Chapter - V

Memoirs &

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The Haryana state Archives, Chandigarh states that about 3777 officers and men participated in the I.N.A. campaigns similarly Prem Chowdhury in her book-“The role of Sir Chhotu Ram” gives this number as 2248. Very few participants have got their memoirs published in the form of book, majority of them were illiterates or semiliterate hence their memoirs and reminiscences are of verbal nature. The All India Radio Rohtak had done a programme on the I.N.A. and had collected memoirs of the participants in the form of audio tapes. I as a researcher also interviewed the participants and the memoirs were collected in audio form.

The significant features of the memoirs are that the major part of their memoirs are related to the personality and charismatic qualities of Netaji Subhas Chander Bose, for them Bose was a super human with super human qualities. None of the participants believed that Netaji had been killed in the air crash, they feel that there is a dirty politics in this accident and the British and the contemporary Congress leadership is responsible for it. The second important feature of their memoirs is the narration of events, the hardships they had to face and the behaviour of Japanese as an allied army of I.N.A. Most of the memoirs are similar and subscribe to the memoirs of the army commanders like Col. Dhillon, Col. Sehgal, Maj. Gen. Shah Nawaz khan, Captain Kanwal Singh, Col. Malik, Caption Shamsher Singh, Captain Lakshmi Sehgal and Major Fujiwara. Hence in this chapter I will be considering the memoirs of commanding officers, which are available in the form of
books. The officers and men who fought along with in all the campaigns faced similar hardships. After the war the I.N.A. persons both officers and men have to go through the same process of rejection as they were not considered fit for Indian army and a stigma was attached to them and their sacrifices and hardships have not been given a due weight. The problem with the I.N.A. it seems that although it was a revolutionary army, it could not take the role of Mao’s army in China or that of Lenin’s army in Russia, whereas in China and Russia new structures came into existence, but in India I.N.A. did not get space in the existing British imperial structure which was accepted in the existing form by congress leadership. All most all the participants of I.N.A. resented this, inspite of this the I.N.A. personals are happy that they participated in the I.N.A. campaigns as revolutionary soldiers, faced the hardships, knowing that there was no material gains.

In formulating this chapter, the verbal memoirs of the persons given below are also taken into account, most of these memoirs are eulogies but when analysed scientifically, become an important source in the construction of this chapter. The significant participants are Col. Dilsukh Maan, Village Mundsa, Col. Ramswaroop Yadav, Village Kosli, Major Ran Singh Ahlawat Dhandhlan, Major Mehar Chand Kungai, Major Balwant Singh Chara, Major Mumtaz Khan Jhajjar, Major Nand Lal Barahi, Major Kanhaya Singh Kanheli, Major Amir Singh Sonepat, Captain Mehtab Singh Rohtak, Captain Preet Singh Rewara, Captain Kanwal Singh Mandhoti, Captain Surja Singh Dighal, Captain Sher Singh Babepur, Captain Rishal Singh Dhandhlan, Captain Kanwal Singh Dhakla, Captain Matlab Ahmed Kalanaur, Captain Hari
Kishan Bhadurgarh, Captain Immamudin Khan Sample, Captain Hardwari Lal Dighal, Captain Ganeshilal Kosli, Captain Daryav Singh Dawala, Mehar Singh Barona, Captain Shamsher Singh, Captain Hari Ram, Lt. Dunichand, Captain Chander Bhan and Captain Bagri. In addition to these many soldiers have their memoirs, the memoirs of Nathu Singh, Naik Kehar Singh, S.O. Hari Singh, Sepoy Diwan Singh, Naik Sultan Singh, S.O. Udey Ram have taken into account while formulating this chapter. The following memoirs constitutes this chapter:-

**Col. P. K. Sahgal**

On the 15 July 1942 the Indian National Army was formed as an organised body of troops. Capt. Mohan Singh who had assumed the rank of General, took over its command. This army consisted of the headquarters of the I.N.A., three Guerrilla regiments, one Hindustan Field Force Group, one Special Services Group and one Reinforcement Group, one Engineering Company, one Mechanical Transport Company, and one Base Hospital. The Field Force Group in its turn consisted of three Infantry battalions, one Artillery battalion, one Armoured Fighting Vehicles battalion, one Signal Company, one Medical Aid Party and one Company of Anti-tank guns. The approximate strength of these I.N.A. units amounted to 15,000 although the number of volunteers available to join the Army was much larger. This fact naturally caused a great deal of discontent among those volunteers who for no fault difference of opinion between the Japanese Liaison Office and I.N.A. Headquarters because the I.N.A. headquarters were naturally keen that every volunteer
should be absorbed in the I.N.A. but the Japanese showed their inability to accept their request.

The Indian National Army was equipped mainly with captured British weapons because it was felt that once it went into battle its expansion and armament must depend entirely on the supplies that they could wrest from the enemy. This was a sound principle.

Although most of the equipment of the I.N.A. was out of date and inadequate, yet young officers of this army threw themselves wholeheartedly into training their men for their forthcoming battles. By the beginning of October 1942 the units of the Indian National Army had achieved high degree of training and preparedness and when on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday on the 2 October 1942, the units of the I.N.A. under their own commanders paraded through the main streets of Singapore, They left a lasting and indelible impression on Indians and others living in Singapore.

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose arrived in Singapore on 2 July 1943 and on the 4 July 1943 at a great conference of Indian delegates from all over East Asia, Shri Rash Behari Bose handed over the direction of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia to him.

On the 25 August, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose assumed Supreme Command of the I.N.A. and the Directorate of Military Bureau became his Headquarters of the Supreme Command. Gen. J. K. Bhonsle became his Chief of Staff and gen. Kiani continued to command No. 1 Division of the Indian national Army. Planning for future rapid expansion of the Indian National Army was started immediately. Conscious of the fact that throughout the history of India, women had played a valiant role in
the defence of freedom and liberty, he formed a women’s regiment called The Rani of Jhansi Regiment and when he formed the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, he gave its commander a seat in his Cabinet.

On the 21 October 1943, Netaji formed the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. This Provisional Government was recognised by all the Axis powers and received greetings from Mr. I. Valera of the Republic of Ireland.

By the time, the Provisional Government of Azad Hind had been formed and the Indian national Army became its organ, most of the officers who had studied the developments of the war objectively knew that in the final analysis on Axis victory was unlikely. This did not however, in any way influence their determination to proceed, according to plan, with the organization, expansion and training of the Indian National Army, because they had implicit faith in the final victory of their revolutionary army. They knew that their victory could not, and could not depend upon the victory of Japan or the Axis powers. For the freedom they would have to pay with their own blood. Shedding of blood would inspire the Indian people and the Indian Army to rise revolt and drive the British out of India. Being a revolutionary army was assured of its final victory. It might meet with setbacks; it might even be overwhelmed but the torch of freedom that it had lighted could never be put out. Netaji often said that no revolutionary army could ever be defeated because revolutionary war once begun passed on from Son to Son.

On one point Netaji was very clear and he often repeated it in speeches that the price for Indian freedom had to be paid for in Ind
blood and no freedom obtained through the efforts of others could ever be lasting.

He was, therefore, very anxious that units of the Indian National Army should move into action against the British forces without any further delay. For this reason, plans were initiated to form a new regiment called No. 1 Guerrilla regiment with units selected from all the other units of the I.N.A. to be put under command of one of its ablest officers, Gen. Shah Nawaz Khan and sent to the front. Captain Kanwal of Village Dhakla was an able officer from Haryana. Soon after its formation was completed Gen. Shah Nawaz Khan put his regiment through intensive training and took it by the overland route to Burma. On arrival in Burma, one battalion under Raturi proceeded to the Kaladan Valley where it gave a magnificent account of itself in the operations. S.O. Hari Singh played a magnificent role and awarded by Netaji. Other two battalions fought originally in Hakka Falam area and then moved to Ukhurul and finally took part in the assault on Kohima.

By the middle of 1943, reliable information had been received to the effect that the British and their Allies were preparing a massive invasion of Burma. For this purpose they had concentrated in various sectors approximately 20 divisions with massive air support. To counter this threat the Japanese could master only 5 divisions.

After a great deal of serious deliberations during September 1943, plans for an advance on Manipur front were finally accepted. It was also agreed that No. 1 Division of the I.N.A. will have a vital role to play in this advance.
Japanese 15\textsuperscript{th} Army under the command of Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi was allotted the task for preparing the attack in Manipur. It was also agreed that prior to the 15\textsuperscript{th} Army's advance in the Imphal plain Lt. Gen. Hanayar with his army in Akyab area would carry out a diversionary attack.

An agreement was also arrived at that all areas from where British troops were driven out would be handed over to the representatives of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind for administration. Gen. Chatterjee was appointed Governor of liberated areas and units of Azad Hind Dal specially formed for carrying out civil administration were mobilised and made ready to move into liberated areas at short notice.

According to the agreements arrived at, small units of the Bahadur group, previously known as the Special Service Group, the Intelligence group and the Reinforcement Group were to be attached with all formations of the Japanese Army for collecting information, sabotaging British war effort, contacting units of the British Indian Forces and making arrangements for the collection and organization of such personnel who joined our side.

Aside from these, one battalion of No. 1 Guerrilla Regiment was to take part in the operations in Akyab area.

Early in 1944, the Japanese troops carried out diversionary attacks in the Akyab area. The British Forces were caught napping and the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} Divisions were mauled badly. In these operations units of the I.N.A. acquitted themselves with great credit.

Every effort was made to convince the allies that this was the main attack. Both the Japanese Government and the Provisional
Government of Azad Hind issued proclamations to the effect that the March on Delhi had begun.

In the spring of 1944, the Japanese 15th Army with No. 1 Division of the I.N.A. launched its attack in the Manipur Sector. These advancing forces met with brilliant success in all the Sectors. The British retreated along the Tamu Imphal and the Tiddim Imphal roads leaving behind their equipment and transport. In the Ukhurul Sector the Japanese and I.N.A. units arrived at the gates of Kohima.

Frightened out of their wits, the British flew in two divisions in the Manipur area. They also organised large scale air supplies to keep the beleaguered divisions operational. But for his air supply system there is no doubt that the British forces would have been defeated at the strategic objective of the Japanese and the Provisional Government of Azad Hind realised.

When the units of the I.N.A. first crossed the Indian frontier and planted the tricolour flag on the soil of free India, there was great rejoicing among all the Indians and the morale of the I.N.A. soldiers went sky high.

Netaji visited the front on several occasions and felt proud of the heroism that his soldiers were displaying in the battle field.

The measure of his greatness can be judged from the fact that from ordinary mortals of clay he created many thousands of heroes.

No. 1 Division under Gen. Kiani was attached to the Special Task Force formed under the overall command of Major general Yamamoto.
In accordance with these arrangements gen. Kiani’s Headquarters and 2nd and 3rd Guerrilla Regiments moved forward and concentrated in front of Imphal on the Tamu-Imphal road.

The No. 1 Division took part in the brilliant operations carried out by the Yamamoto Task Forces together with other Divisions of the Japanese Army. Their most outstanding operation was the attack on the Palel Aerodrome. At the same time, No. 1 Guerrilla Regiment less one battalion was operating in Ukhurul area and advanced towards Kohima.

