, however, confined to agriculture related subjects and

⁶³ Pre-release training was the concept under which soldiers to be demobilised or discharged were given some sort of training so that they could live a better civil life. The pre-release training further helped the soldiers to start some livelihood on their own or take an employment.

⁶⁴ 'Pre-release Training', *Fauji Akhbar*, 26 February 1946, p. 20; 'Pre-release Training', *Fauji Akhbar*, 1 June 1946, p. 12.

⁶⁵ Record of the First Meeting of Policy Committee No. 1 on Resettlement and Re-employment, held at New Delhi on 29 Feb 1944, p. 21.

⁶⁶ The recruits of the training centres had been demobilised immediately after the War. These Training Centre's were then converted into Demobilisation Centres.

⁶⁷ 'Resettlement - Indian Army', a brief prepared by Q.M.G. on 10 September 1945 and forwarded to all units and formations of the Indian Army, including HQ North Iraq Area, *War Diary of HQ North Iraq Area*, File No. 601/265/WD/XI, HDMOD.

cottage industry. Besides, refresher training was conducted especially for tradesmen. The time period for vocational training was generally two to three months. It was planned to send a few selected service personnel to the UK and USA for higher technical training.⁶⁸

Further, all servicemen due for release were also ordered to undergo an additional educational training of fifteen periods per week. It was especially designed to fit them for return to civil life as better citizens. Of these, four periods were devoted to discussions on current affairs, problems connected with the improvement of social life and conditions in India, and principles of citizenship and their application to rural and urban development. In the remaining eleven periods men would receive instructions in specific subjects suited to the capacity and qualification of the individual. Alternatively, courses were also designed to make men literate in their languages. It was thought that men who could read and write had better chances of earning a good living. Men were taught for the 'Indian Army 1st Class Certificate of Education' and the 'Special Army Education Certificate equivalent to Matriculation'. The medium of instruction for 1st Class Certificate of Education was Hindustani while for the Special Army Education Certificate it was English. The syllabus of the Indian Army Special Certificate of Education was brought in line with the syllabus for the matriculation examination certificate of the Universities of India. Many universities like the Calcutta University, Punjab University, Delhi University, Madras University, etc., recognized this certificate equivalent to matriculation for all purposes.⁶⁹ Correspondence courses were also planned in business, commercial and secretarial subjects, and teacher training. However, problems in getting financial sanctions, shortage of instructors and text-books handicapped the plans.⁷⁰ The problem was tackled by ordering prints of material and instructors too were arranged somehow.

In agricultural training, soldiers were taught by way of demonstrations of the modern methods of agriculture to increase crop yields. Lessons were imparted on improved methods of farming and also ploughing (See Photo 4.1 & 4.2). Instructions were also given in mixed farming, soil erosion and soil conservation. The literatures on these aspects of agriculture were made available at all demobilisation centres.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ 'Indian Army Special Certificate of Education', *Special Indian Army Order*, 114 of 1945.

⁷⁰ *Resettlement*, pp. 4-5.

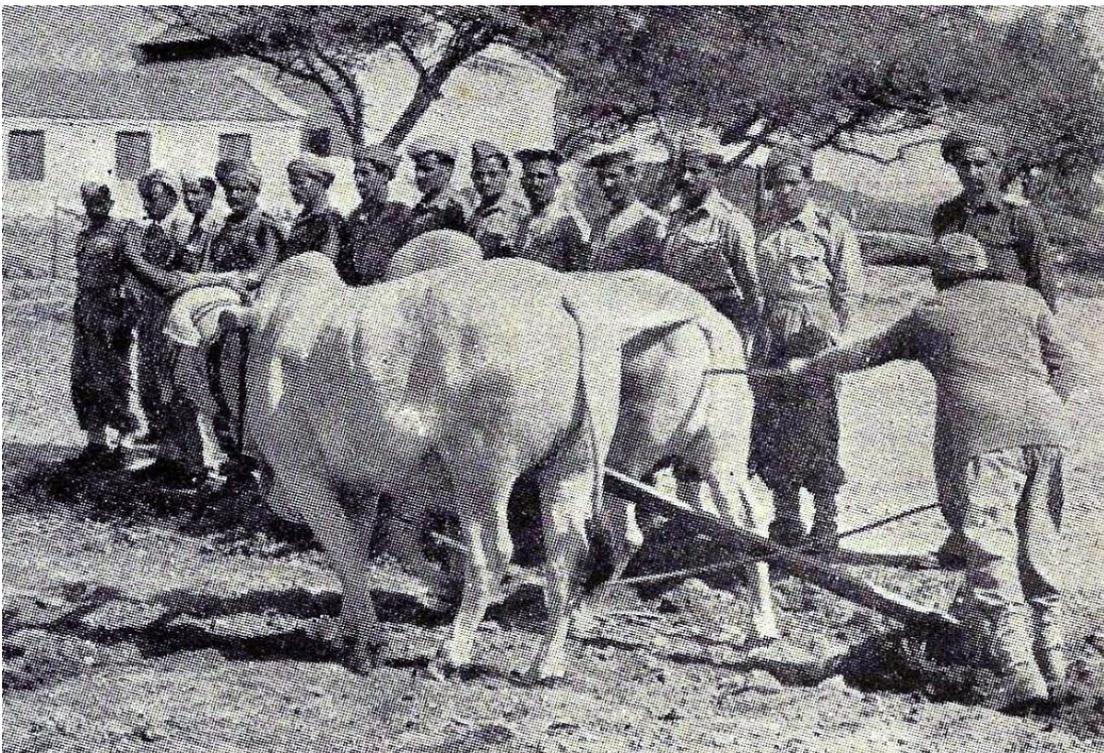
Training at Demobilisation Centre

Photo 4.1



Lesson in improved farming methods

Photo 4.2



Instruction in ploughing

Source: *Fauji Akhbar*, 8 June 1946 & 18 May 1946.

To show them what was being done in advanced countries, a set of seventy-two photographs on the topic was arranged from America.⁷¹ Training films in different languages on resettlement issues were shown in order to enable the personnel to learn some trade and village craft.⁷² Self-help, co-operation and breaking down of old prejudices against certain types of work that offered an honest living were the themes of these films. Some of the titles of these films were: '*Anti-soil Erosion*', '*Modern Implements*', '*Poultry Farming*', '*Rabbits*', '*Animal Husbandry*', '*Handloom Weaving*', '*Bee Keeping*', '*Basket Making*', etc. Modern and old implements were compared in such films. For example the age-old wooden plough was shown where men and beast were pictured performing hard work and still the result was a meagre harvest. It was then compared with the modern plough which an animal pulled without strain and the farmer was shown happy with the rich harvest. Similarly in one of the film, a demobilized *sepoy* was shown looking after his chicken neatly and feeding them well in his poultry farm, leading to lots of eggs and a good price in the market. It was contrasted with the filthy and dirty poultry farm where chicken died daily.⁷³ The basic aims of these films were to help the soldiers to learn some trade or village craft to earn money and thereby raise their standard of living.

However, the arrangements of pre-release training in subjects of agriculture were found difficult in the Air Force. They did not have the demonstration plots and agriculture rooms as was the case with the Army. The Air Force thus liaised with the Army and requested them to train their rural class personnel at army pre-release training centres. The Army thus provided some seats at its pre-release centres for the Air Force personnel. The Air Force however complained of getting meagre vacancies for their personnel in courses of rural reconstruction.⁷⁴ For the Navy personnel, the pre-release courses were conducted at Bombay in conjunction with the army authorities.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷² Maj Gen S.T. Berkeley-Hill, 'Films in Uniform: An Account of Indian Services Film Unit', *JUSII*, vol. LXXVIII, No. 333, October 1948, pp. 387-91. Maj Gen Berkeley-Hill served the Indian Services Film Unit for five years during the Second World War and rose to the designation of Executive Producer. He was instrumental in the production of some resettlement films.

⁷³Capt E.W. Kelly, 'Visual Training', *JUSII*, vol. LXXVIII, No. 330, January 1948, pp. 95-9. Kelly worked in the Directorate of Army Kinematography in England. In 1945, he joined the Indian Kinematography Section.

⁷⁴*Demobilisation and Resettlement RIAF*, p. 3, a brief report, File No. 601/7516/H, HDMOD.

The tradesmen of the army, however, were planned to be trained in preparing agricultural implements and handicraft and in the cottage industry. These seem to have been planned keeping in view their traditional profession in the villages. For instance, the soldiers of Chuhra and Chamar castes were planned to be trained in properly organized tannery.⁷⁵ Besides soldiers of some other castes were also given training suiting to their ancestral profession (See Photo 4.3 & 4.4)

The plans were also prepared to impart some training to the troops deployed overseas. Overseas commands were, therefore, instructed to organize training courses in agriculture and other vocations as and when possible. Troops serving in the Middle East and Europe were taken to industrial centres in advance countries like Palestine, Egypt and Italy, depending upon their places of deployment, and practically shown the modern methods of farming there. They also saw the Mechanized Farming practised in Jewish settlements in Palestine. Small-scale industries running on co-operative lines in Italy and agriculture and cottage industry in Japan also impressed the Indian soldiers.⁷⁶

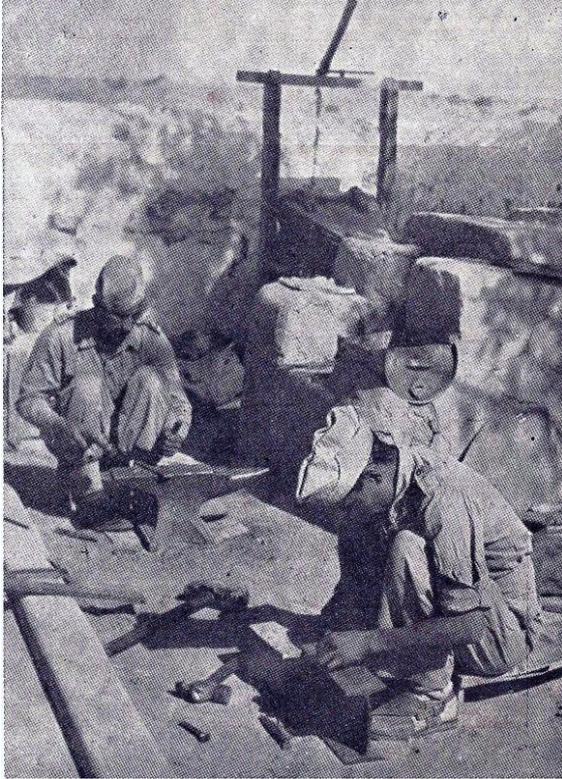
Pre-release training was also arranged for members of Women Auxiliary Corps (India). Their educational programmes included topics of interest to women, commercial and domestic science, nursing, short hand, type writing, book keeping, house-hold management, child welfare, cookery, laundry, hair dressing, dress making, hygiene, first aid, etc. The domestic science courses were conducted at the Lady Irwin College (New Delhi), Deccan College (Pune) and Calcutta University. The Government of United Provinces conducted short courses for the WAC(I) personnel to train them in the preservation and canning of fruits and vegetables. Besides, 100 auxiliaries were given preliminary training in social work containing subjects like physical training, health, education, personal relationship, art, principles of leadership and community problems, etc. Courses in leather work, soft toy making, art, interior decoration, hair dressing and beauty culture were conducted for their benefit in

⁷⁵ Post War Reconstruction Fund for betterment of Enlisted Classes, No. F-6(14) MP.A/43, Defence Department, GOI, dated 29 October 1943, in Record of the First Meeting of Policy Committee No. 1 on Resettlement and Re-employment, held at New Delhi on 29 Feb 1944, p. 8. Chuhras and Chamars were the castes considered as untouchables. Their primary occupation in villages was preparing items like shoes and other products made of leather. For Chamars see G.W. Briggs, *The Chamars* (Delhi, Low Price Publications, 1920, reprint 1990), p. 11.

⁷⁶ *Resettlement*, p. 6.

