CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY
EVOLUTION OF BRITISH INDIAN MILITARY ORGANISATION:
FROM COMPANY TO CROWN

The East India Company founded the British Raj in India, but could not have done so without the help of an army. Eric William Sheppard in his book *A Short History of the British Army* wrote, 'An Army was built up from the people of India themselves, which in the end brought its own country under the sway of its foreign masters.' This was indeed true. The valour and fidelity of the Indian troops had been an important factor in the establishment and consolidation of British rule in India. Although it served the commercial and imperial interests of a foreign power it was not a mercenary army since the concept of nationhood was non-existent.

The origin of the British Indian Army can be traced to the early days of the East India Company. On 31 December 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to "The Company of London Trading Unto the East Indies" which established their "monopoly of commerce in eastern waters." It was commercial rivalry and competition with other European powers that prompted the English to come to India. They were preceded by the Portuguese and the Dutch. In 1612, English ships under Captain Best defeated the Portuguese
outside the inlet of Swally. It was after this success of the English that the Mughal Emperor granted them trading concessions. On 11 January 1613, the Mughal Emperor Jahangir's firman granting the English permission to establish a factory at Surat was delivered to Captain Best, the Company's representative at Surat. After the establishment of a small factory at Surat, Sir Thomas Roe was permitted by the Governor of Surat to land the men of the Company's ships, and the resident merchants were allowed to bear arms.¹

This marked the beginning of the Bombay Presidency. By 1624, the Company's servants could be tried by common and martial law.² In 1625 a trading centre was established at Masulipatnam and later was removed to Armegaon, where the Company erected fortifications. In 1634, the Emperor Shah Jahan's firman granted the Company permission to establish factories in Bengal with a fort at Pipplee. In 1640, the Company acquired on very favourable terms, the concession of Madras which became the first independent position of the English in India. Permission was also obtained to build a fort - the Fort of St. George and this was the origin of the Madras Presidency.

¹ S. Rivet-Carnac, The Presidential Armies of India (London, 1890), p.27.

² Ibid, p.35.
EARLY RECRUITMENT

To protect the trade outposts and factories, the English found it necessary to enrol guards and watchmen. According to the Government of India, "These guards consisted of small bodies of ill-disciplined Europeans and badly armed native peons whom we should now regard more as corps of chowkidars than as soldiers. The purpose of their existence was not only to safeguard the walls of the factories and the valuable merchandise which they surround, but by their presence, the dignity of the Company's local officials." 3 Similar opinion has been expressed in the Cambridge History of India, "These peons could hardly be regarded as soldiers, and were employed rather to add to the dignity of the Company's officials than for purposes of defence". 4 Therefore it would be wrong to trace the beginnings of the Indian Army to the Company's chowkidars, watchmen and guards.

The need for adequate defence arose after the renewal of hostilities with the Dutch in 1621. It became necessary to have fortifications around the English factories. In 1652, an ensign and 30 men were sanctioned for Bengal.

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3Government of India, The Army in India and Its Evolution (Calcutta, 1924), pp.2-3

In 1661, the Company was given authority by King Charles II to send armed ships and men to make war against non-Christians, "in the place of their trade" and in a later renewal of the charter this authority was extended to conduct war against any "heathen nations" of Asia, Africa and America. In 1685, the Code of Martial Law for the British Royal Army was made applicable to the Company's forces. Permission was also given to enlist Europeans in India willing to enter the Company's military service since the charge of sending recruits from England was very high.

The earliest force which can be seriously regarded as the embryo of the Army in India originated in Bombay. In 1662, the island of Bombay became the property of King Charles II of England. It was ceded as a part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza when she married Charles II. It was the first territorial acquisition of the Crown in India held in full sovereignty; no Indian authority had any claim to jurisprudence there. A detachment of the King's troops, augmented by a few Europeans of various nationalities garrisoned Bombay. Its maintenance proved a serious financial burden and there was also violent dispute for precedence between the Crown's officer and the

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5 Government of India, n.3, p.3.

Company's representative. This induced King Charles II to offer the island of Bombay to the Company for a yearly rent of £10 in gold. The lease was made in 1668 and thereafter the King's troops in Bombay accepted service under the Company.\(^7\) In 1668, when the King leased Bombay to the East India Company, its garrison consisted of twenty commissioned and non-commissioned officers, 124 privates and fifty-four Topasses, or half-caste Portuguese, and this force eventually became the nucleus of the 1st Bombay European Regiment.\(^8\)

Between 1669 and 1677, Gerald Aungier served as both the President of Surat and Governor of Bombay. He recognised the military importance of Bombay and ordered the construction of a fort within the city and raised a local militia in 1670. In 1672, he obtained sanction for the supply of uniforms for the whole of his troops "to be of one colour for the greater awe of the

\(^7\)This process was reversed in 1857 after the great Revolt of 1857.

