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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| Military Strength and National Power | —Lt Gen AM Vohra |
| Group Cohesion —The Ultimate Battle-Winning Factor | —Lt Col M Suman, VSM |
| A Leaner, Meaner, Army | —Maj Gautam Das |
| An Introduction to Tactical Guided Missiles : The new Swords of War | —Maj Gen VK Madhok |
| The Punjabis in the British Army Some Aspects of "Loyalty" | —Sahdev Vohra |
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CONTENTS

October—December 1986

Military Strength and National Power	—Lt Gen AM Vohra	301
Group Cohesion—The Ultimate Battle-Winning Factor	—Lt Col M Suman, VSM	309
A Leaner, Meaner, Army	—Maj Gautam Das	321
An Introduction to Tactical Guided Missiles : The new Swords of War	—Maj Gen VK Madhok	330
The Punjabis in the British Army—Some Aspects of “Loyalty”	—Sahdev Vohra	336
The Mazhbi Sikh Soldier	—Maj (Dr) DB Sharma	344
‘White Mutinies’ in India Before and After 1857	—Lt Gen SL Menezes PVSM, SC	354
Akbar The Great As Military Commander	—Brig SS Chandel, SC, VSM	360
War Poetry : A Survey and Appreciation	—Lt Col Randhir Singh	370
Letters to the Editor	—Maj CS Vidyasagar	377
Book Reviews		383
The Soviet Union : A Geographical Survey—G Melvyn Howe; Goodnight, Sorry for Sinking You : The Story of the SS City of Cairo—Ralph Barker; Cohesion : The Human Element in Combat; Leadership and Societal Influence in the Armies of the Soviet Union, the United States, North Vietnam—Wm. Darryl Henderson; Small Arms Today : Latest Reports on the World’s Weapons and Ammunition—Edward Clinton Ezell; Vehicles and Bridging—I.F.B. Tyler and Others; Never to be Taken Alive : A Biography of General Gordon—Roy MacGregor – Hastie		
Additions to the USI Library		391

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Military Strength and National Power*

LT GENERAL A.M. VOHRA

WITH the end of the Second World War began an era of decolonization. The decline of the British, French, German and Dutch empires commenced in the late forties. For some decades now the international environment has been such that capture and occupation of territories for colonization is no longer acceptable. The political consciousness of the people will not tolerate colonization and makes it unprofitable. Thus, there is a major change of emphasis on the role of the armed forces. Their role now is to deter war rather than to gain territory for occupation by waging one. Deterrence aims at making aggression by an adversary disadvantageous. This has always been one aspect of the role of the armed forces but not the crucial one. Now it has become the primary role and is an important factor contributing to national security.

THE MILITARY MIND

National power is multi-faceted and depends on the sum total of the state of the nation in the fields of economy, internal cohesion, foreign policy and the armed forces, to name its major elements. The armed forces are an important factor, but to consider military strength as the only or even the primary element would be fallacious. However, "the military mind" gives primacy to military power. Rikhi Jaipal in his essay in *Gandhi Marg* brings out that "the military mind" is not the prerogative of the soldier : it is often found in the most unmilitary places—in academic circles, in scientific laboratories, and religious institutions.¹ It insists on military superiority for the preservation of peace. Its philosophy is essentially based on armed superiority for national security.

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In any case, in this day and age, armed superiority be it in the superpower or regional context, is not achievable. The quest for it

*Strategic Analysis/July 1986.

only leads to an arms race which increases the probability of war. It encourages an approach of confrontation as opposed to one of negotiation. In spite of differences in the sizes of countries, their GNP, the type of polity and so on, likely adversaries are not willing to accept a sizeable difference in their respective military strengths either in terms of the size of the armed forces or in the sophistication of weapon systems. An arms build-up by one leads to matching measures by the other. Deterrence in the aim of both but the level of achieving it is constantly raised higher and higher with consequent increases in the defence expenditure of both. The strain on the economy of the smaller country is naturally greater but the belief that this strain would force it to give up its arms build-up to meet the perceived threat is erroneous. Countries pledge to eat grass or go without trousers than give up the pursuit of arms.

Only a correct perception of military strength in national power can bring about a realistic approach to the quest for military superiority and foreign policy formulations to ensure regional relations that do not necessitate a competitive arms build-up. If relations between the countries of a region improve, the influence of superpower rivalry and the consequent repercussions on the regional environment can also be contained. This development of relations to obviate an arms race is easier said than done but the issues involved need to be stated and the objectives need to be defined.

INDIA'S IMAGE

In the chapter "Role of National Power" in the book titled *India and the Nuclear Challenge*, K. Subrahmanyam observes, "India does not have a credible image of power vis-a-vis its neighbours. India no doubt has the fourth largest army in the world and by every indicator of power in international relations far outweighs the rest of the subcontinent put together. Yet India is seen not as a power but only as a flabby, fumbling oversized developing nation whose future is somewhat uncertain."²

Later in the same essay, Subrahmanyam avers that this image is a result of "the Indian military performance not being impressive enough"³ and that having conducted its underground nuclear test, "[But] India developed cold feet because of some pressure from big powers, and it stopped further testing."⁴ On account of this, he feels, "on the nuclear issue especially, the rest of the world cannot

have a high opinion about Indian will to power",⁵ and concludes, "India is left with no option but seriously consider going nuclear."⁶

It is apparent that Subrahmanyam gives primacy to military strength in general and nuclear weapon capability in particular in his assessment of national power. There is passing reference to other indicators of power and a mention of India's internal problems for instance but there is no consideration of other factors which contribute to national power.

NATIONAL AIM

Strategy has been defined as the systematic development of national power, in peace and war, to secure national aims. India's aim is to develop as an integrated, economically strong, democratic nation state at peace with its neighbours, so that it can forge ahead and pull itself out of poverty and backwardness. Among the important factors that have a bearing on this aim are global developments, regional environment, foreign policy, internal cohesion, the state of the economy and the armed forces.

Global development. The developments in the Horn of Africa in 1978 followed by subsequent events in Iran and Afghanistan ushered in the second cold war. The superpower conflict has been brought to the very door of the Indian subcontinent and has, among other things, intensified the militarization of the Indian Ocean. The littoral as well as the hinterland countries have to live with this in the foreseeable future. The race for bases or ports offering facilities will be one aspect to be faced. The other, the more serious one, could be the possibility of active involvement in a conflict that might occur in the region.

Another consequence of superpower confrontation has been a boost to the Indo-Pak competitive arms build-up which commenced in the sixties as a result of the \$1.5 billion arms aid given to Pakistan by the USA. In 1981 a package of \$3.2 billion over a period of six years materialized, on the expiry of which a \$4.2 billion aid has been announced. A comparative study of the strengths of Indian and Pakistani armies is instructive. In 1963, India and Pakistan had ten and eight divisions respectively (India also had three mountain divisions under raising as part of the force for the Indo-Tibet border). *The Military Balance 1985/86* shows India with 22 divisions excluding the mountain divisions (2 armoured, 1 mechanized and 19 infantry), and Pakistan with 18 divisions (2 armoured and 16 infantry). Thus the level of forces has been more than doubled but the same situation of near parity obtains on the Indo-Pakistan border. So much for the quest for military superiority in this region. What is

true of strengths is also true of weapon systems. Pakistan gets the F-16, India acquires the mirage. Pakistan introduces Harpoons, India goes in for Sea Eagles.

Arms race is defined as competitive and cumulative proliferation or accretion of weapons or build-up of armed forces based on the conviction on the part of adversaries that only by staying ahead in military power can they ensure national security. Pakistan is a frontline state in the perception of the USA ever since the global developments mentioned earlier. The USA therefore continues to provide arms to strengthen it militarily and India takes matching measures. Thus the arms race goes on. Were it not for the differences between India and Pakistan and Pakistan's strategy of external dependence, it would have been possible to contain the spill-over effects of superpower rivalry and confrontation.

Foreign policy. War is a costly, inhuman and unreliable way of achieving national objectives. Other means of settling differences and disputes require that diplomacy should become the art of ensuring friendly relations, particularly with one's neighbours. Foreign policy is therefore a very important factor in the development of national power. By virtue of its size and potential, India is suspect in the eyes of its neighbours. Its pre-eminence is misunderstood for a desire to predominate. Indo-Pakistan adversary relations, from the very inception of the two countries, have contributed largely to this state of affairs. Whereas the bipolar cold war has encouraged regional alliances like NATO and the Warsaw Pact, in the Third World differences among the countries of the region invite great power interference to pursue the interests of these powers to the detriment of the region. The answer lies in establishing and strengthening regional groupings like the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ASEAN, both of which have a long way to go. In this context the establishment of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a step in the right direction. India should continue to play a low key role but support and strengthen this organization with all the means at its command. Bilateral relations continue to be vitiated by the proclivity to take advantage of each other's difficulties. Nevertheless, the objective of normalizing relations and moving towards friendship and cooperation should be persistently pursued as this is in India's national interest.

Internal developments in Pakistan with the return of Benazir Bhutto tend to suggest a period of "wait and see" in regard to negotiations with that country, but cast no doubt on the long-term

aim of friendship. In the case of China, the present is the opportune time since it is in dire need of an environment of peace. It is intensely involved in the reorganization of its Communist Party and economic development through modernization, in meeting opposition to both these measures and the consequent power struggle. In the foreseeable future, Chinese policy is going to be basically inward looking, concerned about national integration and raising the standard of living. Although ambitions of becoming a great power, its posture for the next decade or two is going to be one of low profile, seeking normal relations with both the superpowers.

This very brief analysis does not by any means suggest that the course to normalization with China or friendship with Pakistan is an easy one. It only states the objectives and the need to pursue these persistently and to so define the guidelines of India's foreign policy. The extent to which such policy succeeds will determine the weightage of India's international standing, apart from its relations with the other South Asian countries as well as influence with them, which is an important factor for developing national power.

Internal cohesion. India's internal dissensions are at present the biggest obstacle to the development of national power. The veteran Gandhian R.R. Diwakar wrote in a letter published on June 26, 1984, "We are a geographical expression, a political entity, an administrative unit and a unified economic and financial system. But a composite Indian nation is an unrealised dream."⁷ The problems of the building of the Indian nation state are many and of great complexity. Although unified by the concept of Indian civilization and culture, religious, linguistic and ethnic differences cast a shadow on integration. Organized collective activity on emotive issues gets out of hand and acquires its own momentum. In the process, the leadership loses control, original objectives get lost sight of and the movement turns separatist, although clearly strength lies in consolidating unity. Apart from this fissiparous tendency, there are the socio-economic factors that are inevitable in the transformation of a predominantly agrarian society into an industrial one.

India's size, its geostrategic importance, its industrial base, its military strength cannot proportionately lend to its national power as long as its image is that of a country internally divided. As it is, the solution of socio-economic factors that afflict the power of the nation will take time and slow down the evolution of the nation state. In addition India has to take measures in the political and educational fields to ensure that loyalty to the nation is placed, in practice, above all other loyalties : religious, regional, ethnic.

State of the economy. The state of the economy of a country has a dominant bearing on its international standing, its development, state of employment and welfare as well as its defence potential. Early emphasis since the fifties on infrastructure in the way of power, steel, coal, cement and transportation as well as on heavy industry and capital goods sectors, has helped India establish an advanced and self-sustaining industrial capability among the developing countries. It has also established a good scientific and technological base with a large reservoir of trained manpower. In agriculture, after an initial period of dependence on imports of food-grain, India's green revolution in the mid-sixties has given it self sufficiency. However, problems in the economic field are vast and complex. A sizeable percentage of the people (between 30 to 40 per cent) still live below the poverty line. Unemployment and underemployment is rampant. Despite substantial investments on irrigation projects, more than two-thirds of the cultivated area remains unirrigated.

Power shortage continues. Transportation of critical raw materials is unsatisfactory. There is gross under-utilization of capacities in industry. To transform the vast and poverty-ridden agrarian society into an industrial one, to overcome infrastructural bottlenecks and to create additional capacities in sectors that fetter the economy, vast resources are required. And such resources are scarce. Targets are not realized plan after plan because of significant shortfalls in plan outlays. The government's ability to generate additional resources is limited. The planners are finding it difficult to muster Rs. 180,000 crore as outlay for the public sector under the Seventh Plan to achieve a modest growth rate of 5 per cent. Outlays in sectors where a big push was expected have had to be pruned; these include power, oil and steel.

If one takes cognizance of India's international image, it might be correct to state that the blot that stands out is internal strife and poverty. India is seen as a poor country which has practised democracy, has established institutions and is keeping them going but has not quite been able to achieve integration or strengthen its unity. Be that as it may, it would be true to accept that of the factors bearing on the development of national power in India, the two that need maximum thought and action are internal cohesion and the state of the economy.

Military strength. In terms of military strength India's image is high regionally. The outside world does not see any lack of will

to employ this strength either. Even within the country, there is a strongly held view that in 1962 the ultimatum to evict the Chinese from Thagla was bravado contrary to military advice. Given the fact of Chinese occupation of Aksai Chin as also of the lack of forces equipped, trained or acclimatized to operate in high altitude areas, it would have been advisable to bide time and make necessary preparations before taking recourse to the military option. To the outside world, India had resorted to the military option too readily. In brief, the point is that the development of national power in India has not been hindered by the lack or inadequacy of military strength.

The part played by military strength in national power is self evident. However, bearing in mind the change of emphasis in the role of the armed forces and the futility of the quest for military superiority touched upon earlier in this paper, the objective should be to attain deterrence at as low a level as possible. In other words, the size of the forces and the type of weapons system should be related to this role rather than adopting a course of attaining regional military superiority in the belief that this will add to status, prestige, international standing, and so on.

Superpowers assume global responsibilities for themselves and constitute fleets, air arms and expeditionary forces to safeguard their interests and to create spheres of influence. India surely has no such pretensions. It is concerned with preserving peace, safe-guarding its territorial integrity from any regional threats as well as any intervention as a result of superpower confrontation. Its regional pre-eminence is not in question. Its primary international role in the foreseeable future is to work for regional stability. Towards this it has to ensure economic growth, internal cohesion, a foreign policy that strengthens SAARC and achieve deterrence at a low level of military strength.

Nuclear weapons have added a new dimension to deterrence but conventional weapon deterrence continues to be relevant among non-nuclear weapon states. In regard to the nuclear weapon debate in India, there is no controversy over the fact that the nuclear weapon threat can only be met by nuclear weapons. Conventional weapon deterrence gets downgraded and the non-nuclear weapon state can be subjected to nuclear blackmail. It is also agreed that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) legitimizes nuclear weapons and has permitted unrestrained vertical proliferation. No notice has been taken of Article VI of the treaty relating to disarmament. There is agreement that to save the world from a nuclear holocaust, which is a possibility in view of the nuclear war fighting theories of the superpowers, the ultimate aim should be to ban, disarm and render nuclear weapons ineffective.

The controversy is basically over how to achieve this ultimate aim. A case is made out that India has a major international responsibility to struggle against nuclear hegemony by aggravating the concern and anxieties of the industrialized world to bring about

an attitudinal change.⁸ It is contended that nuclear weapons are in the hands of a few. Only by breaking this monopoly and aggravating their concern that some more nations can acquire nuclear weapons, can the nuclear hegemonists be brought to the table to discuss a convention to outlaw nuclear weapons.⁹

The idea of a debate is to encourage putting across all points of view, so that various aspects of the problems can be analyzed. In this light the above points need consideration. Along with this, how much influence SNF (Small Nuclear Forces) would command is also a factor to be considered. I would say very little. The motivation of SNF would essentially be defensive. In this context, it is open to question if Britain, France and China, the other three members of the nuclear club, have any effective say on the issues of arms control and disarmament. The struggle for these objectives has to be conducted in stages by pressing for measures like a comprehensive test ban and no first use. The effort of the six-nation summit is directed towards such steps.

The Gorbachev proposals of Jan. 15, 1986, offer a 15-year timetable for banning nuclear weapons throughout the world. A major obstacle to the acceptance of these is that the USA is required to halt its Star Wars programme. President Reagan has, in response, sought elimination of US and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe and Asia over the next three years and proposed that a start in regard to a 50 per cent cut be made with the INF (Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces). This should not disillusion one as to the likelihood of abolition of nuclear weapons. Rather, arms control and disarmament talks need to be persistently pursued.

The other point of controversy in the nuclear weapons debate is whether, in the present circumstances of the regional validity of conventional deterrence, India should take on the costs of entering a competitive nuclear arsenal build-up. Were India to opt for nuclear weapons, there is no doubt that Pakistan will also do so. Overt nuclear capability would certainly lead to a nuclear arms race in the subcontinent. A detailed consideration of the costs of going nuclear would need a separate paper. It is sufficient here to draw attention to this aspect.

The nuclear weapons debate is an important issue but to relate national power primarily to the acquisition of this capability is an oversimplification of the question. It is suggested that primacy needs to be given to other factors rather than the quest for military superiority.

NOTES

1. Rikhi Jaipal, "The Military Mind", *Gandhi Marg*, 38 and 39, Special issue on Disarmament and Human Survival, May-June 1982, p. 116.
2. K. Subrahmanyam, "Role of National Power", *India and the Nuclear Challenge*, Lancer International, 1986, p. 253.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 269.
7. R.R. Diwakar, Letter to the Editor, *The Tribune*, June 26, 1984.
8. K. Subrahmanyam, "Our Nuclear Predicament", *Strategic Analysis*, IDSA, Oct. 1985, p. 649.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 665.

Group Cohesion—The Ultimate Battle-Winning Factor

LIEUT COLONEL M SUMAN, VSM

*May your counsel be common
Your assembly common
Common the wind and the thought
of those united.
A common purpose lays before you,
Strive to work with common purpose.*

Rigveda X 191 (3)

INTRODUCTION

IT has been a constant endeavour of all armies the world over to increase their war potential and effectiveness. A number of theories have been propounded by the military thinkers. Some students of military history have tried to analyse important battles to identify reasons for their outcome, and thereby draw lessons from them. They have also tried to trace the military careers of the famous generals with a view to identify the factors that contributed to their victories and failures. Such studies are retrospective in nature and hence of limited value.

The second set of military thinkers are more predictive in their outlook and approach. Using their intimate knowledge of military history, they have tried to build models of ideal war machines which they visualise to be the ultimate in efficiency and effectiveness. Such theories have limited applicability for the simple reason that the gulf between the ideal and the practical is a difficult one to bridge

Whatever be the approach, the final recommendations always lay stress on the two basic sets of factors, albeit in varying degrees

(a) *Tangible Factors.* These are the common factors that are obvious and quantifiable i.e. training, weapon systems and tactics. These factors are essentially primary in nature. Every army is

organised and structured on these basic factors. But these have their limitations as well. We all know that training beyond a stage can prove counter-productive. Similarly, weapon systems that an army can procure are dependent on the availability of technological know-how and economic health of the country.

(b) *Non-tangible Factors.* These are the factors that are difficult to identify in terms of the specifics. They have a long gestation period and the results are not discernible immediately. These measures require the best in human leadership. These are capable of raising a motly group of people to dizzy heights of endurance, bravery and selflessness. There are no limiting factors. Motivation, morale, esprit-de-corps, leadership and group-cohesion are some of the factors that deserve constant attention at all levels.

Enough attention has always been paid to all the factors mentioned above, with the sole exception of group-cohesion, which has recently attracted attention. Perhaps, it is a fall-out of the research in the field of group-dynamics by social scientists.

We have always been considering a soldier as an individual entity and therefore, all our endeavours have been towards motivating 'him' for war. We have failed to realise the effects of a group on an individual soldier and his dependence on it for psychological-social support.

Group-cohesion is an emerging facet of our constant attempts to find that all important factor that separates the victorious armies from the vanquished. It is, perhaps, that single factor which inspires a group of soldiers to achieve what the others think as 'impossible' in war.

GROUP AND GROUP COHESION

A group is any number of personnel who interact with one another, are psychologically aware of one another and perceive themselves as belonging to that group.

Groups can be formal and informal. A formal group is created for specific tasks and goals while an informal group gets formed due to the basic human tendency to live in a group. Ideally, a group should have the following ingredients :—

- (a) There should be frequent interaction between the members and they should have interlocking roles and common interests.

- (b) The members should identify themselves with the group and others should accept the same.
- (c) The members should find the group rewarding, satisfying and meeting their psychological needs.

In an organisation like the military, groups exist both at primary and secondary levels. Sections and platoons are primary groups whose cohesiveness affects the effective functioning of any army. Morale, esprit-de-corps and cohesion are the social referents which indicate the state of fighting efficiency. In them is anchored the capacity of a group to deliver the results. It is group-cohesion at section and platoon levels that enables a soldier persist in battle against heavy odds and in conditions of extreme hardship and uncertainty.

