CHAPTER V

POLICE MILITIA

When the Second Sebundy Regiment was disbanded, the Agent to the Governor-General put forward a proposal to retain 300 men to form the nucleus of a civil police corps. Into this should be added the existing police, and the proposed corps sufficiently strengthened by additional recruits, should take over all the civil duties of the province. The Commander in Chief thought well of the proposal for such a police battalion could also relieve the First A.L.I. from part of the duties at the numerous outposts. The Deputy Governor of Bengal also recommended the proposal, pointing out at the same time that the battalion so raised should be placed under competent military officers instead of under the Civil Assistants. The battalion should also have sufficient European and native officers. The Governor-General in Council, who saw no immediate necessity for the formation of a distinct police corps, was reluctant to

1. F.P.C. 6 April 1844; No. 180; 2d September 1844; No. 3.
2. F.P.C. 24 August 1844; No. 51.
3. F.P.C. 2d September 1844; No. 8.
sanction the proposal and directed that the ex-Seounay soldiers should be absorbed in the existing police establishments. Under this authority Captain Vetoh, the Principal Assistant of Lakhimpur, formed for the duties of Upper Assam, a Militia of the following strength: One subadar, two jemadars, four havildars, five naiks, two drummers and one hundred and four sepoys. Of this body, a detachment consisting of two jemadars, two havildars, two naiks and 54 sepoys soon after relieved a detachment of the First A.L.I. at Lakhimpur. In early 1845 when the two companies of the 29th N.I. were withdrawn from Bishnath the total strength of the Militia was increased to 120 sepoys. The duties of the tract east of the river Subansiri was entrusted to the Militia detachment at Lakhimpur which was then increased to 70 sepoys. A whole company of the A.L.I. was made disposable for emergencies by these rearrangements. With the reliefs provided in Lakhimpur by the Militia the First A.L.I. was stationed within the Mutook territory and distributed between the stations of Dibrugarh, Jaipur, Mingroo and Saiknowa. The whole corps could be concentrated in any spot in two or three days when once the military roads were completed.

1. Ibid: No. 9; P.L.T.C., No. 3 (6 January) of 1846.
2. F.P.O. 28 February 1845: No. 142.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
The formation of the Lakhimpur Militia somewhat relieved the First A.L.I. of the strain of outpost duties in Upper Assam. Composed mainly of the Doanneahs*, whom the local officers always thought a good policy to employ, the Militia proved sufficient for all the ordinary duties, until in late 1846, the extreme unhealthiness of the frontier, particularly around Jaipur and Mingroo, necessitated readjustments in the distribution of the A.L.I. and the Militia. In March 1847 two companies of the A.L.I. were removed from Jaipur to Dibrugarh followed, soon after, by the withdrawal of its headquarters.\footnote{The Jurwasa, Hindustanis, Gurkhas and the other classes having been transferred to the First and Second A.L.I.}

The correspondence at the time shows that only the great political and strategic importance of the post prevented the withdrawal of the entire A.L.I. detachment. Even the Court of Directors were inclined towards abandoning it on this account.\footnote{F.P.C. 10 May 1850; No. 14; See Report, 14 January 1850.} The post of Mingroo was found to be even worse and the incidence of malaria and jungle fever greater. The A.L.I. had accordingly to be replaced by a party from the Militia.\footnote{F.P.C. 3 April 1847; No. 27.} The Lakhimpur Militia then held four posts on the South-East Frontier viz.,

1. F.P.C. 13 March 1847; Nos. 97-105; P.L.I.C., No. 39 (10 August) of 1848.
2. F.P.C. 10 May 1850; No. 14; See Report, 14 January 1850.
3. F.P.C. 3 April 1847; No. 27.
In addition to these there were three posts in Lakhimpur. These seven posts required 111 men out of the total 120. Of the rest only 6 men remained at headquarters fit for duty. This number was too small to provide reliefs at the outposts. On the other hand the demands on the Assam Militia, which was then located at Sibsagar, were comparatively less heavy. Of its total strength of 100 sepoys no less than 74 remained idle at its headquarters. Jenkins saw no reason why such a large body should be continued on the pay of the Government. Remnant of Purandar Singh's nyke militia, it was composed mainly of the Assamese ryots. Unlike the Doanneahs in the Lakhimpur Militia, there was no Political object in employing them. Further, since the Eastern Nagas were then pacified demands for additional troops was not called for in that quarter. Jenkins accordingly reduced the Assam Militia by half and with the saving thus effected raised the strength of the Lakhimpur Militia to 160. At this strength there was not only a sufficient amount for the reliefs at the outposts but also a small disposable force for emergencies too.

trifling for the Local Corps. The Governor-General approved of the measure.

NOWGONG POLICE MILITIA

A party of one havildar, two naiks and twenty eight sepoys from the disbanded Second Sebundy Corps was added to the Shan Militia for duties against the Angamis. These were distributed between three posts as follows:

Dimapur (Shan) ... 62 sepoys and nine native officers
Mohundijua (ex-Sebundies) ... 10 sepoys and one native officer
Hossang Hajoo (ex-Sebundies) ... 17 sepoys and two native officers

In January 1846 Captain J. Butler, the Principal Assistant of Nowgong, on his return from an expedition to the Angami Naga hills, turned his attention towards reorganising and strengthening this Militia. It had always been the intention to assimilate the Shans and the Sebundy soldiers since

1. F.P.C. 28 February 1846: No. 142.
2. F.P.C. 13 June 1846: No. 29; Butler to Jenkins.
they were to perform the same duties an the Angami frontier.
But these two remained two distinct bodies on account of
their difference in pay. The Shans were entertained on the pay
they had received in the Khasi hills, viz., Rs. 5/3 less
batta, while the former Seundies received their old pay of
Rs. 5/4. In order to assimilate them Butler raised the pay
of the latter to a uniform Rs. 5/3 and redesignated the whole
as the Nowgong Police Company or Militia. Henceforth recrui-
ting was confined to the Cacharees and other tribes. The
strength of the Militia he proposed to raise to one subadar,
one jemadar six each of havildars and naiki and a hundred
sepoys, to be distributed between,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimapur</th>
<th>50 sepoys</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samaguting</td>
<td>10 sepoys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deopani</td>
<td>20 sepoys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hossang Hajoo</td>
<td>20 sepoys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The President in Council approved of the increase of
pay to the former Seundy Soldiers; but since no decision was
taken on the proposed posts the addition to the strength of
the Militia was deferred.