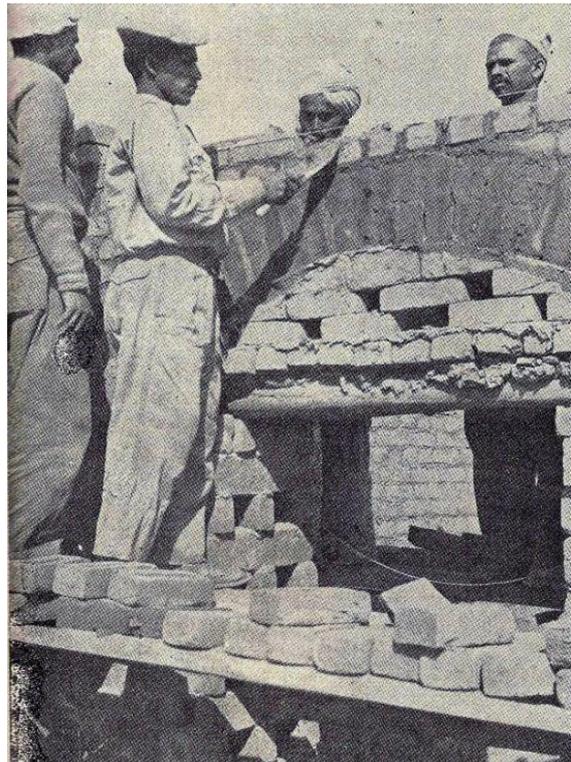
Training at Demobilisation Centre

Photo 4.3



Blacksmith's class

Photo 4.4



Mason's Training

Source: *Fauji Akhbar*, 8 June 1946 & 29 June 1946.

conjunction with private institution in various cities of India.⁷⁷ The women, however, did not take much interest in the pre-release courses. It was later analysed that a lot of money had been spent on such training of women but without much result.⁷⁸

Post-release Training

There was also a scheme of post-release trainings for demobilized soldiers. The scheme was aimed to impart training to some released soldiers who were not capable of being absorbed into a civilian job immediately. It also aimed to give some training to the ex-soldiers whose education was interrupted as they had joined service during the War. Under this scheme, it was the responsibility of the provincial government to train the ex-servicemen who were not more than 35 years of age, in vocational and technical trades so as to become fit for civil jobs. In deserving cases, ex-servicemen could even be sent abroad for training. The post-release training generally covered the subjects like agriculture and allied occupations and cottage and small-scale industries. The period of training was anything between three months to one year. During training, boarding and lodging was provided free to the trainee and occasionally some stipend was also paid.⁷⁹

The training programme was monitored by the Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment of the Labour Department. It is notable that some technical training schemes, which had been launched during the War, were continued as post-war requirement.⁸⁰ The centres set up during the war time were expanded to train ex-servicemen. B.R. Ambedkar, Member, Labour Department, stated in March 1946, that 14,000 seats were reserved for demobilized soldiers in the technical institutions for technical training.⁸¹ The training indeed was imparted in trades like those of motor mechanics, radio mechanics, cabinet-makers, electricians, painters, etc. At the time of Partition of India, there were 93 training centres with 9,000 ex-servicemen in their rolls. The training schemes continued to look after the welfare of demobilized war soldiers even after Partition. In October 1947, there existed a total of 187 centres in India, which included technical, vocational, women's and disabled

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁷⁸*Women's Royal Indian Naval Service*, 1947, File No. 601/10849/H, HDMOD.

⁷⁹ 'Vocational Training Scheme', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1316 of 1946.

⁸⁰ Technical Training Scheme was adopted during the War to fill in the demand of technical manpower during the War. For details see Chapter 1 of this thesis.

⁸¹*The Times of India*, 6 March 1946, p. 10.

training centres with a capacity of nearly 16,000 to train ex-servicemen and women for civil employment.⁸²

The pre-release and post-release training scheme started after the Second World War still exist in the Indian armed forces and has become its culture. Thousands of soldiers discharged every year are imparted training in diverse field for their resettlement in civil life.⁸³

The pre-release and post-release training increased the chances of a livelihood to the demobilized soldiers. The training, however, did not guarantee any job. Perhaps, a large number of ex-soldiers did not make use of the methods of agriculture that they learnt in pre-release and post-release training. For instance, 22 men from the village Malda in Punjab joined the Army during the Second World War. Six of them were demobilized after the War. No one went into the profession for which they were given pre-release training and no one used any modern method of agriculture or farming.⁸⁴ Also 15 men from the village Budana in Punjab joined during the War period. Four of them were demobilized after the War. None of them did any poultry farm or other similar work. They simply did their traditional work without any new technique that they might have been taught during their pre-release course.⁸⁵ Further, demobilized soldiers from Garhwal, trained, however they were, in pre-release scheme, were reluctant to change their existing methods of agriculture. They found agricultural training as an uphill work. The cottage industries, especially carpentry, tailoring, weaving, basket and newar making was, however popular among them.⁸⁶ There seem to be very few soldiers who utilized any of their pre-release or post release training experience. In one of the rare instances perhaps, a soldier from Rewari area utilized his pre-release training experience after demobilisation. He opened a milk dairy in a nearby town.⁸⁷

⁸² 'Post-release Vocational Training', *Fauji Akhbar*, 7 September 1946, pp. 3-4; 'Training Facilities for Ex-servicemen', *Fauji Akhbar*, 8 November 1947, p. 11.

⁸³ See Official Website Director General of Resettlement, <http://www.dgrindia.com/directorate/training.html>, accessed on 2 July 2013.

⁸⁴ Interview, *Subedar Risal Singh*, 5 July 2013. Out of the 22 who joined, 9 remained in service after the War, 4 died in War, 3 became deserters and 6 were demobilized.

⁸⁵ Interview, *Hony Capt Ishwar Singh*, 11 July 2013. Capt Ishwar Singh and his three brothers joined Indian Artillery during the War period. Two of his own brothers and two other in the village were demobilized after the War.

⁸⁶ Deedes, *The Royal Garhwal Rifles, vol. II*, p. 178.

⁸⁷ Interview, *Lal Singh*, 9 July 2013.

Resettlement Plans

Pre-release and post-release training aimed to prepare soldiers to earn some livelihood and settle in civil society after demobilisation. However, it did not guarantee any job. The Government thus tried to identify the scope where demobilized soldiers could be suitably employed. It was indeed the moral responsibility of the government and also their commitment during recruitment and some sort of assurance was given in recruiting publicity. Government authorities also searched for the scope of creating employment. An exercise was carried out in 1945 to identify the land that could be granted to soldiers. As a result 535,000 acres of land was identified for cultivation after reclamation. It was estimated that the land would absorb about 34,000 colonists. The Government of India agreed to contribute towards the expenditure incurred by any Province or State for the resettlement of ex-servicemen on land.⁸⁸

General Headquarters (India) invited applications from the war service soldiers who wished to take part in the colonization scheme. The qualification was that the men should be residents of the Province where land was being granted, had served during the war, possessed experience in farming and was willing to pay Rs 500 as his share money.⁸⁹ Any war service soldier could apply; however, men with meritorious service were to be given preference amongst the applications received. The willing men of the Army, Navy and Air Force could send applications to their respective service headquarters.⁹⁰

The United Province Government prepared a scheme for land colonization on a co-operative basis in Almora and Garhwal districts. It made about 3,015 acres of land available in these districts for the scheme.⁹¹ Madras agreed to resettle among others about 180 ex-soldiers on 1,100 acres of land in the Nellore district.⁹² Central Province and Berar had already earmarked 10,000 acres of land for building model villages of ex-servicemen. They further hoped that 50,000 acres of land would

⁸⁸ *Resettlement*, pp. 8-9.

⁸⁹ The Central Government and Provincial Government, both also planned to pay almost an equal amount. For example in land colonization in Madras, the Central Government agreed to pay Rs 500, an equal amount as planned by the Madras Government. Besides, local government also came forward and gave their consent to pay Rs 200 per colonist. 'Land Colonisation', *Fauji Akhbar*, 12 April 1946, p. 20.

⁹⁰ 'Land Colonisation', *Fauji Akhbar*, 13 July 1946, p. 13; 'Colonisation for Ex-servicemen', *Fauji Akhbar*, 14 September 1946, p. 16.

⁹¹ 'Scheme for Kumaon Shilpkars', *Fauji Akhbar*, 1 December 1946, p. 9.

⁹² 'Land Colonisation', *Fauji Akhbar*, 12 October 1946, p. 20.

eventually be made available for allotment to demobilized soldiers.⁹³ The Punjab Government agreed to make available 95,000 acres of land for colonization by ex-soldiers of the Province.⁹⁴

However, in the case of Punjab, existing laws prevented members of non-agriculturist classes like the Mazhabi and Ramdasias and other scheduled castes from acquiring agricultural land. GHQ took up the matter with the Punjab Government to persuade them to permit the men of the Mazhabi and Ramdasias who had served in the defence services to acquire the land on the recommendation of their commanding officer. The Punjab Government agreed to the proposal.⁹⁵ Further, along with Mazhabi and Ramdasias, twenty-four other scheduled castes like Chamar, Sansi, Kori, etc. were also included in the list of this privilege in 1946. They could also purchase agricultural land of their own and were allowed to do so by the provincial administration. By this provision they became eligible to get land in the colonization scheme. These castes could also be allotted War Jagirs after this provision.⁹⁶

The Resettlement Directorate also brought out a scheme to set up Market Gardening in the vicinity of towns and cities. Such Gardens could be given to ex-soldiers on co-operative basis for growing fruits and vegetables for supply to the market. Besides, it could provide grazing ground for their cattle and they could also go for poultry farming and bee keeping.⁹⁷

The formation of multi-purpose co-operative societies for ex-servicemen was another useful measure. The plan was chalked out by J.B. Taylor in early 1944. The Societies were meant to be non-communal and non-political institutions and could be joined by any ex-serviceman irrespective of caste or community. Self-help was the

⁹³ 'Post War Development and Resettlement Plans: C.P. and Berar's 40 Crore Schemes', *Fauji Akhbar*, 28 August 1945, p. 9.

⁹⁴ 'Land Grants - Punjab', *Fauji Akhbar*, 19 October 1946, p. 10.

⁹⁵ 'Sanction for the Acquisition of Land by Mazhabi and Ramdasias in Punjab', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1323 of 1945 & No. 1467 of 1945. Also see 'Your Queries Answered', *Fauji Akhbar*, 8 January 1945, p. 6. Indeed, the Punjab Alienation Land Act, 1900, Section 3 prohibited the purchase of land by non-agricultural tribe (castes) like Chamars, Kori, Mazhabi and Ramdasias etc. in certain districts of Punjab. This Act permitted the transfer of land only to Statutory Land Owning Tribes (castes) like Rajputs, Jats, Pathans, etc. But with the amendment in the Act, the deputy collector of the district at his discretion could permit a person of schedule caste to acquire land.

⁹⁶ 'Alienation of Land in favour of Members of Schedule Castes in the Punjab', *Indian Army Order*, No. 830 of 1946; 'Resettlement - Indian Army', *War Diary of HQ North Iraq Area*, File No. 601/265/WD/XI, HDMOD.

⁹⁷ *Resettlement*, p. 9.

motto of these societies.⁹⁸ An All India Co-operative Conference was organized in Lucknow in 1945, which passed a resolution asking all co-operative institutions in India to impart training to ex-servicemen in this regard. Inspired by this, the Madras Government started Co-operative Societies for ex-servicemen of the Province. They included co-operative societies for house building, road construction, irrigation works, etc. The Madras Government also appointed a special Registrar at regimental centres to explain the co-operative movement to the men due to be released and also enrol those who wished to join.⁹⁹ The Punjab Government planned co-operative construction societies of ex-servicemen on a large scale. The contracts were to be taken from the Public Works Department for construction of roads, etc. The members of which could only be ex-servicemen and they were required to pay share money amounting to Rs 25.

The Government also planned the co-operative stores stocked with food-grains and items of daily use. Cloth for these stores could be procured from surplus stores of the Army and sold out at a cheaper rate.¹⁰⁰ The Bombay Government approved two co-operative workshops one at Satara and the other at Poona to generate employment for ex-servicemen. The societies offered concessions in the form of subsidies and loans to artisans for the purchase of appliances and tools.¹⁰¹

The trend of organizing Housing Societies for ex-servicemen also began after this War. The setting up of Road Transport Co-operatives, however, proved most successful. During the War, more than a hundred thousand men were trained as drivers, mechanics, fitters, etc. The Bombay Government had already declared its intention to employ ex-army drivers in its public transport that was planned for expansion soon.¹⁰² The Punjab Government issued about 200 permits to ex-servicemen for organizing road services on a co-operative basis. Many ex-servicemen who were drivers in the army thus became drivers in transport cooperatives. The Central Government also urged the Provincial Governments to exempt these ex-

⁹⁸ J.B. Taylor, 'Industrial Co-operation for Ex-Servicemen', *Resettlement and Re-employment Committee*, File No. 601/10686/H, HDMOD.

⁹⁹ *Resettlement*, pp. 9-10

¹⁰⁰ 'Co-operative Construction Societies', *Fauji Akhbar*, 20 July 1946, p. 12.

¹⁰¹ *Fauji Akhbar*, 1 March 1947, p. 19.

¹⁰² Government of Bombay: Planning for the Future of Bombay's Countryside, a Pamphlet containing sixteen pages prepared by Bombay Government in second half of 1944. *Resettlement Policy*, File No. F/819, HDMOD.

servicemen from driving tests and grant them concession in fee during the renewal of their licences. A majority of the Provincial Governments agreed to this.¹⁰³ The objective of some ex-servicemen societies was purely the welfare of its members. For instance, a society set up in early 1946 in the Chakwal district of Punjab and named 'Chakwal Ex-Servicemen Welfare Association' served as an information bureau for securing employment for its members. In May 1946, its members numbered more than 5,000.¹⁰⁴

The responsibility of resettling the demobilized soldiers in civil life was assigned to the Labour Department. It was indeed a tough task to cope up with the rapidly increasing flow of ex-servicemen, particularly when the Labour Department did not have necessary mechanism to deal with the problem. It was, therefore, decided to convert recruiting offices all over India into Recruiting and Employment Offices as an ad hoc measure. It was hoped that the Employment Exchange Service of the Labour Department would be ready to take over the work by early 1946. District Soldier, Sailor and Airmen Boards (DSS&AB) were instructed to act as a link between the demobilized soldiers and the Employment Offices.¹⁰⁵

It was also planned to set up a Resettlement Advice Service at all the Release Centres. In selecting the counsellors for these centres, preference was to be given to the recently demobilized persons. Meanwhile, by December 1945, 167 army officers had started working as Resettlement Advice Service Officers. Initially, Civilian Technical Officers (Trade Testing Officers) assisted and guided them.¹⁰⁶ The men to be demobilized were interviewed personally by the counsellors and recommended jobs that they were eligible for and that they could join.¹⁰⁷

Meanwhile, Employment Index Cards for the personnel who were demobilized and wished to join civil jobs were prepared by the Demobilisation Centres. The same practice was adopted in the Indian Air Force also. Cards were completed bearing the full particulars and experience of the soldiers in the column

¹⁰³ *Resettlement*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁴ 'Ex-Servicemen Co-operative Society', *Fauji Akhbar*, 8 June 1946, p. 24.

