CHAPTER II

THE EUROPEAN ADVENTURERS AND TRANSFORMATION IN INDIAN MILITARY SYSTEM

Transformation in Indian military system on European lines was one of the important developments in north India towards the end of the century. Started by De Boigne, it reached its peak under the leadership of Perron. By Perron’s time five completely Europeanized brigades had been raised. De Boigne set up an institutionalized, systematic and methodical way of raising and training native armies on European model, something which had not been in practice earlier. In the new system, artillery and infantry, trained on European model, was formed the core of the new army, and cavalry which had earlier been the mainstay of armies was reduced to the status of a mere detachment. Different wings were created in the army that had distinct military functions. It not only made them interdependent thus introducing *esprit de corps* among them but also helped them emerge as a cohesive unit. *Telingas, Najeebs, Aligols, Gossains,* and *Mewatis* were formed the chief components of the brigades.

De Boigne played the pivotal role in the process of transformation. His employment with the Maratha leader Mahadji Sindhia and the latter’s grant of land in Aligarh to him along with full freedom to raise and train army were the major factors that led to such a transformation. Another important factor that also contributed considerably to it was the friendly relations of the adventurers’ of this phase with the English company. It resulted in large-scale migration of English soldiers also who were inducted by De Boigne and given important positions. The relations of the adventurers with the English were one of the most important distinguishing features.
between the two phases. Unlike the first one, the second phase was marked by the overt friendly relations between the French adventurers and the English officials. However, this complexion of friendly relationship changed when Perron attempted to open diplomatic parleys with the French government. It provided the much awaited pretext to the English company to attack Delhi in 1803 and liquidate Perron’s Europeanized brigades. Although General Lake registered victory over Perron, it was achieved more by luring English officers of Perron’s brigades to the English side than through a real fight, a fact which does not find much mention in the English accounts.

The military changes effected by De Boigne also had a crucial bearing on the politics of the region. The establishment of Mahadji Sindhia as a major force in the north Indian politics was only due to the military successes of De Boigne’s brigades against his master’s adversaries. In fact, it was the military potential of De Boigne’s forces that had made Mahadji Sindhia the most powerful ruler in Hindustan in the last decade of the century.

2.1 De Boigne: Early Life and ‘Indian’ Service

De Boigne was born Benoît La Borgne to a hide merchant at Chambéry in Savoy, France, in 1751. When he was just nineteen he received a commission in Clare’s regiment in the French Irish brigade. Here De Boigne received a good grounding in the army profession. But Clare’s regiment was mostly stationed in France only and there was nothing much for a common soldier to perform except to be with his platoon and turn left and right or advance and retire with others like automatic machines. It was when he realized that there was no hope of getting high promotions
in French army even after having worked there for six long years that he resigned in 1776.¹

He then took up service in Russian army in a battalion of Greeks which was raised by admiral Orloff to fight the Turks. Here he made friends with Lord Percy, Earl of Northumberland, while on an assignment to escort him in his visits to the Near-East. After the defeat of Russian army at the hands of the Turks, De Boigne arrived at Cairo with the intention to travel to India. Lord Percy helped him in this, both by introducing him to the British consul and lending him money. He also provided him with letters of introduction to European officers in India, particularly, one to Warren Hastings, the governor of Bengal, and the other to the town-major of Fort St. George, Madras.²

De Boigne landed at Madras in 1778 and joined the English company. After a brief period of work as a fencing master and an ensign he obtained a lieutenant’s commission there. It was when he was not promoted further that he resigned from his post and moved to Calcutta. With the letters of recommendation from Lord Percy he met Hastings and expressed his wish to go to Europe via the overland route through

² De Boigne’s journey was made easy by Baldwin who was the consul-general at Cairo who not only assisted him in obtaining a passage to India but also provided him with the letter for Major Sydenham, town-major of Fort St. George. After arriving at Madras, he was recommended to the governor Rumbold who was the governor and appointed as an ensign in the English company’s 6th Native battalion. James Grant Duff, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 477. ‘Esquisse de la vie du général de Boigne publiée dans le Telegraph, en 1797 et 1798’ in Victor de Saint-Génis, op. cit., p. 393-397, Letter Written by Longinus from Agra on 20 December 1796. Longinus was the pen name of L. F. Smith, an English officer, in De Boigne’s service. Jean Marie Lafont, ‘Benoît de Boigne in Hindustan’, in Jean Marie Lafont (edited), Indika, op. cit., p. 201.
Hindustan. Hastings treated him cordially and gave letters of recommendation for his safe passage through Hindustan.³

From Calcutta De Boigne reached Lucknow. After a brief stay there, he marched towards Delhi in the company of British officer Major Robert Brown.⁴ As he was being accompanied by an Englishman he was regarded as a spy both by the Mughal nobles and Maratha leader Mahadji Sindhia.⁵ Later, Mahadji Sindhia had him robbed of his papers to know his antecedents. Although some of his documents were returned to him through Anderson's efforts who was the resident at the Sindhia's court, but his letters of credit and recommendations were not given back.⁶ The loss of these documents made it impossible for him to continue his journey, and he was left with no other alternative than join some Indian rulers to earn money. It was under these circumstances that he found service with Mahadji Sindhia in 1784. It is important to note here that he owed his employment to his two English friends Anderson and Major Brown who acted as his mediators with Sindhia. Taking De Boigne as a spy despite the presence of Englishmen with him suggested that although the Marathas

⁴ Major Robert Brown during this time was deputed on a mission to the Emperor. *Ibid.*
⁵ When De Boigne was travelling from Delhi to Agra after having being denied audience with the Emperor, the Mughal noble and wazir Mirza Shafi took De Boigne as a spy when he discovered that the latter had been in the company of Brown and refused to offer him any help. Sindhia grew suspicious due to De Boigne's links with English officers in north India. De Boigne had entered into Hindustan along with Robert Brown and afterwards he was invited by James Anderson, the Resident at Sindhia's court, to his camp. Victor de Saint-Génis, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.
⁶ Victor de Saint-Génis, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.
had become friends with the English during this time yet there was lack of trust between them.\(^7\)

De Boigne was appointed at a salary of 146,000 rupees per month which also included the salary of his soldiers to raise two battalions.\(^8\) Besides, he was also given complete freedom to raise, train, and command these battalions as he deemed fit. In order to give the battalions a Europeanized look, De Boigne inducted as many Europeans as possible. He contacted the Europeans who were already in native rulers’ service and invited them to join his battalions. He also asked his friends in the English company to persuade European military specialists to join him. His contacts in the company circles helped him in managing many skilful Europeans for his task. His offer was open to all foreigners irrespective of their background and nationalities. As a result, many Europeans including Englishmen joined his service. Sangster, John Hessing, Frémont, Taylor, Lesteneau, and Ramru were some of the prominent names who joined De Boigne at this stage.\(^9\)

Most of the recruitment was made from the common folk who were poor and in utter need of employment. It was believed that their employment would not only form a quality soldier stuff as they had nothing much to lose but it would also benefit them.

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\(^7\) The contempt for the English had been prevailing from the time much before the arrival of De Boigne on the scene. It was evident from 1780-81 onwards when the Emperor and Peshwa attempted to form an anti-English alliance. The emperor assured the Peshwa of a military campaign against the English provided the Peshwa himself or his best generals came to North India to reinforce the Emperor’s army. But the plan ended up in a failure when the Marathas made peace with the English after the first Maratha war on 13\(^{th}\) October 1781. Jadunath Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 154.

\(^8\) At this juncture De Boigne was given the salary of 1000 rupees only, and the salary of 8 rupees per month was fixed for each soldier of his two battalions of 850 men. James Grant Duff, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 479.

\(^9\) Victor de Saint-Génis, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
materially.\textsuperscript{10} To attract more people to soldiery, the provision of giving army equipments and uniforms at nominal rates was also made. And most importantly, De Boigne made it a point that his soldiers were paid regularly. He fixed the salary of a soldier at 5½ rupees per month which was commensurate with that of a sepoy in the English army.\textsuperscript{11}

A recruiting system was put in place by his newly admitted European officers and Indian accountants. It included drawing up rolls, pay lists, and the work of allotting companies and battalions to the recruits. Since everything had to be done afresh, De Boigne himself supervised all the work. For instance, arms and material such as muskets, bayonets, cannons, camels, bullocks, carts, good quality gun powder, shot, shell for the howitzers, all were brought under his supervision. Even minor works such as engaging tailors for the uniforms of soldiers did not escape his eye.\textsuperscript{12}

The recruits were trained in stages with rigour increasing at each succeeding level. Training in squads formed the basic level of military exercise. It was followed by the training in platoons and in companies. Drill in the form of battalions was its last stage. The time for the completion of each stage was fixed. It was due to such a regularity and order in the training exercise that only in five months two battalions of 850 soldiers each was raised.

The newly raised battalions were put to test in the expedition by Appa Khande Rao who was a Maratha general and was on a military campaign to subdue Bundelkhand. Appa Khande Rao was initially contemptuous of these battalions but grew full of

\textsuperscript{10} Victor de Saint-Génis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 194.

\textsuperscript{11} Maurice Besson, \textit{Le Général Comte de Boigne 1751-1830}, Librairie Dardel, Chambéry, 1930, pp. 34-36.

\textsuperscript{12} Maurice Besson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 34.
admiration and praise for it once Mahadji Sindhia successfully escorted the Emperor from Agra to Delhi with the assistance of these battalions.

