emptv threats. He plundered Pushkar and Ajmer and descended upon Jaipur like a storm. "The reduction of that predatory power" wrote Welleslev, "therefore, was manifestly a measure of not only of just policy and necessary security, but of ultimate economy with reference to the finances of the Company."28

Wellesley had carefully prepared a plan for war with Holkar. The basic of that plan was a combination of the movements and operations of the British troops and those of Daulat Rao Shinde and the Gaikwad, acting against the forces and territories of Holkar from Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan, while the main army, under the personal direction of General Lake was to pursue the enemy from north India.

In the South General Wellesley had realised that he was unable to advance against Holkar. He suggested that Colonel Murray should advance from Gujarat into Malwa. The main reason for his inability lay in the fact that there were famine conditions in the Deccan and due to lack of rains, there was no fodder available for animals. If the operations could have been delayed until after the rains were over, he himself would have marched from the south with his own army and at the head of Murray's force.29

On 23rd March, 1804, Lake marched to Ballahira, Yashwant Rao's policy was to avoid a pitched battle against Lake, but at the same time to devastate the Company's provinces. That the guerilla tactics were effective is obvious from a letter written by Lake to Wellesley, in which he expresses that he
was in a most awkward situation the initiative was with Holkar, who was expert at guerilla warfare. If Lake decided to take the offensive the moment he advanced leaving an opening for Holkar, he would get into British territories with his horse and burn and destroy the territory.

Marathi Records reveal that "Yeshwant Rao was camping near Sambhar Lake near Jaipur. He devastated Jaipur district, collected Rs. 25 lakhs and with a force of one lakh infantry and one and a quarter lakh cavalry force reached Kota. He wanted to advance towards the east and collect taxes from Bengal if he was chased by the English, he planned to retire through Bhosle's territory and descend on the Nizam's territory and go south via Arcot, Chennapattan and Shrirangapattan. If the English did not chase him, he planned to camp either at Kota or Gadh Mandula district. The families and heavy artillery were to be kept at Marwad where Haranath Singh and Nago Jeewaji were camping with 30,000 troops. Kirkan Rohlilla was camping in Ajmer district with 30,000 Patnavs. Jivlal had attacked Kashirao Holkar who was camping near Thainera with two thousand soldiers. As a result Kashirao was captured and the army was dispersed.

Lord Lake started his forward movement, early in February 1804, in anticipation of a war with Holkar. He sent his heavy artillery party to Agra and himself started from Bavana on the 9th of the month. After a strenuous journey over bad roads he reached Hindaun on the 20th of February. After a few days
WAR AGAINST HOLKAR 1804-05

DELHI

SIEGE 7 OCT 1804
SIEGE 13 DEC 1804
SIEGE 2 JAN 1805
SIEGE 9 JUL 1804
SIEGE 25 SEPT 1805

APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY

RAJPOOT STATES

LAKE ADVANCE
MONSOONS ADVANCE
MURRAY'S SLOW ADVANCE

160 MILES

CUPPSIWUNGE
BADNAWAR
OUGLIN

GULF OF CANNBAY

CHANDORE
AGANTA

BARODA
BURAT
TAPTEE

AGRA
FAKKURKABAD
FAIRPOOR

OCT 1804
JUL 1804

JANUARY 1805
FEB 1805
APR 1804
JULY 1804

9 OCT 1804
9 NOV 1804
2 JAN 1805
17 NOV 1804
24 FEB 1805

313 JUL 1804
8 MAY 1804
rest, the army started off again on the 9th March and reached Kamwai via Naniup and halted there until the 22nd. He reached Ballanira on the next day.

On the 6th April, Lake crossed the pass of Ballaghira and and encamped at Karnali. When Lord Wellesley issued orders to commence war against Holkar in the middle of April, 1804, Lake was in camp some 25 miles northeast of Tonk. On 17th April, Lake marched to Jowsah. Next day a detachment consisting of the two battalions of the 12th Regiment and the Second battalion of the Second Regiment of native infantry under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Ronson set out for Jaipur. On April 27, Lake advanced to Brianah and continuing his march on the day following reached Nona, about 15 miles from Jaipur. He reached Nawai on 8th of May.

On 10th of May, Lt. Col. Jon with 2/8th Regiment, 2/21st Regiment and Third Regiment Native infantry with artillery proceeded towards Tonk Hampura, 60 miles south-east of Jaipur. As he had no siege train, Jon decided to capture the place by a direct attack. On 15th May at 2 a.m. Jon marched with eight companies of infantry and a 12 pounder gun. Captain Habar, with one twelve and four six-pounders and three companies of 2/21st Regiment was given the task of dealing with any force coming from Tonk. Major Joveton was in charge of reserves which consisted of 3 Regiment of Native cavalry. His task was either to reinforce the main body or to pursue the enemy in case he was defeated. Although Jon carried out a silent march when he came
to the main gateway, a picquet of the Tonk battalion opened fire. This alerted the garrison. Don broke the gateway by using his 12 pounder while his infantry kept a steady fire on the enemy crowding on the rampart. Don's storming party entered the first gate, found the second gate open and broke the third and the fourth gates with artillery. The Garrison tried to escape but were charged by Major Doveton with the 3rd Cavalry and thus Tonk Rampura was captured. Tonk Rampura was strategically important as this was the only administrative base which Holkar possessed in North India.

Being the month of May, the heat in Rajasthan was unbearable to European soldiers. General Lake now decided to suspend the operations for a few months until after the rains and leaving a strong force behind withdrew to the permanent cantonments at Agra and Kanpur. A force of five battalions was detached under Colonel Monson, which was deemed sufficient to contain Holkar in Malwa and even deal with him if he decided to advance. General Lake chose Colonel Monsoon because he had distinguished himself in the battle of Aligarh against the Marathas. He had longer experience of the Indian Army than General Lake himself. Besides, as General Ware and Colonel Vindeleur were killed in earlier actions, Monson was now the seniormost since General St. John had retired. Unfortunately, Monson though physically brave lacked brains and had no judgement. Knowing him General Lake should have given him clearcut and orders/not left the decisions to him.
According to Basawan Lal in Amirnagar, Lake left six battalions and Captain Lucan with his newly raised Native cavalry, two thousand men, Bapu Shinde's army, the Baherich sowars and 1000 men from Jaipur Horse making altogether one force of ten thousand cavalry and infantry. 35

Yashwant Rao Holkar's position was no better. His army also suffered terribly due to heat and lack of water in their retreat from Jaipur. On 29th of May, an action was fought at Ballor Khery between Captain Gardiner's detachment and Tatya, a partisan of Holkar. The Marathas surrendered. Another force of two battalions under Gomaji Shinde also was defeated by Lt. Lucan and surrendered. Yashwant Rao now retreated to Mandasaur. On the way Harnath Singh joined him with his force and Yashwant Rao collected 45 lakhs of rupees from that district.

Mirkhan Rohilla who was operating with his cavalry on the frontiers of Bundelkhand in February 1804 got into a skirmish with Colonel Shepherd and retreated. On 22nd May he attacked two British Battalions besieging Aminta Mulaya, a fort near Koonch. Mirkhan killed fifty gunners and carried off all the artillery consisting of two twelve pounders, one six pounder, two howitzers and forty tunbrils. 37 But on the 24th June, Mir Khan suffered a reverse. One of his officers with a party attacked Colonel Shepherd near Koonch but was defeated. The officer and one hundred Marathas were killed; many were wounded and many horses were captured. 38

Jaswant Rao who knew the weakness of the British army
appreciated that General Lake will not operate in Summer.
He called a war council and the consensus of opinion was
"From daily running, our strength is gone. Relying on the
grace of God, we ought now to fight a pitched battle, because
wherever we retreat, the enemy will hasten behind us and estab-
lish their rule in the Mahals and Taluqas. If the battle is
put off, all our troops will disperse without striking a blow."

As compared to the Company's army Holkar had several
advantages. His army consisting of local Indians from Uttar
Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Malwa and the Deccan was well
acclimatised and could stand the rigours of Summer. The same
was the case with the animals such as horses and oxen who were
hardy beasts. The army subsisted on looting and marauding.
It had no administrative tail to tie it down. Tashwant Rao
boasted with justification that his empire was in his saddle.
Moreover, as compared to Lake's army which had come from far
away cantonments in Uttar Pradesh, Tashwant Rao's men were
fighting in their own territory and they knew the ground well.
His generals like Harnath and Mirkhan were past masters in the
art of guerilla warfare and were willing to fight provided
they were allowed to loot. Holkar's army was lightly equipped
and as he had already sent his family and heavy baggage away
to Jodhpur. This marauding force was highly mobile. The dis-
advantages of Holkar's army were that he lacked artillery and
his Gardars were free lancers who did not obey orders and the
men had a loose kind of discipline. The morale of his army
could fluctuate according to the monetary gains. If the troops were not paid for a long time they used to go away. When there were prospects of loot even the local villagers joined to loot the territory. The men owed their loyalty to their own chiefs. But Yashwant Rao Holkar was a daredevil and his aims were clear. His generals also exhibited plenty of physical courage where tactics proved successful at times, but irregulars cannot stand up against trained and disciplined armies in pitched battles. Whenever the British Commanders hesitated and showed a lack of offensive spirit, they were defeated. If a commander made a mistake of splitting his force, he was defeated in detail by the Marathas who fell on his detachments like a pack of wolves. But when the English army advanced with fixed bayonets with a determination, the Marathas broke up and ran. If pursued by the English Cavalry they were mowed down and died running helter skelter. They did not have fall back positions and strongly held forts where they could withdraw and regroup.