1. P.P.C. 13 June 1846: No. 29; Bulter to Jenkins.
2. Ibid: No. 30.
Meanwhile Naga raids continued. In August 1846 a new series of Angami outrages were reported. The pacific policy having apparently failed Major Jenkins strongly recommended the establishment of a strong military post within their hills. He proposed that Captain Butler should once again be deputed to the frontier for the purpose. Accordingly, Butler proceeded to the Angami Naga hills in November 1846 with specific instructions to establish a post at Samaguting. On 28 December he reached Samaguting where a stockade was built and a detachment of the Nowogong Police Militia was therein located. Soon after, one Bhogohand took charge of the post as native Superintendent of the Angami Frontier. The other military posts were also strengthened. In April 1847 Butler modified the civil police establishments to supplement the Militia. Bhogohand was elevated to a second-class Darogah and the jurisdiction of his thana was extended not only over the Angamis but also over the Hengma Nagas, the Mikirs and to the region south-west of Tularam's territory to the phari at Haflong. The Darogah was always at hand to apprehend the disturbers of the peace with the Militia. A regular and frequent communication was kept up between Samaguting and Haflong. By these arrangements Butler hoped that the defence of North Cachar would be complete.

2. F.P.C. 29 May 1847; No. 19.
These measures had the effect of arresting Naga inroads for a time. Raids apparently stopped and during 1846 a thousand Nagas were reported to have come down to Nowgong for trade. Bhogohand, the Darogah, appeared to have established a sufficient influence over the turbulent Angamis; but soon his unwarranted interference in the affairs of two warring clans not only cost him his life but involved the Government in yet another expedition. The murder of the Darogah was followed by an attack on the outposts. Jenkins once again pointed out the inefficacy of purely defensive measures and advocated the application of force to bring the offenders to book. It was the Manipuri system of coercion and not the defensive policy of the English, Jenkins emphasised, that was most likely to be respected by the Nagas. An expedition was finally sanctioned in December 1849 and Lieutenant Vincent moved up to the hills. This expedition failed and another was forthwith despatched under the same officer in the following February. The Nagas were put to flight and Vincent put to flames one of the villages reported inimical to the British. Thereafter he remained at Mosuma for six months. The growing hostility of the Angami Nagas soon made his position desperate. Another large force of 500 men under Major Foquett, Commandant of the Second A.L.I., with two 3 pounder guns and two mortars were despatched to relieve Vincent and capture the Fort of Konomah,
the stronghold of the Angamis. The fort proved unexpectedly formidable. No officer ever had the experience of such well-contrived and extended fortifications amongst the Naga communities. The small mountain guns of the Local Artillery proved virtually ineffective against them. While the defences were thus strong and complete, the position was also very difficult of access. It was only after a Seige of sixteen hours that the fort 'one of the strongest ever seen in Assam' fell.

On the termination of the expedition Jenkins proposed to raise the strength of the Howgong Police Militia from 100 to 150 for the protection of the frontier. The men, particularly the Gurkhas of whom a good many had lately been recruited, were well suited for the hill work against these rude tribes. The Militia required no provisions or reliefs at the outposts. For the numerous small posts in the unhealthy jungles on the line of river Dorschiri they were well-suited. There were besides, many objections to the constant employment of the men

2. Ibid: The seige is thus described: 'At 2 P.M. the mortars commenced firing shells on the Fort at a distance of 600 yards, but owing to a dense fog, the narrow ridge of the mountain, on which the enemy's position was situated, the shells seemed to have little effect, falling either short of or beyond the position. The two 3 pounder guns were then advanced within 150 yards of the Fort to effect a breach in the barricade for the troops to enter, but the defences being very strong, constructed of stone and timber, and not being injured after many rounds of shot and cannonisters had
of the Local Corps in those jungles. An addition to the Militia was therefore indispensable, wrote Jenkins, no matter what policy the Government may decide to follow in future towards the Nagas.

Lord Dalhousie, who in the meanwhile decided upon a policy of non-interference 'confining ourselves to the establishment of effective means of defence on the line of our frontier', readily approved of Jenkins' proposal. He observed that with such materials as the men composing the Militia "there can be no impossibility nor even difficulty in establishing effective lines of frontier defence." In conclusion Jenkins was desired to prepare a scheme of frontier posts.

LUSHAI RAIDS: THE KUKI LEVY

While the local authorities in Assam were engaged in checking the excesses of the Nagas, those in Cachar and

been expended, the guns were advanced to within 70 yards. Still as there appeared no hope of breaching the barricade, and the day was closing, the whole party advanced to escalade the position'. See also Elwin, V.: The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century, P. 138.
1. B.J.P. 27 February 1850: No. 36.
2. Minute by Lord Dalhousie, 20 February 1851.
3. Ibid.
Sylhet were confronted with the incursions of the Lusnaia. These Lushais since 1844, when an unsuccessful expedition was conducted against them by Captain Blackwood, had been getting progressively bolder. They extended their ravages further each year. In February 1850, Captain Lister, the Commanding Officer of the S.L.I., on his return from another expedition, was constrained to report that unless 'something decisive' was done the whole of Cachar south of the river Barak and possibly a large extent of country south of Sylhet would soon be turned into a desert.