¹⁰⁵ 'Resettlement: Preparation and Disposal of Employment Index Cards', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 56 of 1945 & 19 of 1946; 'Recruitment from the Indian Air Force for Employment under the Labour Department of Government of India', *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 74 of 1945.

¹⁰⁶ 'Finding Jobs for Demobbed', *Fauji Akhbar*, 15 January 1946, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ 'Recruitment under the Labour Department of Government of India', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 145 of 1945.

provided. One of the columns pertaining to the job that the soldier was fit for was filled by the Resettlement Advice Service Officer after interviewing the individual. The Help of a Technical Officer was taken if the individual possessed technical experience to recommend his name for appointment to the technical post. The Card of the person was dispatched to the Recruiting and Employment Office nearest to his home, with a copy to the Central Employment Exchange.¹⁰⁸ The soldiers were also instructed to report to the offices concerned with their discharge book for seeking assistance in getting civil jobs. In case of any difficulty, they could approach their DSS&AB.¹⁰⁹ However, the personnel who did not want to join job immediately and wanted to defer their employment for some time, were given duly-filled in Employment Post Cards. They needed to post it to the address of the nearby Employment Exchange when they felt like joining the job.

After the First World War, the practice was different. On demobilisation, the name and address of the nearest District Liaison Officers were entered in the Discharge Certificate of the soldier. On reaching home, the demobilized soldier could liaise with this officer in case of any problem he encountered in matters like pay, pension, grievances, etc. For getting employment, the ex-soldier needed to register his name in the District Soldier Board who arranged for the re-employment of the ex-soldiers.¹¹⁰

When the Employment Index Card was implemented after the Second World War, there were many complaints. The Card, which generally had 35 columns, was found incomplete in many cases. Even columns, pertaining to crucial information about the individual, were left blank. The Demobilisation Centres were reminded about their slackness and were told that no useful purpose would be served if incomplete Employment Cards were sent to Employment Exchanges.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Central Employment Exchange, located at Simla acted as HQs that controlled all Employment Exchanges of India.

¹⁰⁹ 'Recruitment under the Labour Department of Government of India', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 145 of 1945; 'Post War Resettlement', *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 198 of 1944 & 357 of 1945. Employment Index Cards contained complete information about the soldier, including his bio-data, experience, skill and the pre-release courses that he had undergone in the Armed Forces, etc.

¹¹⁰ Tai-Yong, 'Maintaining the Military Districts: Civil-Military Integration and District Soldiers' Boards in the Punjab, 1919-1939', pp. 833-74.

¹¹¹ 'Resettlement: Preparation of Employment Index Cards', *Indian Army Order*, No. 1795 of 1945.

However, Employment Index Cards were not prepared for medical personnel. Separate arrangements were made by the Director General of Indian Medical Service in conjunction with the medical services of the Provinces and the States to resettle the medical and nursing personnel. As the Provinces and States lacked medical professionals, they showed keen interest in employing them. They even set up information bureaus to help these men.¹¹²

Arrangements were also made with professional, commercial and industrial firms to secure jobs for ex-servicemen. Men and officers desirous of such jobs were advised to send their request to the Central Employment Exchange.¹¹³ Meanwhile, Employment Exchange service began to get momentum and the strength of the Exchanges rose to 33 in February 1946 from less than ten in June 1945.¹¹⁴ The Resettlement and Employment Offices, which numbered 116 initially, were gradually reduced as their responsibilities were assigned to Employment Exchanges.¹¹⁵ Some recently demobilized personnel were employed in these Employment Exchanges.¹¹⁶

The establishment of Employment Service was a new venture and signalled the start of the Employment Exchange culture in India.¹¹⁷ It assisted men in finding suitable employment and the employer in finding suitable workers. 'Square pegs in square holes' became the theme of these Employment Offices. The military service rendered after 3 September 1939, was approved to be counted for pension in

¹¹² 'Medical Resettlement Organisation', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 109 of 1945.

¹¹³ 'Resettlement: Employment in Professional, Commercial and Industrial Firms', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 94 of 1945.

¹¹⁴ 'Resettlement: Preparation and Disposal of Employment Index Cards', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 19 of 1946.

¹¹⁵ These Employment Offices worked under the Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment (DGR&E) under the Labour Department. DGR&E was later re-designated as the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE&T) that still exist under the Ministry of Labour. However, after Independence, the Directorate was also called upon to handle work relating to displaced persons from Pakistan. Subsequently, the scope of the Directorate was extended to cover, employment services to all categories of job seekers in early 1948, and the training services to all civilians in 1950. Official website of the Ministry of Labour, <http://dget.gov.in/main/evolution.html>, accessed on 19 April 2013.

¹¹⁶ 'Recruitment from the Indian Army and W.A.C. (I) for Employment under the Labour Department of the Government of India', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 10 of 1945. By December 1945, 56 officers were trained and employed for managerial posts, 73 for Assistant Managers and 113 for Recruiting and Employment Officers. 'Finding Jobs for Demobbed', *Fauji Akhbar*, 15 January 1946, p. 5; 'Training Staff for Resettlement Services', *Fauji Akhbar*, 12 March 1946, p. 17.

¹¹⁷ At the end of the hostilities in 1945, there were merely ten Employment Exchanges all over India. It rapidly rose in numbers to resettle the demobilized soldiers initially. After Independence, these exchanges continued to work and their scope of work was expanded to employ civilians as well.

Government jobs.¹¹⁸ Employment Exchanges, however, dealt with non-technical manpower. Nine Regional Exchanges were, therefore, set up to assist the ex-officers, service technicians and WAC(I) personnel in finding employment.¹¹⁹ The Resettlement Directorate (Defence Department) in liaison with the Labour Department also took up the matter with the Government of India for introducing legislation for wages in various occupations that could be taken up by ex-servicemen. This paved the way to the passing of the 'Minimum Wages Act (Act XI of 1948)' by the Dominion Legislature in February 1948.¹²⁰

Rehabilitation of the Disabled

Prior to the War, disabled servicemen were discharged from service at the end of their hospital treatment. The government did not bother about their resettlement and washed its hands off them after granting them disability pension. But in 1945, the Government adopted more humane approach towards the disabled soldiers. It was decided to provide vocational training to the disabled ex-servicemen to enable them to seek employment.¹²¹ Seven Services Convalescent Rehabilitation Centres (SCRCs) with a total capacity of 5,500 men were set up to provide mental and physical rehabilitation to disabled servicemen for a period of three months, to make them physically and mentally fit. It was planned to impart training to the disabled, in accordance with their disability. Plans were also drawn under which the already discharged personnel were contacted through their regimental centres and invited to volunteer for the benefit of the scheme.¹²² Training was given to war blind soldiers at St. Dunstan's Hospital, Dehradun. Deaf and Dumb Centres were set up at Lucknow and Jalahalli (Bangalore) where the disabled were given hearing appliances and also some training. An Artificial Limb Centre was opened at Poona in 1944 to provide artificial limbs and appliances for the rehabilitation of soldiers who had lost their

¹¹⁸ Recruitment from the Indian Army and W.A.C. (I) for Employment under the Labour Department of the Government of India, in *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 10 of 1945.

¹¹⁹ *Resettlement*, p. 12.

¹²⁰ *Resettlement*, p. 11. Check debates on Resolution in LAD or CSD of Jab-Feb 1948.

¹²¹ 'Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Disabled Personnel', *Army Instructions, India (Special)*, No. 1122 of 1945.

¹²² After September 1939 till the end of the War, a total of about 60,000 men of the Indian Defence Forces were disabled. At the time of cessation of hostilities, about 35,000 such disabled personnel had already been discharged and 25,000 were still in the forces. *Resettlement*, pp. 18 & 36.

limbs in combat.¹²³ But the plan did not seem to go well as there was a large shortage of artificial limbs. This handicapped the schemes of the war handicapped personnel.¹²⁴

Relaxations and Concessions

To make ex-servicemen eligible for civil posts, educational qualifications were relaxed for ex-servicemen. The army qualifications were also considered equivalent to some civil qualifications. A committee was set up in 1945 to determine the civilian equivalent of different trades in defence services. The committee included representatives of industries, government departments and services and ascertained suitable equivalents of the service trade. The Army's First Class Roman Urdu Certificate was treated equivalent to the Middle Class while the Army's Special Class Certificate was treated equivalent to the Matriculation Certificate.¹²⁵ A policy book called '*Service Guide to Occupational Classification*' stating civilian equivalents of service trade was printed and distributed to all important employers (both Government and Private), Employment Exchanges and Demobilisation Centres.¹²⁶ A question and answer series was started in the issues of *Fauji Akhbar* from June 1946 onwards. Different questions on the resettlement of demobilized soldiers were answered and ex-soldiers were urged to read these issues.

The placement of demobilized men and women depended largely upon the provincial governments and also the goodwill of industrial employers. Efforts were, therefore, made to persuade these agencies to reserve vacancies for men and women with war service.¹²⁷ The States were also urged to resettle their demobilized soldiers. In fact, to encourage recruitment into the defence forces in early 1942, the Government had announced that all vacancies in Central Government henceforth would be filled on temporary basis and that after the War, half of these vacancies

¹²³ 'Resettlement - Indian Army', *War Diary of HQ North Iraq Area*, 601/265/WD/XI, HDMOD. Also see Official Website of Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, <http://afmc.nic.in/departments/hospitals/alc.html>, accessed on 24 April 2013.

¹²⁴ *Resettlement*, p. 25.

¹²⁵ 'Indian Army Special Certificate of Education', *Special Indian Army Order*, 114 of 1945; 'Reserved Vacancies', *Fauji Akhbar*, 15 June 1946, p. 12.

¹²⁶ *Resettlement*, p. 13.

¹²⁷ A Brief on 'Resettlement - Indian Army', prepared by Q.M.G. dated 10 September 1945 and forwarded to all units and formations of the Indian Army, in *War Diary of HQ North Iraq Area*, File No. 601/265/WD/XI, HDMOD.

would be filled by candidates with war service.¹²⁸ C.M. Trivedi, Secretary, War Department, declared in the Legislative Assembly that a large percentage of civilian posts were being reserved for candidates with war service both by the Government of India and the Provincial Governments.¹²⁹ A declaration in this regard had already been made in December 1942, and after January 1943, recruitment to Indian Civil and Police Services were stopped completely to accommodate war service candidates subsequently.¹³⁰ The vacancies occurring in these two prestigious services till December 1945 were exclusively reserved for war service candidates.¹³¹

Provincial Governments also reserved a proportion of vacancies for war service candidates. The Bombay Government had already initiated measures in this direction as early as 1941.¹³² The United Province brought out a Pamphlet containing thirty-seven pages and declared plans and the policies of the Province for the soldiers fighting that War. It reserved fifty per cent of the vacancies in all the services of the Province for war service candidates. It also reserved vacancies for such candidates ranging from 50 to 100 per cent that would fall vacant during the next three years after the cessation of hostilities. It also brought out a scheme under which the *Gram Sevaks* of the Province could be given training by ex-soldiers for rural development on an honorarium basis.¹³³ Other Provinces and States too brought out Pamphlets about post war reconstruction and resettlement of demobilized soldiers.¹³⁴ These were also advertised in the issues of *Fauji Akhbar*. The Directorate of Welfare General too brought out a handbook containing information about the concessions offered to

¹²⁸ Linlithgow to Amery, 22 May 1942, vol. II, *TOP*.

¹²⁹ Statement by C.M. Trivedi, 15 April 1943, *LAD*.

¹³⁰ Press Communiqué, 19 December 1942, Home Department, New Delhi; republished as Press Communiqué, 28 March 1944, *LAD*.

¹³¹ Wavell to All Provincial Governors, 3 October 1945, vol. II, *TOP*.

¹³² *Hindustan Times*, 27 March 1941; 'Post War Development and Resettlement', *Fauji Akhbar*, 14 August 1945, p. 9.

¹³³ 'Concessions to Soldiers of the United Provinces', a pamphlet brought out by the United Province in 1944, pp. 1-37, *Resettlement Policy*, File No. F/819, HDMOD.

¹³⁴ Details like names of Pamphlets of the Provinces and also how and from where these could be procured, is given in the Indian Army Order. 'Resettlement: Development Plans of the Provinces', *Indian Army Order*, No. 989 of 1946.

demobilized soldiers by the Provinces and the States.¹³⁵ By 1945, the Central Government had reserved 7,000 vacancies for them.¹³⁶

Details on reservations in the Provinces were collected by Services Resettlement Liaison Officers (SRLO) and forwarded to the Resettlement Directorate. The information was then circulated to all Demobilisation Centres. It was estimated that over 120,000 vacancies were reserved by the Government, a large number of which were in the Subordinate and Inferior Services.¹³⁷ But the reservations, especially in Provincial and State services, entirely depended on their sincerity. It is notable that these reservations for ex-servicemen had no statutory backing. The vacancies that remained unfilled in a particular selection were not to be carried forward.