Recognition by others is a basic human requirement. A group gratifies that. Social status is an important factor in image formulation. Groups provide a medium through which an individual can satisfy his desire for self-actualisation. Sustained formal and informal inter-actions, common experience and shared values are essential for cohesion. Morale, group cohesion and esprit-de-corps inter-act with each other depending upon a set of variables. It is not always possible to determine their exact mutual relationship. But suffice it to state that morale fosters in group organisation a uniformity of behaviour. Therefore, esprit-de-corps and morale are prerequisites of cohesiveness in any group. *Esprit-de-corps* is generally referred to at much larger group levels while cohesion is at face to face interaction.

NEED IN THE ARMED FORCES

Cohesion is that catalyst that welds individual members into a group wherein the unity of purpose and concern for the group overwhelms individual self-preservation instinct. Military cohesion can be defined as fusing together of members of a military group in such a manner so as to subordinate their self interest to the interest of the group and its mission.

SLA Marshall has termed it as one of the "simplest truths of war that a soldier is sustained in combat by his fellows.

Even in ancient India, the virtues of group-cohesion were extolled by a king before leading his troops in combat, "Let us swear to conquer and never desert one another. Let only such men come who would never turn back from battle or cause their comrades to be slain." (Santi-parva 100, 32ff)

Eventhough the spectrum of activities in any nation's war effort has become extremely large these days, it is still the group at section, platoon and company levels that determines the outcome of any engagement. Extensive studies have shown that soldiers display limited willingness to make sacrifice for the sake of their nationalist spirit. It is their concern for their immediate group that makes them perform heroic acts rather than let their colleagues down.

Most of the engagements are fought at sub-unit level. A unit commander can at best exercise an indirect influence on the sub-units during an engagement. Inherent cohesiveness group plays a decisive role in such situations. Group-cohesion provides psychological and sociological stability. It provides a common bond within a group which steels a soldier and prevents individual breakdown in the face of imminent danger.

During the days of long drawn wars, enough time was available for leaders at all levels to congeal their groups into cohesive fighting units by highlighting external dangers. There is no doubt that external threats and disturbances tend to alter the internal stability of a group leading to the resistance of the group to any dynamics. This unity of purpose to restore status-quo of the group gave rise to its cohesiveness. The cohesiveness thus achieved was temporary in nature and lasted only till the external threat existed. The modus-operandi sufficed when adequate time was available to let the external threats generate group cohesion.

This system certainly cannot work in the present day environment of short and intense wars. If we wish to create an effective fighting machine, we ought to strive to achieve that during peace-time. Short duration wars do not give adequate time to produce cohesive fighting groups. It has to be carried out while preparing and training for the inevitable bout. A military primary group is the key element if we wish to improve the effectiveness of the armed forces. It is, therefore, imperative that we understand the dynamics of a group and its internal structure so that we can exploit it to the maximum to obtain optimum results.

DETERMINATIONS OF GROUP COHESION

It will be incorrect to state that any specific set of variables determines the degree of cohesion in any group. The variables are many and their mutual interaction in a given environment, will to a large

extent, determine the state of prevailing cohesion. Nevertheless, it is possible to list some well-defined variables.

(a) *Structural Variables*

- (i) Group cohesion is inversely proportional to the size of the group. It is much easier to inculcate cohesion at section and platoon levels rather than at unit and formation levels.
- (ii) Time for which a group has been in existence is another important factor. Members who have been together for a long time develop affinity for each other. That is why we follow the unit affiliation system in the army. In Israel, tank crews which fought together in 1967, joined hands again in 1973.
- (iii) Personnel with similar socio-economic background add to the structural strength of a group.
- (iv) The frequency with which the members of a group interact with one another determines the looseness or closeness of a group.
- (v) Homogeneity of a group as a whole generates mutual cohesion in the group.

(b) *Environmental Variables*

- (i) Cohesion is dependent on the status that a group occupies in the organisation.
- (ii) Degree of isolation of the group from the rest of the organisation produces corresponding cohesion. A group that gets cut-off and is isolated in war generates group cohesion of amazing proportions. This is partly due to the normal human instinct of self preservation.
- (iii) Tradition plays an important part in generating group cohesion. It is more applicable to us in India as we by nature respect tradition and history. A man joining a group with a long tradition of valour and excellence acquires the traits of cohesiveness naturally.
- (iv) External threats and pressures create an environment wherein a group acquires a higher degree of cohesion in the knowledge that the very existence of the group is otherwise threatened.

(c) *Leadership Variables.* This is one facet of our endeavour towards better group cohesion that produces results beyond imagination. History is replete with examples of ordinary soldiers turning into extra-ordinary fighting groups under inspired leadership. A personal relationship between the leader and the group is essential. A leader has to understand his group intimately to be able to knit all the members into a cohesive whole. It is a difficult task especially in high technology environment wherein the separate entity of each individual tends to get highlighted. Yet, it is a leader alone whose personal influence over the members can result in a commitment to the group. Section and platoon commanders are the leaders who can mould their commands into cohesive and effective combat outfits.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT GROUP COHESION

We have seen that an essential element of group cohesion is the commitment of members to the group. It is this commitment that motivates members to subordinate their personal interests to the group interests. Needless to say that, this commitment should be moral in texture based on a high degree of loyalty to the group. This commitment loses its purpose the moment it becomes an economic commitment based on calculative motives of profits accruing to a member. This type of calculative commitment should be discouraged and replaced by a moral commitment based on esprit-de-corps and common ideals.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

With increasing economic awareness all round, it is natural that economic considerations should weigh heavily on every individual's mind. Personal economic betterment has come to acquire greater importance. It is not possible that every group interest be in consonance with individual interests of the members. A major conflict arises in reconciling the two interests. No problem is envisaged where a group activity is likely to result in an obvious, immediate and tangible gain to all the members. Economic gain is a major motive for every individual. It is, therefore, desirable to keep members' financial interests in mind while taking decisions. Any decision that is likely to have adverse financial effect is unlikely to generate cohesion. On the contrary, it may damage its cause.

BREAK-UP OF FAMILY TIES

There was a time when joint-family system was prevalent in India. Our soldiers came from family environment where group living was the way of life. They were used to 'collectivity' and knew the advantages of 'collectivism' over 'individualism'. This trait, therefore, was not required to be inculcated. Once they joined the services, they continued to give due importance to the groups they lived in. This created cohesion at section and platoon levels.

With the break-up of joint family system, everyone is becoming self-centred. The quality of 'give and take' of the good old days is gone. Spread of family-planning further reduced the size of the family resulting in excessive individualism. Consequently, group cohesion has suffered. Greater efforts have to be put in by the leaders to wean their troops away from individualism and inculcate collectivism.

MIXED UNITS

Previously, individuals in a unit belonged to a particular area or community. They belonged to the same social strata of the society. Their language and food habits were common. Most of the soldiers of a sub-unit knew each other even before they joined the services. This naturally, facilitated their becoming members of a well-knit team. No special effort was required to instil a sense of group cohesion in them. But with the current trend of mixed units, considerable additional effort is required to be put in by the leaders to integrate personnel of diverse ethnic, regional and social backgrounds. The problem gets compounded these days when fissiparous tendencies are raising their ugly head in the society at large. But given the will and the leadership, this is not an unsurmountable obstacle. Nationalism and a common sense of purpose can push all differences to the background.

TECHNICAL ADVANCEMENTS

With the introduction of high-tech weapons, dependence on individual soldiers and operators has increased. This has also resulted in the creation of a working environment wherein the soldiers work in singles or pairs, in complete isolation from the others. There is very little mutual interaction, an ingredient so very essential for the development of group cohesion. Working in separate compartments has also given rise to an increasing tendency of self-indispensability. Mutual dependence and collective activities are the obvious casualties.

This has also aggravated the problem of leadership. A leader hardly gets an opportunity to set personal example or to have his command together at a place and time to promote group cohesion. He is further handicapped by the fact that a number of his subordinates are perhaps, better qualified in their own field of technical specialisation. This is one problem that defies an immediate solution. With increasing automation, mechanisation and computerisation, this problem is bound to increase. One can only suggest that even within the constraints of high-tech working environment, constant endeavour should be made to instil basic military qualities of characters in all the soldiers. Mutual interaction can be increased by making a deliberate effort and by increased frequency of sports and other extra-curricular activities. It has to be instilled in the minds of the soldiers that mutual-dependence has in no way become redundant. If anything, the contrary is true.

INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION

The present system of awards and decorations tends to encourage individual deeds and acts. Prominence is invariably given to individuals and not to the group as a whole. This results in self-aggrandisement amongst the members of a group. Everyone tries to highlight his own contribution to gain recognition and the associated awards. This tends to retard the process of group-cohesion. Self-interests overwhelm group-interests with resultant break-down of the group. To some extent the above is inevitable in an organisation which is purely pyramidal in structure.

LEADERSHIP FACTORS

The importance of effective leadership in the development of group-cohesion can never be over-emphasized. A leader sets an example for others to follow. A leader who is selfless and committed to his group can contribute immensely to group-cohesion.

Troops are always quick to judge their leaders. A leader who is overly conscious of his career and personal advancement can hardly imbibe a sense of selflessness in his group. A leader who attempts to use his command merely as a stepping stone for further progress in his career, can never inculcate in the members a sense of commitment to the group.

CENTRALISATION

With increasing centralisation in virtually all spheres of professional functioning, the separate identity of primary groups gets undermined. A section or a platoon is very rarely given a separate task. Inter-action amongst the members become infrequent. A junior leader does not get enough opportunity to impress his personality on the group. His contribution towards building cohesion in his group becomes minimal. Due to over-centralisation he gets no independent task in peace-time and takes no independent decisions. An independent task successfully executed acts as a catalyst towards group cohesion. Success is that tonic which builds up the inherent cohesive strength and confidence in a group. It gets them collective recognition and thereby further spurs group cohesion.

A strange phenomenon that is discernible in most of the organisations is the negative attitude of senior leaders towards group cohesion in subordinate groups. A commanding officer in a unit wants his unit to be a cohesive one and attempts to make every soldier think in terms of the unit. At the same time he eyes with suspicion and disapproval any development of group cohesion at company level. He does not appreciate any company spirit and considers it to be detrimental to unit cohesion. Similarly, a company commander wants company spirit and not platoon spirit. It is sad but true. We do precious little to generate cohesion in subordinate groups and sub-groups. That is considered undesirable and harmful. It is a fallacy which is causing immense damage. Group cohesion must start at the lowest possible level and then build upwards. Primary groups always take precedence. Commitment to a group, thereafter, becomes a matter of habit and nature. How can a soldier develop commitment to a large entity like a unit if he does not have any commitment to his immediate colleagues in the primary groups of sections and platoons! We have already seen that group cohesion is inversely proportional to the size of a group. Moreover, the frequency of interaction amongst the members at section and platoon levels is much more than what it can be at the unit level. Group cohesion at sub-unit level is complementary to group cohesion at the unit and formation level. No unit can have cohesion unless its sections and platoons are cohesive entities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is well nigh impossible to lay down a specific set of thumb rules for the promotion of group cohesion. Group cohesion deals with the humans and their behaviour. Human behaviour due to its unpredictability defies any standardisation. It is for the leaders to judge

their commands and act accordingly. However, a few guidelines, as enumerated below, should be borne in mind by the leaders at all levels :—

- (a) The frequency of interaction between the commander and the troops should be increased. The same is true for interaction amongst the members of the group as well. Sections and platoons must be encouraged to retain their distinct identities.
- (b) As far as possible, tasks should be assigned to sections and platoons. It is incorrect to presume that the tasks these days are of company or unit level. Even if it be so, these could always be broken down into section and platoon level sub-tasks. The endeavour should always be to let a section or a platoon work together to achieve specified goals. Success congeals a group together in a fraternal bond.
- (c) It is, perhaps, a corollary of the previous point. When a job is executed well, recognition must be accorded to the group as such and not to a few individuals. Team championships and battle-honours are a few examples of group recognition.
- (d) Leaders must set an example of subordinating individual interests to group interests. Their commitment to the group should be total and absolute. Troops are too sharp and intelligent to be bluffed by phoney talks. They are quick to assess the sincerity and commitment of their leaders. Nothing can be more damaging to the cause of group cohesion than the insincerity of the leaders. If the leader himself is more concerned about his personal interests, other members will also tend to fend for themselves, thereby breaking-up the fabric of group cohesion.
- (e) Every group needs certain ideals to weld and fuze it together. Regimental traditions and history are important factors that promote group cohesion. Nationalism is another ideal that spurs group cohesion. Fighting together for a cause and ideal acts as an important catalyst. It is for a leader to identify those ideals that would give optimum results in respect of his group and thereafter highlight them. To some, nationalism is of utmost importance, while to others, regimental traditions appeal most.
- (f) Continued affiliation to a unit and sub-unit fosters group cohesion. Longer the span of association, better is the mutual understanding and common bond. It is better to let soldiers stay

in one sub-unit than to turn them over frequently. The same is true for the officers as well. The tenure of officers should be longer and their affiliation to their units should be given due importance.

CONCLUSION

George Washington, while writing to Henry Know, had said, "My first wish would be that my military family, and the whole Army, should consider themselves as a band of brothers, willing and ready to die for each other."

Edward A Shils and Morris Janowitz in their treatise "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II" have concluded, "A soldier's ability to resist is a function of the capability of his immediate primary group to avoid social disintegration. When the individual's immediate group, and its supporting formations, met his basic organic needs, offered him affection and esteem from both officers and comrades supplied him with a sense of power, authority, the element of self-concern in battle which would lead to disruption of the effective functioning of his primary group, was minimized."

Recent trends in management studies tending towards too much rationalism in human behaviour have caused a certain degree of confusion. Humans are not robots. Their behaviour can be rationalised to a degree and no more. To achieve cohesion in a group, a leader has to contend with the basic physiological, psychological and sociological needs, as was revealed by the 'Hierarchy of needs' of Elton Mayo's 'Hawthorne Studies'. The Hawthorne Inquiry had the same shock effect on industrial sociology as the studies of Stouffer and his collaborators had on military sociology. According to Jacques van Doorn, the rediscovery of the small group as an organisational unit and as the cadre of motivation for the individual man is of equal importance for both military and industrial organisations. It is an established fact that the small group strongly influences the productivity of the labourer as well as the combat morale of the soldier. For leaders in the Indian Armed Forces, the approach becomes a little more intricate as the personnel have different ethnic and regional background. Hence, they need to be treated and handled differently. They respond differently to the "Hierarchy of Needs. It is a challenging task. Rationalism has to be replaced by humanism. Leaders need

to develop closer personal equation between the leader and the men and amongst the men themselves.

Military values have to be inculcated in all the soldiers-especially in "high-tech" units wherein leadership acquires additional importance. The thrust of the leaders has to be towards professionalism rather than occupationalism.

It will be appropriate to quote a couplet here from the Atharva Veda (iii.30)

With your common desire
Strive to have one aim,
Be of one mind
Follow one leader.

A Leaner, Meaner, Army

MAJOR GAUTAM DAS, THE 11TH GORKHA RIFLES

INTRODUCTION

AS our Army moves towards the 1990's it would be worthwhile to take a look at ourselves and decide whether we are as effective as we would like to be, or do we need to be a little quicker, a little more flexible operationally, more functionally integrated and a lot more spirited? Many of us would agree that to survive and win in the coming decades, we would need to be a little brighter and smarter, and definitely leaner and meaner.

This article is about how we can transform ourselves into that leaner, meaner army, almost painlessly, but perhaps with the shedding of a few tears. The basic approach is that of suggesting a package of organisational measures designed to permit the creation of the kind of army we would like to be.

MORE BANG FOR THE BUCK

Luckily, the need for modern, 'state-of-the-art', equipment is realised by our defence services, our government and our people, so that we are constantly improving our capabilities. The following few points are worth re-iterating nevertheless :—

- (a) We must produce, or acquire, the most cost-effective armament and equipment. Such equipment should be rugged, simple to operate and maintain, but effective.
- (b) Along with armoured vehicles of all kinds, we also need more load carriers, both armoured and soft skinned, for troops and loads, to achieve greater mobility.
- (c) There should be maximum spare parts interchange-ability, not only within the army, but throughout the defence services and para military organisations.
- (d) Scales and types of equipment need not be the same for 'holding' and for "counter-strike/strike" formations. More modern

and expensive equipment should be authorised at lower scales to defensive formations, and should be compensated by larger numbers of cheaper, simpler equipment.

The high cost of modern armament and equipment may force us to accept lower manpower levels in order to remain within budgeted defence expenditures. We should now, therefore, begin to think of fresh operational techniques and organisations using modern weapons systems and less, but high quality, manpower. Re-organisation to achieve such a leaner, lower manpower army, can then become the next step.

OPERATIONAL AND LOGISTICAL HOMOGENEITY

The complexities of modern warfare slow down decision making, passage of orders and speed of reaction. This means that the side with the most homogenous force and the simplest command and control system can react faster and function more efficiently. We must consciously strive to attain this organisational edge over our potential adversaries, even though it is a difficult task, since the same complexities of war and organisation affect us equally. It will require considerable forethought and a willingness to alter tactical and organisational concepts so far held dear. For example, all elements of the plains combined-arms-team should be able to move together, across the same terrain, at the same speed, being refuelled by the same fuel and being easily maintained by the same workshop. Such a requirement dictates homogeneity of equipment to a great extent. To continue the same example, logically, units of the mechanised forces should function only on one 'A' vehicle chassis, that of the main battle tank (MBT), with infantry combat vehicles (ICV's), armoured personnel carriers (APC's) and self-propelled artillery, (both medium-calibre field guns and air-defence multi-barrel mounts), all using the same basic chassis and drive-train. Such equipment can certainly be designed, and we have the design, production and testing facilities in-country. All we need now is the will.

Logistically, homogeneity would dictate a large fleet of just one major type of load-carrier in the plains, and a separate type for the mountains. These could be a four or five-tonner for the plains, with good cross-country capability, possibly achieved through a 3-axle configuration, with a 2½—or 3—tonner for the mountains. In the plains, the load-carrier should ideally have the same cross-country capability as the mechanised forces, while at the same time being suitable for long-distance road movement.

The Armoured Corps Redefined In the interest of efficiency, the Armoured Corps should now comprise both the tanks and our specialist mechanized infantry. Enough has been written in our country on the advisability of permanently-organized combat groups and even combat team, so that it needs no reiteration. This should be carried to its logical conclusion, with the merger of the respective Records Offices and PAO (OR). Two more measures would further increase efficiency and help the process of homogenization. These are :—

- (a) The 'new' Armoured Corps should induct only shorter men into its ranks, for ease of functioning in cramped spaces and greater personal comfort, thus leading to increased effectiveness and endurance. This is an eminently sensible practice which is followed by the Russian Army. An upper height limit of 5 feet 6 inches could be imposed for new recruits
- (b) With the expansion of the tank arm, the proliferation of unit cap badges is leading to diffusion of 'tank corps' identity. It would make sense to have one cap badge for the entire Armoured Corps, leaving tank unit and mechanized infantry distinctions to belt badges and collar insignia. This measure would undoubtedly foster a greater degree of "esprit-de-corps" than a plethora of badges.

TRAINING EQUIPMENT AND ORGANISATION

A major constraint in the training of mechanized forces in particular is the need to conserve expensive equipment which has a rather limited life when used under field conditions. This has led to mileage restrictions, which prevent adequate field training being imparted in mobile operations. This is a serious drawback in training for war and needs to be overcome. A solution can, however, be found in the not-so-distant future when the equipment position improves slightly. Training units of mechanized forces holding somewhat older equipment can be formed and located at major training areas, and used in rotation by various units till the equipment is worn out. A bare minimum holding and maintenance staff can be authorised on the establishment of such units and far less stringent equipment inspection standards laid down. The new equipment held by operational units need only be used for field firing and minimal, localized, troop-level training. Such a system will give us the double advantage of more reliable (because sparingly used) frontline equipment and better-trained units.

