

THIMAYYA OF INDIA

THIMAYYA OF INDIA: A SOLDIER'S LIFE

New York  *Harcourt, Brace and Company*

HUMPHREY EVANS

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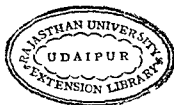
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 60-7423
Printed in the United States of America

V2,8(z,194)γ7NO6

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For Nina and Mireille

FOREWORD

I was first taken to the Thumayya house in Delhi on April 4, 1954, a hot Sunday morning. At least twenty other guests were there. A telephone rang constantly, military aides came in with messages. General Thumayya's wife, Nina, wearing velvet tunic-slacks and smoking through a long cigarette holder, was talking in French to a lady diplomat. Mireille, her teen-age daughter, wearing American jeans, was helping the servants pass lemonade and beer. The largest group was around "Timmy," as the general's friends always address him. He must have been telling stories in that incomparable way of his, but his friends were laughing so much I could scarcely hear him. It was noisy and confusing but relaxed and pleasant.

Timmy broke away at last and propelled me out to a shady corner of the veranda. He had in mind a book and, because of my professional background as a writer and my time and travel in India, he wanted me to help him. I gathered the book would be intended primarily for men of the Indian Army. Until 1947, Indian soldiers had been mercenaries of the British, but now they served Free India. The book would define their new role and help to increase their pride, confidence, and sense of citizenship. I dutifully took notes.

Then Timmy began to talk about Korea. He had recently returned from his chairmanship of the United Nations Repatriation Commission which had been entrusted with the explosive, misunderstood, and unappreciated mission of arbitrating the conflict over the Korean War prisoners who refused repatriation. For two hours I listened, completely engrossed by the

account of Timmy's experiences Obviously, the true story of this international *cause célèbre* was much more dramatic than the hysterical versions of it that had appeared in the world press I continued to take notes, and the next day sent the record of my entire interview to my literary representative in New York

Nine days later, both Timmy and I received cables He was asked to write a book immediately on his Korean experiences I was asked to postpone my own writing to help him with the manuscript My wife and I worked with him for the next four months I doubt if Timmy had ever been forced into such an effort, and this on top of his already hectic schedule He grew to dread the sight of us Nevertheless, the finished work was worth it, the book was happily received by the publisher

Unfortunately, however, a new ruling by the Indian Government prohibited the publication of books by Indian officials Many people were bitterly disappointed, but Timmy was, in addition, discouraged, his hard work had been for nothing

I came out the best While helping Timmy, I had studied him carefully I had recorded his opinions, his ideas, and his reactions to different people and circumstances I had written down the stories with which he could spellbind his friends From my voluminous notes, a portrait of a fascinating person began to emerge.

I was irresistibly drawn to tracking down the "Thimayya legend." During the subsequent years, I continued to gather material I talked to Timmy about his life whenever I had the chance I queried his relatives, friends, and fellow officers I am particularly grateful to his sister, Amu Krishna, for stories concerning his childhood, to Zafar Alam for anecdotes of him as a schoolboy, to General Cariappa for details of his early days as an officer, to the charming Gerald Edelshain in London for an account of Timmy's experiences in World War II, to General L. P. Sen for the Kashmir tales, and to the Singh Brothers, Serbjeet and Jasjeet, who have recorded on film much of his recent life

The importance of Timmy's life story is less in the picture it gives of the man himself—extraordinary though he is—than in its picture of the era through which he has lived In his half

century, the British impact on the subcontinent reached its zenith—and fell to almost nothing. The end came, not gradually, but with explosive suddenness. The cataclysmic changes required millions of people to make painful readjustments, almost no one in the subcontinent escaped unscathed, either physically or spiritually. But a few—very few—were strengthened by the forced adjustment. Somehow, they acquired the unique ability to take the best from the old world and the new, to live equally at ease with both the *East* and the *West*.

Such a person, obviously, is able to give Western readers a clearer understanding of the process whereby India emerged suddenly as an important new member of the world community. Those of us who try to describe this process realize quickly that it cannot be projected adequately by merely recording impersonal events, it can be understood only through insight into the effect of the great change on the Indian people. Thus I want to tell the story of one person—Timmy—who lived dramatically through these changes, understood them, adapted to them, and, in his own way, helped to bring them about.

HUMPHREY EVANS

Washington D C

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GLOSSARY

- baniya* (Hindustani) Hindus of a money lender or merchant caste noted for avarice
- bhai* (Hindustani) Brother As a suffix to a man's name, personal friendship is implied
- Brahman** A member of the highest Hindu caste Also spelled **Brahmin**, though there is a subtle difference The latter suggests the qualities or functions associated with Brahmanism while the former indicates merely the fact of the caste One who assumes or apes the characteristics of a Brahman, regardless of caste, is called a "Brahmin"
- chooch gulti hai?* (Hindustani) "Is there any difficulty?" "Have you any complaints?"
- dhal* (Hindustani) Lentils
- dhoti* (Hindustani) A long lincloth worn by men, usually Hindus, in India
- G 2** In the U S Army, the terms G 1, G 2, G 3, etc., refer to staff functions or departments (operations, intelligence, logistics, etc.) In the British and Indian Armies, however, the same terms refer to the rank of a staff officer, thus, a G 1 is a colonel, a G 2 is a major, and a G 3 is a captain
- G O C in-C** General Officer, Commander in Chief (usually of a district)
- Granth Sahib* (Sanskrit Hindustani) Literally, "The Master's Book", the sacred scriptures of the Sikh religion
- Gurkha** A member of a Rajput race from Gurkha Nepal Though the conservative American spelling is Gurkha the word Gorkha has superseded it in India.

- gurdwara* (Punjabi) A shrine or temple where Sikhs worship
- Hanuman ki jai* (Hindustani) Long live Hanuman (In the Hindu pantheon, Hanuman is a hero-deity, the Monkey God.)
- havildar* (Hindustani) In the Indian Army, a noncommissioned officer with the rank of sergeant. *Havildar* major is a sergeant major
- Hindi The Sanskritized form of the Hindustani language, now India's official language
- I G Inspector General, the highest officer in a nation's police force
- I.N.A Indian Nationalist Army, a force raised by the Japanese from among their Indian Army captives and intended for use against the Allies
- jawan* (Hindustani) A young man, a youth Used as the name for privates in the Indian Army as the British use "Tommys" and the Americans, "GIs"
- J C O Junior Commissioned Officer This rank includes *jemadars* and *subedars* which have the command responsibility of second lieutenants and first lieutenants respectively Like war rant officers, however, they lack the status of commissioned officers
- jemadar* (Hindustani) In the Indian Army, a rank with the command responsibility equivalent to a second lieutenant, but without the status of a commissioned officer
- jutha* (Hindustani) A procession, a demonstration, or, sometimes, a riot
- koi hai?* (Hindustani) "Who is (there)?" The expression was shouted in India by British officials who wanted to summon their servants Hence, as a noun, it means the old Kipling type British who served in India
- kukri* (Hindustani) A heavy knife with a wide curved blade used by Gurkhas and Kumaonis
- lance-naik* (English Hindustani) A lance-corporal in the Indian Army, a private who temporarily holds a corporal's rank
- lathi* (Hindustani) A large stick. As a police weapon it is a heavy, five-foot length of bamboo bound with brass at both ends
- L. of C Line (or Lines) of Communication

- loo* A hot, dry wind, a sandstorm
- machan* (Hindustani) A small platform built in a tree and used as an observation post
- mandir* (Hindustani) A Hindu temple
- Maulvi* (Hindustani) Among Moslems, a man recognized as an authority on Mohammedanism. It is a title, comparable to a Doctor of Divinity degree in the West.
- Mullah* (Arabic) One who is accepted as a teacher or preacher of Mohammedanism, hence a kind of priest, usually he is less scholarly but more fanatic than a *Maulvi*
- murthi* (Hindustani) A likeness, hence the statue of a person, especially the idol of a Hindu deity
- nai* (Hindustani) A barber
- naik* (Hindustani) A corporal in the Indian Army
- pan* (Hindustani) A pleasant digestive, the main ingredient of which is betel nut. Pieces of the nut are folded into a leaf along with spices and other flavorings
- pandaan* (Hindustani) A large ornate container, usually made of silver or brass. It is compartmentalized and used to hold the numerous ingredients for *pan*
- pukka* (Hindustani) Literally, 'ripe' in reference to fruit. Used idiomatically as a comparative for something better than something else, or the best of its kind. Hence it is used for such meanings as perfect, real, sure, complete, authentic, genuine etc.
- purdah* (Hindustani) A curtain. Women in *purdah* were kept 'behind the curtain' out of sight of other men
- risaldar* (Hindustani) In Indian Army cavalry units, the military rank equal to a *subedar* in the infantry, the equivalent of a first lieutenant
- Royal Yakuti* The trade name for a patent medicine which, for years in India was advertised as a specific for "overcoming sexual debility in rajas and millionaires only." It was thought to contain expensive ingredients such as ground up rubies
- shikar* (Hindustani) The sport of hunting, especially for big game
- shikari* (Hindustani) One who practices the sport of hunting, or a professional expert hunter

SP - Superintendent of Police, the head of police in a district
subedar (Hindustani) In the Indian Army, a rank with the
 command responsibility of a first lieutenant. A *subedar* is a
 JCO, however, and lacks the status of a commissioned
 officer.

subedar major (Hindustani English) The most senior *subedar*
 in an Indian Army infantry battalion.

sub teek hai (Hindustani) "Everything is all right (okay) "

tamasha (Hindustani) An entertainment, a show, a party, or
 a celebration.

teek hai (Hindustani) "It's all right (okay) "

Urdu (Hindustani) The Persianized form of the Hindustani
 language. The word itself means "army camp." It was the
 lingua franca of the Indian Army, and is now the official
 language of Pakistan.

zindabad (Hindustani) An emphatic exclamation expressing
 approbation, 'hurrah for'

Note Though the more prevalent American spelling "Moslem"
 has been used throughout this book, "Muslim" is closer to
 the correct pronunciation.

THIMAYYA OF INDIA

CHAPTER I

MERCARA

General Thumayya had shot his tiger. The rest of us milled around him and the huge carcass. We felt that slight hysteria which follows the release of tension, and we all talked at once. Only Timmy said nothing. He stood quietly, a husky figure six feet three inches tall, but graceful even in a shapeless canvas jacket. Not that he was aloof. He was listening to us, smiling and occasionally laughing. Each of us was preoccupied with his own part in the recent drama and was trying to tell his story to the others. Timmy's part, of course, was the only one that mattered. I suppose every tiger shoot is dramatic, but his would have an added touch, a certain flair to distinguish it from all others.

The beat itself had been quite ordinary. It took place in the *Terai* that belt of flat, marshy land along the base of the Himalayas. The thick grass here grows ten feet high, a dun colored ocean dotted with islands of stunted trees.

Timmy had sat in a *machan*—a platform built about 15 feet up in a tree. A 20-yard semicircle in front—the "fire lane"—had been cleared by elephants, who trampled down the grass. In nearby trees were the "stops," villagers armed with sticks. The position of the stops formed an alley that funneled toward Timmy's tree. The rest of us made the beat. We were 50 people on 12 elephants. We had moved forward in a line across the width of the far end of the funnel. If the tiger tried to escape through the sides, the stops beat their sticks, keeping the beast moving toward the *machan*.

The elephants trembled when they smelled the tiger. They emitted hysterical little shrieks. They curled back their tender

trunks They made peculiar dancing motions with their front legs To keep the elephants moving forward, the mahouts jabbed them with cruel iron prods

The elephant I had drawn was a young tusker, inadequately trained His howdah was only a mattress roped to his back An Indian lieutenant and I clung to the rope while the huge beast twirled, stamped, joggled, and danced The head *shikari* (professional hunter), riding in the center of the beat, screamed Punjabi profanity at us every time our elephant broke the line I was more frightened of the elephant than of the unseen tiger I sensed that my companion was equally terrified.

But then we heard two shots from Timmy's heavy rifle Immediately every elephant and human froze We waited for the signal from Timmy's whistle

A single blast from the whistle was dreaded the most. It would indicate that the tiger had been wounded and had turned back into the beat. The animal would attack the people on the first elephant he saw In the grass he could not be seen until he leaped Even with a perfectly trained elephant and expert shots, someone was almost sure to be killed

Two blasts were the best signal, it meant that the tiger was dead

The last signal was also dreaded Three blasts meant that the tiger was wounded but had gone on beyond the beat. The shooter then would take an elephant alone and track the wounded animal, for days if necessary, until he had found and killed it.

When Timmy blew twice on his whistle, therefore, the relief was tremendous We shouted like maniacs Even the elephants trumpeted happily We now moved on quickly to the *machan*. Although the elephants trembled again and tended to back away from the dead tiger, they were made to kneel so that we could dismount

We learned from Timmy that the shoot had not happened as expected. The drive had been planned so that the tiger would be driven out on the left side of the fire lane, where Timmy would have the easiest angle for shooting Instead, the tiger came out on the right side By the time Timmy turned around,

the tiger was beyond the tree Timmy shot, but missed. At the sound, the tiger should have streaked off, running at full speed for miles This tiger, however, acted out of character At the shot, he stopped, turned back, spotted Timmy, and charged Timmy could see only the enormous head and the red burning eyes At seven yards, just as the animal was about to leap, Timmy fired his other bullet The slug hit the tiger between the eyes The great beast stopped in his tracks When we came up to the tiger, the fire was gone from his eyes, but he was still crouched to spring, and his huge slavering mouth with its ghastly fangs was open in a soundless roar. Timmy climbed down calmly from the tree

The head *shikari*, however, was far from calm He was a big fat Sikh His turban was coming unwound He was running everywhere, waving his arms and bellowing orders Now he rushed at Timmy and gripped him in a bear hug "I swear it! That tiger was meant solely for General," the *shikari* said "He will measure ten feet two inches" Timmy looked doubtful as he extricated himself, and the *shikari* added, "I'm *telling* you! Ten two Between pegs"

"That's fine," Timmy said "Now we can get started on leopard I want six of them"

"Leopard!" the *shikari* said He spat in disgust. "Eight-ten leopard you will get Guaranteed Hundred per cent But tomorrow we beat for the mate to this tiger"

The tiger looked really dead now He hung across the spine of the protesting elephant like 500 pounds of boneless meat He stank like the distilled essence of all the zoos in the world

As we prepared to leave, Timmy beckoned to me and to the young lieutenant. "You two ride back with me," he said I felt a rush of relief at not having to remount the vicious tusker But then I was aware of amazement that, despite the excitement, Timmy alone had seen that we were unhappy on our elephant Long ago, I had given up trying to figure out how he sensed such situations, and now I was only grateful The lieutenant *showed similar gratitude and, also, delight at the honor of riding with his general*

The elephants wound single file through the tall grass toward

a violent tropical sunset. They moved with a smooth, steady gait that made us sleepy. On the beast in front, the dead tiger drooped, its enormous head swinging loosely and dripping blood. The trunk of the elephant behind us snaked through the grass searching for tasty bits. The *shikari* was on this elephant, and he still had not stopped talking, his prophecy concerning the size of Timmy's tiger had reached ten feet four inches. "I'm telling you!" he shouted.

"If the measurement reaches ten feet, I'll be surprised," Timmy said to me. "And its mate, of course, will be even smaller." He glanced at the *shikari* behind us. He smiled but shook his head. "I suppose I'll have to buy the leopard skins," he added.

"Obviously the *shikari* thinks that tiger is the only proper game for you," I said. I knew that Timmy was not really avid for *shikar* (hunting). He had begun it recently, along with golf, because he no longer felt up to polo and football. Also, he loved the jungle and he liked to get away from office files during his infrequent vacations. "But why are you suddenly anxious to slaughter the poor leopards?" I asked.

In reply, Timmy took a letter from his pocket and handed it to me. The letter was from London from a British major general who asked Timmy politely to shoot six leopards and to send him the skins.

The skins, Timmy explained, were needed by the bagpipe band of the major general's parent regiment, the H.L.I. (Highland Light Infantry). The drummers in Scottish regimental pipe bands have leopard fur as part of their dress outfits. Nowadays, an adequate supply of the traditional furs is a problem.

Previously, a British regiment's various battalions took turns serving abroad throughout the empire. For sport, the Scottish officers in an overseas battalion shot the leopards necessary for their bands.

But the British Empire is shrinking, and now few such regiments have battalions stationed in leopard country. The skins, of course, can be purchased, preferably, however, the animals are shot by the regiment's officers—or ex-officers.

Thimayya is an ex-officer of the H.L.I. But he was with the

unit for only a year, and that was a quarter of a century ago. The H.L.I. is not his parent regiment. He is certainly not Scottish, as an Indian he is no longer even a British subject, and his loyalty is to a different armed force.

"It seems to me that the major general is presumptuous," I said.

But Thumayya shook his head. He explained that the British pride of regiment is such that the major general could make the request without embarrassment, assuming that Thumayya would be honored. "And he is right. I'm not only honored, I'm delighted," Timmy said. "And that's what bothers me. I can't think of one reason why I should be."

On the contrary, one might think he had reason to be bitter against the British. When Thumayya was graduated from the Royal Military College, just after World War I, Indian officers were subject to discrimination. The British then had no intention of giving up their hold on the subcontinent. Officer training for Indians, therefore, was against policy. Only pressure from Indian nationalists, plus the officer shortage as a result of the war, forced the authorities to allow the training to Indians—and these were kept to the fewest possible.

In those days, the bulk of British military power in the subcontinent was in the so-called Indian Army—sepoys, or native Indians, officered by British. In addition, the forces contained a few wholly British Army units. The officers of these units were socially superior to those of the Indian Army. By custom, a subaltern intended for the Indian Army spent his first year with a British regiment. The idea was that thereby he would learn something of the traditions, manners, and attitudes befitting an officer in His Majesty's forces. Most British Army officers felt that this training in mess life of Indian Army subalterns was a grubby task. They looked down their long noses at the British intended for the Indian Army, but they regarded the Indian subalterns as insufferable.

When Thumayya was ready for his year's assignment to a British Army mess, a battalion of the H.L.I. had just arrived in India. Of the British Army units then in India, the H.L.I. was the most exalted. The individual officers were of impeccable

social background, most were independently wealthy, and some had titles. Even the British in India—officers, officials, and merchants alike—were in awe of these elegant Scots. The possibility of Thumayya's assignment to the H.L.I., therefore, was remote. The fact that it did take place probably could be explained only by a clerical error.

If the H.L.I. officers were surprised at his posting, however, they were too polite to show it. In fact, Thumayya got along with them splendidly and he enjoyed his year with them. Nevertheless, at the time, the idea that a social group as omnipotent as the H.L.I. officers would one day be unable to shoot their own leopards in India was inconceivable. Moreover, a subaltern in any army is a low form of life, but an Indian subaltern in a regiment like the H.L.I. could scarcely claim the privilege of breathing. The social distance between Thumayya and the elegant Scottish noblemen who were his fellow officers could not be measured. The idea then that one of them would become only a two-star general while Thumayya achieved four stars, and that Thumayya would be in a position to do the regiment even a small favor, would have seemed fantastic.

Fantastic or not, the times did change. The major general's letter was one of the dramatic symbols of the change. As such, it could claim from Thumayya a moment of wonder at how the mighty were fallen, and he might legitimately feel a touch of sentimentality. The letter, however, went deeper. It caused him mixed emotions, a confusion of values.

The confusion, I think, is familiar to all thoughtful citizens of new countries. Until 1947, Indians were subjects of the British Crown. Their position in the British social structure was humiliating and they did not like it, but everyone knew precisely what he was. Today, they are citizens of the Republic of India. Just how an Indian is to be identified, however, is no longer simple. Is he a Hindi speaking, *dhoti* wearing, vegetarian Hindu? Is he really an Englishman with a caste name, a sun tan, and a different passport? Is he a mixture of different cultures, foreign and domestic, ancient and modern, or is he something separate? Is he in the process of becoming a new person, or is he reverting to an older identifiable type? The answers to such questions by

a British chief commissioner headed Coorg's government in the capital of Mercara. But the Coorgs never considered the British their conquerors, nor did the British commissioner act as a ruler. The Coorgs retained their tribal laws and customs. The British brought efficient administration and security from marauders. Thus the Coorgs had the advantages but not the disadvantages of the British Raj. Their prosperity increased. Even today, Coorg coffee and rice, citrus fruit, teak and sandalwood, cardamon and black pepper are world famous.

Thumayya was born in 1906 in Mercara. His father was of the Koodendera clan, his mother of the Chepudera clan, both among the most respected in the little county. The Coorg system of names is based on the clan rather than on the family. A child carries first his clan name, next his own given name, and, for further identification, his father's given name. Thus, Thumayya's full name is Koodendera (clan name), Subayya (his given name), Thumayya (his father's given name). This system confused the British, and when he went to a British school, he was told that his father's name should be his surname. He therefore became Thumayya, although Koodendera probably is closer to the Western concept of a family name.

The family was large. There were six children, three boys and three girls. Thumayya was the second boy. They lived in a mansion that sprawled through gardens on a hillside near Mercara. The house was called "Sunnyside," thereby showing British influence. But the warmth, affection, and intimacy of the family relationship were more Indian than British. The family were prosperous coffee planters. The household was dominated by Thumayya's maternal grandfather. Thumayya hardly remembers his grandmother except as a dignified old lady who glided silently through the house on mysterious errands. His mother told him later that the old lady was more powerful around the house than appearances indicated. Nevertheless, it was the grandfather's nose and bluster that impressed the children.

The house would wake with an ominous rumble at five in the morning. The nose descended until six. At that hour the grandfather mounted a huge Australian horse and, accom-

panied by assistants, galloped out to the coffee plantations seven miles away. Then the house quieted down to a leisurely routine that was dominated by the activities of the children.

At seven in the evening, however, they would hear the first faint hoofbeats echoing down the valley as the grandfather and his men returned. The sound electrified the household. Servants rushed about with last-minute straightening up. Cooking fires were started, and water for baths was heated. The children were caught, cleaned, and admonished to behave themselves.

Meanwhile, the sound of the galloping horses grew louder. Finally, with a thunder of hoofs and flying gravel, the grandfather rode up the drive as though leading a cavalry charge. At full gallop he threw himself from his horse onto the veranda, bellowing orders. Thumayya thought it was both wonderful and terrifying.

For an hour the house was tensely quiet as the grandfather soaked in his bath. When he emerged, wearing a skullcap and a loose gown, the house reached the climax of noise and confusion. His orders and his comments on business and domestic problems, the day's news, and the sorry state of the younger generation were delivered in a voice that could rattle windows. He was enthroned on a sofa. A bottle of whisky was put at his side like a scepter. And for the rest of the evening he held a regal *darbar*. Business was negotiated, family affairs settled, and friends entertained. The shouting and laughter went on long after the children's bedtime—it went on, Thumayya thinks, until his grandfather's bottle of whisky was a very dead soldier.

Because of this daily excitement, religious festivals did not cause any great stir in the children's lives. Although nominally the Coorgs are Hindu, they have been touched only lightly by Hindu customs. Their religion is really a form of ancestor worship. Coorgs are taught to respect their forefathers, whose virtues they are meant to emulate. A Coorg household usually has a family shrine in which a light representing the spirits of the ancestors is kept burning.

Nevertheless, Coorgs do have a delightful harvest festival called *Hutri*. It occurs in November when the rice is ready for cutting. The first cutting takes place on a full moon night.

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Nevertheless, Coorgs do have a delightful harvest festival called *Hutri*. It occurs in November when the rice is ready for cutting. The first cutting takes place on a full moon night.

Everyone goes into the fields and cuts a few sheaves. The children play riotous games in the moonlight. The first sheaves then are carried home. A few are taken to the family shrine in honor of the ancestors. The family elder may say a few words about the worthiness of his forefathers. Other sheaves are tied to doorways and to bedposts. Next the feasting begins. The children are soon sent to bed, but the adults have parties at which the dancing and drinking go on until dawn.

The year's real climax, however, came soon after *Hutri* when the coffee was ready for sale. For days previously, the acres of scarlet beans had been drying in the sun. The air was filled with bright color, pungent fragrance, and excitement. When the crop finally had been put into bags, hundreds of bullock carts carried the coffee to the seaport of Mangalore. Each bullock wore brass bells in its harness. The caravan, protected by armed riders against bandits, moved only at night, to avoid the day's heat. All night long, the tinkling of thousands of bells, the singing and shouting of the drivers, and the screech of wooden axles echoed through the hills. In Mangalore was the excitement of what, to the children, was a huge city with exotic sights and strange seaport smells. Then there were the auctions at Volkart Brothers or at Pierce Leslie—much dust and confusion, the chanting of coolies, the singsong shouting of the auctioneers, and the grave discussions among the businessmen.

In those days in India, banks and paper money were scarce. Business was transacted mostly in silver one-rupee coins. Thus when the crop had been sold, bags of coins were loaded into the bullock carts, and the long journey back into the hills began. The arrival home with the money was a moment of joy, for indeed the family's living for the next year depended upon the success of the transaction and the safety of the journey. The bags were taken one at a time from the carts. To test for counterfeits, each coin was banged on the stone floor of the veranda. Inevitably a few spurious rupees were discovered—to be greeted by the grandfather with a volley of curses. Next the counting began. Even the children participated in the chore. The coins were put into stacks of ten and wrapped in newspaper. By the

time the last sack had been emptied, the great veranda was filled with long lines of the paper-wrapped stacks. When the final counting had been recorded, the job of removing the money to safekeeping began. In the grandmother's dressing room was an enormous iron chest fastened to a chain anchored into the wall masonry. The opening of this chest was always a ritual. The grandmother would fumble for her great key ring. She would choose the key reluctantly, mumbling and shaking her head as though no good could come from opening the chest. She allowed no one to help her as she struggled with the lid. The children were permitted only a quick glimpse into the fascinating contents. When the stacks of coins had been packed away, the children believed that all the wealth in the world must be in that chest. The whole job required an entire day, during which the children were as busy as the adults. Thus they all felt a strong sense of family solidarity and security. Another year of comfort and prosperity was assured.

As they grew older, the children realized that the nearby British occupied a unique position in the society. Physically, they seemed little different. Also they were occupied much the same as the Coorgs, but they dressed differently, and the children thought they spoke English with a funny accent. Something in their manner impressed the children, however, and without knowing why, they were rather in awe of their British neighbors.

Nevertheless the first two British Thumayya remembered seeing were in awe of his grandfather. They were the Wright brothers, young English planters who had recently arrived in Coorg. Thumayya was four years old when they visited Sunnyside. He should have been in bed, but he had escaped from his nurse, or *ayah* and was hiding behind his grandfather's sofa. For once the grandfather was silent. Thumayya peered out curiously at the two oddly dressed men. He understood nothing of what was said but he sensed that the strangers were embarrassed. Finally his grandfather shouted for his wife and told her to get 10 000 rupees. A chance to see the strongbox was an event, so Thumayya followed the old lady. That amount of money in silver was a heavy load and she permitted the boy

to help. He saw the Englishmen take the money and heard them stammer their gratitude. The grandfather dismissed their thanks with a wave of his hand.

No record of the loan was made, and no one else in the family knew of it. Thus, several years later, Thumayya's mother was amazed to receive 10,000 rupees from the brothers. Thumayya learned then that their first attempt at planting had failed. Asking no security and without even knowing the brothers, his grandfather had helped them to a new start, from which the Englishmen prospered. They became close friends of the family and were especially kind to the children. Thumayya remembers going to their house for English style tea and being told stories about his grandfather. The children looked upon the Wright brothers as uncles.

This was typical of the relationship between the British and Coorg planters. The two groups met on an equal plane. Feelings of like or dislike between them were personal rather than social. Both groups were confronted with the same problems. They shared their tools and coolie labor, they borrowed from and traded with each other freely.

The most superior Englishman in Coorg was the chief commissioner. In young Thumayya's time, the commissioner was a small, dignified man who was respected by Thumayya's father. This Englishman advised the elder Thumayya about the boys' education. It happened, however, that he was not consulted when the decision was made to send young Thumayya and his brother to St. Joseph's College in Coonoor.

The boys were the first Coorgs—in fact the first Indians—to be admitted to this school. Thumayya's brother was eight and Thumayya himself was six, but neither had a clear notion of what school was. What intrigued them was the prospect of the 275 mile trip to Coonoor.

At the time that trip was an adventure for anyone. For the first 75 miles to Mysore, they traveled by the Royal Mail, which was carried in a two-wheeled *tonga* drawn by Argentine mules. The area through which they went was infested with wild animals, including tigers and elephants. To keep the dangerous beasts away, the mules wore collars of bells, and a guard blew

frequently on a trumpet. The boys were strapped into the back of the *tonga* so that they could not be thrown out on the sharp curves of the hill road. The family's women were afraid for them. The women wept and fussed, but the grandfather only laughed. "Boys shouldn't be mollycoddled," he shouted. "The trip will make men of them."

