The year 1798 marks the beginning of an important period in the history of the army of the East India Company. Nevertheless it is necessary to have some idea of the rise of the Company's army from its humble beginnings in the seventeenth century and its growth in the eighteenth century as a requisite background to the period under study.

The history of Colonial enterprise in India has been essentially a history of war. European nations indulged in un-official war and amidst commercial rivalry the British merchants were obliged to adopt measures of defence. Peaceful trading in the eighteenth century was bound to die a natural death and survival of the fittest was rather the rule than an exception. Though apparently the British continued to be merchants, they were conducting their business with the aid of soldiers, guns, forts and treaties.1 The Company's innumerable unrecorded wars brought about an increase in the number of its forces and the armies of contesting nations too swelled very considerably. Once an armament race had begun there was no end to it, for the contestants looked at one another with distrust which prevented them from dis-armament. Though there could be no open war in India when there was peace in Europe among the mother countries,2 no disarmament was possible owing to

constant fear of war.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 may be said to have marked the beginning of the British commercial interest in India. Elizabeth granted permission to a body of English merchants to fit out a fleet for eastern trade under George Raymond who sailed from Plymouth in 1591. By a charter granted on 31 December, 1600, the Company of merchants at London was empowered to trade with the countries of Asia, Africa and America. Many voyages were undertaken by the Company between the years 1600 and 1612 and profits were made by 'force of arms rather than peaceful trade'. In February, 1613, Jahangir granted some trade concessions to British traders, and Sir Thomas Roe, who came as ambassador to Jahangir from James I, succeeded in 1619 in establishing a small factory at Surat for trade with Persia. In those early days there was no regular military force; the mainstay of the East India Company was the Navy which consisted of factors and officers of the crew of armed trading ships. These crews had no specific training; but they were adventurous and were perhaps the best fighting material of the day. Sir Thomas Roe entered into a treaty with the governor of Surat who was to lend armed ships to the English for the defence of the port, to permit ten armed men of the Company's ships to land at one time and to permit resident merchants to bear arms.

1. Carnac, The Presidential Armies of India, London 1890, P.27
2. Ibid, P.30
3. Ibid, P.33
The crews of armed trading ships, however, did not serve the Company's purpose very long and guards of peons were employed when factories were established at Masulipatam, Armgaon, Madras, Hooghly and Balasore. The guards were enrolled for the protection of the factories. Though armed with weapons, they had no training and no idea of military tactics. They were hardly worthy of being called a military force, for they were employed rather to add to the pomp and show than for any offensive or defensive purposes. Nevertheless, as the number of these peons became larger, rules were framed for their conduct. By 1624, the Company's servants could be tried by common and martial law.

From the earliest days Artillery seems to have occupied an important place in the Company's army, for even in 1628 there were twelve guns on the coast of Coromandel at Armgaon. The detachment consisted of 28 men trained as infantrymen and in the duties of artillerymen. Thus, from the early days there were two arms of service known to the Company - the Infantry and the Artillery. Cavalry, which was the dominant arm of the Indian powers, was relegated to a secondary position.

In 1640, the East India Company acquired Madras and built there a fort, which marked the origin of the Madras Presidency. In 1634, by a farman of Shah Jahan, the Company

1. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Oxford 1907, Vol.IV, P.326
3. Ibid, P.37
had established a factory in Bengal which became the origin of the Bengal Presidency. In 1619, when a factory was established at Surat, the British went to Bombay and that can be considered the beginning of the Bombay Presidency. By the middle of the seventeenth century the Presidential establishments were fairly prosperous and their protection became all the more necessary. The Company petitioned to the Parliament to allow them to fit out men-of-war for the purposes of defence. In 1652, an Ensign and thirty men were sanctioned for Bengal, which was the first force at the Bengal Presidency. Later in the seventeenth century provision was made for the defence of the larger factories by maintaining at each of them a small body of European soldiers, under an Ensign and a "gun-room-crew" supplied by the Company's ships to work the guns of the factory. In 1653, the Bengal force was increased to 250 men, and many ships were employed on the seas which carried soldiers on them. The British abandoned Bengal about 1688 and sailed with the whole fleet to Madras. Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, received permission to renew trade in Bengal in 1692, and landed at Chuttamutti in August 1690, with a traditional guard of one officer and 30 men, which was, however, increased to 100 men by the end.

1. The Army in India and its Evolution, Calcutta 1924, P.2
of that year.

Some new developments took place at Madras and Bombay too. According to the *Calcutta Review*, in an old volume of travels in India entitled, 'Accounts of the trade in India, by Charles Lockyn', published in 1711, and relating to the period a little before that, there is the mention of a 'gun-room-crew' at Madras; the garrison consisted of 250 Europeans soldiers, and 200 Topasses, and about 20 experienced Europeans to manage the guns. Beside them was a Captain to command, assisted by an Ensign, Sergeants and Corporals. In 1661, when Bombay became the personal property of King Charles II, a force of 400 soldiers was embarked for the protection of Bombay and that marked the first appearance of the Royal troops in India. In 1663, these troops were encouraged to transfer to the Company's service, and developed into the 1st European Regiment of Bombay Fusiliers. No more troops of the Crown came to India until 1754, when one Battalion was brought by Admiral Watson to reinforce Clive. Thus with the exception of the Crown's troops that arrived in India for the protection of Bombay, all the troops had belonged to the Company until 1754. The Company had been forming its own forces, obtaining from the Crown the authority and power necessary to