Monson's Retreat

On 12th May, 1804 Lake had sought permission of the Governor General to suspend operations due to excessive heat. The Governor General issued orders for the suspension of the operations and on 25th May orders for the withdrawal were issued when Lake had already reached Kushalga. He withdrew to Hindaur the next day and reached Agra on 5th June from where the army
The orders issued to Colonel Monson were to occupy the passes of Bundi and Lakheri south of Tonk Rampura and north of Kota with a view to preventing Holkar from advancing from Kandasaar to the north. These passes were the gateway to north India from Malwa.

Lake has been criticised for suspending the operations midway and retreating to Agra and Kanpur leaving the task of containing Holkar to Monson. Later Lake himself admitted that it was a mistake to withdraw at that junction. Had he pressed and attacked Holkar, he would have defeated his adversary. However, it was not easy to bring Holkar to a pitched battle as he had not adopted the methods of Shinde and Bhosle. He believed in hit and run tactics. Lake wrote to General Wellesley complaining that Holkar hits and runs and does not give battle. He had laid waste the whole country. The army would have found it difficult to obtain supplies as was evident later when Monson's army was practically starved. Moreover the European soldiers would not have been able to stand the heat especially if they had to march and fight covering long distances day after day, being harassed by the enemy. Even during the peaceful organised march back to the cantonments, Major Iorn who marched back with the army writes that young men who set out in the morning full of spirits and in all the vigour of health, dropped dead immediately on reaching the encampment ground. On the average ten to fifteen Europeans were buried every day.

dispersed to other cantonments.
The wretched plight of the troops was further increased by the scarcity of water. 45 Had Lake withdrawn all European troops and left the field to the Native armies, he would have never had sufficient confidence in them, as throughout his correspondence one finds that he has a firm conviction that Indians are not capable of fighting and only European troops perform great feats of valour. In fact, he had left no Europeans with Monson and this was attributed as one of the causes of Monson's disaster.

One cannot deny the fact that Lake made a strategic error in withdrawing from Rajasthan. He had adequate experience of the Maratha method of warfare. In Guerilla warfare one of the techniques is to retire when the enemy advances and to advance when he retires harassing him all the way and to fall on him when he is on his last legs. In this respect General Wellesley had a better understanding of the pattern of warfare in India. When he saw what was happening in north India he had suggested that Lake should himself follow Holkar and push him as hard as he could. If this were not done, it would be difficult to bring the war to a close. 46 By adopting a defensive attitude Lake was not only letting himself in for a prolonged war but asking for trouble. 47 Although Arthur Wellesley realised that Holkar cannot be made to stand and fight, he felt that Lake should continue his pursuit of Holkar even though he should have no hopes of bringing him to action. 48

One finds that Lord Wellesley has failed here in not co-ordinating
the operations in the Deccan, Gujarat and Rajasthan. General Wellesley had washed his hands off Colonel Murray from Gujarat who made a half-hearted effort to support the operations and Lake withdrew leaving Monson to face Holkar singlehanded. It is the experience that the interformation boundary is always a weak line as it is no one's responsibility. Had Lord Wellesley coordinated the operation, General Wellesley could have captured Chandor and threatened Malwa while Murray could have advanced on Ujjain and Lake could have simultaneously attacked Holkar advancing from Kota in a southern direction. In fact Lord Wellesley did prepare a plan in August of the same year after Monson had retreated in summer. Had this been done earlier Holkar would have found that his army was disintegrating especially since the soldiers were in arrears of pay. In fact, in his despatch dated March 24, 1806 the Governor General in Council does mention that the basis of his plan was a combination of the movements and operations of the British troops and those of Dowlut Rao Shinde and the Gaikwar, acting against the forces and territories of Holkar from Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan, while the main army under the personal directions of Lake was to pursue the enemy from Hindostan. But the plan was communicated to General Lake in a private despatch dated August 17, 1806. The plan was still under discussion between Wellesley and Lake. In between the months of May and August, Lake's army had returned to Agra and Kanpur and Monson had beat a hasty retreat disgracing the English army. It can
he safely concluded that the British underestimated Holkar and Wellesley did not show any foresight in planning a war against Holkar as he did in his war against Shinde and Bhoale in 1803. The decision to suspend the operations during summer was taken by Wellesley on the advice of his Commander-in-Chief.\textsuperscript{51}

Once Major General Wellesley expressed the opinion that a war against Yashwant Rao should not be more than a Polygar war and should not last a fortnight.\textsuperscript{52} His confidence was shared by Lord Wellesley, who full of excitement caused by the triumph against Shinde and Bhoale, also thought that one action was sufficient to annihilate the army of Yashwant Rao.\textsuperscript{53} William Hickey rightly points out\textsuperscript{54} that it had long been the practice of the British Military experts to hold Yashwant Rao in the utmost contempt and to speak of him as a mere freebooter.

Monson was entrusted with the task of holding the passes at Bundi and Lekheri in order to keep Holkar away from Hindustan, a purely defensive task. Lieutenant Colonel Don joined him with his force leaving a small garrison at Rampura. Monson thus reinforced, now decided to advance on Kota, which is south of the passes.\textsuperscript{55} On 23rd April Holkar had already retreated from Jaipur when pursued by British cavalry.\textsuperscript{56}

On his arrival at Kota, the Raja of Kota received Monson in a friendly manner and offered him supplies and even gave a detachment of his own forces hoping that the British will destroy Yashwant Rao once for all. A plan was drawn to advance up to a place Khatowli beyond Mokandara pass situated 30 miles south of Kota (see Map 10). The Raja of Kota promised logistic
ROUTE OF WITHDRAWAL FOLLOWED BY

COLONEL MONSON

JULY - AUG - 1804
support to Monson's force.

Monson thus either did not understand Lake's orders or decided to ignore them out of sheer bravado, underestimating Holkar. He did not realise that the further he went he was cutting himself away from his source of supply and reinforcement. He perhaps hoped to join Murray at Ujjain and complete Lake's task of destroying Holkar.

General Wellesley had ordered Colonel Murray to proceed to Malwa to cooperate with Lake in his operations against Holkar. He advised him to leave sufficient troops for the defence of Surat and Bharoch. He was to move with four battalions and prevent the entry of Holkar in Gujarat. In case he decided to move towards Ujjain, Murray in cooperation with the forces of Shinde was to attack Holkar. To deal with Holkar's cavalry he was advised to make use of the Gaikwad's cavalry.\(^57\) Neither Lake nor Monson established direct liaison with Murray. General Wellesley was not very enthusiastic about these operations. He admitted "it is impossible for me to say what the operations of the Commander-in-Chief will be but Holkar's power appears to consist principally in a considerable army in the field."\(^58\)

With Vindhya and Satpura ranges and Narmada river and Tapti intervening General Wellesley was not in a position to take any active part in the war against Holkar. The task given to Murray was to stop Holkar, embarrass and impede his flight as much as possible.\(^59\) However, he had warned him that .... you should not think of attacking any strong place (excepting such as may
necessarily full in your way) till Holkar's army will have been defeated. With such instructions Colonel Murray, a mediocre officer was certainly not going to stick his neck out. His hesitation later on is understandable. His task was just a show of force. Wellesley left Murray a free hand, simply bidding him to march immediately, more rapidly and attack Holkar wherever he could find an opportunity. Wellesley did not even tell him where he should march in the first place. Murray was not a resourceful person. He had been complaining to Wellington that he was short of troops and supplies, although he had a larger number of British troops than General Wellesley bad. It is not surprising therefore that his heart was not in the task before him. When he reached Ujjain, he received two letters from Monson informing him that Lord Lake's main army had gone back to the cantonments. As Monson was left alone in Rajasthan, Murray should have stayed in Ujjain to support Monson but instead he withdrew behind Mahi river as he feared the destruction of his own army as well. Defending his action he wrote to Lake that "General Wellesley sometime ago directed me to avoid exposing my corps to the sole operation of Holkar's army, and as it appears that your Excellency had found it necessary to canton the troops, and as it will be some months before you commence active operations, I should be during the whole time in the very situation the Major General directed me to avoid. Murray was later replaced by another officer, but the damage was done. General Wellesley should have appraised General Lake
of the weakness of Murray as a commander, but he washed his hands of the affairs in Malwa.