The relaxation in age was also permissible to demobilized soldiers. The candidates were allowed to deduct their period of war service from the upper age for the post. The educational qualifications were also relaxed and equivalent certificates issued by the services were considered for eligibility. Further, it was taken up that relaxation in qualifications may also be given in subordinate services posts. The required qualification for subordinate services was indeed matriculation. All the Provinces except Bihar agreed to the proposal. It was decided that if the selection board considered that a candidate, if otherwise deserved the post, would be selected.¹³⁸ War service candidates were also exempted from paying the application fee.¹³⁹ For Central and Provincial services, the candidates could even apply while still in service and get interviewed. But for Subordinate and Inferior Services candidates could apply only after their release. The vacancies in such services were filled on a monthly quota basis, the figure conforming to the rate of demobilisation intimated by

¹³⁵ 'Concessions to Serving and Ex-Services Personnel and their Families and Dependents', *Indian Army Order*, No. 398 of 1946. The information mainly was related to vacancies reserved for war service candidates, post-release training, medical and education concessions to family and dependents of ex-servicemen, land settlement and monetary assistance to disabled soldiers and their dependents, etc.

¹³⁶ 'Method of Application to Vacancies Reserved for War Service Candidates', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 102 of 1946.

¹³⁷ *Resettlement*, p. 16.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ The Scheduled Castes candidates even needed to pay half the application fee, it was fully relaxed to the demobilized soldiers of the War. 'Recruitment of Civilian Assistant Foremen for the I.A.O.C.', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 153 of 1945. The relaxation in the application fee first was given to demobilized soldiers of the War only, but later it was extended to all ex-servicemen after Independence and this even continues now.

the Army Headquarters in its periodical forecast to the Central and Provincial Governments from time to time.¹⁴⁰

Jobs for Demobilised Soldiers

The Central Government, Provinces and the States had thus reserved vacancies for demobilized officers and men of the Armed Forces. There were indeed three kinds of vacancies that they could go for in the Government. First, there were vacancies in the India and Burma Services. These were considered high-class posts. Second, there were vacancies in class I and class II services under the Central and Provincial Governments. These were considered as superior class. Third, there were vacancies in the subordinate grades under the Central and Provincial Governments. These were considered inferior class. Besides these there were also vacancies in private industries and firms. The demobilized officers and men could go for these jobs, depending on their qualification and options.

In October 1945, it was decided that all vacancies in the Central or Provincial Governments or industries, calling for the services of demobilized soldiers be advertised in the Indian Army Orders.¹⁴¹ The Air Force Order (India) also repeated these vacancies in its issues.¹⁴² Issues of *Fauji Akhbar* brought out a supplement to give wide publicity to these advertisements. As many soldiers and officers were in the process of demobilisation, it was a very helpful measure to get them acquainted about the posts thus enabling them to apply.

By November 1945, 1,000 demobilised officers and men had secured jobs under Class B release. A total of 700 went to Government Departments while 300 joined civil firms.¹⁴³ Besides, 55,329 vacancies had been notified by various employers to the Employment Offices. Of these, 6,095 had already been filled by the demobilized soldiers.¹⁴⁴ The Railway Board also announced the reservation of 70,000 non-gazetted vacancies for war service candidates.¹⁴⁵ Punjab, besides giving five rupees as bonus to each demobilized soldier of the Province, reserved 50,000 acres of

¹⁴⁰ *Resettlement*, p. 16.

¹⁴¹ 'Applications for Appointment', *Indian Army Order*, No. 2182 of 1945.

¹⁴² For example see 'Recruitment from Services for appointment of Tehsildars and Naib Tehsildars', *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 310 of 1945; 'Post War Resettlement', *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 357 of 1945.

¹⁴³ 'Releases to Civil Firms', *Fauji Akhbar*, 27 November 1945, p. 5.

¹⁴⁴ 'Finding Jobs for Demobbed', *Fauji Akhbar*, 15 January 1946, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ 'Railway Vacancies', *Fauji Akhbar*, 2 April 1946, p. 6.

land for them.¹⁴⁶ The land may seem huge but was meagre if compared with the soldiers of the Province whose strength was more than half a million. Punjab also invited applications from Punjabi candidates with war service for training as Junior Vernacular Teachers and Anglo-Vernacular Teachers. It reserved about 600 vacancies in the training for demobilized soldiers. Relaxation in qualification was given to ex-soldiers and their 1st Class Certificate was treated equivalent to the civil Middle Examination. On successful completion of the training course, the candidates were appointed as teachers in the Province.¹⁴⁷ Incidentally, after the First World War also some demobilised soldiers in Punjab were imparted Teachers Training at a school that was opened in Rawalpindi. These soldiers on successful completion of training were appointed as teachers in primary schools.¹⁴⁸

Punjab also advertised a number of posts like Tahsildar, Naib Tahsildar, forest officers, rangers, etc., exclusively for men with war service.¹⁴⁹ Demobilized soldiers of Punjab were also invited to the Punjab Police and a number of such men joined as policemen.¹⁵⁰ Even the Singapore administration invited the services of about 200 Indian demobilized soldiers of Punjab for vacancies in the Singapore Police.¹⁵¹ The job of the Police seemed to suit the most both to ex-serviceman and the Police Department because of the soldiers' love of uniform, disciplined mind, dutifulness and physical stamina. But after the First World War, police vacancies were missing in the list of vacancies for demobilized soldiers. According to Tai Yong, the demobilized soldiers were not taken in the Punjab Police because of two reasons. First, as they were attached to reserve battalions, therefore any threat of War could necessitate the calling up of reservists. Second, if employed in the police services and if war erupted coinciding with internal disturbances, then the Police Department would not be in a

¹⁴⁶ Ian A. Talbot, 'The Second World War and Local Indian Politics, 1939-1947', *The International History Review*, vol. 6, no. 4, November 1984, pp. 592-610.

¹⁴⁷ 'Training of Teachers for Civil Employment', *Indian Army Order* No. 64 of 1946.

¹⁴⁸ Tai Yong, 'Maintaining the Military Districts: Civil-Military Integration and District Soldiers' Boards in the Punjab, 1919-1939', pp. 833-74.

¹⁴⁹ 'Recruitment for services under Punjab Government', in *Indian Army Order*, No. 1840 of 1945 & No. 1841 of 1945.

¹⁵⁰ *Interview, Subedar Risal Singh*, 5 July 2013. According to Subedar Risal Singh, two demobilized men of his village, soldiers Sepoy Prahalad Singh and Sepoy Jhabar Singh joined the Punjab Police. The veracity of the statement was cross-checked with the family of these two men and was found to be correct. Risal Singh also claims to have known many of his colleagues who after demobilisation joined the Punjab Police.

¹⁵¹ 'Recruitment in the Police Department in Singapore Police', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 79 of 1946.

position to spare them for the war.¹⁵² The reason cited, though however, applied in the aftermath of the Second World War also, did not prevent demobilized men from getting employed in the Punjab Police.

The Andaman and Nicobar administration advertised more than 300 posts in various departments like marine, administration, police, forest, and inferior post, etc. The Indian Army Special Certificate of Education was treated equivalent to matriculation.¹⁵³ The Bengal Government invited applications for sixty vacancies of 'Sub-Divisional' and 'Municipal' health officers in February 1946.¹⁵⁴ The United Province Government also advertised about 700 vacancies for various class B and C posts in February 1946 for the war service candidates.¹⁵⁵

The Madras Provincial Government also asked for the services of ex-soldiers in its Engineering Subordinate Services. Ninety vacancies were exclusively reserved for men with war service who had working knowledge of the Telugu language.¹⁵⁶ They also invited the services of demobilized soldiers to fill up more than 27, 000 posts of sub-inspectors, havildars and constables in the Madras Police Department.¹⁵⁷ The Bombay Government wanted war service candidates to join its agriculture and sales tax department. Applications were also invited from Indian commissioned officers of the Bombay province, demobilized or to be released shortly, to fill in the vacancies of Deputy Collectors in the Provincial Government.¹⁵⁸ Orissa invited demobilized soldiers to fill in 10,700 vacancies in government jobs.¹⁵⁹ The Central Province wanted to fill up more than 1,500 vacancies of the Police Department from the demobilized soldiers.¹⁶⁰ Indian States too re-employed some ex-personnel in the

¹⁵² Tai-Yong, 'Maintaining the Military Districts: Civil-Military Integration and District Soldiers' Boards in the Punjab, 1919-1939', pp. 833-74.

¹⁵³ 'Recruitment for Service in Andaman and Nicobar Islands', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 104 of 1945.

¹⁵⁴ 'Resettlement... Government of Bengal', *Indian Army Order*, No. 346 of 1946.

¹⁵⁵ 'Resettlement... Government of UP', *Indian Army Order*, No. 347 of 1946.

¹⁵⁶ 'Resettlement - Recruitment of Supervisors in Madras Engineering Subordinate Services', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 23 of 1946.

¹⁵⁷ 'Recruiting in the Police Department of Madras Province', *Indian Army Order*, No. 898 of 1946; 'Madras Police Vacancies', *Fauji Akhbar*, 27 July 1946, p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ 'Release of Army personnel for posts as Agricultural Assistant', *Special Indian Army Orders*, No. 24 of 1946 & No. 20 of 1946; 'Release of Service Personnel of Bombay Domicile for the Post of Deputy Collectors', *Indian Army Order*, No. 664 of 1946.

¹⁵⁹ 'Resettlement in Orissa', *Fauji Akhbar*, 29 June 1946, p. 13.

¹⁶⁰ 'Recruitment in Police Department in the Central Provinces', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 26 of 1946.

State Services. The Hyderabad Government declared to absorb its 800-strong rank and file of the Golconda Infantry in the Hyderabad Police Force.¹⁶¹

Tata Steel and Iron also demanded the services of war service candidates to fill some vacant posts.¹⁶² Ford Motors also asked for the services of demobilized men in various posts.¹⁶³ Civil firms usually needed men with technical skill. The industries, however, found it difficult to contact Employment Exchanges in the initial stages as the latter were in a formation stage. The Central Employment Exchange, Shimla, thus instructed units and formation commanders to forward the details of technically trained officers and men in a prescribed pro forma to register their names with them in order to provide skilled manpower to the industries.¹⁶⁴

Most of the vacancies of Managers, Deputy Managers and the staff in newly raised 116 Recruiting and Resettlement Offices were filled with demobilized personnel. Some men were also taken in the Punjab Forest Department.¹⁶⁵ A few men of the communication branch of the Air Force were taken by the Post and Telegraph Department.¹⁶⁶ Pilots of the IAF had good opportunities. There were a number of war surplus Dakota aircraft on sale at a low rate. A number of airlines in civil aviation sprang up after the war. Many IAF officers joined civil aviation.¹⁶⁷ Some demobilized IECOs were able to make to Indian Civil Service and Indian Police Service in the reserved vacancies.¹⁶⁸ The IECOs were also invited for many other class I posts also under the Central Government. For instance 100 vacancies in the General

¹⁶¹ 'Demobilisation in Hyderabad', *The Times of India*, 29 May 1950, p. 3.

¹⁶² 'Employment-officers', *Indian Army Order*, No. 2261 of 1945; 'Employment Officers', *Air Force Order (India)*, No. 311 of 1945.

¹⁶³ 'Servicemen with Ford Motors Limited', *Fauji Akhbar*, 1 January 1946, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ 'Resettlement - Employment in Higher Grade Appointments of Technical Nature', *Air Force Order (India)* 258 of 1945.

¹⁶⁵ 'Recruitment for Employment under the Labour Department of Government of India', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 10 of 1945 & No. 118 of 1945; Praval, *Valour Triumph*, p. 153.

¹⁶⁶ *Demobilisation and Resettlement - RIAF*, p. 2, File No. 601/7516/H, HDMOD.

¹⁶⁷ There were two airways companies in India until 1945. After the War, civil aviation policies were liberalized and the airways sprang up to eleven. Factors like the availability of War surplus Dakota aircraft at a cheaper rate, trained manpower demobilized by the Indian Air Force and a number of airfields constructed during the War, contributed immensely. T.N. Kapoor, 'Shipping, Air and road Transport', in V.B. Singh (ed.), *Economic History of India: 1857-1956* (New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1965, reprinted 1975), pp. 348-74; S.A. Sabvala & R.M. Lala, (ed.), *Keynote: J.R.D. Tata*, (New Delhi, Rupa, 2008), pp. 32-3; Air Chief Mshl P.C. Lal (ed. Ela Lal), *My Years with IAF* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1986), p. 51.

¹⁶⁸ Lt Gen S.K. Sinha, S.K., *A Soldier Recalls* (New Delhi, Lancer, 1992), pp. 58 & 77.