1. Ibid, P.500
2. The name was borrowed from Portuguese word 'tope', or gun, because they were often employed in the capacity of gunners (Spear, T.G.P. *The Nabobs*, London 1932, P.35).
4. Seton, Malcolm *The India Office*, London 1926, P.137
5. Loc. Cit.
maintain discipline. The charters of 1661 and 1663 had allowed the enlistment of soldiers, and the charter of 1683 authorised martial law. Sometime between 1668 and 1683, two Companies of native troops were raised. Each Company had a Captain for its command, but they differed in their organisation. The first Company was composed of 2 Commissioned Officers, 66 Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates, and 28 Topasses; the second Company was made up of three Commissioned Officers, 73 Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates, and 26 Topasses; there were also 21 pieces of cannon, and two Gunners with ordnance stores. This force was the largest of the three Presidencies. The Bombay force was augmented by enrolment of 2 Companies of Rajpoors, each of 100 men, commanded by their own Rajpoor officers; and this small force may be regarded the first native force of the Indian army.

The rapid growth of the army of the East India Company in the late 1740s may be safely attributed to the Anglo-French war in India. In this new situation, the army of the East India Company was inadequate for defending its factories. The war which broke out between the English and French in 1744 had proved to the English the inadequacy of their means of defence. The town of Madras was easily

2. Carnac, Op. Cit, P.52
3. Army in India and its Evolution, Calcutta 1924, P.4
4. Loc. Cit.
captured by the French in 1746. The demands of the new situation necessitated the mustering of new troops and the Council at Madras was obliged to adopt new measures to fight back the French. During the siege of Madras itself, a number of peons or Irregular Infantry, armed with swords and spears, or matchlocks were enlisted for the occasion. Haliburton, a civilian, distinguished himself in the action and was given a commission as a Lieutenant, and was employed in training a small corps of the natives. Haliburton was killed on 2nd September, 1748, and Major Stringer Lawrence was given the command of all the East India Company's forces in India. He organised the Madras European Regiment and enlisted 2,000 Sepoys. The Sepoys in the beginning were scarcely better disciplined than the common peons. Soon after being raised, they took part in the capture of Pondicherry in 1748, where they were mostly employed on guard duties and did not give a good account of themselves, for they often ran away on the approach of danger. It was with great difficulty that more recruits were procured and in some cases attractive monetary offers had to be given to induce more men to take up service. The Sepoy levies, raised in haste, were armed with all types of weapons, such as matchlocks, bows and arrows, spears, swords; in fact any weapon they could get. There were no specific regulations guiding the strength of the levies

1. The new danger marked the commencement of progress of the English in India, 'both in the science and spirit of war' (Orme, R, A History of the Military Transactions of British Nation in Indostan, Vol.1, Madras 1861, P.68)
and it was not till some idea of drill was acquired by the troops and muskets were issued to them that they showed the appearance of disciplined soldiers. 

Soon a code of Military Law was made with the help of the 'Articles of War', then in force in England. At the same time the Court of Directors gave instructions regarding forming, paying, disciplining and governing the army at the Coromendal Coast. It is interesting to note that the earliest British Sepoy Battalions were commanded by Indian officers, and though Clive added British officers and men to the Native Battalions, their Indian Commandant survived for a time.

The events in Madras had their corresponding effect in Bombay and it was resolved to raise at Surat 2,000 men, consisting mainly of the Arabs and the Turks. The Bombay government soon received orders from the Court regarding army organisation; Bombay Infantry was ordered to be organised into ten Companies, each consisting of one Captain, one Lieutenant, one Ensign, four Sergeants, four Corporals, and seventy Privates. The garrisons at Fort St. George and Bengal were put on a similar footing, with seven Companies at the former and five at the latter. The command of the Bombay Infantry was given to a Major. From the number of Companies

1. Adams, P. Madras Infantry 1748-1943, Bangalore 1943, P.1
5. Court's LETTER to Bombay dated 17th June 1748, vide enclosure to the Court's letters, Vol.7, P.194-201, Para 2
ordered at each of the Presidencies, it is evident that the first possession of the Company, that is Bombay, was still the most important military hold of the Company.¹

The Artillery two was ordered to be organised because the gun-room-crews were unable to meet the demands of the new situation. A Company of Artillery was ordered to be formed at each of the three Presidencies, with one Captain, one Second Captain, one Captain-Lieutenant, three Lieutenants fireworker, four Sergeants, four Corporals, three Drummers and one hundred Gunners.² The Artillery Companies were, however, not completed immediately. The Bengal Company was raised in 1749 but the Bombay Company was raised much later. A director of laboratories was appointed to keep in readiness such ammunition stores of fireworks as were to be required by ordinary service. A storekeeper was also appointed to take possession of the gun room and the magazines of the stores.

It may be remarked that the Court of Directors from the very beginning ensured that no Indian learnt the use of Artillery at any of the Presidencies. They wrote:

No foreigner whether in our service or not (except such as hath been admitted into it by the Court of Directors) nor no Indian black or person of mixed breed, nor any Roman Catholic of what nation soever, shall on any pretence be admitted to set foot in the laboratory or any military magazines either out of curiosity or to be employed in them, or to come near them so as to see what is doing or contained therein. Nor shall any such person have a copy of sight of any accounts or papers relating to any military stores whatsoever.