It is not my purpose here today to go into the causes which led to the failure of the invasion plan. All that I can say is that when finally a withdrawal was ordered, the I.N.A. units fell back fighting inch by inch by the side of their Japanese comrades. The heroism that they exhibited during the retreat was no less great than that shown by them while advancing against the enemy.

As a first stage, all the I.N.A. troops in Manipur area were ordered to fall back and concentrate in Mandalay area. Special reception centres and hospitals were set up to receive the wounded and the sick. Enemy action, disease and mud took a heavy toll of the retreating soldiers and many thousands perished en route.

In July 1944, when the troops of the 15th Japanese Army and the 1st Indian National Army Division had been ordered to withdraw from the Manipur plain, it was appreciated that the Allies would now launch offensives on all fronts and that the troops available in Burma were not adequate to hold the country. Therefore, it was decided to prepare a line of defence along the hills separating Burma from Thailand. The Indian National Army was to hold a sector in the Shan Hills and with this in
view, the Provisional Government of Azad Hind Proceeded to prepare a base in Taungyi area.

Later on, in anticipation of the arrival of fresh reinforcements, plans were altered and it was decided to give battle on the Irrawady river. The Indian National Army was to concentrate and oppose enemy crossings of the Irrawady river and prepare a defensive zone in the Mount Popa area.

For this purpose the 4th Guerrilla Regiment of No. 1 Division which had not so far taken any part in the Manipur operations but was available in Mandalay area was transferred to No. 2 Division and ordered to concentrate first in Myingyan and then Nyangu-Pagan area.

The balance of the 2nd Division which was arriving in Rangoon was to proceed to Mount Popa area.

Upto this time I had been on the Staff of the Headquarters Supreme Command but now at my own request I was given a command of the 2nd Infantry Regiment in the 2nd Division.

I had accepted this command as a great challenge because we in the I.N.A. were anxious to prove to the Japanese that we were not mere fair weather friends but were prepared to fight side by side with them in their hour of defeat as we had been when they were victorious. From the point of view of our national objectives as well, it was imperative that the fight against the British should be carried on unabated.

The situation was very serious. Dhillon’s regiment had been mauled rather was moving on foot through the desert from Prome to Mount Popa and it would be some weeks before it could be concentrated there. To crown all our difficulties, three officers of the Divisional
Headquarters who had arrived in Popa area with me deserted to the enemy. Undoubtedly they would expose to the British all our weaknesses.

In spite of these difficulties we assembled whatever troops were available and prepared to defend Mount Popa from expected British attack and started intensive patrolling to discover their intentions.

At this critical juncture in the history of our army, I decided that only such persons who truly believed in the sanctity of our cause and who had absolute faith in our final victory should participate in this campaign. I made up my mind that I would let go all those who lacked faith under such adverse circumstances. Therefore I made an offer to all those under my command who wished to leave us and go over to the enemy that they could do so openly after leaving their arms behind and giving an assurance that they would not betray our secrets to the enemy. To those who were physically unfit or frightened I promised safe conduct back to Rangoon. Some officers and men took advantage of this offer and returned to Rangoon.

Before the whole of No. 2 Regiment was concentrated in Mount Popa area, the Japanese posted the Khango Regiment of their army to take over a part of the defences. There was excellent co-operation between our troops and the troops of the Khango Regiment and it was a delight to work with their regimental commander. Our troops took part in many battles together and won each other’s esteem.

Soon afterwards Shah Nawaz Khan took over command of the Division and left me alone to command my own regiment. In the month of March, Dhillon with his 4th Guerrilla Regiment and my 2nd
Infantry Regiment went over the offensive. We sought enemy forces everywhere within our reach and attacked them on all occasion. The British had made massive crossings of the Irrawady River and launched repeated attacks against our positions but in spite of heavy odds, we were able to hold our own till on account of the strategic position obtaining in the rest of Burma, we were ordered to withdraw Southwards.

The withdrawal started on the 12th April and Gen. Shah Nawaz Khan with his Divisional headquarters and the 4th Guerrilla Regiment moved in one column and my Regiment moved in a second column.

Although all communications had broken down completely my column withdrew Southwards in perfect order breaking through enemy lines on a number of occasions.

During the withdrawal in one particular battle against heavy British Tank, Artillery and infantry attack, Major Bagri from Haryana and his battalion earned eternal glory.

The heroism of Major Bagri and his men was of such high order that some weeks later when I had been captured by the British Gen. Gracy, Commander of the British Indian 20th Division, said to me, "Your men were mad. They were only an infantry battalion with no supporting arms and they were attacked by infantry supported by heavy tanks and artillery. Instead of surrendering, they fought back like mad men. At times, attacking our tanks with their bare hands. I cannot understand such stupidity." It was futile for me to try and explain to
Gen. Gracy, the burning patriotism of these heroes, whose only desire was to sacrifice there all for the sake of their country's freedom.

While the second infantry division of the I.N.A. was moving Southwards, the Provisional Government of Azad Hind had decided to evacuate to Bangkok. A small Garrison under Gen. Loganadhan assisted ably by Col. Arshad was left behind to safeguard the life and property of Indians in Rangoon and to assist the Burmese Government in the maintenance of law and order. The I.N.A. Garrison carried out their duties with such efficiency that there was no bloodshed or pillage in Rangoon between the departure of the Japanese and the arrival of the British. This contrasted most favourably with the events of 1942 when nearly 2 lakh Indians perished in Burma during the retreat of the British Forces.

My intention was to attempt to cross Pegu Yomas and take my regiment to Thailand. Unfortunately, when we arrived in a village North of Alammyo, where Irrawady meets the main road, we discovered that the 20th British Indian division had already occupied Alammyo. While we were preparing our plans to move into the jungle, our position was betrayed by some villagers and we were attacked heavily both on the ground and in the air. I along with my companions was captured during this battle. Shah Nawaz was later captured in Prome and the campaign of the I.N.A. in Burma came to an end, but other units were preparing for battle in Thailand and Malaya. The activities of I.N.A. in Burma had a tremendous impact on the troops of the British Indian Army which is amply illustrated by the following incidents.
After I had been captured in Alammyo, I was separated from my men and was escorted back to Magwe in a truck guarded by two British N.C.O.'s and an escort consisting of a Punjabi Muslim Naik and four sepoys of the 12th Frontier Force Regiment. On the way, the Naik got talking to me. He had already heard something about the I.N.A. and its activities and was particularly impressed when he discovered that one of my battalion commanders Banta Singh had been his instructor, at the training battalion. When we had gone about half way, he told me that he was prepared to shoot the two British N.C.O.'s and he and his men would escape with me to join the I.N.A. Realising that such an action would serve no useful purpose, I advised him against it.

On arrival in Magwe, we were taken to the Jail and I was put into the Condemned Prisoners’ Cell. At night I was awakened by about 20 soldiers of the Madras Regiment who were guarding the jail. They were accompanied by the Regimental Clerk who spoke English fluently. These men told me that they had come to meet me on behalf of their Regiment and that their services were entirely at my command. They also brought me large quantities of chocolates and other foodstuff to eat. I advised them to be good to all the I.N.A. personnel who were being brought to the jail and also to tell their comrades the truth about the I.N.A. After a few days stay in Magwe Jail, where I had been joined by my other comrades, some of us were flown out to India, the others came by boat and we were all imprisoned in the Red Fort to await our trial.

The Atom Bomb put an end to the Japanese resistance and before our trial commenced, the Japanese had surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. While we were awaiting our trial, the story of the I.N.A.
began to unfold itself to the people of India and the wonderfi
awakening that it created in the country is a matter of history and need
no repetition. Even in the Red Fort it had a tremendous effect not on
on the officers of the Interrogation Centre but also on the troops w\h
were put to guard us.

Our original guards belonged to the Indian General Services w\l
were replaced by British troops. The British troops were mostly your
conscripts whose sympathy with the cause of the I.N.A. soon becam
apparent. They were then replaced by the Gorkhas but the British h:
not reckoned with the Gorkha members of the I.N.A. who started
work on their guards. The first surprise that the British received w
when one of the Gorkha soldiers sought an interview with l
commanding officer to get a discharge from his regiment because
wanted to joint the I.N.A.

The British Officers of the Interrogation Centre and the Judl
Adjutant General’s Branch, whose duty it was to prepare the prosecuti
case against us were also affected deeply. Although they did their di
in preparing the prosecution case, their sympathies were entirely w
us.

On the day that our trial started, we were escorted out of
prisoner of war cage by a British Major and a Captain. The Brit
Major was in the lead, followed by Shah Nawaz Khan, myself a
Dhillon in that order. The British Captain brought up the rear. As
walled through the narrow barbed wire lane leading out of the cage,
I.N.A. officers and men in the adjoining cages started to shout slogs
Dhillon being very emotional joined them. The British Captain beca
impatient and pushed him forward telling him not to be a silly idiot. Dhillon turned round and told the British officer that if he dared to touch him again Dhillon would hit him. The Captain pushed Dhillon once again and told him to stop this bloody nonsense. Dhillon lost his temper and pitched into him and started to beat him up. The Gorkha guards in spite of their Captain’s shouts for help looked passively on and it was only after I felt that the Captain had received sufficient punishment that I separated the two and we proceeded to the Court room.

Gen. Sir Claude Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of India in 1945, had been advised by his Adjutant General’s Branch that when I.N.A. Officers were put up for trial, whatever may be the judgment of the Court Martial, the I.N.A. would stand condemned by the Indian people generally and the members of the Indian Armed Forces in particular.

However, as witnesses for the prosecution and defence told in the Court the whole story of the I.N.A., it had an electric effect in the country. Millions of Indians who lay crushed and sullen under British oppression found new strength and new pride in themselves. When they realized that their enemies were not invulnerable, a new spirit of rebellion was born in them.

The same spirit permeated the ranks of the Indian Armed Forces. When a special group of officers and men was sent round to all the units of the Indian Army to ascertain their views about the I.N.A. the universal reply given to them was that all ranks of the I.N.A. should be released and sent to their Indian Army units.
The revolts that followed in the Indian Navy and certain units of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army were the direct result of the new awakening that was taking place in the ranks of the Indian Armed Forces.

Members of the Indian Armed Forces awoke to their nationalism and the British Government realized only too well that they could no longer be expected to sustain and support British tyranny in India. The awakening in the Indian Armed Forces broke the will of the British to continue their rule in the country.

Thus, in the final analysis, the I.N.A. through its armed struggle against the British succeeded in achieving Netaji’s strategic objective of creating such conditions in the country that the British rule could continue no longer.

However, it was tragic that the I.N.A. and the Indian people did not succeed in driving the British out of India before the Allies won the war and prevent the partition of the country and the dreadful events that followed in its wake.

Captain Kanwal Singh

Netaji Subhas Chander Bose was the supreme commander of I.N.A. and head of the provisional government of Azad Hindi. The I.N.A. officers and men were very much impressed by his charismatic qualities. In their memoirs the participants from Haryana narrated events of bravery and valour. Captain Kanwal Singh of I.N.A. while discussing Netaji said I have personally known one of the most dreadful moments in the life of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. That was a moment he escaped certain death by the fraction of an inch. It was the morning of
October 18, 1944, the first day of the week to celebrate the first anniversary of the proclamation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind in Singapore a year ago.