\(^8\)Lt.Col.Wolesley Haig, "The Armies of the East India Company", in Dodwell, ed., n.4, p.153. There is conflicting opinion regarding the Topasses. The Government of India Handbook, Army in India and its Evolution, is of the view that they were 'half castes claiming descent from the Portuguese and were so called from the form of headgear they wore.' Patrick Cadell in his book History of the Bombay Army (London, 1938), maintains that they were the Indian Christians of Bombay, Salsette and Malabar, who bore Portuguese name without any claim to Portuguese blood (p.19).
adversary". In 1677, the Court of Directors empowered Aungier to employ force where necessary for the observation of treaties and grants.

In 1684, the Bombay garrison was augmented by the enrolment of two companies of Rajputs. The order to enrol two companies of "Rashpouts from the main" to be commanded by their own officers but to share duties with European soldiers probably indicates the 'first attempt at organization of the Indian soldiers'. These two companies were, moreover, permanent and may be regarded as 'the foundation of the Indian portion of the British Army in India'.

Earlier attempts had been made to improve the Indian troops. Deccanis had been enlisted in 1667, and Aungier also recruited Muslims and Rajputs in 1673 to meet the threatened Dutch attack, and again in March 1676 when there was a similar threat from the Portuguese. These enlistments were, however, temporary.

By the close of the sixteenth century the Company had made further territorial acquisitions in India. In 1696, the Company secured permission to fortify its factory at Chattanuttee in Bengal. On this site Fort William was

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9 Quoted from Court of Directors to Surat Council in Cadell, n.8, p.22.

10 ibid, pp.29-30.

11 ibid.
built, which became the administrative headquarters of the Company's Army in India for almost 200 years. In 1698 a new English Company received a charter to trade in India. The old and the new companies became bitter rivals. An amalgamation of the two companies took place in 1708-9. It resulted in the formation of "the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies", popularly known as the "East India Company". In 1717, the Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar's firman confirmed the trading rights of the Company in Bengal.

The three important Presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta were established by the end of the seventeenth century. From 1708 all English factories were placed under these Presidencies. Each Presidency was under a separate President who was also the Commander-in-Chief of military forces. As far as the Army was concerned, during the first hundred years 'European companies were formed from detachments sent from England, from runaway sailors, men of disbanded French corps, from Swiss and Hanoverians, from prisoners of war, and from any white material in search of livelihood.'\textsuperscript{12} Therefore discipline was lacking. Indian troops known as "native troops" were armed with their own native weapons, wore their own native dress and were

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{12}Major G.F.MacMunn, \textit{The Armies of India} (London, 1911), pp.4-5.}
commanded by their own native officers. In the Madras Army, 'sepoy levies had no discipline, nor any idea that discipline was required. They were armed with matchlocks, bows and arrows, spears, swords, bucklers, daggers, or any other weapon they could get.'

**ANGLO-FRENCH RIVALRY AND THE GROWTH OF THE SEPOY ARMY**

The East India Company's most bitter rival for trade and commerce during the eighteenth century, the French, had started late. The French Company "Compagnie des Indes Orientales" was formed by Colbert in 1664 and their first factory was established at Surat in 1668 by Francois Caron. Thereafter they established a number of flourishing trade centres in India. The outbreak of the War of Austrian Succession in Europe in 1740 led to renewal of hostilities between the French and the English in India. This had far-reaching consequence.

Both parties, with their eyes fixed on limited and immediate objectives, were for some years unaware of the high stakes for which they were playing. They thought they were fighting each other for the trading advantages that influence over local rulers might secure for them; but the real issue, as it turned out, was

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13 Government of India, n.3, p.5.

which of them should succeed the Moguls as the masters of all India.\textsuperscript{15}

By the mid 18th century, the East India Company had regular troops of infantry and artillery in all the three Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Bengal. However, even as late as 1747, the native foot soldiers were known as peons; there were about 3,000 of them, of whom only 900 had muskets.\textsuperscript{16} Their inadequacy was revealed when the town of Madras was easily captured by the French in 1746. It was the French who first realized the advantages of training Indian soldiers on European lines. The Indian troops trained and organised according to European military standards were known as sepoys.\textsuperscript{17}

As early as 1674, Francois Martin had enlisted Indian troops. In 1746, a French Officer, M.Paradis, with 230 French soldiers and 700 sepoys, had successfully attacked an Indian force of over 10,000 men. This battle was the first occasion of many which proved that a resolute attack by properly trained men could usually defeat the forces of an Indian prince ten times as

\textsuperscript{15}Penderal Moon, n.6, p.11.