The boys wanted the *tonga* ride to last forever—and it nearly did. The driver changed mules every fifteen miles. Also, the *tonga* broke down frequently. At every stop, the two passengers found something to fascinate them, so the driver and guard had to run them down and carry them, struggling and kicking, back to the cart. Thus, the 12 hour trip to Mysore took 20 hours, and they arrived at the railway station after midnight. Normally, a train ride would have been even more wondrous than the *tonga* journey, but they were too tired for new adventures.

The climax of their excited anticipation was their arrival at St. Joseph's College, where, except for holidays, they would spend their next six years. Their first glimpse of the place, however, filled them with foreboding.

The buildings were cold, damp, and ugly. The furnishings were functional only—neither comfortable nor decorative. But it was the other students that worried them most. The other boys were quiet and well behaved—too well behaved. They were cowed.

The lives of Thimayya and his brother were now ruled by the Brothers, who ran the school according to old-fashioned British theories. All but one of the Brothers were Irishmen. They were hard-faced ascetics in whom human compassion seemed to have been deliberately suppressed. They never smiled or spoke pleasantly. The boys sensed that the Brothers would deal sternly with the slightest deviation from their rigid behavior code.

The boys learned, on the first evening after their arrival, how sternly the Brothers enforced the code. In some room of the college a student was beaten. Even today, Thimayya says, he can still hear the screams of the poor child.

Within a few days, Thimayya had his own taste of St. Joseph's discipline. When he arrived, he could speak no English, and the Brothers knew no word of Coorgi. Communication therefore

was difficult, and Thimayya got along mostly by following the example of the other students. One evening, when he was in the line that marched to the dining hall, two of the Brothers yanked him out. They hurried him between them to one of their rooms, where, without explanation, he was given a thrashing. Thimayya did not feel the pain, he was too astonished to realize what was happening to him. Nor did he ever find out what he had done wrong.

The experience did make him learn English rapidly. He found, however, that the knowledge was little protection against the punishments, which, according to the old ideas, were considered necessary to education. Even more dreadful than the beatings was to be made to stand for hours at a time in a certain cold, dark, and frightening corner of the dormitory building, some of the students would collapse after only an hour or two, evidently out of sheer terror. But the worst punishment of all was meted out in the chapel. The young criminal was made to kneel with bare knees on broken glass and to pray until the Brothers decided that their god had been sufficiently placated. Thimayya still has faint scars on his knees from the few times he endured this ordeal.

Eventually, Thimayya realized that punishment at St. Joseph's was not meant as a corrective measure. Indeed, the students were much too cowed to misbehave deliberately. Punishment was meant to instill fear—fear of the Brothers and, through them, fear of the Lord. In the old orthodox Christianity, earth was a vale of tears, and the Lord meant it thus. Suffering was good for the soul. Joy and beauty were inventions of the devil to tempt the weak into sin and thus were to be eschewed.

Sin was the primary preoccupation of the Brothers. The students were filthy with it, especially the "heathens." To cleanse the young sinners, they were taken daily to the chapel in the cold dawn. The Latin service was incomprehensible to the Coorg boys. The students were not expected to participate, so that the mere act of sitting silently through the ceremony was discipline in itself. In that bleak chapel where the blood-dripping form of Christ tortured on the cross hung above them, the

ceremony seemed to Thimayya a horrible and mysterious rite in which human sacrifice could well be a part

The theme of sacrifice and suffering, sin and retribution, was carried further in the religious teaching the boys were given daily This consisted mostly of lurid descriptions of hell, where sinners dwelt with horrid fiends who tortured them mercilessly throughout eternity Thimayya gathered that the best a heathen like him could expect was purgatory, which he pictured as a frozen wasteland where wraithlike figures wandered lost and aimless

But the system reached the climax of cruelty in its social groupings The school's 300 students, mostly Anglo-Indians and the sons of the poorer planters and traders, were divided into four classes on a basis of economic and social position The highest class was called the "parlor boarders" This rank was held by only two boys—Thimayya and his brother They had private bedrooms and shared a parlor Also, although they ate in the dining room, they had their own table, and the food they were served was of better quality and in greater quantity than that given to the others They received less punishment and were allowed small privileges that set them apart

Next were the first-class boarders They came from middle-class families and slept in the dormitory Their food was inferior, and they were reminded frequently that they had less status than the two Coorgs

The second-class boarders were made to feel even more inferior The food they received was downright bad But the third-class boys were really miserable Most of them were orphans They received the *full benefit of medieval discipline* The daily ration for a third-class boarder was a cup of porridge, a cup of broth, and two pieces of stale bread Eating in the same room with these hungry children became unbearable, the others wrapped their scraps and gave them secretly to the boys, but Thimayya is still haunted by the memory of their suffering

Ultimately, St. Joseph's was brought up to date and became a fine school Moreover, even at the time, neither Thimayya nor his brother was unhappy there At home the boys had

nothing but affection and security, so that they could not believe seriously in pain and suffering. Also, the school did have compensations.

The scholastic standards, for example, were high. The Brothers stood for no nonsense about studies. The boys acquired a solid groundwork in learning, and were kept too busy to feel sorry for themselves.

Again, one of the Brothers was quite human. He was the instructor in athletics and the only Englishman among the teachers. Sports were not to be enjoyed, of course, they were to harden the boys physically and to keep their minds from evil thoughts. Nevertheless, this Brother made the games fun. Thus, sports became almost an obsession with every student. The boys achieved exceptional standards, especially in hockey. Thimayya was big for his age, and he had a flair for athletics. He acquired a skill in sports that stood him in good stead for many years.

Finally, Thimayya and his brother were able to escape the school's grim atmosphere on weekends. After the first year, their sisters and female cousins were sent to a nearby convent school. The convent nuns were sweet and gentle, everything that the Brothers were not. The nuns always welcomed the two boys, gave them delicious things to eat, and allowed them to have picnics and parties with the girls.

As a result, Thimayya learned at an early age to get along socially with the opposite sex. This may seem a small matter, but the custom throughout India was to keep the sexes separated until marriage. Thus unmarried Indian boys and girls invariably were painfully gauche in each other's company. Western dance music was just becoming popular with Indians, and it was the craze with the older girls. Thimayya and his brother were about the only dance partners their girl relatives had. At home, during vacations, the boys learned ballroom dancing thoroughly. Thimayya even learned to play the piano a little and to sing popular songs. Such accomplishments mean little today, but in India around World War I they were unusual and had a decided effect on Thimayya's career.

The next step in Thimayya's career came when he was twelve

When he returned to Mercara for holidays, his knees were still bandaged from a recent ordeal on broken glass in the chapel. By this time he had become so toughened that the cuts meant nothing. It had never occurred to him to complain, he had assumed that such punishments were standard in all schools. Thus when his parents questioned him, he explained about the cuts casually. At the time, Thumayya did not realize how shocked his parents were. The English chief commissioner of Coorg was equally upset. Nothing was said to Thumayya immediately, but a few weeks later he and his brother were told that they would finish school at Bishop Cotton's in Bangalore.

Bishop Cotton, some decades previously, had established two Anglican schools in India. Generally, British officials sent their sons home, even for primary education. Anglo-Indian boys were in the majority at the Bishop Cotton schools. A few British boys from missionary and planter families also were enrolled, but until Thumayya and his brother went there, no Indians had entered the schools. Nevertheless, these schools were considered the very best in India.

For this reason, Thumayya and his brother assumed that the school would be even more strict than St. Joseph's. They preferred the devil they knew and were unhappy about the change.

Moreover, their introduction to the school was far from reassuring. While they waited in the compound until their parents completed the registration, a group of the other students gathered around in silent curiosity. Finally, the biggest student said to his friend, "God, man! What is the school coming to when they have started taking niggers into it?"

Thumayya vaguely knew the term "nigger", he thought it meant a low type of black man, and he knew that he and his brother were meant to be insulted. The boy who had made the remark, however, was darker skinned than they were. Thumayya's tendency would have been to clarify the definition before taking action. But his brother was more volatile, he promptly drew back and let fly with a left hook that knocked the big boy back into the crowd. Taking his brother's cue, Thumayya leapt at the other student. In a moment, the two brothers had both students on the ground. Just then the warden intervened. Upon

learning that the Coorg brothers had struck the first blows, he took them to his office, lectured them, and gave their backsides a few whacks with a cane

The thrashing was nothing compared to the beatings they had received at St. Joseph's. Nevertheless, no punishment had hurt more. At St. Joseph's, punishments were arbitrary, like an act of God—no worse really than a twisted ankle or a skinned knee from football. They had never felt guilty about the punishments—only unlucky.

The warden at Bishop Cotton's, however, pointed out that the boys had been wrong to strike the first blows, and he punctuated his viewpoint with the thrashing. The boys could not agree that they had been wrong. Thus they felt they were exposed to injustice. When the punishment was over, Thumayya and his brother walked out of the school and back to the hotel. No matter how their parents pleaded, the boys refused to return.

Finally the headmaster and the warden were called in to reason with them. The boys expected stern reproof. To their astonishment, however, the masters treated the whole affair as a joke. The boys had never known teachers who laughed. It was pointed out that fighting on the school grounds was forbidden. If a fight did occur, he who struck the first blow would be punished, regardless of what the fight had been about. That was the law. And to one who broke the law, a caning would follow as inevitably as night the day. But that was no cause for distress. In fact, the boys were told that the spirit they had shown was admirable. The headmaster even asked Thumayya's brother to demonstrate the left hook! Who could resist such blandishment, especially when followed by ice cream, cakes, and chocolate?

The boys returned to Bishop Cotton's school, and to their further astonishment discovered that it was wonderful. They lived in a dormitory, but it was comfortably and attractively furnished. They soon learned that no class distinctions were permitted, everyone received the same just treatment. The food was plentiful and good. The teachers were serious—some were religious and a few were stern—but they all could be pleasant, and they tried to make the students enjoy the school.

Best of all, the Coorg boys discovered that the fight had brought them prestige rather than discredit with the other students. Even the two boys whom they had fought became their friends. Sports were important here as well, but Thumayya's previous training was such that he now excelled in athletics. He starred in hockey, football, and tennis.

Finally, at Bishop Cotton's, the boys were exposed for the first time to a formal relationship with girls from nearby schools. Dances and picnics were arranged. The other boys were still self-conscious in mixed company, but not Thumayya. When it was discovered that he knew the latest dance steps and tunes, his popularity was assured.

Even Christianity took on new meaning for him. The chapel was decorated with flowers instead of with lurid crucifixes and suffering saints. Thumayya was not forced to attend the service, but because it was in English and because the congregation participated in it, he found that he attended out of choice.

He especially enjoyed the singing, and eventually found himself in the choir. The choirmaster appreciated Thumayya's enthusiasm and took pains to develop the boy's voice. Thumayya did well in the choir until it was discovered he was not a Christian. Religious regulation disqualified the singing of hosannas by heathens. The choirmaster was disappointed at the prospect of losing Thumayya's energetic vocalizing. He asked if the boy would mind being baptized. Thumayya thought it was a small price to pay for the fun of making such loud and pleasant noises and agreed. As an afterthought, however, Thumayya was advised to write to his parents about it.

What an uproar the letter caused! Thumayya's parents stormed into Bangalore. Conferences were called and inquisitions established. Ultimately, the fact that no pressure had been applied to convert him became apparent, and the turmoil simmered down. Thereafter he could not sing with the choir on formal religious occasions.

He compensated for this musical gap by joining the Boy Scouts, where he learned to play the bugle. This was his first experience in a disciplined force. He took naturally to drill and

marching. When he paraded past the girls' schools, his back stiffened, his chest puffed out, and the blast from his bugle became superbly martial.

From the Boy Scouts he graduated into the Auxiliary Force India. Only Europeans and Anglo-Indians were allowed in this force, but an exception was made in the case of Thimayya and his brother. Thimayya now had real army training. Every Sunday a company from a locally stationed Scottish battalion marched through Bangalore's streets to church. The bagpipes screamed while kilts swung and flags snapped in rhythm. Thimayya took to following the soldiers, marching beside them, copying their precision and learning the orders. This helped him in his drill with the Auxiliary Force, and he rose quickly from the ranks.

In addition to the sports and drill, Thimayya also starred in the other schoolboy extracurricular activity, mischief. He had been suppressed so thoroughly at St. Joseph's that the sudden release at Bishop Cotton's had an explosive effect. Thus, he achieved a deadly accuracy at dropping paper bags of water onto the heads of masters walking two stories below. Equally accurate was his aim with a spitball fired from a rubber band. He knew the routes and watches of the proctors and warden so thoroughly that he could enter or leave the grounds at any time of day or night without getting caught. He knew the greatest number of ways of disrupting a class. Compared to such achievements, his deficiency in studies seemed unimportant.

The masters, fortunately, never quite gave him up. They pleaded and reasoned with him. They caned him. And they wrote scathingly of his deportment to his parents. "You grow more like your grandfather every day," his mother said, and added, "What a pity!"

But he was too happy to worry. And despite unimpressive marks, he graduated at the age of fifteen.

By this time his attitude toward the British had changed. As a child he had recognized superficial differences in dress and speech, but he considered the British the same as the Coorgs. At St. Joseph's he saw them as a master race, they were haughty

disciplinarians with a brutal religion. At Bishop Cotton's he saw them as warmly human again, but they seemed wiser and more gifted than his own people. He admired them.

He admired most their social life. From his dormitory window at Bishop Cotton's, he could look down into the Bangalore United Services Club next door. Every Saturday night the club held a great ball, which Thumayya watched as long as his eyes could stay open. General Sir Hore Ruthven, the district commander, would arrive in a carriage with his aide-de-camp and his pretty twin daughters, and the gaiety would begin. The lights were bright and cheerful. The merry games and dancing, the drinking and laughing, would go on until dawn. The officers looked magnificent in their gaudy uniforms, and the women were proudly beautiful in their lovely gowns. Thumayya longed for the day when he could participate in such gaiety.

But his chance to participate seemed slight. Among Indian families, social life was restricted generally to quiet gatherings of relatives and close friends. Even in Mercara, where the British lived in neighborly co-operation, the British had their own club and their own kind of social life.

The difference was that the British social life was on a community basis. Within their group, they organized dances, parties, receptions, and balls. Besides dancing, they had parties to play cards, charades, and other fascinating games, to listen to or to play music, to eat special food, or just to drink whisky. They had polo matches, horse races, gymkhanas (athletic contests), *shikar*, group sports, and spectator sports. They held treasure hunts, musicales, recitals, concerts, and dramatic shows. And all their functions were lavishly performed.

Thus when Thumayya finished school, he knew only that when he grew up he wanted to live as the British did. He had no ideas about a career. The masters had talked to him of Oxford or Cambridge, but he knew that his marks had not been good enough for entrance. He supposed that he would learn to help run the family plantations, but the prospect was unexciting, and he thought little about it.

Meanwhile, his family must have been giving much thought

to his future. He had been home a few days when he was called into his parents' room. 'My son,' his mother said, "what would you think of joining the Indian Army?'

Her question stunned Thumayya. This was simply because it opened up a world which he had not thought of before but which immediately struck him as being just what he wanted.

The Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College at Dehra Dun was being opened. The cadets would be trained for the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, in England, and from there would go into Indian regiments. From the Madras area, which for this purpose, included Coorg, only one boy was to be chosen for the college. Thumayya now lived in an agony of fear that someone else would get the appointment.

By this time, his English was perfect. English manners were second nature to him. He was five feet nine, physically hard, and a good athlete. These, rather than scholastic ability, were the essential qualifications. He was chosen. He prepared for the 2,000 mile journey to Dehra Dun—a journey from which there would be no returning.

Ultimately, he would get his wish to participate in the glamorous British social life. By that time, however, his relations with the British would have taken on new dimensions that would make all else seem trivial.

CHAPTER II

DEHRA DUN

The journey from Mercara to Dehra Dun gave Thumayya his first real glimpse of India. The many varieties of people fascinated him, and he gasped in awe at his first sight of the Himalayas.

His father, who accompanied him, however, did not seem interested in the sights. He knew that in North India the relations between Indians and British were different, and he was worried for his son. At the Dehra Dun station they were met by the college president, Mr. Scott, a distinguished Oxonian, and his beautiful wife. They welcomed the Thumayyas and took them to their house for tea. At first Thumayya's father was suspicious and aloof, but the Scotts were so gracious that he soon thawed. Before long all four were chatting like old friends. Then the Scotts' eight-year-old daughter came in. She was an adorable child—in fact she became the favorite of the college—and she won the elder Thumayya's heart. She also dispelled his doubts about the suitability of the college. As he left, he admonished his son to give up mischievous ways and to work hard.

Mr. Scott turned young Thumayya over to Mr. Kittermaster, who was to be the boy's section master. Kittermaster also represented the best English public school type. In addition, he was a superb athlete. He had just come to India, in fact, Thumayya was the first Indian boy he had met. On the way to the dormitory, he asked Thumayya questions that seemed curious because of their naivete. How many wives did Thumayya have? Did he believe that widows should throw themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres? Did he eat meat? By the time they reached

the dormitory, Thimayya began to have doubts about Mr Kittermaster

Moreover, Kittermaster handled awkwardly the introducing of 32 cadets to one another. Admittedly the boys were a diversified group. All of them were ill at ease. Kittermaster strained to band them into a group. Thimayya sensed rising resentment toward the Englishman. Then, at the worst moment, Kittermaster committed a blunder that would either cement his relations with the boys—or would break them irrevocably.

In India the Western custom of using tissue paper in the bathroom is not followed, instead, water is used. To carry the water, everyone has his own *lotha*, a little brass pot with a spout. During the awkward moment with Mr Kittermaster, one of the boys took his *lotha* and began to leave the room.

But Kittermaster stopped him. "Where are you going with that teapot?" he asked. "Why don't you share it? I could use a cup."

There was a stunned silence before the cadets burst into laughter. Kittermaster looked at them in astonishment. When he was told about the *lotha*, however, his face went tomato red. He made an effort to maintain his dignity, but he failed. He too began to laugh. By laughing at himself he won over the boys, and from then on they liked him.

They also liked the college itself. Dehra Dun lies at an altitude of 2 000 feet at the foot of the Himalayas. At night they could see the lights of Mussoorie, a hill resort a few miles to the north but a mile above them. The college was surrounded by green meadows and forests of bamboo and pine. The buildings were in the English country style: red tile roofs, black beams, and whitewashed walls. They were surrounded by lovely gardens and playing fields.

The college was given to the cadets because of circumstances dating from 1918, when the Indian nationalist movement was first being established as a political force. Indianization of the Indian Army was one of the nationalists' demands. Reluctantly, the British opened a military college at Indore in 1918. Sixty cadets attended and were soon commissioned. In addition, another six Indian boys were chosen directly from universities and schools. The total hardly constituted Indianization, in fact, the

number was insufficient to make up for normal attrition, *i.e.*, those who died or who for one reason or another left the service. Thus, within four years, only a handful of Indian officers were left.

The British obviously were uneasy about giving officer training to Indians. Because of the massacre in Amritsar in 1919 and, a year later, the civil-disobedience movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, the British had lost self-confidence in the strength of their position in India. Moreover, they could not forget the mutiny of Indian troops in 1857. They felt now that they could isolate the sepoy and prevent him from being infected with nationalism, but they were unsure of educated Indian officers. Thus only the persistent nationalists' pressure, plus the fact that World War I had nearly exhausted the supply of British officers, forced the British Raj to permit the training of Indian officers. At the time the British authorities believed that no Indian school could produce boys capable of the standards required at Sandhurst. The Military College at Dehra Dun, therefore, was established to bring a small number of Indians up to the necessary standards. The number of cadets at the college was to be increased to a hundred, but at first only 32 were enrolled.

The moment Thimayya met his 31 fellow cadets, he knew that they had not been chosen because of aptitude. Only those whose parents were, in the opinion of the authorities, utterly loyal to the British Raj had received appointment. The boys came from every corner of the subcontinent, and their cultural standards varied widely. The age limits for admittance were supposed to be from 15½ to 16½, Thimayya was a few months below the minimum, but others were at least 25 years old.

The cadets were separated into three sections named after famous Indian Army generals—Rawlinson, Roberts, and Kitchener. Thimayya was in the Rawlinson Section. He realized that the majority of the cadets came from families who were connected with the military and thus shared a similar background which was wholly unfamiliar to Thimayya. As a result, the friends he made at first were those who did not fit in with the majority.

There were six in his group. Two were Pathans, Amed Jan

and Khalid Jan, sons of a distinguished father in the Northwest Frontier Province. They were not particularly bright, but honest and straightforward. The three boys felt sorry for two Burmese, Maung Chu and Ba Yin. They were intelligent, but although they smiled, they were really lonely, they accepted friendly overtures gratefully. Finally, Dolvoy Srikant Lakshmi Kantaraj, nephew of the then Maharaja of Mysore, attached himself to Thimayya's group. He too felt out of place, he had been raised so delicately that being thrown with a group of boys on an equal basis was a harsh experience.

The group might have remained unpopular outsiders except for an incident that occurred on the third day in the college. The families of many cadets had accompanied the boys and instead of departing had settled down to enjoy the college's hospitality. Funds, however, had been allocated for only the 32 cadets. Thimayya's group, unfortunately, had chosen the end of the dining table that became known as starvation corner.

Sitting at the table next to Thimayya was a Punjabi boy who came from a small village where he had learned little about courtesy. When the dishes were passed to him, he shoveled all the remaining food onto his plate. Then, without apology, he handed Thimayya the empty dish. His other table manners were equally unpleasant. After three days of watching him feed while they had had nothing to eat except sweets bought at the tuck shop with their pocket money, Thimayya and his five friends developed a dislike for their neighbor. Dinner on that day was a rich curry. Its fragrance tortured the hungry boys as they watched the Punjabi plow into his full plate. Something in Thimayya snapped. He rose slowly from his chair. He heard a gasp from his friends, and one tried to pull him back, but he brushed the hand aside. He thinks that he intended to snatch the plate from under his neighbor's face and to dump its contents onto the boy's head. At that moment, however, he realized that the whole room had become suddenly silent. He glanced up to see the college commandant standing at the head of the table. Colonel J. L. Houghton, D.S.O., of the 11th Sikhs, was six feet three, and so haughty that the cadets were in awe of him. They rarely saw him, but now he was on an inspection

tour If the commandant had arrived three seconds later, Thimayya's military career undoubtedly would have been cut off then and there

"Is everyone happy?" the commandant asked

"No!" Thimayya shouted without thinking

The colonel's eyebrows raised "No, *what?*" he asked

"We're not happy We're starving"

The colonel descended to starvation corner He saw the six empty plates and the neighbor's full one He also saw the besmeared face of the young Punjabi The commandant turned on his heel and left the room without a word

A few minutes later, however, the six boys in starvation corner each received a four-egg omelet The next day the families of the other cadets disappeared By standing up to the colonel, the six boys found that they had acquired prestige

More important, from then on the cadets formed into groups of those who had manners and those who did not. Those who did not either learned fast or failed to pass

Most of those who failed to pass, however, lacked scholastic requirements Many had had little previous education Some were almost illiterate, and a few could speak no English Thimayya had been self-conscious about his unimpressive record at Bishop Cotton's, but now he found himself relatively an intellectual He was even singled out as an exceptional student With such encouragement, he worked harder and had no trouble with most of his studies

Other cadets could not pass the physical requirements Mohamed Zafar Alam was an example His father was the chief detective officer to the Viceroy Zafar was 25 years old, and to the other cadets was a man of the world He should have been a poet, in fact, he did compose magnificently in Urdu He also was a clever mimic He knew by heart the famous speeches of Gandhi, Jinnah, and other nationalists He could keep the boys spellbound with these speeches or have them rolling on the floor laughing at his droll stories He was the most brilliant student and popular cadet, but in sports or physical training he was hopeless Thimayya still remembers him padding helplessly on his big flat feet after a hockey ball or stum-

bling over them on the drill field Zafar Alam considered physical activity beneath his dignity, and he failed to graduate

Even worse than poor Zafar Alam was the Nawabzada Quadratulla Khan from Rampur He was handsome—too handsome—with a classical profile, fair skin, enormous black eyes, and wavy black hair, which he wore almost to his shoulders and which he daily spent hours combing He was also a scholar He and Zafar Alam could trade Urdu love poems by the hundreds The Nawabzada brought a special mattress and feather bolsters for the comfort of his soft body His comfort also required two servants, whose function was to massage him after his strenuous day

What first intrigued the cadets about Quadratulla were the mysterious things he ate He kept a silver *pandaan* in a kerosene tin under his bed Surreptitiously he would dip into his mixture of spices, pills, *pan*, and heaven knows-what, and eat it a spoonful at a time Finally the boys caught him at it Thumayya asked him why he did not share his sweets

"Ah, Timmy-bhai, this is not for youngsters like you," Quadratulla said "This is a very special stuff It must be taken in small quantity"

That was the finish of his special stuff As soon as he was asleep that night, the boys took it from under his bed and ate his whole year's supply It was rich and may well have contained ground jewels Thumayya assumed that it was *Royal Yakuti*, which he had seen advertised as meant to "overcome debility in rajas and millionaires" He expected the next day to have boundless energy, but he had only indigestion Quadratulla, when he discovered the loss, burst into tears and was disconsolate

He was more so a few days later when the boys took up the matter of his coiffeur The cadets had grown displeased with the way he combed his hair so meticulously One day, therefore, when Quadratulla was dozing in the barber's chair, Thumayya bribed the barber to shave his head When the Nawabzada woke and saw what had been done to him, he vented his wrath on the poor barber, whose very life the cadets had to protect

Thereafter, Quadratulla looked more soldierly, but his heart

was no longer in a military career. The end came later when the authorities made him send away personal servants and, worse, made him sleep on the regulation straw mattress. This was too much for him, and he returned to his family.

Even the sturdy Sikhs sent luxury-softened sons to the college. Mohinder of the famous Bedi clan was popular, and like Zafar Alam was older than the rest. Nevertheless, despite his warrior ancestors, he was incapable of co-ordinated physical activity. He would flounder around the football field complaining with eloquent bitterness. In the evenings, however, he could keep the boys enthralled with his singing. Before he too left the college he taught Thumayya several Punjabi songs, not a word of which Thumayya understood. Thumayya sang these songs for years afterward, and ladies especially seemed to enjoy them. He assumed, therefore, that they were sentimental. More years later, a Sikh officer on his staff translated them for him. To Thumayya's dismay, the songs were risqué. In fact, they were hair-raisingly obscene, and he still blushes to remember specific occasions when he innocently sang them.

Thumayya always had difficulty with North Indian languages. Even today, friends joke about his accent in Hindustani. The deficiency stemmed from an incompetent instructor, who first taught him Urdu at the college. The teacher was a humorless little *Maulvi* who lacked patience with non Moslem beginners in his course. Thumayya soon began spending the time in his class reading detective stories and chatting or playing cards with other like-minded Urdu scholars.

Even with these pastimes, the *Maulvi's* class was dull. He always wore a green coat, ultimately, in their ennui, the boys took to speculating on whether he had only one green coat or several exactly alike. Opinion on the subject was equally divided. One day, to settle the matter, Thumayya squirted some ink from his pen onto the back of the teacher's coat. Thereafter, the teacher continued to wear daily the one ink-spotted green coat. Eventually, however, he appeared in a white silk jacket. He went to the blackboard and wrote, "*Mera hara kot par sahai kisne dala?*" ("Who put ink on my green coat?") He asked the boys to write

the phrase a thousand times Today, General Thumayya says, these are the only Urdu words he can use with complete authority, but they did not help him much for a career in the Indian Army

More helpful to his career was his enthusiasm for sports Despite cadets like Zafar Alam, Quadratulla, and Mohunder, the college had some good athletes, and the instruction was excellent Squash, tennis, hockey, football, cricket, fencing, boxing, riding, and swimming were compulsory, and Thumayya was outstanding in all of them Near the end of the 18-month term, the college was visited by the Chief of the General Staff, Sir Claude Jacob The festivities included a cricket match Thumayya was in good form that day and scored a century He slugged a sixer, which landed among the spectators, nearly clouting the general Fortunately, the general was a keen cricketer himself Instead of holding rancor, therefore, he remembered Thumayya—a fact that was definitely an asset in Thumayya's future

The most important asset to the cadets' physical training was Sergeant Major Gorman, of the Durham Light Infantry He was a perfect example of that famous—but, alas, vanishing—breed of British drill instructors He was complete with beefy figure, crimson face, waxed mustache, a voice that could cause snow slides on the Himalayan slopes from Mussoorie into Tibet, and a command of profane invective that could sear the souls of sweating cadets

"Gawdammit, Quadratulla," he would bellow, "you look like a pregnant woman Have yer pups on yer own bloody time—not on my drill field"

"Mr Zafar, Gor bli me, are you trying to have *relations* with that wooden horse? Don't try to go *into* it. Go *over* it!"