Lister's expedition, like the one under Blackwood, was only a qualified success in spite of the fact that he penetrated fifty miles into the hills south of Cacnar. It merely showed to the Lushais, as the Deputy Governor of Bengal observed, that their mountain fastness was not inaccessible to the British troops. But on the other hand the expedition brought to light the enormous difficulties to be encountered in conducting operations against these rude tribes. These difficulties Lister elaborated in his lengthy report of.

1. B.J.P. 27 February 1850: No. 36.

* The ease with which Lister was able to penetrate deep into their territory was due to the fact that the whole of the fighting population was absent on one of its raids.

2. Ibid: No. 37.
February 1350. The route to the Lushai villages was extremely hazardous; hills, swamps, rivers and forests would have to be crossed. Further, the nature of the country made it very easy for the Lushais to throw up stockades in a matter of a few hours which would successfully cut off the communications of an invading force. As Lister wrote,

"It is not their muskets or other offensive weapons that are to be dreaded but their expertness in the use of the bow, and the facility with which their jungles afford, both in materials and in position for throwing up obstacles in the way of an advance or retreat".

To put down these people effectively Lister was of the opinion that a force not less than 3,000 men would be required: from 500 to 1000 to keep open the road from Gaonar and protect the various depots, and the remainder for carrying on operations. Even if small detachments were occasionally to penetrate into the hills and destroy one or two villages this could only be done at a considerable risk and with the not improbable result of provoking retaliation.

For the defence of the frontier Lister established stockades along south Gaonar and Sylhet. Four companies of the Sylhet local corps were left at Silchar to garrison any

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: No. 33.
points which the Superintendent of Gaohar thought most exposed. A jemadar’s post was established at Chargola and another at Lungai, both in the Sylhet district. In addition, Lister proposed to raise a two hundred strong Militia from among the Kukis, who had only recently been driven out of their hills by the Lushais, under a young, active and enterprising European Officer. These with ‘nothing more’ than an elementary instruction in musketry, he proposed to post in the stockades along the line of the frontier and at the most frequented routes into Gaohar and Sylhet. He further suggested that all condemned muskets belonging to the S.L.I. should be handed over to the Superintendent of Gaohar for distribution among the frontier villages. The authorities at the Fort William, who deprecated any extended military measures, readily accepted these proposals.

The Kukis did not prove as willing to enter the service as Lister was keen to employ them, Captain George Verner, the Superintendent of Gaohar, informed that some of villages had not only refused the service but prevented the entry of any recruiting party amongst them. Verner further observed that it might not be prudent to place arms in the...

1. Ibid: No. 36.

* It was here in 1832, that this chowkidari system of frontier village defence was first tried out by Captain Fisher against the 'Kukis'.
hands of tribes too independent and self-willed. Instead a certain number of Bengalees and Kacharies should be entertained, who being accustomed to the jungle life could be employed against the Lushais as well as the Nagaś. These views induced Lister to reduce the Kuki element to one hundred. They were to be increased only if after a fair trial their employment was found practicable; the other hundred Lister proposed from the Kacharis, 'a stout and hardy race who inhabit the foot of the hills and are regularly accustomed to a jungle life as the Kookies.' The Military Department also advised caution in placing arms immediately in the hands of the Kukis. The officer who was to raise the militia was to be specifically instructed to refrain from entertaining any Kukis before the recruitment of the Kacharis was complete, after which their enlistment was to commence on the responsibility of their rajahs and mantries.

The corps was organised into one European officer commanding, two rajahs as subadars, two rajahs as jamadars, ten mantries as havildars and two hundred Kukis and Kacharies in equal proportion. It was to be a civil corps. The men were

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid: No. 96.
3. B.J.P. 26 June 1850: No. 163.
4. B.J.P. 14 August 1850: No. 90.
entitled to *batta* when employed beyond the frontier, the cost of the corps otherwise was Rs. 1627-13-0 per month. The old muskets of the S.L.I. were used for the corps but no clothing was provided to the men. The command was at first given to Edward Baker, son of a salt agent at Naokhali, but as this objected to by the Court of Directors the command finally fell on Lieutenant R. Stewart, 22nd N.I., attached to the S.L.I.

The Militia was ostensibly raised for the defence of the frontier south of Cachar and Sylhet, but the real motive of enlisting the Kukis was to provide them with some employment. This is clear from the class composition of the Kuki element. These consisted chiefly of the Thadon and Shingeshon clans who had accompanied Lister in his expedition. In Stewart's own account they were inferior in martial capacity to the 'Old Kukis' who would have made better soldiers. The 'New Kukis' consisted of the Thadon, Shingeshon, Chunges, and Lungia clans; of these the last two had already been dispersed and settled in parts of North Cachar and Manipur. But the Thadons and Shingeshons, who were most turbulent of the

3. Stewart, R. *Notes on North Cachar*, J.A.., Vol XXIV, 1855; The 'Old Kukis' entered British Territory in late 18th and early 19th century A.D. See also Shakespeare, J. *The Lushai Kuki Clans*, Part II, Ch. III.
four, had still to be provided for. If left to themselves there was every possibility of their carrying on retaliatory raids against their victors in the Lusnai hills and thereby keep the frontier in a constant state of warfare. The Kukis, under the impression that the Militia was raised for the purpose of taking back their country, flocked to the standard in numbers. They were at first staggered by the severity of its discipline, but soon recovered when they began to appreciate the value of money and the regularity with which they received their pay. Although the Kuki element formed only half of its strength, the corps was popularly called the Kuki Levy and proved very useful against the Lushais and the Nagas. But when the plan of giving employment to the hill tribes was extended to the Angamis the measure did not meet with equal success.