Holkar who was watching the developments with the eye of an hawk was too good a general to miss such a golden opportunity. Here was Monson deserted both by Lake and Murray and disowned by General Wellesley. Instead of remaining on the defensive during the summer months in the hilly area of Bundi and Lakheri, he had engaged himself in a foolhardy venture of advancing to Mokandara, far away from any administrative base like Khushalganj or Tonk Rampura. He had trusted the Raja of Kota and zone south 30 miles from Kota.

As soon as Lake heard of Monson's intention to advance he warned him of the dangers of such a move, but the warning came too late as Monson was already at Mokundara. Lake did not order him back but allowed him freedom of action and latitude.66

had Monson stayed at Mokundara he would have been safe as Holkar was still far away but after staying at Mokundara and being emboldened by the fact that he was not molested by Holkar Monson made bold to advance 50 miles more to Kholi Sagad on 28th June. He captured the fort by storm on 2nd July.67 As there was not much opposition, he advanced to Fipla two days later and finally camped at Gurrote which was 70 miles away from Ujjain.

Lake again warned Monson that if he advanced at this rate, he would not be able to get supplies from Hindustan. He
instructed him to remain in touch with Colonel Murray who was advancing from Gujarat upon Ujjain and had reached Dohad in June and was at Budnawar on 30th June. Monson should have sent a force to establish contact with Colonel Murray, which he failed to do, nor did Murray make any efforts to liaise with Monson. Holkar in the meantime retreated to Pratapgad south of Ujjain. He was now between Colonel Murray and Monson and kept manoeuvring between Colonel Murray and Monson looking for an opportunity to strike. When he heard that Monson was camping at Gurrote, Holkar advanced to Mandasaur. By this time Murray had come near Ujjain. Looking at the map, it will be observed that Holkar had kept Chambal river in between himself and the British troops. Unfortunately although Monson and Murray were moving towards Ujjain, they did not know each others whereabouts. When Murray heard that Holkar was at Mandasaur he feared that he would be cut off from Gujarat by Holkar and inlake's words: "..... for reasons which have never been satisfactorily explained to me," Colonel Murray after he had advanced within a short distance of Ujjain, formed the extraordinary resolution of retreating behind the Mahse river. But after communicating this decision to Monson, Murray changed his mind and recrossed Mahse river on 1st July and reached Ujjain on 8th July; but it was too late. Monson had already decided to retreat. Thus these two poor Commanders blundered. They showed a complete lack of any tactical sense whatsoever. They vacillated and kept moving up and down without securing
their lines of communication or paying the least attention to their logistic problems which would be created by such moves. General Wellesley's orders to Colonel Murray which were vague, to say the least, were partly responsible for Murray's hesitancy. The orders amount to advance but do not attack. You are only to hinder him. As I do not know what is in the mind of the Commander-in-Chief, I cannot tell you what to do and where to go, but remember that Holkar has large army so do not try to attack him.

The decision of Murray to retreat was a golden opportunity for Holkar. He could now deal with Monson, for which task he had been collecting forces. On 6th July Holkar crossed the Chambal river and came west. When Monson got the news he sent a reconnaissance patrol to confirm it. Monson now planned to advance and attack Holkar. He advanced 7 miles and his spies informed him that Holkar with a large force was waiting for him and the morale of his troops was very high. The distance between them was 12 miles. Monson had two days rations with him. Had he boldly carried out his plan the issue would have been settled one way or the other in two days. But had Monson not succeeded then Holkar would have cut his route of withdrawal and starved him out. Thus discretion being the better part of valour, Monson gave up his plan to attack and decided to withdraw to Mokundara pass. He should not have advanced from the pass in the first place. Having advanced, it was very wrong to withdraw when he was already in contact with the
enemy. Monson's intelligence was faulty. According to Todd, Monson ordered his advance in "... utter ignorance of the rapid advance of Holkar - with what object is unknown; but as soon as he learned the vicinity of the foe, without awaiting him, he ordered a retrograde movement to gain the Mokundara P. 71

It is obvious that Monson did not understand Maratha tactics. Both Wellesley and General Wellesley had clearly stated that offensive action alone will succeed against the Marathas. In a letter to Colonel Murray dated 1st September 1804, General Wellesley describes Maratha tactics thus: "They follow the enemy with their cavalry in his marches and surround him and attack him with their infantry and harass when he halts and he can scarcely escape from them. That, therefore, which I consider absolutely necessary in an operation against a Maratta power - is such a quantity of provision in your camp as will enable you to command your magazine. Seven offensive action and logistic self-sufficiency were the two cardinal principles of war against the Marathas and Monson ignored both.

Monson sent his heavy baggage from Garrote to Sonmara early in the morning on the 6th July and leaving a rear party with St. Lucas, consisting of 1500 horse, and two guns, the contingent commanded by Bapuji Shinde. The plan to send the infantry back to organise a defence at Mokandara and leaving a rear guard of mobile cavalry was made on the advice of
Bapuji Shinde. Although Baswan Lal in his Waqai Holkar calls it "deceitful counsel" it was sound advice from a technical point of view.

The officer chosen by Monson for the rear guard, Lt. Lucan, was a very brave person with war experience. In fact, according to a letter written by one Narayan Lal who was a spy in Bapuji Shinde's force, to Holkar, the advice given was, "if you put Lucan to death and advance, you will conquer the whole country without a battle." This Narayan Lal used to communicate between Holkar, several zamindars in the Doab and the Raja of Bharatpur. According to 'Holkaranchi Kaiflyat', Tashwantrao ordered Harnath Singh to join him after collecting five battalions, 80 pieces of artillery with 30 tumbrils of ammunition drawn by oxen. Tashwant Rao himself had 80 thousand swift light cavalry. The Kaifiat states that Monson was routed on 7th July. The English records do not describe any action on this day. It is a fact that Monson who was only a few miles from Rampura had taken a decision to withdraw without encountering Holkar. According to Colonel Malleson, Monson took this decision on the sole advice of Bapuji Shinde. The commandants of the native regiments urged upon him to advance and attack Rampura. Lt. Lucan who commanded the native cavalry levies offered to lead the attack, but Monson having once taken a decision to withdraw, did not change his mind. He curtly told Lucan that, if he chose, Lucan could stay to encounter the whole Maratha army.
As soon as the Marathas got the information that Monson was retreating, they took up the pursuit and soon 20,000 cavalry men established contact with Lucan. Lt. Lucan had with him a contingent from Kota commanded by a gallant Rajput named Amar Singh, the Chief of Palait who was determined to hold his ground with Lucan. On Holkar's side were commanders like Wahid Alikhan and Bakshi Bawani Shankar. While the skirmishing was going on, Wahid Ali Khan and Bakshi Bawani Shankar charged at the full gallop into the enemy's force before them and plied their swords and lances so well that Lucan's soldiers took to flight. However, Lucan and Amar Singh fought back until Amar Singh fell on the battlefield along with 400 to 500 of his gallant men who were either killed or taken prisoners. The Chief of Kota also named Amar Singh and Afsal Khan, the brother of a minister of Kota Raja died in this battle. Amongst those taken prisoners were Akhayram Pachali, the Fauz Bakshi of Kota, and Fais Talib Khan, the Nawab of Baharaich.

The fate of Lucan was never positively known. Grant Duff states that he heard from Muhammad Khan Bangash that Lucan was wounded, taken prisoner and later died due to some stomach ailment. Baswan Lal claims that Yashwant Rao himself charged upon Lucan and beheaded him; which appears rather romantic. According to Holkar's Kaifiat, Lucan was killed on his elephant.

Yashwant Rao captured three thousand horses, four elephants and two guns belonging to Lucan's force. Thus Monson lost all
his irregular cavalry under Luican. Bapu Shinde brought the news of Holkar's victory at Pipalya to Monson. Monson reached Mokundra Pass on 4 July 1804 where he was joined by Major Sinclair with his battalion 2/2 Native infantry from Mundlejgad. He had left behind a Garrison at Mundlejgad under two British officers, but the Garrison revolted, beheaded the officers on orders of Haranath Singh and joined Holkar's army.

Soon Holkar established contact with Monson and sent him a letter asking him to surrender his guns and small arms in exchange for a safe passage. Monson refused. Yashwant Rao then attacked Monson's forces on three sides with his cavalry but as the Company's army fought back Holkar broke engagement and concentrated his forces four miles away.

When Monson tried to enter Kota, Zalim Singh refused him entry as he was afraid to invite the wrath of Holkar. Rain and acute shortage of food reduced Monson to a miserable state. As Gaumna Nadi river was in spate he could not cross it either. His guns got stuck in the mud; so he was forced to abandon them. Although English authors like Thorn, Pearso and Duff say that the guns were spiked, it is not true as later in the battle of Deeg, none of those guns were recovered by the English from Holkar and they were perfectly in working order and had been firing at the English forces.

Monsoon managed to cross Gaumna river on the 15th and reached Chamba on the 17th. The river was not fordable and there was very little food in camp. Next day European artillery
men who had no guns now crossed over with the help of elephants and proceeded towards Hampura. But the cavalry and infantry remained in camp. They were almost surrounded by Holkar's cavalry. A feeble attempt was made by Capt. Dunel who attacked with two companies and for the loss of sixty men. But Holkar withdrew. He had lost 80 horses and another 100 were wounded. This was partly due to carelessness of the Sardar in charge of the cavalry who did not watch Dunel's movements carefully.

