CHAPTER ON

GRAND STRATEGY OF LORD WELLESLEY, ORGANISATION OF OPPOSING FORCES, RELATIVE STRENGTH, AND GENERAL WELLESLEY'S CAMPAIGN IN THE DECCAN.
Lord Mornington, better known as Marquess Wellesley, came to India in April 1798. He was the fourth Governor General. He was thirty-seven years of age and was in the full tide of his physical and mental vigour. A sound classical scholar, he commanded a forceful style. In intelligence, he was far superior to his famous brother, Arthur, the future Duke of Wellington, but he lacked the stolidity and the enduring qualities of the younger man. He had a brilliant mind, an ardent temperament and an unlimited capacity for work. Wellesley was an intimate friend of Pitt, Granville and Dundas, the three great statesmen who then directed in England, the general interest of the empire.

He firmly believed that the British rule for India was a blessing. "I can declare," said Wellesley, "my conscientious conviction that no greater blessing can be conferred on the native inhabitation of India than the extension of the British authority." Wellesley thus came to India inspired with the sense of mission. The loss of the American Colonies had to be compensated by creating a new empire in India to secure a perennial source of wealth for the enrichment of England's economy. He was also carrying the white man's burden.

His predecessor Lord Hastings, in spite of his great abilities, labours and reforming zeal, had left behind a corrupt administration. It needed a strong man to put an end to the growing corruption. Wellesley with his courage and
resolution was ideally suited.

When Wellesley landed in India, England was at war with France. The star of Napoleon had risen on the horizon and the peace of Europe was threatened. The French East India Company had secured a foothold in India. It was a competitor to the British East India Company not only in the commercial field but also in political sphere. In the south, Hyder Ali and later, his son Tipu Sultan had established close contacts with the French. Tipu deluded himself with the belief that Napoleon would be landing in India, any day with a large French Army which would defeat the British. Had the French navy not been defeated by Nelson the dream would have come true. Although Wellesley knew that Napoleon was defeated in the Battle of the Nile, he blew, out of all portion the menace of the French, and set about destroying Tipu. The total assistance which the unfortunate Tipu received from France was the arrival of a contingent of 150 Frenchmen from Mauritius. The Duke of Wellington reacted to it by the remark "That certainly cannot be very dangerous to us." ²

The President of the Board of Control of the Honourable Company, Mr. Dundas with an insatiable appetite for territories however, was deeply interested in fostering the petard about the French menace. He wrote to Wellesley "As a general principle, I have no hesitation in stating that we are entitled under the circumstances of the present time to consider the admission of any French force into Tipu's army, be
it greater or smaller, as direct hostility to us" - a point of view that completely coincided with the Governor General’s own.

The short sighted Nizam joined the English and in the Battle of Seringapatam Tipu was killed on 4th May, 1799; thus Wellesley wiped out one enemy and extended the Empire, not by occupying the territory and buying trouble for himself but by reinstating the Hindu king who had been ousted by Hyder. Wellesley wrote to the Directors that the glory of the victory, had never been surpassed (if it has ever been equalled) in the history of military transactions of the British nations in India.

"If you will have a little patience, the death of the Nizam will probably enable me to gratify your voracious appetite for lands and fortresses. Seringapatam "I think, to stay your stomach a while, not to mention Tanjore and Poligar countries. Perhaps, I may be able to give you a supper of Oudh and the Carnatic, if you would still be hungry."

This clearly shows that Wellesley had worked out the Grand Strategy for the extension of the empire in India. He proposed to isolate the Marathas and secure the alliance of the Nizam, and the Rajput princes. He already had dominated the Southern Kingdom of Carnatic.

The enemy between the Marathas and the Nizam was well known. The Marathas did not join the British in the Mysore war realising the imprudence of augmenting the strength of a potential enemy that had already become invisible. When Wellesley assumed charge as a Governor General, he found the
Nizam in a sullen mood. He had been defeated by the Marathas in the battle of Kharda in March, 1795. He had strengthened his army with French Contingents, which did not suit British Policy. By a conspicuous display of tact and boldness, Wellesley offered a subsidiary alliance to the Nizam which was concluded on 2nd October, 1800. This gave Nizam the security he was looking for. The British troops were to be stationed in his territory to fulfill this obligation. He also agreed to discharge all the Frenchmen from his service. Thus with a single stroke of diplomacy Wellesley succeeded in both reclaiming the Nizam to the fold of the Company’s faithful allies and in securing the dispersal of French troops. The Nizam ceded the territory known as Northern Circars to the Company for maintenance of the subsidiary force. The Company now had a contiguous area from Bengal to Madras.

The most important power at that time was that of the Marathas. However, after the death of Madhavrao Peshwa, the Marathas were engaged in mutual annihilation. The premature death of Madhavrao Peshwa was disastrous for the Marathas. The death of Mahadji Shinde on 12th February 1795 followed by the sudden death of Sawai Madhavrao, on 27th October, 1795 precipitated the matters. Mahadji Shinde was not only a competent soldier but also a practical statesman which is evident from the role he played in the First Anglo Maratha war. Although he could not tolerate Nana Phadnis, the great statesman, both had unquestionable loyalty to the ruling
Pashwa. Mahadji Shinde conceived the bold project of establishing a Maratha hegemony and chose north India as his field of action where he performed the role of a Kingmaker but in the name of the Peshwa.

With the sudden death of Savai Madhavrao, the question of succession to the Masnad raised its ugly head and Nana Phadnis and Bajirao II, the son of Raghoba further weakened the Maratha unity. In the end Bajirao II received the robes of Peshwaanship on 6th December 1796 and patched up the quarrel with Nana Phadnis but the two could not work in harmony.

Daulatrao Shinde succeeded Mahadji Shinde. He inherited a well trained army but he was unlike his father neither a soldier nor a statesman. He was befriended by Bajirao II which created a wicked combination. The house of Shindes was always hostile to the Holkars. However, Mahadji Shinde and Malharrao Holkar had kept the jealousy and rivalry within limits. But Yeshwantrao, a hot headed dare devil who forced his way up soon had a grievance when Bajirao II, and Daulatrao, thoughtlessly, got Yeshwantrao Holkar's brother Tukoji trampled to death under the feet of an elephant and arrested the son of his eldest brother. He demanded justice which Bajirao II failed to do. Yeshwantrao now marched on Poona with a large army and defeated the joint armies of Daulatrao Shinde and Bajirao II who had to run away from Poona.

Wellesley watched the growing feebleness of the Peshwa's authority which, he noted, was reduced "to a state
of extreme weakness by the imbecility of his counsels, by the instability and treachery of his disposition and by the prevalence of internal discord.

The last straw on the camel's back was the death of Nana Phadnis on 13th March 1800 and with him departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government. Although he respected the English for their valor, he had steered the Maratha Kingdom away from any alliance with them. Nana had too much wisdom to involve the Maratha empire in war with the British.

The future of the Marathas was now in the hands of three desperate men—Bajirao Peshwa, Daulatrao Shinde and Yeshwantrao Holkar. When Bajirao was forced to flee from Poona he went to the British for help. This was a golden opportunity for Wellesley. He had been watching the Maratha affairs with keen interest. He now realised that if he upheld the claim of Bajirao to the Masnad, Holkar and Shinde would automatically become second rate powers. Bajirao sounded the death knell of the Maratha power on 31st December, 1802 when he signed the Treaty of Vasai. Wellesley had caught another prey in his snare of subsidiary alliance system. It gave him a right for military intervention in Maratha territory. He had in fact anticipated this event. An army under Maj Gen Wellesley was assembled at Harihar under orders of Commander-in-Chief of Madras.

In conformity to the foregoing directions, the
Commander-in-Chief appointed a detachment from the main body of the army assembled at Harihar for the purpose of advancing into the Maratha territory. The detachment consisted of one regiment of European and three regiments of native cavalry, two regiments of European and six battalions of native infantry, with a due proportion of artillery, amounting altogether to 1500 cavalry and 6000 infantry. In addition the Mysore Horse, a regiment of the Raja of Mysore, accompanied the force.

Lord Wellesley ordered Maj Gen Wellesley to enter into Maharashtra and secure Poona before it could be destroyed by Amrutrao, the Peshwa's brother. This move was planned in detail. The subsidiary force stationed in Hyderabad marched towards the western border of that state in February. The force was accompanied by 6000 infantry and 9000 cavalry belonging to the Hyderabad army. The subsidiary force under the command of Lt. Colonel Stevenson consisted of six battalions of native infantry, two regiments of native cavalry, and sixteen field guns.

Wellesley had realised that the Maratha Chiefs would resent the action of the Peshwa in signing the subsidiary alliance treaty of Vasai. The English had already signed a treaty with the Gaikwad of Baroda. But Wellesley was certain that the Shinde, the Holkar and the Raja of Berar would not accept servitude without a fight.

When General Wellesley entered Poona, Holkar had with-
drawn and crossed the Narmada. These three Maratha Chiefs could react in two ways. They could either get together and march against the Peshwa thus coming in conflict with the Company's forces or attack the territory of Nizam to secure loot and create a diversion. Wellesley had, therefore, taken the precaution to safeguard the frontier of the Nizam. He also visualised that the army of General Wellesley would advance and join hands with that of Lt Col Stevenson if hostilities had to be declared against the Maratha Chiefs.