Shah Alam II had appealed to Mahadji Sindhia for help in the wake of assassination of Afrasiyab Khan, the son of the wazir Najaf Khan.\(^\text{13}\) The emperor himself had fled from Delhi to Agra. Mahadji Sindhia during this time was busy in the Bundelkhand campaign. He immediately summoned De Boigne and his battalions from Bundelkhand, gathered his cavalry, and joined Shah Alam at Agra in October 1784. Owing to the presence of De Boigne’s forces there was little opposition to the Emperor’s march, and he was reinstated on his throne. It was after this event that the Emperor, who was already worried about the decadent politics and factionalism in the court, urged Mahadji Sindhia to take regency of his house and regulate his empire. He bestowed on Mahadji Sindhia the title of ‘Wakil-i-Mutlaq’ i.e. ‘Regent Pleinpotentiary’ and formally entrusted on the Maratha chief the task of stabilizing his empire.\(^\text{14}\)

The ascendancy of Mahadji Sindhia at the Mughal court was however not accepted by the leading Mughal nobles, Mohammad Beg Hamdani, a military general, and his nephew Ismail Beg, a cavalry leader. As a result, they entered into secret alliance with the Jaipur and Jodhpur Rajas against Mahadji Sindhia. As a regent of the Empire, Mahadji Sindhia summoned the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur and other Rajput chiefs to pay the tribute that they owed for being the tributary states of the Empire. But the

\(^{13}\) Afrasiyab was stabbed to death on 2\textsuperscript{nd} November 1784 when he was reading a petition. Jadunath Sarkar, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. III, p. 191.

\(^{14}\) The Emperor held a darbar at Halena, a place five miles north of Wair (a city in the Jat state) fort, on 3\textsuperscript{rd} January 1785 and conferred on Mahadji Sindhia the title of Waqil-i-mutlaq. Jadunath Sarkar, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. III, p. 200-202. Herbert Compton, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 171-173.
Rajputs who now had the support of the Mughal nobles refused to comply with Sindhia's demands. Sindhia summoned De Boigne and marched against the defiant Rajputs in May 1787. De Boigne was at the command of two battalions and excellent artillery. Sindhia while marching towards Jaipur met the Rajput forces at Lalsot where the Rajputs had taken up positions to oppose the Maratha army. Both the forces met at Lalsot on 28th July 1787. The battle of Lalsot was significant not because it was De Boigne's first real military campaign in north India but more for the fact that this battle highlighted stark differences existing in the fighting methods of two armies. Whereas the Maratha army fought with their trained and disciplined artillery corps of De Boigne, the Rajputs relied on their traditional cavalry. It was reported that the strength of De Boigne’s battalions at Lalsot was 1300. Other European adventurers who fought from Sindhia’s side were Lesteneau, Le Vassoul, and Jean Baptiste de la Fontaine.

In the battle, Mughal nobles Mohammad Beg Hamdani and Ismail Beg who had already formed a tacit alliance with the Rajputs deserted Sindhia and joined the Rajputs. The consequence was that Sindhia’s forces were drastically reduced in numbers. The Rathors attacked Sindhia’s left wing which was being guarded by De Boigne. De Boigne ordered his men to form a hollow square and wait for the opposition army come close to them. As soon as the rival forces came within the shooting range, the front line of De Boigne’s soldiers immediately fell back behind

16 Lalsot is a large village situated thirty miles south-east of Jaipur. The battle was named as the battle of Lalsot as it was the only nearest village to the battlefield. The battle was fought in the plains between Tunga and Bidakha which was some fourteen miles away from Lalsot village. Jadunath Sarkar calls it as the battle of Tonga. Jadunath Sarkar, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 250-251.
18 Ibid., p. 263.
the guns and at once discharged a terrible fire of grape-shots on the Rajputs. The adjoining map shows De Boigne's plan of attack. It depicts the hollow square formation switching to attacking mode with soldiers spreading out to have more enemies within the firing range. Despite such a volley of fire, the valiant Rajput horsemen kept coming, cutting down the gunners with their sword and attempting to reach the centre of the square. After some time when dust had covered the entire field, De Boigne ordered the musketeers to fire. Soon afterwards, 2000 musketeers fired a murderous volley into the very faces of Rajputs. Although De Boigne's fighting methods had given the Marathas an edge, Sindhia thought it prudent to make a retreat as the Rajputs were being supported by the Mughal nobles.19

The Maratha retreat from Lalsot, in spite of the presence of newly trained battalions, considerably compromised their reputation in Delhi. Ghulam Qadir Ruhela expelled the Marathas from Delhi and also reduced their fortress of Aligarh. In order to recover his territories, Sindhia made an alliance with the Jat raja Ranjit Singh and met the Ruhela forces at Chaksana near Bharatpur. Sindhia put up Appa Khande Rao and a Jat named Rana Khan in command of a mixed army of irregular cavalry for the fight. De Boigne here was commanding the Jat infantry and three battalions—two of his own and one of Lesteneau. Ismail Beg and Ghulam Qadir fought with traditional methods, relying on cavalry and guns. As the fight ensued, Maratha's irregular cavalry was engaged by Ghulam Qadir who drove it off without much difficulty. The Jats were also driven away in a similar manner. De Boigne was pitted against Ismail beg who was a reputed cavalry leader of the time. To avoid casualties, De Boigne thought to spread out his infantry. He was also aware that if it was opened out, it would become

19 Shelford Bidwell, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
defenceless against a well-handled cavalry attack. Before he could take any decision, Ismail Beg thinking that Ghulam Qadir had almost routed the Maratha cavalry made a charge on De Boigne’s infantry prematurely. De Boigne immediately discharged a volley of grape-shots on Ismail Beg’s forces, and repulsed him with great loss. The entire field had become open for De Boigne. But he had to withdraw due to the absence of the Maratha cavalry which had been driven away by Ghulam Qadir as a planned tactics.\textsuperscript{20}

The outcome of these military engagements showed that two battalions were not sufficient to impart unchallenged military superiority to the Maratha army. Therefore, De Boigne proposed to Sindhia to raise it to a full brigade of 10,000 men. Sindhia, who was lacking in financial resources, ignored De Boigne’s proposal. Besides, he was also apprehensive that such a high promotion to a foreigner would create discontent among his generals. Sindhia’s silence led De Boigne conclude that there was no possibility of his proposal being accepted, and at the same time he had also realized that two battalions were not enough to win battles. Owing to these reasons, he resigned from Sindhia’s service in 1788 and went back to his friend Claude Martin in Lucknow.\textsuperscript{21}

The military success of Sindhia under General De Boigne provoked jealousies and hostilities among the local powers of the region such as the Rajputs, Jats, and the Ruhelas. His growing power also became the cause of envy for his Maratha rivals.

\textsuperscript{20}Shelford Bidwell, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{21}James Skinner, \textit{Memoir of James Skinner, op. cit.}, p. 52-53. S. N. Sen, however, gives other reasons. He says that De Boigne left the service because he was not satisfied with a subordinate position in the army, and secondly, he did not see any prospects for him there. Surendra Nath Sen, \textit{The Military System of the Marathas}, K P Bagchi & Co., 1928 (first edn.), 1958 (revised edn.) p. 116.
Tukoji Holkar and Nana Fadnavis. The former was one of the military commanders and the latter was the powerful minister in Poona. In order to safeguard himself from these rivals, Sindhia resolved to create a special force which would remain loyal only to him. It was with this motive that in 1790 he sent his waqil to Lucknow to persuade De Boigne to rejoin his services. Although De Boigne agreed to work for Mahadji Sindhia, he put two conditions before taking up the service. First was that his soldiers must be paid regularly, and second, that under no circumstances he would be compelled to make wars on the English. Although the condition of not making wars with the English was for himself, he also suggested Mahadji Sindhia to follow the same policy. Sindhia agreed to the demands of De Boigne. His acceptance of the demands clearly indicated that conflict with the English was not his motive in reappointing De Boigne.

2.2 The Europeanized Brigades: Composition and Training

De Boigne began raising the proposed brigade soon after his appointment. And within a year i.e. from January 1789 to January 1790, he raised a brigade of 10 battalions with 12,000 soldiers. He raised the second brigade in the subsequent year. And the

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22 De Boigne insisted on regular payment of salary because he had already seen the plight of soldiers due to this problem during his Kalinjar campaign in April 1785 under Apa Khande Rao. In this campaign, Apa Khande Rao had the support of five trained battalions led by De Boigne, Taylor, Lesteneau and Ramru. Highlighting the plight of Apa Khande's forces due to non-payment of salaries, he had written on 3rd July 1786 from his camp near Kalinjar, "The tributes are not finished with any of the Rajas. The troops are very much tired of Apa, as no pay is to be got from him...the troops are starving. Mr. Taylor's troops have been, for eight or ten days, very mutinous for their pay...". Jadunath Sarkar, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 221.


24 Bidwell contradicts himself by saying at one place that Mahadji Sindhia was raising it to combat the English whereas elsewhere he argues that Sindhia wanted to avoid conflict with the English at all costs. Shelford Bidwell, op. cit., pp. 26, 37.
third brigade was raised in 1792. Thus, in a span of only three years, a completely organized and trained army was formed. It was constituted of 24,000 men and 130 pieces of artillery. That such a large army was raised only within a period of three years also indicated the quick adaptability of Indian soldiers to changing methods of warfare. This time even more Europeans joined De Boigne's army. Some of the important European military experts who associated themselves with De Boigne were Perron, Pedron, Baours, Rohan, Drugeon, Sutherland, Robert, Filoze, Fidèle, and Pohlam. Filoze and his son Fidèle who were Italians, joined the service in De Boigne's army because of harsh treatment they had been meted out with in the English company service.