\textsuperscript{16}Philip Mason, \textit{A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men} (Harmondsworth, 1974), p.31

\textsuperscript{17}The word sepoy is derived from Persian Sipahii meaning 'soldier'.
numerous.\textsuperscript{18}

In view of increasing French threat to English possessions in India, in 1748, Major Stringer Lawrence was given command of all the East India Company's forces. Major Lawrence followed the French example and raised the first few companies of Indian soldiers who were trained and equipped in English style. These sepoys had their own officers called Subedars, though they were led by European officers. Soon after Major Lawrence's reforms in Madras, changes were made in Bombay and Bengal Presidencies.

The war with France had revealed the inadequacy of the "gunman and his crew" as an unsuitable organization. Therefore orders were issued to the three Presidencies that each was to maintain one company of artillery with one second Captain, one Captain Lieutenant, one 1st Lieutenant, one Fireworker and one 2nd Fireworker.\textsuperscript{19} They also appointed a captain and engineer to command all three artillery companies.\textsuperscript{20} As far as the artillery was concerned no Indian, foreigner or person of mixed breed, nor any Roman Catholic was admitted for service.

\textsuperscript{18}Mason, n.16, pp.29-30.

\textsuperscript{19}Government of India, n.3, p.7.

\textsuperscript{20}ibid, p.9.
In 1754 Royal troops arrived in India in aid of the Company's forces against France. The reinforcements which arrived at Madras under Admiral Watson included the 39th Foot, which later adopted the title of "Princes in India". With the arrival of King's troops the Mutiny Act was made applicable to the Company's forces. Thereafter the Army in India was 'divided into Kings troops, the Company's European troops and the Company's Indian troops.\textsuperscript{21}

**Contribution of Robert Clive**

In 1751, Robert Clive who had entered the Company's military service distinguished himself in the capture of Arcot. Thereafter, in 1757, Clive reorganized the Indian troops under his command by forming them into regular battalions with small nucleus of British officers. This was the 1st Regiment of the Bengal Native Infantry known as "Lal Paltan" or the "Red Regiment". The sepoys were armed and dressed like the Europeans so as to create an impression on the enemy that the entire troop was composed of European soldiers. Up to now, Indian troops, organized in companies, were under the command of their own Indian officers. In the new organization although there was still an Indian commandant, for the first time British officers were superimposed. Also, British non-commissioned officers were

\textsuperscript{21}ibid.
introduced into Indian units. This was to continue up to the Mutiny. The first battalion of the Lal Paltan had the following composition:\(^22\)

British Officers - 1 Captain, 2 Subalterns

British non-commissioned officers - 1 Serjeant Major and several Serjeants.

Indian Officers - 1 Commandant, 1 Adjutant, 10 Subedars, 30 Jemadars

Indian Rank and File - 50 Havildars, 40 Naiks, 20 Drummers, 10 Buglers, 700 sepoys.

While the Lal Paltan was being raised by Clive the Company got involved in local politics in Bengal. In 1757, the Company's attempt to fortify Fort William without the authority of the Nawab of Bengal led to the Battle of Plassey. Clive led 1,100 Europeans and 2,100 sepoys against 58,000 of the Nawab's forces.\(^23\) The battle was not a fair fight. "It was only when treason had done her work, when treason had driven the Nawab from the field, when treason had removed his army from its commanding position, that Clive

\(^{22}\)ibid, pp.9-10.

was able to advance without the certainty of being annihilated."\textsuperscript{24}

After Plassey the Bengal Army gained victory over the Dutch at Chinsurah. In 1760, the French under Eyre Coote were defeated at Wandiwash. By the end of the eighteenth century France ceased to be a major threat to the Company. The English succeeded in ousting the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French and eliminating or rather reducing their sphere of influence in India.

In Bengal a second battalion was raised after Plassey. In 1759 six battalions were raised in Madras on Clive's model. Bombay also developed its native forces on the lines of Bengal and Madras. In Bombay Arabs, Abyssinians, Indian Muslims and Hindus had served as ancillaries to the European battalions. In 1760 they were organised into independent native companies and in 1767 into battalions. The battalions were supervised by one or two British officers. This was later converted into battalions with British commandants and company commanders.