While political negotiations were going on with Daulatrao and the Raja of Berar, Wellesley was preparing for war. In his instructions to the Hon Maj Gen Wellesley dated 27th June 1803 he states: "In this event or in any other state of circumstances which may appear to you to require hostilities consistent with the general tenor of my instructions, you will employ the forces under your command, in the most active operation against Scindia or the Rajah of Berar, or against both according to your discretion." Special attention was to be paid to the destruction of artillery, all European arms and military stores belonging to Daulatrao Shinde. He was to try to take Shinde and Bhosle as prisoner of war.

Wellesley thus aimed at the entire reduction of Shinde's power. The Rajah of Berar posed no great threat by himself. In his instruction to the Resident of Poona dated 30th May, 1803, the Secretary to the Government had given Wellesley's appreciation of the Maratha Chiefs according to which the
Kahratta States could never become formidable to the British Government, unless the feudal chiefs united under the Peshwa’s leadership or if a revolution took place which should unite the command of resources of a large portion of the Mahratta territory under a powerful leader.

With Bajirao in his pocket Wellesley knew that there was no Sovereign power and the only enterprising chief was not Yeshwantrao Holkar under whom the other two would unite. Actually he nearly went wrong in his calculations. In response to the call of Daulatrao Shinde and Raghují Bhosle, Yeshwantrao Holkar did move south with his army. But a letter written by Daulatrao Shinde to Bajirao Peshwa in which he had explained a plot to make an outward show of friendship to Holkar until the end of the hostilities (after the war they were to wreak full vengeance upon him.)11 it was intercepted by Amrutrao and given to General Wellesley who promptly sent it to Yeshwantrao through Amrutrao. As a result Yeshwantrao went back leaving the others to their fate.

General Wellesley defeated Daulatrao Shinde’s army in the famous battle of Asai on 24th September, 1803 and Bhosle separated his forces. He was attacked and defeated by Lt Colonel Stevenson in the Battle of Adgaon on 29th November, 1803 and later again in the battle of Gawilgarh on 25th December, 1803.12

Lord Wellesley’s Grand Strategy for the defeat of the Maratha Chiefs consisted of a simultaneous advance from the
south by General Wellesley and from Kanpur towards Delhi by General Lake, the Commander-in-Chief. He had given specific instructions to both the field commanders to leave Holkar alone. General Wellesley instructed Lt Colonel Murray who was commanding the forces in Gujarat in his letter dated 13th October, 1803 to ensure that he did not interfere with Holkar who had not hitherto committed hostilities against the British. General Wellesley himself wrote a letter to Yeshwantrao Holkar dated 16th July, 1803 in which he assures Holkar that the Treaty of Bassein guaranteed security to all the great Maratha Jagirdars including the Holkar family. That being the case, whatever others do, he had asked Holkar to maintain peace with the British. Later, on 5th January, 1804 he congratulated Yeshwantrao for not joining Shinde and Bhosle and assured him that the British Government will not interfere with him. In fact, all misdemeanours of Holkar during this period were overlooked.

It proved indeed a master stroke of policy on the part of General Wellesley that he did not direct his attack against Holkar, but singled out Shinde and Bhosle for that purpose, preventing Holkar from joining the confederates. In fact, in the summer of 1803 Holkar collected tribute from many allies, which Gen Wellesley took no steps to prevent. Thus in the south, Wellesley's strategy was to separate Holkar from Shinde and Bhosle. As events turned out when Shinde was defeated, the defeat of Bhosle was a foregone
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conclusion.

Let us now see how Welleslev planned the campaign in the North. Firstly, both the campaigns were to start simultaneously. Shinde's army consisted of two separate corps, one under Daulatrao Shinde, which operated South of Narmada in early 1803 and the other, which guarded Shinde's Northern possessions. This corps was commanded by Perron, a French officer who had in fact, became a feudatory chief and appropriated the revenue of some of Shinde's districts to himself for years. His loyalty to Daulatrao Shinde was of doubtful nature. In fact, he was planning to go over to the British. A simultaneous advance would tie up Shinde's corps in the South while Perron would be facing General Lake. Thus mutual reinforcement were ruled out. Perron had five brigades, a total strength of 45 thousand men plus the best artillery establishments at Agra and Aligarh. The Governor General on 23rd June, 1803 defined and communicated to the Commander-in-Chief the following objects to be achieved in the event of war:

(a) To seize all territory belonging to Shinde between the Ganga and the Jamuna (Doab).

(b) To take the person of Shah Alam under own protection.

(c) To form alliance with the Rajput and other states for the purpose of excluding Shinde from the north, and

(d) to occupy Bundelkhand.
In a letter to Lt Gen Lake dated 28th June 1803, Lord Wellesley had warned that there were signs of hostilities in which Shinde and Bhosle would form a confederacy with a view to destroying the subsidiary Treaty signed by Bajirao II with the British. He was, therefore, asked to collect his troops, in the first instance, at the cantonments of Kanpur and Fatehgad. Gen Lake had 2211 British and 5615 native soldiers in Doab for this task.

The plan envisaged a main thrust by Gen Lake and subsidiary thrusts from Allahabad entering Bundelkhand and one from Saharanpur towards Rohilkhand each a brigade strength. Precautions were to be taken to secure Benaras, Kanpur, Fatehgad and Etawa.

The aim was the defeat of Perron. In the memorandum by Lt Gen Lake to the Marquess of Wellesley, Lake stated that the defeat of Perron would be given the highest priority as it would result in victory for the British. It was also anticipated that the moment British superiority was manifested Perron and his officers would court British protection, a prediction which later proved to be correct. Lake left Kanpur on 7th August, 1803 (early in August General Wellesley also opened his campaign) having already issued proclamations to Shinde's officers to come over to the British Services. When Lake attacked Aligarh, Perron with 15000 troops withdrew without firing a shot. A week later, he joined the British and went back to Europe. Same thing was repeated in
the attack on Delhi. On 14th September, the British took over the possession of the sightless Shah Alam II, thus achieving another task. The role of Shinde as the king maker was over. On 4th October, Agra surrendered and the Rajah of Bharatpur concluded a treaty of alliance. Shinde's army under French Officers was defeated in the Battle of Laswari on 1st November, 1803. Soon, Colonel Murray brought the war in Gujarat also to an end. Thus, the war which opened in August practically ended before the year 1803 expired and made the British supreme masters of India. However, General Wellesley was not going to make Daulatrao and Raghoji prisoners and sent them to Calcutta to beg peace at the feet of the Lord, as desired by Wellesley. He displayed a soldierly spirit of leniency and large heartedness towards the two defeated chiefs. He believed that he had made a better peace than the Governor General expected. The treaty of Devgaon with Bhosle, signed on 17th December 1803 and the treaty of Anjangaon Surji signed on 30th December, 1803 knocked out two opponents. Only Holkar now remained in the field. By concluding reasonable treaties, General Wellesley had removed the bitterness from the Maratha mind and that of Shinde and Bhosle, who were not likely to come to the aid of Holkar now. Wellesley managed to remove Amrutrao to Benaras, thus removing another likely opponent. The British provided Daulatrao a subsidiary force signing the Treaty of Burhanpur on 27th February 1804. This was a move for the
destruction of Yeshwantrao Holkar. On 5th January, 1804, Arthur Wellesley informed Holkar that Wellesley had been able to reestablish friendship with Shinde and Bhosle by signing treaties of friendship. He thanked Holkar for remaining neutral. The British had taken no action to prevent Holkar from plundering Ujjain in October, 1803 and collecting tributes from Jaipur. Since the Raja of Jaipur had agreed to maintain/force of the British, this was a challenge to them, but the British strategy was to destroy Shinde and Bhosle's power first. Holkar even tried to form a coalition of various Rajput and Maratha Chiefs, a fact known to Wellesley. It was only in January 1804 that pressure was increased on Holkar since Gen Lake was now free to deal with him.

On 16th April, 1804 Lord Wellesley directed Gen Lake and Gen Wellesley to start an immediate war against Holkar. Gen Lake ordered Colonel Monson to occupy and guard the passes of Bundi and Lakheri so as to obstruct the return of Holkar from Malwa north of these passes. But Monson failed miserably and was forced to retreat by Holkar upto Agra. In this retreat Col Monson lost all his guns and baggage. Ten officers and at least a thousand men lost their lives. This disastrous retreat of Monson inflicted a sizeable disgrace on the British Arms. Although Holkar fought like a tiger in the battles of Shamli, Deeg and Bharatpur, in the end he was defeated and had to sign a treaty at Rajpura that on 24th December, 1805.
Thus Lord Wellesley in utter defiance of the authorities of the home Government had been engaged in wars from the south to the north, had broken the power of prince after prince, completed a gigantic revolution and seated the Company on the throne of the Great Mughal and invested it with the responsibility of governing one half directly and controlling the other half of India. A shrewd and clear mind had worked a grand strategy in great detail, leaving nothing to chance. However, he did not receive any reward, as the British Government did not approve of his policy, he was called back.