The brigades or Campoos as they were called formed the highest unit of the army. A brigade was divided into different battalions. The battalions were constituted of regular soldiers known as telinga and najeeb. They were clothed and armed with muskets and bayonets as was the custom in the English company. They were trained to handle flint matchlocks. The entire brigade was exercised by the manual word of command as was the practice in European armies. 500 Mewati or irregular soldiers were attached to perform ordinary routine camp duties so that the battalions might be ready for active service on all occasions. In addition to it, 60 pieces of well-mounted and well-served artillery with the range of 4 to 8 and 12-pounders were made part of

26 Drugeon was the brother of General Sarde and died in Nice around 1824. Victor de Saint-Génis, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-196.
the brigades. To give further strength to it, a cavalry of 500 horsemen was also inducted.28

Since telinga29 formed the core of the battalions they were given rigorous training. They were trained to combat the musket fire through artillery. They were trained to aim at distant targets using cannon-balls or 'shot' or clusters of iron shot.30 They were also trained to use flint matchlocks with precision. In north India, only the telinga of De Boigne's brigades used flint matchlocks with skill and accuracy.31 The telinga were armed with the muskets manufactured at Agra.32

De Boigne was a pioneer in introducing flint matchlocks as an instrument of war in Hindustan. Flint matchlocks were much more superior and efficient compared to ordinary matchlocks, and therefore, could be used with deadly effect. Until popularized by De Boigne, flint matchlocks had remained generally unknown in India. The native armies were in the practice of using ordinary matchlocks and they had

28 William Francklin, op. cit., p. 192.

29 The word Telinga was used for the infantrymen from Karnataka region employed in the Mughal army at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries. The word Telinga was used for them as they came from Karnataka and Telingana regions. The Telingana infantrymen were also brought by the English Company to Bengal in the middle of the 18th century. Later, it began to be commonly used for a sepoy in the regions lying under the influence of the company. And by the end of the 18th century, the word Telinga had acquired common connotation for the regular infantry of matchlockmen in the French adventurers' forces. By this time, Telinga force was not identified with any caste or region. Ghulam Hussain Khan Tabataba, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 545-546; Calendar of Persian Correspondence, NAI, Delhi, Vol. VII, p. 412; William Francklin, op. cit., p. 136.

30 Ibid.

31 William Francklin, op. cit., pp. 138-139. Indians had lagged behind in handling matchlocks from the 17th century onwards. It was due to inability of the Indians to copy European cast-iron cannons and hence develop more efficient flint-locks as standard military muskets. This failure was done away with during this period when the cannons etc began to be cast in native foundries. Iqtidar Alam Khan, op. cit., p. 195.

32 Victor de Saint-Génis, op. cit., p. 201.
never seen the percussion weapon like flint matchlocks. It was a new weapon of war for them. 33 Fitzclarence, writing as late as in 1818, further attested it when he said, “The flint-lock, an introduction of the Europeans, is far from being general, and I may even say is never employed by the natives: though the telinga, armed and disciplined after our manner, in the service of Scindiah and Holkar, make use of it”. 34

Najeeb formed flintmatchlock-wielding component of the infantry. Although majority of the najeeb were muslims, they were also recruited from Hindu social groups of Rajput, Purbea, and other high castes of Hindus. When they came for training they used to be armed with matchlocks, shields, and swords but after the training their matchlocks were replaced by the more effective flintlocks and swords by bayonets. 35

The matchlock was definitely a deadly instrument of war of this period. Its effectiveness can be assessed from the fact that it could also pass through the strong shield if hit properly. 36

In order to keep the army’s belligerent quotient high during wars, members of certain religious groups i.e. aligol and gossain were also recruited. They were employed to render military service in desperate war situations. They were reputed for putting up daring fights. They were also hired to protect crops and villages from plunderers.

33 Matchlocks were called as tufang or banduq in local parlance. The flint matchlocks were known as banduq-i-chaqmaqi. William Irvine, The Army of the Indian Mughals: Its Organization and Administration, Low Price Publications, Delhi, Reprinted 2004, p. 105.


36 James Skinner, who had been in De Boigne’s army, himself testifies it by saying that once when he was in a battle a matchlock ball passed through his shield and hit in his palm which had held the shield. James Skinner, Memoir of James Skinner, op. cit., p. 136.
William Hodges who travelled in India in 1783, a year before the arrival of De Boigne, had met a group of nearly two thousand gossain encamped on the outskirts of Firozabad who had been hired as militia to protect crops and villages from plunderers. He wrote that they were well armed and maintained artillery with two fine pieces of cannon.\(^{37}\) De Boigne had incorporated these religious groups as a regular unit in the army when he raised the third brigade in 1792.\(^{38}\)

A separate medical corps was also constituted, and men were appointed to transport wounded soldiers from battles. The provision of pension either in cash or in the form of land was instituted for the physically disabled soldiers.\(^{39}\) This particular achievement of De Boigne was praised by the English historians also.\(^{40}\)

Each battalion was provided with an artillery company and five guns as a part of its regular establishment. It was a novelty to form artillery into regular and established units of battalions, as it had not been fully developed even in the English company


\(^{38}\) When James Skinner says that before the appointment by De Boigne gossain had not existed as soldiers he probably meant that De Boigne was the first to recruit them on a regular payroll. For we know that gossain had existed as fighters in the past also. They were fierce fighters and were frequently hired by rulers. The Jat ruler Jawahar Singh had hired them for his Delhi campaign in November 1764. Umrao Gir Gossain was the famous warrior of Jawahar Singh’s time. *Memoirs of James Skinner*, op. cit., pp. 56-57; *Wendel’s Memoirs*, op. cit., pp. 85-86.


\(^{40}\) "Monsieur De Boigne, disent les historiens anglais—inaugura dans l’Inde ce à quoi nul gouvernement indigène n’avait songé et ce que nous ne faisons nous-mêmes, aujourd’hui encore, qu’avec une sorte de parcimonie : Il apporta tous ses soins à atténuer les cruautés de la guerre, il soigna les blessés, il pensionna les estropiés, il mitigea l’horreur des supplices". *Ibid.*, p. 47. "English historians say that De Boigne accomplished in India that the native rulers had never dreamt of doing and even we, the English, have achieved that only partially: he took all care in attenuating the cruelties of war, he cured the injured soldiers, instituted pension schemes for the war-crippled, and mitigated the horrors of torture". (My Translation).
Battalions were commanded by captains followed by a second-in-command. Sergeant-major commanded the artillery wing which had been made a regular part of the battalion. Skinner says that the assurance of ‘good and regular’ pay attracted many a men to this army.

The brigades were named after the general who commanded them. The battalions were recognized by the place of their origin or the fort they were constituted at. The names of the battalions as the Agra, Delhi, Koil, and the Aligarh battalions indicated the place they were raised at. The European flag of white cross of Savoy, the place to which De Boigne belonged, was chosen as the flag of the army. During the time of Perron it was changed to the French flag. The choice of European flags signified that the leadership was provided by the European adventurers.

Though the soldiers were Indian, they were completely Europeanized in their military outlook. The uniforms provided to them bore stark resemblance to that of the European armies in style and look. The cloths for the uniforms were brought from Calcutta. Each section of the brigade had its own distinct-coloured uniform. The telinga were dressed in scarlet black leather uniforms with blue turbans. The najeeb wore a Persian uniform which was made of blue quilted ‘country cloth’. The cavalryman had the uniform of green colour with red turbans and belts. James

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45 Herbert Compton, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
Skinner's corps was called as 'yellow boys' for their yellow-coloured uniforms. Such uniforms gave distinct identity to each unit which proved extremely useful in battlefields as it provided visual clarity for enhanced performance and also kept them organized within their respective units.

The brigades were trained in an area around Koil (Aligarh) which was given to De Boigne as a jaidad by Mahadji Sindhia. It was constituted of 52 pargana and yielded an annual income of rupees 30 lakhs. The recruits for the brigades came from diverse background and regions. During the raising of brigades, people from Ruhelkhand and other mountainous regions, who were known for their fighting skills and sturdiness, also began to be employed. The soldiers of disbanded military units were also recruited. For instance, the soldiers of Lestineau's disbanded battalion were employed by De Boigne. The soldiers were paid on the very first day of the month. This exactitude in the date of payment was followed even when the army was on campaigns or expeditions.

The brigades were trained according to a fixed schedule. A five-month period was put in place to train the brigades in all aspects of warfare and military manoeuvres. The 

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47 James skinner joined De Boigne's forces at Koil (near Aligarh) in 1796 as an ensign at the age of 16. Memoirs of James Skinner, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

48 Jaidad meant an assignment in land for the maintenance of troops. Literally, there was a clear distinction between jagir and jaidad. Whereas the former was assigned to a Mughal noble, the latter was assigned exclusively for the purpose of military service. But in the 18th century, owing to the decaying Mughal empire, the jagir institution was undergoing change. The main feature i.e. transferable nature had become defunct. And by the second half of the century, both the Jagir and jaidad had become nearly interchangeable. S. Inayat A. Zaidi, op. cit., p. 75.