NEW POLICY : RELIANCE ON MILITIA

Closely following the expeditions against the Lusnais and the Angami Nagas came reports that a party of armed tribes had entered the Naga hills from beyond the Patkais. At about this time the relations of the Government of India with the Burmese was somewhat strained and the local authorities quickly

1. Ibid.
linked up the incident with the threat of another Burmese invasion. The armed Shans were looked upon as a reconnoitring party in advance of a much larger invading force. Even the Government of India viewed the reports with considerable alarm. Measures for the defence of the frontier had to be taken accordingly. The time was highly inopportune. There was not a sufficient disposable force. For the greater portion of the Local Corps were on outpost duties. As an immediate measure the General Orders granting furlough to the Regiments, which would have deprived the province of some 300 sepoys, were cancelled; and the Agent was instructed by the Governor-General in Council to withdraw, as much as possible, all the detachments of the Local Corps from the outposts so as to concentrate the Regiments.

The problem of the disposable force showed, once again, that it was no longer possible for the Local Corps to hold the frontier posts as well as maintain a sufficient force in reserve for emergencies. Further, these posts which dotted the entire line of the frontier not only imposed a heavy drain on the regiments but also proved, as Jenkins pointed out, 'very

2. F.P.O. 7 May 1852: Nos. 211-212.
3. Ibid.
inimical to the maintenance of that state of discipline which would enable the Local Corps as intended to be substitutes for Regular Regiments and save the corps of the line from service in a province so insalubrious to unacclimatized Hindustanees. On the other hand, none of the posts could be abandoned for the defence of the frontier depended entirely upon them. In Lower Assam the Second A.L.I. maintained seven posts on the Garo frontier. The Garos frequented the frontier hats in such large numbers, between 1000 to 2000 at a time and not unoften fully armed, that it was always necessary to keep a strict watch over them. If the guards were withdrawn, Agnew, the Principal Assistant of Goalpara warned, 'we should very soon have a petty war in our hands'. Along the northern frontier a line of small posts had to be kept up from the Bhutan duars to the Abor marches. To watch and restrain the Mishimi, the Khamtis and particularly the Singphos, nearly the whole of the First A.L.I. had to be kept stationary on the frontier. Against the Nagas of the Sibsagar division it was necessary to maintain small posts at the hats between Jaipur and Golaghat, which were most frequented by the Nagas, for the security of the ryots and to prevent the Nagas from quarrelling among themselves. Jenkins was therefore at a loss to provide

1. F.P.O. 4 June 1852; No. 93; Jenkins to Allen.
2. Ibid: Agnew to Jenkins, 29 April.
a sufficient disposable force as well as maintain all the frontier posts. His solution to the problem indicated a departure from the system established in 1844. He thus observed in a letter dated 18 May 1852 to the Political Secretary of the Government of India, that

"With so many totally barbarous (tribes) on the border hills, one must maintain small detached military posts along the Hills to give confidence to the villages; but to employ on this duty the men of the Light Infantry is very detrimental to their discipline and accompanied by much inconvenience in providing for them the supplies which sepoys of that class expect; it would seem therefore better that all the small outposts should be garrisoned by Local Police Corps and by this arrangement I think it practicable ... to reduce both the Assam Light Infantry Regiments from their present war strength of 1000 sepoys (10 companies of 100 men each) to 900 or 800"1.

To relieve the Second A.L.I. on the Garo frontier and enable its ultimate reduction Jenkins observed that it would be necessary to raise a Police Militia for the purpose. For Upper Assam he recommended the adoption of the Principal Assistant of Sibsagar, Holroyd's proposal to reorganise the Assam Militia of his district. This corps and the Lakhipur Militia, Jenkins wrote, would allow of the relief of the greater part of the First A.L.I. and leave it disposable for sudden calls2.

1. Ibid: Jenkins to Allen.
2. Ibid.
The Assam Militia stood at one jemadar, six havildars and naiks and fifty sepoys after its last reduction in 1847. At the rate of pay of Rs. 4/- per month to the sepoys the Militia attracted only the old, the decrepit, the opium addict and the like who were totally unfit to be entrusted with a musket in their hands. Holroyd's proposal was to disband the Assam Militia and raise in its place a well-armed corps of 100 sepoys. The duties of this Militia would be to occupy the small posts and keep up a line of observation on the hundred miles of Sibsagar frontier, supply guards for the civil duties of Sibsagar and Golaghat, assist the civil police on occasions and relieve the A.L.I. from non-military duties in the Sibsagar district. As the efficiency of such a Militia depended almost entirely on the native officer grades, Vetch, who had already acquired considerable experience with the Lakhimpur Militia, suggested that the proposed corps should be placed on the same footing with his Militia in respect to pay, viz.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Pay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jemadars</td>
<td>Rs. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havildars</td>
<td>Rs. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naiks</td>
<td>Rs. 10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Ibid: Holroyd to Jenkins, 20 April.
2. Ibid: Vetch to Jenkins, 7 May.
The sepoys he proposed should be entertained at Rs. \( \frac{3}{4} \) per month. By a higher scale of pay it was hoped that a better class of men, particularly the Gurkhas, would be attracted. In view of the uncertain relations with the Burmese, the Governor-General in Council readily accepted the proposal to reorganize the Assam Militia, or Sibsagar Militia as it was then designated\(^1\). The Agent was at the same time informed that the Government would be prepared to consider a plan for reducing the strength of the A.L.I. Regiments when it could be done with safety\(^2\).

**DEFENCE OF THE NAGA FRONTIER**

The Burmese menace was followed by a threat of a Bhutia or Tibetan invasion through the Karlapara duar. A large force from the Second A.L.I. under Captain Reid of the Local Artillery was stationed at Odalguri for watching their movements, roads were opened up connecting this advanced post of observation with the principal military stations on the north bank of Brahmaputra\(^3\). Towards the close of 1855 the threat receded and the local authorities were able to turn their attention towards the vexed question of the Naga frontier defence.