On 22 October 1764, the Company fought another decisive battle against the forces of the Nawab of Bengal. This was perhaps the first battle fought by a well-organized Bengal army. The success of the Company had established it as the most important military and political power in India. 'The Sepoy

\textsuperscript{24}G.B. Malleson, \textit{Decisive Battles of India} (London, 1885).
battalions organized by Clive had proved their worth and loyalty beyond challenge and the Bengal army, the backbone of British military power in India, had come to age'.25 At Buxar the ratio of Indian officers to British officers was 3:1.26

REORGANIZATIONS OF 1796 AND 1824

The constant wars with the French and Hyder Ali led to rapid expansion of the Presidency Armies. Each Presidency Army had independent development and changes were made according to local needs. In the wars with the native rulers the Presidency Armies had fought together. Thereafter the need arose for assimilating the organisation of the three armies on one pattern. By the Pitt's India Act the Civil and Military affairs of the Company were to be controlled by six commissioners known as the Board of Control. In 1785 an attempt was made to make the organisation of the three armies uniform. The post of Native Commandant was abolished in all the Presidencies. Native artillery or Golandaz was disbanded. The command of


26ibid. The composition of the British Army at Buxar was as follows: British Officers-106; Indian Officers-384; British other ranks-1,038; Indian other ranks-6273.
natives was entirely in the hands of European officers. Each Presidency had a military board for the coordination of the work of the Army. With the increase in the strength of Presidency Armies there was discontent amongst the Company's European officers. In spite of their seniority they had been suspended by the King's Officers. In 1782 by an act of Parliament, Crown officers in India were given precedence over the Company's officers. Senior European officers of the Company had to serve under junior officers of the royal regiments who received rapid promotion during their service in India. Moreover, the Company's officers were not entitled to any pension after service. In view of the growing discontent amongst the Company's European officers Lord Cornwallis was asked to suggest measures for the reorganisation of the Presidency Armies.

Lord Cornwallis recommended the transfer of the Company's Army to the Crown. This was not accepted. Other recommendations for reorganisation were implemented. Native Infantry was to be formed into twenty-six regiments of two battalions each. Each battalion was to consist of companies. Bengal was allotted twelve regiments, Madras ten and Bombay four. The Indian Infantry regiments were formed by linking existing battalions and amalgamating half-battalions of reduced regiments with them. Besides the

27 C. Ross, ed., Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis (London, 1859), vol.1, Appendix XIX.
Colonel commanding the regiment, each battalion had the following establishment.\textsuperscript{28}

**British Officers**

- Lieutenant-Colonel 1
- Major 1
- Captains 4
- Lieutenants 11
- Ensigns 5

**TOTAL** 22

The strength of Indian troops was reduced and there was considerable increase in the number of British officers in each regiment. Moreover, the regimental system on a two battalion basis was not satisfactory since the battalions 'though theoretically linked, were not mutually interdependent, and

\textsuperscript{28}Government of India Publication, n.3, p.12.
had no common esprit de corps'. \(^{29}\) The control of the regimental commander was excessive and in this system lay the foundation of the Mutiny of 1857. \(^{30}\) While the prospects of advancement of the British officers had improved, the dignity and authority of Indian officers were considerably impaired. \(^{31}\)

Because of the unsatisfactory nature of the reforms of 1796, the single battalion regiments were reverted to in 1824. However, the high proportion of British officers was retained. The reforms had aimed at accelerating the promotion of British officers. In Bengal, as a result of the reforms, forty Lieutenant Colonels secured promotion as Colonels. For the first time we find mention of local units and irregular cavalry regiments. The increase in the number of Indian cavalry regiments was effected by augmenting the number of regular regiments and also adding certain irregular units known as the Silladar system. \(^{32}\) Improvement was made in the artillery and in 1824 it was also to be commanded by European officers. The reorganization, however, did


\(^{30}\)ibid.


\(^{32}\)Under the Silladar system, an individual soldier supplied and maintained his horse, clothing, equipment and arms, receiving in return a higher rate than the non-Silladar soldier.
not improve the condition of Indian officers and sepoys.