ORGANISATIONS OF THE OPPOSING FORCES

Section I. Army of EIC at the end of the 19th Century

The East India Company possessed an army which was far superior to the native armies on the eve of the Second Anglo Maratha War. It had its origin in the guards or chowkidars employed to guard the factories. The need for a trained army was felt as the conditions in the surrounding areas started becoming more and more chaotic. Moreover the threat from the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese increased in the 19th Century. The Company's armies would therefore not only take part in the battles fought amongst the Indian princes but also defend the British possessions against European contestants.

Although the EIC was active in the east from the early 17th Century, its military forces were organised at Company level only for appropriately 150 years and functioned as a
type of police force for the protection of EIC mercantile establishments known as factories. When the French took Madras in September, 1746, the British land forces in that Presidency consisted of 200 Europeans and 2,000 Indians. The latter were not then under European officers and drill Sergents. The majority were still armed with bows and arrows.23

In Britain, the British army was organised on the pattern of Companies, Squadrons and Battalions. The same pattern was adopted in India and Companies of Sepoys were raised. These Indian soldiers were dressed, disciplined and armed in the European style and were known as "Sepoys". These forces were commanded by British officers. In this respect the Company followed the example of the French who raised native infantry.24

The EIC army is said to have begun with the arrival in Madras in January 1748 of Major Stringer Lawrence. He was nearly 51 years old. He combined the seven independent EIC companies of European soldiers into a single battalion later known as the Madras Europeans (Still later the Madras Fusiliers --102nd Foot--1st battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers).25 Lawrence began organising, training, disciplining and arming of Indian soldiers after the British fashion under European officers and sergeants (drill instructors) although these units did not grow to battalion size until 1749. The Bengal and Bombay Presidencies followed the lead of Madras in regard to both Europeans and Native battalions.
Each Presidency raised its battalion. They were designated the Bombay Native Infantry, the Madras Native Infantry and the Bengal Native Infantry. The present day Indian Army has its origin in these battalions. In 1748 companies of artillery were raised and a unified command was set up under a Commander-in-Chief. However, the three armies differed from each other in many respects. Till 1756 the Madras Army consisted of European soldiers, while the Bombay had a few independent companies. The Bengal army had only 500 Sepoys.

During the second half of the 18th Century, Madras army was reorganised in battalions each 1,000 strong. Each battalion was divided in ten companies of 100 each. In 1796 a full colonel was placed in charge of a group of two battalions. The honour of raising the first regiment of Cavalry in Madras goes to Sir Henry Cosby who in 1768 raised a regiment for the Nawab of Arcot. This regiment was absorbed in the Bombay’s service in 1784.

By 1796 the East India Company had a force of 1,300 Europeans and 24,000 Indian troops stationed in Madras. There was a force of similar size in Bengal; while 9,000 troops were stationed in Bombay area. The Company recruited both Hindus and Muslims. The Bengal Native Infantry had two thirds Hindus and one third Muslims. The percentage of Muslims in the cavalry and the artillery was however high. The Bombay Bombay Native Infantry recruited Marathas both from Deon and
Konkan. There were Muslims from Surat and Bombay. The Cavalry and Artillery of the Madras Army consisted of men from Arcot. In this army the officers belonged to the Muslim class, while the rank and file were Hindus. The Madras Infantry recruited men from Telangana.²⁹

In the Deccan, Russel's Brigade was famous. The Nizam's Reformed Horse was the best cavalry in the Deccan. The Kumaon Regiment of the present originates from the erstwhile Hyderabad Regiment. The cap badge displays the Russel's Lion even today. The infantry and the cavalry was grouped together as Hyderabad Contingent.

There was not much to choose as far as fighting qualities of the soldier were concerned. However, British officers who had their esprit de corps believed that their soldiers were better than others. By 1796 the number of European officers in the Sepoy Regiments was increased.

**European Soldiers**

The European element in India can be grouped under two categories: Units of the British Army stationed in India and units of the army raised by the East India Company. The Royal troops received higher scales of pay and allowances and had more privileges as compared to those in the Company's service.³⁰

**Subsidiary and Contingent troops**

The Subsidiary Alliance System gave additional resources to the EIC. A direct result of this system on the army was
that the strength increased considerably. These subsidiary forces although paid by the native states were considered to be a part of the Company's army and were available for operations. They were paid from the revenues of districts ceded to the Company by the native states. Although their primary role was to afford protection to the State concerned from outside aggression, they fought only with the concurrence of the Company. In addition, the native States also raised their own state forces, who were to serve the Company in an emergency. Most of these units were commanded by British officers who naturally owed their loyalty to their own country and had hardly any sympathy for those who paid them.

Cavalry

The Cavalry under the EIC consisted of three elements: (a) the King's Regiments of Cavalry, (b) the Native Cavalry Regiments commanded by British officers and (c) State Cavalry which was available for war according to the Subsidiary Alliance System which was mostly commanded by Indian officers.

The first King's Regiment of Cavalry to come to India was the 23rd, later designated the 19th Light Dragoons. This unit arrived in Madras without horses in October 1782 and for 16 years was the only King's Cavalry Regiment in India. It proved extremely useful to the wars against Tipoo Sultan between 1790 and 1792; which lead to the raising of Native Cavalry Regiments. Formerly the Company had Native troops or Companies. James Stevenson was the first Madras Cavalry
After some experimenting, the regimental organization was standardized at nineteen European—two of them drill sergents and 492 natives, divided into three squadrons of two troops each. A troop at full strength contained two or three British officers, three Indian officers, eight Indian NCOs, a trumpeter, a water carrier and seventy privates or troopers. Where terrain would permit, troops or half troops carried out complicated manoeuvres when the regiment was training.

The cavalry had both a reconnaissance role and an offensive role. Troops or squadrons were sent on broad re­cess and went deep in enemy territories. They were the eyes and ears of the commander in the field. Cavalry protected the flanks of the infantry in a set-piece attack. When it was used in the offensive role, it charged at controlled speed at a trot and the sowars or the cavalrymen charged with their sabres drawn, riding thigh touching thigh, which presented a solid front and was enough to strike terror in the hearts of the enemy infantry or gunners who fled. Sometimes the enemy did not even wait for the charge to go through. However, there was at least one instance when the Maratha gunners not only withstood a charge and fell flat feigning death and turned their guns about as soon as the horses went past and fired at the cavalry making the situation very precarious. This was in the Battle of Assai which will be described later. If the terrain permitted the cavalry charged in echelons of
squadrions, with the troops adopting the line formation, two
deep with an interval of about fifteen yards between the
ranks. A 500 man regiment formed in three squadrions abreast
formation with gaps between squadrions and troops occupied a
300 meter front. Sometimes when the enemy was disorganised
and the aim was to scatter him, the single line formation
was adopted. Wellesley charged Dondiah Wagh with four regi-
ments in line formation. Care was always taken to sandwich
native cavalry regiments between the King's Cavalry Regiments,
so that direction and control was maintained while charging.
Sometimes the commander failed to re-establish his control,
as happened in the Battle of Assai, after the charge was over
and regiments disappeared in the blue, taking a wide detour,
leaving the flank of the infantry temporarily defenceless.

The question of provisioning mounts for the cavalry was
always a problem as we did not breed horses in India. In
1782 there were not enough horses in Madras sufficiently strong
to bear the Europeans. The light dragoons were effective
partly because of their discipline and training, but in part
because they and their imported horses were physically more
powerful than those of their opponents. The 2IC Native
Cavalry proved superior because they had developed more strength
and skill with their weapons. But the heavy horses were no
good for light reconnaissance and at screening or at operat-
ing against Maratha bargirs mounted on light fast ponies.

The cavalry unit provided by the Raja of Mysore under
the Subsidiary Alliance, was commanded by Bishnappa. It earned its laurels with Wellington in the Second Anglo Maratha War. Bishnappa did valuable service in the field with his Siledars who furnished their own light horses.

From 1798 Cavalry regiments also had pairs of field guns assigned to them.

**Artillery**

The English armies proved far superior to the native armies mainly because they possessed well trained and well equipped artillery. As compared to the native guns, the English guns were lighter and hence mobile. The English artillery had both guns and Howitzers. As the Howitzers are high trajectory weapons they were useful during seiges and static warfare. The English artillery was equipped with 6 pounder, 12 pounder and 18 pounder guns. The maximum range of these guns was 400 yards. The heavy artillery consisted of 24 pounders with a limited range of 250 yards. These guns were primarily used for blowing a breach in the ramparts of the forts during a siege operation. The artillery possessed five and a half inch and 8 inch howitzers. The mortars were of three calibres—10 inch, 8 inch, and 5 1/2 inch.

The EIC artillery organization in each Presidency was rudimentary until the middle of the eighteenth century. Companies of artillery were formed in each Presidency on 17th June, 1748. That in Bengal, was reformed to fight at Plassey in 1756. The twelve British pieces used in this battle may
have been naval pieces on travelling siege carriages which were manned by personnel most of whom had no previous field experience. The field guns of the Muller type appeared later, although the pieces themselves were mostly assigned to infantry battalions in actual campaigns, or even to the smallest garrisons.