¹ Ibid, Para 179-182
² Walter, Richard, India and Colonial Forces, London 1890, P.53
³ Stubbs; Regiment of Bengal Artillery, London 1877, P.2
⁴ Accompaniment to Court’s letters to Bombay dated 17th June 1749; vide enclosures to Court’s letters to Bombay, Vol.7, P.179-193, Para 23-33.
They also ordered:

No deserter from any nation whatever is to be entertained in the Company of Artillery, nor even a British subject, who may have once deserted from His Majesty's or the Company's service, although he may have been pardoned for his desertion, nor any Catholic. And if any person belonging to the Company of Artillery marry a Roman Catholic, or his wife become a Roman Catholic after marriage, such person shall be immediately removed from the Company of Artillery and be obliged to serve the remainder of his time in one or the other Companies or be removed to some other Company's settlements to serve it there if the Council think fit.

From this account of the Presidential Armies it is clear that the organisation of the Company's troops as an effective force dates from 1748. With the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, war with France temporarily ceased and there were larger bodies of military men in India than ever before. After the fall of Madras, the command of military men came to be placed in the hands of military officers rather than the civilian members of the Council. The Court of Directors started taking more interest in the army as regular troops replaced Topasses and peons. A separate corps of Artillery replaced the gun-room-crow and it was discovered that the Sepoys could be subjected to European discipline and made like soldiers. Regulations for the army were formed and the Presidency Armies began to be effective, efficient and disciplined. The want of Infantry and Artillery during the wars on the coast from 1746 to 1754, and the impossibility of forming a sufficient number on the spot, induced the Court of Directors to obtain and send out two Companies of Royal Artillery to Bombay and Admiral Watson brought one Battalion of Royal Infantry to reinforce Clive. Many of the officers and men from the Royal Corps were received as volunteers in the Company's
army, and in subsequent years several Crown's Regiments were sent for the service of the Company. The Court seems to have paid a particular attention to Artillery because they were "fully satisfied how great a share of our dependence must in case of troubles, be on Artillery, and upon the skill of the people appropriated to its service." They did not even want that this important service should be trusted with Roman Catholics, for they wrote to the Councils:

We observe you have among the service several officers of Roman religion. Upon the receipt of this you are to discharge them from our service and send such as are British subjects to England as we will on no account permit their continuing in India.

Around 1755, Madras appears to have had the strongest Artillery of the East India Company. A 'field train' had been organised in that year and a Lieutenant was made its Adjutant. Each Artillery Company in the year 1757 consisted of 9 six-pounders and two howitzers, to which was attached a body of 100 English artillerymen. There were no natives employed in Artillery before the Battle of Plassey. In 1757, however, Native Artillery joined Clive in Bengal and cooperated with Madras Artillery.

1. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. IV, P.327
2. Court to Bombay, dated 14 March 1753, Para 114, Public Department Court's letters Vol.IV of 1752-1756, P.101
3. Court to Bombay, dated 4 May 1752, Para 119, Public Department Court's letters Vol.IV of 1752-1756, P.820
5. Mohammedan British India from Queen Elizabeth to Lord Reading, London 1957, P.42
The political events after the succession of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah in Bengal opened a new epoch of British power in India. Soon after coming to power the Nawab attacked the factory of Kasimbazar and advanced on Calcutta which at that time was in a state of unpreparedness and after a weak resistance the garrison at Port William gave way. Lieutenant-Colonel Clive was at this juncture sent from Madras and about the same time Major Kirpatrick reached Dalta with 230 men under his command. Clive mustered all the resources which amounted to no more than 250 of His Majesty's 39th Regiment, 570 of Madras European Infantry, 1200 Madras Sepoys, some detail of Artillery, 230 Bengal European Infantry, and 70 volunteers from civil, making a total of about 2,400 men. With this small force and with the help of military officers like Major Kirpatrick and Captain Eyre Coote, the British had some successes which gave them a breathing time. It was at this time that Clive discovered the weakness of the Company's army, and resolved to put it in a condition of efficiency. Clive discovered that the contingents sent from Madras and Bombay, though they formed part of the regular armies of those Presidencies, were not properly disciplined. He also found that even though they were clothed and armed after European fashion, very little of drill and discipline had been imparted to them, and were still commanded by the natives. 

1. The Services of the Bengal Native Army, compiled in the office of the Adjutant General in India, Calcutta 1903, P.4
furnishing the new corps with European arms and uniform, but also at drilling and disciplining them as regular troops; and to achieve that he appointed an European officer to command, and Non-Commissioned officers to instruct and drill them. Clive did not experience much difficulty in obtaining recruits for his Paltan as a lot of Pathans, Rohillas and Jats came down to the lower provinces in search of profession. Thus in a short time, Clive formed the first regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, called from its equipment the 'Lal Paltan' or 'The Red Regiment', and subsequently Gillis-Ka-Paltan.

The Lal Paltan had a complement of European officers and Non-Commissioned officers. It marked a new phase in the history of the Company's army, for till then the Indian Companies were under the command of Indian officers alone, and it was for the first time that British officers had been superimposed. It may be recalled that in 1748, the overall command of the Presidency Armies was given to military men, whereas the command of the Companies was in the hands of the native officers.

The Court of Directors was anxious to ensure that a minimum number of Europeans must be maintained in each of the

1. The Regiment later came to be called Gillis-Ka-Paltan from Captain Galliez who long commanded it. (Williams, J. An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Native Infantry, London 1817, p.165-66.)

2. British Officers - 1 Captain, 2 Subalterns, 1 Sergeant and Sergeant Major; Indian Officers - 1 Commandant, 1 Adjutant, 10 Subedars, 30 Jemadars; Indian rank and file - 50 Havildars, 40 Naicks, 20 Drummers, 20 Bugles, and 700 Sepoys; making a total of 3 British Officers, 7 British Non-Commissioned Officers, 42 Indian Officers and 800 rank and file.
Presidencies. A Fort William they ordered that the number will not go below 500. To keep the proportion of Europeans, the Court sent a Battalion of the Crown's troops for service in Bengal.