As far as recruitment of sepoys was concerned, the Bengal Army consisted of class battalions composed of men of high caste. Men were recruited not only from Bengal, but also from Bihar and Oudh, and most recruits were Brahmins and Rajputs. As early as 1804, the Duke of Wellington wrote that recruits were chosen from Oudh because they were of better size and appearance. 33 In the Bombay and Madras Armies lower caste recruits were predominant. The preference for higher caste was always there. In 1777 a batch of recruits from Arcot was described as 'low in size, low in caste, and very bad indeed'. 34 In the Bengal Army low caste men were completely excluded from the fighting force. In the Bombay Army with the exception of hangmen, sweepers and scavengers, no caste was excluded from enlistment. 35

Conditions of service differed from Presidency to Presidency. In the Bengal Army no provision was made for the sepoys families, while in the Bombay Army accommodation was provided for a certain proportion of

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34 Quoted in Mason, n. 16, p. 125.

families. The families of Madras sepoys followed their regiments and as such their regiments became their permanent homes. With the extension of the Company's territories the sepoy regiments had to frequently change cantonments and undertake new postings and this adversely affected the Bengal sepoys since they could not visit their families at regular intervals. With the beginning of the nineteenth century there was discontent amongst the Bengal sepoys largely due to insufficient pay and long-delayed promotions. It was only after completing twenty years of service that a sepoy could hope to receive his first promotion as a Naik. There was also breakdown of confidence between the sepoys and their commanding officers. Before assuming his office as Governor-General of India, Lord Canning is reported to have said: "We must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which, growing bigger and bigger, may at last threaten to overwhelm us with ruin." However, in spite of the repeated outbreaks of mutiny in the Army prior to 1857, the growing discontent of the sepoys remained unnoticed. The outbreak of 1857 was but inevitable. Although India was conquered with the help of Indian soldiers, no attempt was made to redress their grievances.
THE REVOLT AND AFTER

The Revolt began at Meerut on 10 May 1857 and ended with the fall of Gwalior on 20 June 1858. It was confined to the sepoys of the Bengal Army and had little support from the civilian population. The Bombay and Madras Armies had remained unaffected. The Revolt of 1857 eventually triggered a reorganization of the Army to ensure its reliability.

The East India Company was transferred to the Crown. The Directors of the Company noted: "The Company has the great privilege of transferring to Her Majesty such a body of civil and military officers as the world has never seen before." By an Act of 1858 it was provided that: "The military and naval forces of the East India Company shall be deemed to be the Indian military and naval forces of Her Majesty...." This ended the distinction between the 'Royal Troops' and the Company's 'European Troops' that had existed for more than a hundred years. A Commission was appointed under Major General Jonathan Peel to suggest reorganization of the Army. Sir Colin Campbell in his evidence before the Commission said: "We should never again rely upon their (Indians) feelings of dependence on Europeans, or any other of their supposed feelings, but place it altogether out of their power to do serious mischief." Lieutenant General Sir Patrick Grant of Madras Army said: "I am of the opinion that there is in the heart of every black man an inherent dislike of the white man, which will always lead him to sympathise with those of his
own colour, however they may differ in race, creed or country."

The Commission recommended: "That the Native Army should be composed of different nationalities and castes, and as a general rule, fixed promiscuously through each regiment."³⁶ It was felt that a homogeneous Army would be a security risk as had been the case with the Bengal Army. Prior to the Revolt recruitment in the Bengal Army was confined to the upper caste Hindus. Sir Charles Wood in his letter to Lord Elgin on 19 May 1862 wrote:³⁷

Keep your Sikh regiments in the Punjab, they will be ready to act against the Hindoos, keep your Hindoos out of the Punjab and they will be ready to act against the Sikhs - I do not say that I would not raise men for general service, but I would not put them to general service all over India unless it was necessary.... Depend upon it the natural antagonism of races is no inconsiderable element of our strength.

It was decided to divide regiments into class companies and this eventually led to the theory of "Martial Races of India". The class company regiments of the Punjab and Bengal were a device to provide a built-in-rivalry and by

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1890 the majority in the Bengal Army were one-class regiments.\textsuperscript{38}

The Peel Commission also recommended that the proportion of Indian to British soldiers in India should not be greater than three to one. This proportion was generally adhered to until the beginning of the Second World War. On 4 January 1867 Lord Lawrence in his letter to Lord Cranborne gave the following information:\textsuperscript{39}

Previous to the Mutiny the strength of the Army in India was in round numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Troops</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British troops</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native troops</td>
<td>260,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the English troops being generally below this proportion. At present the proportions are these

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Troops</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British troops</td>
<td>61,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native troops</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus it will be seen that the present aggregate strength of the troops is something like 120,000 men less than before the Mutiny, when the Native soldiers was 7½ to 1 British soldier, while now the ratio is about 2 of the former to 1 of the latter. Perhaps you may say that the change in the relative strength of the two descriptions of troops is excessive but such is not the case. In the first place the previous disproportion was enormous and left as completely at the mercy of the Native army....