"Come on, Thumayya, don't look at the ground You won't find yer commission there Look *up* for your star"

Thumayya's training with the Reserves helped him now, and he never really suffered from the sergeant major's brutal tongue In fact, he took to visiting the old soldier in the cottage at the college entrance, where the sergeant major's further duty was to see that the cadets were properly dressed when they went out

He would tell Thimayya wonderful stories of the old days in the British Army

Thimayya nearly lost the old man's friendship, however, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit to the college in 1922. Sergeant Major Gorman held a vast reverence for British royalty, and he was terrified that his Indian charges might disgrace him. For days previous to the visit, the cadets drilled until they were ready to drop. Actually, they had little to do but to stand in line during the royal inspection. The Prince was shorter than Thimayya, and when he came to Thimayya's place in line, the young cadet lowered his eyes to have a good look at the royal visitor.

The sergeant major caught the misdemeanor. After the parade he approached Thimayya, his face livid. "I saw you, Thimayya," he shouted. "Disgraceful! *Shame* on yer! Why did you lower your eyes?"

"I wanted to see the Prince of Wales," the boy answered.

A look of surprise came over the old soldier's face. He considered the answer and slowly deflated. "That's a good reason," he admitted finally. Then he collected himself and shouted, "But don't let it happen again."

The sergeant major was strongest when the cadets were at their weakest—six o'clock in the morning. They began their day with thirty minutes of physical training. Breakfast was at 6.30. The boys attended classes from 7.30 until 12.30. After lunch they rested and studied until 4.30, when the games and drill began. Before dinner at eight, they were allowed an hour of relaxation, during which they could stroll through the spacious grounds or collect for bull sessions in the tuck shop. When the dinner bugle sounded, they gathered in the anteroom, where the roll was called and orders for the day were read by the cadet captain.

The food was wholesome, but usually English dishes were served. The idea was to get the Indian boys used to the food they would receive at Sandhurst. Thimayya had already learned to eat it, but many cadets found it too bland to be satisfying. Even Thimayya considered it tasteless, but he got by because he liked milk, which the boys were supposed to drink and which

many of the cadets did not like Thumayya would pass a jug under the table and thereby collect at least an extra quart of milk with every meal

The period after dinner until lights-out at ten o'clock was the most pleasant of the day. The cadets collected in the dormitories for horseplay and relaxation. During this period they would make life miserable for types like poor Quadratulla. They would laugh at Zafar Alam's mimicry or listen wide-eyed to Mohinder's experiences with women. Thumayya's own contribution was popular. He had learned to play the mouth organ, and he knew most of the popular dance tunes. His friends would make him blow until he choked, while they sang these songs together.

Except for weekends, when they were allowed to go on picnics or to films, their only other relaxation was meant to be with the various religious programs. The few Christians among the cadets participated in church activity in town. At the college, however, rooms were set aside as a mosque for the Moslems, a *gurdwara* (shrine) for the Sikhs, and a *mandir* (temple) for the Hindus.

The Sikhs' service was the most interesting, and therefore the most popular. It was led by a six foot three-inch ex soldier. He read from the *Granth Sahib* with great forcefulness, and told exciting tales of army life. At the finish, fruit and sweets were served.

The Moslem service was almost as popular. The *mullah* also was an ex army man who made his sermons interesting.

But the Hindu service was dull. The *mandir* was a bare room with a cheap plaster *murthi* (idol) and a dusty lithograph picture on the wall. The service was led by a Brahman in a cotton *dhoti* with his hair in a topknot. He would sit with his back to the boys, throwing flower petals at the *murthi* and muttering Sanskrit *slokas* (verses) until time to leave. Soon the Hindu cadets were attending the Sikh and Moslem services.

One day the Brahman approached Thumayya, obviously having worked himself up into high dudgeon. By this time Thumayya was the cadet commander of his section and the senior

Hindu cadet. The Brahman blamed him for the lack of attendance at the service. Thimayya was setting a bad example for the others, and the Brahman criticized him bitterly.

Thimayya lost patience, and with the tactlessness of youth described what was wrong with the Brahman personally and with the service generally. He outlined a plan for the improvement of both. The Brahman should dress and wear his hair like a civilized person. He should forget Sanskrit and *shood* (pure) Hindi when talking to the cadets. The *mandir* should be made attractive, the congregation should participate in the service, and afterwards refreshments should be served. Probably no one had ever spoken so bluntly to the Brahman before. He was too shocked to reply.

A week later, however, he called a meeting of the Hindu cadets. The boys hardly recognized him, his hair was cut and he was wearing a suit. He asked for their co-operation in making the *mandir* and the service more attractive. They all pitched in with money and effort. Within a month, the Hindu service became as popular as the others. Thimayya believed that religious training at the college was intelligently handled. The cadets acquired a tolerance for and an understanding of the religious practices of other people.

But no tolerance was extended to those who failed to maintain the standards in study and drill. Probably the British disliked admitting that Indians could keep up with them on their own level. Thus every flaw in each cadet was searched for and pounced upon. Those who could not make quickly the necessary corrections were expelled. Those who could maintain the rigid British standards were well treated—indeed they were accepted as equals without reservation—but by the time Thimayya's 18 months at the college were up, it was clear that only sheer competence would get him through the Sandhurst examinations.

The examinations were held in Simla. They were open to students from all over India. Only a small number who took the exams would get a Sandhurst appointment. Competition, therefore, was keen.

In addition, scholastic grades were only half of the require-

ments For every few applicants, a British officer was appointed His duty was to stay with his charges constantly and report on the personality and general deportment of each If the boy passed this scrutiny, he went through a private interview with the Chief of the General Staff And last, the poor boy faced an interview with that most lofty of all personages, the Viceroy of India, who then was Lord Reading

The Dehra Dun graduating class of five boys therefore approached the examinations with feelings that amounted to terror Thimayya stood at the head of most of his classes, and he was the cadet captain, but he still had doubts about winning a Sandhurst appointment As part of the graduation celebration, the five graduating cadets were invited to Colonel Houghton's house For once this haughty soldier unbent, and Thimayya voiced his fears to him

"I shouldn't think you need worry," the colonel said to him "You did well in your studies"

"But my Urdu is poor," Thimayya said

"Yes," the colonel admitted "But you may do well enough in your other exams to make up for it" He saw that the boy was still not convinced and added, "Let me get you a drink"

He ordered Thimayya a John Collins It was Thimayya's first alcoholic drink Except for the bitters, he found the taste pleasant enough Drinking it made him feel a man of the world, and his fears vanished

They returned, however, during his first day in Simla The captain assigned to him was a languid, adenoidal Englishman with an obvious distaste for The Native He watched Thimayya's every action so carefully that within a few hours the boy was nearly overcome with self-consciousness Thimayya felt like a clumsy oaf, and was sure that the notes jotted down about him would disgrace him for the rest of his life

To make matters worse, Thimayya's first test was in Urdu The written paper required him to translate into English a passage from the Field Service Regulations He recognized only one word, 'hai' meaning "it is" He wrote these words and drew a line through the rest of his paper

Then he was called in for the oral test. The examiner was an English colonel, a fat man with a rosebud mouth that folded delicately around the lush Persian phrases. He asked in English, "Where are you from?"

"Coorg," Thumayya replied.

The colonel closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "This is a test in the Urdu language," he advised. "I shall query you in English. You will reply in Urdu."

"I don't know any," Thumayya said.

The colonel looked up for the first time. It was as though he were regarding a fish—long dead. "Urdu is compulsory in the Sandhurst examination," he said. "How can you expect an appointment without passing this test?"

"I expect to get enough good grades in the other courses," Thumayya said.

The colonel just blinked. Then his mouth became ugly. "Get out," he said.

The other exams went better, however, and Thumayya even got used to the adenoidal captain's breathing down his neck. Finally, he was received for his personal interview with the Chief of the General Staff, Sir Claude Jacob.

"You look familiar, boy," the general began. "What's your name?"

"Thumayya, sir."

"Ah, Thumayya. I remember. The cricketer. You scored a century. You very nearly bashed in my skull with that sixer."

"Yes, sir. That is, no, sir. I mean, sorry, sir."

Sir Claude laughed and put out his hand. "Good luck, my boy," he said, and the interview was over.

The interview was successful, and Thumayya was now ready for the final hurdle, the inspection by the Viceroy. It happened that a cousin of Thumayya's, named Bopayya, from Madras University, also was sitting for the examination. He and Thumayya planned their final interviews as they would a military operation. Their appreciation of the situation revealed two assumptions. First, there were, all told, sixty boys who would have the viceregal inspection. The boys would be in Sunla only ten

more days HE was unlikely to spare more than an hour a day for the cadets. This meant that each cadet could count on no more than ten minutes under scrutiny.

In their second assumption, the boys thought that the danger in the interview was that of being asked unfamiliar questions. If, for example, His Excellency should query them on an obscure Shakespearean scene or on some minor point of British history, the boys could be made to look ignorant. To prevent such a situation they would need to keep the Viceroy from asking questions, this in turn meant that they would have to do most of the talking. Bopayya and Thimayya therefore chose several topics, on each of which they prepared themselves to talk eloquently for ten minutes. The idea was to lead the conversation with the Viceroy into one of these subjects and to talk on it for the duration of the interview.

The great moment arrived. The two boys were shown into an anteroom, awesomely hushed and majestically furnished. They were still under the supervision of their British officers. On a table were whisky and port wine. After a hasty consultation, Thimayya and Bopayya decided to ask for a glass of the wine. This act might give them the look of *sang froid* that in a military man perhaps was expected.

As Thimayya accepted the wine, it occurred to him that only the best of drinks would be served in the viceregal lodge. After a sip, therefore, he remarked to his supervisor, "A most excellent port."

For the first time, Adenoids showed animation. "My di fella, you're a connoisseur!" he exclaimed. "Absolutely super port." Then his eyes narrowed. "Are you familiar with this particular vintage?" he asked.

Thimayya was about to suggest that he had been weaned on it when he sensed a trap. "No," he replied. "I've never had any thing like it."

He had escaped. Adenoids nodded. "HE's the only one in India with booze as good as this," he said. "Can't afford decent port on a captain's pay, what? I slop up all I can whenever I come here."

Thimayya joined him in laughing and felt that the English-

man was reconsidering the notes he had written in his little book.

Then came a silent signal. The English officer put a hand on Thumayya's arm. "It's your turn," he said. "Keep your wits about you, what?"

The great doors swung open, and Thumayya found himself in an even more awesomely hushed and majestic room. In the center in a great chair sat the Viceroy. Behind him stood a phalanx of imposing officers. His Excellency had that stiff back-limp-wrist look peculiar to the British aristocracy. Thumayya thought that if the Christian explanation of creation were the correct one, then the Almighty with His archangels must look like this. Nevertheless, he walked across the acre of rich carpeting and, despite his quaking knees, managed to click his heels sharply.

The Viceroy glanced at a paper. "You're Thumayya?" he asked.

The boy's first reply posed the problem of how to address the personage properly. As a *puḷḷa* (genuine) lord, he had the right to be so addressed. This title, however, was tricky. The British said, "M'Lord" as one word, with the accent on the last syllable, and in English any other way of saying it sounded absurd. Some cadets had blundered trying to use this address. Some said merely "Lord," others "My Lord," still others "Your Lord," and one poor befuddled boy had said, 'Oh Lord.' But the simple "Sir" was equally correct and infinitely easier. "Yes, sir," Thumayya replied.

"Where are you from?" was the next question.

"From Coorg, sir."

"Ah, Coorg," Lord Reading said. "Every time I go to Mysore I intend to visit Coorg, but I never have the time. Tell me, is it as lovely as they say?"

This was luck. "Coorg, Its Past, Present, and Future" was one of the topics Thumayya had chosen for a ten minute discourse, and here was a perfect opening. He launched into his lecture.

At first, His Excellency listened, nodding from time to time. But then a twinkle came into his eye, and a smile crept across his face. Thumayya was into "Coffee, Its Effect on the Economy

of Coorg" and had only a minute to go when the Viceroy stopped him "What games do you play?" he asked

"Hockey, cricket, football, tennis, and squash," Thumayya replied

"Indeed?" the Viceroy said, still smiling He made an imperceptible signal, and an aide-de-camp stepped to Thumayya's side "I hope you enjoy Sandhurst" was the Viceroy's parting comment.

Thumayya was at the door before he realized the full meaning of the comment His Sandhurst appointment was assured! In the anteroom, he forgot himself to the extent of giving a whoop of joy He even felt benevolent toward poor old Adenoids and shook him warmly by the hand "Good show," the Englishman said "Jolly good show Have another port." Thumayya did

Ten minutes later Bopayya came out equally elated He too had had no difficulty in getting onto one of his prepared subjects His topic was "Madras University, Its Past, Present, and Future" The Viceroy also had wished him a good time at Sandhurst Thumayya had another port to celebrate with Bopayya, but both boys were too excited to be affected by mere alcohol

Thumayya was also excited about an invitation to visit Zafar Alam in Delhi He had not seen the imperial city of India before Zafar may not have been fitted for a military career, but he was well adapted to the cosmopolitan life of the capital He took his guest sightseeing and to parties where, for the first time, Thumayya met urban and sophisticated Indians of his own age Thumayya began to feel very grown up

On his last night in Delhi, Zafar promised him a special *nautch* show Zafar's father dined out that evening, and the two boys had the house to themselves Thumayya had visions of scantily clad hours who would compete with each other for his virtue He looked forward to the evening with considerable excitement

After dinner, Zafar had the room cleared of furniture Sheets were spread over the carpets Bolsters and cushions were brought so that the boys could loll comfortably on the floor Zafar then clapped his hands, and five musicians entered Each seemed more

evil looking than the others, together they gave to the room a sinister atmosphere which increased Thumayya's excitement.

Suddenly two women came through the doorway, twirling and stamping their bare feet rhythmically. The silver bells on their ankles tinkled in time with their dance. Their saris were in flashing colors. They seemed covered with jewels that burned with myriad bright flames. Thumayya's heart pounded furiously.

The entertainers stopped in front of the boys and began their performance. One would chant a verse while the other would interpret the words with undulating hips, quivering breasts, and lecherous leers. Then the girls would exchange roles. Thus went on and on.

Unfortunately, Thumayya knew little about this type of music and dancing. He gathered that the show was meant to be voluptuous, but he understood none of the details. Also the girls were fat and coarse looking, and both had hideously betel-blackened teeth. Often they stopped to spit *pan* juice into a *lotha*. And still the show went on and on. Thumayya's excitement gave way to disappointment.

He would have gone to sleep had it not been for Zafar's reaction to the show. At the end of every verse Zafar would rock back and forth giving little moans of ecstasy. Sometimes his delight was so great that he tore at his hair. Often he threw himself out at full length, face down, and beat the floor with his fists. After a particularly intriguing verse, he was rendered quite helpless and could only shake his head soundlessly while he threw a few coins to the girls.

Thumayya tried to rib him by outdoing this performance, but Zafar did not seem to know that Thumayya was there. Occasionally a girl would flip a hip in Thumayya's direction, but both performers soon realized that his appreciation of their act was not sincere, and they abandoned him to concentrate on the host.

Years later, when Thumayya had learned more Urdu and was more familiar with North Indian music and dancing, he went to a similar performance at a nawab's palace. The girls were more attractive and better trained. Thumayya put on an exaggerated demonstration of appreciation, as Zafar had done. To his cha-

grrn, however, no one laughed. On the contrary, the others took him seriously as a genuinely cultured type.

Thumayya's family took his Sandhurst appointment seriously, and when he returned to Coorg a large clan celebration was staged for him. He had never felt more flattered. Only his mother seemed to doubt that he was a worthwhile member of the community. She remembered his days of mischief at Bishop Cotton's, and was not convinced that he could change so completely so quickly. His enthusiasm for his new career, rather than his protestations of innocence, finally settled her fears.

But then she developed new fears about her son. In her youth, she had visited England, but now her memory of Europe's culture concerned mainly the French. The insouciant French attitude toward morality disturbed her the most. To Thumayya, she seemed to picture Europe as populated with predatory females, avid for her son's innocence. Like most Indian boys of the period, Thumayya was innocent for his age, and his mother now tried to educate him about Women. Her explanations, however, were so delicate that he remained as much in the dark as before. He did get the impression that mere proximity to a willing Parisienne could mean getting the most fearsome diseases.

But the high points of that summer in 1924 were his talks with his relatives Ponappa and Cariappa, the latter was one day to become India's first Commander in Chief. That summer the two older men were both subalterns, and their stories and advice gave young Thumayya his real inspiration for army life.

At this point, he ceased to consider any other kind of life. Because the British dominated the army, the only kind of life he could consider became dependent upon his relations with the British. Thus his attitude toward them entered a new phase. He thought of them collectively instead of individually, and he knew he must strive to equal the best that they could produce.

CHAPTER III

SANDHURST

Leaving India for the first time gave Thimayya the feeling that his life had really begun. Five other Indian cadets, including Bopayya, made the voyage to England. The Indian boys' excitement must have stimulated the enthusiasm of the British passengers, who took the young cadets to their hearts. The entire voyage was a round of games and parties.

Not even the dismal damp and cold of the day they arrived in England could depress the six boys. The weather, however, was not as cold as Lieutenant Colonel Sturgess, their future guardian, who met them at the station in London.

He was unfriendly, sullen, and seemed always in pain. Once in the Indian Army, he now was appointed to control the boys' finances, arrange their holidays, and superintend their department. Although he was paid for these responsibilities by the boys' parents, he also reported on his charges to the college, so that he had some control over their promotions.

It was obvious that Colonel Sturgess did not approve of Indians. Thimayya took an instant dislike to him, and, rather than sit with him in the tonneau of the Rolls Royce taxi in which they rode from London to Camberley, Thimayya rode in the open with the driver, a friendly old Scot who made the boy feel at home.

In Camberley, the boys were registered at the hotel and then were taken to Colonel Sturgess' cottage for tea. His wife was as sour and pinchfaced as her husband. Worse, the cottage was overrun with Pomeranian dogs, which yapped incessantly and which looked amazingly like Mrs. Sturgess.

Nothing was warm or pleasant about the tea party. The Sturgesses were doing a painful duty, and they made no effort to hide their distaste for it. After the meager tea, the colonel sent his wife from the room so that he could have a "little man to man talk" with his charges.

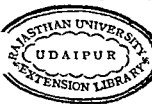
The first part of the talk concerned economy. Presumably a retired officer did not receive a large pension, and money matters may have been an important part of the colonel's thinking. He seemed to have a mortal fear of extravagance.

An even greater fear in his mind concerned the boys' morals. In this respect, his preoccupation with sins of the flesh was like that of the Brothers at St. Joseph's. He dwelt on the horrors of unspeakable diseases. What really offended the young Indians, however, was his seeming assumption that they were all degenerates, waiting only to be unleashed so that they could fall upon the unprotected womanhood of Britain. The colonel emphasized that the boys were to have no contact with British girls.

But the cadets were too exuberant to be depressed for long, and as soon as the colonel dismissed them their spirits rose again. Back at the Camberley hotel, they found their rooms being readied for them by an English maidservant. Until that moment, the only English the boys had seen were high officials. An English servant fascinated them. She was a buxom, country girl full of easy laughter. She could banter in the most friendly way but at the same time remain respectful. To the young Indians it was an odd combination, but it charmed them.

The villages of Camberley and Sandhurst also charmed them. The towns are on the Great West Road, 80 miles from London, in some of Surrey's loveliest scenery. The countryside seemed miraculously lush and green. The cattle looked sleekly fat and well cared for. The red-cheeked children were vivacious and delightfully full of mischief.

But what the boys liked most were the chocolate cakes and sweets available in the shops. Despite their tea with Colonel Sturgess, they filled up again. The damp English cold was beginning to penetrate their bones, and they bought overcoats before setting out to explore the Royal Military College.



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The gardens and playing fields of the college were larger than those at Dehra Dun but just as lovely. In the center was a beautiful lake around which the dignified buildings of the college were clustered. Thumayya could hardly wait the three more days until the new term would start and he would move into a dormitory.

Their first taste of Sandhurst life, however, began just after that exploratory visit. As the boys were returning to the hotel, they met another group of Indians, obviously senior cadets. They stopped to greet the older boys. The senior cadets, however, refused to notice the younger boys.

An hour later, Thumayya ran into the older cadets again. One of them was only three years Thumayya's senior but had the bearing of a professional soldier, Thumayya was approached by this cadet, who demanded to know why the boy was wearing an overcoat. Because of the insolence in the older boy's manner, Thumayya demanded to know why the information was wanted. The cadet informed Thumayya that wearing an overcoat in summer was not done and that Thumayya was guilty of bad form. In reply, Thumayya intimated that the cadet's parents had been guilty of bad form in having produced him in the first place. Thumayya also suggested that anyone who obviously changed his linen as infrequently as did the cadet could hardly claim the right to arbitrate on matters of taste. Thumayya then stated forcefully that he intended to dress as he pleased and stepped back to await an onslaught.

To his surprise, the cadet did not react with indignation. In fact, the older boy merely looked at Thumayya pityingly. "My poor chap, you have so much to learn," he said, almost sadly. "As of three days from now, you will begin to have it kicked into you."

Three days from then, Thumayya learned that he had been assigned to Company Four, known for some obscure reason as "Lovely Four." The first three companies were housed in the "New" Building, which was ancient even by Indian standards, but which was newer than the gloomy old pile in which he found his room.

The room next to Thumayya's was occupied by a Siamese

cadet who played beautifully on the saxophone Thumayya enjoyed listening to his music. The company contained another Siamese cadet, however, and both Siamese spent their free time racing around the British Isles in expensive sports cars, they were too wealthy for Thumayya to keep up with.

Lovely Four also had two Egyptian boys, but they were a tough pair who disliked the British. They remained haughtily to themselves.

The British boys were pleasant enough, but they all came from similar backgrounds and therefore tended to form tight groups among themselves. Thus Thumayya and his cousin, Bopayya, stuck together and helped each other through the pangs of homesickness. Eventually they formed a group with Indians from the other companies as well, but for the first time in his life Thumayya knew what it meant to be an outsider. Nevertheless, he determined to put up with whatever hardships he faced and to get the most he could from the college.

For the first ten weeks all the new cadets, British and colonial, got little else besides abuse. During this period they were "on the Square." This meant that their training concentrated on drill. For five hours a day they were marched up and down the drill field. They were made to stamp their feet as hard as possible on the gravel. Thumayya flung a rifle around until it became a vital part of his body. The boys were bellowed at by a Grenadier Guards sergeant major whose bite was even worse than his thunderous bark. He always carried a measuring stick in his hand. The stick was meant to delineate the exact pace a soldier should take in marching, and it also measured the space a man was to occupy in the ranks. These measurements had to be exact, and the new cadets were drilled over and over again until the precise spacing became second nature. Even the timing of the steps had to be perfect. For the first three weeks of the drill, the boys were made to shout "one step-two-step three step" as they marched, and the noise they made was deafening.

Also, they were taught to give the same orders they were receiving. They were given strenuous courses in physical training, gymnasium, and boxing. They had lectures on marching, leadership, elementary tactics, and military courtesy.

Emphasis was placed on being perfectly turned out. The uniform of the cadets on the Square was a dreadful set of drab canvas overalls worn with khaki plus fours. The creases, however, had to be razor like and the buttons highly polished. Once a week, a cadet's hair had to be cut so short that the portions of his head still showing when his cap was on were bare. The instructors would run a finger across the back of a cadet's skull, and unless the bristles were like wire, the hair was too long. The same attention was given to the cadet's face, which was required to be quite smooth. Previously, shaving had been a once-a-week chore for Thimayya, but now he had to hack at himself daily to avoid the frequent reprimands.

The reprimands were nothing compared to the treatment extended to the new boys by the senior cadets. New boys were regarded as scum. Unless necessary, no one deigned to see them, much less speak to them. Boys "on the Square" were noticed only to the extent required to mete out punishment. Some previous Sandhurst cadet had written, "Being on the Square, although seldom fatal, is a loathsome disease for which no cure has been found, it must run its ten week course." Thimayya realized now that the senior Indian cadet, far from being insolent, had shown him exceptional kindness in noticing him at all.

Passing off the Square meant, first, that the new boys no longer had to wear those overalls which in themselves brought on feelings of inferiority. They now could ride with the hunt clubs. The daily hours of drill were decreased. The boys now took up the study of machine guns, and the tactics courses were more advanced. They also had the relief of being able to leave the college grounds after hours and on weekends. Finally, they were now permitted to participate in college sports.

Thimayya signed up for hockey, cricket, and tennis. At Sandhurst successful athletes were given social prestige. Thimayya determined to win such prestige and thereby overcome some of the prejudice against the "colonials."

His first try-out was in hockey. Of the 12 goals scored in that game, he was responsible for ten. He maintained the same standard in subsequent trials. He achieved similar ratings in

cricket and tennis. Often the instructors used him to demonstrate technique. He had every right to expect that he would play on the first teams. When the interbattalion matches or the formal games with other colleges were held, however, he was never asked to play.

Other Indians at Sandhurst were treated even worse in this respect. Sant Singh, now a retired Indian Army general, was an outstanding hockey player. Outside the college, he played in important matches. He was a hero in the local press, which described him as 'that dexterous red bearded Indian' and 'the most brilliant player we have seen in years.' Nevertheless, when players were picked to represent Sandhurst against Oxford or Cambridge—matches for which each player automatically earned a "blue"—Sant Singh was never chosen.

The same injustice was carried over into the honors and promotions given or won among the cadets. The incident that rankled most with Thimayya concerned the winning of spurs in the equitation course during the first term.

This course was so simple that anyone with a mere pretense of co-ordination could pass the end-of-term test when the spurs were given almost automatically. In fact, anyone who had had previous riding lessons could pass that test on the first day of the term. Thus the course was a bore, and everyone tried to get his spurs as early as possible. Thimayya had been riding all his life, and he wanted the spurs quickly so that he would be allowed to ride with the hunt.

One day the equitation officer himself was leading the class across rough country to the college riding area. They came up against a high postern gate set in barbed wire fencing. Every horse refused to take the jump.

The officer became angry and yelled, "Have none of you any guts? Get over that fence!"

The boys lined up and tried again, but still no horse would jump.

"I'll award spurs to anyone who gets over that gate," the officer said.

With spurs for reward, Thimayya determined to make the jump. His mount was temperamental but could jump well if

not given time to think about it Thimayya drew back to where the animal could not see the gate and then pushed into a full gallop He and his mount sailed over the gate in good form None of the other cadets made it. The officer said nothing

Thereafter, Thimayya frequently reminded the authorities of the promise, but he received evasive replies And he did not get his spurs until they were handed out to everyone at the term's conclusion

By the end of that term, Thimayya began to understand the nature of the British prejudice against Indians at Sandhurst. Part of it was political and part was snobbery In the past, Indians had earned "*blues*" in sports and rank in the cadet corps, but this had been during periods of political tranquillity in India When Indian nationalist agitation was great—as it was now that Mahatma Gandhi directed the Congress Party—the British tended to regard all Indians with suspicion This was especially noticeable in the military, where the fear of Indian officers who might one day lead an uprising against the British Raj was understandable Thus the prejudice was partly meant to discourage Indian cadets as much as possible

The snobbery was an aspect of old fashioned British insularity It was based on an assumption that someone raised in the colonies could not have the refined standards of one brought up in England Theoretically, if a colonial could prove that he did have the same standards, he would be accepted as a social equal, and indeed many examples prove the genuineness of British democracy in this respect At a place like Sandhurst, however, another factor made an obstacle to social acceptance It was called "not letting down one's side," and it meant really that those with the same upper-class background stuck together to give each other rank and privilege

Thus, for example, the boy who ultimately became Thimayya's company cadet commander was by no means the one most capable of the job He was an earl He had come from Eton and was going into the Guards He was small, weak, unco-ordinated, he had a squeaky little voice and almost none of the qualities necessary for command Actually, Thimayya liked him, but believed that, except for social position, the young nobleman probably

would not have been able to enter Sandhurst at all. Eventually the cadet left the army and became a businessman.

The second cadet officer in Thimayya's company was even worse. He also had a title and was destined for the Guards. He drooped elegantly, but the cadets in *Lovely Four*—British and colonials alike—considered him impossible. Because of his failure to win their respect, the boys did not work hard for him, and the company rarely stood out in corps competitions.