The Madras and Bombay Councils two undertook to organise their armies. On 4 December, 1759, the Council of Madras ordered the Sepoys to be formed into four Battalions with European Subalterns for each regiment and a Captain to command all the four. The officers were sent from the Royal service and their military experience was of great value in disciplining and training the new troops. But soon hostilities began which prevented the formation of new Battalions. The Madras government requested and obtained detachments from Bengal for immediate service. It was not till the fall of Masulipatam that the proposed Battalions were raised. The Sepoy Battalions, like the 'Ial Paltan', were given requisite establishment of both Europeans and natives to officer them, so that two Subalterns, three Sergeant Majors, and one Indian Commandant (under the orders of the Commissioned officers) were appointed to the command of each Battalion. Each Battalion had nine Companies, one of which was called a Grenadier Company.

1. Home Public letter from Court dated 3 March 1759, Para 70-71
3. Phythian, Adam The Madras Regiment, Madras 1958, P.271
4. Each Company consisted of: 1 Subedar, 2 Jemadars, 6 Havildars, 6 Naicks, 1 Trumpeter, 2 Tom - Tom, 2 Colourmen, 1 Vackeel, 1 Puckali, and 33 Sepoys; total 115 effective men.
No attention to re-organise the Bombay army was paid till 1759, and in all probability it was losing its preeminence. In that year, Major William Fraser, the Commander of the Bombay army, submitted proposals for forming Companies on the pattern of the 'Lal Paltan'. Bombay was allowed to have Sepoy Companies, each of 500 natives, but the new Companies continued under their own officers and did not have Europeans attached to them.¹

By the new organisation of 1758-59, the Native army of the Company, with the exception of Bombay army came to be officered by Europeans. Non-Commissioned officers were employed to drill and discipline the Sepoys and they formed a part of the Battalions. Artillery as a supporting arm increased largely, but the army was still without Cavalry, the inclusion of which would complete the army structure. Even at Plassey the British forces did not have any Cavalry, whereas the Nawab had eighteen thousand horsemen. British Cavalry is said to have been employed in India for the first time in the battle of Bedanah in November, 1759, when a body of 20 to 30 mounted volunteers from Calcutta, mostly civil servants, took part in the battle. But the real beginning of Cavalry was a result of the efforts of Major Caillaud who experienced want of Cavalry in campaign against the prince Ali Gauhar; and by an order in Council dated 22 September, 1760, he began organising two troops of Dragoons and one of Hussars. The men were selected from European Infantry and horses were obtained by purchase. The establishment of each troop of Dragoons was one Captain, three Subalterns and sixty

¹ Cadell, Patrick History of the Bombay Army, London 1939, p. 67
Non-Commissioned officers and rank and file; but for Hussars, only 2 Subalterns and 36 Non-Commissioned officers and troopers were allowed. The state provided horses, arms, clothing, and accoutrements and saddling, but troop commanding officers had to keep the latter in repair, and feed the horses, for which they received a monthly allowance. In 1762 two Ressallahs of Native Irregular Cavalry or Moghul Horse were raised and commanded by two Native Ressaldars. A small European Body-guard was organised at the same time, which included horsemen from Moghul Horse. The Moghul Horse found and maintained their own horses, arms and equipments, for which an allowance, per mensem, was allowed. The Cavalry did a wonderful job at Buxar, where all Moghul Horse were present. Cavalry by this time had become a sizeable force, especially the Moghul Horse. Great augmentations and reductions occurred in this arm from time to time as the Court intended to disband them as soon as circumstances warranted. In 1765 they wrote:

The progress that the natives make in the knowledge of the art of war, both in Bengal and on the coast of Coromandel is become a very alarming circumstance, and we are not without our apprehensions the consequences of your teaching them our Cavalry exercise. We hope therefore that you will have only made it a temporary expedient...

From the above account of Cavalry it is evident that this arm had started gaining importance along with Artillery,

2. Ibid, P.551
3. Home Public letter from Court dated 26 April 1765, Para 17
as a supporting arm.

Bengal, between the year 1759 and 1765 had added large tracts of land to its territorial limits, and the case of Madras was similar. Mir Jafar died in January 1765 and was succeeded by his next surviving son, Najam-ud-Dowla. The British resolved to take the military defence of the country entirely in their own hands, as they considered the new Nawab incapable of defending the new acquisitions. In the treaty with the new Nawab, they allowed him to keep only so much force as was necessary for parade of the government, the distribution of justice, and the business of collections, and the whole military defence became the responsibility of the Company, who appointed Clive as the President of Bengal, and Commander-in-Chief on 3rd May, 1765. Clive by his appointment as the civil as well as the military head, got the most independent powers, both in military and political affairs. One of the first measures that he adopted for the territorial defence of the Company’s newly acquired provinces, was to re-organise his army in Bengal into an efficient body of troops. He found that the Bengal Native Infantry, to which he had given a beginning by raising ‘Lal Paltan’, had grown into nineteen Battalions. He raised two new Battalions and divided them into three Brigades of 7 Battalions each, so that all Brigades had equal strength. He allowed each Brigade one Ressallah of Native Cavalry, one Company of Artillery and one Regiment of European Infantry of the same