The occasion was the very first function of the first day, and Netaji was standing on the base to take the salute at a parade of the I.N.A. and Ranis of Jhansi at Rangoon. Major General Kiani was standing to attention on the ground to the left of the base. The Ranis of Jhansi had begun their march past. Ministers of the Provisional Government and Government of Burma, Senior Indian Independence League officials, and high-ranking Japanese office were seated on chairs behind the base. Suddenly we heard reports of gunfire above us. We thought that Japanese fighter planes were carrying out manoeuvres. Actually they were trying to chase away enemy planes over the parade ground. The Indian Tricolour waving in the morning breeze and Netaji standing majestically on the base in bright sunshine could easily be seen by enemy pilots in planes flying a few thousand feet above the parade ground. In a flash an enemy fighter plane emerged from behind us and flew at tree-top level to our right.

The face of the white pilot peering at us through his goggles could be clearly seen by us. He had only to press a button and open up machine-gun fire; that would have instantly mowed down Netaji; some of the Ranis and some of us who were seated behind the base. Kiani realized the dreadful danger to Netaji’s life and begged of Netaji to step off the base. But Netaji would not budge; he would not even turn in Kianik’s direction. Then a shrapnel hit a soldier at the base of his skull and ripped it open and the man dropped dead within a few
feet of Netaji. Even then Netaji would not move. As long as he stood there and took the salute, the soldiers were bound to march past him at risk being mowed down by machine-gun fire. Kiani thought this was too much. So, as officer commanding the parade, he ordered the soldiers to disperse and take cover. The soldiers did so. Netaji had no other alternative but to get off the base. Quite unconcerned by the commotion, he walked a few yards and went and sat under a tree until the who excitement died down. He thus set a shining example of bravery in the face of extreme danger. Occasions of this type were many on and off the front-line.

Whenever the sirens sounded and enemy planes were overhead, it was extremely difficult for those near Netaji to persuade him to come out of his bed-room and go downstairs to enter an underground shelter until the raid was over. He would come out with great reluctance a walk very slowly towards the shelter hoping that it would not be necessary to enter the shelter. But they were moments of agonizing suspense for his associates because of the serious risks to Netaji's life and of course, to their own lives too. The idea of instant death was far half so frightening as the deafening roar of the huge enemy planes, the thunderous sound of the rain of bombs hurtling through the air. It is difficult adequately to describe the intimidating noise of the bomb and the bombs hurled by them. Instant death would be merciful relief from the frightening sound of an air raid. The ground under your feet would shake as if in an earthquake, every time a bomb fell on ground with a frightening thud. But in the midst of all this terror from the air, a look at Netaji's face at that moment would make you feel t
every thing was normal and there was no need whatever for any panic. And yet, to all others, panic and terror reigned supreme during those brief or long moments.

There was high drama when the curtain was finally wrung down on the I.N.A. with news of the Japanese surrender to the Anglo-Americans in August 1945. It was 2 A.M. and Netaji was still awake at the Guest House at Seramban (Malaya) attending to important matters of State. Messengers drove up from Singapore and gave him the stunning news of Japan’s surrender. He took the blow coolly. In a moment he recovered his composure and his sense of humour reasserted itself. Though it was the gloomiest hour of his life, he did not look back even for a moment. He concentrated all his attention on the future and gave detailed instructions to all concerned as to what should be done all over East Asia with the I.N.A. and the civilian Indians.

In those twenty five brief months that Netaji led the I.N.A. in East Asia, he created traditions of valour and courage by personal example which generations of Indians yet unborn may also very well try to emulate in the service of Independent India.

Major Gen. Shahnawaz Khan

Major Gen. Shahnawaz Khan was the part of I.N.A. from the days of Mohan Singh and Major Fujiwara. He had seen all the ups and downs of the I.N.A., his memoirs on I.N.A. are related to the personality of Subhas and Subhas vision of I.N.A. relating to communal unity and secularism that was practically applied to I.N.A., and also the memoirs contains I.N.A.’s relations with Japanese. In relation to the Japanese behaviour towards I.N.A. Shahnawaz Khan was skeptical. We had seen
how Japanese had behaved with the people of Malaya and Burma and quite frankly we did not trust them. They also behaved in an unbecoming and rather treacherous manner with Gen. Mohan Singh. We were anxious to see how they would behave towards Netaji and how he would react to their behaviour. Very soon we found out that Netaji was not the person who would ever bow down before any one or sell the honour of his country for any price. His frankness was another quality which won the hearts of his officers and men alike. One day, some officers asked Netaji to explain to us exactly where we stood with the Japanese. He told us that as far as the Japanese were concerned, they realized that as long as the British held India, and could use it as a base of supply and operation against the Japanese, the Japanese Empire could never be safe; and that, in their own interests the Japanese must drive the British out of India, otherwise they themselves would be driven out of East Asia. He said that the Japanese, by assisting us were doing no favour to Indians. We were helping them as much as they were helping us. We had a common aim inasmuch as we both were interested in driving the British out of India, the Japanese for their own safety and we for the independence of our motherland. He said that quite frankly he did not trust the British nor did he trust the Japanese. He went on to say that where it was the question of the independence of one’s country one could trust no one and, as long as we were weak we would always be exploited. Netaji said that the surest guarantee against being betrayed by the Japanese was to build up our own strength. He said that we should ask for no safeguards from the Japanese, our surest safeguard must be our own strength, and if on going into India, we found that the Japanese
wished to replace the British, we should turn round and fight them to...

At several lectures at mass meetings Netaji repeated this. He warned his soldiers that any one who joined the I.N.A. should come prepared, first to fight the British, and then, if necessary to fight the Japanese to... Although we had a common strategy with the Japanese Army, we had our own independent sectors of the front, where the I.N.A. sectors operated entirely by themselves. There was no Japanese central direction within the I.N.A. Some critics of the I.N.A. used to say over the All India Radio that since it was working in cooperation with the Japanese it was a “puppet” force. Netaji’s reply to this was that the British and French Armies were fighting under exactly the same conditions—France under the command of Gen. Eisenhower. If the British could accept the strategy dictated by the Americans, then how could they criticize the I.N.A.?

For him there were no religious or provincial differences. He refused to recognize these. He looked at everyone Hindu, Muslim and Sikh without distinction and his spirit animated his men. In the I.N.A. there was no “command” feeling of any sort inspite of the fact that every man had full liberty to practice his religion in any way he liked. This made his soldiers realize that they were persons of the same motherland, and as such, there could be no differences between them. We were all completely united and it was realized by us that communal difference in our country were the creation of an alien power. The success of this can be gauged from the fact that the most ard supporters and admirers of Netaji were to be found along Musli...
Netaji respected every man of what he was worth and not for his religion or the province he came from.

It is amazing to see that when Netaji selected one officer from Germany to accompany him during his most hazardous journey to Tokyo by submarine, it was Abid Hussain, a Muslim, that this choice fell upon.

Again, when his troops were sent to the fighting line both the Divisional Commanders were Muslims- Major Gen. M.Z. Kiani and myself. When he went to his last trip to Tokyo by plane in August 1945, it was Col Habibur Rehman that he selected to accompany him. This feeling was not confined only to the members of the army. Among the civilians, some of the greatest supporters of Netaji were also Muslims. It was one Mr. Habid, a wealthy merchant of Rangoon, who gave all his property amounting to nearly one crore of rupees for one garland belonging to Netaji. It is on account of these facts that we of the Azad Hind Fauj refuse to believe that it is not possible for all work for creation of a great, free and united India.

He made us realize that we were an army of the starving millions fighting for a very sacred cause. It was this elevation in the character of his soldiers that enabled them to face hardships and fight against almost impossible odds. The soldiers and officers from Haryana who participated in the I.N.A. campaigns subscribe to the views of Shahnawaz Khan they felt that British have handed them over to Japanese as a flock of sheep, and has thus severed all relations of duty and honour, which they had for the British army. Now they were members of the revolutionary army which enabled them to face
hardships and starvation in malarial infested Arakan and Burma campaigns.

To all Rani of Jhansi Girls he was like a father and was always concerned about their welfare and honour. On one occasion one young lady for the Rani of Jhansi on hearing that her husband has been killed fighting on the front, took poison. Luckily it was discovered in time and she was saved. Netaji detailed two elderly ladies to always accompany her everywhere she went. He too, used to send for her and talk to her for hours consoling her like a father.

Netaji's most extraordinary move was the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. It was a master move in the game of international politics. The original Indian independence League, could not freely declare war on enemies and could not cooperate on equal terms with the Asiatic Nations. It was Netaji who foresaw the necessity of equality and thus he declared the inauguration of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. The Officers and workers remained the same but this switch over carried us overnight to the status of the free state and since then the Provisional Government of Azad Hind was recognized nine sovereign states as an equal partner in the comity of those nations. We were a refugee Government but our privileges and status was no less than that of any of the Sovereign states there.

At one time the Japanese suggested to Netaji that since the Japanese Army was a senior army, when I.N.A. and Japanese Officers of equal rank meet, Indian Officers should salute first. Netaji was furious at this. He said that would mean that the I.N.A. had accepted an
inferior status, which he was not prepared to do. He said they both salute at the same time. This was accepted by Japanese.

In addition to this the I.N.A. was the only army in East Asia which was not under the Military law of the Japanese. Several times the Japanese approached Netaji and told him that the I.N.A. should also be subject to the Japanese Military Law. Netaji refused staunchly. He told them that the I.N.A. was an independent army. This matter had ultimately to go to Tokyo, where Netaji had his way. Whenever the occasion arose Netaji made it absolutely clear that he would fight only for the independence of India and would never allow itself to be exploited by the Japanese. There were two occasions when the Japanese approached the I.N.A. to fight for them, once in August 1944, against the Siamese in the area of Chumpong where a small Japanese force was besieged by the Thais (Siamese), and a second time against the Burmese army in March, 1945, after the Burmese National Army had rebelled against the Japanese. On both these occasions, with the approval of Netaji, the I.N.A. refused to take any action against them.

To keep our end, Netaji never asked for any facility from Japan which could be provided by the Indians in the Far East. Netaji was approach on this point but he refused to accept any assistance other than the supply of war material. He told the Indian people that he did not want to approach any one as long as they could help themselves. It was for this sincerity that the Indian people showered everything upon him: man-power, money and material wherever he went. Several Indians in the East had brought into practice the slogan of total mobilization. It seldom, if ever that people sacrifice their all for the course of which t
end is uncertain but Indians of all castes and creed threw in their lot with Netaji and were ready to give whatever was asked from them.

Rich and moneyed people were not only ones that contributed. In fact the greater proportion of our funds was donate by comparatively poor people. It was the poor labourers, Gwalas, and other like them that made the greatest.