49 Maurice Besson, op. cit., p. 47.


51 The soldiers were paid 10 4/5 rupees per month. The salary of officers varied from 3000 rupees for the colonel to 150 rupees for the enseigne. Victor de Saint-Génis, op. cit., p. 199.
complete training comprised 28 days for handling of the musket, 40 days for learning to handle cannons, and in the end, 3 months for acquiring command on the simultaneous use of all equipments. The words of command used for infantry and artillery wings were French and for cavalry it was Irish.\textsuperscript{52}

The brigades were trained to function in battalions with their own infantry, artillery, cavalry and camp-followers during campaigns. Such a functioning made the battalions independent of each other; hence, they could work as a self-sufficient unit in case of any eventuality.\textsuperscript{53} But they were trained to move in columns during the march. At the time of attack, they usually led the volley of musketry and charge in line. They were drilled to change the attacking pattern according to circumstances. If the front was narrow, the attack had to be made in column, and in that movement, the battalions or sub-divisions had to close up to form a solid block of men hitting the enemy position. The rear sub-divisions had to be ready to take the position on the front in case it fell. If the movement of the battalion was threatened by cavalry then the ‘squares’ were formed which could turn into either offensive or defensive depending upon the situation. In short, the brigades were trained to present an unbroken front in every direction.\textsuperscript{54}

Large-scale raising and training of armies brought substantial changes in the military face of the region. Military establishments such as cantonments, training grounds,

\textsuperscript{52} Victor de Saint-Génis says: \textit{Ses ordres aux officiers instructeurs portent qu’il accorde vingt-huit jours aux recrues pour apprendre le maniement du mousquet, quarante jour pour apprendre l’exercice du canon, trois mois aux capitaines pour les manœuvres d’ensemble}. Victor de Saint-Génis, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 150, 201.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 199-200.

\textsuperscript{54} Victor de Saint-Génis, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 199-200.
arsenals, foundries, and fortified buildings etc. sprang up at various places. Drills and parades became the regular features in north Indian plains.

2.3 Military Landscape of Hindustan

The rise of large brigades brought significant transformation in the military landscape of the region. Military camps came up in different pockets of the region. Sardhana in Meerut and Koil or Aligarh in modern UP emerged as important training centres of westernized soldiery. While Sardhana was raised as a military centre by General Sombre and his wife Begum Sombre, the rise of Aligarh as a famous training centre was the work of De Boigne. Barracks and cantonments made large-scale appearance. Barracks were particularly erected at Koil for providing accommodation to the soldiers. For officers, private residential houses were constructed. By the time of Perron when the number of brigades had increased to five, numerous cantonments were established for accommodating as many as 20,000 men. Apart from Aligarh, a cantonment was also set up at Shikohabad which was situated on the frontier of Etawah district and formed an important line of defence of the Delhi-Aligarh region.55

As such a large force could not rely on costly imported equipments, it needed its own production centres where arms and ammunitions could be manufactured at minimum costs. The establishment of such production centres would have not only provided quick and ready supply of firearms, but would have also effectively mitigated the expenses incurred on importing it. As a result, arsenals and foundries were established

55 William Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, conducted by General Lord Lake, London, 1818, pp. 93-94, 105-106. William Thorn was the captain in 25th Light Dragoons and served in the military campaigns of Lord Lake in Hindustan.
in Hodal, Palwal, Bulandshahr, Mathura, and Koi.\textsuperscript{56} Agra, where Sombre had already built a foundry, a gunpowder-making factory was also set up, thus imparting it more the touch of military features. The expansion was not only in terms of numbers, it was in terms of geographical space also. Some distantly-located towns were also given military hue either by developing them as manufacturing centre or as supply centre. For instance Gwalior was developed as a cannon-ball manufacturing centre for its proximity to the iron ore mines. Bikaner which was at a considerable distance from Aligarh was brought within the loop for being the source of saltpetre and sulphur, the important ingredients of firearms.\textsuperscript{57} Sardhana and Hansi, the seats of power of Begum Sombre and George Thomas respectively, were the other reputed military centres.\textsuperscript{58}

The European ‘scientists’ who were expert in manufacturing arms and ammunitions were deputed. Sangster who was reputed for his knowledge of military science and expertise in casting of cannons was made the director of the arsenal at Agra. He cast excellent cannons and manufactured high quality muskets at a remarkable low price of 10 rupees each.\textsuperscript{59}

We are informed that more than five hundred guns that had been cast in these foundries were taken by the English army during their campaigns under Lord Lake in 1803.\textsuperscript{60} From Aligarh alone, 281 guns of various types, such as, brass guns, iron guns,

\textsuperscript{56} Maurice Besson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{57} Jadunath Sarkar, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. IV, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{58} An arsenal and a foundry for fabricating cannons were set up in the Sardhana fort. William Thorn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 386.
\textsuperscript{59} Lester Hutchinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{60} John Malcolm writes that all these were cast under the supervision of the European adventurers whom he calls as ‘scientific Europeans’. John Malcolm, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. I, p. 137-138.
brass howitzers, and mortars were procured. Sixty-eight guns of different types were collected from Delhi. The iron guns taken were of European make, but the brass guns, mortars, and howitzers had been processed in the indigenous foundries. These guns were cast at Mathura and Ujjain. The specifications of equipments were generally that of the French and all the guns had high-level finishing. From Agra, Lord Lake collected 76 brass guns and 86 iron ones. These iron guns were again of various kinds, such as, mortars, howitzers, carronades, and gallopers. The brass guns found here were from the same stock as that of Delhi. They also resembled the Delhi ones in their construction. The description of weaponry manufactured in north Indian arsenals and foundries showed that these were not really Mughal weapons, rather, these were the war equipments manufactured under the supervision of European military professionals in ‘Indian’ service. The establishment of foundries at various places and such an organized production of fast-firing firearms by De Boigne and his officers acted as an important influence for the large-scale adoption of these weapons by military combatants, an important trait that had been missing in the first half of the eighteenth century.

2.4 The Brigades in the Field: Patan, Merta, and Lakheri

The real evaluation of the newly raised army can be made by analyzing its war operations. We find that the brigades’ presence made a huge difference to the outcome of the battles. Not only these brigades won wars for their master but on many occasions they even bailed out their master’s forces from near-defeat like situations. The fighting methods adopted by these brigades altered the usual Maratha style of

63 Iqtidar Alam Khan, op. cit., p. 155.
warfare, and moulded them to fight pitched battles, something they had rarely attempted before.\textsuperscript{64} The first brigade of the army had become so famous for its rapid marches that it began to be called as ‘The Flying Army’ or \textit{Chiria Fauj} literally ‘The Army of the Birds’.\textsuperscript{65}

The battle of Patan was a glowing example of superiority of these brigades despite being heavily outnumbered by the adversaries there. The battle was fought in August 1790 at Patan between Lakwa Dada and Ismail Beg Khan who were fighting for the Marathas and the Rajputs respectively.\textsuperscript{66}

Ismail Beg Khan who was earlier an ally of Sindhia had by this time gone over to the Rajputs to check the growing power of the Maratha leader. The Rajputs with the support of the Mughal noble also prepared to oppose the Maratha leader. When Mahadji Sindhia saw such developments, he ordered Lakwa Dada to march to Rajasthan. De Boigne’s army was also attached to that of Lakwa Dada. Ismail Beg, who was on Rajput side, entrenched himself at Patan located in a rocky terrain between Gwalior and Ajmer. Ismail Beg himself was commanding a large army. According to the estimates by De Boigne, Ismail Beg’s army stood at 20,000 horses, and 25,000 foot soldiers with 100 guns. Apart from sending Lakwa Dada on military expedition, Sindhia also used diplomatic means to persuade the Rajput Raja to abstain from taking up arms against the Marathas.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65} Shelford Bidwell, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{66} Ismail Beg Khan during this time had joined the Rajput rulers of Jodhpur and Jaipur. Lester Hutchinson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 133-134.
\textsuperscript{67} Lester Hutchinson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 133-134.
The battle began with the Maratha attack on Ismail Beg’s entrenchment in June 1790. Ismail Beg defended it for three weeks waiting for the Jaipur army. When the Jaipur army did not arrive, he ran out of patience and came out to take offensive. To induce the enemy to leave their entrenchments, De Boigne ordered his men to advance in columns dragging their guns with them until the enemy forces came within the reach of grape-shot. During this movement De Boigne’s army exchanged nearly forty rounds of grape-shot with that of Ismail Beg’s. De Boigne lost most of his artillerymen in that exchange such that the soldiers left there were unable to drag the guns any further. De Boigne then immediately ordered his troops to storm the lines with sword in hand. Ismail Beg’s army had not expected such an assault and within an hour his infantry and cavalry fled in all directions. Ismail beg himself galloped away. About the battle of Patan, De Boigne’s own words are worth mentioning here, “It was indeed a signal victory, won by a small body of disciplined infantry over a force three times larger”.

After Patan, De Boigne’s army went on military campaign against Merta in the same year. The Rajputs had encamped there under the leadership of Bijay Singh. De Boigne’s forces made disciplined march in the square form towards the Rajput entrenchment at Merta. The Rajputs who were waiting for De Boigne’s army immediately came out to attack its front row. But it proved catastrophic for them, partly due to their own mistake and partly due to De Boigne’s army’s marching strategy. The Rathors made the fatal mistake of coming out without any cover-fire from behind, as a result, when they came out they had nobody behind to support them.

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68 Victor de Saint-Génis, op. cit., p. 167. The army of Ismail Beg along with the Rajputs was 30,000 cavalry, 20,000 infantry, and 25 cannons, whereas Sindhia’s forces were consisted of 20,000 cavalry, 80 cannons, and De Boigne’s 12,000 men, Maurice Besson, op. cit., p. 51.
secondly, De Boigne’s army moved in such a manner that each soldier had considerable space for firing. Owing to these reasons, the Rathors who attacked De Boigne’s forces were immediately killed by the musket fire. De Boigne’s soldiers advanced further, firing grape-shots all along. The Rajput army could not stand the precise and effective grape-shots for long and fled in complete disorder.

The most significant result of the victory at Merta was De Boigne’s strict prohibition to the Maratha soldiers from pillaging and looting the city. He ordered Maratha soldiers to abstain from their practice of depredation. He deputed his own officers in the city to provide security to its inhabitants from any Maratha excesses. It was an important decision for it drove the point home that it was not a mercenary army which generally thrived on money accrued through such means. Secondly, under his leadership the army would not fall for the lure of loot and plunder. De Boigne’s efforts to transform Maratha army from more ‘predatory’ nature to one of graceful army were also praised by John Malcolm. John Malcolm wrote in his memoir, “Mahadji accompanied by the brigades, or campoos, as they were termed of De Boigne, took forts and fought pitched battles, in a manner that the Marathas never before attempted” 69 The battle of Merta indicated that De Boigne had considerably diluted the plundering tendencies of the Marathas.