On the other hand the British—if not the Indians—could overcome the class obstacle by sheer competence. Thimayya remembers particularly a cadet named Dalrymple, the son of a professional soldier. He was tough, intelligent, and always perfectly turned out. He was strict but fair. The younger cadets admired him. He won officer rank, in fact, he won the sword of honor when he "passed out." This was an extraordinary achievement, usually the sword was given to a cadet intended for the Guards, which Dalrymple was not. Despite his capability, he was unpopular among the cadets who had an upper-class background, they rarely even spoke to him.

The most unpopular cadet at Sandhurst was named Bennett. He had neither social background nor military capability. His father had been killed in the war under gallant circumstances, and the son was given the appointment as a reward. The boy looked like a sack of potatoes and for this reason was called "Baggy" Bennett. His co-ordination was even worse than Zafar Alam's but he had none of Zafar's intelligence. He was so helpless at drill that he was sent to the hospital whenever the company drilled in competition. He failed at the end of every term. His mother, however, would plead with the commandant, saying, "Is this how a hero's son is treated?" and he would be given another chance. The other cadets teased him mercilessly. He was given every possible type of punishment. He was even made to do the terrible "pack parade" two or three times a week.

The pack parade usually took place after dinner. The victim had to get into Field Service Marching Order with field pack, respirator, and rifle. He then was made to move at double time through the dormitory corridors and up and down the stairways while the other cadets shouted abuse at him.

Thimayya was given this punishment once for reporting late to the college. Baggy Bennett was his fellow sufferer. At the end of it both boys were exhausted and crushed. Then they were told to run a race. The one who came in first could knock off, but the loser had to do another half hour of the "parade." Poor Baggy could not even run. He stumbled around in a daze, and Thimayya won easily. Baggy resumed the pack parade, but not for long, minutes later he fainted.

This sort of cruelty was meted out only by the cadet officers. The college authorities were strict but fair in their discipline. The only punishments they inflicted were severe reprimand, confinement to the grounds for stated periods, "rustication" (which meant doing the term over), and, finally, expulsion from the college.

The worst Thimayya incurred was severe reprimand. He was conscientious, and because he was already used to discipline, he managed to stay out of trouble. One day, for one unhappy moment, however, he relaxed.

His company was turning out for physical training, and the boys had formed up in front of the Old Building to collect their bicycles. They wore white shoes and trousers, the red and white Sandhurst blazer with a scarf of the same colors, and, on their heads, round polo caps perched rakishly on the side. Just before mounting the cycles, the boys were to execute a right turn. The turn required, first, both legs to be stiffly braced. The body then was pivoted to the right on the right foot. Finally, the left leg was brought up smartly and put down with a spine-jarring stamp alongside the forward leg. Thimayya was in the rear line. The military turn seemed a bother, so he made a normal civilian turn. At roll call that evening his name was read with those of others who would have to appear before the company commander for disciplining.

Thimayya could not believe that anyone had seen his sloppy turn, but he could think of no other misdemeanor. He was so worried that he did not sleep that night.

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He reported the next day to the commander's sergeant major, with whom he was friendly. He begged the old soldier to tell him what he had done wrong.

"You'll learn not to be slack," the sergeant major said "You were idle, sir, bone idle "

The fact that the sergeant major, as a friend, spoke so sternly, added to Thumayya's panic His knees were shaking as the sergeant major marched him in "By the center, quick march," the sergeant bellowed "Left right left right left right Halt. Left turn Salute " This was done as rapidly as possible Thumayya tried his best to do the drill perfectly Now he found himself facing Major Jackson of the Royal Scottish Borderers

Previously, Thumayya had seen this officer only from a distance, a tall, distinguished gentleman who arrived at the college riding in a limousine and wearing the colorful trows of his regiment. Thumayya saw now that the officer was a man in his forties, graying at the temples, and with a close-cropped mustache But his face was kind, and he even had a friendly twinkle in his blue eyes

"Well, Thumayya," he said, "you are reported as being bone idle on parade "

"I don't remember it, sir," Thumayya said.

"The adjutant reported you were slack yesterday when forming up to go to the gymnasium."

How had the adjutant seen him? "I'm sorry, sir," Thumayya replied

"As this is the first time you have appeared before me, I shall let you off but don't be slack again."

Thumayya was so relieved to escape punishment that he saluted and prepared to leave This called for an outraged shout from the sergeant major "Don't move, sir, until ordered to Now One pace back Salute. Right turn. Quick march Left-right left right left right." And they were out.

Thumayya asked the sergeant major how the adjutant had seen him

"He has wot yer might call a sixth sense," the old soldier replied "The adjutant knows by intuition when a cadet has been bone idle "

Thumayya was half willing to believe this, but then the old soldier pointed to a window above the spot where the cadets had

formed up the day before "That's Boy's office," he whispered "Boy" Browning as the adjutant was called, was Captain Sir Robert Browning of the Grenadier Guards. He was six feet of iron brawn and immaculate turnout. He rode a superb gray charger on parade and drove a rakish sports car when he went to London to see the famous actresses with whom his name was often linked in the press. Twenty years later, Thimayya would meet him again in the Burma jungles and find that the guardsman was still as magnificent as ever. Now, however, he was the ideal of every cadet and represented all the glamour of military life. Thimayya made up his mind never to win the adjutant's censure again.

Thimayya had another run in with the authorities, however, near the end of his term. It was during the Sunday morning parade. At this time, the cadets were inspected by the commandant, Sir Charles Cochrane. The commandant was accompanied by his wife and daughter. He would march from his house attended by two G C's (gentlemen cadets), who were supposed to be the best turned out in the battalion. The other cadets always suspected, however, that the G C's were chosen less for turnout and more for eligibility for the daughter's hand.

On this occasion the day was very hot. In India when the temperature was in the nineties, men wore cotton or tussore, but in England no such effete compromises were made with mere weather, the cadets wore woollens. An errant streak of perspiration escaped from under Thimayya's cap, ran down his cheek, collected on his chin, paused for aim, and dropped neatly onto the second button of his tunic, tarnishing it promptly. As the general paused in front of the cadet, he pointed a pudgy finger at Thimayya's chest and muttered, "Dirty button."

Pandemonium broke loose.

The cadet captain leapt forward and shouted in the boy's face, "Dirty on parade. Get his name!"

Up jumped the senior underofficer. "Filthy on parade. You clot. GET HIS NAME!"

Next came the regimental sergeant major. "Filthy, stinking dirty on the *general's* parade. Oh, you dog. GET HIS NAME!"

And finally there was the company sergeant major "Thumayya stinking rotten dirty on the general's parade Oh, you swine, Thumayya, you filthy swine"

The world collapsed around Thumayya He spent another sleepless night

The dreadful moment arrived Again he was quick marched up in front of Major Jackson No friendly twinkle brightened the officer's eye "Thumayya, you are reported as being dirty on the general's parade"

"Yes, sir"

"You're idle, Thumayya, bone idle What possible excuse could you have for a dirty turnout?"

"It was hot, sir Perspiration fell onto my button and tarnished it But I swear it was polished before parade" Thumayya began to explain that, in India, they would be properly dressed for the weather, but the major stopped him impatiently

"That's no excuse," he said "You are not supposed to sweat, Thumayya, *cadets here are strictly forbidden to sweat on parade* Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir," he said

"Very well," the officer said Thumayya waited for his doom 'As this is the first time you have appeared before me, I'm letting you off, but don't be slack again'

Thumayya could hardly believe that he was outside and that he had escaped punishment again He looked anxiously at the sergeant major Would the old soldier remind Major Jackson that Thumayya had been called up once before? The sergeant major was grinning "You are lucky, sir," he said 'And being lucky is the most important quality a soldier can have'

It has happened that, frequently, in later years, the wisdom in the sergeant major's words was proved to Thumayya.

Despite the prejudice and snobbery, Thumayya admits that he enjoyed almost every minute of his 18 months at Sandhurst The life was clean and healthy The work was interesting and he had the satisfying feeling that he was learning a great deal Finally, although the discipline was very strict, he did have escape from it.

On weekends, he and Bopayya took trips to Reading or Al-

dershot, the nearest large towns, where they could have a larger choice of restaurants, films, or revues. Occasionally they went to London for the theater and museums. Bopayya and Thumayya bought *motorcycles*, during the summer holidays they explored the British Isles. In the long winter vacations they went to Switzerland for winter sports. Thumayya had never even seen snow before, so that skung, skating, and tobogganing were new to him, but he took to these sports with enthusiasm.

The people they met on the jaunts through Britain's countryside were invariably pleasant. Prejudice against colonials seemed virulent only at the college. Nevertheless, during their entire stay in England, the boys never met a British family with whom they achieved a close friendly relationship. Thumayya did spend several weekends with a Mr. and Mrs. North, their son and two daughters. The man was a well known lawyer and was charming to Thumayya, but he really was a friend of Thumayya's family. During World War I, North had been stationed in Bangalore, where he and Thumayya's father had become acquainted. North had visited Sunnyside a few times, and now he was repaying the hospitality. Except for this one instance, the Indian cadets did not have the chance to see how the British lived in their own country. In Mercara, the hospitality between the Indians and the British had been both frequent and lavish. The Indians were disappointed to find that the same pleasant relationship did not exist in the United Kingdom.

The relationship they could achieve with the British girls, however, was more pleasant, they soon found, but was rigidly controlled by their guardian, Colonel Sturgess. Thumayya had not been in England long before he came into conflict with the guardian on this score. Thumayya once attended a community charity dance near Reading. He asked a girl there to dance with him. She accepted, and he spent a few hours with her and her friends. When the dance was over, her parents took her home. Thereafter, she and Thumayya corresponded for a while. Her letters were on perfumed paper. A few days after the dance, Colonel Sturgess called Thumayya in and gave him one of the letters. He wanted to know who the girl was and how Thumayya had met her. When he learned that the boy had danced with

her, Colonel Sturgess lost his temper. During the ranting, Thumayya became aware that the guardian had opened the letter and had read it. That made Thumayya lose *his* temper. The fact that Thumayya had caught the guardian in an inexcusable act brought the argument to an abrupt close, their conflict on that occasion ended in a draw. Nevertheless, their dislike for each other was now in the open. Thumayya knew that henceforth the guardian would watch him carefully for any misbehavior, especially with girls, and would be as difficult as possible. Thumayya determined, therefore, to watch his step.

He was equally determined, however, that the guardian would not prevent him from dancing whenever and with whomever he liked. The holiday trips to Switzerland provided the most likely opportunity, even though the boys were accompanied by another guardian appointed and instructed as to their behavior by Colonel Sturgess.

In Switzerland, also, the boys found that the continentals tended to regard all Indians as fabulous maharajas. They therefore had a kind of automatic glamour which made it easy for them to meet girls.

On Christmas Eve their hotel in Klosters held a costume ball. The boys chose a table on the far side of the room from their guardian and his wife. Next to the boys' table sat a jolly German family with two attractive daughters. As the festivities progressed, the Germans laughed and joked with the boys, whom they finally invited to their table. The girls asked the boys to dance, and, as only Thumayya knew how, he readily agreed. He felt, however, that good manners required him first to ask to dance with the old dame who was the guardian's wife. Thumayya found the couple sitting glumly in the corner. As a concession to the festivities, they were wearing paper hats, but they obviously felt miserably foolish. Thumayya's request for a dance was turned down flat. He returned happily to the Germans, and they all spent a rollicking evening.

The next day, the guardian called Thumayya to his room. He was displeased that the boy had danced with the girls, but he was too embarrassed to do more than hem and haw. Moreover, Thumayya gathered that, although the guardian would violently

oppose the Indians dancing with British girls, the fact that they had joined foreign females made their crime less reprehensible.

Thumayya therefore decided to find an English girl. Two days later he thought he recognized one among new arrivals at the hotel. That evening, he approached her and asked her to dance. She was an American. This disappointed him because, to the British, this made her a provincial. He thought this fact might give them something in common, but she seemed ill at ease with him.

Her companion, however, was a lovely Norwegian girl with whom he felt immediate rapport. The girls were attending a finishing school in Geneva. The American girl's father had brought them to Klosters. Thumayya danced with the Norwegian girl most of the evening. Later he learned that the guardian had retired early and had not seen him dancing.

The next morning, however, Thumayya discovered difficulty from another source. The American father had scolded the Norwegian girl for dancing with a "colored person." He forbade her to see Thumayya again. This was the first Thumayya knew that Americans could have racial prejudice. The Norwegian girl could not understand such prejudice, and she continued to see Thumayya, but secretly on the ski slopes.

Thus the Swiss holiday did not increase Thumayya's conflict with Colonel Sturgess, but eventually the conflict reached a climax. It happened at the end of Thumayya's term. A large ball was held at the college the night before the commissioning ceremony. Indians customarily did not attend the dance, but Thumayya broke the unwritten rule. He invited the North girls as his guests, and they came gladly. At the party itself, no one saw anything unusual in his presence. Other cadets danced with his partners, and he danced with theirs. It was all quite pleasant.

The next day, however, Thumayya put in a command appearance before Colonel Sturgess and saw at once that the guardian was in a rage. They quarreled. What Thumayya had done was unforgivable, according to the colonel, who added that he was unaccustomed to back talk from young Indians. Thumayya replied that he was not accustomed to allow anyone but his family to arbitrate his behavior. In the end, the guardian stated that he

would inform both the India Office and the boy's parents that Thimayya had danced with English girls

This did not worry Thimayya. He knew by now that the British had no official policy on the relations between Indian men and English girls and would be embarrassed to bring the matter into the open. His parents would think merely that the colonel was crazy. Finally, Thimayya also knew that he had passed at Sandhurst with a high rating so that he would have to put up a much worse "black" than the dance to lose his commission. Thus, he told Colonel Sturgess to go to hell and left.

Another incident added gloom to Thimayya's last days at Sandhurst. Bopayya was returning on his motorcycle from a cinema in Aldershot on a foggy night. A car crashed into him, and Bopayya was thrown a hundred feet into a thick hedge. His leg was fractured, and he had internal injuries. He spent a year in the hospital. When he returned to India, his body was paralyzed on one side, and he died within a few years.

But in that summer of 1926, despite his consistent worry about Bopayya's injuries, Thimayya was too full of life to be depressed by anything for long. The discipline imposed upon healthy youngsters called for explosive release. The authorities understood the need for pranks at the end of the term, and instead of trying to prevent them, attempted to keep the animal spirits within bounds.

A few years before, for example, a cadet rather the worse for drink on the dance night had climbed the flagpole and put a chamber pot on top. The next day at the parade, the adjutant noticed the pot. The Union Jack, of course, could not be unfurled. He demanded to know which of the cadets had done the deed. No one answered. The adjutant threatened the whole class of senior cadets with rustication for a term unless the guilty man stepped forward. At this, the guilty man did come out. He was ordered to retrieve the pot. The entire battalion was made to watch him do it. It was one thing to have made the climb under the previous night's alcoholic enthusiasm, but it was quite another to repeat the process in broad daylight with a hangover. Twice he almost lost his grip. The battalion scarcely breathed

Finally the boy reached the top and removed the pot. The battalion cheered him all the way down. The cadet was rusticated for a term, but he was still a hero to the battalion.

Nothing so heroic was done during Thimayya's commissioning celebration. Many of the boys had too much to drink, and their pranks became rowdy. One group took to stopping the cars that carried the girls for the dance. The cadets roughed up the girls, disarranging their clothes and hair-dos. Neither the girls nor their parents thought this was the least bit funny.

Thimayya does not think that the prank in which he engaged was funny either. The college grounds were guarded by ex-servicemen, old soldiers who wore blue uniforms and were called "blue bottles." They were on duty as far as London, where they were meant to see that the cadets maintained the required standards of dress and deportment. One cantankerous old blue bottle had the job of seeing that the boys went out by the out gate and came in by the in gate. For years he had had no other responsibility, and he had grown to take it with deadly seriousness. A group of cadets, including Thimayya, caught the old fellow and carried him fifty times out the in gate and in the out gate. At first the old blue bottle was angry and threatened the boys with dire consequences. In the end, however, he broke down and wept pathetically. Thimayya has felt guilty about the prank ever since.

On the morning of their last day, the commissioning parade was held. The parade consisted of an inspection in review order, a march past, the forming of a hollow square, and finally, an address by a visiting VIP. In Thimayya's exercise, the VIP was Field Marshal Sir John Mills, the then Commander in Chief.

After the address, the cadets marched in slow time to their dormitories. "Auld Lang Syne" was played. The parade was finished the moment the boys entered the corridors. They then rushed to their rooms, where a hot drink and their packed belongings waited for them. Outside, taxis and cars honked impatiently, and soon the cadets dispersed in all directions.

Thimayya paused for a moment, looking around his gloomy old room and out across the Square. He even stopped once more

in front of "F Jesus", this stood for F G S, the initials for Fancy Goods Store, the tuck shop where he had spent many happy hours with the other Indian cadets

He was leaving for Paris. Colonel Sturgess had arranged for Thumayya to stay there with a French artillery colonel.

The Frenchman and his family were delightful, and they treated Thumayya like a son. The colonel had served in Indo-China, but he had none of the British prejudice against colonials. He had two daughters who were a few years older than Thumayya and not especially attractive but sweet and charming. They made sure that he saw Paris properly.

By "properly" was meant that they showed him the places of cultural and historic interest. Thumayya accompanied them to a few decorous parties, but because he had to dance with both daughters he had little opportunity to meet other girls.

Moreover, Thumayya now was wearing the smart uniform of a second lieutenant. He imagined that French girls considered him glamorous—a fact on which it seemed a shame not to capitalize. Further, he felt that he was grown up and it was time he saw life. By the end of his stay in Paris, therefore, he was convinced that he owed himself one night out on the town without the French family's kindly but inhibiting supervision.

Escape from the family, however, was not easy. In the end, Thumayya made the excuse that family friends had asked him to dinner. In fact, he had contacted an English boy who was the brother of a fellow cadet and who worked in a Paris bank. The English boy agreed to show Thumayya some interesting night spots.

They went first to the Moulin Rouge. Thumayya wore a dinner jacket. He soon realized that this was not customary in France, and it made him embarrassingly conspicuous.

But he was even more embarrassed by the show. The boys sat in the fourth row, where they missed not a single wiggle. Thumayya had pictured himself as worldly. Actually he was shocked by the performers, whom, afterwards, he described as "a flock of naked ladies who cavorted on the stage like hens." Next to him sat a white-bearded Frenchman whose enjoyment of the spectacle was uninhibited. Thumayya felt that never in his life would

he become so sophisticated as to acquire the old man's attitude toward such goings-on

But the worst was yet to come. The fabulous Mistinguette was then the rage of Paris, and on that evening she introduced Maurice Chevalier for the first time. Chevalier sang a song that advertised the six separate flower scents of a well-known brand of perfume. At the end of the act, six girls who for all practical purposes were naked mingled with the audience. Each girl had one of the scents on some intimate part of her person. Men in the audience were requested to smell the perfume and identify the flower. Those who made correct identifications were given a bottle of the scent. To Thimayya's horror, a girl approached him. He slipped down in his seat so that she might choose the panting old boy next to him, but she was merciless. Moreover, Thimayya's attempt to escape was noticed by the audience *and* by Maurice Chevalier. Much laughter and shouting were directed at Thimayya. Then the girl presented him her inner thigh. The lad would have run away if the crowd had not been pressing around so tightly. Thimayya lived through several hells of embarrassment. Chevalier was calling encouragement to him. The old man was nudging him and guffawing loudly. Finally, Thimayya took a quick and distant sniff and said, "Violette." A bottle of scent was thrust into his hand, but he never knew whether it was because he had made a lucky guess or as a reward for the agony he had suffered.

At the interval, Thimayya pretended to be bored and suggested to his English friend that they leave. The Englishman suggested that they go to Pigalle's and, in his innocence, Thimayya agreed.

Pigalle's was almost deserted. Later, Thimayya realized that it did not fill up until after the theaters were out, but now he thought it a haven of quiet and dignity. As they went into the restaurant itself, however, he happened to glance into an open door. He saw a number of girls, few of whom had on any clothes. This was bad enough, but they were wearing stage make-up, which Thimayya had never seen before at close quarters. It looked hideous to him. Again he was shocked.

Nevertheless, he and the English boy took a table and ordered

champagne Just when Thimayya thought he was becoming shockproof, he discovered the institution of gigolos He saw sleek looking males wandering through the audience, talking to old ladies and, on the dance floor, behaving in an ungentlemanly manner His friend explained what they were doing, and Thimayya was revolted

But then the show began It made the show at the Moulin Rouge seem like "The Cotter's Saturday Night." Thimayya was sure that Pigalle's must be the most evil place in the world He was terrified that he might be recognized by someone who knew his family Meanwhile a stream of girls came to the table "Don't be selfish, *chéri*," they would say, "share your wine wiz us" Thimayya tried to pretend that he was particular or that he was waiting for a friend, but he does not think that he fooled them He was remembering his mother's warning about "The Women of Paris"

Ultimately a girl whom the English boy could not resist came along He borrowed three pounds from Thimayya and vanished Now Thimayya was alone and even more conspicuous

At this point, a trio took the table next to his They were a father and mother with their 20 year-old daughter Gigolos asked the girl to dance, but she refused While everyone was throwing streamers, she threw some at Thimayya Finally he acquired the courage to ask the mother if he could dance with the daughter "You sure can," the woman said

Thimayya danced with the girl and was chagrined to discover that she was American From his previous experience, he thought that all Americans had racial prejudices He learned now, however, that he was wrong This family was charming He joined them, and they spent a gay evening They had a villa on the Riviera and were motoring down the next day Before the evening was over, they pressed him to go with them Thimayya was tempted, but the next day he was to leave for Southampton to catch the ship for India

He crept back guiltily at dawn to the colonel's flat. He managed to get into bed without disturbing the family One of the daughters, however, brought him tea in the morning. Thim-

ayya did not waken, and she saw his bottle of scent and the program from Pigalle's

When he did awake, he heard the family whispering outside his door His head seemed semi-detached, and when he looked into the mirror he saw that his face was puffy and blotched When he joined the family, they became silent "Where were you last night?" the colonel demanded

Thumayya could only shake his head

"You look ill," the mother said "I think you should be in bed"

Thumayya could only nod his head

A doctor was called, and he examined Thumayya gravely, muttering medical French Thumayya could not understand the doctor, but he did not need the diagnosis He knew what was wrong with him His mother had told him all about it "Oh, how quick is retribution," he thought "My life is finished Why did I ever leave home?"

The doctor stood up "Measles," he said.

Thumayya had intended to take an early passage to India so that he could spend some time with his family before beginning his army career The ten-day bout with measles, however, caused him to take the same ship on which other recently commissioned Sandhurst cadets were sailing He was not surprised, therefore, to find that his cabin mate had a familiar face 'Baggy Bennett, pride of His Majesty's armed forces!' Thumayya greeted him

He meant only to be friendly, but to his horror the English boy burst into tears 'Please, you mustn't call me 'Baggy,' " the boy said When he had calmed down, he told Thumayya how unhappy he had been at Sandhurst He knew that the authorities had commissioned him only to get rid of him But now he hoped to make a new start He wanted to forget the misery he associated with being called "Baggy"

He hadn't a hope, of course Other recently commissioned Sandhurst men were on board, and they continued the nickname They were unnecessarily cruel to Baggy, Thumayya thought, especially when they made fun of him in front of girls The

girls also laughed at him, and none would dance with him. The English boy would cry himself to sleep every night like a lost child.

Bennett was assigned to a Gurkha regiment, which had a glamorous reputation. In the Indian Army, such regiments had their pick of the new officers. Baggy, therefore, had been accepted wholly on the basis of his father's reputation. A few years later, Thimayya learned that the boy resigned his commission. Nothing was wrong with Bennett except that circumstances had thrown him into a life for which he was unfitted. Unquestionably he could fit well into some niche somewhere. Thimayya remembered him often, even more years later when he himself was commandant of the Military College at Dehra Dun. Often, then, parents would plead with him to reinstate a cadet who had failed. He learned the greater kindness of preventing a boy not cut out for a military career from wasting valuable years.

But on that return trip to India, Thimayya thought only that Baggy was being treated badly and felt sorry for him. Thimayya, however, did not let pity interfere with his own good time. He joined the deck games and went to the dances. He was frequently in demand for his harmonica playing. The young officers, Indian and British alike, got on well.

The situation changed, however, when the ship left Suez. On board were several British Indian Army officers who gave orientation lectures to the new subalterns. One day, the subalterns were told to attend a particular lecture on India to which the Indian subalterns were not required to go. The Indians assumed that the lecture would be on basic facts of the country with which they, of course, were familiar. They thought no more about it.

But Thimayya had become friends with a New Zealander who had not been to Sandhurst but instead had been commissioned directly from the Territorial Army to the Royal Welsh Regiment, then in Multan. After the lecture he came to Thimayya's cabin, his face grave. The young British officers had been instructed in the attitude they would be expected to take towards Indians in general. The idea was that, under the current political circumstances, no Indian could be trusted, and the young British,

therefore, were not to get too friendly with any of them. The British also were warned not to allow Indians to mix too freely with English womenfolk, the reason given for this was that Indians would not allow Indian women to mix with the British! Finally, the customary "do's and don't's" for Europeans in India had been listed. Don't drink unboiled water or buy food from the bazaars. Don't speak to Indian women in *purdah*. Don't strip in front of the servants or sepoy's. And so on.

The New Zealand friend said that the lecture had been "a lot of damned silly rot." Nevertheless, it had a noticeable effect on the attitude of the other young British officers. They now avoided the Indian officers, and if they did speak their manner was patronizing.

Thimayya was annoyed rather than offended by this change. He understood that the prejudice tended to be impersonal. On some Indians, he had seen that the effect of the prejudice could bring on feelings of inferiority and insecurity with attendant personality complications. But Indians in his position simply could not feel inferior to the British. In all the categories which the British themselves considered important, he had no difficulty in equaling or even bettering their standard. Moreover, in personal relationships with them he had found "absolute rotters" and people whom he could love and respect, in short, the British were no different from anybody else.

Thus to Thimayya the prejudice was only an annoying obstacle. Now, more than ever, he knew he would be satisfied only with an army career. As the British controlled the army, success in his career would depend upon the individual British officers with whom fate threw him. If he drew the "rotters," he would not get far. But if he drew those whom he could love and respect, he knew that his life ahead held every promise.

It was a matter of luck. He remembered the sergeant major's observation that he had that most important quality in a successful soldier.

As the ship approached Bombay, Thimayya felt the thrill of the traveler returning home. The beauty of the harbor made him swell with pride for his country. How good it looked.

All the officers had posting orders waiting for them at the

docks. Because of a clerical error, Thimayya's had not been issued. A call was put through to army headquarters. He was told that he would spend his first year of army service in a British Army battalion. He was asked if he had any preference as to regiment. He had none. He asked to be sent, if possible, to Bangalore, which was near his home. "Right," said the clerk at the end of the line. "The 2nd Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry has just moved there. You are hereby posted to their mess."

That night Thimayya caught the train for Bangalore.

CHAPTER IV

BANGALORE

In Bangalore, Thimayya was met at the station by two tall Scots in the trews and Glengarry (bonnet) of the Highland Light Infantry. Both were subalterns, but five years older than he. Gray and Black were their names. Their greeting was polite and friendly. The three officers rode in Black's custom-built car, which was complete with a cocktail bar. They drank gin on the way to the cantonment.

At the mess, the other officers were having pre-lunch beer and gin. They seemed glad to see Thimayya, and they pressed him to celebrate his arrival with more drinks. By the time lunch was over, Thimayya could not keep his eyes open. His quarters were in the mess itself. He pleaded exhaustion and was asleep the moment he stretched out.

Minutes later, Gray stuck his head in the door and awakened him. "Are you all right?" Gray asked.

'Of course," Thimayya said.

"Quite sure?'

"Quite."

Thimayya was barely asleep again when Black opened the door. The same questions were asked. Thereafter, one at a time, the other officers looked in to see if Thimayya was "all right."

When Gray came in a second time, Thimayya sat up. "Look," he said, "there's nothing wrong with me that sleep won't cure. Why is everyone worried?'