Captain Shamsher Singh

Captain Shamsher Singh who was ADC of Netaji observes in his memoirs that in a meeting addressed by Netaji in connection with the collection of Netaji fund, an incident took place which was memorable. I should never forgot a scene that I witnessed at one of the meeting addressed by Netaji at Singapore. After Netaji had finished his speech, he made an appeal for funds. Thousands of people came forward to donate. They formed a queue in front of Netaji, each one coming up on his turn, handed over his donation to Netaji and left. Most of the people who formed the queue were donating large amounts. All of a sudden I saw a very poor labourer women go up to the state to hand in her donation. She was in tatters and had even no cloth to cover her head. With abated breath all of us watched her. She took out three rupees notes and offered them to Netaji. Netaji hesitated. She said Netaji “Please accept these. This is all I possess”. Netaji still hesitated. Then great big tears rolled down his checks. He extended his hand and accepted the money from her.

After the meeting was over I asked Netaji why he had hesitated to accept the money from the poor women and why he had cried. Netaji replied “It was very hard decision for me. When I looked at the
condition of that poor women, I knew that those three rupees were all the wealth that she possessed and if I took it she would probably suffer terribly but on the other hand when I thought of her sentiment, the desire to give her all for Indian freedom, if felt that if I refused she would feel hurt and probably think that I accepted only large sums from the rich. In the end in order not to hurt her feelings. I accepted the money and to me those three rupees have a greater value than lakhs contributed by rich men out of their million.”

**Col. G.S. Dhillon**

The story of the I.N.A. is a legend in itself. Its historical evidence shows that never in the long history of man and war did a people in exile raise an army so bit in order to liberate their country from a foreign rule. In this historic struggle, the part played by the Indians overseas can never be appreciated enough. It was entirely due to these Indians that the Provisional Government of Free India could attain the status of a duly organised, recognized and a belligerent Government enjoying the allegiance of two million people. These Indians were the state with Indian Independence League as the Executive of that state and the I.N.A. as its Army of Liberation.

I cannot help mentioning the name of General Loganathan. As I write these lines, I recall his tall inspiring personality full of courage, spirit; of sacrifice, wit, humour and the never failing sense of duty. This great man inspite of his ill health accepted to do the most difficult job, the Governorship of Andamans and Nicobar Islands which having been annexed to the Provisional Government had been renamed “Shaheed” and “Swaraj” respectively. Though ill health and non-cooperation by the
Japanese Forces of Occupation made his job more and more difficult, yet he stood it out. Again he had to act as the G.O.C. Burma Command after Netaji’s departure from Rangoon. With the INA contingent about 6,000 strong he manned the Burmese Capital in the absence of any other Police force or troops during the period between the departure of the Japanese and the arrival of the British. And he was successful in maintaining law and order to the extent that there was not a single case of dacoit or of loot during that period –24th April to 4th May 1945.

Throughout the difficult stages of the INA, whether it was its formation or the crisis in it, or the move to the battlefields or the withdrawal, this old man held the fort like a knight from the mediaeval ages. He was affectionately called “Uncle” by all those who were fortunate enough to approach him. In return the old man would call us all “Uncle” irrespective of the age. While in captivity in the Red Fort he was suffering very badly from an ulcer in the stomach, yet he seldom let us know the agony he was passing through. I remember the day, General Shah Nawaz Khan, Colonel Sahgal were given our Charger Sheets. Overwhelmed with the joy of being one of the first to be tired in the Red Fort - on which once we intended to hoist the Tricolour, like a child ran to General Loganathan who was lying in an old sagging cot. I shouted, “Uncle uncle I am going to be senior to you now. We are going to be tried first and shall die first, Look! Here is the Charge Sheet of waging war against the King”. That day General Loganathan was not well. Forgetting his pains with an effort slowly, very slowly clinching the charpoy with both hands he sat up. Got hold of the Charge Sheet and started reading it to himself as reverently I looked on. As he read
through it, big tears rolled down from his eyes onto the sunken cheeks and with choked voice he shouted, "No, no, No my Son, they can't do that to you when I am living. I being the senior most amongst you, I must be responsible for all what you did. I must be tried and punished first. I must die earlier not to see you suffer". It was this very ulcer developed during the I.N.A. days which was responsible for his early death- a martyrdom on the altar of the Indian Freedom.

Netaji’s personality was our greatest strength which could sustain in spite of our deficiencies in numbers, weapons and resources. I remember an after dinner conversation with him in August 1944 after Imphal had been lost to us. As he was reviewing the war situation, I asked him that as war appeared to have been lost to us and to our Allies and we had little hope of talking over the offensive again, what exactly was left for us to fight or what were we fighting for. Netaji’s reply was quick, "To pay the price of India’s liberty". He further elaborated his point and I was surprised at his frankness and clarity of vision. Little has happened ever since, on the political stages of India, Asia and Europe which he could nor foresee and foretell. He had a very good memory, seven months later in a letter from Rangoon dated 21st March 1945 to me, when I was fighting on the front, he repeated the same concept thus:-

"Whatever happens to us individually in the course of this heroic struggle, there is no power on earth that can keep India enslaved any longer. Whether we live and work, or whether we die fighting, we must, under all circumstances have complete confidence that the cause for which we are striving its bound to triumph. It is the finger of God
that is pointing the way towards India’s freedom. We have only to do our duty and to pay the price of India’s liberty. Our hearts are with you and with all who are with you in the present struggle which is paving the way to our national salvation. Please convey my warmest greetings to the officers and men under you and accept same yourself. ‘Jai Hind’

-Subhas Bose.

The letter was worth more than a reinforcement of a hundre guns. It did put a new life into me and into all those who were with me like Captain Bagri and Lt. Duni Chand. It is human to be appreciative and human to appreciate.

Netaji was indeed magnanimous, he raised us from the dust to serve the national cause in an unprecedented way. Colonel Shau Hayat Malik formerly of the Bahawalpur State Forces earned the decoration of ‘Sardar-e-Jung’ while commanding Bahadur Group (Special Task Brigade) in the Manipur Sector. With the help of Manipurians like Shri Koireng Singh and other who were members of the INA, he hoisted the Tricolour for the first time on the Indian Soil at Moirang after having liberated it from the British. Moirang, situated on the banks of the beautiful Loktak Lake has been a centre of the cultural and political activities of the area.

The spot chosen for hoisting the Tricolour was considered auspicious and sacred by the people because of its local historical background. Bald, thin, tall like a pole standing seven feet high Colonel Malik was great for all the three Ws. While always victorious against the first two the third one often saw him flat before the end of man...
party. "Netaji, Netaji, Netaji my foot, I (pointing to himself) hoisted the Tricolour at Moirang in the State of Manipur, "shouted Colonel Malik thumping his foot on the floor. The occasion was a State Banquet given in his honour and in the honour of other Commanders who had fought before the rains in 1944. Netaji heard Col. Malik’s outburst with a smile as if nothing had happened, he continued entertaining and talking to the foreign dignitaries including Dr. Ba Maw the Burmese President, present at the function. Colonel Habibur-Rehman the Assistant Chief of the General Staff however quietly got Malik whisked off to a waiting staff car, which took the hero to his Bungalow and to the bed. Early next morning as Col. Malik got up, he recalled the previous night’s happening. Hurriedly he dressed up and made straight for the Netaji Bhawan. It was very early in the day but Netaji was already on his desk. On arrival, Col. Malik asked the ADC Captain Shamsher Singh to report to Netaji that Col. Malik requested for an urgent interview. Immediately he was called in Salutations over, Col. Malik took out his revolver and presenting it to Netaji said, “I do not deserve to live for a day after what I did last night. But I do not wish to commit a suicide and go to hell. I request you, Sir to shoot me so that I may take the punishment but at the same time may go to heaven because of your sacred hands”. Affectionately Netaji patted him on the back and said, “Shaukat you have been too long under stress and strain, what you need is a rest and a holiday”. A few days after, as I landed at Mingladon airport alongwith Col. S.M. Hussain having flown from Bangkok by Netaji’s personal eleven seater aircraft- AZAD HIND- I found Col. Malik waiting in the lounge. As we wished each other he took me aside and showed his
pockets bulging with currency notes. He said, "Do you know who gave me this money? Netaji. He has given me fifteen days leave to take a holiday in Bangkok. This plane has specially come to take me". Handing me a couple of hundred rupee notes he said, "You are new to Rangoon, you may need some money. Take it." Inspite of my refusal he put the money into my pocket and hurried away to the waiting plane. What would not Col. Malik do for such a considerate leader?

Being a regular solider, it was natural that I should try to determine the soldier and the commander in Netaji. Once in a battle report, I had mentioned the next likely place where I expected the enemy. I was 500 miles away from Netaji. He sent me a small note scribbled in his own hand suggesting an alternative map reference and advising me to watch the spot for the enemy's next move. When I received his message, I was already fighting the enemy at the spot Netaji had cautioned me to look for.

Given better means of communications, resources and weapons our story might have been a different one. Yet even in defeat, destiny wanted us to play a role the memories of which shall linger as long as India lives.

The I.N.A. apart from serving India as it did, has undoubtedly been also the forerunner of a freedom movement all over the Asian and African counties. Shri Bhula Bhai Desai had appropriately said during the opening of his Defence Address in the First I.N.A. Trial in the Red Fort of Delhi that, "What is on trial before the court now is the right to wage war with immunity on part of a subject race for their liberation." Is
not so that the age of a liberation of subject races started thence onward destroying all forms of Empires and Imperialism!

It is indeed unfortunate that inspite of our fighting for a free and united India, the British power cut up our divine Motherland into pieces. But having accepted the fact, today it behoves us that in the name of God, in the name of Netaji Subhas, in the name of our dead Heroes and in the name of by-gone and future generations, we try our best to keep our people and country united. Netaji used to recite to himself a quatrain of Kipling, replacing in it India for England. This noble exhortation while an inspiration of Netaji's soul is the vital need of India today. It runs thus:-

There is but one task for all
One life for each to give.
What stands if freedom fall?
Who dies if INDIA live?

Jai Hir

**Captain Chander Bhan**

Captain Chander Bhan of Haryana who was the 4th Guerril Regiment of the Nehru Brigade discusses the availability of communication and transport to I.N.A. His memoirs regarding battle Irrawady crossing and battle of Meiktila in Burma are similar to that of Col. G.S. Dhillon the regimental commander. Captain Chander Bh observes that logistics of the INA in action are awe-inspiring. It had to operate under ever-increasing difficulties and against fearful odds. Wireless communication was rare luxury. We normally had to use runners or at times a dispatch rider on a motor-cycle to carry messages.
to and fro. Often our only means of transport was the good old bullock-cart. It was more difficult to find a cover from fire for the oxen than for the men. When they got killed or ran away because of the battle noise, our backs carried the pack and that would be our only belongings or rations in the world. Once we hired a cart with a stubborn pair of bullocks. They were too difficult to be controlled. General Shah Nawaz Khan personally tried to drive the cart. The pair ran away with the cart and the Divisional Commander (Maj. General Shah Nawaz Khan) on it. The owner of the cart had jumped off but the Commander would not give in. The situation became worse as an enemy aircraft appeared overhead. Inspite of his own predicament Shah Nawaz shouted to us to take cover while himself was having the dangerous ride up and down a dry river bank. It was after a good half an hour that we could retrieve him and that too luckily intact. The athlete in him saved us our commander.