After Merta, De Boigne’s brigades defeated the Rajas of Udaipur, Dholpur, Alwar, Matchery, and Bikaner, thus, bringing an entire area of Rajputana between the Sindh desert and Chambal under Mahadji’s control. 70 These military successes resulted in

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many lucrative offers for De Boigne from various states. But he spurned all such offers and continued in the service of Mahadhi Sindhia.⁷¹

Apart from his superior military techniques, De Boigne’s victories against the Rajput states can also be attributed to his effective use of shaturnal i.e camel barrel. *Shaturnal* was a tactics of using light cannons from the back of camels. This arrangement has been called as ‘mounted artillery’ or ‘artillery mounted on camel’s back’ and a ‘swivel gun’. In this arrangement, light cannons were fitted on some kind of swivels which facilitated the movement of barrels in vertical plane.⁷² Since it was practically difficult to drag heavy cannons to long distances in the uneven terrain of Rajasthan, De Boigne effectively used *shaturnal* in his campaigns. The height and size of camels facilitated him to fix the arms at 45 degree angle—necessary to hit the base of the slope of the mountains or the summit of the wall. The angle enhanced the shooting range more by 600 meters, and since the camels’ movements were comparatively faster than the manual dragging of cannons it provided swiftness to the assault. The fireshots were made by making the camels seated on the ground. It provided stability and precision to the shots. The *shaturnal* proved extremely effective


⁷² The practice of using light cannons from the back of the camel started in Mamluk’s Egypt sometime in the early years of sixteenth century. The evidence of its earliest use in India comes to us from Jahangir’s campaign against the Rana of Chittor in 1614. Its use has been mentioned by various contemporary writers. Till the end of eighteenth century *shaturnal* could be moved only in vertical direction. It is only from the early nineteenth century onwards that *shaturnal* began to be fixed in such a manner that they could be moved both horizontally and vertically which made this tactics of war even more deadly. G. C. Mundy who described about *shaturnal* used in Sindhia’s army in 1828 mentioned about its multi-directional movement. Iqtidar Alam Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-109; William Irvine, *op. cit.*, pp. 137.
warring tool for De Boigne in the deserts of Rajasthan both in his siege operations and in open battles.\textsuperscript{73}

Ismail Beg was again defeated by De Boigne in 1792 at the time when Tukoji Holkar, the arch rival of Sindhia, began collecting tributes in the Rajputana. Ismail Beg found opportunity in this development to humble Sindhia, and therefore, took position with his army in Kanaud. De Boigne ordered Perron to march against Ismail Beg. Ismail Beg had taken position outside the fort with an army of 20,000 men and 30 guns. Perron at once attacked Ismail Beg resulting in the latter taking refuge inside the fort. But Ismail Beg was unable to defend the fort for a long time and surrendered it to Perron. While Perron was busy in chastising Ismail Beg, Gopal Rao, the deputy of Sindhia, summoned Lakwa Dada and De Boigne to march against Tukoji Holkar. De Boigne recalled Perron and reinforced his brigades with the latter’s 9000 foot soldiers. Gopal Rao and Lakwa Dada had 20,000 horses. At the end of September 1792, De Boigne met Tukoji Holkar at the pass of Lakheri on the way from Kanaud to Ajmer. De Boigne studied the enemy’s position and arranged his field artillery and lines of musketry accordingly. The battle at Lakheri was important as for the first time De Boigne was pitted against a force which had not only been raised on the European pattern but was also equally strong.\textsuperscript{74}

De Boigne began the action by sending forward 500 Ruhela horsemen to form a screen behind which he advanced his infantry with fixed bayonets over the swampy ground. But his columns were immediately exposed to a murderous fire from Holkar’s batteries to which he could not make any adequate reply as his own guns advanced.


\textsuperscript{74} De Boigne, ‘\textit{Lakheri: Une Bataille Mémorable (1793)}’ in Guy Deleury’s \textit{Les Indes Florissantes}, p. 977.
slowly across the swamp. Moreover, a sudden explosion in his ammunition created havoc in his own force. But he succeeded in moving his broken columns into the opposite jungle where Holkar’s horsemen could not penetrate. There, along with Perron, he reorganized his army and from the cover of the trees attacked Holkar’s forces with ceaseless volleys. The latter’s horsemen wavered and then retreated. Dudrenec, the Frenchman who was at the command of four corps of regular infantry put up a stiff resistance but it proved to be of no consequence before De Boigne’s brigades. All his four corps was completely destroyed. He himself could escape only with great difficulty. It was a great triumph for Sindha’s forces under De Boigne. While it elevated the status of Sindha among the Maratha leaders, it established De Boigne as the supreme military general in north India.\(^\text{75}\) De Boigne’s reputation as a military general also found acknowledgement in his adversaries’ utterances. The Mughal noble Najaf Quli Khan in the last moments of his life had advised his wife to resist the efforts of enemies but to surrender if De Boigne himself came.\(^\text{76}\)

The battles of Patan, Merta, and Lakheri testified the superiority of smaller but better disciplined troops. It attested that war was an art which required strategy, innovation, new tactics and techniques, and most importantly, the presence of mind to mould even adverse circumstances in one’s favour. This is, however, not to argue that Indian warriors were not valiant or brave. But the European-led forces were far superior in terms of strategy, innovative tactics and techniques with which the Indian rulers were not very familiar. As a result, whenever Indian rulers faced such armies they generally ended up with a loss. The defeat of the Rajputs is the case in point. Although they

\(^{75}\) Ibid. John Malcolm says that only Dudrenec could escape and other European officers were either killed or were wounded. John Malcolm, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 128-129.

were the universally recognized brave warriors but their traditional cavalry could not match the innovative military tactics of infantry and artillery. The advantage with Mahadji Sindhia was that he had realized the importance of such a regular military body earlier than others, and the results were, as it were, for everyone to see.  

2.5 De Boigne and the dynamics of his principality of Aligarh

The land grant that was given to De Boigne in Aligarh by Mahadji Sindhia to raise and train modernized army was developed by De Boigne into a hub of multiple activities. Although military colour remained its dominant hue, it was also developed as a principality ruled independently by him.

He created elaborate and systematized civil and administrative machinery for its efficient governance. Aligarh was chosen as the capital from where administrative and financial controls were exercised. The security of the principality was maintained through round-the-clock policing system which included the task of constant patrolling of its borders.

De Boigne's justice characterized by a proportionate mixture of severity and mildness was the hallmark of his administration. He tried to ensure that no innocent person was punished under his rule. Often he checked the impetuous bouts of the Maratha leaders on their men and saved those whom he believed to be innocent.  

The chief source of income, the land revenue, was reorganized. The headman and the elected body of the villages were made responsible to the collector for the revenue. The produce of the land was verified by the designated experts of the village before

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harvesting of the crops, and then the revenue for the year was fixed by taking into account the produce and revenue of the previous year. Thus, the revenue was fixed in advance and was paid in cash. Such a method led to increase in the crop production in the region.\textsuperscript{79} James Skinner testified the growth in the annual yield of the state by stating that it increased to thirty lakhs from the initial amount of twenty.\textsuperscript{80} The efficiency of De Boigne’s land revenue method was also acknowledged by the English company when it was re-implemented by them in the region in 1827.\textsuperscript{81}

The financial affairs of the state were managed at various levels by different set of officials. At the initial stage it was handled by the local officials who kept all the records in Persian. The records were then handed over to the French officers for their further scrutiny. At the end, all the finance-related documents were sent to the General who himself checked all the accounts regularly.\textsuperscript{82}

Twining who visited De Boigne’s state in 1794 gave a detailed account of the general’s daily routine. He wrote, “Dinner was served at four. It was much in the Indian style: pillaws and curries, variously prepared, in abundance; fish, poultry and kid. The dishes were spread over the large table fixed in the middle of the hall, and were, in fact, a banquet for a dozen persons, although there was no one to partake of it but the General and myself. (An elephant ride followed dinner. The next morning after breakfast the general called for his ‘chillum’ which aroused the traveller’s

\textsuperscript{80} James Skinner, \textit{Memoirs of James Skinner, op. cit.}, p. 76-77.
\textsuperscript{81} The British had abolished the revenue system followed by de Boigne after their capture of Delhi in 1803. But finding it efficient they implemented it again in 1827. Victor de Saint-Génis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 186.
\textsuperscript{82} Jean Marie Lafont, \textit{Indika, op. cit.}, p. 188.
enthusiasm). After this, general held a durbar when vakils and men of rank paid their respects".\textsuperscript{83}

The Aligarh region also emerged as one of the most commercially active regions in Hindustan during this period. Many towns in the region were transformed into trading hubs which attracted workers, craftsmen, traders, merchants, and entrepreneurs. Aligarh emerged as a market, entrepôt, and a commercial centre. But this particular aspect would be taken up in the fifth chapter which deals with De Boigne’s trading activities in Aligarh.