On 23rd July, 2/21 Regiment crossed the Chambal making use of some rafts provided by the local Chief of Indargad. 2/12 followed the next day. In the meantime Lieutenant Colonel Don with 2/8 Regiment proceeded down the river in order to find a crossing place. Holkar attacked Monson's camp which was now reduced in strength by three battalions. The engagement was broken at sunset with moderate losses on either side. On the 25th, 2/21 Regiment which had crossed Chambal was ordered to proceed to Lakhari Pass with a view to securing the entrance to Hampura. Lieutenant Colonel Don was reinforced by 1/12 Regiment. Monson himself crossed the Chambal on the 25th and proceeded to Hampura with 2/21 Regiment and 2/12 Regiment. He reached Hampura on the 27th in a most exhausted condition.

Monson who managed to get some supplies, sent a supply column to Lieutenant Colonel Don who joined Monson on the 29th. Some of his men drowned in crossing the Chambal. The locals now realised that there was a retreating army. They now took
up arms and started attacking in small parties.

Lord Lake having heard of the plight of Monson had sent from Agra a supply column escorted by two battalions of infantry, four six pounder guns and two howitzers and some irregular cavalry under Major Firth. He had already reached Rampura when Monson reached that place. Monson rested his forces at Rampura for a month from 27th July to 22nd August, 1804. In the mean time Yashwant Rao had crossed the Chambal and was moving on to Bundi which is south west of Hampura. He had the Banas river on his western flank. There was no obstacle between him and Monson now. It was not in Holkar's interest to allow the enemy time to rest and recuperate. Moreover if Monson received further reinforcements from Agra he would be in a position to take the offensive. Holkar therefore detached a force to guard the baggage at Bundi, and set out to hunt the enemy. His progress was slowed due to heavy rains.

During the month's halt at Rampura, Monson's army had consumed the supplies sent by General Lake. Monson therefore decided to fall back on Khushalgarh where he hoped to get supplies locally. Moreover, six battalions of Shinde's army with twenty one guns were located at Khushalgarh under Sadashiv Rao Bakshi. Leaving a garrison under Captain Hutchinson at Hampura, Monson set out with five battalions and six companies of sepoys and with two howitzers and reached Banas river on the 22nd August. But the river was in floods and could not be crossed. Monson collected some local boats and
crossed one battalion and the treasure under Capt. Nicholson, which was ordered to proceed to Khushalgad. Yashwant Rao Holkar followed close on Monson's heels and reached Bana as the next day. He pitched a camp four miles away from that of Monson.

When Monson started crossing the baggage the next day, Holkar ordered Najib khan and other cavalry Captains to dismount and attack Monson's force. At the same time, Bhawani Shankar, Khushaba Bakshi, Chimna Bhaau and the Pindharis crossed Bana on both flanks of Monson's army. By this time, Monson had crossed four battalions and greater part of the baggage. He had left Major Sinclair under 2/2nd Bengal Sepoys as rear guard. In the afternoon when the rearguard was preparing to withdraw Yashwant Rao opened artillery fire. Sinclair charged the guns. The gunners withdrew, leaving the guns which were taken by Sinclair. Jaswant Rao brought in eight other guns and opened fire and recovered the lost guns. Sinclair withdrew under covering fire provided by the 14th Regiment from the opposite bank. In this desperate action Sinclair and 13 officers died. Many soldiers were either killed or drowned. Yashwant Rao now started harrying Monson's force, until Monson was forced to abandon his baggage and retreat towards Khushalgad fighting his way out. As per Waqai Holkar "Monson, in spite of such a great king being in pursuit of him, out of the intoxication of valour did not in the least loose heart, but kept up a hot fight. From our side charge after charge was
made, but owing to the enemy's shower of grape and shot, no
success could be gained, rather many of our men were killed."

Monson reached Khushalgad on 25th August. The fort was
attacked the previous day by Sadashiv Bhau but the attack was
repulsed by Captain Nichols. Holkar concentrated his army on
the 26th and held a council of war with Bapuji Shinde. Some
of Monson's Indian officers, seeing that the position was hope­
less entered in correspondence with Holkar and although Monson
tried to prevent it, two companies of infantry and a large
proportion of irregular cavalry went over to join Holkar's army.
Mohan Singh writes: "As terror and despair seized the troops
of Monson, Anifkhan, the brother of Janglikhan, with 200 horse­
men and 300 musketeers sought our protection, entered Jaswant's
camp, received a bounty of Rs. 2/- per head and was sent to
Harnath Singh."

Having realised that staying in Khushalgad was not safe
Monson once again set out on his retreat. He spiked the
howitzers and forming a hollow square the retreat commenced.
Holkar kept on attacking the force for the next two days but
could not penetrate the hollow square formation. Monson reached
Hindaun fort on the 27th night. After a few hours rest, he
recommenced his march in the middle of the night towards Agra.
Due to the darkness there was confusion on both sides. The
English kept the attackers at bay by firing grape and shot.
Casualties were mounting on both sides.

When Monson's army came out of the ravines near Hindaun
which provided cover, Yashwant Rao formed his cavalry in three divisions and charged but the Indian sepoys withstood the charge bravely and fought back. They allowed the cavalry to close in, held back their fire, and after firing volleys on the advancing cavalry charged them with the bayonet thus displaying cool courage and discipline.92

Monson reached Bayana on the 28th in the evening. His troops were tired out and he wanted to rest them that night. But the never tiring Holkar's army93 closed in and opened heavy artillery fire on Monson's force. This resulted in confusion. The camp followers got mixed up in the line and a rout started. Every man for himself and devil take the hindmost was the rule until the retreating army reached Fatehpur Sikri. Holkar kept on attacking them throughout the retreat. At Sikri itself Holkar nearly succeeded in encircling the English army and the locals of Fatehpur also opened fire from within the fort. Monson now sent a message to Holkar that he was willing to surrender if a safe passage was guaranteed to his army but this was only a ruse and Holkar was taken in. He slackened his pursuit giving Monson a chance to withdraw by night, who by a forced march reached the safety of Agra on the 31st August, 1804.94

Holkar showed no mercy to the stragglers and cut their right hands, noses or ears. These stragglers kept coming in Agra camp for days later.95

This is the story of six weeks of retreat. The numbers of casualties was never correctly ascertained since many deserted,
many just went home or got lost but it is estimated that each battalion lost three to four hundred men. Almost all baggage and guns were lost.

Throughout this arduous retreat the sepoys manifested a degree of courage and firmness of mind, and repulsed every attack with coolness and intrepidity which speaks very well of them. Lake himself has praised them in these words: "A finer detachment never marched, and sorry am I to say—I have lost five battalions and six companies, the flower of the army, and how they are to be replaced at this day God only knows."

The British government not only suffered in men and material during the retreat, but the effect on the morale of the troops all over the country was disastrous. Later when Holkar was 200 miles from Mathura, the garrison fled leaving the tents and baggage standing. "The best of the business was that Holkar was running off one way while we were going another." This is how Skinner has described this episode in his memoirs. Had the garrison met even a thousand men of Holkar's army, they would have surrendered. Such was the panic caused by the mere name of Holkar. The official despatches, of course, omit all such details and conceal the state of affairs.

The political consequences of this retreat were serious and lamentable. Arthur Wellesley wrote that "I tremble for the political consequences of these events." It nullified the past successes of British forces in the Deccan and Hindustan. Holkar again appeared on the horizon of Hindustan as a hero and
the Raja of Bharatpur and other minor princes opened corres-
pondence with him. Shinde and Raja of Berar began to think of
regaining their lost possessions. Thus a great danger was posed
to the British possessions threatening to undo the work of the
Governor General. The retreat was a disgrace to British mili-
tary reputation as a whole. It was not only a tactical defeat,
but General Lake's strategy and logistics had failed. The enemy
had been underestimated. Lord Wellesley had failed in not co-
ordinating the details of the plan between Lord Lake and General
Wellesley and the biggest omission in the execution of the plan
was the lack of cooperation between Murray and Monson. General
Lake committed a blunder in withdrawing the main army leaving
a small detachment behind, and Monson made matters worse by
foolishly advancing from the passes without assuring his logis-
tic support. There was a difference of opinion between General
Wellesley and Lake on this point. Arthur Wellesley thought
that Monson's force was never strong enough to engage Holkar.
He had also forbidden Murray to attack Holkar. He urged Lake
to continue pursuit of Holkar with rapidity even though there
was very little chance of bringing him to battle. Instead
Lake broke contact with Holkar. He was not very alarmed by
Monson's retreat itself and was confident that he could
still succeed in getting a treaty signed with Holkar, but the
price paid was very high.

On 28th July the Governor General warned Lake that a
defensive war might prove disastrous and the forces of Murray
and Monson were not strong enough to meet Holkar. He therefore suggested posting of another senior officer in that area, but Lake did not take any action on this suggestion.