Administrative Pool, a central services class I service were filled with war service officers.¹⁶⁹

The Willcox Committee had recommended the raising of the War Department Constabulary after the War.¹⁷⁰ The Constabulary was to be raised exclusively out of war service candidates. The recommendation was accepted and accordingly, more than 6,000 demobilized soldiers were employed to guard government installations like airfields, armament factories, ammunition depots and arsenals, etc.¹⁷¹ The men of RIASC (MT) got jobs easily as there was a large requirement for trained drivers in the country.¹⁷² Further, Corps like Indian Artillery initially demobilized its maximum manpower, but it was expanded again in the later period of 1946. Moreover, after Independence, when some of the arms and services of the defence forces again needed men in view of operations in Jammu and Kashmir, a number of demobilized soldiers again joined the army.¹⁷³ Various queries forwarded by serving soldiers in 1947-48, asking from experts regarding the counting of their war service for pension also shows that many demobilized soldiers joined the army again when the Indian army expanded after the Partition.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, after the War a considerable number of bullocks, mules, donkeys and camels were surplus to requirements. These were made available for sale to ex-servicemen at concessional rates.¹⁷⁵

Some individual accounts are mentioned for illustration. Gurdas Singh of Ludhiana, Punjab, who lost his an eye during operations in the War, was demobilized after the ceasefire. Since he was a matriculate, he was given the job of a clerk in the

¹⁶⁹ 'Release of Army personnel for posts as officers in the General Administrative Pool, Central Service Class I', *Special Indian Army Order*, No. 56 of 1946.

¹⁷⁰ Willcox Committee Report, para 217.

¹⁷¹ Notification No. 1121, 26 April 1947, *Gazette of India*; also see *The Times of India*, 18 November 1947, p. 1. War Department Constabulary was re-designated as Defence Department Constabulary after the disbandment of the War Department. It was further named Ministry of Defence Security Corps and again renamed as Defence Security Corps that still exists in the armed forces and still recruits ex-soldiers of the Army, Navy and Air Force, exclusively.

¹⁷² *Expansion of the Armed Forces*, File No. 601/9056/H, HDMOD.

¹⁷³ *Interview, Jemadar Sri Ram*, 19 May 2012. Recruit Sri Ram, who had not yet completed his training at the artillery depot when hostilities ended, was demobilized. Indian artillery needed men again when it was planned to expand the Corps. Sri Ram joined the artillery and retired as Jemadar after serving a full tenure. Hav (later Hony Capt) Umrao Singh, Victoria Cross demobilized after the war, again joined the Artillery in 1947.

¹⁷⁴ After Partition, the armed forces were split into two, leaving a proportion behind in India. Second, the British other ranks and officers also left India. Third, Operations had started in Jammu and Kashmir against raiders and the Pakistan army, hence there was a large number of requirement in the forces. The Army recruited, besides fresh manpower, the demobilized soldiers, who fitted into age and other criteria.

¹⁷⁵ *Resettlement*, pp. 8-9.

district headquarters office. Besides the medical pension from the army, he got reasonable pay from his later job.¹⁷⁶ Two soldiers of village Malda, Mahendergarh, Punjab, joined the Punjab Police after demobilisation and two others from the same village joined the War Department Constabulary Force.¹⁷⁷ Two demobilized soldiers of Rewari, Punjab, joined the Railway Police and Central Reserve Force each.¹⁷⁸

Indeed, a large number of vacancies were reserved for the demobilised soldiers. In April 1946, 51,000 vacancies were notified by the Employment Exchanges (including Recruiting and Employment Offices) but aspirants were only 47,000. The reason being that demobilisation was a slow process and also many who had recently been demobilized wanted to relax for some time.¹⁷⁹ By July 1946, out of about 850,000 demobilised men, 274,660 had registered their names with the Employment Exchanges. Of these 54,669 were employed while there were still 100,276 vacancies with the Employment Exchanges.¹⁸⁰ (See Photo 4.5 & 4.6, ex-soldiers visiting Employment Exchange). Meanwhile, the number of Employment Exchanges also grew to 69 by July 1946.¹⁸¹ By May 1947, a total of 121,891 ex-servicemen had been placed in employment by May 1947.¹⁸²

The system of resettlement, however had some problems. Some ex-soldiers complained that the working of the Employment Exchanges was not fair. They also complained that the wages offered were too less. However, they were asked not to compare the wages with those in the armed forces. The armed forces were offered higher pay because of strenuous living conditions and also due to the possibility of the personnel getting posted in remote areas and foreign lands. The story of a man, who refused a job on the plea that the pay was less but repented later when he reached the stage of starvation, was published in *Fauji Akhbar* to impress ex-servicemen to join without reluctance.¹⁸³ But the result was not encouraging. From June 1946 to June

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Jemadar Gurdas Singh by his Grandson, www.youtube.com/watch?v=uU7koCL-97A, Part 1 to 4, accessed on 18 May 2012.

¹⁷⁷ Interview, *Subedar Risal Singh*, 5 July 2013.

¹⁷⁸ Interview, *Lal Singh*, 11 July 2013.

¹⁷⁹ 'Servicemen and Jobs', *Fauji Akhbar*, 11 May 1946, p. 5.

¹⁸⁰ 'Employment Exchange Jobs', *Fauji Akhbar*, 28 September 1946, p. 12.

¹⁸¹ The cost of these Employment Exchanges to the Central Government was about Rs 3,642,500 during 1946-47. The per capita expenditure on placement worked out Rs 43 in 1945-46, Rs 20/12 during April-June 1946 and Rs 16 in July 1946. *Ibid.*

¹⁸² 'Resettlement Figures', *Fauji Akhbar*, 12 July 1947, p. 9.

¹⁸³ 'Employment for Ex-Servicemen', *Fauji Akhbar*, 14 December 1946, p. 14; 'Unauthorised Employment Exchanges', *Fauji Akhbar*, 21 December 1946, p. 12.

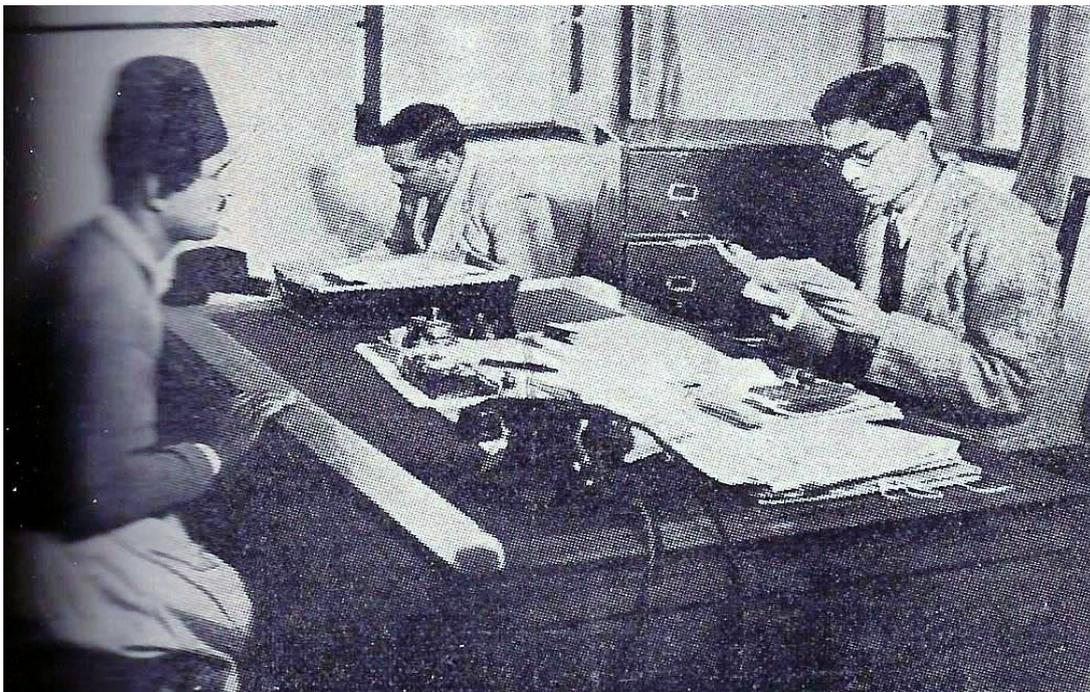
Demobilized Soldiers at Employment Exchange

Photo 4.5



Ex-Servicemen are entering the compound of an Employment Exchange

Photo 4.6



Ex-Servicemen applicants being interviewed for civil job

Source: *Fauji Akhbar*, 2 November 1946.

1947, a total of 41,898 ex-servicemen refused to join jobs arranged by the Employment Exchanges. About fifty per cent did so because they considered the pay as inadequate.¹⁸⁴ At last, a large number of demobilized soldiers still remained jobless. According to a survey conducted in three villages for this research, more than fifty five per cent demobilized soldiers did not get any job. Of the total fifteen men demobilized after the War in these villages, only six could get some job and another opened his own milk dairy in a nearby town. Thus, eight had to go back to farming. Also none of these eight men got any War Jagir neither were they associated with any co-operative society.¹⁸⁵

Conclusion

It would thus appear that demobilisation created many problems for the affected. But it was an exercise that had to be conducted, good or bad. Some soldiers wanted to go home soon while others had the apprehension of losing jobs. Some regiments like the Chamar Regiment and Lingayat Regiment were raised for the first time out of some Schedule Castes but despite the wishes of a majority of the soldiers of these regiments, no consideration was given to retain them in combatant force.

The Government started planning demobilisation as early as 1941 by setting up a Demobilisation Section. Efforts were made for the smooth functioning of the demobilisation machinery. But the demobilisation was in such large numbers that it was very difficult to handle. Any mismanagement and negligence proved costly. Mishandling of Demobilisation in the Royal Indian Navy even contributed to mutiny. Also, during release from the army, some soldiers were wrongly demobilized and had to be called back. Still others, who were convicted for some offence and were awarded forfeiture of benefits, were demobilized with all the benefits and sent home wrongly. This became a reason of embarrassment to the Government.

The release of the men from the armed forces was done in a phased manner. Recruits at the training centres were demobilized first. Personnel of low medical category, men above fifty years of age and married women came in the second

¹⁸⁴ 'Ex-Servicemen's Indifference', *Fauji Akhbar*, 9 August 1947, p. 25.

¹⁸⁵ Interviews were conducted in three villages Malda, Budana and Thothwal, all in old Punjab and present Haryana. Information usually was obtained from veterans of Second World War: Subedar Risal Singh, Malda; Honorary Capt Ishwar Singh, Budana; and academician Principal Lal Singh, Thothwal, who is in his 80s and witnessed the happening in the village. In doubtful cases, the information was cross-checked either from the next-of-kin of the veterans or from other old persons of the village.

priority to be released. Since the Japanese surrender in August 1945 till December 1946, a total of 1,252,765 personnel of the Indian armed forces had been released. This includes 17,842 personnel of the Royal Indian Navy and 12,953 personnel of the Royal Indian Air Force. Also 4,069 Indian army units had been disbanded. The strength of the regular Indian army including WAC(I) was 2,049,203 in July 1945. It came down to 399,203 in July 1947. The strength of the Navy came down from 37,863 to 15,001. Thus, more than eighty per cent of the Indian Army and more than sixty per cent of the RIN strength had been demobilized by July 1947. Also by May 1946, more than 70,000 animals had been demobilized.

As and when men were demobilized they were paid their benefits in cash. Soldiers taking benefits of service in cash, in some cases, were robbed or tricked of their money during their journey home. Thus, some soldiers even after serving so hard, at far away places, reached home without any money. Also in many cases, there were irregularities in pensions. This led to a number of petitions to Army HQs. To deal with the problem a 'Pension Appeal Tribunal' was set up.

The soldiers were also given pre-release training at the demobilisation centres before the release. Besides lectures on basic education, sanitation and hygiene, etc., they were given a short training ranging from one to three months in subjects related to agriculture and cottage industry. Soldiers, however, expected jobs for their resettlement. Though most of them came from agriculture and related professions, a majority of them did not want to go back to their previous professions. Of the 82 per cent men who came from agriculture and related professions, 65 per cent wanted some jobs. Of these aspirants about 85 per cent wanted to get into government jobs. Steps were initiated to resettle as many of them as possible. Some army certificates were considered equivalent to civil qualifications. Relaxation in age, qualification and application fee were given to the demobilized soldiers to get into some job. Co-operative societies were also encouraged and steps were initiated to give government contracts to these societies. To resettle the soldiers, jagirs were distributed and military colonies were established for demobilized soldiers under various provincial government schemes. The grant of land to the soldiers who belonged to the scheduled castes of Punjab brought about a change in the policy of the Provincial Government. This opened the scope to scheduled castes like Chamar, Chuhra, Kori, etc. to acquire land. Besides the grant of Government land, they could now even purchase

agricultural land. Under the new policy, it was the discretion of district officer to allow a soldier of the non-agricultural class to purchase land in Punjab. On the recommendation of the military authorities, demobilized soldiers of these castes were allowed to purchase agricultural land.

A large number of vacancies were reserved in various departments like the Police, Railways, Secretariat, provincial offices, both of higher and lower posts. Punjab and Madras recruited a number of demobilized men in their provincial police. Some soldiers went into the CRP (Crown Representative Police later CRPF) and also the Railway Protection Force. A numbers of soldiers joined the Defence Department Constabulary (later DSC). A few were taken into district and provincial administration as peons, clerks, watchmen, etc. Those who learned driving in the armed forces joined transport companies and became drivers. Men with technical service in the forces joined civil industries. Some IECOs went into civil services, the Indian Police and other class I services in Central and Provincial Governments. They also joined as managers in civil firms. IAF pilots had opportunities in civil aviation.

However, a large number of men still remained jobless. By May 1947, a total of 121,891 ex-servicemen had been employed in different employments. Besides, a few per cent might have opened their own small businesses. Thus despite many measures, a large percentage of ex-soldiers had no option but to join their ancestral profession of agriculture. Punjab, which initiated more steps than any other Province, could provide jobs only to twenty per cent of the war service candidates registered with Employment Exchanges by the end of 1946 in Punjab.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Ian A. Talbot, 'The Second World War and Local Indian Politics, 1939-1947', *The International History Review*, vol. 6, no. 4, November 1984, pp. 592-610.