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1. Ibid: No. 99.
2. Ibid.
After the annexation of Tularam's territory of the Mikir Hills in October 1853, Bivar established a post of 26 sepoys at Hossung to connect the military posts of Dimapur and Semkur and encourage the ryots to recoup some of the fertile lands east of the river Manur. In 1855 the post was abandoned when this object remained unrealised and also because the post was found too far advanced to be conveniently supplied with provisions. Withdrawing from Hossung and falling back upon the more populated country behind it, Bivar established a cordon of military posts connecting his headquarter station of Asalu with Mohungdijua for the defence of the North Cachar and Mikir hills frontier. The posts and their respective strength were,

Asalu: 111 sepoys, one subadar, five havildars, four naiks and one bugler under an European officer.

Minglow: 16 sepoys, one jemadar, one havildar and one naik.

Semkur: 24 sepoys, one jemadar, one havildar and one naik.

Goulong: 12 sepoys, one havildar and one naik.

Butaree: 20 sepoys, one subadar, one havildar, one naik.

1. For details see Barpujari, H.K.: Assam: In the days of the Company, Pp. 140-46.
2. B.J.P. 13 April 1854: Nos. 203-205.
3. B.J.P. 26 April 1855: No. 214; Bivar to Jenkins, 23 February 1854.
4. Ibid.
Bor Komoree: 16 sepoys, one havildar and one naik.
Langphert: 16 sepoys, one havildar and one naik.

These posts were all within a short distance of each other, and in case of need could provide mutual support. To help the Howgong Police Militia and a detachment of the Second A.L.I. to garrison these posts a portion of the Kuki Levy under Lieutenant R. Stewart, its Commandant, was moved into North Caohar. A well-regulated system of constant patrols was kept up between the posts. All the small posts sent out a patrol once a week, and the larger ones, two or three times. From Asalu patrols were sent out in various directions. By this constant movement of troops it was hoped that the Naga would be deterred from their marauding forays for fear of running into a patrol.

On the Naga frontier bordering on the Howgong and Sibsagar districts Colonel Hanmay, the Commandant of the First A.L.I., established the same system of frontier posts and constant patrolling. Golaghat was established at the headquarters of two companies from the First A.L.I. under an European officer with complete military control over the frontier between Golaghat and Dimapur. The force was sufficient

1. Ibid.
to provide reliefs at the outposts and to follow up any marauding parties of Naga. From Golaghat two permanent detachments of 30 men and 3 native officers each were established: one at Jamuguri, 3 miles distant covering the frontier towards the Lhota Naga, and the other at Borpothar, 18 miles distant on the Dimapur road, towards the Angami Naga. At these two places blockhouses similar to those established on the South-East Frontier were erected. A party of 50 men from the Police Militia was stationed at Dimapur, and at Mohungdijua, about 30 miles to the west, a party of 60 men from the Second A.L.I. and 25 from the Militia. To facilitate patrolling these posts were connected by good roads, at places as wide as thirty yards. To assist the patrols Hannay also proposed to attach six young men from the border villages to act as scouts.

The Dimapur post was abandoned in October 1855\(^1\), on the direction of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal that the frontier posts should, 'defend something real - not uninhabited forests'. The Militia was withdrawn to Mohungdijua which was connected by a direct road to the post of Barpothar and also linked up with Bivar's North Cachar line of posts. A further revision of the posts was made in the same month to enable the withdrawal of a part of the detachment of the Second A.L.I. for the duties of the Northern frontier of Kamrup and Darrang

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1. B.J.P. 29 November 1855: No. 142, Jenkins to Grey, 8 October.
where the Bhutias were once again giving trouble. To help the construction of the frontier military roads so that the patrols could move freely and rapidly at all times a 'Beldar Corps' of labourers was raised. They were armed with daos and pistols so that instead of requiring guards to protect them and become a drain on the military force they would be a source of strength to the frontier.

The defence of the Naga frontier was complicated by geographical conditions. The entire frontier was an intricate mass of jungle, though impenetrable to troops and police, was easily traversed by the Nagas. Multiplication of the military posts was difficult in as much as the country was thinly populated and could not furnish supplies to the troops and the people had a great aversion to serving as coolies. A single file through an impenetrable forest may perhaps be easily defended by a company of infantry; but the Nagas always avoided beaten paths when on raids. Further, the Naga mode of warfare exposed the patrols to the risk of ambushes. Raids therefore continued in spite of the defensive measures.

The local authorities never failed to advocate coercive measures.

1. Ibid: No. 190; Jenkins to Grey, 1 November.
4. Ibid.
measures; either economic blockades, as was successfully instituted against the Garos\(^1\), or punitive expeditions. The Government of India insisted upon a strictly defensive policy and the local officers were left to devise further schemes to protect the frontier and wean away the Nagas from their lawless propensities.

**ANGAMI MASA MILITIA**

In May 1854 Bivar took advantage of an application made by some Angami youths for employment to enlist twenty of them into the Rowgong Police Militia\(^2\). The recruits grave no trouble and all went through their training and drill cheerfully and had shown keen interest in the instructions. After a year's experience of the Naga sepoys Bivar concluded that the experiment had 'proved highly successful'\(^3\). The conduct of an Angami sepoy during an attack on the post of Langpher who called out to the enemy in their own language, fired against them with his comrades, had apparently fully justified the confidence placed on the Angami soldier. Bivar fondly hoped that it would be possible to enlist fifty Angamis into each

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1. The success of blockades against the Garos was due to the fact that they were entirely dependent upon the plains for their necessities.
2. B.J.P. 22 June 1854: No. 15d-159.
of the Local Corps. Jenkins fully approved of the experiment of enlisting the Angami youths into the Police Militia. Lieutenant R. Stewart, the Commandant of the Kuki Levy, not only approved of the policy but ventured to enlist a few into his own Levy. The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal impressed with the success of the Kuki Levy thought that the experiment would meet with equally good results with the Angamis.