INFANTRY ORGANISATION

The ground-holding capability and versatility of infantry is going to ensure its continued importance well into the foreseeable future. Thus the bulk of the combat strength of our army is going to remain the infantry. However, a fundamental question that needs to be addressed now is as to how we intend to apply this infantry power in our tactical thinking: whether as a number of companies or as a number of battalions. That is to say, is it the number of companies that matter or is it the number of battalions? There is no doubt that it is the company which is the primary group of individual identification, comradeship and *esprit-de-corps* as far as the men are concerned. What is necessary is the identification, at the tactical thinking level, of the basic infantry tactical building-block. If it is the company, then we should opt for an organisation that given the maximum possible bayonet strength to the companies, if it is the battalion, then we should organize our infantry into the maximum possible number of battalions, perhaps of only three companies each. The choices are tabulated below, in simplified form, for ease of comparison :—

Company as Basic

Solution : 4 rifle companies per battalion, strength of rifle company maximised by reducing size of HQ Company and battalion HQ administrative staff.

Implications : Increased control by, and increased administrative responsibility of, brigade HQ; reduced independence of battalion commander.

Battalion as Basic

Solution : 3 rifle companies per battalion, with a somewhat reduced battalion HQ. Creation of a 12—battalion infantry division with practically the same total manpower as before.

Implications : More manoeuvre units available to the divisional commander; increased tactical alternatives. An additional brigade can be formed, or an APC-borne battalion, a lorried battalion and a reconnaissance and support battalion each.

Thinking ahead, in terms of tactical nuclear environment, would it be better to think in terms of more companies for defensive operations, and more, but smaller, battalions for offensive operations? Does that mean different infantry organisations for 'holding' and 'strike' formations? The author is personally not in favour of the number of companies differing in regular infantry battalions operating under

different formations, as that would mean restricting their interchangeability, or recurring re-organisation of the companies, both of which are undesirable. Instead does such a requirement not suggest the creation of more para military infantry or regional force infantry, with larger or more companies, for deployment under 'holding' formations? The idea is definitely worth examining.

Role Interchangeability of Infantry Battalions Leaving aside the specialised mechanised infantry, most other regular infantry units should have interchangeable roles, these being Standard, Mountain, Lorried, APC—borne and Heliborne. All battalions should rotate through these roles, with rotations being of 5 years for APC—and Heliborne, $4\frac{1}{2}$ years for Lorried, 4 years for Standard and 2 to 3 years for Mountains, depending on altitude and climate of the location. Such a system will produce experienced and better-motivated battalions, and infantry officers with all-round experience.

'JOSH' AND THE 'JAWAN'

It is an irrefutable fact that the greater the "Jawani" the greater the "josh"; blood always runs hotter in youth. Personnel policies, however, designed to offer career stability, militate against this principle, and result in combat arms units having a higher average age profile than is ideal, especially at the lowest rungs of the ladder, where the maximum 'josh' is desirable. One suggested remedial measure is that sepoy, sowars, gunners transferred to the ASC, AOC, DSC, AMC, (Non-technical trades) and to the proposed training equipment units of the mechanised forces. This option should also be offered to Lance Naiks with over 10 years of service and 50% transferred out as suggested above. This will keep our combat arms units younger and more enthusiastic.

'HOLDING' AND 'COUNTER-STRIKE' FORMATION FOR THE MOUNTAINS

There is a need to reduce the number of regular infantry battalions and other units permanently deployed in a holding role in the mountains. This would reduce the number of tenures spent by large number of all ranks in inhospitable areas, thereby improving motivation and also increasing the attractiveness of the army. This can be done by designating separate 'holding' and 'counter-strike' formations, giving the 'holding' formations much larger areas of responsibility and pulling out the 'counter strike' formations to lower, more congenial locations. More Scouts and Assam Rifles-type of units can be raised, through primarily regional or local recruitment, to operate under the

'holding' formations which would now be stretched thin on the ground. Such units could be tasked with border security and patrolling, civic action and a covering troops and 'stay-behind' role in war. They would preferably be rotated between 'hard' and 'soft' areas every 5 years to relieve boredom and maintain efficiency.

THE OFFICER—MAN RATIO AND EFFICIENCY

The German Wehrmacht of World War Two, widely acknowledged as the most efficient army of that war, went into war in 1939 with the officer percentage for the army as a whole at 2.86% i.e., an officer—OK—ratio of 1:34, and for the Field Army at 2.96%. These percentages dropped by 50% in front-line units by 1945, due to casualties, but without great loss of efficiency. (In spite of the casualties, the Germans did not compromise on officer quality for new commissions). By comparison, our infantry battalions have an authorised officer percentage (including JCOs) of something like 7.3%, or one officer or JCO for every 14 men. This high percentage does not appear to dramatically improve our efficiency, however. This situation certainly leaves very little scope for functioning at the NCO level and thus provides them no opportunities to grow in their jobs, apart from deadening initiative and providing no job satisfaction. As a remedial measure, the officer percentage can be reduced, without impairing efficiency, by taking the following steps:

- (a) Reducing the establishment of commissioned officers while leaving that of JCOs as it is.
- (b) Changing the rules so that JCOs are officially made responsible for more routine tasks, for example, paying officers at pay parades. (Inspectors and sub-inspectors of the police, from the same social background, have greater responsibility, why not our JCOs ?)
- (c) As already suggested, 'holding' and 'strike' formations should have separate establishments, with a lower scale of officer authorisation for the 'holding' formation.

BETTER PROMOTION PROSPECTS AT ALL LEVELS

Better promotion prospects at all levels make for a better quality of intake, which improves efficiency and capability in the long term. The officers' prospects improve if less officers of lower rank are required, thereby reducing the pyramidal structure of the officer-cadre-organisation. In fact, less officers, with more responsibility and

perks, may well improve the quality of the officer-intake. For the enlisted men, more officer and JCO intake avenues would improve prospects. In addition to the Army Cadet college and Officers' Training School entries, the Special List and Regimental Commissioners' are important and their scope should be enhanced. A direct JCO intake for Intermediates should also be initiated, with promotion prospects upto Major or Lieutenant-Colonel, the rank of Naib-Subedar being granted after a period of 1½ years training and 1½ year's probation in the rank of Havildar. Better career prospects for all will mean greater motivation and will also attract better quality personnel at both officer and enlisted level.

NURTURING INITIATIVE

A lower officer percentage, greater responsibility at all levels and concomitant job satisfaction will, of themselves, increase the initiative taken by junior officers, JCOs and NCOs, but this initiative needs to be nurtured and fostered like the rare and delicate flower it is. Overdoses of "bull" and "parade ground-ism" in routine activities kill all spirit and initiative, developing instead the mindless automation kind of "perfect" soldier we do not need on the possible battle field of the future. Over-regimentation will have to be severely curbed if we are to develop initiative as an army and, also, in the long run, attract the right kind of young men to both officer and enlisted ranks. Only NCOs, JCOs and young officers with alert minds and who are full of initiative will be able to react to changing situations and seize opportunities in the fast-moving wars of the future, instead of hesitating and waiting for orders.

FACILITIES AND PERKS

Facilities and perks certainly add something to the Army's morale and élan. Small expenditures at the national level could mean a lot to the soldier's self-esteem and thereby his effectiveness. A few small examples will serve to illustrate the point :

- (a) Free rum to the men should be restored, purely as a small perk, as it has become a traditional status-symbol, especially in the rural areas from where our men come. Its importance today is more as a status symbol and hence its loss is keenly felt.
- (b) All officers should travel for official duties in light vehicles such as jeeps, Jongs or cars, in order to enhance their 'Officer' image—to the men they have to command, to the public, and to themselves.

(c) Peace-station facilities should be made available to 'holding' formations in the plains, whereas 'strike' formations in the plains, irrespective of location, should be considered 'hardships' tenures for the personnel posted to them, owing to the nature of their working lives. Unit and personnel rotations should be ordered taking these factors also into account.

RECRUITMENT, CLASS COMPOSITION AND THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM

Recruitment. The recruitment system needs to be improved in certain respects so that it does not produce the number of square pegs in round holes that it routinely does. Such personnel are frustrated, yet the system and their domestic compulsions do not permit them to change their trades or leave the army. Thus they become demotivators for all around them. Who has not seen cases such as a matriculate Brahmin enrolled as a sweeper, or a matriculate Rajput stuck in the trade of a Mess Waiter in infantry battalions, situations where these individuals would have done well in their own right as infantry soldiers. All candidates for recruitment should be told, after initial selection, what vacancies are available and what they are being enrolled as. The recruiting organisation should not be as callous, impersonal and bureaucratic as it is, for the sake of our own Army and Navy.

Class Composition. While class and caste *do* possibly matter, as shown in the examples of personnel mismanagement above, the new combinations of fixed-class composition infantry units are a welcome move. Another progressive step would be the creation of units having regional admixtures, with or without laid down class or caste percentages, but with sub-units also manned as an admixture rather than on a one class basis. Some of the battalions of one of our infantry regiments are already so organised. At least one infantry regiment, with all its battalions, should also be organised on an all—India, all-classes admixture basis and given a suitably evocative title, such as the Azad Hind Regiment, for example. The experience will teach us a lot for the future.

The Regimental System. One of the major advantages of the infantry regimental system is that it provides a more personnel, or human, touch to personnel management. With most personnel decisions decentralised to the battalion level. Regimental Centres and Record Offices are also regarded as 'ours', rather than as some cold, distant, bureaucratic organisation. The tendency to very large regiments, with number of battalions running into the twenties, is gradually negating the advantages of the system. To retain the very real

benefits of the system, which greatly improves morale, cohesiveness under battle conditions, and motivation, an upper size limit should be laid down and the excess battalions grouped into new regiments.

THE FINISHING TOUCHES

With the basic infrastructure somewhat altered, it will be possible finally to create the leaner, meaner army through fine tuning. A final reorganisation will make the army leaner, while realistic training, improved esprit-de-corps and motivation will create an army with elan, thus sharpening the edge of the sword. But how should this 'fine tuning' be conducted, and what will need adjustment at that stage? The few points below should be the guide :—

(a) *Final Reorganisation.*

(i) All organisations should be re-examined in order to improve the teeth-to-tail ratio, but modifications should not sacrifice functional efficiency.

(ii) Staff procedures and channels should be critically examined and administrative reforms implemented to drastically cut down infructuous paperwork and the bureaucratic 'post office' tendency.

(b) *Training and Motivation.* The unhealthy phenomenon of "Professionalism" having synonymous with "Career—Consciousness" has to be rooted out. This can only happen when dedication to the profession of arms and patriotism gain the upper hand—this itself being dependent on the encouragement of such values. The old dictum that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy", needs to be heeded by senior commanders, so that units and subunits can train hard, seriously and realistically, and then relax for a while. Regimental life has to be made physically hard, but also good fun, for all its members.

CONCLUSION

As can be seen, producing the leaner, meaner army is going to be no easy matter. Mere cosmetic organisational changes are not going to transform us overnight. Equipment, tactics, organisations, rules regulations and organisational culture will all have to change gradually and simultaneously before we can become what we would like to be. It is hoped that this article will provide a few guidelines to at least begin the thought—process.

An Introduction to Tactical Guided Missiles : The new Swords of War

MAJ GEN VK MADHOK

MISSILES are now very much regarded as part of weapon systems all over the world. In the overall concept these systems include surveillance, interception by aircraft and last ditch missile defence. In countries where these systems have been properly developed, besides assured defence and deterrence, missiles also provide means of instant retaliation. In such countries with advanced technology, a powerful strategic missile attack capability in the shape of ICBMs (inter continental ballistic missiles) and a well organised active and passive missile defence 'back up' are available to support their military systems. The problem of active defence to intercept and destroy incoming missiles has however not yet been resolved, though passive defence measures to minimize damage against a missile attack are within the reach of all countries.

Missiles can be conveniently grouped into strategic (of the ICBM type), tactical and conventional. The conventional types such as the anti-tank or air defence missiles with ranges from 2000-3000 meters or even upto 4-5 miles are already in service with practically all armies in SE Asia. It is the tactical guided missiles with ranges from 30-40 miles or even upto 100 miles or so in exceptional cases for which a race would ensue in the third world countries once they acquire guidance techniques which is their major handicap to-day. The definition is of course elastic and could be varied to suit circumstances.

The Falkland Island's war in May 82 and the Gulf of Sidra incident between the Americans and Libya in March 86 have under-scored the value of tactical guided missiles. The American claim therefore, that they could have put entire Libya out of action within 48 hours and neutralised the ability of its 500 or so combat aircraft to take off from airfields cannot be treated as a figment of imagination. Two of the most important features of a missile are the increased range it offers to the land forces, Navy or any other platform from which it is fired and the accuracy to kill a target.

Interestingly, the Germans were the first nation to experiment with missiles. Their V2 rocket produced in 1944 had a range of 200

miles and could deliver a ton of high explosive in 5 minutes over that distance, a no mean achievement at that time. It was followed with V1 which could carry a similar quantity of war-head at about 400 miles per hour upto a maximum distance of 160 miles. It weighed $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons compared to 14 tons (V2). Germany launched nearly 5000 of these on London alone, resulting in 5500 deaths and destruction of 2300 buildings. Absence of a dependable guidance system was, however, Germany's major shortcoming in the development of missiles, otherwise the history might have been different! It is stated that the greatest concentration of guided missile technology was found in the ravaged German laboratories at the end of World War II. The Allies made full use of this knowledge and to-day they have achieved sophisticated guidance techniques which were missing for V1 and V2 rockets.

Recently, at the Asian Aerospace 86 exhibition in Singapore, China made its debut in precision guided weapons with a selection of missile systems to include HQ-2J ground to air missile system, C-801 multi purpose coastal defence missile and HN5, a portable shoulder fired anti-aircraft missile. We learn that the Mujahdeen in Afghanistan are now equipped with American shoulder fired, portable super-sonic 'Stringer' against Russian helicopters. Brazil is exporting its latest Astros-11, surface to surface missile system to the middle eastern countries. It is reported that a Soviet battlefield missile brigade is likely to be based in Poland and would possibly be armed with SS 23 (range 600 miles) as a possible replacement of 'Scud' missiles. Also, missiles are cheaper. Hyper-velocity missiles being developed now in the USA for all the three services it is stated, would cost 1/10th of the cost of their conventional weapons. The missile scenario reflects an endless plethora of myriad developments and possibilities.

To-day all over the world, all services employ missiles. In another war, everyone in and out of uniform will be affected by them. No matter where the soldier, airman or the sailor is working, his introduction to guided missiles in future is inevitable. Most combat missions in an air warfare are likely to be taken over by missiles. These may not replace the aircraft and would be a step towards evolution of weapons. The guided missile is already the basic weapon of all Navies in the world. In fact, it is stated that a target, anywhere on earth, can be reached by a missile with a range of 1700 nautical miles which has a ship as its launcher. As to whether guided missiles have or will bring 'Push button' warfare nearer and make other weapons obsolete at least to a degree, is a matter with which the scientists in the West are seized. This ultimate stage is however far off and may be only when some substantial achievements have been made in the

Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) or star wars by the Americans in the next decade that it might be possible to view this more objectively.

We are in a period of transition and tactical guided missiles are likely to be forced as the ultimate part of weapons race in the continent. Implications regarding employment of such weapons are indeed profound. As such the need to understand the basic missile technology, defence against missiles and of course the way increased induction of missiles could influence the three services is essential.

The simplest definition of a missile appears to be that it is a robot device, which can be directed to a target by commands originating from outside the weapon or instruments built into it. It should be able to change its course to meet the evasive factor in a target—when necessary. Whatever its purpose, a missile consists of an airframe—with or without wings and fins, housing and a motor, control and guidance systems and a war-head. The main innovation in missile technology has been the Guidance system or "The Missile brain" designed to think 10,000 times faster than the human brain. This ensures that a missile hits its target. These vary from the simplest wire guidance to the more sophisticated ones like Radio command, Beam riding, semi-active homing, Active homing, Inertial guidance and Radar tracking. Other equipment like the accumulators, electric motors, switches, propulsion systems and aerodynamics are not new. But the 'Guidance' technique is the one which is not available to the third world countries. As regards the warhead, be it a nuclear explosive, chemicals, high explosive, instruments, cargo or a human being, the contents of this relatively tiny compartment in the forward tip of the missile is the whole reason for the existence of a missile. A missile has to move through four basic mediums i.e. Air, Water, Space and Earth. These affect the three important fields of Aerodynamics, Guidance and Propulsion systems of a missile differently. To correct the unpredictable variations while travelling through a medium, a self correcting guidance mechanism is essential—without which a missile would be worthless. These and all components of a missile system accordingly, must not only be immediately reliable but compatible.

Missiles to-day are capable of travelling at very high speeds. One hears of sonic (speed of sound), supersonic, Mach no, Hypersonic (10 times the speed of sound) or transonic. Missile data is however scanty, as there is no pilot to read instruments or the return of craft to the base for another study. Command posts directing guided missiles need not be restricted to the ground but may be carried in ships or aircraft and control can be handed over from one post to

another during the flight. A missile capable of catching and destroying another missile will be larger, faster, longer ranging with a more sensorial control system and responsibility.

So far as missile defence is concerned, as mentioned earlier, the early warning radar, radar interrogation, outer bases for interceptor aircraft and the last ditch surface to air missiles need to be taken into account as part of the entire system. The threat from missiles can be tremendous unless the defensive measures to intercept or destroy these can be as revolutionary. In case of high density population areas or key industrial centres which are within the striking range of missiles, a defender can be seriously handicapped. Further, an adversary can be powerless if an attack comes from supersonic missiles instead of bombers.

To break the stalemate in the Iran-Iraq war, the employment of tactical guided missiles was thought of by both sides. Through mid 1985, six large explosion rocked the cities as a result of surface to surface missile attacks. This has obvious psychological and political implications as such missile attacks are of far serious a nature than an artillery bombardment. Moreover, as a clear weather radar system cannot detect an all weather missile, a defender's problem is aggravated. Besides, it is easier to improve a missile than missile defence as missiles are as capable of false turns to baffle the fire control systems or computers designed to determine the aiming point. So far as the anti-missile defence at sea is concerned, a ship's defence starts at the greatest permissible distance in the area defence envelope. Modern warships therefore have long, medium and short range defence weapon systems which include weapons, electronic counter measures, decoys, chaffs and flares. The key factor here being to engage the weapon platform carrying missiles well away from a ship. The defence nearer to ship favours gun systems and depends on the quality of detection, weapon control system and a perfect match to the weapons. Gun systems like USA's 'Phalanx', Spain's 'Meroko', Italy's 'Sea Guard', Netherland's 'Goal Keeper', all of which have been designed to destroy missiles from 10,000 to 500 yards, using huge quantity of shells.

A variety of anti-ship missiles which can be launched from various platforms have been produced. Very high flying missiles launched from 200 miles or so may approach from an altitude of 100,000 feet at a speed of Mach 2 or more. Diving missiles can also be launched from aircraft or helicopters. Sea skimming missiles of the Exocet type or 'Harpoon' with a curved vertical terminal trajectory at a speed of Mach 1 are already in service. The damage which can be brought

about by missiles fired from different platforms, arriving from different directions, at the same time and at short intervals can be devastating.

Missiles need complex logistic support because of the need of careful handling, maintenance, assembling and movement. This is inescapable because of the need to ensure the reliability of hundreds of components of a missile. With a shift to a missile environment, a number of effects could take place, in our case some of which would be as follows :—

- (a) As artillery range is limited along with its suspected accuracy as well as lethality at long ranges, missiles with their accuracy and lethality would enable a target to be hit at 40-50 miles or even upto 100 miles. These will thus extend the striking power of a ship or submarine or an Army. As a result of the increased range, targets which fall in the category of strategic targets would be termed as tactical targets and engaged as such. To that extent, the land combat zone will be greatly deepened.
- (b) A combination of air mobility and guided missile firepower at increased range would give a land Army, a capability several times that of many Armies in the second world war. This outcome is pregnant with possibilities of diverse concepts,
- (c) In view of a sudden missile threat as part of passive defence, increased dispersion of troops and logistic installations is a mandatory requirement. As a corollary to this, massing of troops would need to be done secretly, quickly followed with rapid dispersal.
- (d) In spite of bad weather, in view of all weather missile ability, greater continuity of ground action would be possible. Again, as guided missiles are all weather, ground forces as such would no longer be entirely dependent on aircraft for area neutralisation.
- (e) As mentioned before, military operations and guided missiles are becoming increasingly dependent on logistic support thereby tremendously increasing the importance of communications and sources of supply. In fact, it may be necessary to have a separate logistic corps with specialists to support missile systems as well as other requirements within the Army itself.
- (f) Need for higher technical standards and quality as well as training of individual man would increase.