We had a few supporting weapons, but at times lack of ammunition prohibited their use. On 13th February 1945 during my round of the different units of the 4th Guerrilla Regiment (the Nehru Brigade) as I visited no. 1 Battalion posted at Nyanngu to oppose the British crossing of Irrawady, I learnt that the Battalion had eight machine guns with only tow bells of ammunition each. I ordered four of the guns to be thrown into the River to make more ammunition available for the remaining four guns so that the duration of the fire could last a bit longer. It worked. On the following day the assault on Crossing of the River by the South Lancashire Regiment failed. They suffered heavy casualties and were compelled to withdraw under the cover of the
Artillery and the Aircraft. The object is not to narrate the Battle of Nyanngu and Pagan. It is suffice here to submit that the odds were of an odd nature and yet we could fight an obviously last battle against the forces of one of the greatest Generals of the War - Field Marshal S. William Slim.

K.M. Kannampilly

Kannampilly was personal secretary to Subhas Chander Bose. His memoirs about I.N.A. is as follows, "As the old car picked its way along the bomb-created road, I could feel the tenseness in the air. Ne Tamway people were helping themselves from a Japanese factory. It was a disquieting sight, for I knew from experience that looting once begun was hard to control, and its demoralizing effect on the public would be disastrous. Within a couple of days every Indian merchant and householder in Rangoon and suburbs would come running to the Independence League Headquarters, frantically appealing for arms protection. And I would not blame them either - their experience was the time when the British had evacuated Rangoon in 1942, leaving the unprotected and helpless among a non-too-friendly population. Of course, I knew that, thanks to Netaji and his Government, conditions were not going to be bad this time. I knew that Netaji's bride sojourn in Burma had effected a remarkable change in the attitude of the Burmese towards Indians. I knew all that, but the people did not know, and they would be nervous and come demanding protection".

Columns of dark smoke were already mushrooming skyward from different corners of the city - dismal landmarks of an Army
retreat. For, the Japanese Army was evacuating Rangoon. Most of it had already left, along with Dr. Ba Maw’s Government of Independent Burma. The only government left in the City was the Provisional Government of Azad Hind; the only organization still functioning, the Indian Independence League; the only Army still intact, the Indian National Army; and the only Head of State, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

And the Provisional Government of Free India was evacuating Rangoon on the night of that twenty-fourth day of April, 1945. Netaji and the Cabinet of the Provisional Government were to have left on the 23rd: but when he heard that the transport arranged for the Rani of Jhansi Regiment had been diverted by the Japanese for their own use, he had refused to leave. Lt.-General Ishoda, the Chief of the Hikari Kikan (Japanese Liaison Department) came, frantic with apologies. Netaji refused even to see him. The Japanese were really worried. A British Tank column was moving fast down the Mandalay-Rangoon Road, and any time Pegu might fall sealing off the only route of escape from Rangoon. General Ishoda approached senior officers of the I.N.A., pleading with them to persuade Netaji to delay no more.

In the end Netaji agreed to leave Rangoon, if two trucks were provided for the girls- their kit to follow by train. And on that 23rd April night, when their own officers were footing it towards Moulmein, the Japanese did produce the two trucks.

But by then it was too late in the night to start, as they would not be able to reach Pegu before daybreak.
And so Netaji was leaving on the 24th- the last leader to leave Rangoon. I was going down to receive my final instructions. I reached the bungalow; the guard identified me and let the car in. Cars and trucks in camouflage were all over the place; and officers- those who were going as well as those who were not- were sitting about in the portico and the grounds.

Many of them I had met in the very early days, when the Movement was in its infancy. With a few among them I had shared the grim anxiety of crises, of doubts and despair. Along with them I had prayed as early as March, 1942, for the arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose in the East. And, with them I had worked under Netaji, often too busy with immediate problems to see the greatness of the work or appreciate fully the magnitude and extent of Netaji's plans.

There was Major-General Kiani, sedate, poised unperturbed. I remembered the first time that we had met, scarcely three weeks after the Union Jack had been lowered in Singapore, and the British Commander had handed over nearly half a lakh of Indian soldiers to Japanese “like so many sheep.” A few representatives of those sold and Indian civilians in Malaya were meeting to review the situation and plan the future. And Kiani had come with Mohan Singh. “My name is Kiani.” He had introduced himself with a firm clasp of the hand. In those days of enthusiasm that followed, days of hard work willingly, eagerly, undertaken, we had met often.

Kiani, by then a Colonel in the I.N.A., was the Commander of the Division that had fought on India’s soil. To-day he was leaving...
Netaji Recalling the hopes we had cherished, he repeated the memorable lines of Omar Khayyam:

"The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes-or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a 'little Hour' or two-is gone."

Philosophic words: but the pain was there, throbbing in the voice.

Colonel Gulzara Singh sitting on a kit bag, quiet, stoic, with a gentle smile of recognition. We talked of those who were not there- and of whose fate we knew not. There had been many rumours in the town of late; that Shaw Nawaz had been captured and shot, that Sehgal had been killed in battle, that Dhillon had committed suicide. Wild rumours, but probable stories. The heaviness of his heart spoke through Gulzara Singh’s eyes.

Colonel Mullick, tall, gaunt and stooping, but looking healthier after his recent treatment in Bangkok. He was still good for a joke. The hero of Kohima and Imphal, no fortune of war could crush his good humour.

There were the Indian Independence League Officers. Thivy, going back, only because he would not disobey an order. A more loyal follower of Netaji never had, nor the Indian Independence Movement, a more sincere worker. He hated having to leave behind his colleagues, but the Movement had to be carried on elsewhere, and Netaji was leaving behind only the minimum number of senior Officers to continue in Rangoon. And so Thivy had to go back to Malaya.
Then there was Das, thick-lensed, bald, blunt and good-hearted. In the Movement from the very beginning, he had been one of those who somehow got the hardest breaks. We chatted for a while about the days when he and I had set about organizing the Indian Independence Movement Headquarters in Malaya—with a dozen graph books, a packet of lead pencils and three dozen bottles of blue Quink ink. Being soon after the Japanese occupation, it was difficult to get things. The Japanese liaison officers had insisted that they would supply everything—and gravely produced those items of stationary, as all that could be needed for any office! Das and I had been through most of the hard times together; the tense nerve cracking December days 1942, when the Council of Action resigned; the bitter days of February, 1943, when we were both the special targets of Japanese hatred. Das had been the Secretary of the Council of Action in those days, and I the General Secretary for Malaya.

Captain Sham Sher Singh of Netaji’s Bodyguard came to call us up. Netaji was in the conference Room. There were others too; Ministers of the Provisional Government, Senior Officers of the I.N.A. and the Indian Independence League.

I watched Netaji’s face.

I had watched it the previous day, when he had addressed a mass meeting of Indians in Kamayut, near Rangoon. There were all sorts of rumours in town. The Japanese retreat was no more a secret. The fact that the Burmese Government had evacuated was already known to most. And in that meeting Netaji had spoken to the thousands of Indians who had assembled, despite the ever-present enemy plans, and given
them such confidence and courage, that not one word of doubt in the final victory in our fight for freedom was heard from anyone. He had not misled the people by painting a rosy picture of the situation. He had spoken, and spoken with frankness of the military reverses we had suffered—bug it was into the frankness of the helpless despair, but the outspokenness arising from cool confidence in final success. And a young Chettiar couple had come forward, as was quite common in meetings addressed by Netaji, to give their gold and jewellery for the nation's cause. This, on 23rd April, when to all those who had eyes to see it was evident that the British would be in Rangoon in a matter of days!

I had watched him then, and I had marvelled at the iron will that could infuse confidence in people when the whole world was crumbling around them; at the indomitable faith in one's own.

And how near he had come to achieve that mission! The monsoon a little late in 1944, and India's Flag of Freedom would have been unfurled over Imphal. And today, instead of packing for evacuation, Netaji and his Cabinet would have been in the heart of Hindustan. Probably in Delhi!

His face was calm. The same determined, crisp manner, in which he usually conducted conferences. Every point clear, marshalled in the mind. Every question answered and doubt cleared, without hesitation or pause. It did not take more than ten minutes. And then we withdrew, Netaji went into pack.

I was down with Thivy and Das, when I was called up again after about half an hour. Only those who were to stay back were up in the
balcony. This was to be the last time. Netaji was dressed as usual in uniform, wearing the I.N.A. and the I.I.L. Hqrs. Badges. He had a word for each of us. He warned me about the difficulties I might have to face in keeping the organization intact during the coming days. He inquired about funds at my disposal, and gave minute instructions about financial help to be given to various workers of the movement.

A sepoy came up with some message, and Netaji went in. On coming back he asked me whether the officers of the Women’s Department in the League Headquarters knew of his evacuation. I replied that they had guessed it, and were sad. "There can be no farewell in a movement like ours," said Netaji.

He was silent for a while. The face softened, and a far-away look crept into those eyes that had never bated before the worst of perils. "I couldn’t say good-bye to my mother," it was almost a whisper.

Just then General Chatterji came up to inform that the convoy was formed and ready to move off. We all went down. Netaji shook hands with each of us, and got into the car.

"Jai Hind! We’ll meet again!" and the cream-coloured camouflaged car slid into its place in the midst of the convoy, as Netaji sat back, his eyes already looking ahead-ahead into the next phase of the campaign for his country’s freedom.

**Lakshmi Swaminathan-Sehgal**

On the 21st of October, 1943, just three and a half months after Netaji had taken over the leadership of the Indian Independence movement in East Asia, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment Training Camp were started simultaneously in Singapore and Rangoon. Even this dela
would not have taken place, but for the obstructive attitude of the Japanese. To them this idea of a Women’s Regiment was something quite unimaginable, and they could not realize for quite sometimes that Netaji was serious. They were quite prepared to see women nurse work in hospitals—in fact all their hospitals were staffed by women nurses. In their rear headquarters they often employed women clerks and stenographers. But a Women’s Regiment, that went against their entire military tradition! They, therefore, created all kinds of obstacles in the way of obtaining suitable camp sites and training grounds. Netaji, however, would brook no such interference, and took up the matter with the highest military authorities on the spot, and was even prepared to go to further lengths. This ultimately convinced the Japanese and they gave in. The day on which the camp was first opened proved to be doubly auspicious. On the one hand, it was the day on which the patron of the regiment, Rani Lakshmi Bai, had been born, and on the other hand, it was the day on which Netaji formed the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. In Singapore Netaji himself declared the camp open and he was on that day provided with a guard of honour consisting of young women smartly clad in Khaki uniforms. The presence of this small detachment who had been undergoing part-time military training for two months previous to the opening of the camp, dispelled once and for all any doubts which the cynical had cherished, as to the Rani of Jhansi Regiment ever becoming a reality. In Singapore, the first detachment of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment which, to begin with, consisted of one company only, started training on the 23rd of October, 1943. Although as regards military training everyone started from scratch, due to
differences in educational qualifications, some sort of division in future officers, N.C.O.s and sepoys, was possible and accordingly the girls were divided into sections and platoons. The majority of the volunteers consisted of the daughters, sisters and wives of petty tradesmen, estate workers and men of the lower middle class. Most of these young women had been denied the benefits of education due to economic and social conditions, and were barely literate in their mother tongue. Hitherto their lives had been confined to within the four walls of the homes, and they had little to offer them outside the drudgery of household duties. Yet overnight they were able to cast off their shackles and enter into a completely new life. A life of which they knew absolutely nothing. Yet their very ignorance and simplicity made them put complete trust in Netaji. Never for a moment did they doubt the wisdom of his words, and even later when bitter defeat overtook them, they never once faltered or regretted the step they had taken. To them it was a new life, for it meant not merely an escape from their monotonous lives, but a life with a purpose. At last, they had something to live for, and if necessary to die for. In addition to these, there were also a number of young women from comfortable homes, who in the normal course would also have found any very great purpose in life. In spite of their education they would eventually have had to settle down to lives of placid domesticity. But even they did not come in any light-hearted spirit of adventure. They came, fully realizing the magnitude of the step they were taking and determined to give their all to the service of the motherland. Among these young women who came forward with such spirit and devotion, the majority had never even seen the motherland for whose liberation
were ready to lay down their lives. And yet they were Indians to the core. Indians who in distant lands had been able to forget all differences of caste and creed; Indians who had been shamefully exploited and had no redress for their grievances; and above all Indians who knew that unless the motherland was free, there was no hope of a fair deal for her national abroad.