Conclusion

The declaration of the War against Germany made the British involve her overseas colonies in the Allied War effort. Mobilisation of the Indian armed forces commenced at a slow pace but the expansion became inevitable with each passing day. The Middle East, where vital British interests were involved, was under great threat. The political climate in India was continuously demanding more troops for internal security. Besides, the sea routes to India were also under German threat and were partially closed down. Subsequently, the Japanese involvement in the War brought the War much nearer to India. As Philip Warner, a War veteran and the biographer of General Auchinleck writes that “British Empire was locked in a desperate struggle and that India was one of the keys to success.”¹ These factors necessitated a large expansion of the Indian armed forces during the Second World War. India served as a base, storehouse and a large recruiting ground for the two theatres of War viz. the Middle East and South East Asia.

In 1939, at the outset of the War, the strength of the Indian Armed Forces was about two lakh. It had increased to two and a half million men at the time of armistice. The peace time recruiting policies could not stand ground. This led to number of changes in recruitment policies to keep pace with the demand.

But initially, there was not much deviation from the earlier policy. This was because as soon the War was declared, men from the enlisted classes in India, looked at the start of the War as an opportunity for jobs. Non-enlisted classes were equally keen to make an entry in the Army from which they had been deprived for long. Thus, men in large numbers flocked to the recruiting offices for enlistment. But the requirement in the initial stages could be sufficed out of manpower in reserve and also at training centres. The numbers of men rushing for enlistment were thus routed back. The pace of recruitment, therefore did not substantially change. The requirement in the Middle East gradually increased. The routing of the men back from recruitment offices was considered unwise and therefore Recruit Reception Camps were opened. Recruits were hold in these Camps till sufficient space became available in the training centres. But soon, the requirement grew and Recruit Reception Camps too

¹ Philip Warner (ed.), *Auchinleck: The Lonely Soldier* (London, Buchan & Enright Publishers, 1981), p.72.

were flooded with the new recruits and therefore the opening of many new training centres became imperative.

The Japanese entry in the War caused a lot of consternation among the British authorities, particularly, when they were losing ground in other theatres of the War as well. Now, they started hunting for recruits in India. But there was a strong opposition, especially from the Indian National Congress Party, to any Indian participation in the War efforts. War indeed played different games with the recruiting at this time. The Congress appealed to the people not to join the armed forces. The Quit India Movement crippled the Government machinery especially in the United Provinces and Bihar. Violent riots erupted in several parts of the country. The authorities tried to quell the disturbances by using the military and police forces. Fifty seven battalions of the Army were deployed to curb these disturbances. The Indian police personnel dealing with the disturbances were awarded Police Medals for shooting the Congress workers and sympathizers for dispersing the mob. Some parties like Unionist Party, Hindu Mahasabha, Communist Party, actively supported the recruitment to the armed forces. Indian members of Council of State and Legislative Assembly and leaders of depressed classes pleaded with the government to recruit men from their region and community thus sparking a sort of competition.

To keep pace with the demand, the recruiting system was toned up. The Martial Race theory, which had been continuously pursued till this time, created a manpower crisis. The policy was therefore abandoned and recruitment was thrown open to all classes of Indians. Relaxations in age and qualifications were allowed to bring more candidates within the eligibility criteria. Medical and physical standards were also slackened to enlist maximum number of men. The training period was reduced to a bare minimum to manage the ever increasing demands of the units at the front. Steps were taken to sustain the manpower already serving with the army. Discharge from service on medical grounds except in severe cases was stopped and invalid soldiers were diverted to garrison duties. Even persons, who had got enrolled by quoting a wrong caste, were retained by the Army. Laws were framed under which no man would be sent home on the basis of unsuitability but would be transferred to arms or service where he could fit in. In some cases, even men outside the prescribed age limit were enlisted on some pretext or the other. However, political activity was

never tolerated. Participation in a political agitation like 'Satyagraha' rendered a candidate unsuitable for the armed forces.

To mitigate the shortage of clerks, Women Auxiliary Corps (India) was formed. These women in uniform took over the duties of clerks, operators, cyphers, storekeepers, etc. to relieve the men for duties on the war front. Women were also recruited as sweepers to relieve the men to serve in different theatres of War.

Recruitment to technical trades in all the three services posed more difficulty. Civ-mil Centres were opened to train men in technical trades. Stipends were given to candidates for seeking technical training. Shortage of technical manpower still remained a big problem and therefore help of contractors and private industry was also taken to meet the needs. Wastages in training centres of some technical trades, however, led to the raising of qualifications again even at a time when the War situation was turning worse. Recruiting policies indeed were relaxed and tightened depending on the intensity of the War and the availability of manpower. Seasonal and climatic factors also affected the pace of recruitment.

Qualifications required for recruitment to different trades were relaxed according to the circumstances of the War. The minimum qualification for applying to clerical grade and direct VCO, was matriculation. But, no minimum qualification was prescribed for the Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers. However, a British candidate joining the Indian army as an Emergency Commissioned Officer was required to possess a school certificate from Oxford or Cambridge Board or an equivalent or higher qualification. In the case of Indians, a candidate was required to be educated and intelligent, armed with fluency in the English language. He was also expected to bear a good personality and the ability to command the respect and obedience of Indian soldiers, capability to assume responsibility, as also adaptability and tactfulness. However, a majority of the Indians who joined as IECOs were matriculates and some of them even possessed higher qualifications.

Recruitment to the officers' cadre of all the three services came as a golden opportunity to the educated Indians, who were desirous of a military career but were financially poor. It was difficult for them to pay the fee of Rs 60 per month during training period as cost of training prior to the outbreak of the War. During the War, the training cost as well as the application fee was completely waived off. Further, a

number of the other ranks were also given commission in the Indian Army and Air Force during the War. Joining the officers' cadre in the armed forces was like a passport to high echelons of society and changed the social status of the individual enormously.

The reasons for the entry of Indians in the armed forces differed widely. Unemployment and poor economic condition largely contributed their entry into the armed forces. Men of some castes preferred a job in the armed forces than that of a labourer. Supplementing the meagre agricultural income of the family was an added advantage to the peasants.

Besides salary and the hope of gaining glory, respect attached to the military profession in India and the scarcity of finding any other job were motivating factors for the Indian youth to join the forces. Poor economic condition, rising prices, scarcity of food and intermittent droughts further compelled the peasants to join the armed forces. Friction with parents/family members or school authorities sometimes became the immediate cause of recruitment as lots of employment opportunities had opened up, paving the way to disobey them. In some cases even men who were absent and absconding from home, got the way to army without intimating their parents or relatives. Incidents of forced recruitment also cannot be ruled out.

The officer candidates were generally well educated and many belonged to well to do families. They usually joined the forces because of the respect attached to the service. Unemployment also played a role. Martial traditions and a love of uniform were the motivating factors. Some pilots joined the IAF for their love of flying machines. Some officer candidates, however, did not have any particular aim. They joined merely by chance. Advertisement and propaganda also played a significant role in attracting candidates to the uniform. It was advertised that joining the forces would lead to a permanent job after the War.

Many officers claim to have joined the forces with a view that India would get independence soon and would need its own armed forces. Their experience would help independent India to manage its own forces and contribute in nation-building. But this view is also to be seen in the light of the fact as Air Marshal Ghadiok asserts: 'what other employment opportunities were available to the young educated.' Thus, a patriotic notion might have emerged later when India rode to the path of

Independence after the Cabinet Mission. However, this view, especially of the IECOs, also cannot be ignored as men who joined as Emergency Commissioned Officers during War were the men of more political inclinations than the Indian Commissioned Officers and KCIOs.

The prevailing anti-British sentiments, political considerations and agitations, discrimination, desertion, creation of the Indian National Army, non-attractive terms of service, war calamities and reluctance of parents were some dissuading factors to recruitment. The political environment restricted some men from reaching the recruitment offices for joining the ranks while it influenced educated youths to abstain from the recruitment process. The political factor, however, played a major role in Bihar, Orissa and the United Province. Punjab, Madras and the North West Frontier remained almost untouched by political tiding.

The Service Selection Boards continuously invited criticism for their rigidity in the selection process. Military authorities argued that India lacked officer material and also that the right type of candidates were not coming forward. The success rate of officer candidates, however, depended on the intensity of the War. On an average one out of about fifty candidates eventually got commission. The lack of public school education in India influenced both the number and quality of men seeking commission.

The strength of the Indian armed forces increased tenfold during the Second World War which was proportionally a greater increase than the First World War when it had multiplied seven fold. Non-availability of horses posed a difficulty in recruitment for the cavalry during the First World War while a shortage of tanks delayed the expansion of the Armoured Corps during the Second World War. The non-availability of experienced manpower in terms of VCOs and NCOs handicapped the expansion of non-enlisted classes in both the First and Second World Wars. The Second World War opened opportunities for women also. Indian women had already found entry in medical and nursing branches of the Indian Army during the First War but now they were recruited in a special Corps for women [WAC(D)] to perform the duties of clerks, operators, ciphers, etc. and relieved many combatant men for fighting on war fronts. The recruitment system during this War differed from that of the First World War. During the First World War the recruitment for a regiment was carried

out by a specific class of recruiting officers. The system, however, was changed to a territorial recruitment system in 1917. But during the Second World War recruitment to all the three services was combined and it was controlled by a centralised agency, called the Directorate of Recruiting. Field Recruiting offices of this Directorate, located in various parts of India, were supported by the Provincial Governments. Punjab still remained the largest supplier of manpower as was during the First World War.

The War also opened the doors to some depressed marginalized classes of the society to get enlisted in combatant forces for the first time. Exclusive regiments like the Chamar Regiment and Lingayat Regiment were raised. The British, however, were anxious about the performance of these newly recruited classes and rarely tested them in active war mechanism. Some other regiments composed of the depressed classes like the Mahar Regiment, and Mazhbi and Ramdasia Regiment were re-raised after a long pause. The Assam Regiment and the Bihar Regiment, raised out of the non-enlisted classes, were also creations of this War. Some of these Regiments found a permanent place in the Indian Army while some others like the Chamar and Lingayat were disbanded at the end of the War.

The tastes of soldiery by the Indians during this War evoke mixed responses. On the outbreak of the War, Indian soldiers saw it an opportunity to get accelerated promotions, war allowances and medals. But, on mobilisation though some were desperate to move to the War zones, quite a few others were homesick and apprehensive. Indian soldiers however enjoyed the good food, better lifestyle and visited different regions of the world. Battle fatigue, long marches, rigorous manoeuvres, hectic patrolling duties and the vagaries of nature, especially stormy deserts of the Middle East and the dense jungles of South East Asia were indeed troublesome. The desert was always dry while the jungle was always wet. Sandstorms made life difficult in the desert; cool and humid weather and intermittent showers made it especially arduous in the tropical regions. Drinking water was a problem on both the war fronts. Flies tortured the soldiers in the desert while leeches and mosquitoes created lots of problems in the jungles. The terrain, climate and the fauna were no less of hurdles than the real enemy at the War. In war deserts provided no security to men while jungles provided much of suspense.

In the battle-fields, a soldier usually found himself vacillating between emotional extremes. He was at times full of spirit while in other instances he was disappointed and depressed. This fluctuation usually reflected the morale of the soldier. Further, the combat capability of an Army has a close relationship with the morale of its soldiers. The morale also depended on the situation of the battles. In times of victory it was high while in defeat it sagged. The leadership of the commander, and factors like problems at home, infidelity of wives, battle casualties, disease, etc., also contributed to the morale. As it is said, the Army fights battles on its stomach, the supply of rations too contributed to the performance of the troops. When the supply of fresh ration in the Fourteenth Army was alarmingly low, Slim feared that it would threaten the possibilities of offensive. Continuous defeat, heavy casualties, hardships, delay in letters and mails, milking away of experienced troops and delay in reinforcements demoralized the soldiers. Cancellation of leave trains also frustrated those who were going on leave.

To boost the morale of the troops a local newspaper was started. To prop up the spirit of the soldiers further, some measures such as welfare activities, recreation, local leave, visits of dignitaries and better interaction between officers and men, were initiated. Gallantry awards were conferred in numbers and in person by the senior military commander to the recipients in a large gathering or ceremonial parades of the soldiers at war fronts to make the recipients feel proud and spur others to bring laurels and combat morale difficulties. Propaganda was also disseminated to boost the morale of the soldiers, though temporarily. For example, in the first half of 1943, when 15 Corps failed in its offensive in Arakan, rumours were spread through the press that Wingates and the Allied forces had penetrated the Japanese area. The cooked up story was spread among the troops to make them believe that they had defeated the Japanese. In fact, Wingate's Long Penetration Campaign was not a success and it suffered one third of its troops went missing in Burma jungles. Slim found that this skilful propaganda distracted the attention from failure in the Arakan and contributed raising the morale of the troops. Also long periods of inactivity made the soldiers homesick while successful operations gave them a purpose and boosted their morale.

Separation from wife, worry about her extra marital relations as also re-marriage to other men in their long absence, sometimes haunted the mind of soldiers. When such cases of infidelity took place with the airmen of Indian Air Force,

authorities became most concerned to settle the problem. An amendment in Code of Criminal Procedure was carried out to help out such persons. The amendment provided that an aggrieved husband who was away on military duty could authorize other person to make a complaint on his behalf regarding the adultery or abduction of his wife. The aggrieved soldier needed to authorize someone in writing under certification by his commanding officer.