1. Haugh Political and Military Events in British India, London 1853, P.24-25
strength. Keeping the late orders of the Court of Directors on Cavalry in view, Clive disbanded European Cavalry and transferred them to Infantry and Artillery; only a small body-guard for the governor was retained. The Moghul Horse was dismissed, with the exception of 300, which formed the three Ressallahs of equal strength. The establishment of each Brigade was the same,¹ and a large number of lascars was attached to assist in working the guns. The ordnance with the Company of Artillery appears to have consisted of six light six-pounders and two Howitzers, forming a battery or field train as it was then termed, of eight light pieces.²

In addition to the guns with the park, each Battalion of Infantry was equipped with two six-pounders or three-pounders worked by the men of the regiment, assisted by the native officers and lascars from Artillery.³ Europeans instead of natives came to be employed for working the Battalion guns on an order of the Court of Directors:⁴

As it is very essential that the natives should be kept as ignorant as possible both of the theory and practice of Artillery branch of the art of war, we

---

¹. Each European Regiment consisted of: 1 Colonel, commanding the whole Brigade, one Lieutenant Colonel commanding the Regiment, 1 Major, 6 Captains, 1 Captain Lieutenant, 9 Lieutenants, 18 Ensigns, 36 Sergeants, 36 Corporals, 27 Drummers, 630 Privates. Each Battalion of Sepoys consisted of: 1 Captain, 1 Lieutenant, 2 Ensigns, 3 Sergeants, 3 Drummers, 1 Native Commandant, 10 Subedars, 30 Jemadars, 1 Native Adjutant, 10 Trumpeters, 30 Tom Tom, 80 Havildars, 50 Naicks, and 690 Privates. Each Company of Artillery consisted of: 7 Commissioned officers, 102 Europeans, and a body of lascars. Each Ressallah consisted of: 1 Subaltern, 1 Sergeant Major, 4 Sergeants, 1 Ressaldar, 1 Jemadar, 1 Second Jemadar, 1 Third Jemadar, 16 Daffadars, 2 Naicks, and 100 Privates (Calcutta Review, Vol.XIV, London 1850, P.530)


⁴. Home Public letter from Court dated 27 March 1770.
esteem it a very pernicious practice to employ the people of the Country in working the guns, and therefore direct that in future four European Artillery men be constantly attached to the service of the two guns which belong to each Battalion of Sepoys and that no native be trusted with any part of this important service unless necessity should require it.

The Bengal organisation, inspite of its defects, was remarkable on the whole. The new force had all the fighting arms of service necessary in modern warfare. The three Brigades were capable of independent action in view of the fact that a Company of Artillery and a Resallah formed a part of each Brigade. By separating and dividing Sepoys into three Brigades 'the danger of their holding labels in a great measure was avoided.' Clive had made no arrangements for payment of Brigade, and within a few months of the new organisation, a paymaster and a commissary of musters were appointed to each Brigade. No Commissariat at this time existed, but all supplies of provisions, cattle etc. were furnished by contractors, who in their own persons were present with the Brigades. The contractors were not very reliable. To rectify this defect, the subordinate officers submitted fortnightly reports of requirement of carriage and draught animals, so that action to procure them could be made well in time. The biggest defect of the new organisation perhaps was a comparative deficiency of

\[\text{(Footnotes)}\]
1. Public letter from Court, dated 16 March 1768, Para 128
3. Ibid.
4. Home Public letter from Court dated 23 March 1770, Para 134
European element in each Brigade. The Court gave an anxious thought to Bengal organisation for there 'the Company have so much at stake'. After consulting Lord Clive, Lawrence, Caillaud and Carnac, they considered it highly expedient to increase the number of Europeans, and have them commanded by a larger proportion of field and other officers. Upon this, the Court not only despatched European recruits for their establishments, but also undertook to send out every season a requisite number of European officers to keep the European part of the Army to the established strength. The Court, in 1768, fixed the European establishment for each Presidency; for Bengal they ordered it to be three Regiments of European Infantry and a Battalion of European Artillery. Each Regiment of Infantry was divided into two Battalions, each of seven Companies, and one of Grenadier Company.  

It is interesting to note that the Court granted the Presidents and the Council at each of the Presidencies the power of dismissing European officers who did not behave to the full satisfaction of the civil government, with a view

1. Home Public letter from Court dated 16 March 1768, Para 77
2. Each of the seven Companies consisted of: 1 Captain, 1 Lieutenant, 1 Ensign, 4 Sergeants, 4 Corporals, 2 Drummers, and 50 Privates; whereas a Grenadier Company consisted of 1 Captain, 3 Lieutenants, 5 Sergeants, 5 Corporals, 3 Drummers, and 67 Privates. The Battalion of Artillery was composed of four Companies and each Company consisted of: 1 Captain, 1 Captain Lieutenant, 1 First Lieutenant, 1 Second Lieutenant, 3 Lieutenant Fireworkers, 6 Sergeants, 6 Corporals, 2 Drummers, 2 Fifers, 10 Bombardiers and 20 Gunners. (Home Public letter from Court dated 16 March 1768, Para 79-85)
to keeping the military under proper subordination of the civil authority. It was left entirely to the judgement of Indian government to consider what number of Sepoys was requisite for service, for it depended upon 'the circumstances and situation of affairs', but at the same time directed that the natives be paid regularly and Battalions be given as many commissioned and non-commissioned officers as the service could afford. The Court soon realised that in order to keep the discipline of the Sepoy corps, the Sepoys should have at least one officer for each Company.

