After the capture of Ahmadnagar, Wellesley had secured a firm base for his future operations. Colonel Stevenson with his Corps was in Jafrabad. Shinde and Bhosle had concentrated their forces north of Ajanta hills and they were negotiating with Holkar trying to form a coalition to fight the British. As a retaliatory measure, Shinde tried to ravage Nizam's territory and Wellesley crossed the Godavari and moved to defend Aurangabad. Nizam Ali had died on 6th August and there was chaos in the court of Hyderabad. Wellesley reached Aurangabad on 29th. He had already given clear instructions to Stevenson to be on the offensive against Shinde's foraging parties and skirmishes immediately commenced between Stevenson's outposts and Shinde's Pindharis. Bhosle now reached Jalna. It was thus evident that battle with the opposing forces was imminent in the near future.

Copalrao Bhau of Lakheri fame and Vithal pant bakhshi and Yadavrao Bhaskar of the Bhosle were the principal commanders of the Marathas. As the Maratha soldiers were in arrears of pay they staged a dharana. Thus all was not well with the morale of the Maratha army. In any case Raghuti Bhosle's cooperation was not wholehearted and Begum Sumroo's campoo had no intention of fighting with determination. Neither Raghuti Bhosle nor Shinde were trained generals or war veterans. They were quite undecided about a plan of action. Raghuti Bhosle advised Shinde to carry on a guerilla war, but Daulatrao was superior in artillery and he could derive maximum advantage only if he
fought a conventional battle in the plains. In the meantime Stevenson forced Bhosle’s contingent to quit Jalna and occupied it himself. General Wellesley could not advance as he was awaiting supplies to reach him from the south. A convoy was on its way under Major Hill which joined Wellesley on the 18th September.

By 21st September Wellesley got the information that the armies of Shinde and Bhosle had concentrated between Jafferabad and a village Bhorkardan (See Map 1) he conferred with Colonel Stevenson at Budnapore on the same day and a general plan of action was drawn. The plan was simple. It involved the movement of Stevenson’s army first north west and then north east towards Bhokardan while Wellesley and his corps was to move east towards Jalna and then turn north towards a village Naulniah. They had kept the hill features which exist between Budnapoor and Jalna between them with the idea that by advancing on a wide front the enemy would not be able to slip through in Nizam’s territory. Moving on two routes was also faster although command and control became difficult.

In a letter to the Governor General, dated 24th September 1803, Wellesley stated that he had established contact with the enemy’s forces commanded by Colonel Pohlman and Bapuji Shinde and with the campoo belonging to Begum Sumroo, commanded by Colonel Boliever.

Lieut Colonel Collins, Resident with Dowlut Rao Scindiah had informed General Wellesley in a letter dated 24th July
MAP SHOWING BATTLE AREA OF ASAI
1402 that Shinde and detached Colonel Joudernairee and Major Brownrigg, and sent them north, along with seven battalions and five hundred cavalry to reinforce the Northern front.

Maratha Army

The strength of Daulatrao Shinde's Army at Jalgaon, as assessed by Colonel Collins, was

Colonel Pohlmann's brigade: 500 cavalry

Seven battalions of infantry
500 matchlock men
3 Heavy guns
40 Field guns

Berum Jumroo's brigade under Colonel Boliever: 14,000 Cavalry

Shinde's force under Bapuji Shinde: 4000 Cavalry

Part of artillery: 25 heavy guns
100 light guns

Total: 18,500 Cavalry

Infantry 11 Battalions, each consisting of 700 men, Heavy guns 35, and Field pieces 170.

The strength of the army of Haja of Berar was as follows:

Cavalry under the command of different native Sardars: 20,000

Benny Singh's infantry brigade

Artillery field pieces: 35
Camels carrying rockets: 500
Camels carrying sustanants: 500

Thus even a rough estimate places the Maratha army at

38,000 cavalry, 13,000 infantry, 70 heavy guns, 170 field piece
and 500 rockets and 500 gatans (small guns carried on camels). In a letter to His Excellency General Lake, Commander-in-Chief in India dated 29th July 1803, General Wellesley has given his estimate of Shinde's force as 18,000 horses, eleven battalions of infantry and 150 guns and Berar's force as 20,000 horse, 6,000 infantry, and 40 guns.

General Wellesley's Forces

From a report by Governor General to the Secret Committee of the Honourable the Court of Directors, General Wellesley had 1,731 European and native Cavalry, 6,999 infantry, exclusive of European artillery, and 653 pioneers, of the establishment of Fort St George, 2,400 cavalry belonging to the Rajah of Mysore, and about 3,000 Maratha horse. As Colonel Stevenson failed to join Wellesley on the day of the battle, as will be seen later, his strength need not be considered here.

Wellesley's army advanced, as per plan, on the 22nd, and after covering 18 miles camped at Panyp village. Stevenson's division made an equivalent march and camped at the village of Khamsaon on a branch of the Burna river that same evening. Shinde and Bhosle were still at Borkardan.

Latest information about the enemy strength and disposition placed the strength of Colonel Pohlmann's Campoo at eight battalions, each with a strength of about 800 including the artillery men who handled four field guns and a howitzer (a high trajectory gun). Pohlmann's cavalry, probably 500 men and pioneers, in all 7,500 men plus some recce troops. Pohlmann was
a former sergeant in the British Hanovarian regiment and had considerable military ability.

Bezum Sumroo's independent brigade under Colonel Boliever consisted of five battalions of twenty five field pieces. These were first rate troops. This force was raised by Walter Rheinhart, known as Sombre (dark) who started his career as a professional soldier and later became a feudal subordinate of Shinde. On his death, his widow inherited his political position.

There was a small force under Bapiste Filoze but it was not up to the mark in training and equipment. Bapiste Filoze was an Anglo Indian. As he was not present on the battlefield his force was commanded by Major John James Dupont, a Dutchman. The force consisted of four battalions and about fifteen pieces, with the usual cavalry and pioneers.

The entire regular forces numbered about 15,000 disciplined soldiers under European officers. They had some eighty pieces plus few battering guns. Apart from the Regular Battalions, Shinde and Bhosle had other units numbering between 10,000 and 20,000 infantry and between 30,000 and 60,000 armed horsemen who may or may not have been trained soldiers. There was a considerable train of Mahratta artillery in addition to that of Shinde's Campoos.

Wellesley's army moved off at sunrise on the 23rd in the following order of march. Mysore Cavalry under Bishnappa and Maratha cavalry under Gokhale and Appa Desai acted as the Vanguard. They were deployed well ahead of the main body on
a broad front and carried out reconnaissance. This was followed by the British cavalry and EIC Cavalry with Wellesley at the head of the Column. Next came infantry headed by the pickets of the day. Wellesley's small siege train followed with extra ammunition in tumbrills and then the baggage. Last of all were the pickets of the previous day. A Squadron of British Cavalry and a Mysore unit of about 300 brought up the rear. Grant Duff in his History of the Marathas states that just before the battle of Assaye commenced intelligence was brought to General Wellesley that the Peshwa's troops intended to join Shinde in attacking him. He has not been able to obtain any confirmation of this, but it is a fact that Wellesley did not allow them to cross the Kaitna river while the battle was going on, nor were they used for pursuit later. Wellesley arrived at the village Naulniah at about 11 am. after a march of 14 miles, Borkardan lay some ten miles further (See Map 2).

A Squadron of the 19th Dragoons brought in some banjaras who gave out that the Shinde's army was deployed not at Borkardan but spread over a six mile area to the east thereof. The line extended over six miles along the northern bank of the Kaitna river, which was just about five miles from Naulniah. He also received a report that Daulatrao Shinde and Raghujir Bhosle had moved off in the morning with their cavalry, and the infantry was about to follow. In a memorandum on the Battle of Assye subsequently transmitted Wellesley complains that the information about the enemy disposition was faulty.
THE BRITISH APPROACH TO ASAI

CAMP OF MAHATTA

OTHER MAHATTA ESPECIALLY NAGA TADA
20 MILES

AGUATA

BARSHAJA

BRITISH INDIAN TROI

BHAGPALGAON

BRITISH INFANTRY

MALOOL

MAKOMISE

1ST OBSERVATION STATION

2ND OBSERVATION STATION

3RD OBSERVATION STATION

4TH OBSERVATION STATION

LOCATIONS OF BRITISH 2 OBSERVATION STATION

BRITISH INDIAN TROI

NAUNJISH

RECONAISANCE

PROBABLE ROUTE OF WHEELS OF FIRST PAKISTAN
The main difficulty was that he could not use Bisnappa's Cavalry as the men were South Indians and they did not know the area. Therefore close reconnaissance of the enemy was not possible as they had a large cavalry force who would attack such patrols. He, therefore, had to depend on the harkarahs, the locals of that area and trust their reports. The harkarahs had earlier reported the enemy position as Borkardan. Wellesley's out line plan was to attack the left of Borkardan himself while Stevenson was to attack the right. The latest information brought the enemy much too near and too much to the East. It was not safe to camp at Naulniah only five miles from the enemy. His hoardes of cavalry would make life miserable at night. But Stevenson's force was nowhere in sight. He was due to attack only on the 24th as per plans.

Wellesley was now on the horns of a dilemma. Should he decide to wait till the 24th for Stevenson's force to arrive and then attack as per plan he might find the enemy withdrawn to Ajanta ghats. Wellesley was confronted with large Maratha force who were holding a most formidable position. Their infantry numbered three or four times that of Wellesley. It was supported by hundreds of guns, rockets and mortars. The choice was now to withdraw a few miles to a safer palace, await arrival and then attack on the following morning according to the plan or throw caution to the wind and take a risk and attack immediately.

The consequence of a withdrawal would have been, that the
enemy would have followed close on his heels to Naulniah with his cavalry, and possibly would have prevented an organised withdrawal. They would have harassed him all that day; and as he had only fortified an area to secure his baggage with a small force the Pindharis would have looted the baggage while Wellesley was busy attacking the following morning. As it happened during the attack the enemy did not know where his baggage was and the Marathas were too busy fighting a battle. Besides this, there was a chance, indeed a certainty, that the enemy would hear that Colonel Stevenson also would move upon them on the 24th, and would withdraw their infantry and guns at night.

Wellesley was later criticised for his decision by military pundits who had hindsight. In the first place, he should not have split his force and marched on two separate routes and secondly, he should not have taken the risk of attacking a force ten times larger. Wellesley admitted that the plan for concentration of forces had failed. Moreover due to faulty information regarding the enemy’s position at Borkardan and, consequently, his coming too near them on the 23rd with his bag and baggage, etc. had jeopardised the safety of his army.

Wellesley had already deployed his cavalry screen on the south of Kaitna river. He now set out with his escort on his forward recce and moved along the whole front from west to east from Kodullu to Peapulpoon. He was escorted by the 19th Dragoons and the 4th Native Cavalry. He issued orders to Colonel Maxell to bring forward the other British cavalry regiments. They were
to keep out of sight of the enemy. Wellesley chose a vantage point on the left of his army and observed the enemy through his telescope. He estimated that a force of about 200,000 was deployed over an area of seven miles from Borkardan to Assaye. As the enemy had come to know about the arrival of Wellesley's forces surprise could not be achieved. The enemy was already breaking camp and forming up for battle. Wellesley rode east parallel to the Kaitna river to complete his reconnaissance.

Wellesley found that Shinde's European officered infantry was on the left of the combined Maratha armies and they were occupying a front of two miles just west of Kodully to the east of another village Tanklee. The guns were interspersed along with the infantry. Wellesley now chose a second vantage point on the right. He observed that the regular battalions were forming up but the rest of the army was in shambles. A great mass of Cavalry lay to the west along the Kaitna towards Borkardan. There was another mass of cavalry near the village Assaye in the rear, accompanied by infantry.