Similarly, the Secretary of the Foreign Department of the Government of India wrote, 'The Kookee Levy has quite answered its purpose, and there is no reason, why a Naga Levy should not do so as well.'

The success of the experiment was shortlived; the Angamis did not remain long in service. That the Angamis were eminently qualified for service as soldiers with reference to their constitution and ability there is no reason to doubt. But of the experiment too much was expected too soon. In drawing a parallel between the Kuki Levy and the Nagas in the Howgong Police Militia the Lieutenant Governor and the Foreign Department failed to appreciate the difference in the organisation of the two corps as well as in the characteristics of

1. Ibid: Butler was against the experiment. He wrote: 'I hereby record my total disapproval of enlisting Aughamee Nagahs ... for it may be attended with the most disastrous consequences at any moment, and when least expected. I do not think it safe to have a single Aughamee Nagah in the Police Company, the lives of the whole force are in jeopardy by enlisting Aughamee Nagahs, over whom we have no control'.

2. Ibid: Stewart to Bivar, 14 April 1855.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid: see Keep-With.
the Kukis and the Angami Nagas. The Kuki Levy was loosely organised and discipline was slack. The Kukis, who were strictly monarchical\(^1\), were officered by their own rajahs and mantres and therefore easily managed through them. The success of tribal levies depended largely on whether or not they were officered by one of their own tribe and the degree of discipline imposed upon it. The Nowgong Police Militia, on the other hand, was organised on the lines of the Local Corps, and though its discipline was not as severe was nevertheless enough to disappoint the Angamis. Above all, it could hardly have been expected of the Angamis to remain long under the orders of the Cacharee or Gurkha native officers who formed the bulk of that grade in the Militia. Owing to their democratic character the Angamis were unaccustomed to the obedience of a single authority\(^*\). There is, therefore, every reason to believe that the Lieutenant Governor's hopes that the levy of a small local force of Angamis on the plan of the Kuki Levy might prove 'at once the cheapest and most effectual means of protecting our frontier from Naga incursions and be of great use in any general service that might

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* Bivar thus described the Angami character: 'they have no internal form of Government, they acknowledge no supremacy except that of the Spear .... brook no authority ean is his own master and in the absence of any influenual person whose advice they might respect they are exceedingly difficult to deal with'. B.J.P. 8 March 1855: No. 158. See also Butler, J.: Rough Notes on the Angami Nagas, J.A.S. Vol. XL IV, No. 4, 1875.
any time be required on the Assam Frontier would have remained unrealised.

VILLAGE DEFENCE: THE CHOWKIDARS

To protect the exposed frontier villages, H. Vetch, officiating Agent to the Governor-General on the North-East Frontier, attempted to organise village communities which could defend themselves until help arrived from the nearest guard. He proposed, in March 1855, that two or more young men in each village should be armed with the musket while the other able-bodied men, provided with spear or gun, would rally round the musketeers in time of danger. These chowkidars, if liberally supplied with ammunition and encouraged to hunt in the jungles in advance of the villages, would soon become more efficient scouts than the patrols which followed the beaten paths from post to post, and might be further useful as guides. Vetch's experience of the chowkidari system was limited to the Sadiya district where it was found to be of

2. B.J.P. 26 April 1855: No. 214; Vetch to Bivar, 7 March 1855.
the greatest use against the prowling bands of Misuais from
the frontier hills. But Bivar had little success in extending
the system to North Cachar. When he proposed the plan to the
people, the Arong Nagas and the Mikirs in particular who were
most exposed to Angami raids, proved very reluctant to take
up arms for their own defence. They quaintly remarked that
instead of being advantageous the muskets would prove a burden
to them for, when attacked, they would not only have to look
after their wives and children but also the muskets for which
they would be held responsible. Of those capable of bearing
arms, it was found that they were very likely to use the
muskets to prosecute their own feuds. But Butler had some
success with the villages of Mohungdijua, Ramsadijua, Koonjong
and Borpotnar. For each of these villages three chowkidare
were armed who were granted a yearly remission of revenue of
Rs. 6/- each.

KUKI SETTLEMENTS

An attempt was also made to protect the frontier by

1. B.J.P. 31 May 1855: No. Bivar to Jenkins, 12 May. Of the
dread of the Angami Nagas there people had, Bivar relates
this experience: 'I have known a party of Angami Nagas who,
travelling unarmed through the country, raising by way of
a joke the war cry when they approached a large village, and
on their doing so such a panic was created that the inhabi-
tants as soon as they caught the sound rushed out of their
houses helter-skelter and hid themselves in the adjacent
jungles where they remained concealed until their fears were
allayed'.

2. Ibid.

planting Kuki settlements to act as a barrier against the inroads of the Angami Nagas. The policy was at first tried out in Manipur by Colonel McCulloch in 1846, and its success induced the local authorities in Assam to try out a similar experiment in North Cachar. In 1850 Butler had proposed to locate some five to six hundred Kukis in Dimapur; Jenkins thought well of the proposal stating 'by the establishment of so large a colony of these bold and hardy clans at the foot of their hills .... the Nagas would be effectually intimidated from provoking them by any wanton attack .... we should be able to prevent the Kukis without difficulty from any aggressions on the Nagas, for the former are more under the authority of their leaders than the latter tribes'.

Nothing came of the proposal and it was only in 1853 that a large colony of Kukis were settled in the neighbourhood of Langting, about 30 miles to the north-east of Asalu. Lands were given the Kukis who wished to take advantage of the concession, at first for ten years, then twenty years, and apparently afterward for twenty-five years, rent free. These Kukis were supplied with arms and ammunition from time to time; it clear from the correspondence that these were to be used.