The Peel Commission also recommended that "soldiers should be enlisted for general service." The Brahmins had always pleaded that they


\textsuperscript{39}Lord Lawrence to Lord Cranborne, 4 January 1867 in Philips, n.36, p.509.
would lose their caste if they served overseas. This plea was ignored and it adversely affected the recruitment of Brahmans.

In 1861, the reorganization of the Indian troops was undertaken. Since all the regular cavalry regiments of the Bengal Army had mutinied, they were disbanded. Only eight irregular cavalry regiments had survived and were led by Skinner's Horse. Cavalry was now organized on the Silladar System, except for the three regiments of the Madras Army.

In 1861, the three Presidency "Staff Corps" were introduced. Earlier British officers were enlisted to regimental cadre. Since regimental rules varied, there was marked disparity in the rate of promotion within the various armies. The introduction of three staff corps, it was hoped, would remove this drawback.

As a result of the reorganization the establishment of the Indian forces in 1865 was as follows:40

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40Government of India, n.3, p.19.
The Indian Forces in 1865

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cavalry regiments</th>
<th>Artillery batteries</th>
<th>Infantry regiments</th>
<th>Sappers &amp; miners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bengal Army</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras Army</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay Army</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab Frontier Force</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyderabad Contingent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Infantry regiments consisted of single battalions. The promotion of Indians which had earlier been on the basis of length of service was now determined by merit. To ensure the reliability of the Army, Indian soldiers were given inferior weapons compared to their British counterpart.

In 1879 an Army Organisation Commission under Sir Ashley Eden was appointed to explore the avenues by which military expenditure could be decreased and recommend measures to improve the efficiency of the Army in India. According to the report of the Committee, the purpose for which the Army of India was being maintained was: 41

(a) Preventing and repelling attacks, or threatened aggressions from foreign enemies beyond our border,
(b) Making successful armed disturbance, or rebellion, within British India, or its feudatory states, impossible,
(c) Watching and overawing the Armies of feudatory Native States.'

The Commission recommended abolition of 10 cavalry and 30 infantry regiments. The reductions proposed in the Madras Regiment were the largest. It also recommended that the Madras and Bombay Armies should continue to be organised on a "mixed" basis but should be restricted to recruiting within their own Presidency boundaries. There was gradual decline of Madras sepoys as they were considered unsuitable for service outside Madras. They were compared unfavourably with the so-called martial races of Punjabis, Dogras, Gurkhas, and Pathans.

The Eden Commission had also recommended the abolition of Presidency Staff Corps. In this system promotion was by merit within the corps as a whole rather than a regiment. An officer in a regiment could always be superseded by another from outside appointed to the same regiment but belonging to a different Presidency Staff Corps. In 1886, the Government introduced the linked regiment system in which a regiment was linked into a group of two or three with a common seniority list. It was only in 1893 that this system was abolished and thereafter officers were appointed to the Indian army.

The most important recommendation of the Eden Commission was the abolition of the Presidency Armies and their replacement by four army corps. It was Major General F.S. Roberts, a member of the Commission who formulated the plan for integrating the Presidential Armies. This
recommendation was fiercely debated. The supporters of Presidency Armies argued that in 1857 it was the separation of Armies that had enabled them to suppress the revolt of Bengal sepoys. The argument for separate Presidential Armies rested on the theory of 'watertight compartments', two compartments would keep the ship afloat even if one out of three sprang a leak. This was a political concept based on the idea of divide and rule. Roberts, who rejected the separation of Armies was to substitute it with the theory of 'martial races' which again was broadly based on the principle of divide and rule. It was argued that security did not require separate Armies but only a degree of separateness amongst regiments based on the theory of 'martial races'.

Gradually the opposition to the abolition of the Presidential Armies diminished. In 1895 the three Presidential Armies were abolished and were replaced by four area commands - Punjab, which included the Punjab Frontier Force; Bengal; Madras, including Burma; and Bombay including Sind, Quetta and Aden. Each command was placed under a Lieutenant General and they were all under the direct command of the Commander-in-Chief in India.