The artillery personnel in the upper grades i.e. officers, NCOs and gunners—were almost all Europeans. Gun lascars were, of course, Indians, but normally they only handled drag ropes and performed minor functions during firing, when pieces were assigned to single infantry units, e.g. artillery officers did not accompany their guns. The artillery came directly under infantry officers who were not gunners.

Artillery companies of ten guns were often assigned intact to five battalions operating together. This was something of a dual responsibility. The individual two-gun sections assigned to a battalion would have been responsible to the commanding officer of that unit in action but to the artillery unit for day to day operation. Both Wellesley and Stevenson had chiefs of artillery who undoubtedly kept a close check on all artillery pieces and personnel, when their respective armies regardless of their temporary assignments to other units.

Major General Sir Jasper Nicolls K.C.B. gives detailed information about British artillery of those days. According to him a park consisted of four iron 12 pounders, four
brass ditto, six or eight 6 pounders and two 5\frac{1}{2} inch howitzers, with a large number of tumbrils, ammunition, forage and store carts. To each corps of cavalry and infantry a brigade of guns was attached; the 19th Dragoons, 6 pounders, native cavalry, 5 pounders; the former drawn by six horses, the latter by four, all mounted. Their lumber boxes did not contain many rounds, and they were frequently out of order, that it would have been better to have had but half the number of guns, 6 pounders, with a large proportion of ammunition and not attached to Corps.

The infantry had all 6 pounders, but of different weight and length; the Madras guns were old and short, the heavy guns had twelve bullocks, the others ten. The tumbrils were heavy and were drawn by twelve bullocks. Some tumbrils had iron axles, others teak axle trees, the latter, when well seasoned, proved best.

The iron 12 pounders were drawn by forty four bullocks, nine sets formed abreast, and four pairs of leaders. To each gun there was a spare bullock, to the larger ones, more. To each pair of iron 12 pounders an elephant was attached, which assisted them in their draught in very sandy, mirey steep or otherwise difficult part of the road. They pushed the guns with the greatest ease, easing the cattle of the weight. They used to follow the first gun, applying their aid without direction, when necessary, and then falling back on the side until the other had passed, when they followed in their place.
The well trained elephants used to chastise the bullocks with their trunks when they did not pull heartily. To the smallest cart there were four bullocks.

However, the artillery though a great asset in the open battle fields of Ahmednagar, Assai and in Northern Indian plains slowed down the army's move in hilly areas and proved a definite handicap in the battle of Gawilgad.

Artillery Organization and Tactics

A company of artillery consisted of five two-gun units, each commanded by a sergeant with a corporal, two European gunners and a fairly large number of Indians; these units were assigned to infantry battalions. As these subunits served many miles away from each other, they were totally dependent upon the battalion.

Field artillery tactics in India were normally based on the proper employment of one or more two-gun sections. Wellesley made no effort to get any sort of grand battery into operation. In battle each battalion had the support of its two 6 pounders which gave the infantry more firepower, especially within the range of grape; they also gave the intangible advantages associated with artillery in India. Without its guns, a battalion was always subject to the near approach and consequent harrassment from enemy cavalry and rocketeers. The two 6 pounders gave a battalion enough long range punch to inspire respect, this pair of pieces could also clear jungle which might or might not be occupied by enemy infantry. EIC
gunners were genuine professionals and skillful in handling their weapons.

Seige artillery in India was competently handled because both officers and gunners were skillful veterans. Most European soldiers took their profession seriously. Artillery men learned how to handle guns both in the field and against fortifications. The pieces were different, but the personnel were the same. The British artillery at the seiges of Ahmednagar and Gawilgad did professional jobs with far less material. Lake's tragic failure before Bharatpur came from improper planning, poor logistics and inferior leadership during the first assault, rather than deficient artillery skill.

Field pieces could also be employed against fortifications 'to open the gates', a technique in which pieces were loaded with powder only. Blackiston says of the attack on the pettah of Ahmednagar, "the artillery officer (in charge of the field gun so used) had been firing shot at it, instead of running up his gun and blowing it open."36

Wellesley wrote on 14th October 1805, "I think that General Lake's capture of Alizghur is one of the most extraordinary feats which I have heard of in this country. I never attacked a fort that I did not attempt the same thing, viz. to blow open the gates, but I have never succeeded. I have always taken them by escalade, which appears to have been impossible in this instance."37
Infantry

Infantry was the predominant arm in India. In order to understand combat which took place in Wellesley's time it is necessary to show how the foot soldiers were organised and how they moved and fought. Both King's and EIC infantry battalions were organised in the same manner. Strength depended on casualties, health and replacements from England for King's units. Native battalions could be recruited more easily if suitable replacements were available locally, but frequently they were not. Throughout his military career Wellesley preferred to have understrength units rather than reduce quality by adding untrained, undisciplined personnel. Full roster strength was from 900 to 1,000 but numbers below this were common. During Wellesley's time there was at least one instance of an EIC battalion which had 1,600 men in it.

The first King's regiment was sent to India in 1754. It was then known as Allderton's but was to become 39th Foot.

The second regiment to go out to India was the 84th Foot; this was raised by Coote especially for service in the East. The contribution of King's Regiments to the British effort in India after Plassey was considerable. There were at least seventeen of them present in India during the Maratha war, although some were below strength.

Each battalion, regardless of size was divided into ten companies, two of which were the flank companies. In King's battalion, the flank companies were the grenadier company,
which was normally on the right of the line, and the light company on the left. The better soldiers were usually, although not always, in these flank companies. The bigger men were grenadiers; the smaller, more active soldiers were generally in the light company, so long as they qualified in other ways. To some extent these flank companies had special, or perhaps additional training. As they were detached from the rest of the battalion, they were able to operate more efficiently alone than the other eight line companies.

There were no light companies in Wellesley's EIC battalions, both flank companies were grenadiers. In his opinion, natives were poor skirmishers. Even with the best sepoys, control, which was of paramount importance, was not possible when units were spread out. 38

During Wellesley's time Native Infantry regiments normally consisted of two battalions, but these units served separately more often than together. Even as late as 1793 an EIC battalion was normally commanded by a captain and had only an European adjutant, an assistant surgeon, and six or eight subalterns attached to it. 39 By 1799, the number of European officers had increased to about twentyseven per battalion at full strength, a condition rarely achieved. The normal rank of a battalion commander was Lieutenant-Colonel, although Captain Vesey/in charge of the Madras Native Infantry for months in 1803 and 1804.
Both King's and EIC infantry battalions habitually formed in lines two ranks deep; the unit of manoeuvre was generally a half company. A battalion column was normally twenty half companies, one behind the other. The extreme width of a half company at full strength was about twenty-five men shoulder to shoulder, a little less than fifty feet, but too wide for any roads in those days. British infantry in India did not use roads except in unusual circumstances, or at least did not confine itself to them on the march. The length of a battalion column varied with the march. The length of a battalion column varied with the distance between half companies; these units did not march one behind the other with only a single pace separating them. If the entire battalion was likely to have to go from column into line just by having each unit wheel ninety degrees, the individual units were at full deploying distance. This meant roughly fifteen yards of open space between half companies.

Forty ranks of soldiers, two in each half company, with nineteen gaps of fifteen yards between each half company would have occupied about 215 yards in depth, too much for compact strength. Half and quarter distance columns, with eight and four yards separating the half companies, were more common and obviously led to shorter columns.

Close order drill was then the very essence of infantry tactics. Battalions manoeuvred on the battlefield precisely as they did on parade. By the time the Wellesleys arrived in
India, Colonel Dundas had standardised these procedures. Both King’s and 61C battalions followed the system known as the Nineteen Movements; by using them infantry could go through all their evolutions precisely and without confusion.

In battle, British infantry fought in line; enemy cavalry in India was not sufficiently strong to make squares necessary. A two-rank line allowed maximum fire power, because both ranks could fire at the same time because the muskets of the rear rank were long enough to extend well past the faces of the men in front. Advancing with a whole battalion in line over a considerable distance has been always difficult, but it was done in India as well as it ever had been in military history. Malavelley, Assaye and Argaum were won by British infantry battalions advancing in line. At Malavelley and Assaye, Wellington’s battalions advanced in echelons; at Argaum, they went forward independently.

British infantry in India created more enemy casualties with bullets than with bayonets. Both King’s and 61C battalions were good with their muskets because they practised with them. But the ever-present threat of British bayonets supported the firepower; one without the other would have been less effective.

Assaults on fortified places were less formal than battles. When possible, a portion of the British infantry engaged would cover the other portion with fire. But generally the first few men who mounted a breach or got over a wall had
to use their personal weapons to kill some of the defenders and overawe the rest. Bayonets and swords wielded by men confident of their skill, strength and ability to support each other were more important than bullets from muskets and pistols, although undoubtedly maximum effectiveness was reached when shock and firepower were combined.

Battles and assaults were, of course, of paramount importance. We should not forget, however, the almost endless series of small infantry actions in India--fought to protect camps, convoys, depots of boats and the like. Wellesley's emphasis was always on maintaining discipline and order, while taking advantage of all favourable circumstances. A single company which could continue to manoeuvre, fire and use its bayonets when necessary could defeat easily a thousand semi-organized enemies.