2. F.P.C. 30 August 1850: No. 66.
3. B.J.P. 18 September 1856: No. 265.
if necessary, against the Angamis. Jenkins later wrote: 'The Angamies are evidently afraid of the Kookies, and wish not to disturb them.' The Kuki settlements were avoided by the Nagas, but the other villages continued to be subject to their inroads. The lapses of the Kukis, which the local authorities were only too apt to notice, prevented the extension of the scheme to the other exposed villages.

NORTH CACHAR MILITIA: PROPOSED AMALGAMATION

The presence of a military officer in Golaghat to supervise the frontier defences left the civil officers of both Nowgong and Sibsagar divisions entirely free from military responsibilities. But in North Cachar the absence of such an officer placed on Bivar military duties in addition to those of the civil department. Neither the S.L.I. nor the second A.L.I. could spare any officer to relieve him of this responsibility and take charge of the large number of troops assembled

1. F.P.(A)P. March 1872: No. 112.
2. Ibid.
3. The Local Officers did not keep the Kukis under sufficient control. As a result they became involved in internecine wars with the Nagas. In 1871 these Kuki colonists made a horribly successful attack on Tapemah, a Naga village, which was utterly reduced, killing thirty and carrying off property and heads. 'How are we to treat our friends and proteges' lamented Sir Stewart Bayley, the Secretary to the Bengal Government, 'when they take ... the aggression'. F.P.(A)P. March 1872: Nos. 92-95. Officers like Major General James Johnstone, Op. Cit., would have condoned such acts of the Kukis in order to ensure the defence of the frontier against the Nagas. 'The experiment answered well to a certain extent', writes General Johnstone, 'and would have answered better, had we been a little less timid.'
on that part of the frontier. Jenkins accordingly proposed in January 1855 to unite the Kuki Levy and the Howgong Police Militia under the command of Lieutenant R. Stewart of the former corps, placing in him the military control of the North Caohar. Verner, the Superintendent of Caohar, objected to moving the Kuki Levy out of his district, and the Lieutenant Governor allowed only a small portion for Caohar. In the following April the proposal was revived by Bivar. The Howgong Police Militia had to be rendered efficient for the defence of the frontier. Though individually brave and able, the men collectively were untrained, had no discipline and could not be depended upon in case of active operations. A great drawback of the Militia was that it had been perpetually stationed at the outposts. Its inadequate strength and its constant duties never allowed it to remain at the sadar station long enough for drill and exercise. No reliefs could be given to them and consequently the men had to take their families with them to the frontier posts. This had adversely affected their discipline and efficiency. Under similar conditions even the men of the Local Corps, it was said, would have soon lapsed into total inefficiency. The first step towards

1. B.J.P. 26 April, 1855; No. 246; Jenkins to Grey, 3 January.
2. Ibid; No. 256; Vener to Grey, 19 February.
3. Ibid; No. 261; Grey to Jenkins, 7 April.
improvement was to place the Militia under the immediate command of an European officer; and this object could be effected, wrote Bivar, by uniting it with the Kuki Levy. The proposal was recommended by all the Local Officers. Jenkins again reaffirmed that 'the most economical mode of providing for the efficient protection of the frontier is to unite both police Militias into one Corps'.

NORTH CACHAR PIONEERS

In the following month Bivar further urged that the united corps should be remodelled and converted into a body of Sappers and Miners to be called the 'North Cachar Pioneers'. It would be very advantageous, he wrote, to employ Pioneers for the defence of a frontier where improvements were urgently required. It was then in contemplation to open permanent lines of communication connecting North Cachar with Assam, Cachar and the Khasi Hills for which the services of such a corps would

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1. B.J.P. 20 September 1855: Nos. 187-193; Bivar Hanny; 2 April; No. 55.
2. B.J.P. 1 November 1855: No. 149; Jenkins to Grey, 26 May.
3. Ibid: No. 149 A; Bivar to Jenkins, 10 May.

* A pioneer battalion is enlisted, drilled and trained as any other infantry battalion; but in addition the officers and men are taught the elements of field engineering in so far as making of roads, simple bridges and defensive works are concerned. Younghusband, O.J.; Op. Cit. P. 203.
be invaluable. The duties of the Pioneer Corps would be, therefore, to furnish guards for the protection of the frontier and supply men for the prosecution of the public works. In order to provide relief at the outposts and prevent the men from being harassed by constant duty, Bivar recommended that the corps should be raised to 500 men, of whom 300 should be placed in Dimapur and the rest in North Cachar. Bivar further added that by this arrangement the detachment of the Second A.L.I. should be withdrawn to Lower Assam where its services were urgently required on the northern duars. In furtherance of this proposal Lieutenant Stewart drew up a detailed scheme for the organisation of the Pioneer Corps. He recommended that Hindustanis and Gurkhas should be enlisted along with the Kukis, Cacharees, Angamis, Manipuris and other bordering tribes. The European non-commissioned officers should be chosen either from those having a knowledge of certain crafts or of engineering. In addition to the musket and the bayonet, Stewart proposed that each should be armed with the dao and be supplied with other pioneer implements.

Both Jenkins and Colonel Hannay saw practical difficulties in converting the Police Militia into a Corps of Pioneers, although they strongly recommended the incorporation of the

1. Ibid.
Kuki Levy into the Howgong Militia. But Captain Vernor, who had earlier disapproved of the plan proposed by Jenkins, once again set his face against the whole scheme. He argued that his district would gain nothing from it. If Lieutenant Stewart were permanently stationed in North Cachar he would lose the services of an officer and a large portion of the corps when they were always required for Cachar. At the same time he would be expending revenue from his district on men whose services he would never have the benefit of obtaining. He therefore suggested that if Stewart was required permanently in North Cachar some other arrangement should be made whereby the expenses of his district would be lessened and not increased. Evidently, Vernor viewed the plan from the narrow angle of the requirements of his own district. Nevertheless, the Government of Bengal found in them sufficient grounds to negative the proposal of the Assam Office. Jenkins was accordingly informed that the Lieutenant Governor was not disposed to make any change in respect to the Kuki Levy for the present.