Lord Kitchener, who became the Commander-in-Chief in India on 28 November 1902, introduced sweeping changes in the Army organization. In his letter to Lady Salisbury on 30 December 1902 he wrote: 'The idea that

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42 Mason, n.16, p.359.

pervades everyone in India is that the army is intended to hold India against
the Indians.... I think this is a wrong policy.\textsuperscript{44} He saw the maintenance of
internal security as a means to an end, namely, to set free the field army to
carry out its functions. The Army's main task, he was convinced, was not to
support the civil power but to defend the North-West frontier against an
aggressive enemy.\textsuperscript{45} Kitchener found the Army 'scattered all
higgledy-piggledy over the country, without any system or reason whatever.\textsuperscript{46}

In January 1903 the designation "Indian Staff Corps" was abolished, and
officers belonging to this corps were designated "Officers of the Indian Army".
All the regiments of the Indian Army were renumbered and renamed. The
Indian Army Order of 2 October 1903 published the new designations and
numbers of all units of the Indian Army. For instance, the 6th Madras
Infantry became 66th Punjabis.\textsuperscript{47} It erased all traces of the old Presidency
Armies.

By 1908 the Army in India was divided into Northern and Southern

\textsuperscript{44}Sir Philip Magnus, \textit{Kitchener, Portrait of an Imperialist} (London, 1958),
p.198.

\textsuperscript{45}Government of India, n.3, p.27.

\textsuperscript{46}See Magnus, n.44, p.198.

\textsuperscript{47}Government of India, n.3, App.V. It contains the list of Indian Infantry and
Pioneer Units, showing titles alloted in 1903 and 1922.
Commands which in turn were divided into various divisions under the control of Army Headquarters. The First World War revealed inadequacies in Kitchener's organisational scheme. Since there was too much centralisation in Army Headquarters, the system proved a failure during the War. Kitchener was also responsible for the opening of Staff Training College at Quetta. It was to train officers on the pattern of Camberley Staff College. However, it was Curzon who was really keen to reform the Army and he had secured the appointment of Kitchener. Initially, they had worked in harmony. Soon a bitter struggle between the two had resulted in the resignation of Curzon in 1905.

It was only after the First World War that the next major reorganization of the Army was undertaken. In 1922, the government introduced major reductions in personnel and equipment in order to save money. The cavalry regiments were reduced by amalgamating the existing regiments from 39 to 21. During this period infantry battalions were linked together in groups, with one battalion acting as the 'training' battalion.\(^{48}\) Besides, the Army was divided into four commands, each under a General Officer Commanding-in-Chief.\(^{49}\)

The Army Organisation 1923 was as follows:

\(^{48}\)ibid, p.100.

\(^{49}\)ibid, p.40.
It Included four districts each under a General Officer Commanding-Peshawar, Kohat, Rawalpindi and Lahore. It also included Delhi and Allahabad Brigades.

It Included two districts each under a General Officer Commanding United Provinces and Presidency and Assam.

It Included four districts each under a General Officer Commanding Central Provinces, Poona, Bombay and Madras.

It Included three districts each under a General Officer Commanding Wazirastan, Baluchistan and Sind-Rajputana.
Thus, by the beginning of the twentieth century through various reorganisations the basic framework of the Indian Army had emerged. There was no major change in this framework during the remainder period of the Raj.

THE INDIAN NAVY

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, "No European army could come to India unless it had control over the seas." It was the English East India Company which realized the importance of a strong marine force for the protection of their trade in India. The origin of the present Indian Navy can be traced to 5 September 1612 when the company formed a squadron of fighting ships to face the challenge of the Portuguese and the Dutch. It consisted of four warships namely the 'Dragon', the 'Horseander', the 'James' and the 'Solomon' under the command of Captain Thomas Best. With the expansion of trade and commerce more warships were added to the Company's Marine Service.

In 1686 Marine Headquarters were shifted from Surat to Bombay and thereafter, it was known as Bombay Marine. This was done to protect the Bombay post against the Siddis and Marathas. After the decline of Portuguese naval power they had posed a serious challenge to the Company's naval supremacy in India. In 1756, the Bombay marine with the help of the Royal Navy's heavy ships finally

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defeated the Marathas fleet. In 1759, the Siddi fleet was also wiped out by the Bombay Marine. The East India Company had successfully utilised the Bombay Marine in all its campaigns against the Indian rulers. It undertook sea-borne assault on Hyder Ali’s ports which ended in complete victory. It was also utilised in the campaigns against the French, in the capture of Trincomalee from the Dutch, in the Napoleonic wars and in the Burma expedition.

In 1830, after almost two centuries the Bombay Marine was designated the Indian Navy. The Company had meanwhile transferred itself from a trading company into a political power in India. The Indian Navy witnessed an era of change from soil to steam and from wooden hulled ships to steel ships. With the advent of steam, ships from England appeared in Indian waters at regular intervals.