Wellesley, however, had been warned by Colonel Collins that the infantry was well trained and fought hard. This later proved correct.12

Wellesley had about four hours of day light available to him and Stevenson had not appeared. But he kept Collins' advice in mind. The real tough nut was the formations in front. The rest were Fidharies and irregulars who would not influence the battle. The Maratha army was superior in infantry and
artillery. Therefore a frontal attack was out of question.

In a letter to the Governor General dated 24th September, 1803 Wellesley stated that he decided on a right flanking attack. He appreciated that once the infantry was defeated the others would pose little problem. The best approach to the infantry was from the right; accordingly, he marched round to the enemy's left flank, covering the march of the column of infantry by the British Cavalry in the rear and the Maratha and the Mysor Cavalry on the right flank.

Wellesley intended to move light. He detailed 1/2 Madras and the pickets of the day to guard the baggage, heavy artillery and reserve ammunition under Lieut. Colonel Chalmers was asked to form a base at Naunniiah. As soon as the Cavalry formed a screen under Colonel Maxwell the infantry moved forward and concentrated near a village Barahjala and started advancing towards Pepulgaon by the shortest route.

River Kaitna was an obstacle for the infantry and it was necessary to find a suitable crossing site away from enemy interference. The harkaras told Wellesley that there was only one place north of Kodully where the river could be crossed. It was between Kodully and Tanklee but as the enemy had blocked this approach it was ruled out. They told him that no other suitable crossing place existed. This information did not make sense to Wellesley. He saw two villages Pepulgaon and Waroor on either bank of the river facing each other and he reasoned that men could not have built villages so close to one another
on opposite sides of a stream without some habitual means of communicating either by boat or a ford—most probably the latter. On that conjecture or rather reasoning, he set out to find a crossing place on the river. He found a passage and crossed over with his army. He had the advantage of having a river on either flank when the forces were deployed North-South facing west.

In his Despatches to the Governor dated 24th September 1803, Wellesley mentions that he intended to extend his right flank up to Asai. With this intention the infantry crossed and the pioneers started making approaches for the guns on either bank. The water was less than three feet deep. Unfortunately Marathas had failed to guard this obvious crossing place. Even when the British force started crossing the river, no effort was made to oppose them by cavalry. However, artillery opened up. Wellesley's orderly Dragoon was beheaded by a solid 18 pounder shot.

Captain Blackiston of the EIC engineers who was present well forward has written: "In front of the little British Sepoy force the confined space between the two rivers seemed to one who was present to be covered by one living mass to which our handful of men was but a drop in the ocean. It seemed as if each individual felt that this was to be the test of discipline against numbers and that nothing but the utmost steadiness and determination could make up for the appalling disparity of force ..... Not a whisper was heard through the
ranks; our nerves were wound up to the proper pitch, and everyone seemed to know that there was no alternative but death or victory. In the space of little more than a mile, a hundred guns, worked with skill and rapidity vomitted death into our feeble ranks.

An auxiliary force of Peshwa and Yoree cavalry attached to the British, marched on the right flank of the infantry, and finally took up position near the Pepulgaon ford to restrain Maratha cavalry attacking the British forces from the rear. General Wellesley later admitted that it was a stroke of luck that the Marathas did not occupy the ford at Pepulgaon; if they had, he would have had to go further east; and possibly would have been obliged to make a road across the river, which would have taken so much time, that an attack in the remaining few hours of daylight would have been impossible.17

Although the crossing was unopposed by cavalry or infantry the Maratha artillery moved closer and opened fire on the advanced guard which caused heavy casualties. A large number of gun bullocks were also killed by the fire making the guns immobile.

As Wellesley had planned to attack the Maratha left flank he deployed his infantry in two lines (see Map 3). In the first line 78th, 1/10th and 1/9th Regiments were deployed south to north with 78th Regiment resting its left flank on the Kaitna and 150 yards behind 1/4th, 2/12th and 74th formed the second line of infantry. British cavalry under Maxwell were deployed...
BATTLE OF ASAI - 23 Sept 1803
southern of Juah with 19th Dragoons in the centre flanked by 11th, 15th, and 7th Native Cavalry. The infantry flanks were thus held by British regiments and the cavalry had a British regiment in the centre, two important positions in infantry and cavalry deployment.

While the forces were forming up for the assault, Wellesley accompanied by Capt. Blackistone and his escort moved forward to carry out close reconnaissance. He observed that the village Asai was heavily defended. The village itself was surrounded by a high mudwall. The Maratha guns were deployed in front of the wall. It was obviously too dangerous for the infantry to close in, on Asai. He later issued orders to Lt Col Orrock to stay clear of the guns while leading the attack on the right flank.

When the Marathas discovered that the enemy was going to attack their left flank they reacted very quickly. Colonel Pohlman's infantry and artillery which was facing south across the river Kaitna now turned through 90 degrees and faced the east, changing their front and taking up a new position with their right on the Kaitna and their left on the village of Asai, in the most steady manner, though not exactly according to Dundas. Wellesley now observed that the Maratha regular battalions had now linked up with Asai which formed a firm anchor. A strong north south line of infantry and artillery was formed facing Wellesley's forces. Wellesley gave specific orders to Maxwell that he and his four regiments remain just
out of the effective range of Maratha artillery.

The manœuvre executed by the Marathas speaks highly of the tactical sense of Colonel Pohlmann and the high standard of training of his troops. However, Wellesley had caused a dislocation of enemy troops and they were forced to react and face a new front.

The initial moves of Wellesley's infantry were covered by artillery fire which were deployed on the right flank. The Maratha guns promptly replied, resulting in an artillery duel. Wellesley moved from one battalion to another and explained the battle plan to each commanding officer. As his infantry was deployed in two lines, with three battalions in each line, the advance from the assembly area at Waroor to the forming up place was a bit complicated. The first line was to advance due west keeping the Kaitna on its left, while the second line of three battalions would be doing a diagonal march going north west first until they came in line with the first line and then turning due west so that all the six battalions formed a single line on the startline prior to the assault; a manœuvre quite difficult to execute even on a parade ground. It was to be executed when the guns were firing from both sides covering the battle field with smoke and dust. Only way to keep direction in the 'fog of war' was by taking direction from the noise of guns firing from Asai. Wellesley planned to have the 74th on the left flank and the 78th on the right flank with four EIC Native infantry battalions in the centre (see Map 4) Lieut
Colonel Orrock who was commanding the pickets that day was
the commanding officer of 1/8th Madras. He had half company
pickets of other two battalions under his command. Wellesley
initially moved forward with the 78th on the left flank. He
ordered Lieut Colonel Orrock to move forward without his guns,
as the guns could not be moved since the bullocks were killed.

Thus Wellesley now faced thirteen battalions drawn up in
a line under Colonel Pohlman, who had deployed sixty-odd guns
in front of the infantry, not counting the guns deployed on his
left flank outside the walls of Asai. The guns were sited al­
most hub to hub and behind this wall belching fire, there was
an unwavering line of muskets and bayonets. Wellesley proposed
to attack this line with six and a half battalions of infantry
and four regiments of cavalry. The odds thus were very heavy
especially so since the Marathas had more guns. The fire from
the Maratha guns intensified when the British infantry launched
the first attack. This attack was launched by the 78th Regi­
ment, which advanced in column first and then changed into line
and moved forward. Wellesley was with the attacking troops.
They attacked Colonel Pohlmann’s right anchor battalion.
Success depended upon this attack. If the anchor gave way
Pohlmann’s flank would be turned and he would be forced to swing
back across a wide plain. The Highlanders advanced and formed
up for the assault when they were sixty yards from the enemy
guns. Here this highly trained battalion halted, coolly fired
a volley, recovered, reloaded and presented their muskets with
their bayonets gleaming and charged the Maratha guns and the infantry behind. But the Maratha gunners fought back. Many died as a result of the volley and quite a few were bayonetted, others threw themselves between the wheels feigning death. The Scots burst through the line of the gunners, reloaded their muskets and advanced in line on the infantry. Again they halted and fired a volley and advanced with their bloody bayonets.

After the second volley the two anchor battalions of Pohlmann broke up. They left their dead behind and withdrew. The 1/10th was the next to charge the artillery and infantry in front of them followed by 1/8th, 1/4th and 2/12 all of whom were properly spaced. Advanced, fired their volleys and charged with bayonets. As a result about 900 yards of Pohlmann's right front broke up and he lost about 40 guns. The EIC battalions pursued the enemy but the 78th reformed in columns of companies and deployed their guns. The Mahratta cavalry which numbered about 20,000 now charged the EIC battalions but the guns of the 78th repelled the attack and the EIC battalions gave up the pursuit and reformed to the right of the 78th.

Wellesley's horse was shot under him and he now rode on Diomed, a tall Arab horse. As the battle on the left flank was going on well, he now moved to the right flank. He discovered that Lieut Colonel Orracks had made a terrible mistake. Wellesley had specifically warned him to keep clear of Maratha guns deployed outside Asai. After marching north west and instead of turning west he continued straight and lead the pickets
and the 74th straight into enemy artillery fire. Thus his 2 1/2 companies who constituted the pickets were butchered. As the pickets did not turn west, the 74th also failed to turn west. As they were to form up on the extreme right flank, they could not turn on their own. They too came under heavy artillery and musket fire.

When General Wellesley realised what had happened, he ordered his cavalry under Maxwell to charge. By then the 74th had suffered fifty per cent casualties. Although Lieut Colonel Orrock survived the pickets were almost wiped out. The 74th nearly reached an area about 200 yards from Assi where the attack was held up. They fell back and rallied round their colours. They formed a hollow square and beat back the attacks of the Maratha cavalry.

Colonel Maxwell now came to the rescue of the 74th. He gave orders to his northern regiments to charge and himself lead forward the 19th Dragoons flanked on his right by the 4th Native Cavalry and on his left by the 5th. The double line of horsemen came on with sabres drawn and rode right over the attackers of the 74th, the Maratha cavalry, the battalion guns beyond and went through an infantry unit. They cleared the area around the 74th and smashed the northern most portion of Pohlmann's line. The Maratha horsemen faced bigger and better trained men on stronger horses and the Maratha Infantry was caught in the open. Here Maxwell should have halted the charge but in the heat of the moment he pursued the Marathas right.
Ill

across Juah, leaving Wellesley's right flank open and what is more, leaving him no cavalry reserve.

A new development now occurred. The Maratha gunners who had feigned death now came to life; they turned their guns and started firing on Wellesley's infantry. At the same time the guns at Asai opened up on Maxwell's cavalry. He was thus caught up in artillery fire from both sides and only way to bring his force safe was by crossing the Juah and circuiting Asai and taking a wide detour coming back to the battle field from the east. The Marathas had also captured some English guns which were now being fired on the English cavalry.

As it is, Wellesley was compelled to call prematurely into action his cavalry which was his only reserve in order to rectify Orrock's error. He had to abandon his artillery as the bullocks were killed. Now he realized that the guns must be silenced first. He now decided to use the EIC battalions which had formed up for the second charge of the attack to hold Poehlmann's brigade. He led a cavalry charge of 7th Native cavalry which had been left behind by Maxwell, to silence the guns and at the same time ordered the 78th to attack the guns from the west. In this action Wellesley's horse died and was piked through a lung, Wellesley changed his horse for the third time in the day.