CONCLUSION

While the defence services would slowly get drawn into a guided missile environment, it is important that the civil population equally understands the implications of guided missile warfare. A large number of oil installations, key industrial centres, harbours, populated cities and isolated islands might well be within easy reach of missiles. And therefore, a civilian whether in Delhi, Madras or Bombay would be as vulnerable as the soldier in the front line. Passive civil defence measures to that extent would need deliberation and much greater involvement of civil population. A missile environment has also implications for each service. Creation of a logistic corps within the Army or at the Ministry of defence level or a Missile command to handle missile warfare are some of the possibilities which could take concrete shape in the time to come.

The purpose of this article is not to suggest as to which service tactical guided missiles should belong to but to propose that developments in tactical guided missiles would reshape tactical doctrine and military organisations and in due course these will become the new swords of war in our environment also.

The Punjabis in the British Army —Some Aspects of “Loyalty”

SAHDEV VOHRA

IT is a paradox that the British East India Company conquered India with the help of Indian troops. The Bengal Army recruited from “Poorbees”, men of Bihar and Oudh, was the main instrument forged by the Company for their conquest in the north right up to the victory over the Sikhs and the annexation of the Punjab from 1846-1849. This instrument was thereafter discarded following upon what has been called by the British, “the Sepoy Revolt of 1857” and the ‘Purabeeas’ banned from recruitment to the British army. Instead, the Punjabis replaced them as the main source for manning the British armies in India. They were called the martial classes, the Sikhs, Pathans, Dogras, “Haryanwis”, and the Muslim jats, and lauded in and out of season for their “loyalty” to the British rulers. But it is by no means clear that the British were assured of their loyalty. In fact, on several occasions the British had to face their open opposition. It would also appear that the British secret service was entrusted with the duty of watching for signs of disaffection and opposition to British rule before it erupted. The British landed them for the very quality that they wished to inculcate, namely, “loyalty” to stand by the foreign rulers. It is the purpose of this article to study how for the British succeeded in their aim and how they went about it.

After the Sikh wars, the disbanded Sikh army roamed the country sick and created a law and order problem. A decision was taken by the British rulers to recruit them in a new type of army formation based on the model of irregular troops recently raised by General Jacob in Sind after its annexation. They were needed in the first instance to restore law and order and to perform duties of internal security. Another urgent task was to keep the Pathan tribes under control, after the disappearance of the Sikh rule over them. The Corps of Guides were the first ones to be raised and enlisted Sikhs and Pathans. At the very beginning, the Guides proved their usefulness by rescuing the British garrison in Multan after the first Sikh War. A marked feature of the Guides units was personal loyalty to the commanding officer. They were to play an outstanding role in the British seige of Delhi in 1857.

In recruiting the Sikhs, the British blundered at first by requiring that they should shave off the beard and cut the long hair. This total ignorance about the religious aspect of the beard and the long hair meant that they failed in the policy of recruiting Sikhs. Brigadier Hodson who had earlier served as the head of a Sikh regiment was asked to submit a report on the question and he submitted a memorandum in 1850. He pointed out the religious significance of the keeping of beard and long hair by a Sikh and explained that the 'Paol' or religious pledge of the Sikh fraternity (Sangat) should on no account be interfered with. Defending the Sikh soldiery he stated, "Drunkenness and opium-eating are not Sikh vices, but vicious habits picked up by the old Khalsa Singh".¹ Hodson advised that the "*musbee*" Sikhs and the so-called low and inferior castes were to be excluded from recruitment among them he mentions "Bunneahs and Khatri". For maintaining the Sikh identity he advised, "If they re-entered the pale of strict Hinduism, their value as a foreign body, and a moral counterpoise would be diminished. Should the Sikhs abandon social peculiarities of their race, the Sikh sinks into a low-caste, shorn of his best attributes. His political worth as a foreign military exotic is lost."

The Akalis were a key part of the infantry under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Lepel Griffin who was chief secretary in the British administration in the Punjab has in his book "Ranjit Singh" published in 1892 stated that they were "the only infantry soldiers who in the old Khalsa days enjoyed any consideration... they were supposed by the Sikhs to possess a semi-sacred character... and their reckless valour turned many a wavering fight into victory".@

As recommended by Hodson, the first recruitment of Sikhs was limited to two hundred each of the seventy four battalions, that is, 14800 in all. Hodson also advised against recruitment of Punjabi Mussulmans, who later formed an important element of Punjabis in the British army. His reasoning was that "The Punjabee Mohammedan from moral causes, generally speaking, does not make a good soldier. He is the helot of the Punaub and some years will elapse before, raised in his own self-esteem, he becomes a desirous class to recruit from". In 1846 when recruiting parties had gone into the Kangra Hills they had scarcely picked up a recruit "though thousands of able-bodied, high-spirited Rajputs were looking for service. Many

—Steinbach, a British officer who served in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, called the Akali irregular troops undisciplined whom even the Maharaja could not control, and stated they were given to looting and plunder. (2)

have since entered the Punjab Regiment and the Frontier Brigade," stated the Board of Administration of the Punjab in December 1850.¹ The Board reported further about Haryana area that, "Colonel Grant when commanding the Hurreana Light Infantry had the utmost difficulty to break through the old prevailing custom,"¹ of recruiting only the men of Oudh in the Bengal army.

Apart from Dogras, and Haryana Hindus, raisings had commenced among the Pathans first in the Guides units and then more widely in the Punjab frontier force raised in 1849, when it was called the Punjab Irregular Force. The *principal* task of this force was guarding the 997 miles of the Punjab frontier. In addition to these new formations, there were the old regular troops of the Bengal Army and wholly British units whose main garrison was at Peshawar. By 1852 the Punjab army command was the largest and most important. At the time of the revolt of 1857, there were 11,000 British troops at Peshawar and 36,000 sepoys of the Bengal Army all over the province. The Punjab Frontier Force had risen to 14,000—chiefly border tribesmen. The Hodson memorandum had been accepted by Dalhousie, the Governor General, for immediate execution. He had remarked (or rather, it was noted on his behalf) that "he attached the greatest importance to the Sikhs of the Manjha area". The Sikhs disbanded from their own army in 1849 were now successfully recruited in large numbers.

Seeing the Bengal army in revolt, the decision was taken to disarm all Hindu sepoys of the Bengal army. John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the province, was proud of the work of pacification that the British had accomplished and wrote about "all that has been done, when I recall the state of the country before the annexation and the marvellous change that has come over it in the course of a few years."³ At Peshawar, Edwardes "descended" on the sepoy regiments and disarmed "as many as he could lay his hands on".⁴ He proposed to Lawrence the formation of "a moveable column of two European and two "Piffer" (Punjab Frontier Force) regiments to "punch the head of army station that says knife." At Meean Mir Cantonment of Lahore, Montgomery had also moved fast on the receipt of news of mutiny at Meerut and in May disbanded the sepoy regiments there. There had been sepoy revolts at other places in the Punjab and John Lawrence issued a proclamation on June 1 to the "Purabeeas" in the Punjab saying, "You will have heard that many sepoys and sawars of the Bengal Army have proved faithless to their salt at Meerut, at Delhi, and at Ferozepur. The British government would never lack for native soldiers. In a month it might raise 50,000

in the Punjab alone. If the Poorbea sepoy neglect the present day, it (the day) will never return." He added, "It was only the other day that the Jumme mosqua at Lahore which the Sikhs had converted into a magazine was restored to the Mohammadans".⁵ In June Brigadier Cotton reported from Mardan that "with the exception of Sikh soldiers (one hundred) the 55th Regiment Native Infantry had mutinied and were disarmed". Lawrence reported on the 4th that "arms be restored to such men of the Sikh, PM or Hill races belonging to the disarmed regiments who have behaved well and they be separated from their comrades".

The idea of a movable column advancing to Delhi for its relief was now put into practice, the 'Guides' playing a notable part and being expended quickly under Nicholson who was to lead the columns. However, John Lawrence had first only limited success in raising Sikh troops for the column. Lt General Innes in his book 'Sir Henry Lawrence' published in 1898 writes. "On comparing the action of the Sikh community in the Cis-Satluj states ... it will be seen that... under the specific guidance of orders of their chiefs (they) ... furnished valuable contingents and gave important aid throughout the seige. In the Jalandhar doab also, the Kapurthala raja held the district for the government; but no other trans-Satluj Sikhs thus voluntarily came forward and when at length John Lawrence called the Sikh chiefs on July 23 to furnish men for the war,..... no levies of real Sikhs under their own leaders ever seem to have joined at all, though a body of gunners and sappers was organised, and a large number of muzhabis—low-caste Sikhs—were raised from among the casual workmen by the irrigation engineers and converted into sappers and miners for employment at Delhi. After the capture of Delhi the trans-Satluj Sikhs came forward and enlisted in thousands raising the strength of the Punjab troops, it is said up to some 70,000 men".

Nicholson's moving column was engaged at first in quelling the sepoy revolts at Phillaur and Amritsar and the revolt of a body of cavalry at Sialkot. The column also fought mutineers at Gurdaspur on July 12 before it could move towards Delhi by the end of the month.

After 1857, the Punjab Command was to protect the Indian sub-continent against any advance from Central Asia, and to quell the attacks of the Pakhtun tribes of the North-Western frontier. The Amir of Afghanistan made no pretence of controlling these border tribes although when it suited him or the tribes they made common cause against the British. The British policy towards these tribes wavered—

Lawrence and his school wanted to leave them alone, and the label 'masterly inactivity' was stuck to them although the policy was anything but masterful. The other view, called the 'forward school' would have liked to occupy the tribal areas and administer them, but on the whole this was found to be unworkable, given the intractable nature of the tribes and of the areas that they inhabited. Each tribe ruled itself and was subject to no common control. All the British could do was to post strong detachments at key points like mairan to the north of Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu to the south, and further south in the Derajat areas, and at Quetta in Baluchistan. An incident that gave a rude shock to the myth of loyalty took place in the Derajat area when Sikh troops of the 10th Punjab regiment seized the magazine depot "Kot" in 1858 at Dera Ismail Khan. Brigadier Chamberlain could not decide what action to take against the Sikh troops involved and wrote on September 1, 1858, "I fear the majority of the Sikhs of the 10th Punjab Infantry have been more or less so (infected). "In place of this (the spirit in May 1857) there is now a spirit of restlessness, of eager desire to know what is going on in Hindoostan and readiness to believe in any report to our prejudice; and we no longer command the sympathy of the Sikhs as a body... and were it not for the counterpoise afforded by the Trans-Indus and Punjabi Muslims and other classes which help to constitute these corps, and numerous levies which help to hold the frontier", there would have been a greater sense of alarm.

The Punjab government were sufficiently alarmed to consult the Sikh chiefs and after consulting the Sikh rajahs of the Phulkian states wrote to the Government of India on 8th September, "The opinions of the great (Sikh) chiefs in the Cis-Satluj division (i.e., Patiala, Nabha and Jind)" were asked as the troops who had revolted were from the Malwa region. The Chief Commissioner of Ambala Division who was entrusted with the task of seeking their advice reported "The Maharaja of Patiala told (him) that the Punjabee troops should on no account exceed one-third of the whole of our native soldiers. The Raja of Jind was even more decided"⁶. The Punjab Government noted that out of upward of 51,000 Punjabi troops, less than 15,000 were Sikhs—and further that "probably all the purely Sikh soldiers do not exceed 22,000".⁶

While the Sikh revolt on the North West frontier subsided the tribesmen from time to time were up in arms against them. The *Amir* of Afghanistan was asked to agree to the Durand Line in 1893 to demarcate the Indo-Afghan border but he was not reconciled to it. In 1897 he took the title of "King of Islam" and pamphlets appeared

in the tribal of belt in favour of *Jehad*. Soon the area of the new Malkand Agency north of Peshawar was in turmoil "We had all the tribes from the northern border of Zhob upto Chitral against us, and what was worse, the tribes within our effective border in a state of disaffection"⁹ The Tirah campaign was a costly fiasco. In 1907 a realignment of the European balance of power led to a detente with Russia but the Amir of Afghanistan was not really in a position to control the tribesmen and the attacks of British positions continued.

At the same time, the British had to face the prospects of a revolt of the Punjabi troops in 1907. The sudden eruption of the anti-British riots over the Chenab Colony legislation and other related issues shook the British confidence not only against the civilian population but against the Punjabi troops also. Ajit Singh was the foremost speaker of anti-British rallies all over the Punjab and he was responsible for winning over the soldiers. A Special Police Report on Ajit Singh reads, "On 17th April (1907) Ajit Singh addressed a meeting of 2,000 persons at Bagh Lange Khan (in Multan). At the conclusion of the address of Ghasita Ram they (the crowd) 1700 persons of whom 200 were Sikh sepoys demanded to see Ajit Singh and they garlanded him with flowers".⁷

The well-known Minute of Denzil Ibbetson about the "*Nai-hawa*" in the Punjab which led him to arrest and report to Burma, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, notes, "and at a public meeting held at Ferozepur at which disaffection was openly preached, the men of the Sikh regiments stationed there were specially invited to attend, and several hundred of them acted upon the invitation. Ajit Singh's autobiographical account given in the above mentioned book, "*Buried Alive*" describes how at Rawalpindi, he addressed the crowd. He narrates, "The military was called out and the commander of the military asked us to disperse failing which he could order shooting. No body moved from his place and he ordered for shooting, but Indian soldiers instead of directing their guns at the public aimed them at their commandant and said if he gave a similar order again they would shoot him. Seeing this he asked the Indian soldiers to return to the Cantonment and himself also left with them. He goes on, "At Rawalpindi Indian military personnel wanted to wait upon Lala Lajpat Rai in deputation but he refused to receive them. Then the deputation waited on me and I explained to them their duty towards their countrymen and their country".

The recruitment of the various classes of the Punjabis was done by recruiting officers who specialised in working among particular

classes who visited the home grounds of these classes judging the timing and numbers available for recruitment. There were confidential handbooks written analysing the qualities of various subcastes and clans among them and the relevant considerations in respect of each class. Captain R.W. Falconer's "Handbook on Sikhs", was one such handbook. The conclusion from the British point of view is of interest, "Qualities useful for soldiering" it says, "pertain much more to districts than to tribes or religions".⁸ Lord Roberts who became commander-in-chief in 1895 terminated the system of three armies—the Bengal, the Bombay, and the Madras—which had still continued although it had long lost its relevance. He introduced four territorial commands. Kitchener carried the idea further into the concept of an Indian army, giving the regiments consecutive numbers and linked them together. More important, he divorced the army from purely internal peace-keeping, and organised and trained it for war. The army was divided into a northern and a southern command.

It was Kitchener's reorganisation which tendered possible the dispatch of Indian troops to the Western front in Europe so early at the beginning of the First World War. The Indian army was to be expanded from its strength of 1,50,000 to well over a million troops to fight for the British during this war, of which the Punjabis formed a prominent part. Non Punjabis fought equally well. The "Civil & Military Gazette of Lahore wrote on April 28, 1906, "In France we were always hearing of the Gaihwalis, in Mesopotamia, it is the Marathas". The Lieut-Governor Sir Michael O'Dwyer carried out a vigorous campaign of recruitment. There was strong resentment against forced recruitment and resulted in revolts in various units, a fact that was kept suppressed by the government to avoid any adverse impact on recruitment. The Punjabi immigrants in the USA and Canada had formed the *Ghadr party* and sent representatives to the Punjab to coordinate a civil revolt in the province with a mutiny in the army. The planned revolt was handicapped by the leaking of information about it, and by large-scale arrests of the Ghadr party and other leaders prior to the date fixed for the uprising.

There is not enough information about the uprising but it is known that some army units went ahead with the revolt in a number of Punjab regiments in military cantonments in India as well as in the Far East. The revolt took place on 21 February 1915 among the Punjabi troops at Ferozepur, Lahore and Rawalpindi. The rebellious regiments were disbanded and the leaders hanged or imprisoned. Among the hanged were 12 men of the 23rd Cavalry. In Singapore

Jamadar Chisti Khan, Jemadar Abdul Ghani and Subedar Daud Khan and 34 "other ranks" of the Punjab, MLI and the 36th Sikh battalion were executed on February 15, 1915, 41 "other ranks" were transported for life. Among the civilians: 42 leaders of the Ghadr party were hanged, 114 were transported to the Andaman Islands and another 93 sentenced to long term imprisonment. Full information has not yet been collected, but these details show that the revolt was a serious affair, and expression of resentment against the British.

The above narration will show how the people of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh who had contributed the main element of the Bengal Army before the revolt of 1857 were replaced by the Punjabis (and Gurkhas) after it as a punishment to the former. The myth about loyalty of the Punjabis to the British during the 1857 revolt has however to be taken with a grain of salt. The theory of martial classes was trotted out by the British to justify the barring of the men from the U.P. and Bihar from recruitment after 1857. The Punjabis saw army service mostly in the defence of the North-West frontier against the apprehended Russian advance and the Pakhtun tribesmen. The war of 1914-18 prompted the enforced recruitment to fight in Europe and the Middle East, led to the revolt of Punjabi troops and civilians in 1915 under the leadership of the *Ghadr* party. Details of the revolt have still not been fully brought to light.

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The Mazhbi Sikh Soldier*

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THE history of the Mazhbi Sikh Soldier is a saga of his deeds of valour and sacrifice his service and suffering for the cause of religion and his ceaseless struggle to attain for himself a status of respectability in a society afflicted with the cancerous growth of caste consciousness.

The origin and growth of the Mazhbi Sikh community is an astounding phenomenon of Indian society. The Mazhbis were the Chuhbras (scavengers) and the Chamars (leather workers) of the undivided Punjab and as such stood at the lowest rung of the social ladder. The treatment meted out to them was of such cruelty and night-marish horror that poetry fled at it while sensitivity got stunned and petrified. They were admitted into the faith of the Khalsa following a dramatic and historic event in Sikh history¹. They were brave fighters and formed an integral part of the Khalsa army of Guru Gobind Singh. When Sikhism was fighting for its survival, these out-castes were caught up in the wave of chivari and "gentled their condition"; but as soon as the Khalsa were dominant in the Punjab, the Mazhbis found, to their dismay, that the equality their religion promised existed only in theory rather than in practice. They were forced to occupy much the same position among the Jat and Khatri descended Sikhs as their ancestors, the sweepers, enjoyed amongst Hindus. They were debarred from all privileges and were at one time even excluded from the Army. The Mazhbis were patronised by Ranjit Singh who tried to recruit them for the Khalsa army. High caste community objected to their integration into the Khalsa and were formed into separate companies, one attached to each high caste battalion.

The revival of caste consciousness in the Khalsa dealt a death blow to the Mazhbis' prestige and respectability and his services to the

* The present article is an abstract of the doctoral thesis entitled "History of the Sikh Light Infantry: 1914-1945" which has earned Major DB Sharma a Ph D in History from Meerut University Meerut.

1. The ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, had been slaughtered by Aurangzeb in 1675. His quartered body was snatched from a Muslim mob in Delhi's Chandni Chowk by three Chuhbras and carried it back to Tegh Bahadur's son, the great Guru Gobind Singh. As a reward for their effort, the sweepers were admitted to the Khalsa and bestowed with the title, "Mazhbi", the faithful.

Panth were either forgotten or relegated to an inferior position. Without their own organisation and without their own leader, they became rudderless and cogs in the machine. In their desperate struggle for identity and social recognition, the Mazhbis resorted to the 'rude virtues'² of dacoity and robbery which canker was cut out by the British with a diplomatic hand.

The British too were conscious of the caste system then prevalent among the Sikhs. Whereas the Jat Sikhs were recruited in the ranks of Bengal Army, the Mazhbis were engaged only as labourers to work on the Bari Doab Canal at Madhopore and the Grand Trunk Road between Nowshera and Peshawar. The Mazhbi community was purposely excluded, with the avowed aim of making the army "an honourable profession".³

The revolt of 1857 compelled the British to give them an opening, which helped partially to re-establish their honour and self esteem. First enlisted in 1857, for the siege work at Delhi, these raw recruits fought like real veterans. During the siege, their courage amounted to utter recklessness of life. John Lawrence⁴ who was at one time reluctant to recruit them wrote of the deed of blowing in of the Kashmiri Gate as one of "deliberate and sustained courage, as noble as any that ever graced the annals of war".

Thenceforth, the Mazhbi Sikh soldier took part in nearly every military expedition from the Frontier campaigns in Waziristan in 1860 to the Burma operations in 1944. It was the 32nd Pioneers who carried the guns over Shandour Pass in the snow, in the march from Gilgit, and relieved the British garrison in Chitral. The 34th was among the earliest Indian regiments to be engaged in France. The Mazhbis gained distinction in October 1914 when they were pushed to relieve the French cavalry. During this operation, the Mazhbi Sikh Officers (VCOs) carried on the defence for a day and a night under repeated attacks when their British Officers had fallen. Equally great was their gallantry at Festubert (November 1914) and the spirit of the ranks.