Gray came all the way in. "Actually, we *are* worried," he said. "You're the first Indian officer we've seen. Headquarters said we'd have to handle you tactfully. We mustn't be snide

about Indians in front of you Mustn't give you beef We want you to like it here, and we're worried we might drop some bricks "

Thumayya laughed "I appreciate your concern," he said, "but I don't expect the Highland Light Infantry to adapt itself to me "

Gray also laughed "Right," he said, and thereafter Thumayya was permitted to sleep

One matter still confused Thumayya Everyone addressed him as "Mr Ulia " Perhaps he had acquired a nickname, he thought, or maybe all new officers in the H L I were traditionally called Ulia

The next morning, however, he was taken to report to the adjutant, Captain Ross Skinner "Mr Ulia," the adjutant said, "welcome to the Highland Light Infantry We hope you'll be happy with us "

The adjutant reminded Thumayya of Major Jackson at Sandhurst. He was tall and distinguished and, like Major Jackson, he had a stern expression belied by friendly blue eyes His friendliness gave Thumayya the courage to ask about "Ulia "

"Isn't that your name?" the older man asked

"Definitely not," Thumayya said

The adjutant got out the H Q telegram in which the posting had been announced, and showed it to Thumayya It stated that Second Lieutenant K S Thumayya Ulia would be arriving Suddenly the subaltern understood "'ULIA,'" he explained, "stands for 'Unattached List, Indian Army'" The two men burst into laughter

Captain Ross Skinner took Thumayya to meet the C O , Lieutenant Colonel Sir Robert Seagraves, Bart The C O was stiff and stern, but even he chuckled over the Ulia incident He chatted with the subaltern about Sandhurst, and asked about Thumayya's background. At the end of the pleasant interview, Thumayya knew that he was going to have an easy time with the H L I

It was almost too easy The officers were on parade by 7 00 A.M They did p t with the men They watched the drill and weapons training They strolled across the parade ground, taking the salutes of the men The entire process could not be stretched

to more than two hours, and they were through for the day. At nine they breakfasted, and even then some of the officers began drinking beer or gin. From ten until the pre-lunch drink hour, they sat around the orderly room in case any of the men were brought in for disciplining. After lunch everyone took a two-hour siesta. Next came two hours of sport, several times a week they played hockey or football with the troops, and on the other days the officers played polo or tennis among themselves. At 7.30 they collected on the mess lawn and, as whisky was now permitted, the drinking began in earnest.

Nevertheless, dinner was a serious affair. At eight o'clock, bagpipes sounded. The officers dispersed to change into formal mess kit. They were ready in time for a "quick one" before the pipes screamed again at 8.30. Now they marched into the dining hall.

At the dining table, everyone could sit where he pleased except for the mess president. He usually was a junior officer elected to the post by the others. He sat at the head of the table and directed the service.

Normally, only the unmarried men ate in the mess. The married officers had their own bungalows nearby. The usual mess dinners, therefore, were attended by the younger group. Nevertheless, an air of formal decorum prevailed. The talk was light and "small", neither serious nor frivolous. No woman's name was ever mentioned. This was a custom from the days when men fought duels. Evidently the duels could deplete an officer corps more effectively than the most persistent enemy. As women were the cause of most of the conflicts, the rule of prohibiting the mention of any woman's name in the mess slowed down the rate of officer turnover. Breaking the rule, in the old days, entailed a heavy fine. Nowadays, the offender merely had to buy a round of drinks for the others. The same fine was imposed for the slightest deviation in proper dress. The men talked of horses, sports, and regimental affairs. After the sweet had been served, the mess president passed around bottles of Madeira and port. Unless a party was going on somewhere—and parties took place almost every night—one could linger chatting over the wine until the early hours.

Even more formal, however, were the mess dinners on Wed-

nesdays—the regimental guest night. All the officers, married or not, had to eat at the mess on these occasions. The guests usually were senior officers of neighboring regiments or local high officials. On these nights, a more senior officer was appointed temporary mess president, and the one who held that post regularly became the vice-president, or “Mr Vice.” A brass band entertained the diners and either discouraged one from conversing at all or forced him to make his small talk at the top of his voice. Just before coffee was served, the music stopped and the president rose to say, “Mr Vice, the King.” Now the band struck up “God Save the King” while everyone stood at attention. Then the president said, “Gentlemen, the King-Emperor.” Before the toast was drunk, the officers of the rank of major and above replied, “The King Emperor, God bless him!”

Relaxation was now permitted. The drinks flowed freer. Voices grew louder. At this point, however, conversation again was drowned, this time in the scream of bagpipes. The pipers marched around the long table, their kilts swinging, the ribbons fluttering. They skirled slow marches, reels, and pibrochs, and the noise could sliver the rafters. When the performance was over, the head piper was given a silver bowl of brandy, which he drank with a flourish.

The bottles of Madeira and port gradually gave way to bottles of Drambuie. When everyone was really cheerful, a move was made to the main hall. Here the formality of the dining room gave way completely. Loud laughter was interspersed with the shrieks and hoots peculiar to Scottish exuberance. The pipers returned, and now the wild Scottish dancing began. It went on until the early hours. Only men did this dancing, no woman was ever allowed to enter the mess.

The officers had plenty of chances to join the ladies, however, during the rest of the week. Parties of every description were held, and the social prestige of the HLI officers gave them entree into every circle. At last, Thimayya was participating in the glorious British social life he had envied as a boy.

Inevitably, however, the fact that he was an Indian limited his participation in the social activity. A complication arose

over his membership in the Bangalore United Services Club. This was the club whose ballroom he had watched from his dormitory at Bishop Cotton's. The club was the most exclusive in the area.

This part of India was not under complete British rule. Bangalore was in the princely state of Mysore and was governed by the Maharaja. In the past, however, the Maharaja had leased to the British a large area near the city. Ostensibly, this area was a cantonment. In addition to the several regiments stationed there, however, were many British business firms. British government officials maintained residences in the area, and even the Maharaja kept a palace there. Bangalore's 3,000 foot altitude guaranteed a perfect year around climate, so that many people were attracted to the city.

Thus the city contained many separate groups. The groups were stratified and seldom overlapped. At the top was His Highness. Almost at his level were the British officers and officials. Next came the British businessmen, planters, traders, and managers of important firms and banks. Almost on their level were the senior Indian government officials and professional men. Then came the Anglo-Indian community, whose members dominated the services such as posts, telegraphs, and railways. Finally, there were the Indian merchants and traders.

Each group had its own customs and some sort of center for its social activities. In this set up, however, Thumayya was an anomaly. As an Indian in a fashionable British regiment he seemed to have entree into all the groups, and at the same time to belong to none.

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of this situation was the fact that he could—and did—belong to the Bowring Institute, the main club of the Anglo-Indian group. The Bangalore Anglo-Indian community was the largest in India, and the girls were attractive. The parties were delightfully gay. In those days, the Anglo-Indians were snobbish about the Indians, more so than were the British, and normally Thumayya would not be allowed to join their club. Because of his association with the H. L. I., an exception was made for him.

Also, he belonged to the Century Club, the center for Indian

government officials. The members were impressed with his belonging to a fashionable regiment, and he was welcomed. Thumayya, however, seldom used the club, the officials tended to be older men, set in their ways and orthodox. Their women-folk rarely moved outside their homes, and at the club the men did little but talk and play cards.

Thumayya had been with the regiment only a few days when the adjutant told him that he should join the United Services Club. Thumayya replied that he could not enter the club because Indians were not permitted to do so. The adjutant could not believe this until he had put up Thumayya's name.

"To my surprise," Timmy reflected later, "none of the H. L. I. officers knew that Indians were excluded. Moreover, they seemed genuinely indignant about it. The C. O. himself went before the club committee to make the members change the by-laws. He was voted down, although actually by only a small majority. When this happened, the officers were really angry. They told me that they had agreed to resign from the club in protest. Now it was my turn to protest. Their concern touched me rather deeply, but one could not allow them to forego the fun and games the club provided."

Ultimately, the officers accepted his viewpoint, but they tried to make up for his lack of the club by seeing that he was constantly entertained. The most pleasant aspect of this situation was that it enabled Thumayya to spend a great deal of time at the home of his company commander, Major Sir Telfer-Smolett. The major represented the perfect type of officer and gentleman. His men worshiped him. He was kind and generous and without pretense. Lady Telfer-Smolett was equally charming. They were wealthy, and their house was one of the loveliest in Bangalore. They entertained almost every evening, and Thumayya had a standing invitation to their parties. In fact, if he did not go, the major would check to make sure that Thumayya had had another engagement and had not spent the evening alone.

At the house of the Telfer-Smoletts, Thumayya met the other senior British officials and officers. He was often asked to play the piano or his harmonica, and group singing was always popular. At this social level, none of the British seemed to have

heard of the rule against Indians dancing with European women Thumayya danced with all the wives and daughters

One of the reasons Thumayya got on well with the H.L.I. officers was that the Scots and Coorgs have much in common Both have the clan system, and many other aspects of their cultures are similar Even Scottish and Coorg dancing are much alike The proof of the similarities came when the other officers met Thumayya's family His parents and sisters usually took a house in Bangalore for a month or so each year They also liked these cultured Scots Soon Thumayya was inviting the officers to his home in Mercara for special parties and *shikar*

Oddly enough, he got on better with the H.L.I. officers than did two English subalterns who arrived after he had been with the regiment six months Like Thumayya, they were intended for the Indian Army but were doing their first year in a British Army mess From the moment the subalterns arrived, the Scots officers seemed to dislike the new boys and took little pains to hide it The Englishmen did not come from an upper-class background, but that in itself was not the reason for their unpopularity Their basic attitudes were in conflict with those of the rest

For example, they would not play football or hockey with the troops This was a small matter, but one that had emotional overtones In peacetime India, the British troops had few advantages compared to the officers, so that, for the sake of morale, the officers' help in entertaining the men was an unspoken obligation Failure to co-operate was not the way to win friends in the regiment

Again, although the new subalterns could and did become members of the United Services Club, they rarely went there They felt ill at ease there and in the mess and soon took a bungalow so that they would have to eat at the mess only on Wednesday nights No one blamed the two boys, everyone would have helped them fit in But the Englishmen would not even try, and this exasperated the H.L.I. officers

And finally, the English boys brought Anglo-Indian girls to their bungalow The moral issue was a minor detail, it was a matter of "proper form" Immorality among upper-class British

was not frowned upon, but its practice had to be in accordance with a rigid, although unwritten, code. If an officer were discreet, for example, he could have an affair with a married woman from an upper-class background. The onus of such an affair was on the woman. The man was considered lucky, and the woman was not censured as long as she maintained her dignity.

Also, the proper young man could have prostitutes. Discretion was less important here. Society realistically took the view that young officers were likely to get into trouble unless permitted some such release. The main requirement was that the officer keep the details of this release divorced from his social life with his own group. He was not supposed to have any such goings-on in his own house or quarters. The old sayings "Don't foul your nest" and "Don't dirty your own doorstep" applied and were taken seriously.

Lastly, an affair with an Anglo-Indian girl was frowned upon, especially if she was unmarried. The idea was that an upper-class young man might be taking advantage of the girl. Seducing her could get her into trouble from which the young man could not extricate her. He therefore was considered a cad if he took such a chance with the girl's future. Since many Anglo-Indian girls did not see the situation this way, and because many of them were attractive, the rule was difficult to uphold.

Thus, the fact that the two English boys did not even try to uphold it infuriated the other officers. When the conflict between the new subalterns and the officers reached a climax, it was over Anglo-Indian girls. The Scots officers and Thumayya were drinking on the lawn of the mess one night after dinner. Gray announced casually that the two new subalterns were entertaining a lovely pair from the Bowring Institute, the fact had been passed on to him by one of the mess servants. The news caused a sudden silence, but Thumayya could feel tension mounting. Suddenly Black stood up and walked unsteadily toward the road. Gray immediately followed. They called to Thumayya to join them.

Without a word, the three men got into Black's car and a

moment later were in front of the English boys bungalow. The lights in the house were out, but the officers could hear gramophone music. Black calmly drove the big car through the closed gate and up to the veranda. By the car's lights the three men could see the two boys dancing in the dark with their girls. Gray and Black got out of the car and approached the two startled couples. Thimayya stayed back, frightened at what would happen. A moment later, the two girls slipped past running for the road. Then Black and Gray began fighting with the English boys. The racket they made in the still night was awful. Before long the two subalterns were laid out cold.

The next day, the two boys got Thimayya aside. They were nearly hysterical. They still bore the marks of a thrashing. They asked Thimayya what they should do. One of them was for bringing action against Gray and Black, but Thimayya advised them not to. If they did, they might get a financial settlement and they might even cause their assailants to be reprimanded, but their own position in the regiment would become even more difficult. As best he could, Thimayya gave them advice on how to get along with the HLI officers. Thereafter, the English boys tried to follow the advice but they were not successful. The other officers would have nothing to do with them. Finally, one of the boys resigned his commission and joined the Burma Police. *The other stuck it out but he stayed entirely to himself.*

Black and Gray were sheepish about what they had done, but not contrite. Gray was the younger of the two, but he was better looking and brighter than Black. Also Gray lacked the enormous personal income that most of the other officers had. Thus the others lent him polo ponies, hunting equipment, and motorcars, and this may have rankled with him. He was anxious to get ahead. He could easily pass the examination for promotion but Black, being senior, had the right to take the examination first—and Black invariably failed. The two used to have arguments about the situation. Often they went to Thimayya with their different viewpoints. Black insisted that he would resign from the regiment if Gray were promoted over him. Gray swore that he would resign if his promotion continued to

be blocked. The regiment wanted to lose neither. Finally the C O gave Black an unmerited passing grade, and both men became first lieutenants. The argument was settled, and the tension eased.

Despite his deficiencies, Black was likable. He was a big, bumbling fellow with a friendly grin. He used his wealth mostly to see that those around him had a good time. He never played polo himself, for example, but he kept a string of ponies so that no one in the regiment ever lacked a good mount. He drank only beer, he drank it in vast quantities, but the best champagne was never too good for his friends. He seemed to have little interest in women, but he gave magnificent parties so that the rest could enjoy feminine company. He loved to play drums. At his parties, therefore, he always hired the best available dance orchestra, but the drummer would have the night off. Black would spend the evening banging away on the drums, his eyes closed and a look of idiotic ecstasy on his beefy face while one servant was kept busy filling his beer mug. Black became a favorite of Thimayya's family. Thimayya's mother especially liked him. She said that despite his enormous size he was like a lovable little boy.

Black evidently grew up, however, two years after Thimayya left the regiment. He fell in love. The girl was the daughter of a retired colonel, but gossip alleged that her mother had been part Indian. In any case, the girl was not socially acceptable, and the regiment was against the proposed marriage. Black, however, could not be dissuaded from matrimony. At this time, the H.L.I. was at the training center in Benares, while Thimayya was not far away in Kanpur. One night Black telephoned Thimayya and said that he was driving over at breakfast time next morning to talk about his marriage. Early the next day Thimayya received another call—this one from the police. There had been an accident. Thimayya rushed to the scene. Black had been driving, as he usually did, at 100 miles per hour. He had hit a cow, and that was the end of Black. The extraordinary thing about the accident was that the road was strewn with a fortune in jewelry, Black's family heirlooms which he was bringing to

his fiancée. He had made a will leaving his entire estate to the girl. The girl did the right thing, however, she went to Scotland and took care of Black's mother.

With people like Black and Gray and the Telfer Smoletts, Thumayya's year with the HLI was happy, but he did little soldiering. Nevertheless, what he remembered most about that year was the soldiering he did. This was his first chance to command real troops. The men of his platoon came from the Glasgow area, they were big hearty men who lived violently. At first, Thumayya was worried about their reaction to being led by an Indian.

He found, however, that they responded to firm leadership. In wartime they would have followed him anywhere. His only difficulty with them was understanding their language.

He had been with them for a few days when one was brought before him on a drunkenness charge. When asked why he had got drunk, the soldier replied, "I don't mind it."

"You bloody well should mind it," Thumayya informed him, "and you should mind your insolence even more because I'm taking you up before the company commander on both charges."

The man had been in the commander's office for only a few minutes when Telfer Smolett called Thumayya. The major was laughing. "This chap wasn't being insolent," Telfer Smolett said. "In the Scottish dialect, 'I don't mind it' means 'I don't remember it'."

Thumayya does remember that in the battalion, demoralization was a problem. Drunkenness was constant and uncontrollable. Sodomy was rife. And venereal disease had reached alarming proportions. Thumayya was shocked that such a splendid regiment could reach such a state of indiscipline. He learned, however, that sometimes the more highly disciplined a fighting unit becomes in wartime, the more thoroughly indisciplined it becomes in peacetime laxity. The HLI had gone through hell in World War I and had made a magnificent record. Indeed, its record for several centuries was truly impressive. Moreover, when World War II came, the regiment maintained its reputation, in fact it was completely wiped out more than once.

But, for his platoon, Thimayya wanted an improvement. What the men needed most was to be kept busy, for none of them, on their own resources, had the imagination to use spare time for anything besides drinking and fornication. On the other hand, making unnecessary work for them was unfair, they had given everything they had during the war and they deserved some spare time. Thimayya concentrated on keeping them occupied. They liked sports, and by now Thimayya was at the top of his form in hockey and football. He had the advantage of being familiar with both the Indian and British techniques. Thus, he played with the men a great deal and coached a good team. The men became enthusiastic enough to take time off from dissipation to practice. In addition, Thimayya thought up other games and contests that stimulated a spirit of competition. Probably his efforts failed to make angels of those wild Scots, but improvement was noticeable. None of his brother officers seemed to notice what he was doing, but, before he left, the colonel gave him heart warming praise. Even the men of Thimayya's platoon evidently appreciated his efforts. On the day he was leaving, they "chaired" him on their shoulders around the parade ground, the colonel told him mistily that this was an honor the men had not paid to an officer for many years.

Despite his year of social frivolity with the H L I, therefore, Thimayya felt that he had learned much. He knew that, to a good officer, *whom* he led was less important than *how* he led. He acquired an appreciation of high standards in behavior and values, the simple discipline of good manners was fundamental to leadership. He now understood the British better.

When Thimayya was ready to be posted to the Indian Army, he had no feeling about a particular branch of the service, nor had he a preference for a regiment. What he wanted was the chance to do something resembling military service. In those days both the British and Indian armies in India were still relaxing from their contributions in World War I. The result was that most of the regiments were like clubs.

Only two Indian Army battalions serving abroad were available. One was the Second Battalion of the First Madras

Pioneers, stationed in Mandalay. The other was the Fourth Battalion of the 19th Hyderabad Regiment, stationed in Baghdad. The Pioneers sounded glamorous to Thumayya, but he thought that Mandalay at the time might be a play station like most of the military posts in India. He chose, therefore, to go to Baghdad, and his parent regiment for the rest of his career became the 4/19 Hyderabad.

CHAPTER V

BAGHDAD

In March of 1927, Second Lieutenant Thimayya arrived at the station in Baghdad. This time he was met by an Indian officer, Captain Kunwar Daulat Singh, an athletic Rajput from Kotah. The officer greeted Thimayya gravely and took him to his car. When they were seated, the officer asked, "What do you think of the British?"

"I've met some decent ones and some rotters," Thimayya said.

"They're all rotten!" the captain said. He spat out the words.

"This climate could rot anyone," Thimayya replied. Indeed, the heat and stinging dust were a torture.

But Daulat Singh seemed to consider Thimayya's remark facetious. He proceeded to tell the younger man what attitude an Indian should take toward the British masters. The captain's bitterness, more than his words, disturbed Thimayya, who began to have apprehensions about the Hyderabad Regiment.

His apprehensions were increased when they arrived at Hinaidi, the Baghdad area's cantonment. The battalion was practicing a ceremonial parade. The troops, Thimayya thought, looked splendid. But he really studied the officers standing on the review square.

Besides Daulat Singh and Thimayya, the group included two other Indian officers. These two were younger than the captain, and they did not seem so grimly serious. The British officers looked like an average assortment of middle-class types. It was the CO who worried Thimayya. The CO, he learned, was Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton Britton. Thimayya saw a big, shapeless body leaning on a stick. The man's knees were badly

swollen from gout and bandaged His face was covered with a network of blood vessels that suggested he might be a heavy drinker

When the march past was over, the C O turned suddenly to Thumayya "What did you think of the parade, young man?" he asked

Thumayya had been feeling a thrill of pride for the men Their drill, however, he thought could be sharpened "Not bad, sir," he said

"Not bad!" the colonel exclaimed "It was bloody good Either you're ignorant or you have high standards"

"We were taught high standards at Sandhurst," Thumayya said

"Ah, Sandhurst So you're one of *those*," the colonel said, and it was no compliment He turned abruptly and loped away

Daulat Singh then took Thumayya to the barracks, where he introduced the new officer to the other young Indians One was Lieutenant Harbushan Singh Brar, a Sikh who had shaved, he had a cheerful but characterless face The other was Lieutenant Mohamed Ishfaq Majid, a fair skinned Assamese Moslem Both greeted Thumayya warmly

When Daulat Singh left, Thumayya asked these two if the relations between the Indians and the British here were as bad as they seemed

"They're not good," Majid said "Mostly we work and forget the British" He grinned and added, "The Baghdad women can make one forget anything"

'Part of the trouble is Daulat Singh,' Brar said 'He goes out of his way to aggravate the British'

From the subsequent conversation, Thumayya gathered that Daulat Singh was an intelligent man, and a fine soldier, but that his anti British feelings colored his whole life When his daily work was done, he took off the hated uniform and donned a *dhoti* He never touched the foreigners' food He was always doing *pujas* (religious rituals) He had his family with him, but kept his wife in *purdah*

Thumayya also gathered that the other two, while agreeing with Daulat Singh in principle, felt that he was unnecessarily

grim about it Brar was a cheerful sort who could get along well with anyone and would avoid unpleasantness at all costs Majid seemed to think of nothing but women But both were young and spirited They wanted to enjoy life as they found it They welcomed Thumayya as reinforcement to their viewpoint

Later at the mess, Thumayya was introduced to the other officers Captain Geoffrey Bull was his company commander Despite his name, he was a cadaverous type and reminded Thumayya of his sour-faced guardian at Sandhurst As soon as they met, Bull said, "You realize that your coming into the army probably will deprive my son of a commission"

Thumayya was too surprised to reply He knew that Bull was married but had no children Daulat Singh jumped to Thumayya's defense "So what?" he said to the Englishman "Your forefathers deprived ours of our rightful place in the Indian Army"

Captain Bull lost his temper and reported Daulat Singh for being anti British The next morning the C O listened to the story of the incident He thereupon apologized to Daulat Singh and gave Bull a tongue lashing

This was typical of the Indo-British relations in the battalion Conflict and animosity did exist between the two groups, but justice and fair play also were present As always, some of the British officers were pleasant, and the Indian officers got on with them splendidly Others resented the Indians' presence and made the unpleasantness Almost every issue took on facets of the conflict

Invariably, however, the issues were petty If the radio in the mess lounge were tuned in on Indian music, for example, some one would switch it to Western music Then someone else would turn it back to Indian music This would go on until some sensible person would turn off the radio altogether

Thumayya's position in this conflict was defined on his third day with the battalion He went early to the mess No one was in the lounge except Colonel Hamilton Britton Thumayya nodded to the older man and passed, but the C O called him back and told him to sit down nearby The C O's bandaged legs were propped up on another chair, and Thumayya could see that he had had several *chota pegs* (whiskies) The older man

began a rambling account of what he expected of Thumayya in the regiment.

Finally he said, "What a long name you have Where do you come from?"

"A place called Coorg," Thumayya said.

This reply had an amazing effect on the colonel. Despite his gouty legs, he jumped up and actually embraced Thumayya. "Coorg!" he exclaimed. "I'm from Coorg too!" He saw Thumayya's surprise and laughed. "Well, not actually *from* Coorg," he said, "but it's the most wonderful place I've ever lived in."

Thumayya could never have imagined the colonel so animated. Obviously Coorg meant something special to the older man. The colonel said that the only really happy years of his life had been spent there. He was originally from the Karnatic Regiment. As a subaltern stationed in Coorg, he had married a planter's daughter, but she had run off with another planter. How this situation made for the happiest years of the colonel's life was not clear. Perhaps he then may have fallen in love with a Coorg girl, from whom he may have acquired fond memories, because later that evening he said, "Timmy, you're the son I might have had!"

In any case, Thumayya became his favorite. The young Indian could do nothing wrong. This was flattering, but it surprised and confused Thumayya. The colonel had been in the service for thirty years. He lacked any real soldierly qualities, and seemed to know it, but he had been in the Indian Army too long to know any other life. Perhaps, therefore, he was lonely and lost. He took to inviting Thumayya to his house on every possible occasion.

His present wife was equally hospitable. She was a large, blowsy woman with a booming cockney voice, but she was goodhearted. Among the officers, it was said that anyone who filled her up with gin and lost some money to her at bridge would get a good report from the C O.

Thumayya did not have to stoop to any such trick, the C O always gave him a glowing report. Thumayya did not object to this, but it did make his relations with the other officers a bit awkward, especially with those who were anti-Indian.

The most vehement of the anti-Indian group was the second-

in-command. He was a ginger haired Irishman with a vicious temper. "He seemed to hate everyone, regardless of race or creed," Thumayya said later, "but perhaps we Indians were more sensitive to his abuse."

Thumayya had not been with the battalion long, however, before the Irishman married the older sister of an English officer. The woman was middle aged and gray haired, but she had a lovely complexion and a sweet disposition. More important, she achieved a miraculous change in her husband. He learned to control his temper. And, incredibly, he reversed his attitude toward Indian officers. In fact, he prohibited any expression of racial prejudice in the battalion. Life for the Indian officers became more pleasant.

It became even more pleasant when the C O stood up for the Indians at the Basra Club. As in Bangalore, Asiatics were denied membership. The commander went before the club's committee to insist that the Indian officers be allowed to join. Thumayya remembered the embarrassment caused by the Bangalore club's rejection and he asked the colonel not to press the issue. Moreover, Daulat Singh was infuriated at this British gesture, he insisted that it was another sinister move to humiliate the Indians further.

Nevertheless the colonel persisted. He was in a strong position. The club was in the cantonment area where even British civilians were allowed only at the commandant's discretion. Thus the colonel won, and the Indian officers were elected to full membership. Daulat Singh refused to go near the place, but Thumayya, Brar, and Majid found that they were unreservedly welcome at the club and used its facilities gratefully.

The facilities were important to the health and morale of all the officers. The climate in that part of the world was grim. Temperatures of 130 degrees were common. The fiery *loo* blew burning dust that penetrated everywhere. The conditions could affect one's nerves badly unless an adequate escape was provided.

And the officers had no chance to escape through a social life among the Iraqis, who hated the Indians as much as they did the British. During World War I, the Arab nations had tried to

remain neutral Turkey, however, sided with the Germans, and Turkey contained the Caliphate, the nominal seat of the Moslem religion. After the war, the Allied reparations demanded of Turkey seemed to the Arabs an attack on their religion. They flared into a revolt which the British suppressed. Thereafter, under a treaty with King Faisal I, British troops were quartered in the Baghdad-Basra territory to enforce the peace. Only two battalions of these troops now remained, the 4/19 Hyderabad and the 3/5 Mahratta Light Infantry. The Iraqis did not like being kept under subjection by foreign troops, and they considered the Indian troops and officers mercenaries of the British. Thumayya tried to make friends among the Iraqis, but he always failed.

Thus the officers were thrown on their own resources. They could shoot ducks along the Euphrates or partridge in the desert, but the climate discouraged the activity. In the evenings they could go into Baghdad, where émigré elements from the trouble spots of Europe and the Near East had collected and had evolved a cosmopolitan but degenerate night life. Moreover, because of inflation, a few rupees could buy more than enough entertainment for one night. But this kind of escape could be fatal. The officers could concentrate on regimental affairs, they could play hockey and football with the men and polo among themselves. Thumayya did take a keen interest in his duties, and he played on the first string in the regimental team sports. But battalion business could keep the officers busy no more than three hours a day, and the heat limited games. In the end, therefore, the healthy relaxation offered by the Basra Club was important to the officers' well being. The C O was wise to fight for Indian membership. It did much to alleviate the Indo-British conflict, it raised regimental morale and increased efficiency.

The regiment had been first raised in 1784 by Salawat Khan, then Governor of Berar. The unit was used to put down the Pindari ravages. Afterward, the governor could not keep up the regiment and turned it over to the East India Company. The company put in British officers and named the unit the Hyderabad Irregulars. During the mutiny of 1857, the regiment's sepoy were kept from joining the revolt. When India came under the

Queen, therefore, the regiment attained more formal status, it was called the 98th Battalion of the Hyderabad Contingent. It earned much glory and achieved a fine *esprit*. When the Indian Army was reorganized in 1922, it became the 4/19 Hyderabad Regiment.

Thus, for almost 150 years, only British had officered this fine regiment. When Indianization of the Indian Army began, the British officers of the good regiments objected. Their argument against the change was that the *jawans* would not want to serve under an Indian officer and might mutiny again. The Eight Unit Indian Army Scheme therefore was adopted. Instead of distributing the few available Indian officers throughout the army, only eight regiments—six infantry and two cavalry—were Indianized. The British officers in these regiments considered themselves unfairly treated.