Engineers and Pioneers

A Chief Engineer was appointed at each Presidency who during his normal tours collected military intelligence which included resources, population, roads, facilities for defence, water, etc. There was also a Department of Pioneers. The pioneers prepared roads for the army and the artillery. They constructed bridges and threw up earthworks for the guns. They worked under the most adverse conditions and quite often under enemy fire. Sometimes prisoners were employed as coolies.

The Sappers and Miners of the Pioneer Department were
given proper training and guidance by the British officers. The present day Bombay Engineering Group, Bengal Engineering Group and Madras Engineering Group have originated from Bombay Sappers and Miners, Bengal Sappers and Miners and Madras Sappers and Miners. The sappers and miners rendered valuable aid during the seiges of Bharatpur and Asai.

**Department of Survey**

Intimate knowledge of ground is very essential for planning and execution of military operations. In India cartography was unknown. The British made a beginning by establishing a department of Survey under the Quarter Master General. The British officers had to learn the geography of their area of operations. They also collected local intelligence which had military value. Prior to the commencement of the Second Maratha War the Quarter Master General sent a survey report to the Adjutant General with copies to important officers.

**Intercommunications**

A telegraphic committee was formed under the Quarter Master General which was the equivalent of present day Post and Telegraph Department. All the important Capitals of the Maratha States were connected by postal routes. The 'runners' also acted as spies and reported their observations. The Mankaras usually travelled on foot from stage to stage. When speed was essential 'Gândani Swârs' Camel riders were employed. This regular Dak system improved the administrative efficiency
of the Company.

System of Collection of Intelligence

The English had established a very good network of spies who obtained political and military intelligence to the minutest detail. Bribes were offered and accepted on a large scale by all grades of officials in every walk of life. Elsewhere details of steps taken by Lord Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington to seduce various Maratha and Mughal Sardars have been given. The residents at various courts established a network of spies and regular reports were sent on the most secret activities going on at the courts of the Peshwa and other chiefs. This information was collected and collated by the Country Correspondence Officer. Elphinstone eventually won on the excellence of his espionage. The Peshwa was aware of the vast net that Elphinstone had woven round him. He had employed over 175 spies whose salary came to Rs.2,12,500.45

Logistics

By the beginning of the 19th Century, the British army had developed a commissariat. It was the duty of the Quarter Master General to meet the logistic demands of the army. He had the survey department under him, which helped him in carrying out an administrative appreciation prior to the commencement of operations. He could assess the availability of supplies, fodder, water, labour and animal transport in the battle area. A proper liaison existed between civil and military authorities and also between the various branches of
Army HQ such as Adjutant General and Accountant General. As a result, the operations were backed by logistic cover.

The daily requirement of rations was met by the Banjaras, a nomadic group of traders who purchased commodities from the villages, carried them on the backs of bullocks in large convoys which sometimes exceeded 50 to 60 thousand animals. They established their own camps in the near vicinity of the army and defended themselves with swords and lances against dacoits and looters. The Banjaras were impartial in that they sold commodities to both sides in a conflict and kept aloof from the war.

The forts were normally stocked up prior to the commencement of monsoons. They held stocks for 3 months or more. A system of contracts was slowly being introduced in certain areas. The armies also had a large number of camp followers who established bazars in camps.

Supply Depots

The army had three main supply depots, Fort William at Calcutta, Fort St. George at Madras and the Port of Bombay. Stores for these were either brought from England or locally procured. Guns and mortars were imported while gun powder was manufactured at Allahabad and Issapore. Besides these, there were depots at important places like Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Cuttack, etc. Supply bases were also established in Gujarat and Hyderabad which were subsidiary states.

There was a gun factory at Kanpur and an ordnance depot
at Amraoti. Horses were imported from Arabia and England. Local ponies were procured from Kathniawar and Gujarat. A horse stud farm was opened at Dinapur in Bihar.\(^{48}\)

**Medical Department**

The East India Company's army had a Medical Department\(^ {49}\) and a periodical medical check up of soldiers was carried out. Superintending surgeons were appointed to military units. Health and Hygiene was given a lot of attention. Water supply and grains were kept free from pollution and kitchens were kept absolutely clean.

The medical officers were allowed to purchase the medical stores required by them, by going in for contracts which led to malpractices.

**Discipline**

There was greater discipline in the British Army due to its system of organisations, than in the armies of the Indian prices. Punishments were given to the defaulters though there seems to have been a distinction between the European and the native soldiers. This was done perhaps to create fear into the habitually relaxed character of the Indians and also to maintain a distance between them. Punishments for the native deserters were severe.\(^ {50}\)

The British officers tried to avoid destruction of public property as far as possible during a campaign, though there were many occasions when damage to public property was inflicted by the Company's soldiers.
The Organisation and Tactics of the Native Armies of the Shindes.

Unlike the armies of the SIC, the native armies were not a homogeneous, disciplined force. Since the Maratha power itself at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, was a loose Confederacy, the armies were also independent forces, recruited and paid by the respective Maratha Chieftains. Thus in the North, there was a large army of the Shindes. It can be broadly divided into two main categories. Forces raised and trained by that able Frenchman de Boigne under orders of Mahadaji Shinde. De Boigne had raised sixteen battalions of infantry. As he had been allotted territory for their maintenance, he practically became an independent Chieftain but remained under the Shindes. Other forces of their army were commanded by Maratha Sardars of varied ability and courage. The soldiers owed their allegiance to the Shindes and not to the Peshwa. This army consisted of cavalry, artillery and infantry. The army was accompanied by thousands of bullocks, camels, elephants and carts to carry stores, rations and equipment. The Banjaras performed the role of the Commissariat. The ranks included both Hindus and Muslims. There were Jats, Rohillas, Bundellas, Rajputs and Arabs in addition to the Marathas. There was a large proportion of Europeans both in the officer cadre and in the ranks. The Maratha preferred to serve in the Cavalry and his second choice was the infantry. But he was averse to service in the artil-
lery which was manned by Europeans, Muslims, Christians and some Hindus from North India. The guns were mostly of foreign origin, of mixed calibres and often discarded by the Europeans as unserviceable. As compared to the Cavalry and Infantry, however, the gunners proved to be steady in action and many died in action along side their guns, rather than deserting them. The Cavalry was a predatory force, good in scouting and shadowing the enemy. They pounced on the enemy whenever they found him weak in strength or not alert. They moved well both during day and night.

The Infantry which was trained and kept as standing army by the Shindees, under European officers was a disciplined force but there were thousands of others who lacked esprit de Corps. They were indifferently equipped and poorly led. Many were not paid for months and lived on loot.

On the 29th of August, 1803, Wellesley was warned by Colonel Collins who was the late resident at Shindee's court, known by the nickname King Collins and compared to a "monkey dressed up for Bartholomew Fair", this shrewd observer said, "I tell you, General, as to their Cavalry, you may ride over them whenever you meet them; but their infantry and guns will astonish you." This just about sums up the comparative standards of the three arms of the Shinde army. De Boigne, was best known and most successful of the European professional soldiers who raised regular battalions for the Maratha Chiefs. He began his career with them in 1781 and was a competent
oflcer of courage and high professional ability. He worked very hard in India and spent his days much like Arthur Wellesley. In 1797 he returned to Europe at the age of forty-six with a fortune of £80,000. For the support of his troops, the Shindees had given him territory.

Raymond’s army in Hyderabad and Ferron’s army in northern Hindoostan, employed Frenchmen. But there were other Europeans also in the service of the Indian princes. A large number of British officers and men served in native armies. Colonel J.P. Boyd, who served the Peshwa, was an American. Some of these officers, including Englishmen, continued to serve Shinde and Holkar against their countrymen in 1803 and 1804 in spite of generous offers from the Governor-General to abandon their employers.

A regular battalion in Wellesley’s time consisted of about forty native officers and 700 enlisted men. They were organised on the EIC pattern and were supposed to follow roughly the same tactics. There were two main differences. First, a battalion, although slightly smaller than a similar EIC unit, had five rather than two field pieces, four 9 pounder guns and a 5.5 inch howitzer as well. A full complement of artillery ammunition consisted of 300 round shot and 100 cartridges of grape for each gun. There were 50 explosive stone shells and 50 charges of grape for the howitzer.

The other major difference was the extremely small number of Europeans in a regular battalion. Two white or partly
white officers and six 'Portuguese' gunners were about the maximum per battalion. Perron, who took over from De Boigne and finally lost to Lake, is said to have run 40 battalions and 380 guns with only 300 Europeans, including those supervising the factories for small arms, cannons and ammunition.

Four to eight Regular Battalions were organised into brigades or company level and apparently some additional irregular infantry as well as the inevitable swarm of camp followers of all Indian armies. In good units morale was high. Indian soldiers were often more attached to their European leaders than to the Indian princes who paid them.