An Analysis of Monson's Retreat

General Wellesley has summed up the causes of Monsoon's retreat as follows:

1. The British should never employ a corps in a service for which it is not fully equal.
2. They should take care of their provisions against all enemies and the Marathas in particular.
3. They should not depend upon the Rajas or allies for supplies of provision.
4. All the forts in British possession should be filled up with necessary provisions.
5. When they are likely to cross a river which is likely to be full during the rainy season, they ought to have a post and boats upon it.

Lord Wellesley however does not consider that the strength was inadequate. In his report to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors dated 24th March 1805, he confirms that the Commander-in-Chief judged the strength of the detachment under the Command of Lieutenant Colonel Monson to be sufficient to exclude Holkar from Hindustan and accordingly directed Lieutenant Colonel Monson to form such a disposition of his force as should completely obstruct the return of Holkar from the south.
General Lake had kept the following factors in view, in detailing the force. Holkar had withdrawn from the field. His men were deserting the service daily as they were not paid. Their morale was low. He expected Murray to engage Holkar in Malwa and Gujrath in an offensive manner keeping him occupied. This was not possible partly because General Wellesley had forbidden Murray to engage Holkar's army and secondly because of the "General distress of the country in which it would be required to act."

When one considers that the task allotted to Monson was to block the entry of Holkar in Hindustan, six battalions of sepoys, a few places of artillery and two bodies of irregular horse were adequate. He was not expected to go forward and destroy Holkar's army which was exactly what Monson foolishly set out to do. Unfortunately Lake failed to give specific orders to Monson, although later he tried to caution Monson against risking his neck.

The second criticism refers to Monson's failure in safeguarding his lines of communication and ensuring a continuous flow of logistics. Although Monson was entirely responsible for the maintenance of his troops, Lake could have taken over this responsibility especially when he got the news that Monson had started withdrawing. He did send a convoy to Rampura which sustained Monson for a month in July-August 1804. As long as Monson was winning, he could get provision from the countryside and the Raja of Kota also helped him. It was only later when
the local chiefs realised that helping the British will invite the wrath of Holkar that they refused shelter and provisions. General Wellesley remarked that the detachment would have been lost even if Holkar had not attacked with his infantry and artillery" as they had no logistic backing.

Failure on the part of Lord Wellesley to coordinate the plans of General Wellesley and Lake has been one of the main causes for Monson's disaster. The bad state of communications is partly responsible for this calamity. Although Lord Lake started his movements against Holkar on the 17th April, General Wellesley in the Deccan did not get copies of the orders till 6th May. He never believed in the plan and his share in it. In fact, he ridiculed Lake's dependence "upon the exertions of the troops to the southward to defeat Holkar." Writing to Major Malcolm he pointed out that Lake -- "forgets the nature of our tenure, and our present state in the Deccan, the distance we are from Holkar, and the difficulty, amounting almost to an impossibility, of subsisting an army to the north of Poona, owing to the famine." I can certainly take Chandore," he wrote, "but I can not venture to move the troops from the Deccan." Had he moved troops from the Deccan the Marathas would have risen again. That Lord Wellesley's aim was not clear to Wellington is obvious from the remarks: "I should have no difficulty about a plan for the war, if I had an idea what the Governor General intended to do respecting a subsidiary force for Shinde. But a total silence from Bengal
General Wellesley believed that the task was within the capabilities of Lake. He wrote to Malcolm that "General Lake ought to move upon Holkar with all celerity, leaving in Hindustan a large proportion of his infantry, with some of his cavalry. Having thus provided for the security of Hindustan, he should follow Holkar, and push him as hard as he can."^{104}

However, promptly the next day after receipt of orders General Wellesley issued orders to Murray to proceed to Malwa from Gujerat leaving adequate troops for the defence of Surat and Bharoch and providing security to the Gaikwar. General Wellesley estimated that a force of four battalions could be spared for this task. They would try and push Holkar out of Gujerat and Malwa. He was to deny Ujjain to Holkar with the help of Gaikwar's cavalry. However, General Wellesley admitted that he did not know what the Commander-in-Chief was planning to do.

It is interesting to note the way the Governor General and the Commander-in-Chief shielded Monson inspite of his disgraceful performance. In a letter to General Lake dated September 11, 1804, Wellesley writes: "Grievous and disastrous as the events are.... the extent of the calamity does not exceed my expectations; from the first hour of Colonel Monson's retreat, I have always augured the ruin of that detachment, and if any part of it be saved, I deem it so much gain." He feared that
Monson was killed. He continues "whatever may have been his fate, or whatever the result of his misfortune to my own fame, I will endeavour to shield his character from obloquy, nor will I attempt to mean purpose of sacrificing his reputation to save mine. His former services and his zeal entitle him to indulgence; and however I may lament or suffer for his errors I will not reproach his memory if he be lost, or his character, if he survives."105

General Lake informed Wellesley in his letter dated September 26, 1804 that Monson was alive "to answer for himself." He had planned to resume operations after the monsoons but he writes: "unfortunately, my views were defeated by Colonel Monson's departure from the plan which I intended for him to pursue."106.

To sum up Monson's disasters proved to be the greatest and most disgraceful blot on the military character of the British in India. It must be said in his favour that Monson took the full blame on himself and General Lake stood by him.

Campaign Against Holkar in Winter of 1804

Lord Wellesley realised from Monson's retreat that Holkar was not to be underestimated. The prestige of the British and that of the British army had suffered a serious jolt and a proper campaign was now being planned to defeat Holkar. One thing which is noticeable is that there was no mutual incrimination. Lord Wellesley upheld Lord Lake's decision to leave
Monson to look after Holkar during the summer. Colonel Monson was not made a scapegoat and punished for his mistakes, nor was he sent on pension to England. Lord Lake lamented the loss of the flower of his army but added "In consequence of it I shall move every man I possibly can to encounter this war, and I trust, under the protection of divine providence, I shall once more have the satisfaction of reporting to you, my dear Lord, that we have been successful. I will not at present say anything more upon this disgraceful and disastrous event, as my feelings are for many reasons too much agitated to enter into the misfortunes and causes for it"... (I) "assure you that no exertion of mine shall be wanting to crush this freebooter whose force is not I believe, by any means, what it has been represented, or at all formidable if attacked. The first object is in my opinion, to destroy Holkar, I shall therefore do everything in my power to bring him to action at an early period, which by his bringing his guns and having met with success, I think very probable may soon take place." (guns make armies less mobile). In order to do this, Lake had to denude places in Hindustan but he decided to take this risk. "The whole of India is at stake, some risk must be made to accomplish this our principal object." He wanted Colonel Murray to advance once again from Gujarath.

Planning the campaign against Holkar commenced in August 1804. Lord Wellesley sent detailed notes to Lord Lake. In his appreciation about enemy's strength and disposition,
Wellesley states that Holkar's army consists of a large body of horse and infantry, and a very large proportion of artillery. The cavalry men were Rohilla Pathans collected from Rohilkhand, areas around Delhi and from Khandesh. In addition, there were Mussalmans driven from Mysore country and ex-soldiers of the Nizam and the Nawab of Arcot. There were a few Marathas and Pindharies. As compared to this fine cavalry, Holkar's infantry was inferior, even when it was commanded by European officers earlier. There was a lack of discipline and discontent prevailed, as the soldiers were in arrears of pay. As compared to the cavalry, the infantryman did not get much of a chance to collect loot. The ranks were reinforced by deserters from Shinde's army which had been earlier defeated in the South by General Wellesley. Their morale was not very high. They were mercenary soldiers. However, the army was flushed with the recent victory against Colonel Monson and a lot of loot had been collected. Yeshwant Rao Holkar was the hero and the officers were willing to follow him with their contingents wherever he lead them. The British army had not fared well either in Malwa or Bundelkhand. Murray had shown cowardice by withdrawing without a fight although he later advanced to Ujjain.

Holkar's artillery consisted of guns mostly captured by him from Shinde's army in the battle near Poona in early 1803. He also carried off guns belonging to the Peshwa. Later in August 1804 he had captured Monson's artillery. Thus, he had
a fairly strong artillery.

Holkar's army consisted of contingents recruited by Sardars like Mirkhan. It was not a cohesive force paid by Holkar. It was a loose organisation which subsisted on loot and fought while the chances of success were bright and deserted when the going got tough. They were there not from any patriotic motive but it was a mode of living for them. A decisive blow would cause a force of this nature to disintegrate. Knowing this, however, Holkar would engage in guerilla warfare and avoid pitched battles. Lord Wellesley therefore advised Lake to plan bearing this aspect in mind, which means a new strategy and tactics were called for. Sending a strong mobile column against Holkar would not serve the purpose as mere speed was not enough. Unless the force has logistic backing it will not stay in the field long. Holkar would attack with his artillery and infantry and destroy it. The lesson was well learnt. New tactics laying stress on mobility were to be evolved. Mobile forces were to be created which would be self contained and which would outdistance Holkar's cavalry.