2. In the Punjab gang robbery was characteristic of the dominant race and was allied with rude virtues; General Report upon the Administration of the Punjab Proper 1849-50 and 1850-51, Part II: PP: 33-34 available with the National Archives, New Delhi.

3. Khushwant Singh: A History of the Sikhs Vol II: Princeton University Press, London and Bombay, 1966: P-112.

4. John Lawrence was at that time the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab.

That the Mazhbi Sikh soldier was solid concrete and that it would take a stream of molten lava to make him budge from a position, was abundantly proved during the battles in the Middle East. During the operations, it was generally his part to contribute to the inflexible element whenever there was fear of a bent or broken line. In the action at Jebel Hamrin (Middle East) on March 25, 1917 when the British failed to drive the Turks from a strong position in the hills, it was the Mazhbi who showed the British officers how stiff he could be.

The battle of the 'Black Hill', later called the 'Pioneer Piquet', would remain in the annals of the history of the Sikh Pioneers an event of great significance. It would not be an exaggeration to say that it has immortalised the Mazhbi soldier. On December 21, 1919 the truncated strength of two companies of the 3/34th regiment of the Sikh Pioneers gallantly faced and repelled waves of attacks, by hordes of Mahsuds, on Black Hill in Waziristan with no more than a knee high wall and a few strands of barbed wire in front. Many a time, there was grim hand to hand fighting. The two battalions of the high caste soldiers detailed to provide covering fire to the Mazhbis withdrew at the first shot of the Pathan. The Mazhbis bore the brunt of the attacks single handed and succeeded in blunting them though they lost a hundred men.

The Sikh Pioneers were disbanded in February 1933 ostensibly to effect austerity in the Army budget. The men were prematurely retired or transferred to the new units of Sappers and Miners which were replacing the technologically obsolete Pioneers. The disbandment was a traumatic experience for the whole Mazhbi community as, over the decades, it had looked upon the institution of the Army as an opening where it could translate its longings for equality and respectability into fact. Hunted and hounded, humiliated and harassed, back in the village homes, the regiment of the Sikh Pioneers was the rallying point where they could achieve their aspirations. It was not only the economic factor but the loss of social status and identity that haunted the Mazhbi community. The Mazhbi was reluctant to join a regiment comprising Jats, Sikhs and Dogras for he could ill afford to compromise his newly acquired status. A definite consciousness of their identity had permeated the ranks of the Mazhbis.

It is rather painful to note that the British failed to appreciate the aspirations of the Mazhbi Sikh soldier who had made this tryst with destiny only to achieve for himself a place of respectability in the Indian social order in general and in the army rank and file in particular. Unfortunately, the Mazhbi Sikh soldiers, despite their success

and outstanding performance in various theatres of war were made an object of ridicule by being asked to go to Sappers and Miners. Needless to say it was an improper recognition of their aspirations.

A striking feature of the efforts made by the helpless Sikh Pioneers to safeguard their aspirations was their preference to be machine gun drivers in the British infantry battalions. This reflects their sense of utter frustration in expecting to gain respectability from their fellow high caste soldiers. It appears that the Mazhbis were now determined not to be treated as untouchables and that they would like to avoid a situation of confrontation by sticking to the British who were not as conscious of untouchability as the high caste groups of Indian soldiery. In spite of the numerous appeals and representations sent out to the highest in the land, the regiment of the Sikh Pioneers was torn asunder and some of its fragments made to join the apparently unjoinable and the rest retired prematurely.

To meet the urgent and mounting demands of World War II, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd battalions of Sikh Pioneers were revived as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd battalions of the Mazhbi and Ramdasia Sikhs. The regiment was later given the title of the Sikh Light Infantry. The Mazhbi soldiers displayed once again their mettle in Burma when they were called upon to defend Meiktila, one of the most decisive battles of the 1945 Burma campaign. General Frank Messervy, Commander IV Corps, was so thrilled at their performance that he declared that he had not seen better infantry.

The battalions of the Sikh Light Infantry maintained their traditions of valour and worked with redoubled vigour and enthusiasm in independent India. Their past provided a radiant halo but their continued acts of gallantry added larger dimensions, richness and versatility to their regiment in free India. The soldiers were now working for their own country and were indeed proud of it. Once again, they were there on all the battle fronts striking terror in the hearts of the enemy and winning encomiums and laurels galore. The fighting traditions of the Mazhbis have been appropriately recognised and from a three unit regiment before 1947, they can now boast of having fifteen regular battalions and a territorial Army Unit, probably just about equal to any regiment of the high castes.

Despite their outstanding achievements, sometimes probably better than the high caste regiments, the Mazhbis were not eligible for the other Sikh class regiments. Nor were they acceptable in the cavalry or in other arms for the aristocratic Jat Sikh, as a rule, refused to serve with them. Yet you could find a sprinkling of Jat Sikhs in the Mazhbi Pioneer regiments—quick-witted, ambitious men who were

ready to make some sacrifice in the way of social prestige for the sake of more rapid promotions. The Mazhbis were discriminated against in their own regiment when most of the key appointments of the Subedar Major, the Jemadar Adjutant and Jemadar Quartermaster were bagged by the Jat Sikhs and the Lobana Sikhs. As Major Wirsia Singh Dhariwal a retired officer of the Sikh Light Infantry, would have us believe, "A lot of furore was raised in 1928 when my father Jemadar Ishar Singh a Mazhbi, was made Jemadar Adjutant for the first time in the history of the 32nd Sikh Pioneers." The discrimination was pushed to great lengths as British officers in India identified themselves with relatively high caste soldiers. This identification was some times carried to the extreme case in some officers who refused to permit their high caste troops to play hockey with troops from a lower caste. Worse still was the case of a field officer (Major) in a Jat Sikh regiment who would not like to sit down at table with an officer (Lieutenant Colonel) commanding the Mazhbi Sikh Regiment.

No less pathetic was the state of the Mazhbi soldier who could not inter-mix and inter-dine with the soldiers of the high caste regiments. He was generally looked down upon and made a butt of ridicule. He could not visit the place of worship of the high caste Sikhs; nor could he make use of their kitchen or living accommodation. His plight was still more miserable in his village home where he could not share even a place of cremation with high castes. As Hony Capt Battan Singh has ironically pointed out, "Even the dead of our community were discriminated against".

The service in the Indian Army was however not without its plus points for the Mazhbi. The formation of the Mazhbi class regiments kept alive the inward spirit of the Khalsa which in turn strengthened his class feeling more than any other sepoy and inculcated further his pride in himself and his community. Though outcastes still in the eyes of the Hindus and the mass of the Sikh community, nevertheless, their military members were now land owning yeomen enjoying the reward of good service. Self respect had increased, an outward and visible sign. The Mazhbis now could not be mistaken by his outward signs; by his beard, the steel bracelet on his wrist, his long knotted hair or if that was hidden, by the set of his turban and above all by his grave self respect. The casual stranger could mark him by one or all these signs but there was a subtler physical distinction in expression and feature that one could not miss when one knew the Mazhbi well.

The British officers of the Sikh Pioneers and the Sikh Light Infantry nostalgically remember the Mazhbi Sikh soldier for his

cheerfulness and willingness to obey at all times under all circumstances. In a communication, Brig Flewett has written that what impressed him most in a Mazhbi was his trustworthiness and complete loyalty. Another, Major J.D. Worne, has said that his "guts" (courage) was something that distinguished him from other soldiers. Morgan has admired the Mazhbi's hardy and fearless character and that he could perform with ease extra-ordinary marches and was not dismayed by the death or wounds of any number of his comrades.

Nevertheless, the virtuous ingredients in his composition were sometimes subject to reaction. When he fancied he was wronged, he would brood. The milk in him would turn gall. The "waters of life" stirred by steel and his baptismal draught would take an acid potency. Nothing agitated him more than when he was reminded of his low caste status or when his self respect was at stake. He felt inferior to none and his performance had been no less ennobling than that of his high caste counterparts.

Mazhbi Sikhs were torn between the conflicting demands of power and status. Considerations of power led them to define their identity in opposition to the advanced section of society while considerations of status prompted them to merge their identity with the higher strata of society. The Mazhbis could either emulate high status groups and thereby lose group cohesion or to emphasize cohesion at the cost of acceptability and status. The Mazhbi community followed mixed strategies in search of their identity.

Military service was a prime objective of the Mazhbi community. Pride, self-reliance and increased cohesion were especially important to the Mazhbi. Not only did military service help to legitimate a claim to higher status, it also carried with it official governmental encouragement or approval. This claim to status was especially important when the military was a highly visible and prestigious career in the region of origin of the Mazhbis. These symbolic rewards were added to the very considerable material benefits of the military service-training, regular pay, and pension benefits added up to a significant increase in disposable wealth and assets. For an economically depressed group of low social status like the Mazhbis, both material and symbolic rewards were important and necessary.

It is rather unfortunate to note that the British continued to be guided by caste considerations even in the grant of lands to the serving and retired soldiers of the Indian Army. The British could have probably alleviated the sufferings of the Mazhbis and given them a status of respectability if they had been liberally granted lands in the Punjab

as it did in the case of the high caste soldiers and had brought them at par with the cultivating farmers of the state. In spite of strong recommendations sent out to the Govt from time to time, by their British officers, for allotment of lands, the Mazhbis generally could not elicit a favourable response so much so that they were not even given the status of agriculturists except perhaps in the Gujranwala district (now in Pakistan) which too had its political overtones. The British Govt did allot 5,000 acres of land in Gujranwala in 1890 for distribution among soldiers of the 23rd, 32nd and 34th Sikh Pioneer regiments, but this was done more under compulsion than as a measure to ameliorate the living conditions of the Mazhbis. As Macmunn has opined, the families of Mazhbi sepoys had no place in the village community if their sweeping husbands were not made available for service to the land-lords. Barstow has gone a step further and remarked that such a measure of grant of land to the Mazhbis was adopted primarily to ensure an easy flow of Mazhbi recruits in the Army. This fact has been brought out even more vociferously by several dozens of surviving British officers of the regiment and its jawans in their interviews with and communication to the researcher. They held the view that the civil administration headed by the bureaucrats was not favourably inclined towards any measure of welfare of the Mazhbi community. That is why a vast majority of their brethren continued to suffer disabilities in the socio-religio-economic sphere.

The Mazhbi community in the military had always preferred to stay as a well-knit independent unit. This sort of segregation was beneficial to the community on various counts; firstly the existence of separate segregated low-status military units provided an opportunity to develop esprit-de-corps and enhance a group image. The Mazhbi Sikh regiments were conscious of their superiority and sought recognition of it. A Mazhbi Sikh politician had once said that the Sikh Light Infantry was a real fighting unit and the Mazhbi Sikhs were a real martial race but they were discriminated against both in and out of the army as there were no Mazhbi generals or even colonels and hastened to add that the Mazhbis would like to have separate units of scheduled caste Sikhs in order to prove their martial qualities.

Scheduled caste politicians had also argued that if mixed with high castes, their young jawans would be continually reminded of an inferior status. If however, a whole community was segregated, this danger was eliminated. While the unit as a whole was regarded with disdain by other soldiers, individuals within it were more sheltered from abuse. The Mazhbis, therefore, sought more often than not,

separate named units rather than the anonymity of an integrated force in which they feared the possibility of being submerged among higher castes. They remained reluctant to abandon their reliance upon governmental assistance perhaps fearing the outcome of open competition which might be biased and tilted on the side of the high caste community.

The Mazhbi Sikh soldier exploded the myth of martial race theories. In fact the two World Wars tested these theories of martial races as guides to the recruitment of adequate numbers of competent troops. In both Wars, especially World War II, it was clearly demonstrated that such theories were irrelevant to the actual problems of recruitment and could only retard recruitment efforts. Despite all this, the Mazhbis like the other low caste regiments became unhappy victims of the racist theory and were gradually eased out of service thereby substantiating the hypothesis that participation in military affairs was closely related to the intensity of warfare. High intensity demanded greater numbers and lower castes eventually got an opportunity to serve the military which was denied to them in peace time.

The "martial races" theory proved damaging in more ways than one. It became a hindrance towards the social integration of various castes, communities and classes in India. The British purposely widened this cleavage by introducing what is commonly known as the counter-poise of races in which one community could be played up against the other to maintain imperial balance. The class basis of recruitment and organisation and careful nurturing of class traditions reinforced caste and class compartmentalisation which in turn generated unhealthy competition among various regiments and battalions. Such a counterpoise was introduced not only between the European and Indian forces but also within the Indian regiments themselves. Perhaps, the most glaring example of such a policy is to be found in a speech of Michael O' Dawyer, then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, which he delivered on May 4, 1918. While addressing a gathering of Jat Sikhs in Punjab persuading them to respond enthusiastically to recruitment in the army, he pointed out with the taunt that even Bengal had provided a "keen and capable" unit. He also attempted to stir Jat Sikhs by pointing to the rise of Mazhbi Sikh recruitment when he remarked, "If regard be had to available numbers, the Mazhbi Sikhs have surpassed the Jats. Do the Jats view the cavalry of Mazhbis with equanimity?" Thus the policy of divide and rule was followed within the army and was devised carefully to protect British interests.

The study of Mazhbi Sikh soldier reveals another truth. The Mazhbi community, since its inception, had consistently followed a process of Sanskritization. The open adoption of the Sikh religion was the first step taken by them in their upward struggle for social mobility and was accompanied by the abandonment of their old occupation for one which stood higher in the social ladder. Thus the Chuhra (Scavenger), on becoming a Sikh, refused to remove night soil and instead took to tanning and leather work. The Chamar (leather worker) similarly gave up tanning and turned his hand to the loom. As a matter of fact, they gave up social intercourse with the unconverted members of their tribe as far as they possibly could. They did not marry their children in the ordinary Chuhra and Chamar families nor would they drink from their hands unless they became Sikhs. Both the Mazhbi and Ramadasia Sikhs vigorously and punctiliously followed the customs, rituals, ideology and way of life of the high caste Sikhs in order to blot out the memory of their former degradation. The Mazhbis went even a step further. They took up the "gots" (gotras) of the Jat Sikhs, doubtless following the family or group whose hereditary servants they were. Even in their customs like wedding etc., they conformed largely to those prevalent among the Jats. It is to be noted here that these positional changes in the life of this community took place essentially within the stable hierarchical order.

The success of the Mazhbi experiment lays bare another important factor that the social future was something that could be manipulated and controlled as against the prevalent practice of considering it as something preordained and pre-determined. The stimulating precepts of Guru Gobind Singh had weaned the Mazhbis away from the influence of taint of heredity. He gave them the permission to study the Hindu scriptures, a privilege which was never extended to the Chuhras and Chamars in the Hindu fold. Further he made them to realise that they were the architects of their own fate and that they could mould and shape their future the way they wanted it to be provided they had the will and persistence to realise it. His concept of 'Nische kar apni jit karoon'—'I will attain victory with determination'—was too well received by the Mazhbis. Little wonder then, the Mazhbi community accepted this challenge with the zeal of a crusader and moved forward in their march to better future regardless of the social threats and economic privations for its realisation. Whereas their counterparts in the Hindu fold continued to live as grovelling slaves of so called higher classes, the Mazhbis emerged as a martial class of doughty warriors. They are now a class apart, having been "Kshatrised" and can rightfully boast

of their present social status acquired, as it is, through sheer self help and merit.

The study unravels another important feature of the Mazhbi community. In spite of their having experienced rough passages in the history of the Sikhs, the Mazhbis were particularly insistent on attaining respectability within the Sikh social order. If they had wanted they could have probably gained this respectability by converting themselves to either Islam or Christianity. But the impact of the tenth Guru on the Mazhbis was too well marked to allow them even to think of such a proposition. They were confident that 'Sacha Padshah' (the tenth Guru) would one day get them their due from their co-religionists. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, their service in the British Indian Army had further promoted the inward spirit of the Khalsa and strengthened their class feeling. They, therefore, chose to be true Sikhs and continued to struggle for a just place in the Sikh society. Even the petition of the Mazhbi Sikh pensioners to the SGPC in 1932 that they would declare themselves as untouchables if they were not treated as equals of other Sikhs was in fact merely a veiled threat to wrest respectability in the Sikh social order.

To sum up, the Mazhbi community had displayed a rich potential to meet the mounting challenges of life with hope and cheerfulness. It exhibited an immeasurable capacity to mould itself according to the changing environments and was responsive to the social needs of the time. It had integrated itself exceedingly well in the main-stream of national life. The element of self help was too well pronounced and had permeated their whole being. In this, they were guided purely by the benign presence of the tenth Guru in their lives. The community followed his teachings in true earnest and emerged ultimately as a force to reckon with. Notwithstanding the numerous disabilities still being encountered, the Mazhbis, with their dogged persistence, have now attained a status of respectability in free India in the Sikh social order in particular and the Indian society in general. Given the right governmental assistance, especially in the field of education, this community has the inbuilt capacity to play a much more vital and constructive role in the social, political and economic life of the nation.

‘White Mutinies’ in India Before and After 1857

LT GEN SL MENEZES PVSM SC

AS is well-known, February to May were the months when the stirring events of 1857 initially occurred; first, in February at Berhampore in Bengal, then on 29 March at Barrackpore, 3 May at Lucknow, 10 May at Meerut and 11 May at Delhi. The rest is history. We should, however, remember, as Percival Spear mentions in “The Nabobs” (1963), that it was not always the sepoy who mutinied. A naval captain, Richard Koigwin, had seized Bombay in 1683-64 and held it for eleven months, rejecting the authority of the East India Company in favour of his allegiance to the Crown. Spear also mentions ‘the recalcitrant Raworth’, who had seized Fort St. David in South India near Cuddalore in 1713, but was eventually prevailed upon to surrender the Fort to the Reverend G. Lewis. Certain tensions between the officers of the British Army and the East India Company remained until 1857 swept away the distinction. Men consigned to a possible early death wanted a reward.

The first ‘white’ mutiny, along with a sepoy battalion, was in 1764 in the Bengal Army at Patna, for non-receipt of prize money from the East India Company, which had been paid to the Company by Mir Jafar for distribution. The English and the sepoy eventually rejoined duty, but an European company of former French deserters, then serving the English, joined Nawab Shuja-ud-daula. As to the next ‘white’ mutiny in 1766 Sir A. Cardew records in ‘The White Mutiny’ (1929) “The officers of the Company’s Army were at first recruited on no very definite system. Some came from the King’s service...Many were promoted from the grade of serjeant, but the defect of this class, says Dodwell, (in “The Nabobs of Madras” (1926)) was ‘their unseasonable drunkenness’. Others were foreigners—Swiss, Dutch, German and Polish—and even deserters from the French. As the number of regiments grew and as the staff of British officers in each regiment was increased...a corps of cadets was formed, some sent out with nominations from the Company in London and some recruited in India. The latter were known as ‘country cadets’, and about 1786 the Court of Directors prohibited any further recruitment of cadets in India and declared their intention of retaining all

future selections in their own hands. A commission in the Company's service was now becoming valuable...The officers of the sepoy regiments were at a disadvantage which was only gradually removed as the traditions of the Army grew older and more fixed. These defects were very clearly shown in the events which occurred in the Bengal Army in 1766...The Court of Directors had ordered that the enhanced allowances, known as double batta, were to be abolished. These had been given by the Nabob Jaffir Ali after the battle of Plassey, and had been continued ever since. Their abolition caused general dissatisfaction...a movement was set on foot among the officers to force the Government's hand by a general resignation on an agreed date... More than two hundred officers pledged themselves to surrender their commissions on the appointed date. A fund was raised which was to provide for any who might be dismissed the Service...and it was arranged that on the 1st June (1766) all officers should simultaneously resign. The fact that a large force of Maharattas was threatening the frontier did not deter the conspirators, but merely made them advance the date fixed for the attempt. On the 6th May all officers except two in the force (nearest the Mahrattas) resigned or gave notice of resignation. Colonel Smith, who was in command of the (Monghyr) Division, ordered all officers who had resigned to proceed at once to Calcutta. At the same time, he called in a sepoy regiment to enforce his orders. Clive, learning of the mutiny...ordered the issue of double pay to the sepoy ranks so as to ensure their allegiance...he proceeded himself to Monghyr...Seeking that their enterprise would result in their ruin, (they) recognized the necessity of submission and withdrew the notices of resignation. A few ring-leaders were dismissed. The rest were allowed quietly to resume their duty. This attempt at mutiny was not, however, only symptoms of the tendency to insubordination which, in those early days, marked the Company's Army. In Madras, in August 1776, another event, different in character, indicated the same indiscipline among the officers of that Army. The Governor, Lord Pigott, was engaged in a dispute with the members of his Council, who resented his interference with their intrigues in Tanjore. Pigott ordered the arrest of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Robert Fletcher on a charge of inciting the troops to mutiny, and offered the command to Colonel Stuart. This officer was, however, in league with the Governor's opponents in the Council. He dissembled his intentions, attended a meeting of the Council and accepted the Governor's invitation to supper. But while they were driving back together in the Governor's carriage, it was stopped by officers posted by Colonel Stuart; Governor Pigott was treacherously arrested and was carried off to St. Thomas' Mount, where he was held a close prisoner for many months.