Military characteristics, however, remained the overarching feature of the Aligarh principality. As the land was granted for raising and training a Europeanized army, therefore, many buildings of military utility were constructed in Aligarh. A cantonment was built which had training grounds for drill and military exercise and barracks for providing living space to soldiers. Residential quarters, medical centres, ordnance, and magazines were also built. Supply centres of various sorts were established between Aligarh and Allahabad at Fatehpur, Kora, Bithur, Itawah, Mainpuri, and Shikohabad.\textsuperscript{84} Unlike the English company’s armies which generally suffered from the government’s lack of spending, De Boigne spent a good amount of money on raising and maintaining an efficient and strong army.\textsuperscript{85} Fortification of Aligarh, Agra and Mathura was carried out and they were interlinked in such a way that it formed a strong line of defence of the Mughal capital of Agra and the entire


\textsuperscript{84} Victor de Saint-Génis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 181.

\textsuperscript{85} Shelford Bidwell, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 70-71.
region to its west.\textsuperscript{86} Later Perron also brought Hapur within the military zone of Aligarh which formed part of his jagir.\textsuperscript{87}

The recruitment and training of new soldiers kept the military dynamics of the principality high which is borne out from the increasing strength of the brigades. The strength of the army was increased from the original two to fourteen battalions of sepoys. In addition to it, ten battalions of \textit{najib} each consisting of 700 men was also added. A regular cavalry of 1200 men further reinforced it. Brunet who wrote in 1797 mentioned that it was also trained and regularized in European manner to make it subservient to the new military system. The artillery wing was expanded with 150 pieces of cannons in its ranks.\textsuperscript{88} During the time of Perron the strength of the army was further increased. The total number of brigades rose to five. The total strength of Perron’s army by 1803 had risen to 40,000 men. During this time, in Delhi alone there were 19,000 men organized in 16 battalions of infantry and various other wings.\textsuperscript{89}

Thus, it can be seen that Aligarh was imbued with multiple shades. It emerged as a multi-functional territorial entity which meant many things to many people. That is, if for a military aspirant it was the most lucrative destination then for a trader it was a safe haven for commercial activities.

\textsuperscript{86} Victor de Saint-Génis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 181.

\textsuperscript{87} The sources do not mention about the year when Hapur was given to Perron as jagir. Seema Alvi, \textit{The Making of Company Power: James Skinner in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, 1802-1840}, in Gommans & Kolff, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 284.

\textsuperscript{88} Brunet, ‘\textit{Un Géant Savoyard au Service des Marathes, (Brunet, 1797)}’ in Guy Deleury’s, \textit{Les Indes Florissantes}, pp. 981-984.

\textsuperscript{89} William Thorn, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 78, 110-111, 114, 118.
2.6 Perron and the End of the Phase

After the sudden death of Mahadji Sindhia on 12th February 1794, his son Daulat Rao Sindhia, a boy of fifteen years, succeeded to the authority. He confirmed General De Boigne in the command of the army of Hindustan and in the government of all the Maratha possessions north of the Chambal river. At this juncture, De Boigne was ruling a vast tract of land and had made his brigades the most powerful force in India. That the brigades had shaped up as a force to reckon with can also be gauged from the fact that in 1795 when a serious mutiny broke out in Bengal among the officers of the English Company army, the Company sought De Boigne's military assistance. De Boigne at once sent a cavalry regiment under the command of his European general to Calcutta which helped in quelling the rebellion.

Towards the end of 1795 De Boigne's health began to deteriorate. Many years of physical exertion had taken a heavy toll on his body. As his health rendered it difficult for him to carry out regular military drills and campaigns he retired from the service. His resignation was however not accepted by Daulat Rao Sindhia. De Boigne assured him of his return as soon as his health would permit him. But before retiring from the service, De Boigne advised Daulat Rao Sindhia not to make war with the English under any circumstances. Emphasizing on the last piece of the advice, he had said, "Rompez les brigades, détruisez ce magnifique instrument de combat, répétait-il, plutôt que de faire la guerre aux Anglais".90

90 Alfred Martineau, Le Général Perron, Paris: Société d'Édition Géographique, Maritimes et Coloniales, 1931, p. 46. De Boigne had said, "Disband the brigades, destroy that magnificent instrument of war (brigades) rather than make war with the English". (My Translation)
Perron took over the command of the brigades. His victory at Kurdla in March 1795 against the famous Frenchman Raymond, who had commanded 27 battalions of the Nizam of Hyderabad, had considerably raised his military credentials to be chosen as De Boigne’s successor. Afterwards, Perron became the most powerful person in Hindustan where he reigned supreme for seven long years till his defeat at the hands of Lord Lake in 1803.

General Perron maintained the invincibility of the brigades. In his very first campaign after succeeding De Boigne, he chastised Pratap Singh of Jaipur who had refused to pay the tribute after his predecessor’s departure. Perron commanded the brigades while Lakwa Dada was given the charge of this expedition. Pratap Singh’s infantry and cavalry which had stood at a large number of 50,000 each could not resist the brigades’ incessant fire of cannons and volleys of grape-shots. He soon fled from the battlefront, and accepted to pay the tribute. Perron was invited to the palace where he was honoured by the exhibition of a great spectacle of fireworks.91

Perron’s victory over the rebellious Jaipur state was also acknowledged by the Mughal Emperor who honoured him with a title of ‘General Perron Bahadur Muzaffar-i-Jang, Intizam-ud-daula, nasir-ul-mulk’ and the mansab of ‘haft-hazari’ or 7000 zat and 7000 sawar. He was also accorded the privilege to use palanquins and elephants whenever he moved out, He had the seal of his name on which the Mughal title was inscribed.92

Perron raised the fourth brigade which was given to the command of Col. Chevalier Dudrenec. All the brigades were led by the European military officers. During Perron’s time, the first brigade was commanded by Col. Pohlman, the second was

under the command of George Hessing, and third was under Louis Bourquien. The number of battalions was also increased. Its number rose to eight resulting in the induction of more telinga into the brigade.

While the Mughal-Maratha serving brigades were becoming the insurmountable power in north Indian military climate, another force, trained on similar patterns was fast emerging in the vicinity of Delhi under another European named George Thomas. Since it was independent of Perron’s brigades, it was perceived as a threat to the Mughal-Maratha serving brigades. Moreover, George Thomas’ designs of conquering north Indian territories for the British had also been doing the rounds. Thomas himself had said, “I have nothing in view by this plan (the plan of conquering the Punjab) but the welfare of my king and my country. I shall be sorry to see my conquests fall into the hands of the Mahrattas; I wish to give them to my king, and to serve him during the remainder of my days,—and this I can only do as a soldier in this part of the world”. Such aspirations of Thomas to conquer Indian region for the English King made it incumbent on Perron to liquidate his growing power.

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93 Louis Bourquien was French. He was working as a soldier in the English company before joining Perron. Perron not only received him with great warmth but also protected him from the English for having left their service. Perron appointed him as an officer in his brigades and thus gave him high ranks. Alfred Martineau, op. cit., p. 170.

94 James Skinner in his memoir gave the total number of brigades as six. He wrote that apart from detached battalions, the brigades consisted of thirty battalions of sepoys, ten of Najeeb of 700 men each, 2000 regular cavalry, and 200 pieces of cannon. James Skinner, Memoirs of James Skinner, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

95 George Thomas was born at Tipperary in Ireland. He came to India even poorer than Perron. He was sailor before landing up on Indian shores and joining Indian states. He rose to influence after his service under Begum Sombre where he worked for some years. He not only militarily established there but also married the daughter of the Begum thus gaining ascendancy in the Begum’s court. Later, he moved to Hansi and established himself as an independent potentate. Alfred Martineau, op. cit., p. 76.

The military successes of George Thomas against the Sikh states in 1800 and 1801 had accorded him great power and prestige. He had begun playing the role of a political arbiter in the Punjab politics. Initially Perron resorted to diplomatic means to have George Thomas on his side. He offered him service with the Marathas. But it was declined. Thomas' refusal was however due to the secret intrigues of Jaswant Rao Holkar, Lakwa Dada, and other Maratha leaders who were jealous of the growing power of Sindhia under Perron. Perron saw in the rise of defiant George Thomas in the neighbourhood of Delhi as a great threat to the efforts of restoring order in the Mughal Empire. As a result, he resorted to military means to humble George Thomas.

The city of Georgegarh where Thomas was encamped was attacked. The attack by mighty brigades created panic in Thomas' camp, and most of his trusted officers deserted him. Lack of adequate supply of men and material compelled George Thomas to escape to his capital Hansi. After capturing Georgegarh, the brigade under Maj. Louis Bourquieu marched towards Hansi with 10 full battalions of infantry, 500 Hindustani horses, and 5000 Sikh cavalry. Louis Bourquien easily conquered the forts outside Hansi and directed all his forces to move towards the centre of Hansi town.

In order to combat the modernized army of Thomas, Louis Bourquien's army moved in three separate columns commanded by Capt. Skinner, Lt. Skinner and Lt.