As the morale of the English troops was low after Monson's debacle, care had to be taken to ensure that Holkar did not succeed in forcing retreat on small detachments or on garrisons by surprise attacks with overwhelming strength. Otherwise, this would further demoralise the army and boost up the reputation of Holkar.

The plan in outline consisted of the following elements:
(a) A mobile army, not very large in strength was to be assembled and it was to set out immediately to contact Holkar's forces. This army was to consist of regular and irregular cavalry, European and native infantry and artillery. The force was to be commanded by the Commander-in-Chief General Lake himself and its task was to bring Holkar to battle and destroy him. If Holkar avoided action, "this army to pursue Holkar to the last extremity. This army should be equipped for light movements; it must, however, be of sufficient strength to defeat the main body of Holkar's troops."

(b) Detachments were to be formed which would operate independently but in conjunction with the main plan. The most important task of one of these detachments was to guard the passes into the company's territory in Hindustan. The task of the detachments was to preserve tranquility and protect the flanks of the main force. These detachments were to be formed somewhere between Delhi and Agra towards the passes, and manpower to strengthen them was to be drawn from the garrisons at Delhi, Agra, Mathura and so on. If necessary, a reserve was to be created by the Commander-in-Chief, but the garrisons were not to be unduly reduced in strength. Although Holkar was not likely to attack strongly held garrisons, he might try to capture Delhi and secure the person of the Mugal Emperor. Delhi had to be, therefore, strongly held. Another detachment under a senior officer was to operate in Bundelkhand.

(c) In Gujrat, Colonel Murray was to move towards the
frontier of Gujarat with a view to denying entry to Holkar's army. Holkar thus occupied would indirectly help Lake's army.

For this task six battalions which were earmarked as subsidiary force for Shinde were to be detached from Hindustan. This force was to operate under the command of the Commander-in-Chief (and not under General Wellesley as was done previously).

This detachment was to occupy and hold Ujjain. It was anticipated that when pressed by Lake, Holkar might fall back on Ujjain. If Lake found it difficult to detach six battalions at this stage, Colonel Murray was to move from the frontier of Gujarat and occupy Ujjain. If Holkar withdrew in the direction of Gujarat, Colonel Murray was to move from Ujjain and stop Holkar.

Thus, the plan envisaged bottling up Holkar's army between the detachments at Gujarat, Delhi, Agra, Mathura, Bundelkhand and Ujjain, while he was being pursued by Lake forcing him to give battle. However, the possibility of Holkar's army deluding all these detachments and entering British territory was not altogether ruled out, but Wellesley was prepared to accept this risk. In his opinion it was much better to be mobile and take the offensive rather than occupying defensive positions and waiting to be attacked. "The active pursuit of the enemy's main force is the most efficient plan of defence, and this plan steadfastly pursued, constituted the principal source of our triumphs of the late war under any defensive system, the war must be protracted, with a repetition of the
misfortunes which have already occurred.¹¹⁰

Logistic Planning

One of the lessons learnt from Monson's retreat was that
the British army must ensure that their supplies are un-
interrupted and must be independent of the local conditions.
General Wellesley had also stressed this point. Lord Wellesley
gives detailed instructions in his Notes dated 17th August,
1804.¹¹¹ A supply department, commissary of grains was to be
made responsible for this task. They were to obtain the grain
partly by local purchase from the local market and partly from
the Banjaras, the nomads who moved with thousands of bullocks,
horses and camels carrying grain to supply the armed forces,
be they Marathas or English. Camp bazaars were to be set up
and the traders were to obtain supplies from the hinterland
in the area of operations.

As Holkar devastated areas and looted whatever he could
carry away, it was not wise to depend too much upon local sup-
ply. Even Banjaras may fail. However, a certain requirement
would be met by these two sources of supply. The collectors
in the various districts of Doab, on the right bank of Jumna
and Bundelkhand were to be asked to purchase and create stocks
of grains. They were to make arrangements for transport of
the grain to the armies in the field. Special officers were
to be appointed who would take over the grain from the
collectors and convey it to the armies. Thus a supply and
transport department was to be raised. General Lake had been
given full powers to issue orders to collectors and appoint officers for this task. Full use was to be made of forts in this area for stocking and issue of grain. The garrison in the forts would automatically provide security. Detachments of civilian staff were to be located inside the fort to control the procurement, storage and issue of grain.

Bullocks were to be used by the commissary to transport the grain. For this purpose government animals or those of the traders were to be engaged. Banjaras were also to be engaged for this task. All grain convoys were to be escorted by armed guards from the army.

Confrontation between Holkar and the English

Holkar routed Monson during the months of July and August and entered Hindustan with his formidable army. He marched northwards and encamped a short distance from Mathura. He received letters from many Rajas of the surrounding areas promising support and obedience. However, Holkar was wise enough to realise that his army was not in a fit state to confront the English in an open battle. The men were tired, the horses were in poor condition and there was no money. He now decided to concentrate his forces around Fatehpur Sikri. He put to death four or five Englishmen who showed signs of disloyalty. He sent a message to the Raja of Bharatpur extending a hand of friendship and asking for shelter for his camp and the baggage in the fort. But Bhaskar Bhau the Vakil
brought a disappointing reply. The Raja advised him to make peace with the English and expressed his inability to help him. Yeshwant Rao again sent Bhaskar Bhaeu with a pleading message. "When a man chooses a place for his asylum and begs to take up his residence there, it is not worthy of a king and a friend to show bad behaviour." This satisfied the ego of Hanjit Singh and he acquiesced to the demand.

Yeshwant Rao moved out from Fatehpur with 60,000 horse, 15,000 infantry and 192 guns. He advanced on to Mathura. The garrison at Mathura consisted of four battalions of sepoys, two battalions of native cavalry and several guns. The force was commanded by Major Skinner. The effect of Monson's retreat was so demoralising that Skinner retreated to Agra on 15th September without giving a fight and Yeshwant Rao walked in and took possession of the baggage and grain left behind by Skinner's army. Five to six hundred native cavalrymen changed sides and joined Holkar. Yeshwant Rao stayed in Mathura for a month. Unfortunately, instead of making preparations for war he spent the time in drinking and amusing himself with dancing girls. He tried to win over the locals by issuing various parwanas and promising jahagirs to any one who joined his side. He sent parties deep in Doab trying to extend his hold. However, he did not succeed as the garrison from Agra reacted and patrols were sent out to push back Holkar's men. Holkar sent a force of 1000 horsemen under Sardar Allah Meer who surrounded the fort of Eligarh and demanded its surrender.
The parrison was commanded by Major Wood who bided his time by giving evasive replies and promised to surrender the fort within a fortnight, knowing fully well that General Lake was to resume the offensive soon.

The planning for the campaign against Holkar was now complete and General Lake left Kanpur with his army on 3rd September, 1804. He had, however, been cautioned by Lord Wellesley: "I am convinced that you will not allow him to attack you, but that you will attack him with all practicable despatch." Offensive action was the only answer to Holkar. Lake's army consisted of 8th, 27th, 9th Regiments of Dragoons, the flank companies of His Majesty's 22nd Regiment, the 76th Regiment and horse artillery. General Lake planned to have his base at Agra. As the rains were still heavy the progress was slow. The army reached the Jumna on the 22nd September and began to cross the river using local boats. They concentrated at a place between Agra and Sikandara where a base was established by Captain Macan. The concentration was completed by 27th September and the brigades were formed.

Holkar who was planning to send a force under Bhawani Shankar, Murtaza Khan, Bahadur Khan, Gomaji Shinde and Kushaba Bakshi to proceed towards Kanpur to confront Lake, had lost valuable time in frivolous amusement and was now surprised to find General Lake's army so near Mathura. Instead of giving a battle here, Holkar conceived of a better strategy. He formed a force under Harnath Singh, Shaikh Qudratulla and
Papu Shinde to capture Delhi. He himself vacated Mathura and withdrew northwest along the Jumna with Lake in hot pursuit. Lake now had the problem of fighting the enemy on two fronts. Holkar's army had already reached the outskirts of Delhi and the place was attacked on October 8th. Delhi was defended by Burn and Ochterlony who repelled the attacks. When Lake approached Delhi, Holkar lifted the siege and retired towards Deeg, a fort thirty miles west of Mathura which was in the territory of the Raja of Bharatpur. He split his force here. He left his slow moving infantry and heavy guns and baggage at Deeg and set out himself with his light mobile cavalry to raid British territory in the Doab. His plan was to advance towards Oudh or Rohilkhand. This forced Lake to split his force too. He formed a brigade under Colonel Fraser consisting of the British infantry regiments, the artillery and two native cavalry regiments. His task was to attack and capture Deeg fort and destroy Holkar's infantry and guns.