At first the *jawans* were unhappy to have Indian officers. The *jawans* thought of the British as superior beings. They associated education, sportsmanship, and *noblesse oblige* only with the British and with British-educated maharajas. All other Indian classes they credited with weaknesses that they sometimes charged to themselves: dishonesty, double-dealing, and intrigue. Moreover, their own Indian *jemadar* and *subedar* (junior commissioned officers) frequently were guilty of nepotism, favoritism, and graft. To make matters worse, some of the first Indian commissioned officers were ill-chosen and badly trained. They seemed to confirm the *jawans'* fears. Thus the better Indian officers who came later found antagonism from the troops as well as from the British officers. They had a difficult time.

The difficulties might have become insuperable, but the Eight Unit Scheme turned out to be an advantage to the Indian officers. If the available Indian officers had been spread throughout the army, only one or two would have been posted to each regiment. Under these circumstances the Indian officers would have been so outnumbered that their individual capabilities would have been unrecognized. Indianization might well have fizzled out.

By concentrating the Indian officers in a few units, however, the scheme gave the troops a chance to judge the capabilities of both the Indian and British officers. The Indian officers could

help each other maintain high standards, and by standing together could demand fair play from the authorities. When the *jawans* saw that Indian officers could equal and even surpass the British, they were delighted. Pride and nationalism were awakened. When they returned to their villages, they bragged about having their own countrymen as officers. Before long, *jawans* led by Indian officers were the envy of the other troops.

The good reputation of the Indian officers was spread even faster by another peculiarity of the Indian Army under the British—the principle of the mixed battalion. Always fearful of another *mutiny*, the British did not make up a regiment or even a battalion from only one of the several fighting units. The Gurkhas, Sikhs, Rajputs, Dogras, Jats, Punjabis, Mahrattas, and others had separate languages, religions, and customs. A regiment formed from only one of these would surely have been easier to handle and probably would have acquired greater *esprit*. In an uprising, however, the whole regiment might become disaffected and therefore unreliable. Conversely, by having companies of the separate classes, one battalion would be made up of four different ethnic groups that could be played off against one another, thus the possibility of maintaining the capability of the whole battalion—or at least a part of it—would be increased. Not all Indian Army battalions were mixed, Gurkhas and Sikhs were considered reliable enough to constitute “pure” regiments. But all the regiments under the Eight Unit Scheme were mixed. Thus the Indian officers had a chance to show their worth to a cross section of the Indian fighting classes. As the classes came from every corner of the subcontinent, the *jawans* spread the reputation of the Indian officers throughout the country.

The units in Thimayya's battalion came mostly from North India, although the regiment was associated with the South. One company contained Kumaonis, who came from the Himalayas and were similar to the Gurkhas. Another company contained Hindu Jats from the territory south of the mountains but north of Delhi. A third company was made up of Rajputs from the lower United Provinces and eastern Rajputana. The remaining company contained Ahirs, a type of Moslem Jats from the

villages south of Delhi. All these men were old soldiers, tough and experienced. Their average service was 12 to 15 years. They had fought magnificently throughout World War I. They were curious but reserved about the new Indian officer. Thumayya sensed that the men *wanted* to like him but that he would have to prove himself to them.

Thumayya was posted as second-in-command of the Ahir company. He liked them from the first moment he saw them. They were long, lean, wiry fellows. They walked with a graceful, effortless stride, a 30 or 40 mile march in the desert was nothing to them. Moreover, they could keep up this pace with only a canteen of water, one onion, and a half-dozen dry *chapattis* (unleavened wheat cakes) daily apiece!

Thumayya's one difficulty with his men was his weakness in Hindustani. At first he could not communicate with them. He encouraged their help, however, and he laughed with them when they joked about his accent. He ate with the men whenever he could. They told him about their villages and their customs. Slowly, he came to know them individually.

They were simple people. They asked for little. They arose early, worked hard, and were asleep by eight in the evening. Want of discipline among them was almost nonexistent. They liked games and were fine athletes. On Sundays, batches of them would go shopping in the bazaars, but being frugal, they rarely spent more than a rupee apiece. Their favorite amusement, however, was the remarkable wit and banter which were an essential part of their relations with each other. Most of all, they had within themselves a kind of inner contentment that came from an unquestioning faith in simple but genuine values.

Thumayya was surprised at the love which British officers often showed for the sepoys. He did not believe it genuine. The gulf between a sophisticated European and a simple Indian peasant seemed too wide to be crossed by real affection. But as he grew to know the *jawns* better, he realized that anyone would admire and respect them. Culturally, Thumayya was as foreign to them as was an Englishman. Yet to accept him completely, all they asked of him were the elementary good manners which mark a civilized person anywhere. When he began his duties with the

company, he was full of himself. He expected to give the men the advantage of his superior knowledge. They humbled him. Respectfully and with wit, humor, and gentle tact, they taught him to be a soldier. He learned to love those men, and he was proud to be accepted as one of them.

One of the duties of his company was to protect King Faisal I. Thus the company was housed in the Habbaniyah barracks in the center of Baghdad. The King's palace was across the Tigris River. The company provided a guard for the gate and patrolled the perimeter of the palace grounds. Once a day, Thimayya rode a horse through Baghdad's streets and over the bridge. He inspected the guard and rode around the perimeter.

'This was hardly strenuous,' Thimayya said later, 'but I thought the task was glamorous. It also turned out to be dangerous. While riding the perimeter one day, I suddenly heard some female shrieks. Without thinking, I galloped into the palace grounds. I had the vague idea of rescuing damsels in distress. Two Arabs came running toward me with drawn swords. I shouted at them to follow me in the direction of the shrieks. I realized too late that the Arabs' only concern was with me. As soon as one was within striking distance, he took a swipe at me with a sword. My horse was skittish and danced aside, otherwise the Arab would have cut me down. Even so, I heard the whistle of the blade. I got out of the garden fast. The next day I lodged a complaint with the palace authorities. I was told coldly that I had nearly entered the King's harem. In Baghdad, thereafter, I acquired prestige as being the only man to get so close to the harem—and live.'

The next duty to which he was appointed had dangers of a more subtle type. The area was under the command of an R.A.F. air marshal. An R.A.F. staff officer was the provost marshal. This officer's main duty was to enforce regulations that would keep Baghdad's many fleshpots from boiling over and would keep the men of the occupying force out of trouble in the city's frenzied night life. The difficulty was that the temptations offered by the city were so great that even the provost marshal and his men tended to succumb. A nasty incident brought the situation to a climax.

Baghdad's night-life area was divided into districts reserved separately for officers, noncommissioned officers, and troops. One night, two British majors from the Mahratta Light Infantry tried a night club reserved for sergeants. The majors were being entertained at their table by a beautiful White Russian girl when the assistant provost marshal, an R A F group captain, entered. He demanded that the girl leave the majors and join him. The majors objected, and the ensuing argument became a brawl in which the night club was wrecked. The investigation revealed that the group captain had been keeping the Russian girl in his officer's quarters. In fact she used his official car, flying his flag, when she did her bazaar shopping. The group captain was court-martialed.

The authorities then decided to try an Indian officer as the assistant provost marshal. Colonel Hamilton Britton gave Thimayya such a good recommendation that he was assigned to the post. Thimayya basked in the envy of the other officers. He could not be blamed for feeling a little smug.

Before he began his duties, however, Colonel Hamilton Britton called him into the office. "Timmy," the colonel said, "in getting you this post, I may have done you a favor—or I may have ruined your career."

"I can handle the job," Thimayya said.

The older man brushed this aside. "Any moron could do the job," he said. "It's the temptations *off* the job I'm worried about. You're just a boy—not nearly as sophisticated as you think you are."

He described the difficulties Thimayya would face. Because of the authority the boy would have, every shady character in Baghdad would try to buy his co-operation. The night-club owners, fearful of out-of-bounds regulations, also would try to bribe Thimayya, and they would give him all the food and drink he could take. If he gambled, he would never lose. Every available woman would want the security he could guarantee and would practice expert wiles on him. Thimayya would want to be lenient with his personal friends in the regiment. And he would have difficulty enforcing regulations in the case of senior

British officers, who might resent interference from a mere Indian subaltern

"Every move you make will be watched," the colonel said "If you slip once—just once—you will be jumped on But worse than any punishment will be the 'I-told you so's' from my countrymen who believe that Indians can't make good officers "

Thimayya had never heard the colonel speak so seriously, and the warning frightened him He now considered the job a vast responsibility He really believed that if he failed he would be responsible for a serious setback to the cause of army Indianization If he should succeed where a British officer had failed, however, the authorities would have to recognize the worth of the Indian officer group

Thus Thimayya threw himself into the job, grimly determined to be correct in every detail He soon found that the temptations were harder to resist than the colonel had warned Worse, the temptations usually were insidiously subtle, and he had difficulty in seeing through some of the situations he faced

But the other Indians, officers and men, understood Thimayya's position and appreciated its importance to their cause They helped him They imposed upon themselves strict behavior in the city They gave him encouragement When he had a complicated problem, he discussed it with Daulat Singh Somehow he managed to keep his flag flying Unquestionably, his failure would have brought discredit on all Indian officers, but his success probably did nothing to improve their status When the battalion left Baghdad, no official recognition was given to the way he had done the job Thimayya was heartened, however, because on the last day the colonel did say, 'I'm proud of you, my boy "

The battalion left Baghdad for India within a year In that year, Thimayya had grown up He was twenty one, but he was old enough to know that he had much to learn He had learned, however, that he could take responsibility Even more important, he had learned an admiration and affection for the *jawns* which would remain with him for the rest of his life

In this new maturity, he identified himself wholly with the Indians in the Indian Army Henceforth, he did not try to ape

the British. He desired merely to become a good officer. The modesty of this ambition simplified his life. He no longer needed to fear and look for injustice from the British. All he wanted from them was what they could teach him. And he found that many of them, like Colonel Hamilton Britton, were delighted to share their knowledge with anyone genuinely interested.

CHAPTER VI

ALLAHABAD

From Baghdad the battalion was sent to Allahabad in north-central India. The country was hot and dusty during the spring and early summer. During the summer monsoon and the winter, however, the weather was heavenly, and the fields were lush with sugar cane and wheat. The monotony of the flat landscape was relieved by orchards of huge, dark green mango trees. The lacy, pale-green leaves of coolly fragrant *neem* trees shaded the roads which led to innumerable villages. Each village duplicated the others: a tight cluster of flat roofed, mud walled huts over which towered the glistening white dome and minarets of a Moslem mosque or the more ornate dome of a Hindu temple.

The people in this rich area were sturdy and independent. Allahabad was their largest city. It was roughly in the center of the territory from which most of the troops in Thimayya's battalion came. Thus the transfer caused great joy among the men. The soldiers could see their families again. Because Allahabad was an important military and civil station, the British officers anticipated a pleasanter social life with a large colony of their own people. Finally, Allahabad was an important North India cultural center, so that the Indian officers looked forward to meeting again Indian families with backgrounds similar to theirs.

On the way to Allahabad, however, regimental business kept Thimayya in Bombay for a week. During this week, an incident occurred that colored his stay in Allahabad. A family friend introduced him to Mrs. Sairojni Naidu, who invited him to lunch. Mrs. Naidu was already famous throughout India as a patriot and as one of Gandhi's most devoted followers. Thimayya

had never met any of the nationalist leaders. His attitude toward Indian nationalism was objective. As a soldier, he had been taught that to think of politics was bad form. Moreover, knowing the British military strength, the nationalist movement seemed futile to him. Nevertheless, he was curious about the people who could struggle against overwhelming odds, and he accepted the invitation gladly.

Mrs. Naidu was accompanied by her daughter, Miss Padamja Naidu, who now is Governor of West Bengal. The two women had prepared a delicious meal for him at the Taj Mahal Hotel. They were charming and friendly. Outwardly, they were two gracious ladies being kind to a poor soldier returning from the outposts of empire.

Thimayya soon realized, however, that as a devoted follower of Gandhi, Mrs. Naidu abhorred the violence associated with a soldier's life. Further, he himself, as an Indian serving in the British forces, must have seemed to her a doubtful character.

To his surprise, he found himself feeling defensive. He had never been ashamed of his career, on the contrary, he had been proud of it and of his achievements. The ladies were not critical of him—they were much too tactful for that—but perhaps for that very reason their effect on him was worse than if they had argued passionately in favor of *ahimsa* (nonviolence).

Suddenly Thimayya said to Mrs. Naidu, "I'm a soldier. It's the only thing I know how to be. I want to be a good one. What would you do if you were in my position?"

His candor made the woman blink. "I don't know," she said finally. "I really don't know. But I wish you would talk to Mr. Jinnah. He's very interested in our Indian officers."

A few days later, with Mrs. Naidu's introduction, he had dinner with Liaquat Ali Jinnah, head of India's Moslem nationalists. The leader's young wife joined them, but Jinnah dominated the conversation. "I felt that Jinnah did not regard me as a person, but rather as a type," Thimayya said some years later, recalling the interview. "His lawyer's mind probed me with questions the whole evening. My sole interest to him was the knowledge I had about defense matters. Jinnah seemed irked

at not having expert knowledge on every subject with which his political career brought him into contact. He tried to absorb, in that one evening, all that I had learned about military science. I found it exhausting."

The experience of meeting these nationalists altered Thimayya's attitude toward the freedom movement. The intelligence of the people and their singleness of purpose made him feel that perhaps Indian independence was not so unlikely after all. And if independence were a possibility, what was he doing for the cause?

The battalion's quarters in Allahabad were most comfortable. The accommodations for sport and entertainment were magnificent. The officers had even less work to do than in Baghdad. Thimayya began to wonder if the British were not deliberately undermining the Indian officers with pleasant indolence.

Thimayya questioned the British policies further when once more the Indian officers faced the problem of a social club. The battalion's British officers automatically were admitted to the Allahabad Club, but as usual the by-laws denied membership to Asiatics. Again the battalion C.O. tried to have the by-laws changed. This time he failed. The bitterness Thimayya now felt, added to his incipient nationalism, might have led him to an irrevocable decision. It happened, however, that other factors prevented any hasty action.

As the club facilities were denied to them, the Indian officers left calling cards at the houses of leading Allahabad families. They looked forward to participating again in the social life of their own people. To their chagrin, however, not one of the families replied. It soon seemed obvious that the intelligent Indians—like the Iraqis—regarded them as stooges of the hated conquerors. The Indian officers felt that they were rejected by the British and by the Indians as well.

Thimayya's attitude toward his own people was not helped by his reaction to a great festival that was held that year in Allahabad.

The city is situated at the confluence of the holy Ganges and Jumna Rivers. A third holy river, the Saraswati, is believed to

join the other two at the same spot underground. The confluence is sacred to the Hindus, and an important festival is held there annually. Once every twelve years, however, the great *Kumbh Mela* takes place. Millions of people assemble on the banks. They come by elephant, camel, horse, donkey, and bullock. They come by air, rail, bus, car, and bicycle. They walk or crawl or are carried. The blind, crippled, and diseased expect cures. Barren women hope for fertility. Sinners seek salvation. The aged want promise of higher rebirth. Religious sects look for converts and prestige. And thieves, pickpockets, kidnappers, dope peddlers, and the worst underworld characters try to make fortunes by fleecing the gullible. The job of traffic control assumes enormous proportions. The arrangements for lodging, food, water, and sanitation require planning at the national level. Protection for the law abiding against the criminal elements becomes almost impossible.

Thumayya's company was assigned the job of upholding law and order at the holy spot itself. Observation towers with thatched roofed platforms on top were erected throughout the area. A telephone system connected the towers. Thumayya occupied the centermost tower. Behind him loomed the historic Allahabad Fort, in front was the great expanse of the rivers. And on both sides was a sea of faces that flowed for miles. The sound it made was like the roar of a gigantic waterfall. All day long Thumayya watched the people through binoculars. When he spotted a lawbreaker, he signaled to ground patrols, which moved to make an arrest.

The amount of crime he saw shocked him. Pickpocketing and thievery were constant. But so was kidnapping. Stolen children were sold to childless couples or to houses of prostitution. The sale of narcotics and harmful or spurious drugs and nostrums was impossible to halt. Just as bad was the sale of unlicensed contaminated food and drinking water. What upset Thumayya the most, however, was the fact that all these malpractices—including even the kidnapping and prostitution—were done in the name of religion. Every arrested crook acted as though his deity had been insulted. Thumayya acquired the impression that

the holier a *sadhu* or *mahunt* (holy man) looked, the greater scoundrel he probably was

Thimayya had been proud to be a Hindu, although his contact with the religion was slight. Also, he had spent so much of his life with Europeans that some of his tastes undoubtedly were Western. Finally, his job at the *Kumbh Mela* was to search for only the seamier aspects of the festival. In any case, the hypocrisy, ignorance, and suffering he saw sickened him. For a while at least, he was content to have little contact with both the religion and those who practiced it.

Contact with any outsiders, including their own people, was made difficult for the Indian officers by the fact that the regiment was preparing for a celebration even more unusual than the *Kumbh Mela*. This was a ceremony called "the changing of the colours."

A regiment's colours were its proudest possessions. They consisted of two flags, one was the King's colours, the Union Jack, and the other was the regiment's own flag. In the old days these flags served as the regiment's rallying point in battle. Now they were used only on ceremonial occasions. They were made of the best silk. They were kept covered with leather cases in a special cabinet in the regiment's home mess. Eventually, however, age rotted the fabric and the flags needed to be replaced. The replacement ceremony required months of preparation. A soldier rarely participated in more than one during his lifetime.

From all over India, the regiment's full complement of battalions was assembled. On the day of the ceremony the officers and men donned dress uniforms. Old or worn equipment was replaced, and all of it was polished with the utmost care. The bands, which had been practicing for weeks, marched the battalions through the cantonment to the parade ground. A hollow square was formed.

Next, two officers in the mess reverently opened the cabinet and took out the cased flags. Thimayya was one of these officers, and the honor was considered great indeed. Outside the mess they were joined by two sergeants who acted as guards. The four men became the "colour party." They now were joined by an

entire company, which also was assigned to the task as an honor. The company was called the "escort party"

When they reached the parade ground, the flags were unfurled for the last time. When the C O commanded "March on, the colours," the flags were marched through the regiment, while the men presented arms. Now the new colours, still encased in leather, were brought onto the field. As they were unfurled, the old flags were encased. The new flags were handed to the kneeling colour party by the officiating VIP. In Great Britain, he usually was a member of the royal family. In India it was the Viceroy. When the party had received the new flags, the regiment formed a double line. At a slow march, the flags were marched in front of each line so that every soldier had a chance to see the colours at close hand. When the colours had been centered again, the regiment re-formed. Finally, a march past in review was made with the regiment behind its new colours.

Only those who had received formal invitations could witness the colorful ceremony, but thousands of guests were present. Afterward, the officers gave a private champagne party for a thousand special guests. Most of Allahabad's leading citizens and many famous nationalists came to this gathering. In the press the next day, several Indian leaders commented on how proud they had been of the smart turnout of the Indian troops and of the fact that an Indian officer had the honor of being in the colour party. Nevertheless, the Indian families still showed no desire to know the Indian officers socially. The Indian officers were even more bitter.

It was reasonable, therefore, that they should preoccupy themselves with regimental affairs as a compensation. This was easy to do because a number of interesting changes were taking place within the regiment.

The most pleasant change was that three more Indian officers joined the group. Naranjan Singh Gill, a Sikh, Kumar Yadunath Singh, a Rajput, and Ganpat Ram Nagar, a Hindu Brahman. All three were intelligent, well trained, and sociable. They were well liked, and they increased the prestige of the regiment's Indian officers.

Captain Daulat Singh, however, was eased out of the army

His anti British sentiments finally became too much for the authorities. Trumped up charges were brought against him. Nevertheless, when he was gone, the Indian officers did get on better with the British.

Another reason they got on better was the fact that the new British officers joining the battalion were unbiased. Not having had experience with anti Indian prejudice, they came into a mess more than a third of which now was composed of Indian officers. They adapted themselves gracefully to the situation. Thus, although the battalion's officers were a widely mixed group, they co-operated well and developed into a co-ordinated fighting unit.

The fighting capabilities of the troops themselves were increased by another change. The company of Rajputs was disbanded. Originally, the Rajputs had been high-caste Hindus who had refused to surrender to the Moslem invaders. They had been driven back into the jungles and deserts, where hard living had toughened them. Their ceaseless resistance to the Moslems had made them into magnificent warriors. A century and a half of British imposed peace, however, plus prosperity in their districts were beginning to have softening effects. Thus, although no one criticized the Rajput troops, Rajput replacements with the stamina of the troops in the other companies were no longer possible to recruit.

The Rajputs were replaced by another company of Kumaonis. These sturdy hill men were valuable in mountain warfare. The battalion, therefore, was now divided equally between men from the mountains and men from the plains. The officers felt that the battalion was developing into a powerful striking force.

The force was increased by the addition of machine guns. Thumayya was sent to school to become the battalion's machine-gun expert. When he returned, he organized, trained, and led the machine gun company. In those days, this weapon was considered a great technological development, the men seemed to think that only an exceptional brain could grasp its complexities. Thumayya found that this assignment earned him respect from both troops and officers.

Thumayya was more affected than the other officers by an-

other change Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton Britton retired and was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Nicholls. The new C O was a man of exceptional charm and elegant manners. He was a better soldier than the previous C O, but he lacked self-confidence and was inclined to be nervous and panicky.

Colonel Hamilton Britton had written the new C O a flattering letter concerning Thumayya's ability. Colonel Nicholls, therefore, began to give the young lieutenant important assignments. The colonel was not sure of himself in dealing with Indians, and he asked Thumayya's advice on this subject with increasing frequency. Finally, when the battalion adjutant went on leave, Thumayya unofficially took over the adjutant's duties. Before long, the C O announced that Thumayya was slated for appointment as the next adjutant.

This was a remarkable advancement. Thumayya was still only a subaltern. An adjutant, however, was usually a captain and often a major. A first lieutenant could be an adjutant only if he had passed the difficult captaincy examination and was merely waiting for the formal promotion. Thumayya therefore began at once to cram for the examination, for several months he spent most of his spare time poring over books.

Allahabad was a center of nationalist activity. Preparation for another great effort in the independence struggle was beginning, but Thumayya knew nothing of it.

The subject was brought back forcefully to him, however, after the battalion had been in Allahabad a year. One night, Thumayya and three other Indian officers attended a play. At the bar between acts, a middle aged Indian in faultless English tailoring suddenly turned to them. "Tell me," he said, "what does an Indian *feel* wearing the uniform of our British rulers?"

"Hot," Thumayya answered flippantly. The Indian officers expected the civilian to be unpleasant about their being British stooges. They prepared to move away.

But the older man stopped them. "I'm serious," he said. "Does wearing a foreigner's uniform make you feel like a foreigner?"

"No," one of the officers said, "but we don't feel like Indians either."

The man nodded "Mix two cultures and you end with no culture at all," he said

"It's not the uniform," Thimayya said hotly "We don't feel like foreigners. But our own people won't accept us as Indians."

"Oh, come now," the man said "Isn't it that you don't accept us?"

The four officers denied this emphatically. They poured out to this stranger the bitterness they felt at being rejected. Slowly, they saw that they were convincing him.

"But this is shocking," the man said finally "We must talk more about it." He handed Thimayya a card "I want the four of you to come for dinner tomorrow night."

Thimayya gasped when he read the name. He had been talking to Motilal Nehru, one of the most brilliant of the nationalist leaders and father of Jawaharlal Nehru. The four officers could hardly wait for the next evening.

The next evening, a select group met them at Anand Bhavan, the Nehru family's mansion. Besides the two Nehru daughters, who would become Mrs. Pandit and Mrs. Betty Hutheesingh, several other patriots, including Dr. Katju and Tej Bahadur, were present. The nationalists greeted the young men warmly and expressed interest in the details of army life.

Soon, however, the talk drifted to politics. The discussion concerned personalities, legalities, and matters of strategy incomprehensible to the officers. No effort was made to enlighten the young men, but the mere fact of such talk in front of them showed that no one doubted their loyalty or discretion. In short, the officers were accepted, and to all four of them it was an exhilarating experience.

Thereafter, other Indian families began inviting the Indian officers to their homes, and before long they were all participating in Allahabad's social life.

During this period, Gandhi and other leaders had been in jail. They were released, however, in the spring of 1929, and the Congress Party called for another nationwide civil-disobedience movement. Allahabad and the surrounding towns seemed to spring to life. The air was charged with excitement. Being an

Indian took on a new meaning, and the Indian officers felt that they were on the threshold of historical events

One day Thumayya was in a bazaar shop buying gramophone records. He was suddenly aware of a deep hum in the streets outside. At the window he saw thousands of people moving slowly at the same pace in the same direction. They were not shouting or talking, but the sound made by the moving throng was like the throb of a great dynamo. Each face wore a look of ecstatic anticipation.

"Gandhiji is coming," someone said. "He will speak tonight in Purshottamdas Park."

That evening Thumayya's battalion was playing a hockey match against the British police officers. On the way to the playing field he saw that thousands of people still were arriving to hear the Mahatma speak. Some chanted slogans, others sang stirring songs. The Congress flag was everywhere. Thumayya was amazed that one man could command such devotion. He and the other Indian officers decided that, after the match, they would go listen to the great leader.

An English police officer overheard them make these plans, however, and told them not to bother because Gandhi would not be able to hold the meeting. "We are going to cut off the electricity so that no one will hear his speech," the Englishman said.

As soon as the Indian officers were alone, they arranged for one of their group to warn the organizers about the police plan. After the game, the officers also made their way to the park. The current had been cut off, but Gandhi had organized the crowd so that those who came from the villages sat nearest him. They, at least, could hear his words. As Gandhi spoke, his words were passed back through the crowd. Except for the murmur of these people, the enormous audience was silent. After a struggle, Thumayya and his friends were able to get within three hundred yards of the speaker's stand. Because the light from the kerosene lanterns was too weak, they could not see Gandhi, but they did feel the magic of his presence.

The next evening the officers dined with Motilal Nehru. He thanked them for their help. Thumayya said that they wanted to

do more Motilal, however, shook his head "We can't use you now," he said "The movement requires a specialized type of discipline You are not trained for it"

The officers protested, but Motilal would not listen Furthermore, he insisted that starting the next day the Indian officers were to avoid the company of the nationalists "We will be watched closely," he said "If you are seen with us, you will get into trouble"

The young officers said that they did not care about the trouble, and they bragged that they could take care of the British

"Your getting into trouble will only confuse the issues," Motilal said "It would not be helpful to the cause, to us, or to yourselves" He saw that the officers were still doubtful, and he added, smiling, "None of us will invite you anywhere for the next month, and if we see you on the streets we shall pretend not to know you"

The Indian officers were disappointed and hurt In these stirring times, they felt the thrill of national pride, and it was frustrating to continue their easy lives while around them friends were participating in high adventure.

One afternoon Thumayya was returning in a *tonga* to the mess from a matinee Motilal's lovely daughter Betty drove by in a car with a group of other young people They had collected British-made articles which they were going to burn in a public square Betty called to Thumayya to throw her his officer's cap He complied, and Betty shouted at him never to wear a cap again Thumayya smiled at her naïvete, regulations required him to wear a cap, and if he refused he would be expelled from the army If he was to leave the army, it would be simpler merely to resign Nevertheless, this incident seemed to make his position unbearable

In the battalion, few of the British officers took the developments seriously Colonel Nicholls, on the other hand, was almost in a panic He began calling Thumayya to him at all hours for reassurance that the troops were not going to mutiny The troops were calm, and Thumayya knew that they would do nothing rash As the movement spread and its intensity increased, leaflets

occasionally were thrown into the lines for the men. The *jawans* knew what was going on, and they approved, but the Congress leaders did not want action from them. Gandhi was adamant on this score. The movement was to be nonviolent, and help from the Indian troops was sure to bring on the violence he meant to avoid at all cost.

The worry of the Indian officers was that the Indian troops might be used to suppress demonstrations. In the past this had been done, and it might be done again if the British became really frightened. The use of the battalion against its own people would have caused a deep emotional conflict in the Indian troops and officers.

At first it seemed unlikely that the military would be used in civil action. This was largely because the head of the police in Allahabad, Philip Measures, was an unusual man, he was intelligent, and he handled the situation adroitly.