Now that the training was over, this first batch of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment was itching to go into action. Again, the Japanese tried to be obstructive by not providing transport facilities. Again, Netaji was adamant and as always he won the day. Transport was provided and the first batch set out from Singapore with the cry of "Chalo Delhi" on their lips, and the hope in their hearts that if they ever returned it would be only after their motherland had achieved her independence. The first stage of the journey from Malaya to Thailand (Siam) was comparatively simple, although they travelled in cattle trucks. Then started the hazardous part along the newly-constructed Thailand Burma Railway through the dense forests and over the hills of the Thai-Burma Frontier. During the day, the railway truck was the target of enemy bombers, so the journey was generally undertaken in the hours of darkness, the day being spent under cover. During this journey they saw the hundreds of Indian labourers who were working on the railway and who had built it with their blood and sweat. They welcomed these country women of theirs as if they had been goodesses, for they realized only too well that their existence and the existence of their future generations depended only on one thing, and that was the freedom of their motherland, which these young women hoped to achieve. If India were free, they would be
saved. If not, theirs would be one long tale of slavery and exploitation by some foreign Power. What difference if that power be white or yellow! Their fate was always the same.

Once in Burma, the next step was to go to the front to come to grips with the enemy. But the favourable fate which had so long smiled kindly on the aspirations of India’s millions to be free, now withdrew her favours. The Azad Hind Fauz which went into action on the Indo-Burma border, full of hope and courage, fighting under the most desperate conditions and yet able to gain their way inch by inch, found itself up against overwhelming odds. It was not men only, but nature itself who was against the I.N.A. The torrential monsoon burst on them, and yet they clung on without food, shelter, with nothing but their indomitable spirit to cherish them. Knowing that to stick on under such conditions would mean nothing less than total annihilation, Netaji ordered the I.N.A. to retreat back into Burma. The first detachment of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment reached Burma just at the time when the retreat had started. Thus there was no chance of their going to the front. Still they carried on with their training, trying to increase their stamina and capacity to bear physical strain. In particular they devoted most of their time in learning the art of guerrilla and jungle warfare. In addition, several exceptionally spirited young women volunteered for suicide squads and special service work, hoping against hope that once more the tide of battle would turn in our favour. But that was not to be.

In April, 1945, they too had to hear the bitter command of retreat from the lips of Netaji himself. And it was not a moment too soon. They began their retreat with the enemy on their heels. All means of transport
had to be abandoned due to the non-stop aerial bombardment. For days they tramped through the jungle, being unable even to cook their food for fear of smoke giving away their position. One night they were surrounded by enemy guerrillas, who fired blindly at them, killing two of their number and injuring three others. They retaliated by opening fire on all sides and the guerrillas fearing they would be surrounded by a vastly superior force retreated. Finally, the regiment reached Thailand and from there proceeded back to Singapore. When Netaji left Malaya on his last trip he gave orders that the Rani of Jhansi Regiment be disbanded and the members be allowed to return to their own homes. This order they obeyed most reluctantly as they would have preferred by far to be taken as prisoners of war along with their brothers of the I.N.A. But the leader's order had to be obeyed implicitly and without questioning.

When the British re-occupied Malaya and Burma their Intelligence officers interrogated several members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment more out of curiosity than anything else. They were sure that this regiment was raised only for propaganda purpose, but quickly had to revise opinion. For they found themselves confronted by determined young women who could not be won once by threats or favours, and who answered their questions into in parrot fashion, but with understanding and conviction. And above all, they were impressed by their utter loyalty and devotion to Netaji and their faith in his leadership. It was from these members of the Rani of Jhansi regiment that even the British came to realize that the I.N.A. was no puppet army formed of a handful of ex-P.O.W's. but a mighty force of Indians who were ready to
undergo any trials in order to liberate their motherland, and who were all united and welded into one by the dynamic personality of that greatest of Indian leaders-Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Jai Hind,-Zindabad, Azad Hind- Zindabad.

"In the name of God, I take this sacred oath that to liberate India and the thirty-eight crores of my countrymen, I Subhas Chandra Bose, will continue this sacred war of freedom till the last breath of my life.

I shall always remain a servant of India and look after the welfare of thirty-eight crores of Indian brothers and sisters. This shall be for me my highest duty.

Even after winning freedom I will always be prepared to shed the last drop of my blood for the preservation of India’s freedom."

-Subhas Chandra Bose

Dr. Ba Maw

At one moment the I.N.A. came close to achieving at least a part of that vast, pervasive dream. It failed because the world forces ranged on their side failed. But, fundamentally, I.N.A. did not fail. The independence it won during the war was the true beginning of the independence which came to India a few years later. Only the usual thing happened: one man sowed and others reaped after him. Narrating the events relating to I.N.A. and Bose, Dr. Ba Maw observes that, we were close comrades during the war. Besides, many other factors brought us even closer still to each other, our common cause as well as problems and dangers, and beyond that our more or less common outlook generally. I witnessed almost from beginning to end Bose’s work during most of the war years, how he moulded out of the most
unlikely materials scattered across South-east Asia an independe
Indian state and government and army, and turned them into a positiv
force in the world war. A single mind and will achieved this. It pursue
the Indian dream across half the world, through the Middle East, an
then into Russia and Germany, then to the farthest end of East Asia, an
back to South-East Asia, and finally to Burma, and for a few incredibl
weeks beyond the border into India itself. Very soon the man and h
burning faith set aflame the hearts of three million of his countrymen i
Southeast Asia, who gave him practically everything he asked for.

Within a year of Bose’s coming Azad Hind was a full-fledge
state recognized by nine other states; it had acquired a large piece o
territory, its armies were fighting on eight sectors of the Burma –Ind
border, and within a few months set foot on Indian soil, proudly plante
on it the flag of Free India, and just missed winning a great and decisiv
victory there. When all that reality forged out of an overwhelm
dream crashed together with half the world, that lone and tragic dream
clung to this dram and died with it.

He was kept very busy in the next few days getting together h
movement and strength, holding a public meeting of this country-m
before whom he was offered and accepted the leadership of the Indi
Independence League in East Asia, reviewing with Premier Tojo t
Indian National Army, which he had created almost overnight, and age
holding and addressing an enormous Indian mass rally that he instan
captured with the slogan of Chalo Delhi, which sounded so much lik
marching order. He ended by bringing into the war the entire Indi
community in Singapore with his order for total mobilization. It was marvellously done.

Very soon after Tojo's departure Bose and I met and were at last able to talk freely. We talked of a great many things, but mostly of the war and how we could use it for the liberation of our own people. One thing which will always remain in my memory is Bose's first impact upon me. He had recently met the German and Russian leaders and has also witnessed the total character of the war in the West, and this made him thoroughly total and realistic in the way he looked at the world conflict. I too had learnt from my own struggle as well as from the Japanese a good amount of this realism. The result was a meeting of minds between us. But where, I according to my nature, was inclined to be emotional and at times a bit too subjective, Bose showed a cold, clinical objectivity. It was not that he did not have his emotional moments; far from it. But he had them put away when he was dealing with hard facts. As I saw it, this was one of the sources of his strength. Calmly and without any self-deception he faced every fact in a situation, whether it was good or bad or the usual mixture of the two; he brought them together into a single picture, and then drew his conclusions objectively, and then action followed; and after that he was driven along by a sense of compulsion which was almost fatalistic.

Upon his return to Singapore Bose acted swiftly. On October 21, 1943, he proclaimed the establishment of the government of the free and sovereign state of Azad Hind; on the same day the new state declared war on Britain and America, and Bose announced the determination of the Indian National Army to enter India that year, meaning during the
twelve months ahead. Subsequent events showed that Bose was true to his word. He joined us at the Assembly of the Greater East Asiatic Nations in Tokyo, where he was warmly welcomed by all. On this occasion he was a bold, militant, khaki-clad figure, and carried with him everywhere the aura of his vast, fabulous country. Within a month of his return to Singapore he requested me for permission to shift his headquarters to Burma. He had no need to tell me that he must operate from a base as close as possible to India. I openly welcomed him; and so on January 6, 1944, and the days following Netaji Bose and his government and army arrived in Burma and remained till the final defeat of the Japanese in 1945. They received the utmost hospitality as well as cooperation from the Burmese. At the same time the bonds between the two peoples became firmer and the racial tensions which had once existed under the British practically disappeared. Netaji and I met often, discussed our common problems, and did our utmost to help each other.

I have said that Bose was a great force. In Burma he became a positive whirlwind. "What are you going to do next?" I asked him casually upon his arrival. He stared at me and replied, "Why, fight of course," and within less than a month he was doing just that. On February 4, 1944, the Indian National Army (I.N.A.) fired its first shot in Arakan in the west of Burma. That was a proud day for Netaji Bose. March 18 was an even prouder day, for the I.N.A. broke into India on that day. After that, one action followed another continuously. The Indian Army fought on eight sectors along a frontier stretching 800 miles, as Bose mentioned in a radio speech, from Arakan in the south
through the Hukong and the Chin hills right up to Kohima and the plains of Imphal in the north.

By March a wider offensive had started and the Indian frontier was again crossed and the Japanese and Indian forces marched into Manipur and Assam. During March and April the battle for the vital towns of Kohima and Imphal reached its height. The Indian Army fought its greatest battle there, and won its greatest victory, and in the end suffered its greatest defeat because it was completely outnumbered, outgunned, and without a single plane. It penetrated deep into India, captured Kohima and the hills around, and was all set to attack and enter Imphal when it was stopped by the Japanese. Whatever military or political reasons the Japanese had for their action, it proved to be the most crushing blow that Bose and his army received during for that little force; the British poured colossal reinforcements into the area by air while the Japanese and the Indians were running short of everything and had lost all their planes and thus were fighting blindly; and then the rains came down in torrents before their time. Finally, the ill-started little Indian army was forced to retreat in disorder and confusion.