He eventually died in confinement in March 1777." These three events, two in Bengal, one in Madras, show the slightness of the foundation on which 'white' discipline...in those days rested.

Next occurred the events of 1808-1809, also in the Madras Army. In Cardew's words, "the issue between the Government of Sir George Barlow and the European officers of the Madras Army was essentially a simple one. It was the question whether the authority of the civil government to be supreme and its orders to hold, until reversed on appeal or whether the civil government was to be liable to be overriden and overthrown by military force...to that question there could be but one answer.. Sir George Barlow's firm and determined handling of the crisis averted a very real danger of a military pronunciamiento. When the crisis was over and the danger removed, every attempt was made to obscure the issue. It was admitted that the conduct of the officers could not be defended, but it was argued that Sir George Barlow had himself produced the very evil which he was said to have cured. The controversy was carried on by letters in the Press (generally anonymous), by pamphlets, by personal intrigue and by minutes and speeches in the India House and in Parliament. On the one hand was an absent official whose defenders had little motive for ardour but an abstract appreciation of sound principles of government. On the other hand was a large body of officers (21 were cashiered/dismissed), who had lost their appointments in the Indian Army and whose only hope of restoration to the Service lay in the destruction of the Governor. No wonder that as time went on, and as the dangers which had been averted became more remote, the majority in the Court of Directors, which had at first applauded Sir George Barlow's action, gradually dwindled until at last in 1812 a majority was secured in favour of his recall. Barlow himself on his arrival in England in 1813 seems to have made little effort to obtain a reversal of the Directors' decision. To accomplish that would have required a long process of agitation and lobbying which was little to his taste. He preferred to settle down quietly in the country, and to the end of his life in December 1846 he made no attempt to defend himself. He thus allowed judgment to go against him by default and he could hardly be surprised that his reputation has suffered in consequence. Military historians have naturally not regarded him with favour. An examination of the history of the Madras Army before Sir George Barlow went to Madras suggests that the spirit of insubordination which culminated in the mutiny was present from a much earlier period." Of the 21 officers cashiered/dismissed in 1809, one died shortly after promulgation, and 16 were subsequently restored to duty, leaving only four not so restored. Many of those restored to duty

achieved General officer rank, one became a full general and a Director of the East India Company. There was also a kind of institutionalized depreciation built into the relationship in India between the British Army and the Company's officers in respect to the purchase system. Until the reforms of 1879, the upper ranks of the infantry and cavalry of the British Army were filled by men who could buy their way in—and up. There were some cases of infants holding colonelcies, and many more cases of senility. Class snobbery and technical ineptitude were the norm. In the British Army, the bourgeois concept of promotion by merit had made headway only in the technical branches, the artillery, the engineers, the medical, the commissariat, all a bit too close to clerking for aristocrats and gentle men used to a world of honour proven through personal violence. In the case of India, as in the more technical branches, there was a chance for those who survived to get promotions not available in the British Army. The class profile of officers of the East India Company's Army before 1857 was quite at variance with that of the British Army, unaffected by marginal experiments in India with purchase in the 1830s and 1840s. Indian Army officers were more often middle class and townbred. There were far fewer aristocrats—a reflection of the absence of purchase. These differences obviously created social differences when the forces worked at close quarters, as did the practice of wealthier British officers buying substitutes for overseas service, thus avoiding discomfort—and the realities of campaigning. In the opinion of John Beaumont in "Sword of the Raj" (1977), "when one contrasts the confused nature of British military organization with the growth of British power, one might well believe in the favouritism of God or a high incidence of genius or luck in the course of the Victorian Empire".

As recounted, there had been "mutinies" from 1766 through the early 1800s among white officers in East India Company service over their personal "subsides" in the form of percentages taken on tentage contracts (Madras Army) and the allowance of "double batta" or field allowance when on campaign (Bengal Army). While these affairs were bloodless, they reflected the fact that the Company officers in India saw themselves involved in the risk of their lives and health for real profits, and not for glory as the feudal aristocratic officer.

The 1857 expansion of the European units in the three presidency armies of the East India Company produced another "white mutiny" in 1858. The impending transition to Crown status implicit in the end of "Company" rule created a climate of discontent in the fifteen-thousand odd European troops and officers faced with being put

under the British military system. The issue was that the members of these units had not enlisted for the Crown. The British Army system was a different system, in that not only should men be allowed to decide whether they might re-enlist, but that a bounty should be paid. It was not an unanticipated problem. In essence, the government in India was handling the problem by letting time take its course. The would be dissidents found themselves drifting on month after month, taking the Queen's pay and working under the Queen's regulations. They deemed their position was being undermined ipso facto. Matters came to a head in November 1858 at Lucknow, where the ashes of the siege were barely cool. The Fourth Cavalry, a European regiment of the Bengal Army, issued a proclamation that they were not in the Queen's service, unless they formally enlisted therein and got a six-pound bounty. Scrawlings appeared on the walls threatening a march on Delhi if discharge or bounty was not granted. Evidence of inflammatory correspondence between various Indian European forces came to the attention of the government in the spring of 1859, leading to a further deferral of decision as courts of inquiry were held and hundreds interviewed. The government in India was finally forced to act as the Fifth European Regiment of the Bengal Army mutinied at Berhampore, refusing to parade on 15 June 1860. Sir Hugh Rose of the British Army—later Lord Strathnairn—who had become Commander-in-Chief in June 1860, proceeded to disband the Fifth European Regiment. No bounties were allowed. In April 1861 the job was finished. Out of the 15,000 Europeans in Indian European Regiments, 12,116 were discharged and sent home, and 2,809 re-enlisted.

To conclude with only one further example of a tragic 'white' mutiny from "Two Monscons" (1976) by Theon Wilkinson. "After 1857, there was still the occasional mutiny in the army, although this was not always confined to Indian troops. In 1920 there broke out what became known as the Jullundur rebellion, a mutiny among the Connaught Rangers, whose frian nationalism was aroused when they were involved in suppressing the emergent and militant Indian nationalism. It occurred at the height of the hot weather in June as nearly every other major mutiny in India had done, when self-control under the intense and stultifying heat of the barrack-room reached breaking point. The men refused to parade until Ireland had been given her freedom; officers trying to address their men were shouted down, jostled and threatened with violence. Ironically, it was a nearby Indian army unit that was ordered to cordon off the Connaught's barracks. Five months later, with the minimum of publicity, this terse statement was issued by Army Headquarters, New Delhi, as the only opitaph for

Private Daly, the ring leader, who lay in Grave No. 340 in Dagahai Cemetery, one of the last British soldiers to be executed for mutiny in peacetime :

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief regrets to announce that serious cases of mutiny occurred in the 1st Battalion, The Connaught Rangers, between 28 June and 2 July 1920, at Jullundur and Solan in consequence of which 69 non-commissioned officers and men were brought to trial on charges of varying degrees of mutiny. Of these 61 were found guilty and eight were acquitted. Of those found guilty, 14 were sentenced to death by being shot.

In the case of one private the sentence of death was carried into executional day break on November 2, 1920.

In the case of the remainder the death sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life and less "

No one spares a thought for Private Daly today.

Akbar The Great As Military Commander

BRIG SS CHANDEL, SC, VSM

THE remarkable personality of Akbar The Great has received due attention from scores of historians, his contemporary and in the present day, foreigners and Indians. Interestingly, however, little has been said about his military genius on which solid rock his varied interests and achievements in the fields of administration, music, arts, philosophy and architecture are nothing more than embellishments. Man of many graces though he was, his qualifications in other fields were severely limited. His father Humayun and his great grand sons Aurangzeb and Darashikoh were far greater scholars. Babur, Jahangir and Shahjahan were perhaps more discerning aesthetes and builders. Aurangzeb was a more painstaking and thorough administrator. But no one in the long history of India seems to even remotely compare with the military genius of Akbar.

Through his long reign of 45 years he was constantly campaigning either in one part of this vast sub continent or the other. Many a time, he would be fighting one campaign himself while his Army commanders would be carrying his colours in as varied and distant areas as Kashmir, Deccan, Bengal or Orissa. "Hardly ever" observes Father Xavier, who was attached to Akbar's court for a long time, "did he undertake anything which he failed to bring to a successful issue". He fought 14 major campaigns covering Kandhar, Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Deccan which encompass all kinds of terrain-mountainous riverine, desert or plains. It also dealt with varied operations such as sieges, pursuits, river crossing etal. Every type of Indian and foreign manhood was employed and used. Though a complete foreigner (he did not have a drop of Indian blood) he was singularly free of any kind of prejudice. Thus his military leaders ranged from the Brahmin courtier Birbal to fierce Rajput warriors like Raja Bhagwandas and Man Singh to a genius but man of no credentials like Todar Mal, to poet and philosopher like Abdur Rahim Khan Khanna. (Khan-Khana)

THE GENERAL AND THE FELDHERR

Wavell quoting Socrates in his essay 'Generals and Generalship' says :—

"The general must know how to get his men their rations and very other kind of stores needed for war. He must have imagination to organise plans, practical sense and energy to carry them through. He must be observant, untiring shrewd; kindly and cruel; simple and crafty; a watchman and a robber; lavish and miserly; generous and stingy; rash and conservative. All these and many other qualities natural and acquired, he must have. He should also, as a matter of course, know his tactics; for a disorderly mob is no more an army than a heap of building materials is house".

Feldherr. Even this rather exhaustive list of qualities may not be able to describe Akbars' towering military genius. For such a description/definition we may take a leaf from the Germans. Says Schlieffen, "At the head of an army stands a supreme commander, a commander-in-chief, a generalissimo, a general en chef..... Feldherr is not appointed, but born and predestined". "The task of the Feldherr, Schlieffen goes on, 'is to destroy or at least completely to overthrow an opponent, even a stronger one, of whom he does not know where he stands, wither goes, what he intends. The way he has chosen to achieve that goal, he must pursue pertinaciously, overcome with energy all obstacles, find rapidly expedients to meet unforeseen developments, pursue success to the utmost, support reverses with fortitude. In order to achieve that, something superhuman, supermundane must inspire him, call it genius or by whatever other name you will. Of the support and the protection of a higher power he must be convinced" Von Seeckt takes on from here to elaborate the attributes further: "The Feldherr stands alone at the head of the military hierarchy responsible still to his people and history. Spirit without will is Powerless", says Seeckt "and will without spirit is blind". For if the Feldherr is born as such, he must work harder than anybody else to develop the gifts which nature and fate have endowed him with. Through intense labour he must prepare himself for his high function, develop his powers of the spirit and the intellect to perfect lucidity. How much knowledge is not required of the Feldherr? He is not only expected to know how to lead an army to victory; he must also create it, arm it, equip it, train it, cloth it, feed it. These instruments of his generalship the Feldherr must be able to

employ with the assurance of a sleep walker. In their application he must not spend his forces of character or intellect."

Examining Akbar's military record of 45 years, and 14 major campaigns one feels that the description of Feldherr seems to fit him strongly like glove. In the recorded history of the World, his fit peers would be Alexander, Julius Caesar, Scipio Africances, Hannibal, Frederick the great, Moltke MacArthur, Stalin, Manstein and Rommel. Perhaps he would loom a shade above even these *tintans*, for the awesome occupation of incessant struggles did not weigh him down at all. He would plan cities and gardens, discuss philosophy and religion with accomplished servants, listen to the music of Tansen, would have a glad eye for any female and organise and consolidate his administration even as he fought for his empire and life.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Energy and Physical Courage. Of the multitude of his endowments his physical energy was perhaps the most phenomenal. This coupled with most extraordinary daring seemed to invariably confound his opponents. Akbar made a journey from Agra to Gujarat and back to Chastise his foster brother with a small escort in the height of summer season in nine days. It was usual for him to kill such formidable beasts as tigers with sword, ride infuriated elephants through rivers in spate and lead from the front in the thick of a battle. He was endowed with such bodily vigour and nerves of iron which scorned fatigue enough to kill an ordinary man. In this respect he resembled some great captains of war such as Alexander, Changiz Khan and Rommel. War primarily is a business involving physical hardihood and courage. The emperor showed it over and over that he was combat leader without parallel. In May 1567 he once again crossed the river Ganga in spate on his elephant with merely 1500 odd soldiers to surprise and crush a rebellion of one of his recalcitrant nobles Khan Zaman. He did not consider excessive, the risk of going as a mace bearer of Raja Man Singh into the enemy held fort of Ranthambhor and had the wit and the presence to convert a faux pas, when discovered, to his advantage. In the battle of Sarnal (first Gujrat Campaign Jul 1572) he stormed across River Tapti with mere 200 men and routed a much stronger opposing army by sheer moral force. To quell the rebellion in Gujrat (Aug 1573)" he travelled fifty miles through the stifling heat without drawing rein, and proceeded each day with equal speed, riding sometimes on a horse and sometimes in a light cart. So travelling he rushed across Rajputana,

until in the course of nine clear days, or eleven days all told, he found himself in the outskirts of Ahmedabad, distant nearly six hundred miles by the road used. He kept a bodyguard of about a hundred selected warriors about his person... ..Indignantly rejecting the advice of cautious counsellors who unwilling followed to fight at once, and, with his accustomed impetuosity, spurred his horse into and across the river, and so challenged the enemy. The emperor, charged like a fierce tiger. Much hard fighting hand to hand ensured, and at one moment Akbar was left with only two troopers by his side. His horse was wounded, and a report spread that he had been killed. His men, when they saw that he was safe, rallied and quickly drove the rebels from the field.

What made such astonishing feats feasible was perhaps an inborn philosophical attitude which bred in him a Krishna like detachment even while he waded chest deep into the complex and contradictory mire of life. It was perhaps no mere chance that he would seek the company of saints, sufis, philosophers of all callings—Hindus, Jains, Christians, and Muslims while he moved on a campaign. Reminds one of Aristotle's disciple Alexander's entourage when he set out for his conquest Eastwards.

His working hours were amazing, he slept little and lightly, seldom more than three hours in the night time. The hours that he kept must have been dreadfully trying to the court. It is interesting to recall that Churchill during his years as the war lord of Britain did keep similar routine and enjoyed himself. Akbar took only one meal a day which was mainly vegetarian

POWERFUL MEMORY

He was gifted with a powerful memory. Abul Fazl tells us that the emperor was able to recall events of the period when he was barely one year and three months old. Later, he maintained a library of 25000 books which he could remember accurately

Personal skill. Like a true leader, he demanded nothing from his men which he could not do most skillfully himself. He took delight in handling mechanical things with his own hands. Peruschi, a Jesuit priest, observed "there is nothing he does not know how to do, whether matters of war, or of administration or of mechanical arts"

Mastery of Details. Similarly his mastery of details was prodigious. Father Monserrate, another Jesuit priest in the Court of Akbar

who accompanied the Emperor's expedition to Kabul upto Jalalabad admits to being filled with admiration for the prudent care exercised by the Emperor personally in all arrangements of the campaign".

Selection of Personnel. One of his most outstanding quality was his ability to choose men of high calibre regardless of their origin, calling or status and raise them to commanding heights disregarding petty prejudices or even major mental blocks. Thus we find Hindus such as Todarmal, Bhagwandas, Man Singh, Birbal enjoying his greatest confidences and being entrusted with great responsibilities; we find him honouring and putting up with the towering intellectual and general Abdur Rahim Khan Khana who tended to be intellectually arrogant most of the time. His regime was perhaps the most secular of his time or even later or earlier. It was an aristocracy founded on merit.

GENERALSHIP

His personal endowments and credentials having been thus identified it is proposed to now apply the criteria of generalship to him. Sifting the qualities described by Socrates earlier, it may be more intelligible to give them their modern nomenclature. These qualities could thus be identified as Originality, Practical Sense, Energy, Tactical ability and Mastery of Logistics.

I have deliberately left out personal qualities to avoid repetition. To these qualities may be superimposed two overriding ones described by Von Seeckt, namely spirit without "will is powerless and will without spirit is blind." These later qualities of Feldherr are considered superior in merit and hence Akbar's claim to generalship is being examined in that order.

SPIRIT AND WILL

The ruling passion of Akbar was ambition. It is likely that at a maturer age it was tempered by his other inclinations and pursuits. But at no time he seemed to have had the slightest doubt about his divine charter to rule India. "A monarch, he said, "should be ever intent on conquest otherwise his neighbours would rise in arms against him. The army should be exercised in warfare, lest from want of training, they become self indulgent" Therefore he continued his conquests and kept his army always in a state of trim. For this reason perhaps one finds that he never seemed to tire. No war was one too many for him.

EVOLVING HIS POLICY AND STRATEGY

His aim having been crystallised, Akbar now began to evolve his basic policy and strategy. For policy, with the foresight of a genius that he was, he realised that he needed that best of talents, an Army an efficient revenue system and a contented populace. Instinctively, he knew again, that mere religion is not a unifying enough *force*. With his deep insight and knowledge of various religions acquired by his regular interface with their eminent representatives, he got further convinced that there is little basic difference in their fundamental perceptions. That the hostility towards one another was more due to ulterior rather than spiritual reasons. Thus convinced, he embarked upon his secular policy whereby merit and loyalty were the two criteria for recruitment and progress. He laid down a just and efficient, if not a compassionate, revenue system which yielded regular income to his treasury. He insisted on the protection of peasantry and the mercantile class so that the very sources of revenue would not dry up. Economy conscious administrator that he was he maintained a small regular army of 25,000 men which was enlarged by levies from various Rajas and Mansabdar. For Afghan campaign in 1581 he raised a force a 45000 cavalry, 5000 elephants and over 100000 men on foot.

The aim of the policy, was unabashedly imperialistic. This, however, should be judged from state ethics of those times when such an aim would have been cheerfully approved by Kautilya or his successor preceptors.

Strategy. The strategy followed by Akbar was equally clear headed. First to be taken care of were the enemies within. Then to be subdued were the claimants to the throne wherever located. Then the powerful Mirzas of Gujrat who backed by the riches of that part always posed a challenge to Agra. The proud Rajput were the next in order of priority, to be tackled by persuasion and blandishment if possible, and by force if necessary. Thereafter, all the territory which was ripe for annexation such as Bengal, Kashmir, Deccan and even far off Kandhar.

ON THE GROUND

Akbar executed his grand strategy with the aplomb, foresight, thoroughness and elan of a virtuoso performer. Fundamentals like indirect approach, surprise, selection and maintenance of aim, mastery of logistics and economy of effort came to him instinctively. It may

be pointed out here that he achieved these results without the benefit of a trained and cohesive instrument as was bequeathed by Philip to Alexander and without the promise of rapine, plunder, or ghazihood offered by other conquerers before him. A lofty mind, he had already determined to integrate India for ever. Another amazing aspect of his genius is that in all matters he was the teacher of his generals and ministers as well as the exemplar. He did so with an effortless ease which is the mark of genius.

It is now proposed to highlight his achievements in important aspects of generalship.

SELECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF AIM

Aim of This Grand Strategy. Akbar was always clear sighted as to the ultimate aim, interse priorities of his objectives and the timings. He had wide flexibility in his approach to the problems confronting him. From the point of view of his grand strategy, he had selected unification the whole of subcontinent under his personal rule and arranging it so as to make it an ever growing phenomenon. Hence his policy of tolerance, meritocracy and astute revenue system.

Military Strategy. In military spheres his subduing of the Rajputs occurs to the mind directly. Getting the Rajputs to his side being the aim, he proceeded on one hand to cajole such class as Kachwahas of Jaipur, Rathors of Jodhpur and Bhatias of Bikaner, while on the other hand he spared no efforts to bring the proud Rana of Udaipur to heel. While we may not approve of the imperialistic design in the present milieu, one cannot but admire his steadfastness of aim.