However, these actions gave Poehlmann time to withdraw his infantry and reform into a semicircle with the left flank resting on Asai and the right flank resting on Juha. This
manoeuvre was carried out in the field which shows the high standard of training of Pohlmann's brigade and his powers of command and control. The brigade was now once again facing south. His position which stretched over a mile was quite strong out of the original thirteen battalions, three were not yet committed to battle. He had about 15 guns still with him.

Having silenced the guns, Wellesley now once again re-formed his infantry. As the 74th was knocked out, he now had five battalions who had at least half a company missing. While they were forming up Maxwell also returned to his original position and the front stabilised. The 7th Native Cavalry moved forward to take a security post north of Juha which had moved up under Lieut Colonel Harness. Wellesley now ordered Maxwell to reform his cavalry and charge Pohlmann's eastern flank. He organised his cavalry placing the 19th Dragoons in the centre flanked by 4th and 5th Native Cavalry regiments. He himself lead the charge. Pohlmann ordered his brigade to hold fire till the British cavalry reached within their musketry range. As the 19th Dragoons charged Colonel Maxwell was hit by a piece of grape and was killed on the spot. When the cavalrymen saw their commander fall the charge faltered and did not go home and there was no actual contact. Another reason for the attack to fail was, as it was launched in haste, the cavalry did not get time to form up square to the front. The line of cavalry made an angle of 45 degrees to the enemy line. Thus the force of attack was lost. The horsemen careened past several
Maratha units instead of charging through them before they sheered off to the south.12

The British infantry launched two successive attacks against the Marathas, who had formed themselves into a kind of crescent with its right horn on the river Juha and its left on village Asai. The Marathas repulsed both the attacks. Wellesley now ordered the 78th and 7th Cavalry. However, the Marathas did not wait for the attack to come in. They left their position and withdrew beyond the Juha. The battlefield, except the village Asai, was now left completely in the possession of the British army. By six o'clock the combined armies of Shinde and the Raja of Berar were in full retreat towards Burhanpur leaving behind 100 guns and large amount of equipment. Thousands of dead and wounded were strewn all over the area.20

The village of Asai could not hold out any longer. The garrison consisted of Bhosle's irregulars. They gave in when some guns opened up on them. Their guns had been silenced earlier and the infantry had retreated.

Thus the battle of Asai was over. Wellesley's troops had marched twentyfive miles and fought two actions. His cavalry had been in the saddle for almost twelve hours and ridden thirtyfive miles. Only troops who were not committed to battle were those of the Peshwa and Mysore. Wellesley did not pursue the enemy with these forces as he had a suspicion that the Peshwa's army might join the Marathas.
"Wellesley spent an unpleasant night in an enclosed farm yard with a dead officer on his right and a wounded one on his left. He was completely exhausted. He was troubled by night mares due to physical and emotional exhaustion. The next morning Bishnapan brought in the baggage from Naulniah."

Stevenson, who had lost his way now reported arrival with his brigade from Borkardan. He had broken camp at Hussainabad as soon as the battle started and marched to the sound of guns. He had received a note from Wellesley summoning him forward during the night, but had run into terrain which was impassable, between the Girila and the Purna rivers. He lost his way and after 15 hours of march finally landed up at Borkardan. Stevenson handed his chief guide. After an eight hour rest the force marched to Asai and reached only 24 hours late for the battle.

The victory at Asai was complete. The Mahrattas lost over 1200 dead. Wellesley captured 100 guns and large quantities of ammunition but most of the tumbrills containing ammunition were destroyed by the Marathas. For some time the southern army of Daulatrao Shinde ceased to exist as a fighting formation.

Wellesley's army also suffered very heavy casualties, said to be more numerous than in any other previous British battle victory in India. One hundred and ninetysix British and 258 Indian personnel were killed; and 442 Europeans, and 695 Indians were wounded. Considering that Wellesley had about
5800 soldiers engaged in action the casualties amounted to 27%. The maximum casualties occurred in 74th who lost 124 killed and 277 wounded (62.6% of the total Europeans lost in practically both cases. The pickets ceased to exist. The most seriously affected EIC battalion was Madras, who lost 212 all ranks, which was about 20 per cent of its total strength. This unit suffered heavy casualties as it came under heavy gunfire from Fohllmann's guns to the north.

The mistake occurred when Colonel Orrock did not turn west but charged the guns in north instead. However, Wellesley stood by him. "I lament the consequence of his mistake, but I must acknowledge that it was not possible for a man to lead a body into a hotter fire than he did the pickets on that day against Asai." Some blame is attributable to Maxwell who lead the first charge which went out of control across the Juha. His first charge was successful but his second was professionally unsound. The attack was not aligned square to the front. The infantry brigade commanders Wallace and Harness did their duty. Harness commanded the first line when they formed up for the assault, which included the Kings 78th, the 1/10th and 1/9th Madras while Wallace commanded the second line consisting of the Kings 74th, the 2/12 and 1/4 Madras Native Infantry. In the attack on Fohllmann's brigade, Colonel Wallace commanded the right hand brigade.

Analysis of the Battle of Asai

The principal criticism of Wellesley's conduct of the
campaign and battle of Asai is that Wellesley should not have
separated his army at Budnapore, nor have attacked alone on
the afternoon of the 23rd. Both criticisms appear to be
unjustified. There was never a single army; there were always
two. It would have been logistically and strategically impos­
sible to conduct this campaign with a single force. If
Wellesley had combined both armies, the combination would have
been not only hopelessly clumsy and slow, but totally incapable
of guarding the Peshwa and the Nizam's territory. It could
not have secured Ahmednagar and Jalna. Moreover, both corps
could not have advanced through the same defile on the same day,
and that it was inadvisable because as there were two defiles
if one of these defiles had been left open, the enemy might
have passed through it into the Nizam's territory, which it
was object of the campaign to defend.

With regard to attacking alone, once he discovered the
enemy within striking distance, Wellesley determined upon the
immediate attack because he saw clearly that if he attempted
to return to his camp at Naulnihia he would have been followed
there by the whole of the enemy's cavalry. He might have
been attacked in Camp.22 Had he not attacked, the enemy might
have got away at night, only to fight another day. He believed
in offensive action and bold attacks. On numerous occasions
he laid down for his subordinates the principle of attacking
immediately a chance for doing so was presented. By applying
superior strategy he had caused dislocation in the enemy's
defence. They had to leave prepared positions and come out in the open.

However, once Wellesley began his operations from Naulniah, his conduct of the battle was faultless. He attacked from an unexpected direction. His remarkable eye for terrain and his unerring common sense never served him better than in locating the place to cross the Kaitna. His brief personal reconnaissance from the high ground north of Peepulgaon enabled him to appreciate the real enemy situation. His first infantry attack, inspite of Colonel Orrock's error, unhinged the Maratha right flank. His attack in echelons was the correct formation to adopt for that terrain. Had Orrock and the piquets not gone wrong, the attack would have succeeded far more than it did and as Maxwell was poised to exploit the enemy would have been routed.

When an unexpected situation developed when the 'dead' gunners turned their guns and started firing at the cavalry. Wellesley restored the position by employing his remaining infantry units who restored his rear area. He used infantry and artillery for this task.

Wellesley ordered Maxwell's second charge but in the time thus gained he realigned his infantry for the second attack which drove Pohlmann off the field, sealing the victory. Capture of Asai was comparatively easy as the forces of Raghu- nathrao Bhoale were not keen on battle. They gave up the fort when they saw the infantry and artillery lined up with the
cavalry ready to cut off their withdrawal routes.

General Wellesley set a personal example of bravery and leadership. Major Collin Campbell, his brigade Major, wrote two days later: "The General was in the thick of the action the whole time and had a horse killed under him. No man could have shown a better example to his troops than he did. I never saw a man so cool and collected as he was the whole time, though I can assure you, till our troops got orders to advance, the fate of the day seemed doubtful; and if the numerous cavalry had done their duty. I hardly think it possible we should have succeeded."

Wellesley praised the Marathas thus: "Soindia's infantry behaved remarkably well, and stood to their guns to the last; but their execution was with them only, I do not believe that they carried away more than two, and I doubt whether they have got even that number.

"Scindiah's French infantry were far better than lippoo's and his artillery excellent, and his ordnance good, and so well equipped, that it answers for our service. I believe, the action was most severe that ever was fought in this Country; and I believe such a quantity of cannon, and such advantage have seldom been gained by any single victory in any part of the world.

Once in old age when General Wellesley, who was made the Duke of Wellington, was asked, what was the best thing he had ever done in the fighting line, he was silent for a time,
then answered, Asai. He did not, said his interrogator, add a word.

What were the causes of the defeat of the Marathas? Firstly the armies of Shinde and Bhosle were of different standard. Pohlmann's infantry and the Maratha gunners were as good as the British army, but the cavalry was not standard. The role of the cavalry is to go out and meet the enemy. Offensive action and mobility are the main characteristics of cavalry. When Wellesley's force reached Naulniah after a long march had the Maratha cavalry crossed the Juha and swarmed round the enemy. Wellesley would not have been able to form up for the attack. The cavalry ought to have stayed south of the river preventing Wellesley from carrying out a close reconnaissance of the Asai position. Instead of assembling on the Western side, it should have been divided into two so that both flanks were guarded.

The biggest mistake was in leaving the Pepulgaon crossing unguarded. Warur should have been occupied. Attack is the best form of defence. Instead of waiting for an attack to come in, the Maratha horse should have prevented Wellesley from crossing Kaitnajand forming up for attack. The Pindharis should have been sent to search for Wellesley's baggage train.

The Commanders must be well up in front. Unfortunately both Daulatrao Shinde and Raahiji Bhosle left the field the previous day while Wellesley lead attacks. Three horses were shot away under him. Kanya Bapoo was no where while Maxwell
lead the cavalry charge. and

There was no unity of command. Bhosle's army, Begam Samroo's Campoo had no desire to fight.

The loss of Ahmednagar was disastrous as it gave Wellesley a base for operations.

The Battle of Argaum

The Battle of Assai proved a very costly affair to both sides. The Marathas lost 1200 men and 102 guns along with large quantities of ammunition. But Wellesley's army also suffered very heavy casualties. Seventy nine officers and 1,778 soldiers were either killed or wounded. Among the slain were forty three officers. Shinde's army ceased to exist as a fighting force for sometime. In the British army the 74th Regiment lost 124 killed and 277 wounded. The pickets practically ceased to exist. Among the Indian Battalions the 2/12 Madras had 212 casualties as it came under heavy gunfire from Pohllmann's guns. Wellesley's troops had marched twenty five miles and fought two actions. His cavalry had been in the saddle for almost twelve hours and had ridden thirty five miles. Stevenson's army was nowhere in sight. He had lost his way and reached the battlefield 24 hours late (Stevenson hanged his guide!). Pursuit of the enemy was therefore out of question. Only troops who were not committed to battle were those of the Peshwa and Mysore. As it was doubtful if they would pursue their brethren, Wellesley did not use them. In a
letter to his brother Henri Wellesley, dated 3rd October, 1803, Wellesley writes: "I believe, the action was the most severe that ever was fought in this country, and I believe, such a quantity of cannon, and such advantages have seldom been gained by any single victory in any part of the world." 27

Wellesley now detailed Colonel Stevenson to take up the pursuit. The Marathas had already crossed the Ajanta Ghat. The shattered Maratha armies retired towards Barhanpur in order to defend that important post together with its covering fort, Ashirgad, from falling into British hands. Wellesley remained in the Southwest looking after the wounded and the sick and sent Stevenson northwards to seize those two places. Bhosle, however, suddenly swooped round and stationed himself in front of Aurangabad Fort on 29th October with a view to cutting off Wellesley's supplies which came through Nizam's territory. They passed through Casserbarry ghat. The force consisted mainly of cavalry accompanied by some infantry and guns. Wellesley wrote to Major Shaw on 8th October, 1803 that this movement may be intended to draw his attention away from Burhanpore and Asirgad, and they may return to the northward upon finding that he does not follow them." 28 Actually Wellesley did not have the means to chase a mobile force. But left alone, the Marathas would levy contributions upon some important place belonging to the Nizam; or they might move down to Poona. They would disrupt Wellesley's supply system and starve him out. Thus Wellesley was again forced to split
his force and detail Stevenson to attack and capture Ashirgarh. Wellesley had appreciated that Stevenson had adequate strength for the task as long as Shinde and Haja of Berar did not join hands, in which case Wellesley would join Stevenson. Shinde had lost 2/3rd of his regular force. Only Begum Sumroo’s brigade was not involved in action and was intact.