Lake himself set out to pursue Holkar with his cavalry regiments. It was absolutely essential to prevent Holkar from ravaging the country occupied by the British and their allies, the local princes. When Holkar found that his passage across the Ganges was blocked and he could not enter Rohilkhand, he turned South East and flew down along the Ganges and arrived at Farukhabad on November 16th. Lake who was in hot pursuit covered fifty eight miles in twenty four hours and caught up with Holkar.
As stated earlier Holkar had dispatched a force to attack Delhi under Harnath Singh. Lake knew that the garrison at Delhi was weak in regular troops and the morale of the local people was low. Therefore Lake left Sikandara on the 1st October, 1804 and marched to the relief of Delhi. Holkar's cavalry kept shadowing Lake's marching column but did not attack. Whenever they dared to come too close Lake fired a few shots from his galloper guns and dispersed them. However, Holkar did succeed in attacking the baggage train and Lake lost some men, animals and baggage. On the 4th, another convoy of 100 camels was looted near Aurangabad, which was coming from Agra to join Lake's army escorted by some convalescent soldiers.

Holkar who also left Mathura tried to attack Lake's column. Although the attack failed, Holkar looted some carts carrying wine near Keola. When Lake camped at Aurangabad, Holkar camped at Madhuvan, four miles away from Lake's camp. Lake now decided to launch a surprise attack on Holkar's camp. He divided his force into three columns, the 76th and three battalions of native infantry formed the left column under Major General Fraser, the horse artillery was deployed on the right flank. The third column was under Colonel Macan which acted as the reserve and marched in the rear leaving some distance from the infantry column. The camp was protected by the picquets and the rest of the force under Colonel Horsford. Lake concentrated his troops on 7th October by first light having advanced at night. The artillery opened up but before
the infantry launched the attack, Holkar's army broke contact and withdrew. They must have had some inkling of the attack. His sentries and patrols were obviously alert. Thus Lake's plan failed. He again made an attempt on the 10th, but in vain. The illusive Holkar had no intention of making a stand and giving a fight. He was a born guerilla. He hovered round the enemy camp and made their life miserable. When they attempted to attack he withdrew. On one occasion, Lake did manage to kill 30 men and captured a few prisoners; who were let off with a message "none but the cowards treated their prisoners with cruelty." This was a rebuke to Holkar who had killed four or five British prisoners.

Bhawani Shankar, a Sardar of Holkar, was wounded with a bullet in the thigh on the 13th and was sent to Deeg to recuperate. When Lake left Mathura on the 12th, Holkar attacked the column on the next day. He again attacked them on the 16th. These harassing attacks caused minor casualties on either side. Lake sent half his camp and equipage to Delhi on the 18th. Thus lightened, the force now prepared itself to pursue Holkar who was four days march ahead of them. Lake's supply position, however, was not very satisfactory. His advance was therefore delayed by a few days until he managed to collect adequate number of bullocks and grain for his army. However, since the immediate danger to Delhi had been averted by Burns and Ochterlony holding their own, Lake was not worried.
When Holkar realised that attacking Delhi was futile, he changed his strategy. He now decided to devastate British territories in the Doab and collect loot. As he had good teams of bullocks who could tow his guns. He also had some trained elephants who helped the bullocks in pushing the guns over difficult terrain. In the last week of October he crossed the Jumna by a ford at Sawarghat.

Lake too crossed his army at another ford, three miles from Delhi on the last day of the month and started the pursuit with His Majesty's 8th, 27th and 39th Regiments of Light Dragoons. He was accompanied by the horse artillery. He also had 1st, 4th and 6th Regiments of Native Cavalry and a reserve brigade of infantry under Colonel Don (who had given a very good account of himself in the Monson episode). Lake left behind all the wheeled carriages and each man carried rations on him for six days. On the 1st November he reached Bagpat.

In the meantime news was received in Delhi that the Civil Magistrate at Saharanpur had been besieged by the Sikhs and a contingent of Yashwant Rao's army was heading towards Saharanpur. Ochterlony despatched a force under Lieutenant Colonel Burns for his rescue. But Yashwant Rao intercepted this force and attacked it near Kandlah. The attack was not successful but Burns took shelter in Shamli fort and prepared himself for against a siege. Unfortunately the local chief of Shamli and the people were friendly with Holkar and they refused to supply provisions to Burn's force. He was
thus trapped in the fort but to his good luck General Lake reached Shamli on the 3rd November and dispersed Holkar's forces rescuing Burns.

Holkar now established contact with the Sikhs and raised a contingent of 2000 Sikh Cavalry soldiers. When Lake reached Shamli, Holkar moved on to Thana and encamped at Khatauli. He received Rs. 32,000/- from Begum Sumroo as a token of hospitality. Begum Sumroo who always played a double game, had sent a battalion to the rescue of the civil magistrate at Sahranpur and now sent money to Holkar. Holkar then marched on to Hapur which is 20 miles away from Meerut. Lake left Shamli on 5th and resumed the chase of Holkar once again. He now advanced on to Meerut. He reached Hapur on the 9th while Holkar had moved from Hapur and was 30 miles away from it when Lake reached that place. Lake had left behind a brigade under Burns consisting of 2/14 Regiment, 1/21st Regiment, Captain Aitkins's battalions and Captain Murray's Babereich Cavalry for the protection of Northern Doab.

Lake's Battles with Holkar

Battle of Delhi

Holkar had sent Harnath Singh, Shaikh Qudratullah and Bapu Shinde to capture Delhi. The defences of Delhi had been neglected. The city wall was broken at many places and the power of the Mughal Emperor was only nominal. Colonel Ochterlony was the British Resident at the Mughal Court. He
realised the strategic value of Delhi and set to work. The rampant walls were repaired. When Ochterlony got the intelligence that a Maratha force was advancing on Delhi he called for reinforcements from Saharanpur, Rohtak and Panipat. Accordingly, Colonel Burns from Saharanpur, Captain Harriot from Rohtak and Lieutenant Birch from Panipat moved on to Delhi.

Harnath Singh deployed his army close to the city wall on 7th October. Seeing this, Ochterlony withdrew inside the city walls. He sent out a cavalry patrol under Lieutenant Hunter whose task was to gain intelligence about the enemy's strength and dispositions. At this time about 300 Mewatis soldiers in the service of the British left and joined Holkar's army. Harnath opened the battle on the 9th by firing a cannonade on the southeastern position of the city wall, but as the fire was returned he withdrew. However in this fire thirty-forty feet of the wall was destroyed. On the 10th a mixed force of 200 men of 2/14th Regiment and 150 men of Rohtak garrison supported by a six pounder gun set out under Lieutenant Rose. They attacked Holkar's guns and succeeded in capturing the battery position. They spiked the guns and returned in triumph with very little loss. The British now erected a battery and brought their guns near the south east bastion and started shelling Harnath's position. Harnath Singh moved out of range and occupied a new position to the south of the city. Where the ground provided adequate cover for his heavy guns and infantry. Thirteenth October was
spent in preparation by both sides. On the 14th, Harnath's guns opened fire. His infantry followed and assaulted the rampart walls, in the area of Lahore Gate. However the defenders fought back and Harnath Singh had to retire suffering heavy casualties. In the evening Harnath Singh moved his guns towards Kashmiri Gate and tried to assault that position but Ochterlony was alert and he deployed some guns which foiled the attempt of Harnath Singh. Ochterlony placed guns on both Ajmeri Gate and Lahori Gate and caught the Marathas in the cross fire.

Although the battle of Delhi raged for twenty days, Delhi was saved due to the judicious use of artillery by Ochterlony who kept moving his guns from place to place. In spite of the initial defection of the Mewatis, the garrison remained steadfast. The junior officers set an example by taking the offensive all the time and the attack on Harnath's artillery boosted the morale of Ochterlony's forces. He distributed sweets to his men during the siege.

While the siege was in progress General Lake started his march towards Delhi. Yashwant Rao sent a warning to Harnath and instructed him that if Delhi was not captured, Harnath Singh should withdraw in time preserving his army. Accordingly before the morning of the 15th October, Harnath moved off to Najafgad and thence to Farrukhnagar and encamped at Rewari.

General Lake was very pleased with the performance of Colonel Ochterlony and the garrison. Thorn in his memoirs
has remarked "Nothing could exceed the fatigues suffered both by the officers and men but the cheerfulness and patience with which it was endured and this defence of a city ten miles in circumference of nine days, against a well prepared and desperate enemy could not fail to command universal admiration."
NOTES

(2) Ibid., p. 595.
(3) Ibid., p. 601.
(4) Ibid., No. XXXV of 27th June, 1803.
(6) Ibid., p. 403.
(9) Owen, A Selection of Wellesley’s Despatches, p. CX.
(10) Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p. 325.
(15) Ibid., p. 107.
(16) Thorn, p. 333.
(19) Sardesai, op.cit., p. 424.
(20) Owen, op.cit., p. 454.
(21) Thorn, op.cit., p. 327.
(23) Thorn, op.cit., p. 327.
(24) Ibid., p. 332.
(26) Sutherland, J., Sketches of the Relations Subsisting between the Government and the Different Native States, p. 68.


(28) Martin, op.cit., p. 117.

(29) Ibid., p. 332.


(31) Martin, op.cit., p. 46.

(32) Sardesai, Marathi Riyasat, Uttar Vibhag 3.