The leave mechanism during the War provided for two kinds of leaves viz. ordinary and compassionate leave. Ordinary leave was governed by percentage criteria provisioned separately for each theatre of war which further depended on factors like circumstances of war, availability of transport, marital status of the soldier, etc. However, most common ground for compassionate leave by Indian soldier was 'the house fallen down story' while British cooked up the story of 'grandmother is dead'. During this War, Indian troops also started following the plea of their British counterpart for compassionate leave.

Incidence of crimes increased rapidly with the increase in strength of the armed forces. During the year 1938-39, the number of persons convicted by court martial under the Indian Army Act was 238. In 1939-40, the figure almost doubled. As the more and more men joined the Indian Army, the number of convictions increased until it reached its peak in 1944-45 to 15,120. When army strength came down after the War, the cases also dropped in number. Further, between 1 October 1941 and 30 September 1945, besides other offences 2116 cases of theft and 288 cases of murder were recorded against Indian officers and men. During the War unprecedented increase in number and scale of Government contracts also added to cases of fraud, bribery and corruption.

Driving vehicle in negligent manner, over-speeding, riding the bicycles carelessly, loss of pay book and identity disc, negligently loading the rifle, were usually the offences in a typical regiment. The punishments awarded for such offences were normally field punishment and forfeiture of proficiency pay for some period. A mason who failed to take masonry tools while doing the work of mason in War zone was considered as a soldier coming for fighting battle without his sword or rifle. Mason was thus punished by awarding forfeiture of his proficiency pay. Thus intensity of an offence and severity of punishments increased according to the area of

deployment. Being grossly insolent to a superior was taken seriously and severely punished. If such indiscipline was committed by a VCO, the severity of punishment increased and the offender could even be court martialed, reduced in rank or even dismissed from service. An ICO or VCO would usually be punished with forfeiture of seniority for promotion or reprimand or severe reprimand depending upon the offence. However, most common charges framed against Indian other ranks were 'disobeying the lawful command of his superior' and 'an act prejudicial to good order and military discipline'. Mess waiters and cooks were more prone to former charge while the combatant soldiers framed more on the later charge. Most common offence among the officers [ECO, ICO, KCIO and KCO] was drunkenness and it usually invited punishment of severe reprimand.

The economic offences like selling military items to civilians for money, corruption, bribery, etc. were more common among the personnel of Corps of RIASC, IHC and IAOC whereas criminal offences like murder were more among the infantry troops. British soldiers were more prone to insubordination than the Indians while later were more prone to dishonesty and committed more number of military offences. While during the same time Africans were more mutinous and violent to their superiors.

Desertions were more in supporting services like RIASC than the fighting services like Infantry and armoured corps. As far as the area is concerned, soldiers like Pathans of NWFP deserted more than the soldiers of other region. Further, recruits had higher rate of desertion than the trained men. The large numbers of desertions from the army were prompted by homesickness, difficult military life, depressions and fear of eventuality. Desertions were more among the recruits at training centres. Experienced soldiers mainly deserted during embarkation for overseas. However, chances of desertion were rare when units were deployed overseas, away from home. The desertion was less in infantry units, especially which comprised pre-war enlisted classes (except Pathans) while it was more in Corps like RIASC which had mixed class composition and included men from non-enlisted classes. Though rules provided conviction of deserter by court martial and ultimate punishment as death, but it was seldom practised until coupled with other offences.

Desertion of Indian soldiers during this war numbered more than 360,000.² British military authorities were helpless to deal with such large numbers of desertions and civil administrative system could not apprehend large numbers of deserters. British authorities could not make any special efforts in this regards and they seemed to usually remain passive and also did not initiate harsh actions provided in the Law against the deserters except in rare cases. More than 14 per cent of the total soldiers of Indian Army deserted during this War and more than 75 per cent could not be restored till the end of the War.

Dysentery and 'Desert Sores' were common diseases in the deserts of Middle East. Soldiers deployed in East Africa were more prone to yellow fever. Malaria, diarrhea, dysentery, Jaundice, Singapore Ear and Foot and Skin Infections were more common in South East Asia and Far East. The disease which took a heavy toll during this War was Malaria. It occupied more beds in the hospitals than the injured in battles. Strict anti-malaria drills, extensive use of mepacrine and spread of D.D.T. reduced the rate of Malaria cases by the start of 1945.

Cases of infidelity were more among the wives of British soldiers than Indians. British soldiers more often visited the women for sex but cases of venereal disease were more among the Indian soldiers. The lack of knowledge about use of prophylaxis among Indians soldiers was the cause behind it.

The discrimination in the Indian armed forces was common. There are irrefutable evidences in the records of World War II that top military authorities and their civilian counterparts in Defence Department all knew about the discrimination. But there was a reluctance to accept the fact publically. The discrimination started with the entry of Indians in officer cadre of the Indian Army which till then had been a close preserve of British officers. Further, British officers were reluctant to accept the Indians as their colleagues. When some seats were reserved for Indian candidates in officer cadre after the First World War, despite their initial oppositions British officers had little option against the political will. But the feeling of racial superiority started reflecting in their behavior. They came out with other option and segregated

² There was a total of 99,382 cases of desertion in the British Army from September 1939 to August 1945. David French, 'Discipline and the Death Penalty in the British Army in the War against Germany during the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 33, No. 4, 1998, pp. 531-45.

the Indian officers in separate Indianised units. Restriction in clubs, racial remarks and general dislike for Indians, etc. hurt the Indian officers.

After the formation of Indian Military Academy, when Indian Commissioned Officers started coming in the units in 1935, the pay and perks also became discriminatory. The ICOs felt discriminated and hurt but being in a minority they could not dare to raise voice in this matter. Second World War forced the British to recruit large number of Indians both in other ranks and officer cadre. The strength of Indian officers increased but the cases of discrimination did not come down. The pay of IECOs too was lesser than the pay of British ECOs.

By the time of Second World War, KCIOs had acquired substantial experience and some had also undergone the staff course. Expansion of armed forces brought fast promotions to the British officers, but KCIOs felt marginalized. They were not given promotions like British officers during the War and rarely the commands of battalions. Even duties of sensitive nature like General Staff Officer (GSO), Military Intelligence, Military Operations, etc. were rarely assigned to Indian officers. This led to emergence of professional discrimination. KCIOs who were the senior Indian officers nursed the grudge as they were denied promotion opportunities and crucial appointments including command of the units. ICOs and IECOs felt that their pay was far lesser than the pay of British officers of Indian Army. Besides, in the mess also Indian officers felt discriminated. Indian food was rarely prepared and Indian music was generally resented. Racial comments also made the Indian officers uncomfortable. Since the strength of Indian officers increased enormously during the War, they could now oppose the racial discrimination, though diminishly and raise their voice against the discriminatory pay and perks.

The voice against discriminations was also raised in Indian legislatures. British top military authorities also knew that cohesion between Indian and British officers was necessary for combat effectiveness and success in war. They, therefore, issued circulars and instructions to the formation and unit commanders to tackle this problem or face court martial. But rarely took rarely took any stern disciplinary action against British officers for flouting the orders. The British military authorities In India wanted the Indians to be pacified but at the same time they avoided offending British officers. The authorities thus adopted the middle path under which circulars,

warnings, instructions and oral orders, etc. were issued time and again, but the defaulters were rarely punished. However, these actions like issuing orders, circulars, etc. with rare concrete action also had some affect. Commanding Officers gauged the importance of the issue and tried to be fair in their dealings. They started to addressing the discriminatory treatment, if any in the mess and also elsewhere. The usually dealt with the problem tactfully, without hurting the sentiments of the British officers.

Towards the end of the War, racial discrimination started receding. Increase in the strength of Indian officers, and instructions and orders issued by military authorities against discrimination and also less discriminatory mind of young ECOs, brought a change in the attitude of British officers. Some of the issues like discriminatory pay and perks of ICOs and IECOs, were still to be resolved. At first efforts were made by Government to convince the Indian officers that there was no discrimination. It was explained that British officers were drawing more pay because they were serving away from their country. But, the authorities had not answer as why pay difference existed when both British and Indian were serving outside India.

Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy now gave serious thought to the issue. The economic burden, was however matter of concern but in no way more important than redressal of discontent at a time when there was a war. In early 1945, discrimination in pay and perks between the British and the Indian Commissioned Officers as also between the ECOs and IECOs was addressed. The promotions and command of units was also taken care. Some Indian officers were promoted to Lieutenant Colonel rank and this opened the door of command of battalion to more Indian officers. Some officers in Navy and Air Force were also promoted to equivalent ranks. Indian officers were assigned the command of Indian battalions. Going further a brigade (51 Indian Brigade) was composed of all Indian battalions and all the these battalions commanded by Indian commanders, first time in the history of Indian Army. This broke the British myth that Indians as officers did not have guts and that Indian men could only be led by White officers.³ All the battalions of 51 Indian Brigade which

³ Greenhut citing the First World War writes “If British were right, Indian units which suffered heavy officers losses would do much worse than British units under same conditions... What made British officer essential was his inherent superiority.” He also cites Lord Roberts, retired C-in-C, who visited Indian units in France “with British officers they [Indian Soldiers] fight splendidly; without them [white officers] they will not do much.” Greenhut, ‘Sahib and Sepoy’, pp. 14-9.

fought the fierce battle of Kangaw, brought laurels and all the three Indian COs were awarded with Distinguish Service Order for their leadership.

The measures of the British to address these discriminations were prompted by the fear of discontent among Indian officers, irritating questions by Indian legislators, political unrest, and formation of Indian National Army and defection of some officers to it.

The British officers, however maintained good relations with IORs. But IORs always nursed the complaints that they were not treated at par with the BORs in terms of pay, perks and amenities and facilities. The hurt feelings of Indian naval ratings found manifestation in a mutiny in 1946. IAF and Signal Training School also sympathized with the Naval mutiny, former went on strike and latter revolted. The mutiny in all the three services worked as an alarm bell to wake up the British authorities. The sword which helped the British to rule over India had lost its sharpness indeed.

At the end of the War, demobilisation of the armed forces was necessary. Neither such a large force was required nor could the economy of the country afford it. The demobilisation ahead too had mixed response from Indian soldiers. Some soldiers wanted to go home soon while majority had the apprehension of losing jobs. Some regiments like Chamar Regiment and Lingayat Regiment were raised for the first time out of some Schedule Castes but despite the wishes of more than eighty five per cent of soldiers of these regiments, no consideration was given to retain these units.

The plan for demobilisation was pursued in 1941 by setting up a Demobilisation Section. But demobilisation was a very complicated task and it was very difficult to handle it. Mishandling of Demobilisation in Royal Indian Navy even contributed to mutiny. During the release from army, some soldiers were wrongly demobilized and had to be called back. Still others who were convicted for some offence and were awarded forfeiture of benefits, were demobilized with all the benefits and sent home wrongly. This became a reason of embarrassment for Government.

The demobilisation process of the armed forces was done in a phased manner. After recruits in training, personnel of low medical category, men above fifty years of age and married women were demobilized immediately after the end of War. Since the end of War in August 1945 till December 1946, a total of 1,252,765 personnel of Indian armed forces had been released. This includes 17,842 personnel of Royal Indian Navy and 12,953 personnel of Royal Indian Air Force. Also 4,069 Indian army units had been disbanded. The strength of regular Indian army including WAC(I) which was 2,049,203 in July 1945, came down to 399,203 in July 1947. The strength of Navy came down from 37,863 to 15,001. Thus more than eighty per cent of the Indian Army and more than sixty percent of the RIN strength had been demobilized by July 1947. Besides, more than 70,000 animals had also been demobilized by May 1946.

On release soldiers were paid their benefits in cash. In some cases, they were robbed or tricked of their money during journey to home. Thus some soldiers lost their hard earn money and reached home without any money. In many cases, there were irregularities in pensions. This led to number of petitions to Army HQs. To deal with the problem a 'Pension Appeal Tribunal' was set up.

Before release soldiers were usually imparted pre-release training at the demobilisation centres. The training includes basic education and vocational training. In basic education, classes were conducted on topics reading and writing vernacular language of the soldier, sanitation and hygiene, etc. In vocational training, they were given a short course ranging from one to three months in subjects related to agriculture and cottage industry.

Most soldiers, however expected jobs for their resettlement. Majority of them though came from agriculture and related profession, but many did not want to in agriculture profession. Of the 82 per cent of men who came from agriculture and related profession, 65 per cent wanted some jobs. Of these aspirants about 85 per cent wanted to get into government jobs.

To resettle the soldiers, army certificates were considered equivalent to civil qualifications. Relaxation in age, qualification and application fee were given to the demobilized soldiers to get into some job. Co-operative societies were also encouraged and steps were initiated to give government contracts to these societies.

Jagirs were distributed to ex-soldiers and military colonies were established under various provincial government schemes. The grant of land to the soldiers who belonged to scheduled castes of Punjab brought about a change in the policy of the Provincial Government. This opened the scope to the scheduled castes like Chamar, Chuhra, Kori, etc. to acquire land. They could now even purchase the agriculture land from which they were deprived earlier. Under the new policy, it came under the purview of district officer to allow a soldier of non-agricultural class to purchase land in Punjab. On recommendation of military authorities, he usually allowed the demobilized soldiers of these castes to purchase agriculture land.