By 1785, the Bengal Army had undergone a lot of organisational changes as a result of great increases due to India often being in a state of warfare, and owing to reductions caused by heavy casualties. For example, the Rohilla War required re-numbering of Battalions in 1775. Transfer of the Nawab's troops in 1777 to the Company dictated minor changes to be introduced in the arrangement of Battalions. In 1778 nine new Battalions were raised, and two years later six Battalions were sent for service to Bombay which could not be included on the rosters of Bengal. All such arrangements necessitated re-organisation of the Bengal army in 1781. Under the new arrangements, Battalions were increased each to 1,000 rank and file, and formed into

1. Home Public Letter From Court, dated 16 March 1768, Para 126.
2. Ibid, Para 128.
3. Home Public Letter from Court, dated 11 November 1768, Para 95.
5. Home Public Letter from Court, dated 11 April 1781, Para 22.
thirty-five Regiments of two Battalions of 500 men each. The Regiments so formed were each commanded by a Major Commandant, and each Battalion by a Captain. But the new organisation too did not last long as the cost of maintenance of Battalions, which was already very high, increased still further when six of those sent for service to Bombay returned to Bengal. These Battalions were considerably 'under-numbered' owing to heavy casualties in the late wars and the men were absorbed in the existing Battalions.

Like the Bengal Infantry, the Bengal Cavalry and the Bengal Artillery too did not show any signs of steadiness with respect to their organisation. Owing to the constant state of warfare that India had been in for a number of years, and the non-availability of requisite European Artillery necessitated formation of Native Battalions of Artillery termed as 'Golundauze'. The increase was so great that in 1778 the Artillery had to be formed into a Brigade consisting of one European Regiment and three Native Battalions. At the time when Lieutenant General Sir Eyre Coote arrived from England as the Commander-in-Chief, the Court of Directors sent orders to Bengal, similar to those which had been sent to Bombay in 1752-53, ordering discontinuance of employment of Indians and Roman Catholics in Artillery, which resulted in disbanding the 'Golundauze'.

1. General Orders Commander-in-Chief dated 10 January 1781.
3. Ibid, P.62
The Golundauze having been disbanded, the Artillery was re-organised into two European Battalions of five Companies each. The discharged personnel of Golundauze were asked to join their ranks with lascars.

The case of the Bengal Cavalry that formed a part of each Brigade under Clive, was not different. The Ressullehns proved very expensive and accordingly the European body-guard and three Native Ressullehns were disbanded. The Court ordered: 'from the absolute necessity of retrenching all superfluous charges of the military as well as civil establishment at your Presidency, we can no longer permit you to continue in our service three troops of Moghul Cavalry ... It is therefore our pleasure that instead of three you keep one hundred privates with European and Black officers according to your last establishment.' The Court, however, entered into arrangements in 1775, with the Nawab of Oudhe who agreed to maintain six Regiments of Cavalry and six Battalions of Infantry with a Company of Artillery, commanded and disciplined by officers of the Company's service; and this force was transferred to the Company's service in 1777.

The Madras army witnessed as many changes as the Bengal army. By an order of the Court of Directors, in 1765,

1. Ibid, P.64
3. Home Public letter from Court dated 25 March 1772,Para 116
the Madras army was re-organised. There was no attempt at forming Brigades which deprived Madras of all the advantages that Bengal had as a consequence of that measure. The Battalions of Native Infantry which formed the largest portion of the army, were differently organised than those in Bengal. The strength of each Battalion was 900 and it was commanded by a Captain, assisted by a Lieutenant and an Ensign.\(^1\) In the next year there were ten Battalions of 1,000 men each, the establishment having been revised as a consequence of new regulations; and till 1784, they continued to be on that establishment, the number being 80 in excess of Clive's Battalions of 920 men each. These Sepoy Battalions were classified into Circar and Carnatic Battalions, depending on the areas from which they were recruited, and they were normally not required to serve outside the area of recruitment.\(^2\) There was no such distinction in the Sepoy Battalions of the Bengal Presidency. Recruitment of Madras Battalions on regional basis posed problems of procuring recruits, and imposed limitations on their employment outside the recruiting area limit.

Madras Artillery too was differently organised and equipped than Bengal Artillery which prevented them from being employed together in the field. The first Company of Madras Artillery raised in 1765 had the same establishment as Clive's Company (107 officers and men), and that remained

---

the establishment of all Companies till 1765; but on 9 November, 1767, when an additional Company was raised, its complement was 82 officers and men. In 1778, the Companies of Artillery had a very much different proportion of officers and men as compared to the battery raised in 1767. Whereas the Bengal Artillery employed 6-pounders and howitzers, in Madras, during the wars with Hyder and Tipoo, brass 18-pounders had constantly accompanied the armies.

Madras Cavalry was also exclusive in its own way. Whereas the native Cavalry formed an integral part of Clive's Brigades, no Cavalry existed in Madras till 1768. Even subsequently the army depended for Cavalry on the Nawab of Carnatic, who raised the first corps and embodied it into a Regiment under European Officers. This force served in the campaigns of 1770, 1781-83, and was transferred to the Company's service in 1784.