Wellesley gave detailed instructions to Colonel Stevenson in his letter dated 9th October. In this letter he proposed that the force must resume the offensive. As it was, both the Nizam and the Peshwa were non-effective and not dependable, they could not be trusted to defend their own kingdom even. Therefore one of the tasks before the British would be to prevent enemy infiltration towards the South. Secondly, the offensive would be in the direction of Burhanpore. The obvious conclusion was that the force must be split into two. Accordingly, Wellesley asked Stevenson to move towards Burhanpur, and himself undertook to guard the South. The main danger to Stevenson’s force would be from Maratha artillery. Earlier Collins had warned Wellesley to be careful of enemy infantry and guns. Stevenson was, therefore, to avoid open battle. He was to beat or drive back small parties from Burhanpore and levy a contribution on Burhanpore. He was then to proceed towards Ashirgarh and either capture it or lay a siege to that place. On completion of this task he was to move on to Nagpur and levy a contribution.

The Governor General had issued a proclamation on 29th
August, 1803, calling all Europeans in the service of the Marathas to come over to the British side. They were guaranteed the same pay and pensions. This facility was also extended to Indian soldiers who changed sides. This created a rift in the officers of Shinde and Bhosle.

Wellesley's plan was to match the movements of Shinde and Bhosle. If they gave up the idea of ravaging the territory of Nizam or advancing towards Poona and went back to the North to defend their territory, Wellesley would then move north and join forces with Stevenson. It would have been dangerous for them to leave the South open and undefended by moving both the forces in the north. As it is both the forces were balanced forces, in that they had elements of cavalry and infantry. Had the cavalry been grouped together and given the offensive role, the infantry would have been subjected to harassing raids by the Pindharies.

Later in the letter to Major Shawe dated 26th October, 1803 Wellesley stated that since the battle of Ashirai, he had been like a man who fights with one hand and defends himself with the other. Colonel Stevenson's corps was used offensively to capture Ashirai, while he covered Stevenson's operations and defended the territories of the Nizam and the Peshwa. In doing this he had to undertake some terrible marches, but he succeeded in stopping the enemy when they intended to pass to the southwards through the Casserbarry ghat and afterwards by a rapid march to the northward in stopping Shinde.
Wellesley is criticised on two counts. Firstly, according to the critics it was a strategic error to split the force and secondly, Wellesley made Stevenson to do all the dirty work. Both the critics are unjustified. Firstly, Wellesley's corps fought the battle of Asal when Stevenson was lost in the jungle. His force suffered over 27 per cent casualties, as such the force needed rest and recuperation. The 74th Regiment was down to 270 men. Secondly, the task given to Stevenson was within his capabilities. Wellesley provided a firm base for Stevenson's offensive. He also needed time to evacuate his casualties. He found that the Subedar of the Nizam in charge of the fort at Daulatabad refused to accept the casualties. They had to be evacuated all the way back to Ahmednagar, a gigantic task in the days when motor transport was not available.

Wellesley's apprehension that the Marathas would infiltrate and loot Nizam's territory was not imaginary but real. In fact in a letter to Raghujir Bhonsle dated 27th August, 1803, Holkar had advocated this strategy. He had suggested that Raghujir should rather his forces from the districts and keeping a safe distance from the British first swallow Nizam's territory. He promised to do the same himself.

This strategy of "Keeping one foot on the ground" before lifting the other foot is sound. Wellesley was no coward nor was he a bad general. As a Commander of the forces he had given detailed operational instructions to Colonel Stevenson.
On the 10th October, 1803, Wellesley informed the Governor General that Daulatrao Shinde and the Najah of Berar continued to march to the southward towards the Casserberry ghat, with guns, which joined them from Burhanpur. They intended to pass through the Casserberry ghat to go southward. There was nothing to oppose them in the territories of the Peshwa and but little in those of the Subha of the Deccan. Wellesley moved towards Aurangabad and sent instructions to Colonel Stevenson on 12th October, 1803. He was to beat the Campoos (infantry) before they were reinforced by the cavalry under Shinde and the Najah of Berar who had not yet recrossed Casserberry ghat to go north. He was to drive them across the Tapee and prevent a union with the cavalry. If, however, the enemy did succeed in uniting his force, Stevenson was to consider three courses which were open to him. First was an outright attack, second to go in defence and let the enemy attack and be beaten back and the third was to drive him on to Wellesley so that the combined British forces could defeat the enemy.

Stevenson was to first assess the strength of enemy artillery before he decided to attack because the enemy had received guns from Burhanpur, although their exact number was not known. Therefore, caution was necessary.

Going in defence was not the real answer as one requires adequate artillery to ward off enemy attacks. Stevenson was weak in artillery. Had he dug in, he would have been a "Sitting
duck" target to Maratha guns. It was better to take the risk and attack, rather than sit down and be destroyed.

The last course of driving the enemy on Wellesley needed fine coordination. Wellesley planned to descend the ghat on 4th October. If Stevenson made two marches towards Wellesley, then on the 6th both the forces would be one day's march from each other. Stevenson would naturally be followed by the Maratha army which would maintain a safe distance of, say, two marches until they would be organised to attack. Even if the Marathas covered the distance by a forced march, Wellesley would be able to join Stevenson. There can be many 'ifs' and 'buts' and the uncertain element—the enemy—can upset such plans by a surprise move.

Wellesley had warned Stevenson not to attack the enemy if they are in a well defended position on ground of their own choosing. Such positions cannot be attacked without artillery. The banks of the rivers and ravines provided many good sites for a defensive position. He also advised Stevenson not to dig in and wait for the enemy to attack, however, good his position may be. He was to adopt an offensive defence. He was to secure his baggage and sally forth from his defensive position and attack the enemy first while they were on the move, a most vulnerable position. As, an illtrained army on the move is disorganised Stevenson could choose his killing ground and attack the enemy when they arrive there.

Actually after the defeat of Assai it would have been
fair to assume that the enemy would not stand and fight a second battle so soon. But Wellesley did not want to take a chance. He had suffered heavy casualties on 23rd September. So Wellesley also had learnt a lesson and was being cautious. He was not drunk with victory as it had been a very costly affair.

Stevenson took Burhanpore on 16th October without serious fighting. He moved north on the 24th and after a short siege captured Ashigad, which was much stronger than Burhanpore and full of military supplies. A short account of the siege appears in Wellesley’s despatches. These two places with Ahmednagar, Jalna and Baroach had been Shinde’s important military bases in the Deccan. Now all of them were lost to the British.

The proclamation by the Governor General had the desired effect and ten of Shinde’s European officers surrendered. They confirmed that Pohlman’s thirteen Regular Battalions had disbanded during the retreat after Asai.

Wellesley moved north on 17th October to be within supporting distance of the Hyderabad force and was at Wardapur, a day’s march north east of Ajanta, on the 19th. The move was as per his original plan to join up with Stevenson.

The Raja of Berar again made a dash to the south with his cavalry and Wellesley had to force march 30 miles to check him. Bhosle withdrew towards his capital Narapur and joined up with his infantry and artillery. Wellesley who was now at Chincholi halted there for a week to match the movements
of the Raja of Berar. Stevenson was, in the meantime getting ready to capture Gawilgarh, a principal enemy fortress in the hills separating Berar's country from Hyderabad.

On the 11th November Shinde sent his Vakils to Wellesley asking for an armistice. While Wellesley was fighting Shinde's army at Assi, General Lake had advanced from Kanpur and defeated General Perron a vassal of Shinde in the north. General Lake had commenced his advance on 7th August almost on the same day as that of Wellesley's from Ahmednagar (Wellesley was delayed by one day due to very heavy rains) and captured several important fortresses, including Aliqad. He won a battle at Delhi on 11th September and occupied the Moghul capital. Although Perron's army was not totally destroyed, it was not advantageous for Shinde to fight on two fronts. An armistice on the southern front would enable him to transfer troops to the north, although it would have taken almost two months for the armies to reach Delhi from their locations. Wellesley calculated that if an armistice was granted to Shinde, the Raja of Berar will be left alone and Wellesley could defeat him. On the other hand, General Lake's task will not be more difficult if an armistice was signed as Shinde will not be able to transfer troops to reinforce the northern areas. Wellesley agreed to an armistice on the condition that Shinde withdrew his armies fifty miles east of Allichpore. This way Shinde would not be able to interfere when the British tried to take Gawilgarh, nor would Shinde be able to either attack
Nizam's lines of communication. Shinde was really trying to gain time and fight on one front. Wellesley saw through this but it suited his purpose as he would be dealing with only one enemy instead of two.

From his intelligence sources Wellesley came to know that while Shinde was trying to negotiate for an armistice, the Raja of Berar had joined his infantry and artillery with his cavalry force and Shinde was also moving in that direction, either to join Raja of Berar or to comply with the condition of the armistice. On 15th November Stevenson commenced his advance on Gawilpore and Wellesley also advanced north from the Godavery to join Stevenson. Since the four forces were converging on roughly the same point, a clash was inevitable.

Wellesley reached Akola on the 27th and sent word to Stevenson that he would meet him near a village Paterly on the 30th. They met and discussed their outline plan. At noon they climbed on top of a fortified tower in Paterly which provided a very good all round observation. They found the Maratha army presumably both Shinde and Berar’s forces assembled. In the north Bisnappa, the Mysore cavalry commander was already in contact with the enemy and he was expertly skirmishing with the enemy trying to carry out a reconnoissance in force.

Wellesley saw a large concentration beyond the village Sirsoli (see Map 5). It was already formed up in a line for battle. Wellesley who observed through his telescope assessed the strength to be less than what it was in the battle of Asal
THE BATTLE OF ARGAON—DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES

AREA OCCUPIED
BY SCINDIA'S CAVALRY
IN TWO MAZSES

ARGAUM

LARGE MASS OF MARATHA INFANTRY

APPROXIMATE POSITION
15 BATTALIONS & 58 GUNS

MOGULS 11th N.C. 3rd N.C.
STEVENSON'S CAVALRY
AND ARTILLERY

APPROXIMATE PLACE
WHERE SCINDIA'S CAVALRY
ATTACKED STEVENSON'S
FLANK

CAVALRY
INFANTY

STEVENSON'S
COLUMN

CENTRAL

INMETIONAL POSITION OF
WELLESLEY'S ARMY

WELLESLEY'S CAVALRY &
ATTACHED ARTILLERY

ININITAL POSITION OF
STEVENSON'S ARMY

1/8 MAURAS
GUARDING CAMP

47 MAURAS
GUARDING CAMP
and most probably the quality of the army would also be inferior in view of the large casualties recently suffered and the fact that some of the regiments trained by the Europeans had disbanded. Wellesley now had to make a hard decision as to when to attack. His army and that of Stevenson had already covered over eighteen miles and the troops were tired as the day had been hot. Should he decide to attack the next morning the possibility of the enemy melting away at night or harassing his force could not be ruled out. On the other hand he had only a few hours of day light left and the troops were tired.