1. B.J.P. 1 November 1855: No. 149 A; Vernor to Bivar, 20 April. Vernor thus wrote: 'I would not see how my district could possibly benefit by the arrangement but on the contrary it would in my opinion lose by it, I regret to say I cannot recommend the measure'.

2. Ibid: No. 150.
GARO POLICE MILITIA

Meanwhile, in accordance with the policy of substituting Police Militia for the Local Corps at the outposts, Jenkins in May 1853 proposed to A.J. Moffatt Mills, Judge of the Sadar Dewani Adawlat, who was then in Assam to enquire into the state of the local administration, the formation of a Garo Police Militia. The situation on the Garo frontier for quite sometime past had been far from satisfactory. The blockade of the hills had proved less successful because the Independent Garos never ceased to commit aggressions. If they were not reduced to submission the whole of the frontier and duare were likely to be abandoned by the cultivators. The Agent therefore emphasised that there was no alternative but to use unqualified military coercion and reduce the Garos to obedience by the occupation of their hills with a strong force of Police Militia.

The troops hitherto employed against the Garos consisted of a detachment of 219 sepoys with a proportion of native officers from the Second A.L.I. and 46 barkandazes from the civil police establishment. The latter, composed

mainly of Bengalees, were 'for any good purposes .... an entire failure'. Nearly the whole of the sepoys of the Regiment were required for the reliefs of the guards at the hats and as a reserve in case of disturbances. The annual cost of the two bodies was Rs. 18,505 for the Local Corps and Rs. 2,268 for the police. The employment of the former was as difficult as it was expensive for the deadly effects of the climate told heavily on the sepoys. If a Militia were established their detachment could be reduced to fifty and saving of Rs. 3000 would be effected. Jenkins proposed the following organisation and strength for the Militia: one subadar, two Jemadars, eight havildars, eight naiks, two buglers and 150 sepoys. The corps should chiefly be drawn, if the Garos did not enlist at first, from the dabbas and other hill tribes who were unaffected by the noxious climate of the low hills on the border. The Militia should be placed under the charge of the Native Superintendent of the Garo Hills who was to act as its as Commandant.

There would thus be efficient Police Militia in Lakhimpur of 160 sepoys, in Sibsagar 100, Nowgong 150 and in the Goalpara division 150 relieving the Second A.L.I. from many harassing and unhealthy outposts. The two Local Corps

1. Ibid.
could then be gradually reduced to the peace time establishment of 300 men each.

Mills recommended an entirely opposite policy. He was averse to increasing the Police Militia on the ground that these were not disciplined, had no officers to drill them and were not as reliable as the Local Corps. In the latter Mills saw a body of men in every way efficient and admirably adapted for every purpose of internal military police duty as well as for the punishment of those who committed aggressions on the frontier. He therefore considered it a 'doubtful policy (and certainly it will be no real saving to Government) to reduce the strength of efficient corps, and expend what is saved in entertaining a body of men who must in every sense of the word be inefficient.' He would rather, he added, reduce the large Militia of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Nowgong to 2 native officers, 3 naveldars, 3 naiks and 60 sepoys; and place the Garo police on the same footing. By this arrangement the Local Corps would again take the whole of the duties of the frontier. In other words, Mills would place matters as they stood in 1844.

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
The officers in charge of the Militia vehemently opposed the plan recommended by Mills. Holroyd, Principal Assistant of Sibsagar, objected to the measure principally on the grounds of the injury done to the Local Corps by breaking it up into numerous small detachments. Bivar thought his Nowgong Militia admirably suited for the rough hill work required of them. His Militia always carried their own baggage, while great inconvenience was experienced in the reliefs and movements of the detachments of the Local Corps from the number of coolies they required. Captain Dalton, Principal Assistant in Lakhimpur, observed that if it were a question of whether the Militia should be reduced or the Local Corps, he was prepared to reduce the former as it could never be expected of it to be as effective as the latter. But Dalton, like Holroyd, at the same time adverted to the injury that would be done to the efficiency of the Local Corps if they required to take so many outpost duties. Jenkins observed that there was every chance of the Local Corps being required at a moments notice, for the Bhutan and Naga frontiers were in a very unsettled state. The three Militia Corps had enabled to keep the greater part of the First A.L.I. disposable for

2. Ibid.
emergencies. It would be inexpedient, he wrote, to break up the Regiments into small detachments and thus deprive oneself of the means of immediate reinforcements, particularly when the Militia were sufficient as a force to hold the hill tribes in check. The Local Corps with an organisation of 10 companies of 100 men each were 400 in excess of the ordinary peace time establishment. It was therefore preferable to reduce them by 10 or 20 men per company rather than decrease an equal number of the Police Militia and to let the Local Corps take all the petty frontier posts. This system was proved by experience to be totally incompatible with their discipline and morale as well as injurious to the health of the men. In Goalpara, on the Garo frontier, the outposts were so small and numerous and posted in the middle of such unhealthy jungles, that a proper discipline could not be kept up. If the Regiment were to take these duties, it could not be depended upon to serve as a substitute for a Regular Regiment. Jenkins further added that if the Regiments were organised on strictly frontier police duties, the men who offered themselves for enlistment would be of an inferior class. On these grounds the Agent once again pressed for an addition to the number of Police Militia; when this was reported to be sufficiently disciplined and drilled he proposed
to carry out the reductions in the Local Corps.

Mills' plan was not accepted by the Government. Nor was any decision taken on Jenkins' proposal for a Garo Police Militia. Before the Government of India could arrive at a decision on the question, the Mutiny of the Bengal Army broke out.

1. Ibid.