The Bombay army showed still greater differences in its organisation as compared to the other two Presidencies. There was no attempt at Brigading the whole force and no European officers were appointed to the command of Natives even till 1768. After skirmishes with the Sidies in 1767, the Council at Bombay recorded: 'It appears from late advances that our Sepoys have behaved extremely ill, which we attribute

2. Ibid. P.357
4. Evidence of Major General Malcolm, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix B, P.325
5. Loc. Cit.
in a great measure to a want of European officers. The Court of Directors consulted some reputed army officers including Clive, Lawrence, Calliam and Carnac, and in 1768, gave a plan for organising Bombay army. The Infantry was ordered to consist of one Regiment of 1600 Europeans, which was divided into 3 Battalions, to each of which a Lieutenant Colonel and a Major had been authorised. It is difficult to comprehend as to why the Court ordered that establishment, as at that time neither Bengal nor Madras had Battalions of that strength. Each Battalion was ordered to consist of seven Companies with 3 officers, 8 Non-Commissioned officers and 63 Privates. The Sepoy corps were ordered to be formed into two Battalions of one thousand men each; and each Battalion had ten Companies of equal strength, with a Captain and a Lieutenant to command the whole Battalion. In 1770, the Bombay Infantry again underwent a peculiar change. Two European Battalions of 1,562 men each, and two Battalions of Sepoys of 2,042 men were ordered. In 1773, the Sepoy Battalions again underwent a change; each Battalion of Sepoys was ordered to consist of eight Companies, each Company of 90 Privates, making 720 Privates to each with one Captain and two Lieutenants, one Commandant, 8 Subedars and 16 Jemadar to officer them.

2. Courts letter to Bombay dated 18 March 1768, Para 134-175
3. Loc. Cit.
4. Loc. Cit.
5. Court's letter to Bombay dated 6 April 1770, Para 67-73
From the above account of the Presidency armies between 1765 and 1785, it is quite evident that each Presidency army had almost independent development and there was very little in common between them. The various establishments had been devised to serve local purposes and to suit local requirements of each Presidency. The establishments were altered as often as the situations demanded regardless of economic repercussions on the one hand, and difficulties of employing on the field detachments from different Presidencies on the other. The employment of the Presidency armies together in campaigns of 1781, 1782 and 1783 brought home the need to assimilate the organisation of the three armies to one pattern.

With the Pitt's India Act coming into force there started a new phase in the Company's army. The Company's policy in India was subjected to the British governments' control. The political change brought about a change in the Company's army organisation. The short span of peace that followed the warfare in the Madras Presidency saw the army re-organised.

1. The Governor General was forbidden to make war or conclude a treaty likely to lead to war for the reason that schemes of conquest and territorial expansion were measures distasteful to the west and policy of the nation. (Masani, British in India, Oxford 1960, P.13); By Pitt's India Act, the East India Company was made a subordinate department of the English government. Civil and military matters were to be controlled by six Commissioners for the affairs of India properly known as the Board of Control. The government of India was placed in the hands of the Governor-General and Council of three, and the subordinate Presidencies were made definitely subject to Bengal in all questions of war, revenue and diplomacy. (Roberts, P. R. History of British India, Oxford 1958, P.215)
The Court of Directors gave a plan of re-organisation in 1785, with such an object that 'the corps which compose the armies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, should be formed to enable them to take the field in the shortest notice, and to act with effect whenever they shall happen to be united upon service.' To ensure a uniformity of system in the years to come, the Court ordered that whenever it was to become necessary to increase the army of any of the Presidencies beyond what was then ordered, complete sub-units were to be added, without any alterations in the number of officers and men in each one of them, whether they were Companies of Artillery or Regiments of Cavalry or Battalions of European or Native Cavalry. The establishment of each sub-unit of all the arms was fixed and ordered to be the same as the three Presidencies so that the complement of officers and men to sub-units of Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery was the same at the three Presidencies.

1. Home Public letter from Court dated 21 September 1785.
2. Ibid, Para 83
3. Regiment of European Cavalry: 1 Colonel and Captain, 1 Lieutenant Colonel and Captain, 1 Major and Captain, 3 Captains, 6 Lieutenants, 6 Cornets, 2 Quarter Masters, 1 Chaplain, 1 Adjutant, 1 Surgeon, 2 Mates, 24 Sergeants, 24 Corporals, 6 Trumpeters, 6 Hunt Bours, and 324 Privates.

Company of European Artillery: 1 Captain, 2 Lieutenants, 2 Lieutenant Fireworkers, 4 Sergeants, 4 Corporals, 8 Gunners, 56 Matrosses, 2 Drums and Fifers, and 2 Pukhalis or Watermen. 5 Companies of that strength constituted a Battalion of Artillery with a proportion of field and staff officers: 1 Lieutenant Colonel, 1 Major, 1 Adjutant, 1 Quarter Master, 1 Surgeon and 1 Mate. An extra allowance was made for 1 Sergeant Major, 1 Quarter Master Sergeant, 1 Drill Sergeant, 1 Drill Corporal, 1 Drum Major and 1 Pipe Major.

One Grenadier or one Company of European Infantry consisted of: 1 Captain, 1 Subaltern, 3 Sergeants, 4 Corporals,
An important aspect of the new organisation was complete Europeanisation of the armies by giving the command of natives entirely in the hands of European officers, and the post of Native Commandant was abolished in all the Presidencies. Native Artillery or Golundaue had been completely disbanded on the eve of Sir Eyre Coote taking over as the Commander-in-Chief, but it had been re-raised

Contd.

2 Drums and Fifes, 68 Privates and 2 Water Carriers. Two Companies of Grenadiers and six Companies of European Infantry constituted 1 Battalion of European Infantry; which was allowed a proportion of field and staff officers: 1 Colonel, 1 Lieutenant Colonel, 1 Major, 1 Chaplain, 1 Adjutant, 1 Quarter Master, 1 Surgeon, 1 Mate. An extra allowance was also made for 1 Sergeant Major, 1 Quarter Master Sergeant, 1 Drill Sergeant, 1 Drill Corporal, 1 Drum Major and 1 Fife Major.