Thimayya knew Measures slightly and liked him. Once Measures took Thimayya through the prison where the political prisoners were kept. Thimayya saw a hut in the middle of the compound and asked about it. Measures told him that Jawaharlal Nehru was kept in there. Thimayya immediately asked to see Nehru, but Measures refused. Measures evidently had been so lenient with Nehru—allowing the prisoner books, visitors, and other privileges—that he was getting into trouble with his own superiors. Nevertheless, Thimayya insisted, and finally Measures allowed him a peek at the prisoner through the gate. Thimayya saw a lean, handsome young man pacing the little courtyard like a caged tiger. The suppressed energy in the young Nehru was so impressive that Thimayya's picture of the scene has never lost its clarity.

Thimayya has another mental picture associated with these times, it is of Measures facing a group of militant nationalist women. The policeman had forbidden demonstrators to enter the city's civil lines. A group of women, including Mrs. Pandit, Betty Huthesingh, Mrs. Shamlal Nehru, and others whom Thimayya knew, decided to break this regulation. One night, therefore, the ladies marched through the city toward the civil lines,

waving Congress flags, shouting slogans, and collecting followers. In front of the Allahabad Club, however, a line of police with *lathis* (bamboo truncheons) barred the way. The women began shouting and trying to persuade the police constables to let them through. Thimayya was behind the police line, he *chatted with the women and called encouragement to them*.

A dance was going on at the club. Measures strolled out, wearing a dinner jacket and holding a drink in his hand. The women began shouting anti-British slogans at him. He nodded, smiled, and waved as though the crowd meant to cheer him instead of insult him. "What's going on, ladies?" he asked pleasantly.

They told him what they intended to do. He replied, "Oh, I'm so sorry. I can't let you do that."

"Then we'll stay here until you change your mind," the ladies said.

Measures told them that they might catch cold, but they would not listen to him. He also knew many of the women, and most of the women liked him, but they were not going to let his charm deflect them from their purpose. "All right, if you insist on staying," he said finally, "but at least allow me to make you more comfortable." He ordered the constables to bring blankets for the women, and from the club he brought hot coffee for them and for the police. After an hour, the ladies began to yawn, and before long the procession broke up.

But not all the police officials were as capable as Measures. Another led a column into the surrounding districts and spread terror with arrests and beatings. As a result, the villagers near Allahabad were working up into an ugly mood. To the consternation of the Indian officers, their battalion was called out to do a flag march.

A flag march was merely a show of strength. The fully armed battalion was to march through the countryside to show the people that the British were still in control and would use armed force to preserve their authority. This in itself was nothing to worry about. The C O, however, was nervous, and the villagers were in a mood to do anything. If a nasty situation developed and if the troops then were ordered to fire on Indian civilians,

Thumayya felt that the troops and Indian officers would obey. But thereafter their loyalty to the authorities would be shaken, and the reliability of the battalion would be reduced.

On the first day of the flag march, three men beside the road began to shout slogans and insults at the soldiers. When no attention was paid to the three, they began a noisy demonstration. Finally the C O ordered the three men caught and tied with rope into a line. Then they were marched in front as prisoners. Despite the ropes, however, the three men managed to keep up with the march and to maintain their shouting and demonstrations. Thumayya saw that the troops were beginning to admire the three nationalists. He realized also that the prisoners would stir the sympathy of any villagers who saw them. Fortunately, he was able to make the C O appreciate this. The colonel had the prisoners turned over to the police with instructions to release them as soon as the battalion was out of sight.

An hour later, the battalion reached the first village. Accompanying the unit was an Indian civilian liaison officer. He went ahead to announce the arrival. Over the entrance to the village was a gaudy banner that read, "Welcome." In the village itself, however, the troops found the civilian liaison officer alone and forlorn. Not another soul was to be seen.

The next village sported a similar welcome banner, but again no one was in the streets except the unhappy civilian official. All day this went on. In the last village before camp was made, Thumayya examined the customary welcome banner. Sure enough he had been seeing the same one at every village. The official had been putting it up himself, presumably he had meant to ease the troops' loss of face at not finding anyone to awe with the show of British strength.

On the march the next morning, the battalion surprised some farmers in a field. Thumayya could see that they were frightened. He asked the C O to have the band play, and the order was given. The farmers could not resist a *tamasha* (show) and cautiously approached the side of the road to watch. When the battalion was alongside them, a rest halt was called. The troops chatted and joked with the farmers, trying to draw them out.

The Indian officers suspected that the villagers, although keeping out of sight, were watching every move of the soldiers. Thus the band was made to play at frequent intervals, and, in between, the *jawns* sang their own village folk songs. In camp that night, the troops staged a more elaborate show for themselves with much loud music, singing, and games. Inevitably, small children broke away from their parents and edged near the firelight. Immediately the troops made a fuss over the children, inviting them in, giving them food and sweets. Minutes later frantic parents came looking for the children, they too were invited in to enjoy the fun.

The next day, although the column still found no one in the village streets, groups of the less timid villagers watched from a safe distance. That night the battalion had a larger number of guests for the impromptu show. Soon the news of the troops' good behavior spread on ahead.

By the fifth day, every village was turning out to give the battalion a real welcome with garlands and speeches, milk for the troops, and fruit and tea for the officers. At night, concerts, group singing and dancing, and wrestling matches were staged. The flag march turned into a long picnic and celebration. More important, it eased the ugly tensions caused by the police.

The last village on the circle tour was Kanauj, a small but ancient town still famous for the manufacture of an Indian perfume. "The welcoming program in Kanauj included a visit by the whole battalion through the perfume factory," Thumayya told his friends. "As each soldier left the place, he was handed a bottle of the scent and given a squirt of the stuff from an atomizer. Having been on the march for weeks in the heat and dust, we all arrived in Allahabad that afternoon looking far from smart. It is doubtful, however, if any large body of men ever smelled so sweet. We were the talk of the cantonment by the time we reached the barracks. The commandant said that we smelt like the world's most heavily armed perambulating whorehouse!"

Successful though the flag march was, the Indian officers were afraid that they might not be so lucky another time. They there-

fore went to Motilal Nehru. They told him that they were Indians first, and that to help the cause of independence they were ready to resign their commissions.

The elderly man heard them out. "Gentlemen, you have my sympathy," he said then. "In my opinion the contribution you are making to the cause is a difficult one."

The officers protested. What was their leisurely life of games and a bit of marching compared to the efforts made by the patriots?

Motilal brushed this aside. "First," he said, "nothing would please the British more than your resignations. For thirty years we've fought for army Indianization. We're now winning the fight. If you give up, we shall have lost it."

The officers were silent.

"But that's not the most important reason you must continue," he said. "We're going to win independence. Perhaps not this year or the next, but sooner or later the British will be driven out. When that happens, India will stand alone. We will have no one to protect us but ourselves. It is then that our survival will depend upon men like you."

"You mean that we should stay with the army to learn as much as we can?" Thumayya asked.

"Exactly," Motilal said. "And it won't be easy. Often you'll be playing polo when your friends are fighting, perhaps dying. You will begin to hate yourselves, and the temptation to weaken will be great."

"Do the other leaders feel as you do about this?" one of the officers asked.

Motilal shrugged. "I can't even promise you that," he said. "But no matter what people say to you, none of you must give up. Also, you must persuade the other Indian officers to stick with it as well."

Thumayya lay awake thinking most of that night. In the end he was unable to find answers to Motilal's arguments, and he concluded that the older man was right.

Before long, however, the civil-disobedience movement ended, and the country settled down to an uneasy political peace. Thumayya now was too busy with his captaincy examination to think

of anything else. He had been promoted to first lieutenant, and when he had sent off his examination papers, he was free to take a long leave.

He spent the first two months of his leave touring India. He may not have been concerned with politics, but his sense of nationalism had been awakened. Thus he visited India's great monuments of art and learning with a heightened sense of appreciation. When he reached home, his family noticed that he was more mature and serious, they approved.

Just before his leave was up, the War Office letter with his examination results arrived. He had just barely passed.

The same post brought the news that the battalion was being sent to Fort Sandeman on the frontier. Here, Thimayya thought, would be his first chance at real action. Moreover, he now hoped to take over the important post of adjutant. For once, he looked forward to the end of his leave.

CHAPTER VII

FORT SANDEMAN

In the post-World War I period, an Indian Army battalion normally served a duty tour that made an eight year cycle. Four years of the cycle were spent in an "internal security station." Allahabad was an example. The unit was in readiness to put down civil disturbances, but actually the men had little to do. The training program was light. The men were allowed to have their families with them, and the social life was pleasant.

Another two years were spent at one of two field army stations. Here, the men practiced operations involving large military units. Again the families were allowed, and because of the many military people, the social life was gay.

Finally, the battalion served two years on the Northwest Frontier. No families were allowed, and the living conditions were rugged. The area was bleakly mountainous. Deep rocky gorges made traveling difficult. The summer heat and dust were stultifying, the winters were bitterly cold.

The people in this area were as tough and cruel as their country and climate. They were fanatic Moslems, who had never been conquered. Neither Afghanistan nor British India had been able to claim their territory. As matters stood, a treaty with the Afghans had drawn an imaginary border through the tribal area. Each country had agreed to be responsible for the good behavior of the tribes on its side of the line.

This, however, was more easily said than done. The British

first tried what was known as the "Backward Policy." The tribal area was sealed off at the real Indian border, along which strong fortifications were erected. The tribal chieftains were persuaded to sign treaties in which they promised to be peaceful.

The policy was a failure. The tribes paid no attention to the treaties. By being sealed off, they could collect secretly behind the border and mount concentrated attacks at any point they chose. Once they almost overran Peshawar at the head of the Khyber Pass. When the British side proved unprofitably strong, the tribesmen attacked the Afghans.

The British next considered the so-called "Forward Policy." This would have meant moving into tribal territory up to the treaty line. It would have required the occupation of an area two to three hundred miles wide and a thousand miles long. Dozens of strong forts and hundreds of miles of road, railways, and telegraph lines would have had to be built. Garrisoning the forts and maintaining the lines of communication would have required at least half of all the armed forces in India.

Thus the "Forward Policy" was impractical, and the "Halfway Policy" finally was adopted. A few forts were built at key points within tribal territory. These places dominated important passes into India. They were connected by roads, railway, and telegraph lines. In case of tribal misbehavior, punitive expeditions could fan out quickly from the key forts.

At the same time, the chieftains were bribed to keep the peace. Other tribes were paid for the responsibility of maintaining and protecting the lines of communication. Finally, British military strength was increased by recruiting, training, and arming loyal tribesmen, known as *Kassadars*, or militiamen, who were officered by specially trained British.

Thus the British maintained a tenuous hold on the frontier area. Violence might flare up at any moment. Slaughter, arson, rape, and brigandage were basic aspects of tribal culture. The tribes fought and looted for their livelihood, for their honor, and for sheer sport. A fancied insult, a day's delay in the payment of peace bribes, the changing of one thieving contractor for another, or no reason at all could—and did—cause uprisings that often required months of fighting to put down. Army units at

the key forts, therefore, soon learned to be constantly on the alert.

Fort Sandeman was a typical frontier outpost. It was 200 miles into tribal territory northeast of Quetta. The fort was built above the Zohb River, the valley of which was one of the two main thoroughfares into Baluchistan from tribal Waziristan. The river provided narrow strips of fertile land along the banks. Thus the fort itself was surrounded by vegetation, especially by lovely orchards.

The district controlled by the fort was under the administration of a political officer. He had two assistants, one of whom, surprisingly, was an Indian. The political officer kept on hand huge sums for bribing the local chieftains. For squelching tribal exuberance, he also had at his disposal a brigade of Indian Army troops plus the Zohb Militia, which consisted of Kassadars at battalion strength. He lived in a castle like enclosure that contained the fort's only *pukka* (brick) buildings. The adjoining cantonment was encircled by a wall of mud, stone, and barbed wire. The quarters for the military were primitive.

Of the four battalions that occupied the quarters, the men of the Zohb Militia considered themselves the most exclusive. The officers were British and showed little respect for anyone associated with the Indian Army. These British officers had become more like the tribesmen than the tribesmen themselves. They wore turbans. They had tanned until they looked exactly like the Kassadars, and they spoke the local dialect perfectly.

Within the Indian Army brigade, a battalion of the 8th Gurkha Rifles considered itself the next most exclusive unit. This battalion also contained only British officers. Gurkha regiments had the pick of officers available for the Indian Army, and these officers tended to be rather full of themselves. Also it was generally accepted that the Gurkhas (who come from Nepal) made better fighting men than the Indians.

The brigade's other battalion, besides the Hyderabad, came from the 1st Punjab Regiment. The men in this outfit also had a pride of regiment that gave them superb arrogance. The troops were all Sikhs, recruited from the same Punjab district. Every man was five feet ten or taller. None of these Sikhs ever cut the

hair on their bodies, they rolled their beards neatly around a string. In their turbans they wore a steel *charka* (circlet), and they always had white gaiters as a part of their uniform. Being a 'pure' regiment, they also had only British officers.

The Militia, the Gurkhas, and the Sikhs all struggled to out-snub one another, but they united to look down upon the battalion from the Hyderabad Regiment. Not only was this unit from South India, but it was a *mixed* battalion. Even worse, it was *Indianized*. Thus, at Fort Sandeman, the Indian officers were greatly outnumbered by the British and were at the bottom of the social heap.

Thimayya made matters worse for his group by "putting up a black" when he rejoined the battalion. On the way to Fort Sandeman after his leave, he had a between-trains stopover in Quetta. He looked up some friends and became involved in a party. He missed the train and arrived in Fort Sandeman 12 hours late. Normally this would not have been a serious offense, with luck his tardiness might have escaped official notice. But now the battalion had another new C O, Lieutenant Colonel Lewis, and Thimayya was no longer teacher's pet. Further, Thimayya was taking over as the new adjutant, and the C O was waiting impatiently for relief from irksome administrative details. Finally, the battalion was due to go out on tour, and Thimayya's tardiness delayed departure. Thimayya was called before the C O. Colonel Lewis was a tall, sinewy type with steely eyes and a stern, deeply lined soldier's face. He spoke quietly but with authority. As Thimayya told his friends, "He proceeded to give me a most imperial rocket, every scathing word of which I deserved."

Thimayya soon realized that he had not only started off on the wrong foot with the new C O, but had given the haughty British officers of the other battalions a chance to say, "You see? One can't really depend on Indian officers, can one?" He was humiliated, and made up his mind to become a model officer immediately.

After the battalion was out on patrol for only a few hours, however, Thimayya realized that becoming a model officer immediately was not going to be easy. His leave had not softened

him, but he was not used to the rigors of touring in that harsh country

The patrol had some aspects of a flag march. The show of strength was intended to dissuade any tribesmen who might be thinking of carnage. Primarily, however, the tour was meant to harden the troops and to train them for the type of war they would fight in an uprising.

When troops advanced through this territory, they used the "vanguard main body and rear guard" system. The column was preceded by a large vanguard. This group sent forward and kept covered small patrols that combed the hillsides along the trail. The patrols scrambled over rocks and through thorny scrub. The men would shoot any tribesmen they spotted, but of course no tribesman was ever so careless as to be caught. After a hundred yards or so, the patrols established carefully chosen pickets. Now the main body of the column could move forward under the protection of the pickets. Meanwhile, new pickets were being established farther ahead. The most dangerous moment came when the main body had passed and the pickets behind left their cover. Tribesmen hiding in the rocks watching and waiting for the smallest mistake, now had their best chance to shoot and escape. Thus a strong rear guard had to cover the picket withdrawal.

In this manner the column inched forward. It traveled only eight or nine miles a day after strenuous effort. As night came on, the choice of camp site was given very careful consideration. Every aspect of the site and the surrounding area had to be studied for the possibilities of attack. The lives of everyone in the column might be lost because of an unnoticed flaw.

When the site had been chosen, an encircling wall of rocks was erected, and the main body and the animals were sheltered behind it. Fortified pickets were placed outside so that the camp itself could be covered. When night fell, sniping could be expected if the locals could spare cartridges for the hope of hitting something in the dark. If not they would try to surround and cut off a picket. They preferred to use knives on the troops, and would shoot them if necessary.

The tribesmen who subjected the troops to these trying con-

ditions were not outlaws *Dacoits* did exist in the area, but they were bandits who had broken with their own people as well as with the authorities Generally, *dacoits* were hunted down by the tribesmen themselves Thus, it was the average citizen who gave the authorities so much trouble An advance through the area was serious business for the troops, but to the tribesmen it was sport If, for example, one of the "enemy" were seriously wounded in a skirmish, he might cache his arms and calmly enter the army lines expecting medical care He held no rancor for the troops

When the troops entered a village, however, they were welcomed with genuine warmth As is typical of mountain people, hospitality was a strict part of the tribesmen's code They served feasts of roasted fat tailed sheep, rice pilau, and fruit Wrestling matches were held, and sometimes the troops were entertained by dancing girls

The tribesmen's most popular game with the troops was a shooting match The army supplied a hundred cartridges A picked tribal team, often using handmade rifles, shot at a target against an army team The young bloods with their bobbed hair and the roses behind their ears occasionally beat the army team Generally, however, the *jawan* was a better shot than the average tribesman True, in battle, every tribal shot almost invariably hit an enemy But this was because ammunition shortage trained them never to shoot unless they were sure of not missing

Two snipers' shots did not miss during the first day of this patrol A mule was killed, and a *jawan* slightly injured The sniping, more than the strictest orders, made the men vigilant

By the time camp was made, Thimayya ached in every muscle, but he was careful not to let the C O know it As adjutant, he had duties that would keep him busy long after the others were relaxing Colonel Lewis, however, called Thimayya "Captain Bull will take over," he said "You get some rest"

Thimayya was deeply stung "But why, sir?" he said "I know what to do I'm fit"

"It was a hard day, and you have just returned from a leave," the colonel said

Thimayya started to protest, but the colonel stopped him

"I'm not rebuking you," the C O said His voice was friendly "I've seen your record I know you're a good officer I shall expect a great deal from you But until you're used to this climate and altitude, I want you to go easy"

Thimayya's feelings were mixed as he stretched out his aching body in the comfort of the blankets He was grateful for the rest, and he was pleased also that the C O was not holding a grudge On the other hand he was afraid that the C O might be mollicodding him, did he think that Indian officers lacked the stamina of the British?

Thimayya did not help the situation later that night He had not been asleep long when a sudden burst of firing near the camp made him leap up He grabbed his side arms and shouted for the guard

"Shut up, Thimayya, and go to sleep," an English voice said in the dark. "It's only Number Two picket"

"But they're under attack," Thimayya said

"Our chaps are scaring off some tribesmen They'll signal if they need help," the voice said

Then the C O's voice called out, 'Gawddammit, Thimayya, go to bed!'

Twice more during the night firing broke out as the sentries spotted tribesmen who slid like shadows from rock to rock, probing the defenses At the morning roll call, however, no casualties were reported.

Two days later, the battalion visited the first village The tribesmen in this neighborhood had never seen Indian officers before and were curious about them During the festivities, the Indian officers felt that the tribesmen were watching them closely The tribesmen asked pointed questions about the training and experience of the Indians Then Thimayya overheard the chieftain question the C O about the Indian officers To Thimayya's surprise, Colonel Lewis described them in glowing terms He said that the Indian officers had been carefully picked and that they were fine officer material tough and sharp He told the chief that the only fault he found with Indian officers was that they were overproud and touchy about criticism

Thereafter the tribesmen treated the Indian officers with respect, they seemed pleased to see Indians who could compete with the British. Thimayya felt a new respect for the C O.

Some six weeks later, he learned that the C O could be stern with his British officers. The column was near Chaman, another frontier post like Fort Sandeman. Chaman was across a narrow valley from the Afghan line, and an Afghan fort had been built facing Chaman. An English subaltern went out to shoot sand grouse and crossed the line. An Afghan patrol took him prisoner to their fort.

To obtain the subaltern's release, a message first had to be sent to Brigade Headquarters at Fort Sandeman. From there the signal went to the Quetta Army H Q, who in turn advised the G H Q in Delhi. At this level the message was turned over to the Government of India, who advised Whitehall in London. Now a formal British request was made to the Afghan Embassy, who passed on the message to their government in Kabul. Thereupon, the Afghan Government signaled their fort to release the prisoner. And during all this world wide signaling, the officer was only across the gorge. Every morning he would appear on the walls to wave to his comrades. He had a wonderful ten days with the hospitable Afghans, but Colonel Lewis was furious. Thimayya's arrival 12 hours late was bad enough, but carelessness while on tour in tribal territory was inexcusable. "Colonel Lewis gave the poor Englishman a rocket," Thimayya said later, "that made mine seem like a wet squib."

By then however, the battalion's officers needed no further proof that the colonel was thoroughly fair. He was without prejudice. His only concern was the efficiency and well being of his command. Within a few months he had whipped the battalion into a superbly disciplined force. In Sandeman, the British officers of the other battalions began to show a grudging respect for the Hyderabad.

Thimayya's respect for the C O amounted almost to awe. Thimayya stood between him and the rest of the battalion. The C O expected Thimayya to learn to think as he did so that any decisions made by Thimayya would reflect the C O's poli-

cies As he was the best soldier with whom Thimayya had come in contact, learning to think as Colonel Lewis did was invaluable experience

In addition to being the CO's alter ego, many other responsibilities were Thimayya's alone For example, he was in charge of the battalions 'cotes,' a unique feature of the Indian Army Near each company's quarter guard was a "cote," or small building, in which all the men's weapons were chained Except when the arms were in actual use, they were locked in this building A record was kept as each weapon was issued and returned The cote keys were kept in the quarter guard in a glass case which, in an emergency, could be broken open The key to the glass case was held by the officer of the day, who was responsible to Thimayya for the actual distribution and collection of the weapons

The authorities said that the cote system had been inaugurated to prevent arms from reaching the tribesmen There was truth in this, as the tribesmen would do almost anything to get a good British weapon Every adult tribesman had a rifle, but most of the firearms were made by local gunsmiths, who could copy perfectly but who could not get the best materials The black-market price for a stolen British army rifle was as much as 1,000 rupees, which in that area in those days was a vast sum. Ferocious penalties were visited on a sepoy who lost his rifle, but sometimes his temptation to sell it must have been great. Moreover, the tribesmen were fiendishly clever at stealing anything, and for a rifle their cleverness matched the devil's own

Despite this valid argument for the cote system, however, the Indians believed that the real reason for it was the fear of another sepoy mutiny No matter how much the British officers liked their Indian troops, they seemed to sleep better knowing that the weapons were under lock and key

The amount of paperwork required by such duties was huge Thimayya welcomed the work, because Fort Sandeman offered little entertainment The local club was pleasant enough and, as the British officers of the other battalions began to respect the Hyderabad battalion, the Indian officers were accepted without reservation. The sand grouse shooting was good, and the polo

was superb. The favorite entertainment, however, was the fierce interbattalion football and hockey matches, which were taken with deadly seriousness.

In Allahabad, the Hyderabad battalion had had an impressive hockey record, but at Fort Sandeman the men had begun with a stroke of bad luck. During the transfer, the troops had been marched the last 250 miles as a toughening up exercise. The day after their arrival, while their feet were still blistered, the Sikh battalion had challenged them to a hockey game. The Hyderabad men had lost by 25 goals. Since then, the Hyderabads had taken a merciless ribbing from the Sikhs, both men and officers. Isolated in wild and unfriendly country, small matters such as a hockey score could become important.

When Thumayya arrived, he learned that Colonel Lewis appreciated the importance of the hockey defeat to the battalion's morale. As the sports program was also among Thumayya's numerous duties, he decided to raise a team that could make a better showing against the Sikhs.

A victory was not necessary, and Thumayya did not hope for it. Sikhs were built for hockey, and they generally won the world's championship matches. Moreover, all the men in the 1st Sikh Regiment had been recruited with exceptional hockey ability as a necessary qualification.

And the Sikhs had an advantage in that they were a "pure" regiment. The Hyderabad battalion had two companies of Kumaonis, who played football well but did not have the long legs and pounding stride necessary in good hockey. The system was that each company had its own team, and the best company team represented the battalion. Thus the Sikhs, in effect, had four superb teams to choose from, whereas the Hyderabads had only two.

Even worse, the Sikhs were guilty of slight "jiggery pokery" with their battalion teams. By intercompany transferring, they made up a battalion team from among the best players on all four company teams. The Hyderabad companies, however, were composed of separate ethnic groups, so that this practice was difficult for them.

Nevertheless, Thumayya managed a little judicious transfer-

ring, he even used some men from the band. He began by making the whole battalion spend its hour for part on hockey instead. During this period, every man was retaught the basic hockey techniques. Later, as the best players began to stand out, Thimayya made these men practice another hour each day. Next he formed a team which was given even more concentrated practice in playing together as a unit. He made the team study the Sikhs' techniques and devise countermeasures. For ten months Thimayya worked these poor men until they were in the peak of condition. During this time, he kept the fact of the monumental effort a secret even from his own brother officers. Shortly before the opening matches for the Western Army Championship, Thimayya accepted reluctantly a challenge from the Sikhs. He wanted them overconfident. The Sikhs swore they would beat the Hyderabadis this time by 30 goals.

The cantonment turned out for the match, but no one expected much of a game. Thimayya's team was a weird looking assortment, their appearance on the field brought a few derisive remarks from the spectators. Within five minutes of play, however, every spectator was sitting tensely in his seat. The game was one of the most bitterly fought matches in Fort Sandeman's history. The Sikhs were stronger, but Thimayya's men fought like demons. Until just before the end of the first half of the game, no goal had been scored by either side. Then the Sikhs' greater strength began to tell, and they took two goals.

Thimayya instructed his men to act even more tired than they were, in hope that the Sikhs would become overconfident and relax. The stratagem worked. Just before the match was over, his men made a final effort and scored two goals. The game ended in a tie which required a ten minute play-off.

The Sikhs were furious. Again Thimayya told his men to act as though they were almost too exhausted to play. This time they did not have to act very hard, but they managed to fool the Sikhs once more. They scored another goal. The Sikhs now were madmen, and their team lost some of its cohesion. The Hyderabadis had shot their bolt, however, and the best they could do was a holding action. They resorted to the trick of continually knocking the ball out of bounds in order to waste

time Thimayya lived through five minutes of agony while his men barely had the strength to knock the ball out, retrieve it, and put it out again. The Sikhs were howling with rage. By the end of those last five minutes, every player was covered with bruises and blood. Nevertheless, the Hyderabadists held out. They won the match.

Pandemonium broke loose. While the yelling was still going on, Colonel Lewis called Thimayya aside. "In heaven's name, what did you do to those men of ours?" he asked.

"Why nothing, sir," Thimayya said innocently. "I merely gave them a few pointers."

"Pointers be damned," the colonel said. "The Sikhs played a more expert game. But the *fight* in our boys! Their spirit was magnificent. And spirit like that is more important than winning any game."

"Indeed it is, sir," Thimayya said.

The whole Sikh battalion was now in the field, all of them shouting, blaming one another for the defeat. The Hyderabad battalion was delirious with joy. The team was being chaired around the field. It was safe to predict that henceforth the Sikhs would be subdued and that the Hyderabadists would be entitled to a bit of equalizing swagger of their own.

A happy grin spread over the colonel's stern face. "Still, I'm glad we *did* win," he said.

The victory was the talk of Fort Sandeman for days. The consensus agreed finally with Colonel Lewis that while the Sikhs had a more expert team, the Hyderabadists had shown indomitable spirit. As only Indian officers had been concerned in the training of the team, the inference was that Indian officers could inspire the *jawans* to great effort and therefore must be counted as good officers. Unquestionably the hockey game contributed to the status of Indian officers with the British.

Another contribution to their status was the posting of two more Indian officers to the battalion. One was Wadhwa, a Sikh who had been Thimayya's fag at Dehra Dun. He was superb at polo, tennis, and squash. More important, he was a fine officer and, being a Sikh himself, he won respect for the Hyderabadists from the Sikh battalion.

The other new arrival was Shrinagesh, who came from the Madras Pioneers, which had been disbanded. He eventually became Chief of the Army Staff. He too was a fine soldier and helped the reputation of Indian officers.

The Hyderabad, however, never achieved a close relationship with the officers in the Gurkha battalion. No animosity existed between the units, and in the end the Gurkhas thought well of Indian officers, but they considered themselves apart from the Indian Army. The Gurkha troops and the Kumaonis of the Hyderabad battalion got on well and played football together, but the English officers of the Gurkhas tended to remain in their own little ingrown group.