A situation so similar to that obtained in Asai rose once more and once more Wellesley took the decision to attack at once. Perhaps he had confidence in his troops who had trained hard and were tough and fit. He issued his orders for attack and the wheels of battle procedure started moving.

He sent the baggage in the rear and detailed 1/3 Madras and about three Squadron of Mysore horse to guard the baggage camp. They were allotted several field pieces and four 12 pounder siege guns for local protection. The precaution was necessary because otherwise the Maratha cavalry and the pindhars would have looted the camp by pouncing on it like a hoard of locust. Wellesley had four 6 pounders of the two British units (bullock drawn) and probably two 5.5 inch guns.

Likewise Stevenson detailed 2/7 Madras with some of his Mysore infantry, cavalry and artillery to guard his baggage camp.
THE BATTLE OF ARGAON—DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES

AREA OCCUPIED BY SCINDIA'S CAVALRY IN TWO MASSES

APPROXIMATE POSITION

15 BATTALIONS & 38 GUNS

APPROXIMATE PLACE WHERE SCINDIA'S CAVALRY ATTACKED STEVENSON'S FLANK

CENTRAL

INITIAL POSITION OF STEVENSON'S ARMY

1/3 MADRAS GUARDING CAMP

INITIAL POSITION OF WELLESLEY'S ARMY

2/7 MADRAS GUARDING CAMP

WELLESLEY'S CAVALRY E. ATTACHED ARTILLERY

STEVENSOW'S CAVALRY AND ARTILLERY

MUGULS 11th N.C. 3rd N.C.

WELLESLEY'S COLUMN

BIRSOFI

COLUMBUS

CENTRAL

IMI CHAPLINS OF WELLESLEY'S ARMY

STEVENSOW'S CAVALRY

INFANTRY CAVALRY

INFANTRY CAVALRY

LARGE MASS OF MARATHA INFANTRY

AREA OCCUPIED BY BERAR'S CAVALRY IRREGULAR INFANTRY AND ARTILLERY

NAPOLÉONIC WAR

INFORMATION

CAVALRY

INFANTRY

11th NC

3rd NC
The two British armies advanced north from Paterly in four columns, Wellesley on the right and Stevenson on the left. Both the flanks were protected by cavalry and the infantry marched in the centre (see Battle sketch No. 6). Both the corps were roughly of equal strength, Stevenson's battalions though less in number had a greater bayonet strength as he had not suffered casualties so far. He had one British and five native battalions while Wellesley had two British weak battalions and five EIC battalions. Stevenson was weaker in British cavalry. He had only two EIC regiments while Wellesley had one Kings and three EIC units. But Stevenson had several thousand Moghal cavalry while Wellesley had only his Mysore cavalry which was light cavalry. Wellesley's Marathas were marching separately at this time. Wellesley sent his orders to them through a messenger who 'missed his road', so they were not engaged during the 29th. How far it was accidental is any body's guess. In the battle of Asai one will recollect that the chief guide had lost his way first and later lost his life too, but Stevenson was kept out of the battle. It would be only natural if the Marathas kept out of the battle with their kith and kin. In the Battle of Asai, Wellesley had kept the Marathas out of the battle.

Stevenson's order of march consisted of the pickets of the day, followed by the Kings 94th Foot, followed by 2/2, 2/9, 1/11, 2/11 and 1/6 EIC battalions in that order. As these troops had rest at Paterly, they were comparatively fresh.
They took up battle positions as shown in the sketch in that order. (Map 6)

Wellesley's troops were not formed in battle order to start with. His column was lead by the pickets of the day followed by 2/12 and 1/10 Madras. Then came the king's 7th and the 74th and three more EIC battalions, the 1/2, 1/3 and 1/4.

The four British columns--two of cavalry on the flanks and two of infantry in the centre approached the village of Sirsoli and the plain of Arzaum from the south. The advance was through seven foot tall crop of millet which gave cover to the infantry. As the ground was rising towards the north, the Maratha army could not be seen. The plain of Arzaum is flat, a wide and deep nullah divides it in the centre. This served the purpose of interformation boundary between Stevenson and Wellesley and helped the troops to maintain direction. As the ground was interspersed with subsidiary nullahs, it provided cover for infantry in their advance.

While the troops were moving into the Assembly area, Wellesley moved forward to carry out a detailed reconnaissance. He realised that the enemy had chosen the ground well. They were on high ground. A frontal attack was not the best answer but he had only three and a half hours of daylight and there was no time for any outflanking moves. So reluctantly he decided to attack frontally.

The infantry moved from the Assembly area to the forming up place, keeping clear of the nullah and fanned out.
BATTLE OF ARGAON - 29 November 1803

ARGAON

ENGLISH ARMY - AFTER BATTLE

SHINDE

MARATHA INFANTRY

BHONSALE

ENGLISH ARMY

COL STEVENSON

6th Regt

74th Bn 78th Bn

ROUTES OF WITHDRAWAL

DIRECTIONS OF ATTACK

MAP NO 6

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Wellesley rested his left flank on the nullah and extended his front to the east and Stevenson rested his right flank on the nullah and extended to the west. The battalion guns were deployed between the gaps left between battalions.

After his reconnaissance Wellesley went back to Sirsoli and met Stevenson, who was very ill suffering from dysentry. He therefore was riding on an elephant in a howda. By now Wellesley had finalised his plan of attack. As per plan all Stevenson's cavalry was brigaded under Lieutenant Colonel A St. leper, whose task was to protect the left flank of the British army. This force consisted of two EIC cavalry regiments and several thousand Mughal horse. While Wellesley grouped his cavalry on the right flank of the Karathas since Shinde's army was deployed most of the nulla, his cavalry holding the west flank, thus facing Stevenson's corps while the cavalry of Berar were holding the Karatha left flank, facing Wellesley's cavalry. Shinde's cavalry was arranged in two brigades. One behind the other, giving depth. On the east, the Raja of Berar had deployed 36 guns in the front. Fifteen battalions of infantry were deployed in the front line and another mass of infantry was in depth. As an army commander Wellington had no reserve. All his forces were committed to the attack.

When the British and Indian troops came out of the crops, for the first time they saw the huge mass of Karatha army lined up with their guns in front. When they were 3000 yards
away, the Maratha artillery opened a barrage. A chance shot hit a six pounder gun being pulled by ten bullocks. The gun was smashed but the bullocks survived. They panicked and wheeled to the rear and went off running helter skelter. The panic spread to another gun team and although that gun was not hit the bullocks charged back into the infantry pickets of two British and six EIC half companies. The Europeans dodged the gun and kept their position but some of the Indian sepoys panicked and twenty bullocks and 250 sepoys charged back into the next two battalions and the panic spread. "The fact is that the 1st of the 10th and 2nd of the 12th and the native part of the ploults broke and ran off." Wellesley who was only 150 yards away saw the plight and rode up to the running infantry trying to stop them. An officer who witnessed the scene, described what he did. "The General who was then close to the spot under a tree giving orders to the brigadiers perceiving what had happened immediately stepped out in front hoping by his presence to restore the confidence of the troops. But seeing that this did not produce the desired effect, he mounted his horse, and rode up to the retreating battalions, who, instead of losing his temper, upbraiding them and endeavouring to force them back to the spot from which they had fled, as most people would have done, he quietly ordered the officers to lead their men under cover of the village, and then to rally and get them into order as quickly as possible. This being done, he put the column again in motion.
and leading these very same runaways round the other side of
the village, formed them on the very spot he originally
intended them to occupy. This was at once a masterpiece of
generalship and a signal display of the intuitive knowledge
of human nature only to be found in great minds. There is
not one man in a million who on seeing the troops turn their
backs, would not have endeavoured to bring them again to the
spot from which they had retreated. In this attempt it is
more probable that he would have failed, and in that case,
the panic would, most likely, have extended down the column,
producing the most disastrous consequences. Wellesley him­
self admitted that if he had not been there, the day would
have been lost.18

While he was bringing the two battalions back into line,
he had ordered his troops to lie down to minimise the effects
of the intense bombardment to which they were being subjected
to by the enemy. Actually, here was a very good opportunity
for the Raja of Berar. Taking advantage of the confusion had
he attacked the remaining infantry battalions who were lying
down would have run away especially since Wellesley was not
there. But the Marathas did not take the initiative.

Wellesley had drawn the infantry in one line with the
cavalry in reserve. He had about 1000 men as opposed to 30,000
Maratha troops. Normally the British troops were kept on
flanks and the EIC battalions used to be sandwiched in between,
but this time as Wellesley did not have enough time to get his
troops arranged in the correct sequence, he kept the British battalions in the centre and the SIC battalions were on the flanks. Lieutenant Colonel Wallace and Adams commanded the infantry brigades. Wellesley himself stayed with the cavalry as Lieutenant Colonel Maxwell, their brigade commander had been killed at Asafi. Lieutenant Colonel St Leger commanded the British cavalry. The cavalry was kept well to the east of Sirsoli-Arvaum nullah. The advance commenced cautiously, Stevenson and Wallace leading the infantry. When the line reached 800 yards, Wellesley sent forward eight galloper guns another two hundred yards forward and opened fire. The cavalry was ordered to wait for effect and then advance. In the meantime Wellesley came back to the infantry corps. As the advance of the infantry had been over broken country, it was difficult to haul the guns. They had to be unlimbered and manhandled. In those days the infantry advanced in drill square order and tried to maintain dressing while advancing to attack, rather than taking advantage of the broken ground and moving forward in loose order, presenting a small target to the guns as is done today.

When the infantry reached the assault line which was 500 yards away, the British guns opened up. The Maratha gun fire had been closed down as they had been firing for a long time and the barrels had become hot. On the flank the cavalry had reached a line 200 yards away from the enemy. The British cavalry was trained to advance as a unit with swords drawn.
Although the Maratha soldier was brave, he fought as an individual and not as a unit. When the British cavalry charged, Bhosle's cavalry after a brief fight broke the engagement and took to its heels. The infantry could not stand the cavalry charge and they too broke up leaving a few guns and equipment behind.

In the centre, Bhosle's Regular battalions were commanded by Manya Bapoo, Haja of Berar's brother, a brave soldier. They stood the British artillery fire. Manya Bapoo now attacked the British centre which was held by the two King's Regiment, with 1500 Arab soldiers who were ferocious and tough fighters. The Arabs were by far the best professional soldiers in those days in India, but they too fought as individuals and were not trained to fight as units and sub-units. The Arabs came on unsupported by artillery fire and attacked the 74th and the 78th Regiment. The Arabs fought hard and fell almost to a man mostly by the fire of the Highlanders and the British artillery. Their bravery was of no use against gunfire. Those who survived the artillery fire got into hand to hand combat and were bayonetted. It was unfortunate for them that they came across well trained King's Regiments. Had Wellesley kept the EIC battalions in the centre they would not have stood the ferocious attack of the Arabs. Simultaneously with the infantry attack in the centre, Shinde's cavalry attacked the lefthand battalions of Stevenson's Corps 1/6 and 2/11 Madras. The attack however, was made half heartedly by troops who had suffered
a defeat in issue and was not pressed home.

Wellesley now seized the initiative and on his orders the whole line of infantry and their guns advanced in an orderly manner; the guns giving fire support and leapfrogging following the principle of fire and movement. They fell on Maha Bapoo's infantry which numbered about 15,000 including artillery. They were well posted and reasonably well lead but they had seen that the rebels had failed in their attack and were killed. They stood the attack for some time and returned the fire of the enemy but soon fell back on the second line of infantry which composed of illtrained, ill-equipped and ill led second rate troops who just turned about and without giving a fight fled. That was the end of the battle on right flank.