In 1800 the infantry establishment of Nolkar, Shinde and the Peshwa were principally officered by Europeans, three fourths of whom were natives of France. 51

Leaving Perron in the North, Baulatrao Shinde had moved South with about 40,000 men and 80 guns. His regular infantry and artillery had been brought to a high standard of efficiency, but they were taught European tactics which was a handicap. The Maratha soldier was a born guerilla and had so far fought with the Nimbals making full use of the terrain and relying on speed and daring. The main arm was cavalry. The Maratha rode his pony well. The infantry was incidental.

However, now the whole pattern was changed. It was the infantry which took the brunt of the attack and the cavalry played a secondary role of recce and flanking movements. Even General Wellesley remarks that the Maratha nation would have
been more formidable to the British Government, if they had never had a European as an infantry soldier, in their service; and had carried on their operations, in the manner of the original Marathas, only by means of Cavalry.52

The military spirit of the nation had been destroyed by their reliance on foreign trained infantry and artillery which was vulnerable to British cavalry charges and accurate gunfire from guns having longer ranges. Once the Maratha artillery was destroyed, the infantry left the battlefield and the cavalry became ineffective against the British cavalry. Placing reliance on infantry at the cost of cavalry was a grave error made by the Maratha army. The light cavalry and infantry could not stand the well lead charges of heavy cavalry as was witnessed in the Battle of Asalai. The artillery and infantry of the Maratha Army proved somewhat of an encumbrance, detracting from the mobility which rendered their predatory horsemen so famous in the days gone by.

Armies of the Raja of Berar

The Army of Raghunath Bhosle, the Raja of Berar was another force to contend with in the south. He had mustered 20,000 horse, 6,000 infantry and 40 guns. We know far less of Bhosle’s regular battalions than those in the employ of Shinde and Holkar. He did not have many European professional soldiers in his army. He had two types of infantry, the older irregular units and the new battalions with guns assigned to each, similar to those of Shinde. The latter were commanded
Both Shinde and Bhosle depended on forts for static and defence. The forts of Ahmednagar, Asni, Gawilgarh, Asirgarh were strongly held by permanent garrisons who generally fought hard to defend them. The armies in the field retreated to or set forth from these firm bases. (Please see Table on page 58). However, Wellesley knew that the army of Daulatrao Shinde, who were taught by their French instructors, the new revolutionary tactics of using masses in dense columns under cover of intensive artillery bombardment, constituted a more formidable force than any encountered in the Indian battles of the past.

**Armies of Holkar**

The third powerful element in the Maratha Confederacy was the Holkar. However, unfortunately for reasons explained in Chapter I, he did not join Shinde and Bhosle in presenting a solid front to the British. His large army, consisted principally of Cavalry. He practically lived in the saddle. His army consisted of 20,000 horse, 12,000 foot and 107 guns. He too had Europeans in his service. But he was a formidable personality and a born leader. He did not hesitate to behead three Europeans when he discovered that they were being disloyal.

The best among the Maratha armies appear to be the Arabs, Rajputs and Mohamedans and these alone generally offered serious resistance. The Arabs were especially good soldiers, particularly in the defence of forts, when they displayed
remarkable valour; they were at the time employed in all 
Native States. An officer who frequently fought against the 
Arabs wrote as follows in 1720:

"There are perhaps no troops in the world that will make 
a stouter or more determined stand to their posts than the 
Arabs. They were entirely unacquainted with military evolu­
tion and undisciplined; but every Arab has a pride and a heart 
of his own, that never forsakes him as long as he has legs 
to stand on. They are naturally brave and possess the greater 
coolness and quickness of sight, hardy and fierce through 
habit and bred to the use of the matchlock from their boyhood, 
they attain a precision and a skill in the use of it that 
would almost exceed belief, bringing down or wounding the 
smallest object at a considerable distance, and not unfre­
quently birds with a single bullet. They are generally armed 
with a matchlock, a couple of swords, with three or four 
daggers stuck in front of their belt, and a shield. On common 
occasions of attack and defence they fire but one bullet; 
but when hard pressed on the breach, they drop in two, three 
or four at a time, from their mouths, always carrying in 
them eight to ten bullets, which are of a small size. We 
may calculate upon the whole number of Arabs in the service 
of the Peshwa and the Berar Raja at the utmost as 6,000 men, 
a loose and undisciplined body, but every man of them a 
tough and hardy soldier. It was to the Arabs alone that these 
Princes looked and placed their dependence on. Their own
troops fled and abandoned them, seldom or ever daring to meet our smallest detachment.

"Nothing can exceed the horror and alarm with which some of our native troops view the Arabs. They will meet and fight them in the open day under their own officers; but if attacked at night, if detached from their European officers, and even under their native officers or employed in the defence of a post against a sortie or other attack, they quickly become panic-stricken, and fly in every direction." 55

Organization and Tactics in Native Armies

The Regular Battalions in the various Native armies were strongly influenced by European tactics, organisation and discipline, other units were modelled on them to a lesser degree.

The Mysore Cavalry under Bhishnapan Pundit had no European officers or drill sergeants, but was remarkably proficient in light cavalry role of recce and patrolling. They were not suitable for delivering a controlled charge on a battlefield. The Maratha cavalry could not apply shock by means of discipline and momentum either. They were superb horsemen, however, and some of them were fair swordsmen. They performed remarkably well against Colonel Ronson.

Native infantry without any European influence tended to be better on the defensive. It could not manoeuvre in the open or attack effectively in daylight. As Wellesley said, the Maratha were able to choose extremely strong positions,
take them efficiently and hold them well. Even the King's 74th with Orrock's pickets in front was unable to take the village of Asai and the Jats were able to defeat Lake at Bharatpur. Offensively, Indian forces were at their best in irregular actions like night surprises against British forces that thought themselves far removed from danger. Another type of native offensive that proved effective was the cutting off and surrounding a British force. Defensive lines could be advanced to such an extent as to encircle a better organised enemy. This fear caused the Monson fiasco.

Wellesley warned Stevenson that 'he would be attacked in his camp'. The Maratha cavalry had an unusual facility for surrounding and cutting off an enemy with greater combat potential.

Wellesley's decision to attack at Asai may have been caused in part by his own fear of a situation like this. The Marathas employed tens of thousands of horsemen who surrounded enemy camps and destroyed them if the enemy lost his head and/or lacked manoeuvrable strength in the field. But the cavalry alone could accomplish very little against even a much smaller force of integrated arms if it could also move and fight cohesively.

In a letter to Colonel Murray, Wellesley wrote: "There are two modes in which the Marathas carry on their operations. They operate upon supplies by means of their cavalry; and after they have created a distress in the enemy's camp, which
obliges the army to commence a retreat, they press upon it with all their infantry and their powerful artillery. Their opponent being pressed for provisions, is obliged to hurry his march, and they have no fear of being attacked. They follow him with their cavalry in his marches, and surround and attack him with their infantry and cannon when he halts, and he can scarcely escape from them.

"That therefore which I consider absolutely necessary in an operation against the Mahratta power (indeed in any military operation in India) is such a quantity of provisions in your camp, as will enable you to command your own movements, and to be independent of your magazines, at least for that length of time which may be necessary to fulfill the object for which you may be employed."

"The Mahrattas have long boasted that they could carry on a predatory war with us. They will find that mode of warfare not very practicable at the present moment. At all events, supposing that they can carry their design into execution, unless they find the British soldiers and officers to be in the same corrupted and enervated state in which their predecessors found the Mussulmans in the last century they cannot expect much success from it. A system of predatory war must have some foundation is strength of some kind or other. But when the chiefs avow that they cannot meet us in the field; when they are obliged to send the principal strength of their armies, upon which the remainder depend, to a dis-
tance, lest it should fall into our hands, they must have little knowledge of human nature if they suppose that their lighter bodies will act and still less of the British officers if they imagine that, with impunity, they can do the smallest injury, provided only that the allies, who are to be first exposed to their attacke, are true to their own interests. 57

GENERAL WELLESLEY'S CAMPAIGN IN THE DSCCAN (1802-1803)

Yeshwant Rao Holkar attacked Poona and defeated the joint armies of Peshwa Bajirao II and Daulatrao Shinde on 25th October 1802, in the Battle of Hadapsar. Bajirao ran away from the battlefield to Vasai and sought the protection of the English. The Treaty of Vasai was signed on 31st December, 1802 and the Governor General gave orders that Bajirao would be reinstated in Poona with the help of the East India Company's army.

Keeping in view the state of affairs at Pune, a force, 20,000 strong, under General Stuart had been concentrated at Harihar for the effectual defence of the British possessions during the convulsed state of the Maratha Empire and the eventual establishment of a subsidiary force at home, under the execution of the subsidiary alliance concluded with the Peshwa.

In March 1803, General Wellesley was placed in command of this force by General Stuart with the following instructions:
(a) To encourage the southern Jagirdars to declare in favour of the Peshwa's cause; to employ every means to reconcile their mutual animosity and to induce them to unite their forces with the advancing detachment for the purpose of reestablishing the Peshwa's government.

(b) To proceed to Miraj and form a junction with the Peshwa, or should that measure be deemed inadvisable on the part of the Peshwa, with his subordinates and troops as might assemble there.

(c) To open communications and form a junction with the subsidiary force under Col. Stevenson, and the contingent of the Nizam.