Maintenance of Military Aim. When his brother Mirza Muhammad Khan ruler of Kubul rebelled against him and occupied Punjab in 1581 Akbar assessed it as a major threat and moved to quell this rebellion with 45,000 cavalry, 500 elephant, and over 100,000 of foot soldiers. Hakim Khan got deterred and withdrew from Punjab. Akbar, however, maintained his aim. He continued his march to Kabul, crossed Indus in Jul and occupied Kabul in August. Hakim Khan fled to hills. At this juncture the chiefs of Bengal and Bihar were also fractious. But he correctly judged the threat from his brother as potentially more dangerous and accorded it all the priority leaving his generals to take care of Daud Khan of Bengal.

DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Although supremely confident of his personal prowess and generalship and always looming large in the background was he had the sense enough to delegate responsibilities to able viceroys. Thus he entrusted campaigns against Maha Rana Pratap, expedition to Bengal and Kashmir to Man Singh; Sind (1691) and Deccan (1693) to Abdur Rahim Khan; Zain Khan and Birbal against Yusufzai tribes; to Raja Todarmal against Surat and Bengal. In all cases with one exception in the case of Birbal, his judgement proved astute.

PERSONAL LOCATION

While delegating responsibilities widely and judiciously to able subordinates, he took care to locate him in such a way as to influence the campaigns against Hakim Khan at Kabul and against Kashmir, he moved to Rawalpindi; for campaign against his most formidable intractable foe, Pratap, he considered it necessary to oversee the matters closely and positioned himself next to Chittor. So also in the campaigns against Ranthambhor, Kalinjar and Asirgarh. But in 1580-81 when the governors of Bengal and Bihar rebelled, he judged wisely to stay on at Agra to prepare for a greater threat which was emanating from his brother Mirza Hakim Khan.

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

Like all great generals, he loved to lead from front and displayed greatest daring, stamina and skill. In 1572 in the campaign against Mirzas of Gujrat, his performance was truly remarkable. Writes Vincent Smith. "At the small town of Balisna, between Patan and Ahmedabad, he made a halt and reviewed his tiny force, which including the cavalry sent on in advance and his personal escort did not exceed in all three thousand horsemen. The enemy were estimate to muster 20,000. He kept a bodyguard to about a hundred selected warriors about his person, and divided the rest into three sections or brigades, centre. The royal troops, when within a few miles of Ahmedabad, approached the river Sabarmati, expecting to effect a junction with the army of the Khan-i-Azam, which failed to appear. The insurgents, hearing the blast of their sovereign's trumpets, could not believe their ears. Akbar, indignantly rejecting the advice of cautious counsellors who advised him to wait for the city garrison to come out, compelled his unwilling followers to fight at once".

In his second expedition to Gujarat in Aug/Sept 1673, he covered 900 miles in nine days with just 3000 men and once again trounced the enemy by his audacity.

ADEPT AT PURSUIT

Fruits of victory in battle are reaped in pursuit. Akbar had a definite flair for pursuit. In his campaign against Daud Khan, the governor of Bihar and Bengal after having trounced Daud on 3 August 1574, he pursued the escaping enemy for fifty miles. The rainy season was in full swing. Daud had imagined that Akbar would not be able to prosecute his campaign in such a season. In war council the opinions were divided, But Akbar had no hesitation in deciding that delay could not be permitted. Most of Daud' territories were taken.

LOGISTICAL THOROUGHNESS

"I should like you always to bear in mind when you study military history or events the importance of this administrative factor because it is when most critics and many generals go wrong."

Wavell—Generals and Generalship.

Once again, while examining Akbar's claim to generalship, we find that this unlettered soldier had complete and instinctive grasp of the importance of administration in the conduct of a campaign. His campaign in the reverine terrain against Daud Khan of Bengal was conducted at the height of rainy season which necessitated more than usual administrative thoroughness. Requisite number of boats, carts and animals were procured; rations and other provisions organised, staging camps set; security of the capital and marching force ensured. The whole movement had been thought out and executed with consummate skill in the face of tremendous difficulties due to weather.

Similarly during his conduct of campaign to Kabul against Mirza Hakim Khan a multitude of an army consisting of 45000 Cavalry, 500 elephants and over a lakh of footsoldiers was organised with minute care. Father Moserrat, a Jesuit priest, who accompanied Akbar during this expedition ascribed "the extraordinary plenty to the care and foresight of Akbar who had personally seen to the collection of supplies". The same thoroughness and attention to details is noticeable in his conduct of campaigns in Deccan especially in the capture of Asirgarh in the year 1600 even though it was ultimately taken by bribery.

CONCLUSION

A moralist will find many holes in Akbar's personality and his code of conduct specially regarding unquenchable thrust for conquests but then let it be restated in the words of Sun Tzu ; "War is a matter of vital importance to the state; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin". Akbar had no soft options to choose from and in the final reckoning, for a ruler it is the score that counts, Kautilya would have whole heartedly approved of Akbar's methodology. What is most remarkable in this great man's mani-splendoured personality that he achieved great results entirely by the clarity of his own mind, philosophy and force of his personality. Sun Tzu discusses the working of a general's tactical thinking thus, "the normal, direct or cheng force and the extraordinary, indirect or ch'i force—are reciprocal; their effects are mutually reproductive. We may define the cheng element as fixing and the ch'i as flanking or encircling, or, again, as the force (s) of distraction and the force (s) of decision. Their blows are correlated. The cheng and the Ch'i are compared to two interlocked rings; who can tell when one begins and the other ends? The business of a general consists, in part, of creating changes and of manipulating them to his advantage."

Akbar, being an unlettered man did not have any acquaintance with the thoughts of Sun Tzu. But he seemed to have known them by some mysterious process of transmission. Or so it would seem

War Poetry : A Survey and Appreciation

LIEUT COLONEL RANDHIR SINGH 3 GR

*'I have a great belief in the inspiration of poetry towards
courage and vision and towards its driving power'.*

—Field Marshal Earl Wavell

A study of poetry always brings to one's mind the distasteful drudgery of sitting in a class room attempting to comprehend the reason why some rapturous poet was going into rhapsodies over daffodils or sighing over a nightingale. To our minds, innured to the heat, dust, smells and colour of India, forming its own magical flavour, explaining the pastoral beauty of England, was to say the least, not the way to develop an interest in english poetry, a medium on which we skate very thinly anyway. So on completing our academic education, we thankfully jettisoned this burden and never looked back except to stare idly at the poetry 'page of the Illustrated Weekly before going onto Beau Peep.

We thus lost a great deal and partially allowed film songs and popular urdu couplets to fill the void, which not even Hindi or regional poetry with its colloquial and sanskritized idiom could fill.

I will thus attempt to explain the evolution of english war poetry and an appreciation of its rich imagery and through it hope to ignite a tiny spark of interest which may lead to its rediscovery. On many an occasion when alone or bereft or in need of inspiration, the pages of an anthology will provide all the silent companionship that one may need.

English war poetry has its origins in the early Anglo-Saxon epics and ballads. The poetry, in translation, is characterised by its rhyming. It mostly glorifies the exploits of heroes like Boewulf or bemoans their loss in gory battles. Along with translations of Homer and Virgil, these poems, except for a few passages of rich imagery are a narration of events in the epic style. One would expect the english

translation of Chand Bardai's 'Prithviraj Raso' to be somewhat similar.

War poetry as understood through its sense of rhythm, simplicity of syntax and descriptive powers, is evident from the 18th century, when Robert Southey and Thomas Campbell wrote some excellent pieces. Southey's 'Blenheim' brilliantly conveys the irony of war. The 17th Century Cavalier, Sir Richard Lovelace's dedication to Lucasta forms a part of most anthologies. The famous Scot soldier, The Marquis of Montrose's famous lines show what poetry can do in conveying the spirit of daring and dash :

'He either fears his fate too much
Or his deserts are small
That dare not put it to the touch
To win or lose it all.'

During the first part of 19th Century, poetry was dominated by the writings of Keats, Shelley, Byron & Sir Walter Scott. One of Shelley's war poems 'War' is rich in descriptive verse so common to the Regency Period. Byron in his 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' and other pieces has some fine poetry worth quoting while Sir Walter Scott's 'Marmion' is rich in heroic imagery. Byron, in true romantic style went to Greece to free it from Turkish sway, like a knight in shining armour, but the harsh realities and illness killed him without his firing a shot in anger.

Macaulay's 'Lays of Ancient Rome' should for most of us be the earliest and abiding memory of poetry. The simplicity of the rhyme and metre coupled with the imagery of heroic battle as Horatius held the Bridge were a delight to recite and roll on one's tongue and fragments still linger.

During the later half of 19th century, the creeping horrors of modern war with its grim fighting and mass casualties started having their effect on poetry. Sitting in the safety of England, Tennyson could brilliantly glorify the 'Charge of the Light Brigade' at Balaclava, but as his involvement increased, the poet, drawn into the seamier side of war, transferred war poetry from the heroic (but unreal) to the harshly realistic but anti-war. Thackeray's 'Due For the Dead' written for the slain and maimed of the Crimean War is topical even today in any country :

'But they who meet a soldier's doom—
Think you, it is enough, good friend,

To plant the laurel at their tomb,
 And carve their names—and there an end?
 No. They are gone : but there are left
 Those they loved best while they were here—
 Parents made childless, babes bereft,
 Desolate widows, sisters dear

Fold them within her sheltering breast, (the country)
 Their parent, husband, brother, prove,
 That so the dead may be at rest,
 Knowing those cared for whom they love.'

The American Civil War, involving the Nation and its educated masses, changed the poet who saw at first hand the carnage of war and he distilled the essence of it into heart wringing poetry. The poems of Whitman, Melville and the lesser known Ethel Beers and Sarah Bolton convey fully the anguish and pain of war. One is moved by poems such as 'Come up from the Fields Father', 'Picket Guard,' 'Left on the Battlefield'. We can understand and sympathize with the 'College Colonel', returning home disabled, with his battered regiment.

'It is not that a leg is lost
 It is not that an arm is maimed
 It is not that the fever has racked—
 Self he has long disclaimed.

But all through the Seven Days Fight,
 And deep in the wilderness grim,
 And in the field hospital tent,
 And Petersburg Crater, and dim
 Lean brooding in Libby, there came—
 Ah heaven! — what truth to him'.

The later half of the 19th century and upto World War I also saw the British Empire on the ascendent, its armies successful in skirmishes and minor battles in far off romantic places. Its officers were nurtured in exclusive public schools eulogized by poets like Newbolt and Kipling who through their writings subconsciously forced these young to become an image of their creation Newbolt in particular was instrumental in creating what Paul Fussel calls, 'The Newbolt Man.' His poems like 'Clifton Chapel' and 'Vitae Lampadae' encouraged the concept of the straightforward, courageous and honourable officer willing to die for his country. Newbolt, now decried by the 20th

century critic, his poems grotesque in comparison to those of World War I, does still strike a chord in our psyche with such passages :

'To set the cause above renown,
To love the game beyond the prize,
To honour, while you strike him down,
The foe that comes with fearless eyes;
To count the life of battle good,
And dear the land that gave you birth
And dearer yet the brotherhood
That binds the brave of all the earth.'

Kipling, on the other hand, despite his jingoism, was still earthy and wrote some fine soldier poems. His 'Tommy' bemoaning the state of the soldier in peacetime, if translated, would be much appreciated by our men. Kipling lost his only son in World War I and wrote a moving poem, 'My Boy Jack' conveying his sense of loss.

Heroic and romantic sentiments were all drowned by the blood-bath of World War I. The war changed the complete lifestyle of Europe and the world. It ushered the technological revolution with a vengeance and the great loss of life affected the home of every family. The casualty rates were so appalling, that to us separated by time, they seem incomprehensible. A single action wiped out entire battalions and a battle would sound the death knell of armies. During the first two hours of the Battle of Laos, 1915, more British (including the Indian Corps) soldiers died than the total of all three services on both sides during D Day 1944. The casualties during the Battle of Somme, 1916 were a horrifying 500,000. In this terrible crucible was born and sustained some of the finest war poetry. The poets themselves formed a roll of honour, several winning gallantry awards and most died or became casualties before the war was over. The death of such talent has had a permanent effect on English literary tradition, which is yet to recover.

Critics of World War I poets point out that the terrible affect of the War afflicted all of them with a sharp binary vision, restricting their poetry. One has to read this poetry to conclude that the war spawned some of the best war poetry ever produced. Influenced by a rich Georgian and pastoral heritage, the poetry is replete with imagery and a terrible pathos. One reads it aware that the poet was doomed to die or be mentally or physically scarred for life. The poetry itself is anti-war (most good poetry is) and brings home forcefully the sharp realities of the gruesome struggle.

Initially the poetry started innocently enough with the poems of Thomas Hardy, Herbert Asquith and Rupert Brooke. Noble sentiments all died in the slaughter of 1915. The poets, gullible, gallant and imbued with the romance of war, changed and their poetry changed; though still ennobling the fighting man they conveyed the reality of war as never before. From the many worth reading a few examples are, Julian Grenfell's 'Into Battle', John Macrae's, 'In Flanders Field', Ivor Gurney's, 'Ballad of the Three Spectres', Isaac Rosenberg's, 'Break of Day in the Trenches' (considered by many as the finest poem of that period) and 'Returning We Hear the Larks', TP Cameron Wilson's, 'Magpies in Picardy', and Alan Seeger's, 'Rendezvous'. As one reads these poems their impact on the sentiment is almost painful.

'He said that still though chaos
Works on the ancient plan
And two things have altered not
Since first the world began—
The beauty of the wild green earth
And the bravery of man.'

The two greatest poets of World War I were however Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. Though decorated with the MC, both acutely felt the horror of war. Sassoon in forceful and cutting style conveys his rage at generals and civilians who nonchalantly allowed such waste of life and remained oblivious to the soldier's fate. An example :

'You smug faced crowd with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go'.

Wilfred Owen, if not killed in 1918, would have perhaps matured into the greatest poet of 20th century. His poems bring home the sheer waste and agony of war, through bitter personal experience with such painful directness that the reader himself acutely feels the unimaginable horror of what those doomed men went through. As he once wrote of his poems. 'The subject is war, and the pity of war. The poetry is in the pity. Yet these elegies are to this generation in no sense consolatory. They may be to the next. All a poet can do is warn. That is why a poet must be truthful'. Poems like 'Insensibility', 'Futility', 'Strange Meeting' and 'Dulce et Decorum Est' could only

have been conceived through the worst kind of personal experience of war. An example :

'If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gurgling from the froth corrupted lungs
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,
My friend. you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie : Dulce et decorum est
Pro Patria Mori '

Compare this to the sentiments as expressed by Newbolt and other poets. Such intensity of feeling was never expressed by later poets, including those who fought in World War II.

English war poetry was never quite the same after 1918 and old memories of the carnage lingered with later day poets. These poets in tune with the mood of the times abandoned traditional imagery. Their poems, laced in modern jargon, were hard and ironic and as Philip Larkin in 'MCMXIV' so aptly says, there was 'Never such innocence again.' Though poetry was never so intense after World War I there are some fine pieces written by poets like C Day Lewis, Alan Lewis, Keith Douglas, David Jones and Vernon Scannel. Poems like Snodgrass', 'After Experience Taught Me', Hecht's 'More Light!' 'More Light!' and Ginsberg's, 'A Vow' are oddly disturbing; while very few will remain unmoved by Denise Levertov's indictment of the Vietnam War, 'What Were They Like'.

India itself has produced no modern war poets. Col Produt-foot's collection, 'A Soldier's Song' is a naive effort. There is of course the beautiful poem composed and inscribed by Bernard C Dougal at the Walong War Memorial, 'Asleep on the Ashi Hills,' commemorating our war dead. One also wishes for an English translation of our Veer Ras Hindi or regional poets like Bhushan, whose alliterative compositions in praise of Shivaji and Chattrasal have a Tennysonian ring.

Poetry is there to 'inspire one in life and other struggles' It raises our flagging spirit, fills us with courage and fortitude and in moments of solitude eases the loneliness and depression of spirit with its warm companionship.

'But one thing we learned : there is no glory in the deed
Until the soldier wears a badge of tarnished braid;
There are heroes who have heard the rally and have seen
The glitter of a garland round their head.
Theirs is the hollow victory. They are deceived.
But you, my brother and my ghost, if you can go
Knowing that there is no reward, no certain use
In all your sacrifice, then honour is reprieved.
To fight without hope is to fight with grace,
The self reconstructed, the false heart repaired.'

Recommended reading :—

Palgrave's Golden Treasury
Oxford Book of English Verse
Penguin Book of English Verse
The Oxford Book of War Poetry
Men That March Away, Ed by IM Parsons
Other Men's Flowers, Ed by Field Marshal Earl Wavell
Out of Battle, Ed by Jon Silkin
The Penguin Book of World War I Poetry
The Poetry of War 1939-44, Ed by Ian Hamilton
Understanding Poetry by James Reeves

Letters to the Editor

The Editor
USI of India
Kashmir House
Rajaji Marg
New Delhi-110011

I

QUOVADIS : STAFF COLLEGE SELECTION

Sir,

Lt Col KV Rajan in his article 'Quovadis : Staff College Selection' published in your Oct-Dec 1985 issue, has critically analysed the present system of selection of officers to staff College and suggested an alternative. I fully agree with him on the QR prescribed for a psc however I disagree with him that the present method of selection breeds PTs (Paper tigers) or book worms. (pp 351). Having gone to Wellington and after obtaining coveted 'psc' (of course after gruelling 45 weeks spent there) I take up cudgels on the side of the organisation.

SELECTION TO IAS/IFS.

The author suggested holding Staff College entrance examination on the pattern of Civil Services examination. Mr Samadar, member UPSC in an interview to Door Darshan telecast in the last week of Jul 86 brought out the following (if I have heard him correctly).

- (a) The preliminary and main examination are set to reduce the number of applications in the region of 150000 to 160000 to a manageable figure of 600 to 800 who face the final interview.
- (b) The question papers and interview are pitched at such a level that urban candidates do not get any undue advantage due to their environment and rural aspirants do not unjustly suffer.
- (c) The interviewers do not attempt to assess how ignorant a candidate is but are in the look out for qualities such ability to think clearly, analyse problem with its pros and cons and arrive at a reasonable and workable solution to pay today problems.
- (d) He suggested if a candidate prepares according to a set plan and obtains the benefit of company of like minded aspirants he stands very good chance of making it to IAS/IFS.

QUESTION PAPERS

The candidates who appear for DSSC entrance examination are about 1200. Does such a small figure which is approximately 3.3% of total officer strength need preliminary, main examinations followed by interview and psychiatric tests (pp 355-356). After all if one analyses the question papers since last five years it is not difficult to find out that these cover all aspects, such as knowledge of organisations, tactical doctrines, futuristic trends in weapons and technology, administrative set up in war and peace and some knowledge of military law which is required for SO. The objective type of question papers were set to eliminate the book worms. This breed were lucky who could manage to score high percentage in earlier system of question papers which contained eight to nine essay type questions. Some of these questions were very popular and were expected. The correction was so subjective that many unlucky but deserving could not make the grade. Now a days questions are based more on practical experience which an officer can obtain when he serves in a unit for a considerable time, participates in a large number of sand model discussions, attends courses such as JC and takes part in unit/formation level exercises. I did not come across any officer in DSSC Wellington who did not have these ground requirements in good measure. These help officers in innumerable SMDs (sand modal discussions) and OEs (out door exercises).

MILITARY HISTORY

I do not agree with the author when he says that Military History paper should not have objective type questions (pp 359). An officer who has not read the prescribed books atleast three to four times does not have a ghost of chance of completing the Part I of the question paper. This is done to prevent Staff College aspirants going to the 'Military History made easy books'. I agree with the author that maps form an important part in study of campaign and in future examinations blank maps could be supplied to the candidate where in he is asked to depict initial deployment of opposing forces. But it should not be given overwhelming importance. How many of us really remember day to day events of Burma campaign or Korean campaign? Is it not better if one concentrates on the major lessons which could be applied even today?.

HIGH ALTITUDE

I agree with the author when he says that officers who are unlucky to serve in high altitude areas, or in uncongenial areas (pp 353) should be compensated adequately. They are being compensated for and in

the application form for DSSC entrance examination a column is provided where details of such tenures are filled. The unlucky and miserable lot are fairly compensated.

STUDY TIME

The author pleads that officers desirous of appearing in DSSC entrance examination should be given one year time in a place of their choice for preparation and only two chances be given to appear (pp 356). Can the underposted Army of ours be able to spare 1200 officers for one year and post them to their place of choice just to enable them to prepare? I do sympathise with officers posted in difficult areas vis-a-vis those in Cat A establishment. Officer by the time they attain service group of six to seven years while preparing for part D exam are aware of DSSC entrance exam. Therefore one has to plan accordingly whenever one is posted.