Shinde's left flank was now wide open as his cavalry charge had met limited success. Lieut. Colonel St Leger now charged Shinde's right flank in a well led cavalry charge.

Shinde's army at Arzlam consisted of all cavalry. He had formed in two groups. There was not much fighting on Shinde's front as the two EIC cavalry regiments lost a total of two Europeans and one Indian and eleven were wounded. Shinde's army too left the battlefield even before the Raja of Berar's infantry was defeated. The battle was thus over and Lieutenant Colonel St Leger took up the pursuit. He assumed command of all cavalry regiments and organised the pursuit of the Marathas for two days. These six regiments of the EIC and the Mughal cavalry killed thousands of Maratha soldiers in retreat,
especially during the first moonlit night. Elephants, camels, horses and bullocks many of them laden with baggage were captured. The Mysore horsemen took part in the pursuit but the Peshwa cavalry under Appa Desai and Gokhale joined the main force a day too late to take part in the pursuit. It is estimated that the Marathas lost nearly 5000 soldiers. The British casualties were

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Kissing 5

**Analysis of the Battle of Argaum**

The Maratha records mention that "Vithalpant commanded the army of Bhosle. He had 30-35 thousand troops under him. He fought a battle near Akola Balapur for five hours in which three four battalions of Wellesley were cut down and Vithalpant lost two thousand men. Bhosle himself was thirty miles behind and Shinde was fifteen miles east of Jalgaon. Wellesley had Nizam's battalions with him. After a fight for five hours Vithalpant retreated. He was closely pursued by Wellesley. Bakshi then retreated fifteen miles to a side. Shinde and Bhosle are planning to give another battle to Wellesley. Amritrao is with Wellesley. Although Wellesley suffered heavy losses he is alert and has taken up pursuit."

An analysis of the battle brings out certain points.
Although the Battle of Arraum is less important as compared to the Battle of Assai, there is no doubt that this battle ended the coalition of Shinde and Bhosle. Wellesley once again proved to be a better general than the Maratha chiefs. With a force of approximately 15,000, he defeated an army twice that of his, in strength. Both the armies were fairly well balanced. They had artillery, infantry and cavalry.

As far as the initial deployment is concerned, the deployment was quite sound. They had deployed good infantry battalions in the centre and cavalry on the flanks. They had depth in their defences. A second line of infantry and cavalry provided depth and reserve. The guns were deployed in front and as is seen, they gave a good account of themselves although they could have held the fire a bit longer and allowed the enemy to come closer rather than opening at extreme range.

As far as command and control is concerned there was no unity of command. Vithalpant Bakshi and Manya Bapoo appear to have fought their own battles although the timing of the infantry attack in the centre does coincide with the Shinde’s cavalry attack, there seems to be a lack of a joint plan. Shinde's forces consisted mainly of cavalry while that of Bhosle had infantry as the main component. As they held a wide front, they could have outflanked Wellesley's forces and the cavalry could have fanned out and threatened the flanks. Rather than doing that Shinde held cavalry in two groups one behind the other. Both Shinde and Bhosle were not present.
at the battlefield as is seen from Maratha records.

Wellesley had gone into action in a hurry. He did not have his troops in the correct order and therefore could not follow the normal pattern of having the Kings regiments on the right flank and the 9IC battalions in the centre. He lost time as the 1/1C and 2/12 Madras ran away in panic. However, this later saved the day. When the Arab force of 1500 attacked the centre the Kings Regiment held their ground. Since their casualties were 13 killed and over 86 wounded (Stevenson's 94th Regiment had 2 killed and 37 wounded), it must have been a good battle. The 9IC battalions, two of whom had already run away and been brought back by superb generalship of Wellesley would not have stood their ground.

Wellesley planned the battle, carried out forward reconnaissance and gave orders to his brigade commanders following the battle procedure as given in the text book. He held the cavalry as reserve under his personal control. The tactics followed were fire and movement. There was proper coordination between the advance of infantry, guns and cavalry.

As far as the decision to attack is concerned, Wellesley had very little choice. Had he delayed the attack, either the enemy would have melted away at night or more likely would have attacked Wellesley's army at night. However, his decision was not hasty nor was he taking undue risk. Firstly he was confident of the endurance of his own troops who had been marching thirty miles a day for days on end. It was not too
much to expect of them to attack after marching 20 miles. Secondly he knew the state of morale of the Maratha army after its defeat at Asai. Shinde's Vakils who were with Wellesley requested him not to attack Shinde's army as negotiations were going on but Wellesley replied that Shinde had broken trust. Instead of going 50 miles north of Ellichpoor as the terms of the treaty stipulated, he had joined with Bhonsle. Actually this was a wrong move on the part of the Marathas. Shinde had lost all his guns and most of his infantry in the battle of Asai wherein only Wellesley's corps was involved. They should have known that in the next battle, Wellesley and Stevenson would produce formidable opposition. The only good infantry which Bhosle had were the regular battalions commanded by Kanya Bapoo. However, once contact was made, making a clean break would not have been easy as the Maratha army encumbered with heavy baggage and guns moved at a very slow pace.

Wellesley's skill as a general is not only in the conduct of the actual battle but even before that. He planned the moves of both the corps in such a way that a day prior to the D day they were one day's march from each other and concentrated as per plan, on the day of the battle. A similar plan had failed at Asai as Stevenson lost his way at night prior to the day of the attack, placing Wellesley "on the horns of a dilemma". In the conduct of the battle, Wellesley's skill in the use of the ground especially the nala Sirsoli-Aravum
produced casualties and made Maratha guns non-effective. He had a firm grip on the battle is obvious from the fact that he brought 1/10 and 2/12 battalions on the battlefield after their panicky withdrawal. He moved the cavalry to the right flank keeping space between regiments and ordered the galloper guns to advance fire. In the meantime he came back to the infantry and moved them forward. This move being covered by infantry guns, thus perfecting the fire and movement drill. The infantry did not or could not advance in line as the ground was broken, but moved in groups which was an innovation which reduced casualties.

Throughout these four months since August, Wellesley's administration did not break down even once. He ensured a proper supply before moving forward. Wellesley had adopted an offensive defence. His instructions to Stevenson were to exercise caution but at the same time not to get molested by the Pindharies or go into defence waiting to be attacked. This way he ensured security of his forces.

There was complete unity of command. General Wellesley was only 31 while Colonel Stevenson was almost 60 but like a good soldier he carried out orders given by his senior officer, senior in rank though not in age and experience. Though very ill, he did not leave his command. Wellesley praised him in his report to the Governor General in his dispatches dated 30th November, 1803. He added later with sincerity: "I am much obliged to Colonel Stevenson for the advice and assistance I have received from him."
The Marathas lost 3 guns in this battle. "Our late victory was grand" he wrote to the Company's Resident in Mysore, Colonel Close. "It has made a great impression throughout the country. Indeed, between the destruction there dealt out and the subsequent desertion of troops, the enemy have but few troops left; and I anxiously hope that they will come within reach to give them a parting blow with our cavalry only. ...."  

THE BATTLE OF GAWLIGAD

In the battle of Argaum, Shinde suffered a severe defeat along with Bhosle. He had lost the fort of Ahmednagar in August, suffered a severe defeat at Assi in September in which he lost about 100 guns and his infantry disbanded. He had been deserted by European officers and now in November, he lost his cavalry also. In the north General Lake won a decisive victory at Laswari on 1st November, when Ambaji Ingle was utterly defeated, Shinde had also lost Gujrat and Baroch had fallen to Colonel Murray. Therefore for all practical purposes Shinde was out of the contest and Wellesley could concentrate his attention on defeating Raja of Berar, whose next stronghold was Gawilgarh fort. In Orissa Lt.Col. Harcourt had conquered Cuttack province. Now for the first time the British controlled territory extended along the coast from Madras to Calcutta. The Maratha confederacy no longer touched on the Bay of Bengal. Thus, Raja of Berar was also being
hemmed in from all sides. In Malwa, Murray was advancing on Ujjain.

The two British armies that had won at Assam were in fine physical and mental condition. On 30 November 1803 Wellesley wrote to the Governor General that he intended to march towards Cawnpore the next day, so that the enemy does not get any respite. Raja of Berar's brother Kanya Bapoo had withdrawn in the direction of that fort.

By this time, Shinde had already started peace negotiations, immediately after the battle of Asal. Now Raja of Berar also sent a Vakeel to Wellesley, but Wellesley demanded compensation and told the Vakeel to stay at Lichpore until this condition was agreed to. As both Shinde and Raja of Berar had not delegated sufficient authority to their Vakeels Wellesley, who was flushed with victory was in no mood to encourage his opponents to dillydally and gain time. He told the Vakeels to go and come back only if they have full powers to negotiate. In a letter to Major Kerrick Shawe dated 2nd December, 1803, Wellesley writes: "A Vakeel has come in from the Raja of Berar, but nothing very particular has occurred. I have demanded compensation from the Raja, and I have desired the Vakeel to stay at Lichpore until he is authorised to grant it. The powers of Shinde's Vakeels were not quite so perfect. Upon this point, as I wished and they shall go away tomorrow unless they can produce them in more perfect form. There is no dealing with these Marathas unless they are treated in this
manner, and unless a regular document is brought forward upon every point they may occur."

While negotiations were going on Wellesley reached Gawilgarh on 3rd December. His impression was that Gawilgarh was not as formidable as some of the forts won by his troops in Mysore.

At this juncture Shinde ratified the treaty for suspending hostilities and agreed to go east of Ellicnpore according to the term of the agreement. Rachhuji Bhosale also sent a Vakeel who asked Wellesley to cease hostilities which Wellesley refused. The reason was that Colonel Stevenson had already equipped his corps at Asirgarh for the siege of Gawilgarh. Wellesley's strategy was to reduce the military power of Bhosale so that he does not form a coalition with Holkar later. Bhosale's infantry had not suffered much in the battle of Argaum and a large force had managed to withdraw to Gawilgarh. He thus was a potential danger. As his border was adjoining to Nizam territory, he could any time plunder that area. Thus it was not prudent to come to terms with him unless his force was defeated. Shinde was no more a danger but in order that Holkar does not become very powerful both Shinde and Bhosale each militantly weak had to be bound by an alliance in order to isolate Holkar. This was Wellesley's strategy. Moreover, in order to maintain the balance of power it would, however, not do to leave Bhosale strong when Shinde was militarily incapacitated. If these two powers were totally destroyed
he would merely augment the power of another, the formidable Holkar, who though not at present at war, with the company, could easily, by acquiring the bulk of his defeated rival's disintegrating army, provide a new threat to the peace of India.

The Governor General had different views on the subject. In his instructions to Gen. Wellesley dated 27th June 1803, he had instructed that Shinde's artillery should be destroyed along with all European arms and equipment he may possess. He wanted Wellesley to destroy completely Shinde and Bhosle which would have made a bad peace. He even went to the extent of asking Wellesley to make prisoner of Jaulatrao and Raghujibhosle. The entire reduction of Shinde's power would certainly afford considerable security to British interests. Shinde was not only to be defeated and destroyed militarily but deprived of all his possessions, rights and pretensions within the countries to the northward of a line drawn from the north frontier of Grind to the frontiers of Jaipur. This would include Agra, Delhi and the remainder of the Doab of the Jamna and Ganges. The Kophul Emperor would then necessarily fall under the protection of the British thus finishing Shinde's role as the kingmaker. By this arrangement the Marathas would be excluded from north India and the Sikhs would be isolated. All Shinde's territories in Gujarath, all ports under his control, and his possessions in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra were to be annexed.
In short Shinde was to be 'cut to size'. He was to be reduced to the status of third rate vassal and bound fully by the subsidiary alliance. Little wonder, Wellesley who was carrying out these orders ignored the pleas of the Vakeels and fought the battles of Argaum and Gawilgad. Otherwise he could have concluded a treaty.