(d) To proceed eventually to Poona and establish an order of things in that Capital favourable to the return of the Peshwa and the attainment of the ends of the treaty.

In pursuance of these directions, Wellesley left Harihar on 9th March, 1803 on his advance to Poona, and was joined by a number of Maratha Chiefs. He contacted Colonel Stevenson on 15th April. In his appeal to the Marathas he said:

"The Peshwa Bajirao has sought the friendship and protection of the Company's Government. It is at his invitation that we are entering the Maratha country as friends. We have no desire to harm or hate anybody. We call upon the Kamatidars and all officials to join us cordially. We are stationing our guards to see that no damage is done to any
peaceful members of the society. Whatever provision of grain and other articles is needed for us, will be strictly paid for according to current rates."

Wellesley with his cavalry and the Maratha horse made a rapid march to Pune, covering sixty miles in 24 hours and entered the city on 20th April. Yeshwantrao had installed Amritrao as Peshwa but when he heard that Wellesley was approaching Pune, he left Pune on 13th March, 1803 in order to avoid a clash of arms and camped at Chandwad. He had also received a veiled threat from Colonel Close. Without the support of Yeshwantrao, Amritrao, who had been installed as a Peshwa became powerless and he retired to Junner.

General Wellesley now set about restoring Bajirao to his Peshwaship at Pune. He sent intimation of his arrival to Colonel Close at Vasai who immediately left with Bajirao for Pune. On 13th May, Bajirao made his entry in Pune accompanied by lot of pomp and show. Daulatrao Shinde who was a friend of Bajirao remained at Burhanpur. Lord Wellesley had earlier written to Daulatrao Shinde and Haghujji Bhosale which prevented a coalition. General Wellesley now offered protection to Amritrao and a jahat in of 3 lacs. Thus he was won over. He performed a valuable service to the British when he intercepted a letter written by Daulatrao Shinde to Bajirao in which he had proposed that Holkar should be asked to join the coalition by giving him false promises and once the threat of the English is removed he could be destroyed.
General Wellesley was shown this letter and he asked Amritrao to take it to Holkar. Holkar who had already decided to join the coalition and forget his feud with the Shindes for the time being, now saw the treacherous game being played by Bajirao. He crossed the Narmada and went north leaving the coalition of Shinde and Bhosale to its fate.

The next task before General Wellesley was to break up the coalition. Foreseeing that a war was likely, he called upon Bajirao to issue orders to all Chiefs to join the English against Daulat Rao Shinde. Although Bajirao under pressure from Wellesley issued formal orders, he secretly countermanded them. Only Appa Patwardhan joined Wellesley openly.

The original intention of Bajirao in signing the Treaty of Bassein was to get English help in destroying Holkar but as things turned out Wellesley set out to destroy Bajirao's friends, Shinde and Raghuji Bhosale who refused to accept the Treaty of Bassein. Holkar had withdrawn north on approach of Stevenson's force which advanced along the left bank of Bhima.

Lord Wellesley had planned the campaign on two axes. General Wellesley was to advance from the south and destroy the force of Daulatrao Shinde and Raghuji Bhosale which were present in the Deccan. But Daulatrao's domain extended mainly in the North. He had a large army trained by French Generals in the North. Lord Lake who was the Commander in Chief was entrusted with the task of advancing North from
Kanpur simultaneously with General Wellesley who was to advance from Pune thus forcing Daulatrao Shinde to fight on two fronts. A second army consisting of Wellesley's forces and those of Col. Stevenson was assembled under General Campbell.

The occupation of Pune was followed by protracted and fruitless negotiations with the two chiefs, who in their turn were trying to come to some terms with Holkar.

There was another aspect of security in which the French were connected. There were Frenchmen in Nizam's army and in Maratha armies. The French East India Company was a rival to the English in India. The French Revolution of 1789 had roused the innate forces of the French nation and her victorious armies were marching triumphantly to the four corners of the European continent. Napoleon Bonaparte wrote to Tipu Sultan offering him French help. Wellesley who paid particular attention to these French plans, was determined to eliminate all French power from India. Immediately on assuming charge of his office, Wellesley put before himself three main tasks for immediate execution: (1) destruction of Tipu Sultan; (2) dissolution of Nizam Ali's French Corps, replacing it by an English force and (3) the control of the Maratha Government of Pune by driving Daulatrao Shinde to his northern sphere. The Nizam accepted the subsidiary alliance on 1st September 1798 and the French officers were replaced by the British. Tipu was killed in a battle on 4th
May 1799. Since Bajirao had signed the Treaty of Bassein Wellesley had only one task left, to drive Daulatrao to the North in the hope that he would be destroyed by Zaman Shah, the Afghan king then trying to invade India.

General Wellesley's campaign was thus a part of the grand strategy of Lord Wellesley, a man of vision and driving power. "Possessed with an inordinate ambition to increase the greatness of his country, he combined in himself indomitable courage, intense love of power and the supreme gift of choosing able instruments and imperious authority by compelling his subordinate to submit to his will." He wrote to Wellesley "The effectual security of our interests in the Mahratta Empire is the strongest barrier which can be opposed to the progress of the French interests in India; the early reduction of Shinde would prove a fatal blow to the interests of France. An imperfect arrangement with the Maratha Powers, or a delay of active measures might open to France the means of engaging with advantage in the affairs of the Maratha Empire."

In order to drive Shinde to the north, the first obstacle was the fort at Ahmednagar which was held by his forces. Seventyfive miles away from Pune, it formed a suitable administrative base for further operations. Shinde and Raghuji Bhosale were concentrating their forces at Burhanpur which imposed a threat to Nizam, who was now under the protection of the British. Although Shinde and Bhosale were in their territory they were now asked to go back to the north and to
Nagpur respectively. But on 4th May 1803 Shinde left Burhanpur and began his march to meet Bhosale who moved from Nagpur. The Governor General despatched strongly worded letters to them.

Thus during June and July General Wellesley busied himself in preparing for a war. He ordered British troops to move from their various stations and concentrate near Shinde's camp in Varhad. He decided upon south Varhad as the theatre best suited for military movements during the monsoon months when the campaign appeared likely.

The Governor General formed his own plan on similar lines and asked Commander-in-chief Lord Lake to prepare for war.

On 1st July Col. Collins who was in Shinde's camp called on Daulatrao and administered a warning "By delaying your decision (to accept the Treaty of Bassein) you are simply increasing our difficulties. You are here with your full armed forces. If Gen. Wellesley is then compelled to open hostilities, the responsibility is yours."

While preparing for the campaign Wellesley had realised that a long defensive war will be ruinous. He had expressed this view in a letter to Col. Stevenson dated 17th August 1803. His plan was to advance North-Eastwards into the interior to join the Company's Hyderabad Contingent which, under Colonel Stevenson, was trying to prevent the Maratha army striking deeper into the Nizam's territory. Then with the united army
of the Deccan of 15000 British and sepoy regulars and several hundred native auxiliary horse, he intended either to force the enemy to battle or keep them so closely on the run as to make it impossible for them to plunder, thus depriving them of the only resource by which so large a body could be kept in the field, and by equipping his forces with boats and pontoons to enable them to cross the rivers in flood during the rainy season, he hoped to steal a march on an enemy dependent at such time on fords "Keep your infantry in a central situation and let your supplies collect them" he advised Stevenson, who was anxious on account of the wide front he had to hold till Wellesley could join him. "Move forward yourself with the cavalry and one battalion, and dash at the first enemy that comes into your neighbourhood. You will either cut them up or drive them off—-a long defensive war will ruin us—Dash at the first fellows that make their appearance and the Campaign will be our own."64

General Wellesley had moved an army of 10,000 men with their ordnance and supplies for six hundred miles from southern to central India without living on the land, which called for remarkable organisation. He had to transport them and their stores across a bridgeless, anarchical area where there was no law, no civil government and where the cultivator was at the mercy of roaming bands of plunderers who made it impossible to produce anything more than the barest subsistance.

We find that General Wellesley believed in sound adminis-
troitation. He also believed in tactical mobility and offensive action. He surprised the Marathas by his long marches which were only possible as his army was not encumbered with unnecessary baggage. His provision of river crossing equipment shows his knowledge of military geography of the Deccan and foresight in planning. His despatches show how he paid particular attention to minor details such as packing of salt, meat and rum for his British and Indian troops.

**Location of Opposing Armies**

In a letter to the Commander-in-chief dated 29th July, 1803 General Wellesley first describes the location of his troops as follows: The Nizam’s army including the subsidiary force, were concentrated at Aurangabad, north of river Godavari. Gen. Wellesley’s force including about 3000 Maratha Horse, and 3400 excellent horse belonging to the Rajah of Mysore, were moved to Sangwee, upon the Seena about twenty miles south eastwards from Ahmednagar (the fort was being held by a garrison belonging to Shinde). Two battalions of native infantry under the command of Col. Murray were left at Pune to assure Bajirao II.

The whole of Kolkar’s army was concentrated to the north of the river Tapee, but he had refused to join Shinde and the Raja of Berar.