Large numbers of vacancies were reserved in various departments like Police, Railways, and Secretariat, provincial offices both of higher and lower posts. Punjab and Madras recruited numbers of demobilized men in their provincial police. Some soldiers went into CRP (Crown Representative Police later CRPF) and also Railway Protection Force. A numbers of soldiers joined Defence Department Constabulary (later DSC). A few were taken into district and provincial administration as peons, clerks, watchmen etc. Those who learned driving in armed forces joined transport companies and became drivers. Men with technical service in the forces joined civil industries. Some IECOs went into Indian Civil Services, Indian Police and other class I services in Central and Provincial Governments. They also joined as managers in civil firms. IAF pilots had the opportunities in civil aviation.

Number of Employment Exchanges created after the War to resettle the demobilized soldiers. By July 1946, out of about 850,000 demobilised men, 274,660 had registered their names with the Employment Exchanges. Of these 54,669 had been employed while there were still 100,276 vacancies with Employment Exchanges. The system of resettlement however had some problem. Some ex-soldiers complained that the working of the Employment Exchanges were not fair. They also complained that wages offered were too less. The result was thus not encouraging. From June 1946 to June 1947, a total of 41,898 ex-servicemen refused to join job arranged by Employment Exchanges. About fifty per cent did so because they considered the pay as inadequate. At last, a large number of demobilized soldiers still remained jobless. According to a survey conducted in three villages for this research, more than fifty five per cent demobilized soldiers did not get any job. Of the total fifteen men demobilized after the War in these villages, only six could get some job

and another one opened his own milk dairy in nearby town perhaps inspired by pre-release training. Thus eight had to go again into the farming. Also none of these eight men got any War Jagir neither they were associated to any co-operative society.

Thus after demobilisation, a large number of men still remained jobless. By May 1947, a total of 121,891 ex-servicemen had been employed in different employments. Some joined private industries. Besides, a few per cent might have opened their own small business. Thus despite many measures, a large percentage of ex-soldiers had no option but to join their ancestral profession of agriculture. Punjab which initiated more steps than any other Province could provide jobs only to twenty percent of the war service candidates registered with Employment Exchanges by the end of 1946 in Punjab.⁴

The investigation of this Thesis proves that it was not a success of the British who projected to have achieved by raising so large a successful voluntary Indian army. This was because more than 14 per cent soldiers deserted after joining it and 75 per cent of the deserters could never be restored back to uniform even after the end of hostilities in August 1945. It was also not the complete success of Indian national movement as despite many efforts it could not hold back large number of Indians from joining the army when its strength rose from about two lakh to about 2.5 million. British Indian administration was in such a state that British authorities felt helpless. The colonial military authorities could not stop desertion and the colonial civil administration could not trace deserter. Indian national movement could hardly influence anyone especially in Punjab and Madras provinces to keep away from recruiting in the armed forces.

⁴ Ian A. Talbot, 'The Second World War and Local Indian Politics, 1939-1947', *The International History Review*, vol. 6, No. 4, November 1984, pp. 592-610

Appendix - 1

Recruit intake by Provinces and States-Period 3rd September 1939 to 31st August 1945.

Province	British Territory	Indian States			Total
		State	Intake	Total	
Assam	19,702	Minor States	567	567	20,269
Baluchistan	2,154	Do	840	840	2,994
Bengal	1,71,252	Do	4,621	840	1,75,873
Bihar	88,224	Do	2,777	2,777	91,001
Orissa	13,451	Do	4,254	4,254	17,705
Bombay	1,07,117	Hyderabad	22,334	51,482	1,58,599
		Kolhapur	7,272		
		Minor States	21,876		
C.P. and Berar	48,172	Minor States	1,262	1,262	49,434
Coor	973	Do	---	---	973
Delhi	8,058	Do	---	---	8,058
Madras	4,75,984	Cochin	20,142	1,17,448	5,93,432
		Mysore	12,912		
		Pudukottai	2,856		
		Travancore	81,291		
		Minor States	247		
N.W.F.P.	95,541	Minor States	7,573	7,573	1,03,114
Punjab	6,17,411	Jammu and Kashmir	65,262	1,37,040	7,54,451
		Jind	7,907		
		Kapurthala	7,154		
		Nabha	7,062		
		Patiala	30,012		
		Minor States	19,642		
Rajputana and Central India.	12,418	Alwar	9,518	77,6	89,984
		Bharatpur	4,546		
		Bikaner	5,531		
		Jaipur	17,232		
		Jodhpur	11,625		
		Mewar (Udaipur)	5,069		
		Minor States	24,045 I		
Sind	9,853	Minor States	622	622	10,475
United Provinces	3,52,797	Tehri Garhwal	2,646	7,964	3,60,761
		Minor States	5,318		
Miscellaneous	24,323	---	---	---	24,323
Total India	20,47,430	---	---	4,14,016	24,61,446
Nepal		---	---	1,20,280	1,20,280
Grant Total	2,04,730	---	---	5,34,296	25,81,726

Note: (1) The above figures include:
 (i) R.I.N. 28972* (iii) N.Cs (E). 613930
 (ii) R.I.A.F. 52845* (iv) Civilians 8980+

* Intake from 1st February 1942 only. Prior to this date personnel were enlisted direct and not included with figures rendered by Army recruiting authorities.

Source: *Recruiting for the Defence Services in India*, p.139.

Appendix - 2

RECRUITABLE POPULATION AND COMBATANTS RECRUITED

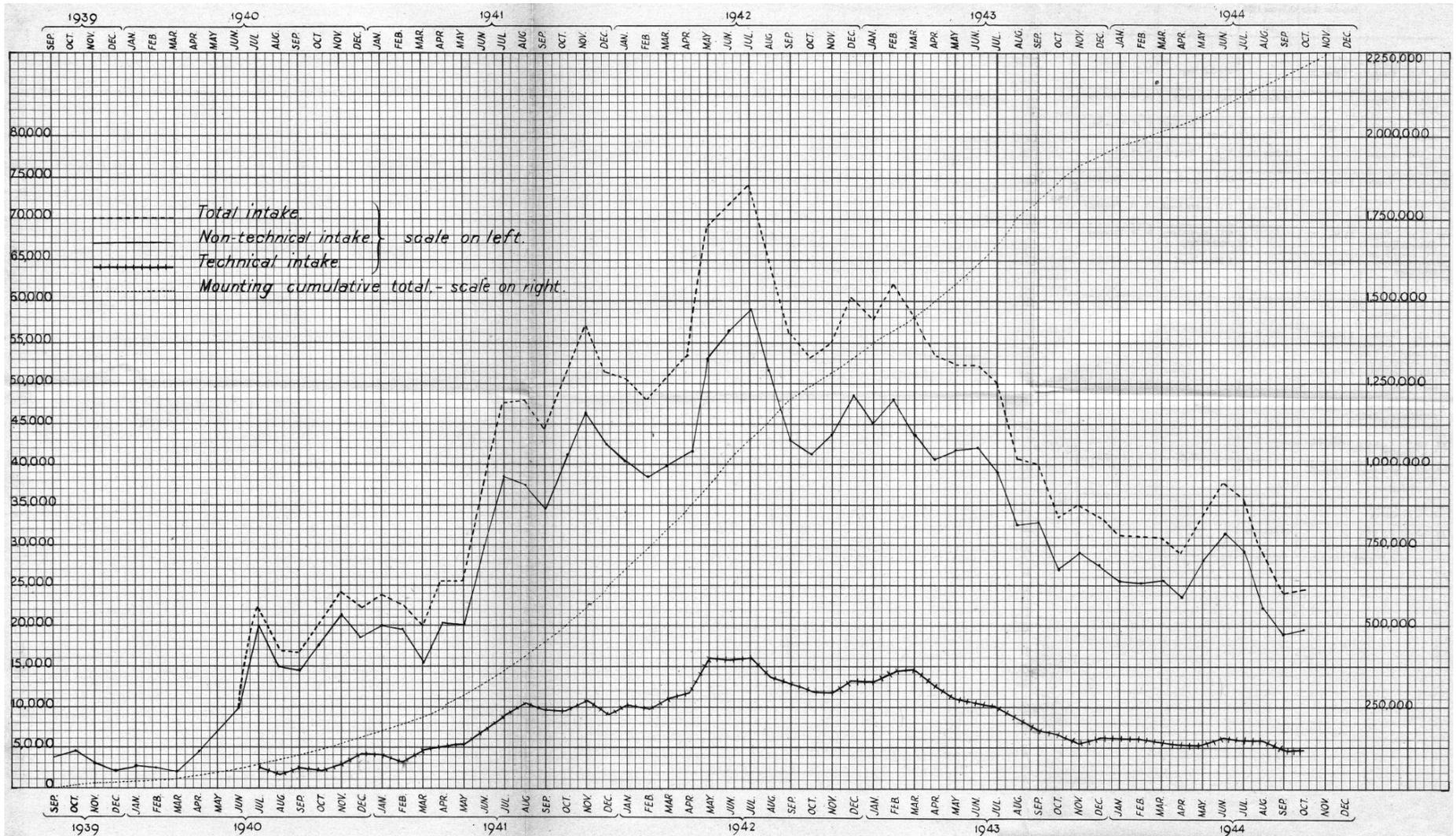
Serial	Classes (a)	Recruitable population (b)	Serving pre-war (c)	Recruited from 3 Sep. 1939 to 31 Oct. 1994 (d)	Total enrolled pre-war and during the war, i.e. (c) + (d) (e)	Percentage of (e) to (b) (f)
HINDUS						
1	Ahirs	469,715	2,121	34,559	36,680	7.8
2	Assamese	106,690	---	2,223	2,223	2.0
3	Bengalis	607,017	---	16,564	16,564	2.7
4	Bhils	24,505	---	233	233	0.9
5	Brahmans	388,960	793	60,511	61,304	15.7
6	Chamars	388,215	---	8,067	8,067	2.1
7	Doras	94,696	10,570	27,417	37,987	40.1
8	Garhwalis	50,820	3,816	17,646	21,462	42.2
9	Gujars	65,874	1,029	14,978	16,007	24.3
10	Ghirts	6,510	263	---	263	4.0
11	Gurkhas	280,000	18,000	94,960	112,960	40.3
12	Jats	153,561	9,390	65,961	75,351	49.1
13	Kabirpanthis	1,000	---	389	389	38.9
14	Kolis	9,600	---	860	860	9.0
15	Kumaonis	39,600	2,364	18,838	21,202	53.5
16	Kumhars	51,225	---	948	948	1.8
17	Lodhis	51,468	---	1,119	1,119	2.2
18	Mahars	120,560	---	9,405	9,405	7.8
19	Mahratts	346,800	4,771	54,750	59,521	17.2
20	Meghs	1,030	---	287	287	27.9
21	Rawats and Minas	30,980	---	3,436	3,436	11.1
22	Oriyas	182,953	---	2,107	2,107	1.2
23	Rajputs	335,143	5,832	66,213	72,045	21.5
24	Shilpkars	12,617	---	1,537	1,537	12.1
25	Others	2,684,947	---	197,448	197,448	7.4
		6,504,484	58,686	700,719	759,405	
MUSSALMANS						
26	Pathans	128,200	6,048	59,951	65,999	51.5
27	Assamese	80,565	---	3,031	3,031	3.8
28	Baluchis	11,780	57	987	1,044	8.9
29	Bengalis	764,720	---	60,777	60,777	7.9
30	Dekhanis	156,478	164	18,564	18,728	12.0
31	Punjabi (incl. Hazarawals)	1,087,450	33,935	314,668	348,603	32.1
32	Hindustani	450,848	654	23,785	24,439	5.4
33	Meos	17,300	384	2,535	2,919	16.8
34	Merats (Katats)	1,300	---	940	940	72.3
35	Rajputana and Central India	53,760	1,001	9,210	10,211	19.0
36	Ranghars	28,160	1,857	6,763	8,620	30.6
37	Others	161,040	---	50,408	50,408	31.3
		2,941,601	44,100	551,619	595,719	

SIKHS						
38	Jat	165,625	17,156	41,545	58,701	35.4
39	Mazbhi and Ramdasia	35,000	1,303	31,672	32,975	94.2
40	Others	127,579	4,211	32,786	36,997	29.2
		328,204	22,670	106,003	128,673	
CHRISTIANS						
41	Assamese	1,642	---	929	929	56.6
42	Other Classes (excl. Madrassis)	51,760	---	34,947	34,947	67.5
		53,402	---	35,876	35,876	
43	Madras Classes (incl. Coorgs)	2,849,350	4,010	368,914	372,924	13.1
MISCELLANEOUS						
44	Hos, Oraons and Mundas	47,740	---	3,045	3,045	6.4
45	Santhals	60,630	---	607	607	1.0
46	Assamese tribes	22,674	---			
		131,044	---	3,652	3,652	
47	Other classes (incl. Assamese tribes)	---	---	145,357	145,357	
	Grand Total	12,808,085	129,466	1,912,140	2,041,606	18.3

Source: *Reorganization of the Army and Air Forces in India*, Vol. 2, (New Delhi, Government Press, 1945), Appendix C.

Appendix - 3

Indian Army Recruiting Intake from September 1939 to December 1944



Source: *Reorganization of the Army and Air Forces in India*, Vol. 2, (New Delhi, Government Press, 1945), Appendix K.

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