(33) Thom, op.cit., pp. 337-338.


(35) Pearse, op.cit., p. 296.

(36) Quanungo, op.cit., p. 179.

(37) Thom, op.cit., p. 351.

(38) Ibid., p. 343.

(39) Ibid., p. 356.

(40) Waquaai Holkar as quoted by Quanungo, p. 183.

(41) Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p. 64.

(42) Ibid., p. 123.

(43) Ibid., p. 67.

(44) Ibid., p. 346.

(45) Ibid., p. 345.


(47) Ibid., p. 266.
(48) Ibid., p. 310.
(49) Martin, op.cit., No. XC, p. 322.
(50) Ibid., No. XXXVII, p. 189.
(51) Owen, Wellington's Despatches, p. 425.
(52) Gurwood, op.cit., p. 233.
(53) Martin, op.cit., p. 190.
(55) Martin, op.cit., p. 286.
(56) Ibid., p. 120.
(57) Gurwood, op.cit., p. 297.
(58) Ibid., p. 257.
(60) Ibid., p. 16. Home Miscellaneous Series Nos. 491, 626.
(63) Gurwood, V., p. 381.
(64) H.M.S., 6 26, p. 53.
(65) Khanna, op.cit., p. 17. H.M.S. 626, p. 54.
(66) Martin, op.cit., V p. 287.
(70) Martin, V., p. 288.
(72) Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p. 357.
(74) Ibid., p. 123.
(76) Malleson, G.B. Col., The Decisive Battles of India, p. 294.
(78) Ibid., p. 188.
(81) Sardesai, op. cit., p. 426.
(82) Thorn, op. cit., p. 369.
(83) Pearse, H., Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Viscount Lake, p. 279.
(85) Thorn, p. 362.
(86) Thorn, op. cit., p. 362.
(87) Grant Duff, op. cit., p. 282.
(88) Qununro, p. 195.
(89) Owen, op. cit., pp. 541-42.
(90) Thorn, op. cit., p. 365.
(91) Qununro, p. 197.
(92) Thorn, op. cit., p. 362.
(93) Martin, op. cit., p. 201.
(94) Thorn, op. cit., p. 366.
(95) Owen, op. cit., p. 543.
(96) Gurwood, op.cit., p. 453.
(97) Khanna, op.cit., p. 32. H.M.S. 626, p. 22.
(98) Pearce, Memoirs and Correspondence of Wellesley
(101) Ibid., p. 231.
(102) Ibid., p. 232.
(103) Ibid., p. 233.
(105) Ibid., Vol. V, p. 287.
(106) Ibid., p. 289.
(109) Thorn, Memoir of War in India, p. 368.
(110) Fester John, War and Sports in India, p. 332.
(111) Thorn, op.cit., p. 370.
(112) Ibid., p. 372.
(113) Ibid., p. 374, 375.
(114) Ibid., p. 374.
(115) Thorn, op.cit., p. 493.
GENERAL LAKE'S BATTLES WITH HOLKAR. THE SIEGE OF
BHARATPUR AND PURSUIT OF HOLKAR

Battle of Deeg (12th November to 24th December 1804)

As stated earlier, General Lake had divided his army into a mobile cavalry brigade and a comparatively slow moving infantry brigade, which escorted heavy baggage and artillery. When Harnath Singh retired from Delhi, Lake detailed Major General Fraser to pursue him. Fraser's force consisted of His Majesty's 76th Regiment, the Company's European Regiments and six battalions of sepoys. He reached Govardhan, a place few miles from Mathura on 12th November, 1804. A few miles from Govardhan, Harnath deployed his army for battle in an area between a large lake and a wide marsh. There was a fortified village to his left flank and his right extended to the fort of Deeg (See Map 11).

Deeg was a flourishing town of considerable size situated 23 miles north west of Bharatpur. The fort was situated in the centre of the town and there was a mud wall surrounding the village with bastions suitably located for all round defence. There was a deep ditch full of water surrounding the wall. The fort itself was very strongly built and had adequate guns placed on high towers which were tactically sited and overlooked all approaches to the fort. There was a high rocky mount known as Shah Burj which was incorporated in the defence scheme. There were massive gateways which covered the entrances.
THE SIEGE OF DEEG FORT Nov-Dec 1804
Gowardhan Hill and an orchard situated on top of a hillock provided good lookout positions. They dominated the approach in between the lake and the swamp where Harnath had taken up a defensive position.

Harnath Singh had deployed his army in the following manner. His left wing was commanded by Mirza Ashraf Beg, his right wing, which rested on the lake was commanded by Baryar Singh. Gomati Sinhia commanded the vanguard while Harnath Singh located himself in the centre where he held the reserves. The artillery was deployed both in the front and also in the area between the lake and the marsh presumably to give cover to parties falling back on the fort in case the pressure grew. This was also the killing ground which was dominated by artillery. The Maratha horse guarded his extreme right flank. Harnath had kept the swamp to his rear. Although his position could thus not be bypassed, his own route of withdrawal was cut off.

Major General Fraser after a careful reconnaissance planned to deploy his forces as follows: His Majesty's 76 Regiment in the centre and the two European Regiments, 2/15th and 1/2nd on the left and right flank respectively. The Native infantry was held in reserve in the rear. He deployed his cavalry on the left flank thus keeping in check the Maratha cavalry. As Harnath's position could not be bypassed, Fraser decided on a frontal attack. He however made use of two small villages keeping each to either flank thus advancing in a
diagonal manner. As he had marched in a western direction and camped at Govardnan he had to detour round the marsh and form up south of his camp location.

The troops moved into their concentration area at 3 a.m. on night 12/13th November and formed up by first light. The artillery opened up with grape causing heavy casualties amongst the defenders. Harnath Singh unfortunately showed cowardice and fled away from the battlefield and took shelter in the bastion of the fort. He was pulled up by those inside by tying a rope to his waist. The casualties started mounting up on both sides as Maratha artillery also opened up. The twelve and eighteen pounders thus caused havoc amongst the ranks of the attackers. The worst blow fell when a shot took away General Fraser's leg when he led a charge on the enemy guns. He had succeeded in carrying the first row of the guns and was charging the second row when he was wounded. He was evacuated to the rear and later died of his wounds. Colonel Monson now took over command of the force. Major Hammond who commanded the 1/2nd was advancing steadily on the right.

Harnath Singh's cavalry now charged and retook the first range of guns, but Captain Norford of the 76th Regiment led an assault and drove the cavalry away. Thus the guns again changed hands for the second time since the morning. Colonel Monson now moved his own artillery forward and concentrated fire was brought on enemy's left flank. This forced the Maratha infantry which was deployed south of the swamp to withdraw.
by the only route available through the swamp. Some of the area was set on fire by the artillery which burnt some of the retreating soldiers. Once the left flank gave way, whole of the front collapsed but Colonel Monson failed to take advantage of the situation and the Marathas were not pursued, Mohan Singh writes. "If the English Sahibs had given chase they could have captured the fort of Deeg that very day." The net result was that Lake had to lay a siege and waste a whole month in reducing the fort. As will be seen later, it was a costly affair.

Harshat suffered approximately two thousand casualties according to Thoro. A large number were lost or drowned in the marshy area. He also lost eleven six pounders and two twelve pounders, nine tumbrils and four ammunition carts which had been captured by Holkar from Monson during the latter's retreat. In all the British seized fifty three guns of all sizes. Credit for the victory largely goes to General Fraser who planned and executed the battle, although he was unable to see the end of it. Lord Lake in his letter to Wellesley has written: "I have reason to believe that, the action of the 13th was a very great business. The personal courage of Monson and others alone served it. It was a most glorious day and deserved every credit possible."

Reputation of Konson was thus restored. He had washed away, at least in part, the disgrace of his retreat and he was lucky to have recovered some of his lost guns. It is interesting
to note that the guns and ammunition was in a serviceable condition although he had given a false report after his retreat that the guns had been spiked and the ammunition destroyed.

**Battle of Farrukhabad**

Before we study the siege of Deeg, it is necessary to follow General Lake's movements. After the unsuccessful attempt to take Delhi, Holkar had moved to Farrukhabad. As usual he spent his time in pursuit of pleasure and ignored his military duties. On 10th November, 1804, General Lake concentrated his forces at Alishanj a place 36 miles away from Farrukhabad. Finding his enemy off his guard General Lake decided to surprise him by covering the distance by a forced march overnight and appearing at Farrukhabad early in the morning with his cavalry. The move was accidentally spotted by one of Holkar's cavalrymen who was going home on leave. He had the sense to turn back and gallop to his master Bhawani Shankar and give him the news. The report was confirmed by Muhammad Khan Afridi who went out on patrol. However, Yashwant Rao and Ganpatrao probably in their cups by that time, disbelieved the report and the entertainment continued. But surprise was lost, although no steps were taken to put the troops on alert.

General Lake reached the outskirts of Farrukhabad as planned and opened up with his guns on Holkar's camp. This caught the troops napping. As it happened, one of Lake's artillery tumbril accidentally blew up causing a big explosion. The