The Crown take-over of the Government of India in 1858 had led to the virtual abolition of the Indian Navy. It was decided that the duty for protecting the Indian waters would be carried out by the Royal Navy. In 1863, the Indian Navy was revived and renamed the Bombay Marine and the Bengal Marine. The naval protection of the Indian waters was still in the hands of the Royal Navy. In 1892, after several changes in nomenclature it was designated Royal Indian Marine.

When the First World War broke out, the Royal Indian Marine was quite unfit for naval duties. Its ships were primarily used for transport of troops, arms,
ammunition and stores to Egypt, Iraq and East Africa. After the War, shortage of funds and extensive retrenchment adversely affected the Royal Indian Marine. In 1923, following the recommendations of the Inchcape Commission, all troop ships belonging to the Royal Indian Marine were sold, and it was reduced to a small force entrusted with minor coastal duties. It had lost its combatant status and the task of naval defence of India was once again entrusted to the Royal Navy.

In 1925 a Committee headed by General Rawlinson recommended: the Royal Indian Marine should be constituted as a combatant force with an initial strength of 4 troops, 2 patrol crafts, 4 trawlers, 2 survey ships and a depot ship; and the service should be commanded by a Rear Admiral. Following the recommendations of the Rawlinson Committee, the Indian Navy Bill was introduced in the Central Legislative Council. The Bill was however defeated by one vote.

It was only in 1934 that the Indian Navy Act was enacted and the Royal Indian Navy was formally inaugurated at Bombay on 2 October 1934.

THE AIR FORCE

The Indian Air Force was constituted on 1st April 1933, after the passage of the Indian Air Force Act in the Central Legislature. During the First World War, Indians were employed as officers in the Royal Flying Corps which was a part of the Army of the United Kingdom. In December 1915, the first detachment of the Royal Flying Corps arrived in India. In 1919, the Royal Air Force became an
independent service in the United Kingdom and in the same year the service in India also came to be known as Royal Air Force. By the end of 1922 there were six squadrons in the Royal Air Force in India. Lord Inchcape's Retrenchment Committee of 1922-23 did not recommend any reduction in the Royal Air Force in India.

In September 1930, on the recommendations of the Indian Sandhurst Committee, a batch of six cadets were sent to the Royal Air Force College at Cranwell for the constitution of the Indian Air Force. In April 1933, the No.1 Squadron of the Indian Air Force was formed when the first batch of Indian cadets returned from Cranwell. The first flight of the Indian Air Force had four Wapiti aircrafts, six Cranwell trained officers and nineteen airmen.

The expansion of the Indian Air Force was very slow and the outbreak of the Second World War had revealed its inadequacy. On 17 March 1941 Auchileck in his letter to Secretary of State for India Leopold Amery wrote:

The Airforce is desperately weak and worries me greatly, I hear that the Air Ministry will not agree to our fifteen squadron expansion scheme for the Indian Air Force. This is disappointment to all of us but I realize that they cannot help themselves. We are now busy on a new scheme based on such aircraft as are actually in sight, and

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51 See Report of the Indian Sandhurst Committee (Skeen Committee), HMSO, 1927.

there are quite a number of them, though most of them are obsolescent. I feel we must expand the IAF by hook or crook.... Even if we do not need our expanded I.A.F. in India, they may be able to lend a hand outside India and I hope they will.

Even by the end of the Second World War the Indian Air Force remained a small body consisting of antiquated weapons.

CONCLUSION

The protection of the Company's trade and commercial privileges had led to the evolution of the Presidential Armies. The consolidation of the Company's Armies into a single entity on a sound organisational basis was the outcome of the Raj's imperialist policy. The Army not only created the Raj but also defended it. Since Britain's Army was never strong enough to defend the Indian frontier, it was imperative to strengthen the Indian Army. The Indian Navy however had limited combatant status. Britain being the foremost maritime power, protection of the Indian Ocean area was undertaken by the Royal Navy. The presence of the Royal Air Force had also checked the expansion of Indian Air Force. Thus, while the Army emerged as a highly professional body, the growth of the Air Force and the Navy had been inhibited. The rank and file of the Indian Army and Navy remained Indian,
while the Officer cadre was totally British. The deliberate exclusion of the Indians from the officer cadre was necessary to maintain the imperial myth of racial superiority. This glaring inequality remained largely unnoticed and it was only after the First World War that consistent demands were made for the 'Indianisation' of the officer cadre of the Armed Forces.

53 The Indian Air Force, unlike the other two services, had 'Indians' as officers. British Officers however could be seconded or attached to it.