Bose took the defeat courageously. I cannot, of course, say what he felt within himself, but outwardly there was no sign of change or discouragement. He at once broadcasted the whole truth to his people, telling them that in a war only the last battle and victory counted. "Indian is a land of long distances," he reminded them," and the Indian people are accustomed to long marches." He then began to act according to his words by getting ready to fight another day.
The true story of the defeat and debacle at Imphal is a many-sided one, over which there is much disagreement. As the Indian army tells it, it was the outcome of a clash of purposes between the Japanese and the Indians. Both wanted to be the first to enter the city and be acclaimed its victor. Imphal lay completely open to the I.N.A. on April 18, 1944—only a stone's throw away, as an Indian officer described it. The Indian military governor of the area had already been appointed, the new currency kept ready for immediate circulation and use, and all arrangements made for a military occupation. Then the Japanese intervened. It was going to be the first real victory on Indian soil, and they wanted it for themselves; even more, they wanted to present Imphal to their Emperor as a gift for his forty-third birthday, which fell on April 29. They wanted to exploit the victory in Imphal to the utmost to counteract the effects of the reverses they were suffering at the time. Colonel Hiraoka, the Japanese liaison officer, asked me to prepare a radio broadcast to be delivered on the Emperor's birthday, in which I would join the Japanese army in offering Imphal as a birthday gift to the emperor.

But Bose had its own plans and ambitions and the strongest reasons for them. He contended rightly that a Japanese invasion of India would create very divided feelings among the Indian and might even swing a large mass of them to the side of the British, whereas the appearance on Indian soil of an Indian army of liberation which had actually succeeded in capturing an important part of India would have the most rousing effect all over Indian. The world would hear for the first time of the Indian National Army and its exploits, and thousands in
India would surge to it. While these two armies were arguing inanely over this question the first momentum was lost, the British rushed their reinforcements into the area, the Japanese offensive slowed down for lack of planes and tanks, and so Imphal was lost and a long disastrous retreat began.

Bose lived his finest as well as darkest hour during that hopelessly unequal fight, the retreat that followed, and the subsequent organization of a virtually new army out of the broken pieces of the old. He was a sadder man, but he was as defiant of the enemy as ever and as fixed in his resolve to fight on. I noticed that he blamed no one for the defeat in Imphal.

As for the men in the Indian army, they felt most keenly this sudden turn of luck which snatched the victory out of their hands. They had been worked up to such a pitch from the very moment they set foot on their native earth that the blow stunned them. The thought of winning a piece of their homeland back from the enemy was enthralling, and almost all of them had gone wild with joy. Some even got down on their knees and kissed the earth of India. Two Japanese war correspondents who accompanied the Indian forces have given an account of it:

We were deeply moved when we saw the Indian soldiers bursting out with joy when they had the first glance of the mountains and rivers of their beloved motherland--------there was an Indian soldier with the units who could scarcely hold himself up and had to be supported by his comrade. However, he was keeping up pace with the advancing units, being encouraged with the hope of entering the sacred soil of his motherland. It was then that he almost collapsed because of fatigue due
to high fever. A Nipponese soldier went down to a nearby ravine to get water and brought the water to him. “This his the water of India that I went down to get.” The Indian soldier drank it as crazily as he could. “Is it sweet?” asked the Nipponese soldier. “Yes, “answered the Indian soldier. But that was all he could say in words with tears in his eyes......The cries of Jai Hind, Jai Hind rent the sky and reverberated in the enemy camp through dense jungle on the borderline.

When he returned to Rangoon after the retreat Bose found his relations with the Japanese getting more difficult. Like me he had to deal with some of the grossest racists and militarists in the Japanese army; in fact, his difficulties were greater because India was outside the Japanese concept of Greater East Asia and so their interest in it was less. The failure of their recent drive into India reduced this interest still further. Bose however was determined to have a new army carry out a joint operation with the Burmese army, by themselves if the Japanese would not come into it. With this aim in mind he kept pressing the Japanese for a considerable supply of arms and equipment, which the Japanese were unable to give him. In November 1944, Bose went to Tokyo to make a final attempt to get what he needed and found that Japan and her force were themselves desperately in need of just those things in Southeast Asia. One result of these attempts to prepare for a new battle with the British was that General Isoda and his Hikari Kikan organization, who were supposed to be advising the Indian government, tried to control its activities more than they did before. I was told that often Bose and Isoda or his second man would disagree so violently that they would sit and stare at each other across a table for hours, both sides
refusing to budge from a position they had taken, and the meeting would break up in that posture.

So we come to the final tragedy which began in April 1945. Everything was giving way round us, the British forces had recaptured most of Upper Burma, and the Burmese army and those working together with it had changed sides. I recall vividly my last meeting with Netaji Bose before we started on our long retreat with the Japanese forces from Rangoon to Moulmein, two hundred miles away in the southeast. We had previously planned to continue the fight together even if the British recaptured the whole of Burma, but that plan had to be abandoned when the Burmese army went over to the British. It was a very gloomy hour for both us. Netaji was deprived of so much by the Burmese army’s switch-over that he had to think of starting all over again almost from the ground somewhere else.

If I remember rightly, we spoke very little of our plans at that last meeting, for we already knew each other’s thoughts and were sure that they would not be changed by defeat. However, to say something I asked Netaji what he intended to do next. “Why,” he replied, calmly lighting a cigarette, “start again and go on fighting when ready. What else can we do? The fight against British imperialism certainly has to go on.” These words echoed my own thoughts so much that I nearly wept to hear them.

“Comrades,” he said to his army, “at this critical hour I have only one word for you, and that is that if you have to go down temporarily, then go down fighting with the national tricolour held aloft. Go down as heroes; go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline.”
Adalbert Seifriz

Adalbert Seifriz played an important role in the formation of the Indian legion in Germany. His memoirs are related to the hardships Bose had to face in its formation and to get a proper military training to the legion.

Bose had Himalayan obstacles to overcome in order to convince the German authorities of the urgency of building up an Indian Legion in Germany. Agreeing to the proposal of Bose was a magnificent concession and consideration shown to the great personality of Bose by the German Government in those critical times when all German efforts were concentrated on the War. Its is to be appreciated that Germany, while showing a big heart to Bose and his Indian assistants, had placed very great responsibility on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the High Command for efficient collaboration and successful implementation of Bose's plans of far-reaching consequence.

Apart from the political planning for a new state system in general, Bose also intended to conduct an experiment with a troop of Indian volunteers, in order to create conditions for full and smooth cooperation among different castes, religious communities and peoples. He was convinced that the time was past when India's people had only to suffer. He wanted to induce the active members among his compatriots from far and near to act with vigour. His endeavour to use the Indian Legion to a certain extent as an object for tests was not just a scientific-theoretic affair but in a high degree a truly practical one. In fact, Bose himself needed an instrument for the realization of his plans. The Indian Legion, he thought, would form the basis of a future national army.
The High Command and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs granted Bose the necessary funds and, furthermore, placed at his disposal personnel, training camps and material. It was at first Bose's task to recruit volunteers with the help of his Indian staff. The fact that he was successful was a proof of the efficacy of the arguments he used with his compatriots who were, in growing numbers, willing to undergo an uncertain ordeal and face an unknown fate when fighting as soldiers in the War for India’s Freedom.

The agreement between German Government and Subhas Chandra Bose, according to which the German partner was obliged to grant the technical assistance as well as the personnel for the establishment of a military unit, and according to which no interference was to be made with Bose's plans and efforts directed towards India's Independence, was absolutely respected by both sides. The organization of an Indian Legion under such conditions was naturally possible only within the German Army.

The Indian volunteers had to undergo a basic training when entering the Legion, irrespective of their former grade and that was the reason why the German Army had to place at the disposal of Bose all officers and NCOs. It was indeed one of the most difficult problems to find the required suitable German training staff. The same had to have a good knowledge of the English language. Furthermore, it was necessary that they should be ready and prepared to acquire the essential knowledge of Hindustani. The training staff was expected to get into rather close contact with their Indian compeers in the official sphere as well as in private life. Only by this procedure could a feeling of
confidence grow between Indians and Germans. Last but not the least
the German training staff had to delve deep into the Indian mentality.
Their training was based on the fact that the recruits were men of
imagination and feeling far different from their own. It was evidently
necessary that the members of the training staff themselves should learn
about India’s history and psychology, that they should acquire the
ability to win over the volunteers and teach them the necessary military
knowledge. The Legionaries often expected from their military training
staff a high measure of knowledge of all kinds as well as personal
integrity. Finally, the German training staff had to transfer their military
knowledge to their Indian friends with the firm aim of enabling them to
fill their proper places efficiently after having finished the basic
training. Be it said here that it was no easy to find a training staff with
all the abilities required, in adequate measure. Nevertheless, it was
possible to find officers as well as NCOs who were highly interested in
their task of training Indian friends and who gave their best to form the
Legion into an efficient fighting force and to make them conscious of
their mission. The mutual understanding and respect between Indians
and Germans and the increasing contact between them in the interest of
the common task made it possible for the Indian Legion to sustain and
keep up discipline right up to the German capitulation in 1945. During
the period of training and even afterwards the comradeship between
Indians and Germans could not be destroyed. The training staff was
steadily decreased as and when an Indian replacement was available. At
the end of the war, the bulk of the German NCOs were replaced by
Indian Legionaries, and in the administrative offices as well, Indians

were employed to a large extent. The Company officers were in large number Indians, whilst the company commanders and commanding officers, including the regimental staff, were guided by Germans, especially with regard to relations between the Indian Legion and the German Army.

The Legion was based on the voluntary co-operation of the Indian Volunteers. The German personnel was often impressed by the eagerness of the Legion to become well-acquainted with the new circumstances. Difficulties which naturally arose were overcome by the iron will to work for the winning of India's independence. The Legion was inspired by a good spirit of comradeship, the feeling of belonging together and the mutual will to help each other. A living national will was the distinguishing character of this Legion. The troops made every effort to maintain discipline in all respects, and the co-operation and relations with the German troops caused no serious difficulties. Even in difficult situations, the Legion suffered privation and proved their courage and readiness for battle. With diligence the legionaries underwent the drilling in different arms; they were eager to learn much in a short time. It must be emphasized that Bose's principle that preferment and advancement within the Legion should only depend on ability and proof of aptitude, independent of birth or former grade, was recognized and esteemed by the Legionaries. It can be said that the experiment to form Hindus, Sikhs, Moslems, Punjabis, Marattas and Bengalees and members of other religious communities into a close military unit and to form an efficient fighting force, was crowned with
success. The Indian in the Legion proved to be good soldiers beside their German comrades-in-arms.

The intellectual basis for the growth and success of the Legion was created by Subhas Bose. Repeatedly he explained to his compatriots and the German personnel his ideas about the Legion and their future task in free India. He was very anxious to see preserved in the Legion traditions of the cultural and political past of his country. With a feelings, fine and noble, he did his utmost to banish the danger of losing the cultural roots of his Legionaries. To many a man Subhas Bose seemed to be a reserved and contemplative personality. But when he stood in front of the Legion and expressed his ideas for a free India in detail, then the fire of a fighter and a revolutionary could be felt. He was never too tired to inspire trust and confidence in various discussions. He was the great idol of the Legion, and it was the ardent desire of each Legionary, up to the day of the German capitulation, to try to emulate him and to help him in the execution of his ideas. A meeting with Subhas Bose was a special event for the German training staff. We spent many evenings with him, discussing the future of India. He lives in the minds of the training staff members as an idealistic and fighting personality, never sparing himself in the service of his people and his country.