A similar punishment was to be given to the Naja of Berar. Whole of province of Cuttack was to be taken away so that the British get all the eastern sea coast.

The empire builder had cast his net far and wide and his generals were fighting according to a set grand strategy. Wellesley had come to India as stated earlier in Chapter I inspired with a sense of mission.

General Wellesley's views on the Governor's general policy were radically different. He realised that in the absence of civic agreement in India except in Bengal, all other landlords rule by the sword. If that is taken away from them, they can collect no revenue, can give no civil assistance, and can exercise no government. Their territories are over-run by armed robbers who are ready to enlist with anybody who will lead them to plunder, and there is no power, in the country to support the government and give protection to the working classes. They then take to plunder and loot merely to exist.

The Governor General was far removed from the scene. Only a person on the spot like General Wellesley could un-
stand the dangers of destroying local powers. The only remedy was to allow the Mahas to retain their armies.

However, it was clear to Wellesley that in order to make Raghunath Bhoj sign a treaty, Gawilgad must be taken. Wellesley wrote to Lt. General Stuart on 3rd December 1803 stating that Raghunath Bhoj will sign a treaty only if pressed hard.

**Gawilgad**

The fort of Gawilgad is situated in a range of mountains between the sources of the rivers Poorna and Tapi. It stands on a lofty mountain in this range. It consists of an inner fort which faces the south where the rock is very steep and an outer fort, which covers the inner to the north west and north. The outer fort has a third wall, which covers the approach to it from the north by the village of Labada. All these walls were strongly built, and fortified by ramparts and towers. The fort had three entrances, one to the north west, one in the north and one in the south.

Wellesley moved his armies towards Gawilgad on 30th November and on 3rd December, he camped 15 miles from the fort. He established a hospital at Ellichpore. He himself moved forward and approached to within two miles from the south east during a personal reconnaissance. He realised that the main task would be to find a suitable approach.

Two roads approached the fort from the South from the
valley below. The easterly approach was so difficult (see Map 7) that even bullocks could not negotiate it. Thus it would have been very difficult to move guns along this axis. It was a footpath going over a sheer climb. The other westerly road was better. Although it too was narrow and steep, it could take moderately loaded bullock carts. As it climbed up there were sheer drops on both sides and it was exposed to enemy fire over the last half mile, and enemy had guns on the west wall of the inner fort.

The defences consisted of two parts. To the North on a tongue of the hill which connected two hill features an outer fort was constructed which stood as a sentinel guarding the inner fort. The ground north of this outer fort consisted of a plateau which was on the same height as the forts. Welleslev realised that the best approach to the objective would be from the North, although it involved a long approach march of 30 miles over difficult terrain from Ellichpore. Carrying of guns would be an engineering feat in itself. He gathered more intelligence from Ellichpore which was in Nizam's territory and confirmed his findings by reconnaissance and formulated his plan. In his words the plan in outline was "Colonel Stevenson has equipped his corps at Assergur for the siege of Gwalichur, for whose services, it had long been destined; and I therefore determined that he should make the principal attack by Labada while I should cover his operations by my own division and all the cavalry and, if possible,
assist them by other attacks to the southward and westward.”

Colonel Stevenson’s division was to storm the northern face of the Gawilghar fort on 15th December at 10.00 O’clock.

As a first phase of his operation, Wellesley had to secure area Deozaum-Demaraum, two villages one on each axis. The enemy then would not be able to cut off Stevenson’s force from that of Wellesley and approach to Ellichpore, which was a base for Wellesley’s army, would be secure. Wellesley began his operations from Ellichpore on 6th December. He sent 1/7 Madras under Lieutenant Colonel Chalmers to clear Deozaum and the valley four miles south of Gawilgad. He sent another column consisting of 1/6 Madras and two companies of the King’s 9th under Captain Maitland to seize the fortified village of Demaraum which covers the entrance to the mountains. Moreover engineer reconnaissance parties were operating ahead of Demaraum who needed protection. Both the columns completed their task on the 6th and the Marathas retreated to Gawilgad.

On the 7th both the divisions marched from Ellichpore. Colonel Stevenson’s engineers and infantry struggled hard for 5 days in the hills manhandling guns all the way on roads constructed by the troops themselves. Wellesley’s division camped at Deozaum nine miles from Ellichpore. The troops began to climb the Gawilghar hills at Demaraum and continued in the rugged country. They had to cut trees and build tracks which involved at one place, filling up a chasm to
shorten the route. His guns reached Labada which is situated on top of the plateau, level with Gawilgad on the 12th.

On the same night, Colonel Stevenson erected two batteries in front of the north face of the fort; one consisting of two iron 14 pounders, and three iron 12 pounders, to breach the outer fort and third wall; and one consisting of two brass 12 pounders and two 5 inch howitzers, to clear and destroy the defences on the point of attack.

On the same night Wellesley's troops also constructed a battery for two iron and two brass 12 pounders on the mountain under the southern gate, with a view, if possible, to breaching the wall near the gate; or at all events, to draw the enemy's attention to that quarter. But the iron guns proved too heavy for manhandling and the fire of the brass guns was not very effective.

Wellesley's total artillery according to Major General Sir Jasper Nicolls KCB consisted of four iron 12 pounders, four brass 12 pounders, six or eight 6 pounders, and two 5½ inch howitzers, with a large number of tumbrils, ammunition, forage and store carts. A brigade of guns was attached to each corps of cavalry and infantry; (here the terms brigade and corps mean battery and perhaps a brigade) the 19th Dragoons, had 6 pounders, native cavalry, 3 pounders; the former drawn by six horses, the latter by four. The infantry had their own 6 pounders, pulled by 10 to 12 bullocks. The iron 12 pounders were drawn by forty-four bullocks. In addition, an elephant
was attached with each pair of guns. Stevenson had two iron 18 pounders and three iron 12 pounders and two brass 12 pounders and two 5 inch howitzers.

The fire of all these batteries opened on the 13th in the morning and by the night of 14th, breaches in the walls were big enough for the infantry to storm them. There were to be three breaches in all, a wider one in the lower wall and two in the upper structure.

As stated earlier, Wellesley had planned to attack the fort from the north. From this side it was not so awe inspiring. Although it was built on the summits of two hills with deep and precipitous slopes almost all round, a corridor about 400 yards lead from the hills to the northern wall. The tongue of land was not open to the wall, two thirds of it was protected by an artificial lake nearly full of water about 120 yards wide. The fortifications of Gawilgarh were built to fit the terrain rather than according to any regular plan. One of its weaknesses was that it had no means of delivering flanking fire. The outer defences extended for more than six miles and varied in strength.

The Marathas had more than fifty guns on the walls, some small and others large. Two of them were huge 11 inch wrought iron guns. One a 22 feet long gun was mounted on the northern side of the inner fort, which covered the northern approach and could turn almost through 180 degrees. Another similar 12 inch gun pointed to the south.
Gawilgarh had a garrison of 200-4000 men under a Rajput Killeddar. It was reinforced by Bennysingh and his regular infantry which had withdrawn from Argaum. This force was armed with muskets and bayonets. The outposts from Deogaoam and Damaraum had also withdrawn into the fort. The permanent garrison had their families and there was a large civilian population residing in the fort.

As Stevenson was still very sick, Wellesley used to ride to Labada during the day, watch the battle, confer with Colonel Stevenson's brigade commanders and return to Deogaon covering almost twenty five miles a day on horseback.

Stevenson did not have detailed knowledge about the layout of the fortress or its defences. No accurate plan or sketch was available to plan the attack in detail. There was an outer fort and inner fort and one had to capture the outer fort to get to the inner fort from the northern approach. The two flat peaks were separated by an irregular ravine up to 300 feet deep which defied all reconnaissance parties. In the inner fort there were water tanks and solid buildings. The fort was well stocked with rations, weapons, ammunition and military equipment. The Mahratta leaders however were not trained in the art of defence of their fortress. There was no plan of defence. They did not try to prevent Stevenson's army from approaching the flat ground south of Labada. They made no effort to protect the outer wall with an earthen glacis, nor did they fire during the nights of 11th or 12th when Stevenson
Wellesley now moved some of his force to a village Baury at the junction of the two tracks from the south and the north west gates. Patrols were sent out to reconnoitre the southern walls. Wellesley realised that he will have to use the difficult eastern route to the south gate of the inner fort to get his artillery up within range of the gate. The other road was broader and could take animal traffic but came under direct gunfire from the fort.

All attempts to get the heavy iron 12 pounders up the eastern route failed, but two brass 12 pounders and two light 5.5 inch howitzers were mounted in a battery within 400 yards of the south gate, 450 feet below it. As the brass guns had to fire at an elevation angle of almost 30 degrees, their fire did not do much damage to the wall.

On 14th December 1803, Wellesley prepared a memorandum in which he outlined the plan. The main features of the plan were:

1. Colonel Wallace, with his own understrength 74th regiment, five companies of the 7th, and the ever reliable 1st battalion 8th regiment, was to take up a position under the Peerputty gate following the steep route before day light. He was to try and move forward a detachment in front of the 12 pounder battery as far as the uppermost tower before daylight.

2. Colonel Stevenson's attack was scheduled at 10
O'clock on 15th December 1803. At this hour, Colonel Wallace was to create a diversion by pushing more troops to the uppermost tower. Stevenson was to detail storming parties who would try and open Peerputty and Delhi gates from his side. These parties were to be assisted by Wallace from his side. Once the gates were open Wallace was to rush in with his troops.

(3) Five companies of the 78th regiment and the 1/10 Madras, with a 6 pounder attached to the 1st of the 8th were detailed under Colonel Chalmers, who was to concentrate at a suitable place near Delhi gate by taking the less difficult western route. At 10 O'Clock he was to push forward a party with a gun and try to blow up Delhi gate. The party was to be given supporting fire. As soon as the gates were blown open or opened from inside, he was to communicate with Stevenson's division.

(4) A company of 1/8 was given the task of local protection of the 12 pounder battery and a company of the 1/10 was left for the protection of the camp.

Wellesley had warned his commanders that they must ensure that no looting takes place. No followers were to accompany the troops and no troops were to be allowed to quit the ranks. Wellesley had warned that he himself will be in the fort, so the orders be better carried out strictly.

On the 15th when it was reported that the breaches are practicable, he issued orders for the assault. A storming party was to be commanded by lieutenant Colonel William Kenny.
of EIC Army. It was to consist of one flank and two battalion companies of the 94th regiment, and the flank companies of the 2nd brigade (consisting of his own battalion, 2/11th and 2/7th Madras).

(2) Second storming party under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Peter C. Desse of 2/2 Madras, was to have one flank and two battalion companies of His Majesty's 94th Regiment and the flank companies of the 1st Brigade (consisting of 2/2, 1/6 and the 2/9 Madras).

(3) Third party under Major Campbell of the Kings 94th, with the remainder four companies of His Majesty's 94th regiment.

(4) The 2nd brigade, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Haliburton consisting of 2/7, 1/11 and 2/11 Madras was to follow the storming party from the right.