Troop of Native Cavalry consisted of: 1 Subaltern, 1 Sergeant; Natives: 1 Subedar, 3 Jemadar, 4 Havildar, 4 Naicks, 1 Trumpeter, 1 Farrier, 68 Privates, and 1 Pakhali. Six troops of that strength constituted a Regiment of Cavalry with an additional staff consisting of Europeans: 1 Captain Commandant, 1 Adjutant, 1 Quarter Master, 1 Surgeon Assistant and 1 Black Doctor. The senior Regiment of Native Cavalry was commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel, the next in seniority by a Major, and the other Regiments by Captains Commandant. An extra allowance was made for 1 Sergeant, 1 Head Trumpeter, and 6 Linemen.

Company of Native Infantry had own its establishment: 1 Subedar, 1 Sergeant, 1 Subedar, 1 Jemadar, 4 Havildar, 4 Naicks, 1 Drum, 1 Fife, 68 Privates and 1 Pakhali. Two Companies of Grenadiers and six Battalion Companies of natives constituted altogether a Battalion of Native Infantry with additional European staff: 1 Captain, 1 Adjutant, 1 Sergeant, 1 Black Doctor; there was also an additional allowance made for 1 Sergeant Major, 1 Quarter Master Sergeant, 1 Drill Havildar, 1 Drill Naick, 1 Drum and Fife Major.

Company of lascars: Even though the Golundauze had been disbanded, the lascars for the service of Artillery could not be dispensed with and therefore they were retained for cleaning the guns and for carriage of ammunition but did not take part in actual working of guns. Each Company of Lascars consisted of: 1 Seang, 2 First Tindalls, 2 Second Tindalls, 56 Privates and 1 Pakhali (Home Public letter from Court dated 21 September 1785, Para 82)
to serve during the late wars. Once again, at the time of the new organisation, it was ordered to be disbanded, for it was the intention of the Court that 'none of the natives from the interior of the country of Hindostan, shall be taught the exercise of Artillery.'

In the new organisation the new and the most important measure was the formation of a Military Board for administration and coordination of work within the armies. Each Presidency had a separate Military Board with the Commander-in-Chief, the senior officer of the Presidency, the senior officer of Artillery, the Chief Engineer, the Quarter Master General and the Commissary, as its members. The Board was entrusted with multifarious duties—such as examining the state of musters of troops; keeping various corps to full establishment; keeping full information regarding the amount of provisions, ammunition and stores in the Company's forts, granaries, and garrisons; attending to Artillery, arms and equipment, and providing them at the shortest notice; and advising the Council with respect to the expenditure on military stores.

The peace establishment of the three Presidencies was fixed. The Bengal Presidency was to have 3 Battalions of Artillery, 6 Battalions of European Infantry, 2 Troops of Native Cavalry, 36 Battalions of Native Infantry and 30 Companies of lascars. The Madras peace establishment was

1. Home Public letter from Court dated 21 September 1785, Para 83.
2. Ibid. Para 18.
ordered to be 2 Battalions of Artillery, 4 Battalions of European Infantry, 1 Regiment of European Cavalry, 5 Regiments of Native Cavalry, 36 Battalions of Native Infantry and 36 Companies of Lascars. The Bombay establishment was ordered to be 1 Battalion of Artillery, 2 Battalions of European Infantry, 12 Battalions of Native Infantry and ten Companies of Lascars. At all the Presidencies the Battalions of Native Infantry were formed into Brigades, each consisting of six Battalions of Sepoys with one Lieutenant Colonel, and one Major as the necessary field officers for conducting the military duties and discipline of the Brigade. When the Battalions of European and Native Infantry were commanded to take field for service, they were equipped with two field Artillery pieces each, 2 Tindalls and 28 Lascars were attached for working the Artillery guns, and 1 European Non-Commissioned officer and 8 Privates were allowed for pointing the guns. For service in the field a Brigade could be detached; the Grenadiers of the Battalions composing the Brigade were formed into two Battalions for covering the flanks of the Brigade and the Battalion guns were attached to each, with a proportion of European Artillery and Lascars. The scale of Artillery, other than Battalion guns, to be allowed in action, was fixed. It is quite evident that Cavalry was not tied down to the Brigades, but it was so kept that its allotment could be made according to the needs of a campaign.

1. Home Public letter from Court dated 21 September 1785, Para 82
2. Loc. Cit.
The re-organisation of 1786 was an attempt at making the three armies similar in their organisation. They continued to be on their peace establishment until the outbreak of the Mysore war in 1790, which necessitated aid to Madras from Bombay and Calcutta. To meet the new emergency the Infantry Battalions had to be increased to ten Companies each. As soon as the war ended in 1792, the Battalions were reduced to their peace establishment of eight Companies each. But for this appreciable change, the new organisation remained almost unchanged till 1796, when dissatisfaction of officers, rather than any defects in the army machinery, necessitated a complete re-organisation. At the time of the re-organisation, the army of the East India Company was 73,000 strong. Cornwallis in 1794 reported the condition of the Native army, which was the largest portion, as 'good'.

Thus, between the years 1746 and 1796, a period of only 50 years, the East India Company had raised an army which in those times was a force to reckon with.

1. Home Public letter from Court dated 11 March 1791.
2. General Orders Commander-in-Chief 13 January 1792.
3. Letter from Cornwallis to Dundus dated November 1794, vide PP(microfilm) Vol.54, P.549, Lords 63 of 1812.