97 Alfred Martineau, op. cit., p. 189.
98 By 1802 he had raised an army of 12000 men and 60 cannon pieces and had begun making inroads in the Delhi region. 'Letter by Perron to De Boigne written on 28th February 1802' in Victor de Saint-Génis, op. cit.
99 J. D. Cunningham, A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the battles of the Sutlej, First Published 1849, Reprinted 1990, p. 110.
100 Alfred Martineau, op. cit., p. 189; Herbert Compton, op. cit., p. 188.
Mackenzie each. Sensing the protracted struggle only suicidal against the brigades’ organized march in the column form, George Thomas suddenly came out and attacked Capt. Skinner. However, he could not remain offensive for long and had to fall back when another Skinner came for his brother’s help. The desperate fight between two European-led forces took place in the Hansi’s central market where the three columns under the command of Perron’s officers faced Thomas’ 6-pounder. The grape-shot fire from Thomas’ 6-pounder proved devastating for the advancing columns and its commanders and the fire forced the Perron’s officer to make a retreat from the market. But, the arrival of reserved battalions and bigger 12-pounder guns on their side changed the complexion of the battle and George Thomas after vainly resisting for sometime finally surrendered.\(^{101}\)

After the defeat of George Thomas, Perron led an expedition against the Sikhs who had been carrying out plundering raids into the Upper Doab. He marched up to the river Sutlej and made all the Sikh chiefs to the southward of Sutlej acknowledge obedience and pay tribute to the Maratha leader Daulat Rao Sindhia.\(^{102}\) Thus, Perron not only eliminated the budding threat to the Mughal order in the form of George Thomas but also checked the Sikh troubles in the Doab. Perron during this time was the most powerful general in north India. He was not only at the command of a formidable army but also had under his control seven great forts of Hindustan namely Agra, Ajmer, Delhi, Aligarh, Khurja, Saharanpur, and Firozabad. In addition to it, he

\(^{101}\) Alfred Martineau, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

was ruling a fertile tract of land comprising twenty-seven districts in the Aligarh region.\textsuperscript{103}

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Anglo-Maratha relations which had hitherto been peaceful since the treaty of Salbai in 1781 began to change. In the wake of straining relations, Daulat Rao Sindhia tried to seek support of the French government through Perron. He asked Perron to send his letters to the French government. Perron was given all discretionary powers to effect a treaty between Sindhia and the French, and was assured that in return the French government's regiment would be apportioned a fertile territory in full sovereignty. As this diplomatic overture needed formal approval of the Mughal emperor, Daulat Rao Sindhia ordered Perron to escort the emperor Shah Alam from Delhi to Mathura.

The British, who had until now been friendly with these adventurers ever since the time of De Boigne, grew apprehensive of the change in Perron's military policy. Consequently, Lord Lake was ordered to march against him. As during this period Perron's brigades were out on various campaigns, he ordered all the commanders to return to Aligarh and he also marched there.\textsuperscript{104}

But the most important setback for him even before the battle was that most of the English officers and soldiers of his army resigned in the wake of war against their own nation. They cited various reasons for leaving the army. Captain Stewart, a British country-born, and Captain Carnegie, a Scotsman, were the first to resign. They

\textsuperscript{103} Alfred Martineau, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 88.

\textsuperscript{104} Perron's brigades had the strength of more than 40,000 men before the start of conflict with the English. William Thorn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 78.
declared that they would not fight against the British army. George Hessing, an Englishman and commander of the second brigade, took leave from the service on the pretext of the death of his father. Stuart another important officer in Perron’s brigade left it when the hostilities with the English forces commenced. Apart from this, many Englishmen who chose to stay in Perron’s army later turned out to be traitors. Lieutenant Lucan who was an Irishman had acted in this manner. He had pointed out the entry point of the Aligarh fort to the English forces and thus had helped Lake capture it. Later, he received 24,000 rupees for the help and a commissioned rank in the 76th regiment of the Company army.

Despite such a desertion, Perron at the command of about 9000 men of regular brigades, 15000 cavalry including his own 5000 regular Hindustani horses took the position at Aligarh. The fort of Aligarh was constructed on a strategic location which had the cover of extensive swamps all around. Perron’s right flank had the protection of the fort and the left flank derived its strength from the nature of ground ahead. On 29th August 1803, Lord Lake attacked the left flank of the fort which he found comparatively weaker. As soon as Lake’s army began firing a few rounds from his

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105 The resignation spree of the English officers had enraged Perron so much that he jestingly ordered all the British officers and British country-borns in his army to leave the service. James Skinner, Memoirs of James Skinner, op. cit., pp. 250-251.
106 Perron, ‘Ma Dernière Mission en Inde (Perron, 1803)’ in Guy Deleury’s Les Indes Florissantes, pp. 990-996. S. N. Sen’s argument that foreign mercenaries deceived their master by refusing to fight Lord Lake is untenable. De Boigne had already warned Daulat Rao Sindhia not to fight the English. And once the battle ensued, Perron led his brigades and fought with all the vigour. It were only the English officers and soldiers who either deserted Perron or put up only a show of fight against their compatriots. S. N. Sen, op. cit., pp. 122-124.
107 William Thorn, op. cit., p. 77.
galloper-guns, Perron’s forces which had already become demoralized due to large-scale European desertion started retreating. Perron, leaving the command of the fort under Colonel Pedron, fell back to Mandu, a village 8 miles south of Aligarh, with his 5000 Hindustani horses. Lord Lake captured the fort of Aligarh on 4\textsuperscript{th} September 1803 only after valiant defiance of the invading army by Colonel Pedron.\textsuperscript{110}

Delhi was also captured by the British only after a strong military resistance of the Indian brigades. The two forces met at Patparganj near Delhi on 11\textsuperscript{th} September 1803. The Indian force was commanded by Louis Bourquien who finally surrendered only after an obstinate resistance to the British forces.\textsuperscript{111} The defeat of Perron’s brigades brought an end to the independent rule of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam who from 16\textsuperscript{th} September 1803 onwards became the English company pensioner.\textsuperscript{112}

Thus, from 1803 onwards the rule of the English company was established in the heartland of north India with Delhi as the base. Many Europeans in the army of Perron were either absorbed in the English company army or migrated to the Punjab where many of them were employed by the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh.

2.7 A Concluding Remark

The foregoing discussion clearly reveals the changes that took place in Indian military system during this period. The discussion not only highlights the military transition but it also dwells at length on the need to neatly demarcate the two phases in the

\textsuperscript{110} Colonel Pedron was taken prisoner and sent to Calcutta. William Thorn, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 94, 99.

\textsuperscript{111} The force at Delhi consisted of 16 battalions of regular infantry, six thousand cavalry, and a large train of ordnance. The total strength of the Indian force at Delhi was 19,000, whereas that of English company was 4,500. Apart from Louis Bourquien, the other French officers who fought were Gessin, Guerinier, Del Perron and Jean Pierre. William Thorn, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 110-111, 114, 118.

\textsuperscript{112} Herbert Compton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 301.
history of modernization of Indian forces in the second half of the eighteenth century. The presence of European adventurers in north Indian military arena was pivotal to this change. Their employment by the states certainly improved the military capability of the states. The case of the Jat state is in point. That the Jats remained a force to reckon with even under the weak successors of Suraj Mal was only due to their advantage of possessing European-led military auxiliaries. And, as soon as this section departed, the power of the Jats also declined. The other reason was that the Jats could not adopt the European tactics and disciplined use of firearms despite active military participation of the Europeans there.113 Writing about the Jat’s level of adoption of European military skills, an anonymous observer remarked in 1768 when he saw that the Jats took ten days to carry two 24-pounders a mile or two in the following words, 
\[telle \, est \, l'adresse \, de \, la \, plupart \, des \, Indiens \, dans \, le \, métier \, de \, la \, guerre \, après \, qu'ils \, ont \, reçu \, tant \, de \, leçons \, des \, Européens, \, dont \, ils \, auraient \, dû \, profiter. \, Mais \, on \, a \, beau \, leur \, apprendre.\] 

The result was that as soon as the Europeans departed from the Jat territory, the Jat power declined sharply. Although the Jats employed the Europeans later also, but in the wake of De Boigne’s systematic approach to the militarization of native armies, their handful of trained personages could not restore the Jat glory of Madec and Sombre’s days.

The early adventurers initiated transition in indigenous military system. But any comprehensive transformation in the military system took place only in the second

114 William Irvine, op. cit., p. 117. “Such is the status of majority of Indians in the profession of warfare after having received so much training from the Europeans, of which they must have profited. But one has to make them learn even more”. (My Translation)
phase. It appears on the basis of available records that military transformation in the second phase was quite fast. De Boigne was able to raise three full-fledged Europeanized brigades in a matter of not more than three years. It is a clear indicative of the capability of the Indians to adopt new military techniques and warfare skills. It is not as if that this potentiality developed only in the later phase, in fact, it had existed earlier also. Yet we see that the transformation that we are talking about took place only in the later phase. The reasons for this have to be seen in the nature of employment of the adventurers in the two phases. In the early phase, the native states employed the Europeans largely with the motive offielding them in battles from their side. It is because of this reason that the preference was given to those who had their own contingents. From the available narratives it comes to the fore that the states’ intention in employing these adventurers was limited only up to the extent of tilting the balance in their favour during wars. Nowhere do we find any mention that in the early phase the states employed the Europeans with the motive of transforming their army, albeit, the states did allow the European adventurers to increase the strength of their corps. Owing to this reason the phase was stretched for a longer time. However, when we look at the second phase we find that the scenario was completely different there. Five fully trained brigades were raised just in a little more than a decade. And in such a short span Indian forces underwent a complete makeover. The metamorphosis of this kind could be effected because the adventurers during this period were employed not only to fight wars but also with the aim to raise a fully Europeanized army. The appointment of De Boigne by Mahadji Sindhia can be seen in this context.

The features of reposing full confidence in a foreigner, giving complete freedom to him, and granting land for financial needs with full authority to raise and train army,
as we have seen in De Boigne's case, were missing in the early phase. All these proved to be essential requisites for such a transformation. It is abundantly clear that the potentialities of adopting western methods of warfare had not been fully tapped in the early phase. The financial constraint had always been in existence. The payment of regular salary had been a limiting factor in this regard, a fact to which James Skinner indirectly hinted. Madec had also highlighted the financial constraints in raising the strength of his corps beyond a point. He stated that he maintained the strength of his contingent on the basis of his ability to pay them regularly. In fact, as it has been discussed in the chapter, when De Boigne proposed to Mahadji Sindhia to raise a brigade at the initial stage, the Maratha leader could not accept it due to financial problems. It was one of the reasons that led De Boigne to retire from Sindhia's service. Later, he took up employment with Mahadji Sindhia again only after the assurance that his soldiers would be paid regularly.