The army of Daulatrao Shinde numbering 18000 horse, 11 battalions of infantry and 150 guns was concentrated at Jalgaon, and Raghujir Bhosle had 20,000 horse, 6000 infantry and 40 guns.
Shinde had located an advanced corps of a few thousand horse in the Ajanta Hills.

Gen. Wellesley knew in detail the strength and disposition of the enemy. He planned to attack Ahmednagar with his corps, thus securing the communications with Pune and Bombay, and keep the Nizam's army upon the defensive upon his frontier. He envisaged that the main battle will be fought when he crosses the Godavari.

Wellesley had realised the importance of keeping his lines of communication open and secure. He allotted the tasks to his troops in a clear cut manner, one corps to advance and attack, while the second corps holds the flank and prevents the enemy's advance in Nizam's territory. Two battalions to hold Poona. Details of opposing armies were as follows:

**Strength of Wellesley's corps**

Wellesley had the following troops in Sangewe camp:

**Cavalry**

- 19th Light Dragoons
- 4th Native cavalry
- 5th Native cavalry
- 7th Native cavalry

**Artillery**

- 17 guns (not including 535 artillery lascars)

**Infantry - British**

- 74th Regiment
- 78th Regiment

Total 1347 men in the three regiments

Total 1368 British troops

Continued...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total 5,631 Indian troops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Battalion, 3rd Regiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Battalion, 8th Regiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Battalion, 12th Regiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Battalion, 18th Regiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers</td>
<td>603</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition 3400 cavalry belonging to the Rajah of Mysore under Bisappa and 3000 Maratha Horse commanded by Gokhale.

The force under Col. Stevenson consisted wholly of the subsidiary forces, amounting to 7,920 infantry, cavalry and artillery and about 1600 men, cavalry and infantry of His Highness the Nizam’s troops. The subsidiary force consisted of:

- **Cavalry**: 3rd Regiment, Native cavalry 969 men
  6th Regiment, Native cavalry

- **Artillery**: 120 men

- **Infantry**: His Majesty’s Scotch Brigade 778 men

**Native Infantry**

- 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment 6113 men
- 1st Battalion, 6th Regiment
- 2nd Battalion, 9th Regiment
- 1st Battalion, 11th Regiment
- 2nd Battalion, 11th Regiment
- Gun lascars 276 men
- Pioneers 212 men

**Total** 8468
The force under Col. Murray from Bombay at Poona

A detachment of Bombay artillery 93 BOKs
His Majesty's 94th Regiment 470
1st Battalion Bombay native infantry
1st Battalion 3rd Native infantry 1215
Total 1778

Strength and disposition of the armies of Shinde and Bhosle

An extract from a letter from Col. Collins to Major General Arthur Wellesley dated 25th July, 1803, gives the strength and disposition of Maratha forces.

The force with Dowlatrao Shinde at Jalgaon consisted of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindu-Deccany</th>
<th>Sepoy Match battalions men</th>
<th>Heavy guns</th>
<th>Field pieces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>7 500</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Under the command of Col. Soliever, in the pay of Begum Sumroo</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Under the command of different Native Sardars</td>
<td>12000</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Under the command of Bappo Shinde</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Park of artillery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16500</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>11 500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Each sepoy Battalion consists of 700 rank-and file.
The force of the Rajah of Berar consisted of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cavalry</th>
<th>Infantry</th>
<th>Heavy Guns</th>
<th>Field Pieces</th>
<th>Rockets</th>
<th>Sutans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Under the command of different Gardars</td>
<td>20000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Under the command of Benvains</td>
<td></td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Camels carrying rockets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Camels carrying sutans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gen. Wellesley describes the dispositions of his enemies—the Marathas—as follows:

"The Maharajah, with the whole of his cavalry, is encamped to the north of the range of hills called the Ajuntee shaut (Ajanta), ten coss from the pass of Faradapoor, and nine from Ajuntee, which is impassable for guns. On the right of the Maharajah, at the distance of two coss, Col. Pohlmann with his brigade, is posted; and about one coss, in the rear of Col. Pohlmann, Col. Soliever, with the corps of Begum Sumroo, is posted. ....

"The Rajah of Berar is encamped two coss on the left of Scindia, with the whole of his artillery, cavalry, and infantry:

"Col. J. Shepherd, with the whole of the regular infantry and guns of Ambajerroo, has already crossed the Nerbudda."

Col. Doudernaixe and Major Brownrigg, with eleven
battalions of sepoy, and a large park of artillery, marched from Julong towards the Merbudda on the 12th instant."

In his letter to his excellency General Lake, Commander-in-Chief in India, dated 29th July 1803, Major General Wellesley gives the details of his plan.

"My plan of operations, in case of hostilities is to attack Ahmednagar with my own corps, by the possession of which place I shall secure the communications with Poona and Bombay, and keep the Nizam's army upon the defensive upon his Highness's frontier. When I shall have finished that operation and have crossed the Godavery, I shall then, if possible, bring the enemy to action."

"As the passes through the Adjutee hills are difficult, particularly for the large quantities of artillery which the enemy have it is probable that Col. Stevenson may be able to succeed in preventing them from deploying their forces on this side of the hills till I shall have joined him. If he should not, he is strong enough to defend himself, and the enemy will find it very difficult to pass through the hills again after I shall have crossed the Godavery."

A comparison of the opposing forces shows that Wellesley had four regiments of cavalry and eight battalions of infantry and a regiment of artillery in his own corps. Col. Stevenson had two regiments of cavalry six to seven battalions of infantry and a regiment of artillery. In present day parlance,
Wellesley had an infantry division and a cavalry brigade under him and Col. Stevenson had two infantry brigades and a weak cavalry brigade. Both were weak in artillery. As far as the fighting capabilities are concerned, the British and the Native cavalries were good. The British infantry was better trained and led than the Native infantry.

The Maratha armies amounted to one good Hindustan infantry battalion and seven sepoy battalions under Col. Pohlmann, an infantry brigade under Col. Soliever, an infantry brigade strength under Sapp Shinde and about 14000 infantry and cavalry under different Sardars. In infantry this force amounts to twice that of the BIC army in the field. In addition the Haja of Berar had a cavalry division and 6000 infantrymen with an artillery brigade consisting of 35 field artillery guns, 500 camel guns and rockets.

The overall Maratha superiority was therefore 3:1 but numerically superiority alone is no good. The forces under the Maratha Sardars were indifferently trained and equipped. Only 500 were armed with matchlocks. Begum Sumroo’s brigade was not fully committed to the cause. Even the Haja of Berar had taken eight months to make up his mind to join the coalition. Only Daulatrao was fully committed and in imminent danger. But a threat was developing for him in the Northern parts where Gen. Lake was concentrating a force to attack him in the north. The French commanders were in two minds and the European officers being mercenaries had their loyalties.
The battle ground was well selected. The Ajanta Ghats formed a major obstacle for advancing forces but a refuge for retreating army. Daulatrao must have realised the importance of the pass as he was already holding it. He had planned to descend the ghats and give battle to the enemy in the planes south of Ajanta. Only drawback here was that the ghat was difficult to negotiate for the guns. In case of a withdrawal it would be difficult to withdraw the artillery. The battle ground was 150 miles away from Poona. This would stretch the line of communication of Wellesley but both Shinde and Bhosale were on the border of their territory. Moreover, Daulatrao had a strong position in Ahmednagar Fort, which would delay the English.
NOTES

(2) Selection from Wellington's Despatches, Owen, p. 41.
(3) Ilyar Sir Alfred, The Rise and Expansions of the
    British Dominion of India, John Murray, 1907, p. 237.
(4) 
(5) Philips, C.H., The East India Company, 1784, 1834,
    Manchester University Press, 1940, p. 104.
(6) Grant Duff, History of the Marathas.
(7) 
(9) Wellesleys Despatches, Vol. III, Martin No. XX.
(10) Ibid., No. XXXV.
(12) New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, G.S. Sardesai,
     p. 412.
(14) Ibid., p. 88.
(15) Ibid., p. 575.
(16) Ibid., p. 165.
(17) Ibid., Appendix P.
(20) Wellingtons Despatches, Owen, Nos. 184, 191 and 192.
(22) Keene, H.G., Hindustan Under Free Lances.
(23) Weller, Jack, Wellington in India, Longman, 1972, Appendix II.


(25) Weller, Jack, op.cit., Appendix II.


(27) Briggs, J., op.cit., pp. 6, 8.

(28) Rajendra Singh, op.cit., p. 76.


(30) Ibid., p. 11.

(31) Weller, Jack, op.cit., Appendix II.


(33) See Dept. Diary, No. 298, 1815; pp. 12, 26-27.


(35) Welsh, Colonel, James, Military Reminiscences extracted from a Journal of Nearly Forty Years Service of Active


(42) Briggs, op.cit., pp. 15-16.


(44) Bevan, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 36.

(45) Sep. Dept. Diary, No. 302; p. 2102 and Selections from the Minutes - Elphinstone, by G.W. Forest and etc.


(50) Bevan, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 27.

(51) Military Dept., Proceedings, January 1818. General Order by C. in C. Death punishment was usually given to the native deserters.


(55)