The association with the Indian Legion was, for the German training staff, very profitable. They had the unique opportunity of coming in steady and intimate contact, and of being acquainted with a great nation and of entering into a world, unknown to them, and which had completely different thoughts and emotions and sentiments.
German officers and NCOs engaged in this work had in the course of their duties got the chance to think on a wider scale, to enlarge their horizon and to perceive developments in the world which would not have become evident to them during any other military service. Each single day brought new problems, required new adaptability and the mastering of new situations. The problem was to act with skill in a diplomatic way, to develop a pedagogic ability, to spread warmth in human relations and finally to act in a constructive way. Each member of the German training staff could gain a lot of experience by his activity in the Legion. It was for each one an experience on which he would like to think back with gratitude, as it brought him personal enrichment. The more rewarding fact was the real comradeship which grew between Indians and Germans, which proved true in dangerous hours and exists still to-day in numerous cases. The Indian Legion was a precious instrument in strengthening and consolidating Indo-German friendship.

**Major - Fujiwara Iwaichi**

My experience of the I.N.A. is limited to the main force of 1 Division which took part in the Imphal operations. As a revolutionary army, its morale was high and it was quite well organised.

The revolutionary spirit, organization and discipline which was the foundation of the I.N.A. morale, was maintained by all officers and men of the I.N.A. on their enthusiastic respect and pledge of loyalty to S. Chandra Bose. Had they not had Mr. Bose as their leader, their morale certainly would have been considerably lower than it was and during a crisis when they would have been shaken and divided. During
the most distressing and difficult period of the Imphal operations about June and July 1944, the great majority of the I.N.A. answered the urgent appeals of Mr. Bose and followed the leadership of their superiors maintaining discipline and otherwise carrying out their respective duties. Even during the retreat they overcome overwhelming difficulties and retreat in an orderly fashion. This won for them the admiration even of the Japanese army.

The leaders were quick to observe enemy intentions and generally speaking they were competent in their leadership. But with the Div. As the strategic unit of operations, they lacked experience and training and not infrequently they failed to see the picture in its correct prospective. But this can be attributed to their lack of experience.

**Difficulties met by I.N.A. Division**

1. Civil volunteers were mixed with military and they lacked the proper housing.
2. Personnel arrived piecemeal and had to be employed separately for instance 1 infantry regiment arrived in Haka and Falam in March 44 as 2 int. arrived at Palel front in April whereas the 3 int did not arrive until June, 44.
3. They were short of equipment especially guns.
4. They lacked organization and means of supply and during the monsoon season, when supply lines were cut, they had to rely on manpower alone for movement of supplies.
5. The Chins and Shans on the frontier were not sympathetic to the Indians.
I would like it to be mentioned that what I shall state below is from my observations. Bose was a man who fought body and soul for independence. He was by nature a revolutionary. He had a zealous fighting spirit, though in outward appearance, he was very gentle. His earnest and precise mind, his vigorous actions, and his initiative together with his love for the masses showing no discrimination between classes won him the respect which was later transformed into reverence from all those who came into contact with him.

As a revolutionary, Bose's political abilities were great as his record from July 43 shows. When contacting the Japanese, it was his policy to give as his motto "Freedom and Equality" when and if there was any fear of being apprehensive of the Japanese taking advantage of him, he was quick to refuse, however, slight the matter may have been. As a leader of the Army, he became the frontier of spiritual strength and was the pivot of the I.N.A. organisation.

REMINISCENCES OF COMMON SOLDIERS

On the basis of interviews and personal contacts, the memoirs of soldiers and officers from Haryana who participated in I.N.A. campaigns have been constructed and have been organized in a systematic way. The major issues around which the memoirs runs are charismatic personality of their supreme Commander Subhas Chander Bose and the hardships and sacrifices, the participants had to go through during these campaigns. The first parties very much similar to the memoirs of their brigade commanders and division commanders like Col. P.K. Sehgal, Col. G.S. Dhillon and Maj.Gen. Shah Nawaj Khan,
hence we will discuss the memoirs related to the struggle part which are different and has information which is useful to the thesis.

Naik Kehar Singh

On the 18th of May 1944, a unit of the INA was piqueting a hill in the central sector of the Indo-Burma frontier of those on duty, I, Naik Kehar Singh S/o Sh. Kali Ram V.P.O. Matan, Haryana was one. On an early morning the enemy made an unprecedented pre-planned attack on our picquet.

One of our comrades, who was working a light machine-gun against the enemy was fatally wounded by enemy fire. He signalled to his comrades to come and occupy his machine-gun. But the man who was to relive him had already been shot dead by enemy fire. I, Naik Kehar Singh was witnessing all this from a short distance. I made a spontaneous decision.

The enemy was firing uninterruptedly. But caring not for my own safety, I rushed through the pouring bullets to occupy the machine gun post. By the time I reached the post, the enemy had approached me to as close as ten yards. With a smile, on his lips, I picked up the machine gun and resting it against his hip opened fire on the enemy who were shooting at me with a Tommy gun.

Neglecting the enemy fire, I, Naik Kehar Singh went on working my own machine gun, so much so, that the enemy had to retreat. At this I put the machine gun in position and went on firing to push the enemy back to complete retreat.

On this unparalleled bravery and execution of duty I was honoured by Netaji with the 'Sher-i-Hind' title.
S.O. Hari Singh

On 15th March, a unit of Nippon army was lying in ambush on the Tiddam Imphal-Road.

A convoy of some British lorries passed that way. When Japanese fired on them, then the enemy drivers leaving their lorries behind, took to their heels. I, S.O. Hari Singh S/o Sh. Tek Ram, Village Pinana who was with the Japanese, made a good defence line of thee lorries on the road, though the enemy was noticing all this. In addition to this I, managed to bring one full ration lorry to our side, although I was being fired on all along heavily.

In April, I, was entrusted with propaganda work in the Indian army. When he was about three hundred yards away from the enemy lines, I hoisted the Tricolour flag. Along with this, shouts of Inquilab Zindabad – Azad Hind Zindabad and march onward to Delhi were raised and I pierced the enemy lines with great stubbornness.

As soon as I entered the enemy lines, I absorbed the Indian soldiers in a talk about the INA and gave them a delightful lecture on INA and the movement of Independence.

The soldiers there, were greatly impressed by my lecture and came to know something about INA with the result that a unit of Madras Sweepers and Miners joined us.

Afterwards, during military activity, I S.O. Hari Singh was sent on a special mission along with five soldiers. But unfortunately my party was encircled by an enemy full unit. My small party of INA fought to the last with the enemy, when we had no ammunitions then, we ran away very cleverly after breaking the enemy’s lines.
In all military activities, my unit did remarkable work as regards propaganda work, and patrolling of enemy lines.

Netaji awarded me “Sher-i-Hind”

**Sepoy Diwan Singh**

In the Central sector one of our piquets was guarding our colour. In this piquet Naik Indar Singh and I were on duty at one place. I was not made out, until they came very near. Two soldiers of enemy assaulted me, but I saved myself by throwing one of them down and piercing my bayonet through his body. The other soldiers of enemy wounded me on the right shoulder. Naik Indar Singh opened with his Tommy gun. The enemy took to his heels. One of the soldiers was killed after this. Naik Indar Singh threw a hand-grenade and another soldier of the enemy was done to death. Netaji awarded Sanad Bahaduri to Naik Inder Singh and me.

**Naik Sultan Singh**

During military work in the central sector I, Naik Sultan Singh preached the British Indian Army in a very able way. But one day I suggested by the enemy and I was handed over to a British Indian. I convinced the Indian commander of that Coy about our I.N.A. Independence movement in such a way, that next day, when the soldiers of this unit became inclined towards I.N.A. not only, I came to our but I also brought four men, who were placed as guards on m addition to this that Coy Commander (Subedar) and his Coy men st propaganda work in British Army for the I.N.A. Netaji gave “Tamghae Bahaduri”.

S.O. Udey Ram
I, S.O. Udey Ram was sent out to get news about a certain enemy position in Kaladen Sector. A patrol was under my command. As the patrol was returning having gathered the information, the enemy opened fire from front and the flanks. I occupied such a position that I totally concealed my men from the enemy by which the patrol could return. The whole of the patrol passed safe and reached a very safe position – but this became possible only at the stake of my life. When the petrol had gone away the enemy fire became still harder, with holding the way from me to return. I took my way, therefore through the jungles and next day joined my unit. Netaji honoured me with “Tamgha-I-Bahaduri”.

Nathu Singh - Indian legion

I Nathu Singh S/o Bachan Singh aged 35 Village Nevori District Jaipur Rajasthan joined 4/6 Rajputana Rifle as a sepoy during 1939 before the out-break of war. My regiment moved to Middle East on Sept. 1939 and reached Cairo on 6th Oct. 1939. My regiment was a part of 5 brigade which belonged to No. 4 Division. During the battle in Libyan border I along with four men lost communication with my regiment and we were captured by German soldiers on 2.21942. They treated us kindly and took us to Italy on 1.8.942, we were taken to Konisbroke a place in Germany which was 50 miles from Berlin. There I was taken to a German army barrack. A meeting of all the captured Indian soldier was arranged. There I saw an Indian in black western suit and I later learnt he was Netaji. He delivered a speech to us in Hindi and stressed that our country must be free somehow. He wanted volunteers to join the Indian Legion which he had formed. There were 27 men with
me at that time and they all pledged to join the army of Netaji and we all became members of His forces.

All the Indians so joined were formed as a regiment and there were 9 Companies. I was a member of No. 4 Coy. The total strength of the regiment was 3500.

Netaji visited our camp almost weekly. He attended to our personal comforts as a friend. He told us about the brave men of India and the huge task before us. He always said that he wants only 500 loyal soldiers to fight the war of liberation. Whenever there was a draft of Indian P.O.W. sent from Italy he went and met them, looked to their comforts and encouraged them to join his army. He was greatly respected by the Germans.

He sent many of us in a Mission to Holland, Poland, Belgium and asked us to study how as independent nations they have progressed. Our company was sent to France to fight the American forces and were captured there by the American.

I last saw Netaji on 28.2.1943 at Berlin when all celebrated his birthday. Later I learnt that he went to Japan to organize I.N.A. in the Far-East.

After our arrest in France they took me to England and we were sent back to India. During Feb 1946 we were put in Asoda camp near Delhi. We were all with German uniforms. The British officers forces us to remove the INA badges and asked us to say that we joined Netaji under compulsion. We sternly refused to do so. Some of us were charged with Bayonets and lied with electric wires which were alive. At
least on 27.2.1946 I was discharged and asked to go home. I again enrolled myself in the Indian Army that is 17th Raj Rif. on 6.10.1947.

I strongly believe Netaji could not have died and he is still living. I cannot say where he lives, but I know that he cannot die.