These storming parties were to enter the breach, Kenny to turn right and Desse was to turn left to drive the enemy from the rampart while Campbell and Haliburton were to gain possession of the heights and of the enemy's guns. The assaults were to be pressed home regardless of cost. Gunners were to accompany each party who were to take over captured guns and turn them on the enemy. A total of 4600 men were assembled for the assault.

The 1st brigade less their flank companies was to be held in reserve under Lieutenant Colonel Maclean. It was to follow second brigade through the breach only if required. Stevenson's
camp was to be protected by one company each of the Native Corps.

Pioneers and scaling ladders were to accompany each party.

Thus we find that the main attack was by Kenny and Jesse with four companies each. They were to enter the breach and fan out right and left. Welleslev's own division was to divert the attention of the enemy from the main attack and storm the Southern gates or blow them up with guns.

The hour for the attack was set at 10 a.m. to give the artillery a chance to complete initial bombardment on the walls. At this stage feelers were sent out by the Killedar to negotiate for terms with Stevenson who demanded unconditional surrender and gave the Marathas half an hour to make up their mind. It appears that the Killedar, Manyabapoo and Bennysingh did not agree to these terms. When Stevenson realised that the Marathas were in no mood to surrender he ordered Kenny to advance. Manyabapoo is supposed to have chided the Killedar and called him a coward.

Stevenson's storming parties swept up the breach without meeting any serious opposition. Sir T.E. Colebrooke, Bt, MP who was the civil intelligence officer and who was present at the battles of Assai, Argaum and Gawilgarh has given an 'eye witnesses account in his book "Life of the hon. Mount Stuart Elphinstone." The Scots, followed by the sepoys charged the breach and were supported by artillery fire. The fire lifted as their own troops came in the danger zone. Although some
Marathas came forward to oppose, they were killed. The Kiledar had made no effort to close the breach at night or to dig a trench to throw back the assaulting troops. He had not even resisted his guns to fire on the breach.

Kenny's party entered the outer fort and split into two groups. One group went through the right hand upper breach pressing the enemy towards Delhi gate, which Chalmers was approaching from outside. This northwest gate actually lay in the south wall of the outer fort. In an endeavour to escape from some of Kenny's men and retreat into the inner fort, the garrison opened the gate and ran head on into Chalmers force. Thus caught between a pincer they suffered very heavy casualties.

Kenny himself went with the other party and went straight for the inner fort. He was joined by Hess's units. Now they found that between the two forts there was a deep ravine which separated the two forts. Although the outer fort was in British hands, the main battle still lay ahead. The larger and more powerful inner fort was still with the Marathas. The most formidable defences in Gawilgarh the so-called 'third wall' lie south of the ravine. On this side the only entrance is through a series of five massive gates with long, steep, and narrow angled passages between. The entire route was swept by fire from battlements along the top of each passage. This retreat route for the garrison in the outer fort was prematurely closed; thus they were trapped and slaughtered at the Delhi gate.

Had the British brought their guns forward along with
then, they could have blasted these gates. Now it was out of question as it would take considerable time and give the enemy a chance to recover. Only other alternative was a frontal assault on the wall.

Kenny and Dessee formed a major portion of their twelve companies of sepoy flankers in line at the bottom of the ravine. The line extended up to 150 yards; filling most of the portion of the ravine between the inner and the outer forts. They were told to keep the enemy's heads down and prevent fire coming from the top of the 'Third wall'. Kenny then lead the three companies of Scots under his command at the succession of gate. He fell severely wounded but the attack started making headway. One finds throughout this campaign in the Deccan that the tough tasks are carried out by the British troops and the Indian troops are used only in a secondary role.

Meanwhile there was another development. The 'Third wall' along the northwest side of the inner fort is built along the top of a stiff cliff which is almost impossible to scale from that direction. However, Captain Archibald Campbell of the 94th, who had studied it with a telescope from well below believed that it could be scaled. He had reconnoitered a route leading to it and now he lead his men, one of whom carried a fifteen foot ladder with him; and reached the base of the wall without being discovered. He took full advantage of the covering fire given by Desse's troops. The garrison was busy fighting Kenny's troops, any way.
Campbell was the first to scale the ladder and jump down sword in hand, quickly followed by his highlanders. There was hand to hand fighting but soon his men got the better of the defenders. Campbell led his men east behind the battlements to the head of the line of passages and gates and started opening them one by one from the top. There were several short, bloody clashes but he succeeded. Thus the gates instead of being assaulted one by one were opened from inside by a brave and resourceful young officer at the head of a few determined men. Ten minutes later the British infantry flooded in. Even Elphinston who was a political officer and not a soldier took part in the assault. He with a small party, collected haphazardly opened the southern gate which allowed Wallace’s men to enter the fort. Wellesley himself entered with Wallace. The colours of the King’s 72nd were hoisted up and those of Berar were brought down. The fight for Gawilgarh was over.

British casualties were light. They amounted to 128 which included Lieutenant Colonel Kenny who died later of his wounds and another 13 killed. Maratha losses were however, heavy. The Killedar, all the principal officers, and the greater part of the garrison were killed. Manvabapu also died fighting at the breaches. This shows that the Marathas did not lack in valour but their strategy and tactics were poor.

Gawilgarh contained 52 cannons and 150 smaller guns which were 1/2 pounders. The garrison had 7,000 new British Brown Bess muskets complete with bayonets, scabbards, belts and
cartridge boxes. In addition there were old matchlocks but most of Berar's infantry had modern arms manufactured in Arra after the French design.

When General Wellesley entered the fort his first inquiry was for the Killedar. He found that the Killedar had slain three of his women folk and family members and gone with the sword in his hand to fight to death in the true Rajput tradition. Another three or four women were lying wounded, who were promptly attended to.

The garrison was allowed to leave the Fort with their personal belongings. They were searched at the gates and all public property was confiscated.

This brought the war with the Raja of Berar to an end and a treaty was signed on his behalf on the 17th by his Vakeel Yashwantrao Ramchandra and Wellesley on behalf of the Governor General at Deogaum which was later ratified by the Governor General and the Raja of Berar. The text of the treaty is enclosed as Appendix A.

In brief the Raja agreed to the following:
1. The province of Cuttack with its whole coast to be ceded to the English.
2. The province of Western Berar up to the river Wardha to be ceded to the Nizam.
3. Bhosle to respect the treaties concluded with his feudatories by the British.
4. Bhosle to dissolve the Maratha confederacy and entertain no enemy of the English in his service.
Gawilgarh was handed back to the Raja of Berar so that all his power is not lost.

By this treaty Bhosle was detached from Shinde, thus allowing Wellesley to concentrate his attention on the latter, who realizing that he could not hold out alone any longer sent his Vakeels Kamalnavan Munshi and Vithal Pant, his Chief Minister to discuss terms with General Wellesley. Thus the famous treaty of Anjangaon Surjee was signed on 30th December, (See Appendix B) according to which

(1) Shinde ceded to the British the Jamna-Ganga Doab.
    The Delhi-Agra region along the Jamna, parts of Bundelkhand, Broach and some districts of Gujarat, the Fort of Ahmednagar and the Ajanta region, upto the Godavari.

(2) Shinde to renounce his control upon the Emperor and also,

(3) to relinquish all claims on the Peshwa, the Nizam and the Gaikwad and recognise the independence of all those feudatories who had made separate engagements with the British.

(4) Shinde not to entertain in his service any Frenchman or American or any other enemies of the British.
Shinde was asked to accept a British Subsidiary Force which he declined to do but later accepted by the Treaty of Burhanpur on 27th February, 1804.
On further representation, Burhanpur and Ashirgarh were restored to him.
On 23rd December, Arthur Wellesley issued a proclamation:

"Peace having been concluded between the Honourable the East India Company and their Allies, on the one part and Senah Soubah Bagnujee Bhonsale on the other, hostilities are to cease forthwith; of which all officers and others concerned are to take notice...etc.

The reaction of the Governor General to the Treaty can be summed up in his own language in one sentence: "Although I entirely approved your armistice, and though it is a most judicious measure, I confess that I prefer your victory to your armistice..."

He still insisted: "In any truce or treaty you must now require hostages from Scindiah's or Ragojee's family, upon Lord Cornwallis' principles in 1792. If you should happen to take the persons of Scindiah or Ragojee, you will send them with an escort of honour to Fort William..."

Wellesley, on the whole, however, displayed a soldierly spirit of leniency in victory and large heartedness towards his defeated foes. He was fully aware of the difficulties of the British situation and knew how to exploit his success without coming to a breaking point, which shows that he was not only a good soldier but a good statesman as well. He considered it a better policy to make the Subdued Chief innocuous but not too weak. He was conscious of the activities of Yashwantrao Holkar, who though temporarily lulled into neutrality, was not likely to submit to British domination without
a fight. It was better to have friendly feudatories who can hold their own.

General Wellesley did all he could to improve the situation with a worthless person like Bajirao II on the one hand and the imperious all grabbed Governor General bent upon complete annihilation of the Marathas on the other. A close study of the papers reveals the fact that there was not much love lost between the two brothers in office, then handling the destinies of India.

Daulatrao Shinde signed the treaty not because of his defeat in Asai, Asnirbad and Argaon alone, but he also suffered serious reverses in the North in the campaign conducted by General Lake which is being dealt with elsewhere. His condition now was pitiable. Once upon a time Mahadji Shinde was a king maker and a pillar of strength to the Maratha Kingdom. He had a powerful, well trained, and well equipped army commanded by professional soldiers both Indians and Europeans. He had strong artillery and modern infantry. He had acquired the most fertile dominions in the north, he had the person of the Emperor and his capital. All that was now lost by Daulatrao. By playing a treacherous game and following a short sighted policy he had created enmity with Yashwantrao Holkar who remained intact, while Peshwa and Raghuji Bhosle, his allies became powerless. Yashwantrao became daily more aggressive in the north and Daulatrao had no means of checking him. This made Shinde helpless. He hoped to destroy Holkar by
signing the Treaty of Burhanpore, which gave him protection
against any of his enemies.

NOTES

(2) Ibid., p. 123.
(3) Ibid., p. 131.
Footnotes.
(10) Ibid., p. 305.
(11) Ibid., p. 316.
(12) Blackiston, Twelve Years of Military Adventure, Vol. I,
pp. 144-45.
(14) The Crocker Papers, Vol. II, as quoted by Glover, Michael,
Wellington as Military Commander, pp. 353-354.
(15) Memorandum on the Battle of Assaye, Wellington's
(16) Blackiston-Twelve Years of Military Adventure as quoted
by Glover Michael, Wellington as Military Commander, p. 42.
(17) Wellington's Dispatches, Owen, p. 308.
(18) Blackiston, Twelve Years of Military Adventure, Vol. II,
p. 161.
(19) Ibid., p. 170.
(20) Maxwell, The Life of Wellington.
(21) Supplementary Dispatches, Vol. 17, pp. 185-190.
(22) Ibid., p. 211.
(23) Ibid., p. 186.
(24) Wellington's Dispatches, Vol. II.
(25) Ibid.
(28) Ibid., p. 368.
(29) Ibid., p. 362.
(30) Ibid., p. 423.
(31) Ibid., p. 365.
(32) Ibid., p. 373.
(36) Ibid., p. 505.
(37) Ibid., p. 565.
(38) Blackiston, Major John, Twelve Year's Military adventures, etc., pp. 198-200.
(40) Ibid., pp. 557-558.
(41) Ibid., p. 525.
(43) Ibid., Vol. II, p. 517.


(49) Supplementary Dispatches, Wellington, Vol. IV, p. 296.

(50) Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 298.


(52) Colebrooks, 1.2., Life of the Hon. Mount Stewart, Alphinstone, pp. 100-104.