That the European adventurers also had to grapple with the salary hassles is evident from Modave's narration of a particular kind of tactics employed by Sombre to have his soldiers paid. Modave called it 'danga' or tumult which was in reality a sham. Modave mentioned that on one occasion, Sombre, in order to get his soldiers paid, colluded with his officers who then induced their soldiers to surround the tent of their master and create all sorts of hullabaloo and trouble. In this feigned protest the soldiers had only refused to work and there had been not a single sign of mutiny. Modave wrote that except cavalry all branches took part in such a 'danga'. The cavalry

115 James Skinner wrote "All other Europeans have failed in such attempts (attempts to raise regular armies) from want of funds for regular pay". Then he says that De Boigne had realized this problem right from the start and took up service only after the assurance that his troops were paid in time. James Skinner, Memoirs of James Skinner, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
supported it only tacitly for the fear of losing its horses if their participation would become known to the highest authorities. Modave points out that the strategy had worked well for Sombre who was then paid by Najaf Khan. Modave writes, *Je me souviens d’un de ces danga que Sombre fit faire secrètement à ses gens pour être dans le cas de presser Nagef-kan de lui faire toucher de l’argent. Les principaux officiers de ces cipayes savoient seuls ses intentions.*\(^{116}\) These evidence clearly indicate that adquate financial support acted as a significant constraint for the early adventurers to raise and train Europeanized army after a point.

Polier’s letters give a first-hand account of the weaponry used during the transitional phase and the status of military organization, something on which the European-led troops scored better. He informs about catapults as an important assault weapon which was used during siege operations to throw heavy stones and the ‘gola’ to break fort walls.\(^{117}\) Polier informs that cannons generally used in north India in 1770s were of low calibre and had limited range, and therefore, were not fit for siege operations.\(^{118}\)

\(^{116}\) Both Sleeman’s who wrote in the early part of nineteenth century and Lester Hutchinson’s interpretations of such incidents are untenable. They say that Sombre would often be insulted by his soldiers who would make him parade at gunpoint. But as Modave himself was present in the region during this time and knew Sombre personally, his information is more reliable and authentic. Moreover, Lester Hutchinson’s interpretation is based on the English writings. W. H. Sleeman, *op. cit.*, p. 272; Lester Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Comte de Modave, *op. cit.*, p. 310. “I remember one of these ‘danga’ which Sombre had asked his people secretly to pressurize Najaf Khan to give them money. Only the important officers of Sombre’s corps knew his (Sombre’s) intentions”. (My Translation)

\(^{117}\) He mentions different types of catapults that were used in siege operations. At the time of his entrenchment at Agra, he had asked the Nawab Shuja-ud-daula to send the large catapult which was kept in Lucknow. *Letter by Polier to Shuja-ud-Daula*’ in Muzaffar Alam & Seema Alvi’s *A European Experience of the Mughal Orient*, Folio No. 46a, p. 121.

\(^{118}\) The cannons deployed by Polier during the siege operation of Agra fort in 1774 were of this nature which had prolonged the siege, a fact he frequently lamented by saying that what was being done with 14 cannons could have been done with only two big ones. The two big cannons he was talking about.
During the assault of the Agra fort in which Polier himself was involved, the shortage both of cannons and cannon-balls were acutely felt. It seems that cannon-balls had still not begun to be produced on a large scale. Polier made the assessment that they required at least 17 or 18 cannons and 400 to 500 cannon-balls for each cannon to capture the fort whereas they had only 14 cannons and 150 cannon-balls for each one. He also said that without such ammunitions a fort like Agra could not be captured. In fact, he had made it clear to Najaf Khan that without 400 to 500 cannon-balls the capture of fort would be impossible.\(^{119}\)

Polier’s letters also shed light on poor military strategies of the Indian states which was evident during this particular occasion. He wrote that lack of organization and discipline in native soldiers was another major factor for the delay in capturing the fort. After the capture of the fort, he rued that the lack of coordination had unnecessarily prolonged the siege nearly for a month as it was captured only within four days once the coordinated bombardment was started.\(^{120}\) Polier expressed that had his plans been properly implemented then they would have succeeded much earlier.\(^{121}\) Polier’s depiction of the poor state of weaponry and organization in native army on this occasion is a hint for the question why despite having very large armies the Indian forces used to be consistently overcome by small, disciplined forces.

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\(^{119}\) 'Letter by Polier to Shuja-ud-Daula' in Muzaffar Alam & Seema Alvi, op. cit., Folio No. 64b, p. 133-134, Folio No. 68b, p. 136.

\(^{120}\) 'Letter by Polier to Shuja-ud-Daula' in Muzaffar Alam & Seema Alvi, op. cit., folio 56b, pp. 128-129.

\(^{121}\) The siege had lasted nearly for a month but the bombardment did not continue for more than four days. The fort was finally taken by the Mughals when the Jats surrendered in the face of heavy cannon attack under Polier. 'Letter by Polier to Shuja-ud-Daula' in Muzaffar Alam & Seema Alvi, op. cit., folio 48a, p. 122-123, folio 64b, p. 134, folio 77b, p. 142; 'Letter by Polier to Najaf Khan', Ibid., folio 60a, p. 131.
As it has been discussed in the chapter, the relation between the adventurers and the English company was extremely cordial in the second phase. De Boigne was a friend of the British Governor General Warren Hastings. It was his pronounced cordiality with English company officers that a number of Englishmen joined his Indian force.\(^{122}\) In fact, one of the important factors of Perron’s defeat was that many English officers and soldiers of his army had deserted him when he fought the English company. This was probably the reason that the ‘far-sighted’ De Boigne had advised Daulat Rao Sindhia not to fight against the English. This friendly relation deteriorated when Daulat Rao Sindhia insisted Perron to open parleys with the French government for military support. It ultimately led to Lord Lake’s attack on Hindustan and the defeat of the Indian brigades.

The popular notion that the French adventurers were acting as agents of their government to establish French power in Hindustan or as Shelford Bidwell argues they were on ‘military missions’, does not really hold ground.\(^{123}\) Nowhere do we find evidence which may establish that these adventurers were officially connected with

\(^{122}\) Bidwell says that the English adventurers had joined not only De Boigne but Perron also. Some of the famous English military officers were William Tone whom Perron had captured after his victory over Lakwa Dada at Sounda. Tone was leading the European corps of Lakwa Dada. Evans was another Englishman who had joined Perron. However, not much is known about Evans. Shelford Bidwell, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

\(^{123}\) William Thorn argues that French government had sent their men of talent as adventurers to India to establish the French power in Hindustan. They were directed to adopt themselves to Indian customs and gain confidence of Indian rulers to achieve their goal. William Thorn, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-32. But he does not give any evidence regarding the connection between the French adventurers and the French government. Shelford Bidwell gives contradictory views when he first says that they were not ‘adventurers’ or ‘mercenaries’ at all, rather they were sent by the French government on ‘military missions’. Then on the same page he says that these mercenaries would fight for any master who paid them their salary. Referring to Madec, he says that he was concerned with making money and warfare for him was only a business. Shelford Bidwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 13.
the French government. Perron, the general of Indian brigades, was not in any formal contact with the French government. That the embassy sent to France was not the initiative of Perron is testified by Col. James Skinner who says that Perron’s overtures was the result of sycophancy on the part of his dependants, and moreover, there was no response from the French government.\(^{124}\) Perron was not even aware of the political developments that had taken place at Pondicherry which by a convention had come under the English control in 1803. The letter of Wellesely is the most telling evidence on the status of Perron’s connections with the French government. Governor-General Wellesely in a letter to Lord Hobart on 20th November 1803 wrote, “I admit that Perron had not been formally connected with the present government of France”.\(^{125}\)

Thus, the English attack under Lord Lake was the tangible expression of their fear about the French adventurers’ military potential and Indian soldiers’ quick adaptability to the new warfare methods. It had only subsided during De Boigne’s time but had not completely disappeared. When Perron became the general, it surfaced again. In correspondence and reports of the Company officers, this issue was frequently referred to which only attested the Company’s long-standing desire to have the French adventurers removed from the north Indian military scene.\(^{126}\)

\(^{124}\) Shelford Bidwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-285


\(^{126}\) The earliest reference for such a stand of the English company during Perron’s period comes from a letter of Marquis Wellesley written in June 1799. Writing to Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control, Wellesely stated, “I shall endeavour to render the cession of territory (after the Mysore War) the instrument of annihilating every remnant of a French party in that quarter. I am anxious to find some mode of engaging the interests of Sindhia in the new settlement of Mysore, under the condition of dismissing all the French officers from his service, and (if possible) under that of his delivering them over to our government for the purpose of being sent to Europe”. On 4th July 1799 he wrote to Colonel
The French presence had kept the English unsettled becomes even more evident when we take a deep look into the politics of Awadh in the post-Buxar phase, a time when a number of French adventurers had taken up employment with the Nawab Shuja-ud-daula. While the English could not openly demand the expulsion of French nationals from Hindustan as they had no control on the rulers there, they could do so to the Nawab who was bound to them through a treaty signed after his defeat at Buxar. Therefore, the vigorous demand of the English for the expulsion of French from Awadh brought the Nawab to a head-on confrontation with them. It formed an important issue of political contest between the two until the Nawab’s death in 1775. It forms the subject of our next chapter which presents the dynamics of Awadh politics in a completely new light with militarization of the Awadh army and the French corps popularly known as _partis français_ becoming the centre of all political actions.

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Palmer, the Resident at Poona, "The whole system of my policy is an earnest of my anxiety to expel the French from the service of Sindhia". Herbert Compton, _op. cit._, p. 291.