AGE LIMITS

Raising service and age limits beyond the existing ones as suggested by the author (pp 354) do not bring any benefits to the unit in any way nor does it help the officer in preparing for the examination. By the time a 'psc' is produced in majority of cases, he would have 10 to 12 years service which is the right stage for him to go for Grade II staff appointments and then go as coy commander,

EXAMINATION CONDITIONS (pp 352)

The author argues that an officer who studies pre staff precis and who has had time to prepare well even by rote stands a solid chance to get through the exam. He further states that those who are less expressive are at a disadvantage. This line of argument is grossly incorrect. The questions set in the exam are not taken from any pre staff precis. Some of them appear in journals like USI of India, Combat and Infantry. An officer who attends formation level exercise is in a better position to answer the question well than the person who indulges in rote. Even in paper like Administration and Morale questions are on practical aspects. Unless one has unit experience, I am afraid any amount of precis knowledge would be of no avail. One of the prerequisites of a SO is the ability to express himself clearly and concisely both in written and verbal forms. Does not the author endorse this trial somewhere else in his article, (pp 347). So why penalise the expressive lot?

GUIDANCE

It is not uncommon to find unit officers advising newly posted YOs on promotion examinations and DSSC entrance examination.

Time schedule for the YO to appear in various examinations is worked out and the officer is advised accordingly. By the time officer passes Part D examination, he would have undergone basic courses of his own arm and some all arms courses such as Platoon Weapons course, RSO course and JC course. GS Pamphlets 'DSSC Entrance Examination with Examiner's comments' are read the staff college aspirants. They get hold of even classified information which is required for appearing in the examination. The campaigns and biographical studies are known as least five years before hand. Preparation for DSSC entrance examination cannot be restricted just for one to two years before examination. It should be spread over evenly for a prolonged time with emphasis on acquiring broad based knowledge. The plea that officer who is posted in High altitude/Jungle terrains just one or two years before the examination suffers in his preparation is not agreed to even though one sympathises with such officer. Lt Gen (Dr) ML Chibber, (Retd) Ph. D in an answer to a query at DSSC Wellington answered that he prepared for the DSSC entrance examination while serving in High altitude area and went to Staff College Camberley. Officers posted in class A Institutions before examination certainly stand a better chance vis-a-vis his counter-parts in difficult area but it could be rectified if preparations are made in right earnest. Does not giving 10 to 12 months of study leave for officers serving in Field Areas affect units and service which the author wanted to eliminate by reducing maximum number of chance to appear in the examination from three to two" (pp 356).

UNLUCKY LOT

My sympathies are there for those who after qualifying in the entrance examination still cannot go to Wellington as they are slightly low in merit or those who fail in one paper very narrowly. It can not be said by any piece of evidence that they are inferior to the lucky pscs in any way. Such officers can be sent on short staff course of three months duration which could be organised at college of combat or Infantry school. Such of those officers who qualify in such courses can be sent on Staff appointments which are lying vacant due to non-availability of pscs.

TECH FORCE

The author argued that technical officers of signals, EME and such like be not burdened to appear for DSSC entrance examination but such corps be given fixed number of vacancies to be filled by the corps

(pp 355). This contention was that after spending two years in acquiring post graduate qualifications such officers should not waste two more years for preparing the examination. Let us not forget DSSC entrance examination discriminates none and every one has to toil to succeed in it. The thrill and satisfaction one derives when he sees his name in the 'Nominated List' cannot be explained but one has to experience it himself. Can tech officer acquire the feel of ground just by attaching him with one of the mech Infantry/Armour units even for a period of one year as is argued by the author?. Tech officers get plenty of opportunities in the present system to attend sand model discussions and participate in formation level exercises. By sending such officers away from their parent units which are already under posted no appreciable gain is made either by the officer or by the organisation. By about 10 years of service tech officers do generally get fair idea on employment of combat and support arms.

ANALYSIS

I do not proclaim that existing system of selection is fool proof. It might suffer from the disadvantage that practical knowledge of officer is not put to test. Practical promotion exam such as Part A and Part C do take care of this aspect to certain extent. In any case officers now appearing for entrance examination have to undergo JC course successfully hence it may not be justified to insist that an interview be held to test practical knowledge of officer. After all what else the interview board will test when an officer has qualified in JC course which trains him to handle comb teams. Element of doubt will certainly arise that so and so manipulated the outcome of interview because he knew so and so member of the interviewing board.

The present system of selection has withstood the test of time. Most of pscs are not found wanting in staff work. The emphasis laid by DSSC Wellington is also on the very qualities which the author was pleading to be developed in SO. In any case psc is not 'Be all and end all'. Non pscs can also equally do well either in units or in courses like SC and HC.

I feel that present examination system is quite adequate to select potential SOs. It is modified keeping such similar system in 'Civvy Street' but laying more stress on OG. We can think of doing some thing more for the unfortunate lot who miss the bus to Wellington. The system changes suggested by the author can lead to bigger problems rather than solving the ones created by the existing selection process. Let the views of 'Not so Lucky' be solicited so that we can hear from the 'other side of the hill' what they feel of the present method of selection.

II

STAFF COLLEGE SELECTION

Dear Sir,

While not without flaws a competitive exam is a time tested, time proved and by and large fair system of selection. Even the ancient Chinese had a competitive examination for selection of their officials

It is agreed that some form of moderation/compensation should be there for a true soldier who roughs it out in inhospitable terrain with no basic amenities like electric lights and no library to refer to. A quota could be allotted to them.

Whereas a disproportionate quota seems to be cornered by officers who are posted to Category A/B establishments/Staff or posted at good stations it cannot be denied that it is the brighter officer who is posted there having done better in service/courses. Of course flaws are there for some officers do well on courses but not so well in the units.

As suggested the psychological aspect of a Staff officer/up and coming officer should also be considered for some officers are wholly unhelpful and tend to bend rules to the detriment of the units and personnel affected.

With electronics becoming the major aid to the eyes and ears of the Services and missiles, Laser ranging, smart bombs, computers and a whole lot of other gadgetry becoming part and parcel of the weaponry in the conduct of warfare, Science and Technology should become a major subject of the entrance examination and part of the curriculum during the course. It is felt that the present Scientific Orientation Course for officers of the non technical arms/Services is inadequate.

In fact a start should be made right at the Service Academies where every graduate should get a bachelors degree in Science/Engineering as part of the training prior to becoming an officer. In this we could well emulate the US Service Academies.

3 Jul 86

Lieut Colonel PM Ravindran

Book Reviews

THE SOVIET UNION : A GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

By G Melvyn Howe

Macdonald & Evans Ltd, Eastover, Plymouth PL6 7PZ, 1968 2nd. ed.
1983 Pages 501 f 10.95

THIS is a second edition of the subject and has been brought upto date to about the end of 1980. It is therefore a very current publication.

The USSR conforms to the 'heartland' enumerated by Mackinder in 1904. It rests on most of Asia, lies to the flank of Western Europe, and is located just across the Arctic Ocean from North America. This is thus a strategic position of great importance. At the same time the fact that most if not all industrial raw materials are available within its boundaries gives the country great inherent strength. Lying so far North with nearly half of its territory in a zone of permanent frost and then having some 10% of desert and mountains it finds it difficult to produce sufficient agricultural commodities for its growing population. Much of this is also due to collectivisation of all farming areas. This system does not give any incentive to the producer to grow more stuff efficiently. Then there is the low status bestowed upon the agricultural working man or woman. At one time the Ukraine was the granary of Europe but now even with the massive expansion of the cultivated area shortages persist. This has meant a search for grain and meat from the West. While this may not be good for the USSR it does bring both worlds into some form of contact. From the point of world peace this is beneficial.

Geographically it would appear that the USSR is a huge basin rimmed by mountains and desert in the West. South and East, and by the Arctic Ocean in the North. Drainage-wise the major part of the country slopes to the North. On the fringes of the territory of the USSR there are of course rivers that flow to the West, South and East. But except for the Eastern rim and some peninsulas of high ground most of the country is a large plain varying in altitude.

Demographically there continues to be a major concentration of people in the old Western part of the USSR. Recently there has been

a shift towards the East. This was foreshadowed by the move of industry to the East of the Urals at the commencement of the Second World War. Now major industrial complexes have come up in what is called Western Siberia, in other words that part adjacent to the Urals and to the East of these mountains. One has to note the increasing numbers of births among the old Central Asian communities who are mostly Moslems. This region lies next to Chinese Sinkiang, Afghanistan (now occupied by the USSR) and Iran. This could be a source of danger to the state unless the peoples here can be properly assimilated into the social fabric of the country. In this connection the Soviets are taking great pains in the education of youth from these areas including those from Afghanistan by taking them to other parts of the USSR.

While in the past the plans for economic development were related to the administrative regions this has now been re-oriented into the more malleable 19 economic regions under 7 macro-regions by the state planning commission.

The book covers the geographical features, communications, industrial and agriculture aspects of the whole country and then takes up each macro region in turn. It also goes into the ethnic composition at the same time.

In the continual denigration of the Soviet system by Western media one tends to forget the tremendous advance made by the USSR in a matter of some 50 years. While the mass of the people live at a lower standard of living than even its own satellites in Eastern Europe the country is indeed a superpower comparable to the USA in armed strength. One has to however consider the cost in human suffering in attaining this position. May be the Russian people are inured to this as a result of their past history.

This is a readable and concise study of the Soviet Union and useful for any student of this subject. —SS

GOODNIGHT, SORRY FOR SINKING YOU : THE STORY OF THE SS CITY OF CAIRO

By Ralph Barker

Collins, 8 Grafton Street, London W 1, 1984; Pages 251, £ 10.95

THIS is an account of the sinking of the 'City of Cairo' a British ship, during the Second World War by a German submarine in the South Atlantic. The incident took place on the 6th of November 1942 which were not very happy days for the British.

The last journey of this ship commenced from Bombay. It took on a motley collection of people on their way to the UK. Most of them were persons typical of the old 'koi hais' who had inflicted themselves on the non-White constituents of the British Empire. Many of them were however simple citizens of the United Kingdom.

The ship was not really fit to travel unescorted in submarine infested seas due to the very slow speed that it was only capable of. The initial stage of the trip was completed without mishap, and the ship arrived at Cape Town. A little earlier German U Boats had operated successfully in the Southern Atlantic and it is surprising that the British allowed the 'City of Cairo' to continue unescorted. It was to hug the coast of Africa till the Tropic of Capricorn and then turn West till apprising off the Brazilian coast. It was in the middle of this last lap that it was spotted inadvertently by the hostile submarine.

The ship was carrying a gun on the stern and this gave the submarine commander the impression that it was a troop ship and he carried out a successful attack from close distance.

The saga commences from this point. The title of the book contains the last words of the German U Boat commander who was horrified at the fact that the ship was carrying women and children and not the troops that he had suspected. He gave the crew the direction that they must make for to reach St Helena, a British possession. Incidentally it had first of all belonged to the East India Company probably as a watering port for ships bound for India.

The book becomes an interesting study of psychology of how the survivors in the boats conducted themselves during the period that they had to remain at sea till they obtained succour. Some boats lost themselves in their search for St Helena—a pinpoint in the South Atlantic. One of them bypassed it and made for the Brazilian coast. In this one the only woman aboard and a ship's officer were the only ones that didn't succumb to thirst and the other hardships en route. The officer was unfortunately sunk in another ship before he could arrive in the UK. In another boat the three survivors were picked up by a German blockade runner carrying rubber for Germany. This included two men and a woman. The latter seemed to succumb owing to the hardships and the exposure of the trip in the boat. Of the two men one of them managed to reach Spain after the German ship was sunk by the British off the coast of that country. The other was picked up along with other German survivors by a U Boat and

taken to France en route to prison camp in Germany. Most of the rest were able to reach St Helena.

The account brings out the fact that the women seemed to have the strongest will to live and bore their troubles with fortitude. The ones with the weakest will were the Indian lascars who began to give up hope from about the 7th day onwards. The author attributes this to their fatalist outlook. It could be the lack of nourishment in their earlier days; or the debilitating effect of servitude. This lack of will to live has also been pointed out by a person on the staff of a British hospital in Italy during the War in another book. It stated that even lightly wounded Indians seemed to die when British personnel in similar circumstances recovered even from greater wounds.

The author is noted for his books on tales of endurance based on real life. This is an interesting book. It is also very fair in describing the actions of U Boat Captains and their crew as not crue as they have been depicted in a lot of wartime literature in the past.

Though written in narrative form the book is a useful account of leadership, courage and endurance. —SS

COHESION : THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN COMBAT; LEADERSHIP AND SOCIETAL INFLUENCE IN THE ARMIES OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE UNITED STATES, NORTH VIETNAM

BY WM. DARRYL HENDERSON

Published by the National Defence University Press—Washington DC, 1985, Pages 192

THE aim of the book is to reverse or to try to reverse the process of 'civilianisation' of the US Army. To advocate this the author has examined in great depth and detail the motivations that inspire men to fight in war.

Cohesion is that solidarity that unites a group of men to face death or in reality to attain their mission in the face of death, effectively and efficiently. One might call it 'esprit de corps'. In the dispersed battle fields of today he considers that the group or groups which are the key to success or defeat is the platoon and those below this. He therefore studies the smallest entity which could be said to operate in the environment of battle. This according to him is the three man group. The basis of this is the fact that once the fire zone is entered it is the individual and his comrades on either side of him that matter. This is applicable both in defence and attack. The need for these three men to be in contact visually and by voice is the crux

of the matter. Isolation leads to unnatural fears. It has been said earlier by other authors that crew served weapons operate more effectively in battle for this reason. The individual rifleman cannot perform function in close contact, physical contact. The battle field does not permit this. Even within a tank the isolated position of the driver makes him vulnerable to fears which could affect his performance. The Israelis recognising this have placed the driver within the cupola somehow so that he can see his comrades.

The author has examined certain factors in this context as they affect the armies of the USA, the USSR, North Vietnam and Israel. These factors are that of—

- a strong national spirit enhanced by ethnic commonality and language;
- a cause;
- comradeship and security in the unit;
- administrative arrangements the efficiency of which hearten soldiers;
- leadership and the extent that it actually controls the life of the men;
- interaction between the men and their leaders.

In the consequent comparison the author has tabulated the strength or weakness of each army in relation to the above points and those linked to it. By and large he tends to favour the army of Vietnam and also that of Israel. He appears to be strongly influenced by his experiences of Vietnam since he has previously made a study of the reason 'Why the Vietcong fight'. In this War, the Vietnam War, one must remember that the local troops were fighting for freedom from foreign domination, and they had been so doing for some 30 years. Too long a period of war had made the Americans reluctant to fight for causes which they did not understand and which kept them far away from home. The media in its search for sensationalism also weakened morale on the domestic front. It was a special war for which the Americans were not prepared. At the same time in his conclusion he states that the Israelis fought well in the Lebanon not because they supported the cause whole heartedly but because they operated in cohesive units where it was not possible for them to let down their leaders and their comrades. In this way it nullifies the first two factors mentioned earlier.

The author decries the degree of civilianisation of the Army—the fixed hours of work, living off the barracks in civilian fashion, the loss of power of the immediate leadership over the rank and file, the ethos which advocates and supports the rights of the individual over that of his unit and his duties and so on. Unfortunately this seems

to be the trend for the future. Thus there seems to be no likelihood that there will be a reversal of policy at least in the USA. The only answer will be to concentrate on elite units. After all the Falklands War was won by the actions of the RM Commandos and para units with the regular army only in a support role in the case of the British. It will therefore be interesting to see how the Americans solve their problems.

A good book which is well worth retention in libraries at all levels in the armed forces. —S S

SMALL ARMS TODAY : LATEST REPORTS ON THE WORLD'S WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION

BY EDWARD CLINTON EZELL

Harrisburg, PA 17105, Stockpole Books, Cameron & Kelker St.
PO Box 1831, 1984, p. 256 pages. \$ 16.95.

THIS book deals with information on various Small Arms being used by the various countries of the World, along with country's details like population, ground forces and reserve. The Small Arms included are Hand guns, Rifles, machine guns, sub-machine guns, special purpose weapons and ammunition.

The dictionary (countrywise) is based on information received from USA and other NATO countries. It is considered as a current issue of "Small Arms of the World".

Recommended as reference book in the library.

—K B N

VEHICLES AND BRIDGING

BY I.F.B. TYTLER AND OTHERS

London. Brassey's Defence Publishers, Maxwell House, 74, Worship Street, 1985, 239 pages (Brassey's Battle field, Weapons System & Technology Series, Volume I) Price £ 16.95.

THIS book deals with evolution, fire power, critical dimension, power train, transmission, running gears, protection and configuration of tanks. One chapter has been devoted on each subject mentioned above with self test questions at the end of the chapter. Answers have been included at the end of book. It is considered as a text-book for officers learning basics of Tank Technology.

The book also includes one chapter each on Infantry Armoured Vehicles and Military Bridging.

The book has been written by the experts of RMCS which is a prime teaching institution of Military Science and Technology in UK and is one of the series.

This book is recommended for every service library and Armoured formations. This will help in preparing for promotion exams.

—K B N

NEVER TO BE TAKEN ALIVE : A BIOGRAPHY OF GENERAL GORDON

BY ROY MACGREGOR—HASTIE

Sidgwick & Jackson Limited, London 1985. Pages 195 Price £ 13.95

GENERAL Gordon is one of those figures that fascinate the British public. He is thought of as a martyr to muddled governmental thinking. It is that intrigues the British. In addition Gordon is a part of the glory that was Empire. Dominion over other men depends on power and leadership. The desire to dominate springs from an aggressive race or more appropriately aggressive leaders. The impulse to do so may arise from purely venal cravings. It could be pure aggression or it could be a mission to work with the underprivileged or unenlightened. Gordon seemed to have a sense of mission enhanced by his strong religious outlook. Fortunately this did not make him a fanatic but more sensitive to others similarly inclined.

The book describes his background and his family. It is strange how many of the Empire's founders were those who had formed part of the Protestant elite in Ireland. May this experience give them the appetite for establishing their superiority over others.

Gordon served in the RE and was a bit of a loner. His contemporaries and superiors did not like him. After a short spell of war against the Russians in the Crimea he did not serve in the regular forces again. For some time he worked alone to define the frontier between Russia and Rumania after the Crimean War and got to know the Turks well. He later went to China where he commanded a hotchpotch force of Chinese and other mercenaries. He won the admiration of the Chinese hierarchy through his tactical skill, bravery and good control over his heterogeneous troops. In a way he became a Chinese mandarin accepted by the court. Later he was instrumental in preventing the Chinese from attacking Russia by advising the court against this.

Turkish Empire was on the verge of breaking up in the middle of the 19th Century and this was being propped up by the European imperialist powers so as to counter Russian expansion into the Mediterranean. At the same time they were attempting to erode it on the periphery in particular in Egypt. The Turkish system was to rule

indirectly by farming out tracts of territory to the highest bidder. The Egyptian Khedive was one of these and he was directly obliged to the British for financial help. It was through this lever that they were able to control the country eventually and to acquire the Suez Canal. Gordon was given employment by the Khedive to ensure that the Sudan was so administered that he received his dues. Slavery was also to be controlled. This he was able to do. The Khedive honoured him for his honesty. The hostile tribesmen honoured him for his courage and fairness. His fearlessness in confronting the latter sometimes alone and unarmed won him their admiration. Even the Mahdi, his bitter enemy, respected him and wanted him to convert to Islam. Gordon thus became known for his ability to understand and deal with unlettered tribes. He was sent for by the South African government to bring about some rapprochement with the Basutos. Here he too went alone and was able to influence their leadership.

It was in his second tenure at the express desire of the Khedive that he was confronted by the Mahdi who by this time was accepted as a Messiah by the Muslim tribals of the Sudan. The British were then in greater control of the government of Egypt. He entered Khartoum only to be besieged more or less directly thereafter. It was now that he seemed to have the deathwish. And this was granted by the sluggish advance of the relieving forces moving up along the Nile. He was killed only a few days before this force arrived at Khartoum. This 'too late' relief resulted in the fall of the British government under Gladstone. It was this very government who had sent him back to the Sudan.

The book is a very scholarly but readable work. It is written by an obviously very Anglophile American. His dedication of the book to Mrs Thatcher who 'would not have been too late' indicates his views of British leadership at the highest level at the time of Gordon.

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23. Stokes, Eric The Peasant Armed ; The Indian Revolt 1986
of 1857, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

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