Nevertheless, Thimayya was curious about the much vaunted Gurkha fighting men, and this was his first chance to see them at close hand. Their drill was rather different. All the Gurkhas were in 'rifle' regiments. The marching pace of a 'line' regiment was 120 paces a minute, whereas a rifle unit marched at 140 paces. Also, the basic color of a line regiment was scarlet (the British "redcoats"), but rifle regiments wore rifle green. The Gurkhas always looked superb on parade. They were short stocky men, almost all the same size and shape, so that their drill had much symmetry. To Thimayya, they seemed less sophisticated than the Indian sepoys he led. He saw that they learned the soldier's profession thoroughly, but no attempt was made to broaden their education. Thus in battle, the Gurkhas were disciplined troops and ferocious fighters. In modern warfare, Thimayya feared, the use of Gurkhas might mean heavy casualties. At the time, therefore, he preferred as soldiers the *jawns* whom he understood better. Later, when he came to know the Gurkhas' fine qualities, he enjoyed leading them.

Watching the Gurkhas inspired Thimayya to another effort rather like the one with the hockey team. His battalion had a good brass band, but the Gurkhas' band was better. Moreover, the Gurkha drum and bugle corps was magnificent, whereas the Hyderabad's was mediocre. When the Gurkhas staged a Beating of the Retreat, everyone in the cantonment turned out for the stirring spectacle. Ever since his bugling days in the Boy Scouts, Thimayya had liked martial music, and now the band was an-

other of his responsibilities as adjutant. He decided to have both a band and a drum and bugle corps that would be better than the Gurkhas'.

The musicians for the Hyderabad Regiment traditionally came from certain families near Secunderabad. They were proud of their profession and had high aptitude for it. They needed appreciation and encouragement, however, in order to do their best. Thumayya set out to give them plenty of both. He weeded out the less competent musicians and recruited better ones. He began a drill program that was accelerated slowly until the musicians could stand up to hours of daily practice. The drill took place in an open meadow down the hill from the cantonment. This was partly to keep the effort a surprise and partly to spare everyone else the constant din. He saw the musicians every day and pushed them constantly for perfection. At the same time, he was using every possible device for raising money for new and brighter uniforms and for better instruments. He maintained this whole effort for more than a year.

The day Thumayya sprung his surprise was a great occasion for the musicians, but a sad one for the battalion. Colonel Lewis was too distinguished a soldier to stay in grade for long. Shortly before the two-year posting in Fort Sandeman was over, he was promoted. A Beating of the Retreat was to be the climax of the battalion's farewell to him. The band was superb when it swung onto the field. Not a sound came from the spectators as the intricate maneuvers of the colorful ceremony began. At the end, just at sunset, when the band played "Abide with Me" and the soft sweet notes of Taps came from the massed bugles and the flags were lowered, Thumayya saw unashamed tears in the colonel's eyes.

Thumayya knew that it was a proud moment for the older man. The hockey team and the band were small achievements, but they were symbolic of the real wonders the colonel had achieved with the battalion.

Thumayya felt that the C O had achieved the most with him. Others who did not know the C O as well thought him too stern. He was quick to criticize laxity, and he never gave praise for a good performance. But Thumayya knew that the

colonel considered the men to be the best, he expected therefore that perfection would be their normal performance. The men responded to his belief in them by doing their best. And any praise from the colonel would have been superfluous beside the pride and self-confidence they now had acquired. As a result, Thimayya learned the most valuable lesson of his life: the reward for accomplishment was not in the flattery of a superior officer, but in the satisfaction one felt oneself in a job well done.

CHAPTER VIII

QUETTA

The new C O was lazy He had been with the battalion an hour when he called Thumayya "Frankly, dear boy," the C O said, "I shall expect you to take over *all* of what might otherwise be considered my duties in this battalion "

"Yes, sir," Thumayya said

"And if I have to spend more than an hour a day in my office, you will not be doing your job properly," the colonel added

Fortunately, the battalion moved soon to Quetta The training program, now expanded, was at the corps level The authority for the program, therefore, was largely out of battalion hands This fact, plus the training Thumayya had had under Colonel Lewis, enabled the young adjutant to handle the details easily The C O meanwhile devoted himself to Quetta's frenetic social life and to his remarkably attractive wife

Actually, the colonel's wife was another reason that Thumayya was given so much of the battalion's administrative responsibility The C O had begun his career in a Gurkha regiment. As a captain he had left his then wife to elope with the wife of one of the subalterns For this, he had been transferred. Eventually, the subaltern married the C O's first wife It happened that this Gurkha battalion was now stationed in Quetta nearby The subaltern, now a captain and his battalion's adjutant, was still married to the C O's first wife, and the C O still had the captain's first wife Inevitably, the two couples met at the same social functions The two women would snarl at each other in a ladylike fashion The Gurkha adjutant, however, would turn

a ghastly gray whenever he saw the Hyderabad C O Few people knew about this situation, but those who did suffered through tense moments when the two couples were in the same room Needless to say, all official and social contacts between the Hyderabad and the neighboring Gurkhas were carried on by Thumayya.

As an adjutant, he also had official and social contact with all the other battalions in Quetta. Thus Thumayya soon knew most of the officers At the time, more than 1,000 officers were stationed in Quetta About 100 of them were Indian Sixteen Indian Army regiments, instead of only eight, were now getting Indian officers

An Indian officer in one of the newly Indianized units, the 2nd Sikh Regiment, created a stir that, for a while, brought all Indian officers into the limelight. He had an affair with a British officer's wife The girl was an American, a striking blonde and the glamour queen of the station

The British were shocked A few of them looked at the affair from a racial viewpoint. They were against a meeting of the East and West on such intimate terms

A few others took a moral stand Adultery was sinful, especially if one were so careless as to be caught at it

Another group had a purely social attitude The simple adultery would have been excusable if the girl had chosen a man from her husband's social background and had been discreet about it. After all, most of the British in Quetta had been making open passes at her for months Instead of taking one of these suitors, however, she had picked an Indian who probably had not even tried to get her It was humiliating The girl was being unfair She was not "playing the game" She had let down her side "

A final group of British merely shrugged in distaste at the whole business These people said, in effect, "What can you expect from a couple of colonials?"

To the Indian officers however, the affair was an eye-opener "We were amused," Thumayya said later, "by the flap it caused among the British Some of us, including me, were delighted that one of our group had outtrdden all the British hunters to

claim the brush of the prettiest vixen in the field. Others frankly envied their brother officer, simply because the girl was so attractive. But many of the more timid among us feared that our position might be jeopardized by such a juicy scandal."

Actually, they had nothing to fear. Postwar European morals had loosened everywhere. A revolt against Victorian values was taking place. Immorality per se, therefore, caused only slight concern. It was mostly the *unusual* in such affairs that created gossip. A month later, for example, four British officers were found to have evolved an interesting *ménage à quatre*, on weekends they would exchange their wives through a kind of lottery system. By this time everyone was bored with the talk about the American girl and the Indian officer. The couple was forgotten in the chitchat over the new scandal.

Finally, in a left hand sort of way, the turpitude of the Indian officer even helped relations with the British in Quetta. The Indian nationalist leaders, especially Gandhi, were directing the freedom movement from a lofty moral plane. To many of the British, this "holier than thou" approach was more aggravating than any political issue. Thus a bit of moral laxity from one of the Indians made all of them seem more human—and therefore more acceptable.

In any case, except for a few old diehards, the Indian officers were wholly accepted. They participated fully in the interminable games and parties. In Allahabad, they had been intense about the nationalist cause. At Fort Sandeman they had lived a clean, rugged, and healthy life. Thus Quetta provided a diverting contrast that was pleasant—but not for long.

The frenzied gaiety eventually palled. Thumayya began to envy the married officers, who could have an equally pleasant but more sedate social life with other like minded couples. Thumayya was twenty-eight and due soon for a captaincy. He decided that on his next leave he would try to find a wife.

He felt that he ought to choose, if possible, a girl from one of the families within his clan. If such a girl was available and if he should nevertheless take an outsider, he would hurt a lot of feelings and he might not be allowed to participate in certain traditional clan ceremonies. If no suitable girl were available,

however, the clan elders would be more sympathetic to his searching farther afield. In any case, he had nothing to lose by looking over the clan-approved girls.

When he arrived home, his family was pleased that he wanted to marry. An immediate search for a girl was begun. Only a few clan families were in Mercara at the time. Unfortunately, not one had a daughter of marriageable age. That was that.

The word of Thimayya's predicament, however, quickly got around. He found that nubile females were being thrust at him wherever he went. The more he refused, the more he was shown. Thimayya found it awkward and embarrassing, and finally he decided to cut short his stay in Mercara.

He went to Bangalore, where he paid a duty call on some people named Cariappa, who were distant relatives. At the door, he was met by an attractive girl who greeted him in French. Only then did he remember that the Cariappas had a daughter. Thimayya recalled vaguely hearing about Nina, but he had never met her because she had spent most of her life in Paris. "I had one look at her," he said, "and that fixed me." He had intended to make only a short call, but he stayed and stayed.

Finally the girl's mother drew him aside. "Do you like our little Nina?" she asked.

"I think she's wonderful," Thimayya said.

The woman smiled. "For years I have dreamed that you and Nina would marry," she said.

It was as simple as that. The next evening, the engagement was announced. The marriage was to take place several months later.

A Coorg marriage follows tribal custom, not Hindu law. No priests are involved in the ceremony. The elders of the two families draw up a contract. In it, gifts to the couple from both sides are described. The gifted property to remain in the wife's possession is indicated clearly. Part of the contract unromantically states the circumstances under which the couple could separate, declare the agreement invalid, and in effect be divorced, provisions to be made for the wife and children, in case of separation, are settled in advance.

The actual wedding is in the nature of two feasts, one at the

bride's house and the other at the groom's. A delegation from each family celebrates with the other, but the bride and groom are separated for most of the ceremony.

Five hundred people came to Thumayya's house for the groom's feast. The men wore flat top turbans and long black velvet coats drawn tightly around the body with red and gold tasseled sashes, they carried jeweled daggers stuck in the sashes in front and the heavy curved Coorg knives at the back. Thumayya's costume, as the groom, was the same, except that his turban was white and edged with gold lace and his coat was of white silk. The guests brought him offerings of milk, rice, and money. Traditional family drummers made a great din so that the neighborhood would know of the festivities taking place. Much drinking and boisterous good humor marked the occasion. The feast, which included traditionally roast wild pig, was served first by the womenfolk to the men. Next the family women served the women guests. Only then could they themselves eat. Afterward the men did war like dances while the women watched. The celebration went on all day. At nine o'clock in the evening, Thumayya and members of his immediate family piled into two cars. An enormous picnic supper and many bottles of champagne were packed in with them. Then they set off for Nina's house 160 miles away. They arrived at 2:00 A.M., but her party was still going strong.

At the entrance to Nina's house the stems of six coconut palms had been planted in the earth. Thumayya and his best man had to chop these down with their Coorg knives. This symbolized the ancient days when a man married simply by breaking into a girl's house, he would challenge anyone who objected to his carrying the girl off.

Inside the house Nina, wearing a rich sari, was looking very beautiful—but pale and tired. She was only eighteen. She had not had much to say in the matter of her marriage, and at this point she must have been having doubts about it. When Thumayya sat down beside her, she would not look at him. The couple were given a single tray of food. This was the climax of the ceremony, the couple were considered man and wife when they had eaten from the same tray. Nina hesitated, Timmy

held his breath, and the room became silent. But then Nina timidly took a bit of rice from the tray. The guests cheered. As a concession to Hindu law, the couple now walked three times around a fire and the marriage ceremony was completed. Tradition decreed that Thimayya should take the bride away before dawn. At 4.00 A.M., therefore, he and Nina began the long drive back to Mercara. They spent three days with his family. Then the couple returned to Bangalore to spend three more days with Nina's family. This also was part of the Coorg marriage tradition. Theoretically, if either Nina or her parents found Thimayya undesirable at this point, he could be sent away without her. Thus the marriage was final only when she agreed to accompany him away from her family.

The two journeyed to Bombay and took a ship from there to Karachi. They now had a chance for a quiet honeymoon and a rest from the strenuous festivities.

The festivities began all over again when they reached Quetta. The regimental band met them at the station, and the other officers had a big party for them. More than a week passed before they had time to fix up their house.

Thimayya had taken a bungalow set in charming English style gardens. The city of Quetta was in a valley at five thousand foot elevation. The cantonment area where they had their bungalow was above the city on the slopes of the valley. Higher still, back in the hills, was a beautiful lake surrounded by orchards and forests. The lake supplied water to irrigate the beautiful gardens in the cantonment. Thus Quetta was a delightful place, and the newlyweds settled down to enjoy their life there.

Nina participated fully in the social life. In Quetta, she was the only Indian wife not in *pardah*. Thus she was a curiosity to the British women, who made a fuss over her. Nina was pretty and vivacious, very French and chic. She was immediately popular, and the Thimayyas soon had more invitations than they could accept.

One of their first invitations was from Sir Norman Cater, the administrative head of the Quetta district. He had been Chief Commissioner of Coorg, where he had known well both Thim-

ayya's and Nina's families. He opened his home to the young couple, and they saw him frequently.

At his house they met the district military commander, Major General Sir Henry Karlake, and he also became their friend. The general rode horseback every morning, with his orderly on another horse behind him carrying the commander's pennant. After his ride, Sir Henry took to dropping in on the Thumayyas for coffee and a chat.

The Thimayyas also became good friends with the brigade commander. The brigadier was an elderly man with a matronly wife. They had recently arrived from England and had none of the attitude of the British who made their careers in India.

Considering his age and rank, Thumayya's friends were rather exalted. This was partly because his adjutant's job brought him frequently into contact with the top officers, partly because of the social backing of Sir Norman Cater, and partly because of Nina's popularity. Another reason, however, concerned Thumayya's personality. At 29, he was a big, husky, athletic type with virile good looks. He was respected for his ability. Nothing really unpleasant had ever happened to him. In his job and social relationships, he had gone easily from one success to another. He was therefore utterly self-confident. Complicated ideas bored him, and he had no strongly felt opinions that would limit his circle of friends. He was a born storyteller. Invariably, at a party, his joviality defined the mood of the group. All these characteristics added up to charm. He had the true charm that comes from genuinely liking people. He was as popular with the men under him as he was with his superior officers. Thus Timmy was a happy man. No one could blame him and his lovely bride for believing that the world was made for gaiety.

This pleasant interlude, however, lasted for only three more months. The newlywed Thumayyas had arrived in Quetta at the end of February in 1935. In the early hours of May 31st their carefree life there was shattered with terrible suddenness.

On the evening of May 30, 1935, they gave a dinner party for a friend, Captain Muqbool Hussain, whose wife expected her seventh child and was in the city with the children. At midnight,

Thumayya drove the captain back to the city. The night was hot and still, with bright stars. Thumayya did not bother to put his car back into the garage. His riding horses were restless—from the heat, he thought—and he took them out of the stable to tether them under a tree. His brindle greyhound dog was whining. Something seemed wrong, but Thumayya could not place what it was. Just as he went to bed, he suddenly realized that the birds which chirped in Quetta day and night were silent. He shrugged and was soon asleep.

An hour later he was wakened by Nina's scream. To his surprise, their beds, which normally were close together, were now against opposite walls. He heard a rumble, and Nina's bed came sliding across the floor, crashing into his. That was all they felt of the terrible Quetta earthquake.

The current was off, they had to feel their way in the dark to the door. The door was jammed, and Thumayya broke it down. Outside, nothing appeared wrong. The night was still lovely. In the distance they heard a slight rumble, they thought it might be thunder. Only later did they know that it was the sound of buildings crumbling in the city.

They were about to return to bed when their neighbors, Major and Mrs. Colsey, drove up. 'I think we'd better see what damage has been done,' the major said.

"Do you think it is serious?" Nina asked.

"Look at your garage and stables," Mrs. Colsey said. Nina and Thumayya walked to the side of the bungalow. The two out-buildings were now only a pile of rubble. If the car and the horses had been inside, the Thumayyas now would have had neither. Nina and Thumayya dressed quickly, both apprehensive, and joined the Colseys.

The Sikh battalion was on maneuvers, so the men's wives were at their homes alone. Also, some of the Hyderabad's officers had gone with the Sikhs to act as umpires, and their wives also were alone. Thus the first job was to check on these women and children. None had been hurt. The major ordered them to sleep outside until their houses could be examined for structural damage.

The major and Thumayya now left their wives and went to see

how the battalion had fared. On the way, a turn in Queens Road provided a view of the whole city spread out in the valley below. When they reached the turn, the major stopped the car and the two men sat, speechless with shock. The city had disappeared. It was a vast pile of rubble, broken here and there by wall fragments that still were crumbling. An enormous dust cloud was rising slowly and spreading over the whole valley. But worst of all was the distant sound of screams from thousands of people. Thimayya suddenly remembered Captain Hussain's family. He was sick with horror. No trace of the captain or the family was ever found.

The barracks were undamaged, and the troops unharmed. The two officers knew that every available person would be needed in the tasks ahead. They aroused the men, therefore, commanding them to stand by. Orders soon began to come through from headquarters. Sir Norman Cater, the district political agent, nominally was in charge, his house had collapsed, however, killing his son, and he was so broken by the tragedy that Major General Karlake took over. When Thimayya told him that the battalion was already waiting, the Hyderabadis were sent at once into the city.

That night and the next day were a nightmare. The Hyderabadis first meant to explore the city and estimate the amount of damage. It was impossible, however, to resist the cries of the still living buried under the fallen buildings. Thus all the troops and officers worked without thought of food or rest until they were dazed with fatigue. Vultures were coming in flocks that covered the sky to the horizons. Jackals were everywhere. Some of the scenes normally would have been unbearable, but the men were too numb to feel anything.

If possible, conditions in the surrounding villages were worse. By the afternoon of that first day, the Sikhs returned from their maneuvers. They had been on a night operation when the earthquake struck. They had been thrown to the ground, terrified that the earth would crack open and engulf them. They had spent the rest of the night on the road. The next morning they found that the nearby villages had been wiped out. In some villages, no one was left alive. In others the few survivors wan-

dered around aimlessly, crazed with horror. The worst part was that nothing could be done for these survivors because Quetta, the center, was paralyzed.

For seven days no outside help arrived. The railway and telegraph lines as well as roads and bridges were out. An effort was made to gather the thousands of homeless into a tent city erected on the race track. Each day these people swarmed to the station to see if the first train had arrived. When it did arrive, the train was mobbed, and troops had to drive the people away so that the sick and wounded could be evacuated first.

Fortunately, the cantonment had several large well stocked hospitals. An air lift brought in more supplies. The cantonment had escaped the worst of the quake and was relatively undamaged. All the houses therefore were used to help shelter the sick or wounded who could not be placed in the hospitals. The Thumayyas had twenty patients in their house. Nina worked tirelessly to care for them. Later she worked day and night in a hospital as well. By now the stench from the dead in the city had become overpowering, Nina took up smoking as a means of getting the smell out of her nostrils. Later, she was given the Kaiser i Hind decoration for her work during the catastrophe.

To Thumayya, the worst of the horror was the looters. Tribesmen from the surrounding hills followed the vultures and jackals into the city. They not only robbed the dead but chopped off the ears and hands of living women and children to get jewelry. The looters were difficult to catch. The broken walls gave them good cover, and the troops had to move laboriously over and through the loose rubble. Shooting the looters did little good. Death was no deterrent to the tribesmen crazy for loot. The troops would string up captured tribesmen and lash them severely. The pain was nothing to these people, but the authorities hoped that the humiliation would dissuade others from coming down to the city. Perhaps this did help but often the troops would string up a man who bore the fresh welts of previous beatings.

Meanwhile, every man with any strength left dug in the rubble to look for survivors. After a few days, the troops wore gas masks because of the stench. By now, the few living who were

rescued were wildly insane. At the end of ten days, the doctors said that indiscriminate digging was no longer necessary, anyone still buried must be dead. Everyone in Quetta had relatives or friends lost in that horrible place, however, and giving up the search was too painful. During the night patrols especially, one's mind often played strange tricks. "In the moonlight," Thimayya said later, "that desolate landscape with its weird shadows, the slinking ghost like jackals, and the wispy dust clouds looked like a piece of hell. One could easily imagine hearing a faint cry from under the rubble, a child's whimpering perhaps, or a woman's pitiful moans. You would ask the others if they heard it too, and you would be furious at them when they shook their heads. Nevertheless, under these circumstances, miraculous rescues were made just often enough so that you would dig despite the doubts of the others. Usually you found nothing—except the dead."

An estimated 60,000 died in the catastrophe. When the survivors had done what they could for the living, the disposal of the dead became a problem. The Kumaonis in the Hyderabad battalion, being caste Hindus, were not supposed to touch dead flesh. When they were ordered to the disposal details, therefore, they refused to obey. One of the officers was a Brahman Hindu. He and the other officers, British and Indian, went to work themselves, putting the bodies into the trucks and carts that carried the grisly loads to the burning grounds. The Kumaonis were shamed, especially by the fact that an exalted Brahman would do what they had refused to do. They finally pitched in and did their share of the horrible work.

At the same time, the entire battalion of Sikhs also refused to do this work. As all their officers were British and therefore casteless, an example such as the Hyderabad's was not persuasive. In desperation the British officers finally came to the Indian officers and asked for help. To the Indians, the situation was not without irony. The Hyderabad's Sikh and Brahman officers were assigned to the task. They called the *subedar* major of the Sikhs. They told him that his regiment would be a disgrace to India if he and the other troops refused to obey the order. The argument went on for three hours. Finally the double persuasion of

a brother Sikh and an elegant Brahman had its effect, and the *subedar* major was converted. The Sikhs went to work. Soon, however, they were sent to the northern passes, where they helped prevent tribesmen looters from entering the valley, this job was more to their liking.

The rumbling shocks continued for a month. The valley took the worst of these tremors. More damage could not be inflicted, but each new quake sustained the panic. Finally, however, the tremors came less often. Meanwhile, the rest of India was rallying to Quetta's relief. Slowly the survivors were able to relax and to think of picking up their lives where they had left off.

But nothing was ever the same again in Quetta. Even today the city has been only partially rebuilt, and in the months that followed the catastrophe, nothing resembling the city's previous gaiety was possible. The scenes of destruction everywhere were constant reminders of the horrors one had faced and the friends one had lost. Everyone wanted to leave.

Thimayya had another reason for wanting to leave. He was a captain now, he was completing his four-year tenure as adjutant, and he had served with the regiment for eight years. If he were ever to go beyond the battalion into a staff appointment he would have to get into the Staff College soon. To do this, he needed first a tour of extra regimental duty. This was partly because he required more free time to study for the entrance examinations and partly because admission to the Staff College required broader experience than mere regimental service.

In those days, however, Indian officers were rarely admitted to the Staff College or were even given extra regimental appointments. Thimayya's uncle, Captain Bonappa, however, had such an appointment. He was adjutant to the 5th Madras Battalion University Training Corps. He was the first Indian to hold this post, and his tenure was ending. It happened also that the Hyderabad's regimental colonel was General Sidney Polk, the G O C in C (General Officer, Commander in Chief) of the Southern Command. Thimayya wrote to the general and asked for the Madras University appointment. The general gave Thimayya the post.

The summer had passed and the cool weather was coming to

the plains Nina was expecting a baby Thimayya was due an eight months' furlough Thus, as soon as the Madras appointment was confirmed, the Thimayyas departed They were glad to leave Quetta, but leaving the battalion was a greater wrench than Thimayya had anticipated Nevertheless, after depositing Nina in Mercara, he went off on a special duty that made him feel closer than ever to his unit

This duty was called a "British Officer's Winter Tour" It meant touring the areas from which the battalion's troops were recruited Thimayya visited the families of his men, listened to any complaints, gave advice, checked on the well being of old pensioners, saw that the relations between the battalion's people and the civil authorities were satisfactory, and finally reported on the general situation as it might affect the morale of the regiment

He spent four weeks making the tour He started at Gurgaon, 15 miles south of Delhi, and traveled in a westward arc that ended in Meerut, 40 miles north of Delhi This area was flat and dry but richly productive because of extensive canal irrigation Few roads linked the numerous villages, and the party therefore rode leisurely moving camels along the banks of quiet canals or on the winding paths through cultivated fields Thimayya met Jats, Ahirs, Rajputs, Meos, and Kainkanis They were sturdy peasant people, proud, intelligent, and dignified Thimayya was the first Indian officer to make this tour His arrival, therefore, was an occasion At every village rallies were held for him, and he was welcomed with speeches and tea parties When the villagers saw him dealing as an equal with their local British deputy commissioner, having a drink with the official and perhaps even staying the night in his house, they were delighted

To Thimayya every moment of the tour was a delight, even the miles of camel riding More important, however, was all that he learned about the background of the battalion's troops Already war clouds were gathering in Europe Within a few years Thimayya would be with the sons of these people in battle His increased understanding of the men would help him to bring out their fighting qualities

CHAPTER IX

MADRAS

In Madras, Thumayya was irked by the relations between the British and Indians. The contact between the two groups was at the minimum. The upper-class British lived inside the walls of Fort St. George. Except for menials, the whole area was taboo for Asiatics. Indians were not allowed even to use the walk which encircled the walls outside.

Part of the reason for these conditions was that Madras had been out of the main stream of the freedom movement. Thus the Indo-British relations had not changed as rapidly as in the north. Madras now was like the rest of India had been 50 years before.

But another reason concerned the Madrasis themselves. North Indians had endured innumerable invasions. They had learned to adapt to the culture of each new ruler. The Madras area, however, had felt the impact of invaders only lightly. The people refused to adapt. They learned to resist the conquerors' culture. Thus the Madrasis now eschewed almost everything British.

When Thumayya first went to Madras, the subtleties of this attitude were beyond him. His duties were such that the obvious place for him to live was within the Fort. He considered the taboo mere nonsense. He found an apartment in the restricted area. In fact, he leased one of the nicest apartments within the Fort, it was said that Lord Clive himself had once occupied the rooms. As Thumayya expected, the British made no protest. True, they remained aloof, but they were polite and even pleasant.

Many Madrasis, on the other hand, seemed to think Thumayya

showed awesome daring by moving into the Fort. Both Nina and Thumayya were annoyed by this attitude, and it drove Thumayya sometimes to brashness.

His most talked about brashness concerned six ancient artillery pieces mounted on the Fort's ramparts. The guns were used to fire occasional salutes. For example, 101 shots were fired on the King's birthday. On rare state occasions the Governor of Madras was given 31 guns. One of Thumayya's titles now was Master Gunner of Fort St. George, and he was in charge of the guns and their crews.

One evening a guest at his party was a pretty Madras college girl. She was in awe of the British. That morning she had caught a glimpse of the governor, and she acted as though it had been a big event in her life. Thumayya tried to convince her that *she* was more important than the British governor. He said that the girl had more intelligence than the governor had, that she would make a greater contribution to society than he would, and that she was far more pleasing to see than he was. He added that she therefore deserved the 31 gun salute more than did the governor. Thumayya swore that when the girl left for the college the next morning he would see that the honor was paid to her. Even the few at the party who knew that Thumayya was the Master Gunner did not think he would commit such a sacrilege. Nevertheless, the next day the whole of Madras was shaken by 31 loud bangs in salute to a simple college girl.

Thumayya was able to do this because he was allowed a number of rounds for practice and testing. Thus, although only the authorities knew it, Thumayya was within regulations. The girl was impressed, and thereafter her attitude toward the British was more rational. The local nationalists were delighted and credited Thumayya with an act of defiance against the foreign rulers. The British themselves, because he was within regulations, treated the matter as a joke.

There was no joking, however, in the British attitude toward the university military training program for which Thumayya also was responsible. Each of the university's five colleges had a *company of trainees*. The companies drilled twice a week. On Sundays, the battalion held a parade. The battalion also spent

15 days a year in camp. It was soon apparent that the military training led nowhere. Moreover, Thumayya sometimes came across boys with outstanding officer qualifications, but, despite his recommendations, not one of these boys was ever accepted into the Military College. The whole program was only a sop to the nationalists' demand for military Indianization. In fact, a boy who showed exceptional qualifications was especially meant to be discouraged. For the first time, Thumayya became disgusted with his job in particular and with the British Raj in general.

Thus, like the Madrasis, he was content to avoid British society. This was his first real chance to live wholly with his own people, and he enjoyed it. Nina too, having lived abroad so much, found contentment in their new life. Mircille, their daughter, had been born, and the Thumayyas felt that they were giving her a fine chance to know and appreciate their cultural heritage.

The most exciting aspect of this heritage to the Thumayyas was *Bharat Natyam*. Thumayya still associated Indian dancing with Zafar Alam's nautch party in Delhi years before. One night, however, the Thumayyas saw the famous Rukmini Devi and her troupe dance stories from the Mahabharata in *Bharat Natyam* style. Along with the dance, Rukmini's English husband recited a poetic commentary in English. It was a moonlit night, and the spectators sat under a banyan tree in a garden on the banks of the Adyar River. The scene was so beautiful that Thumayya still remembers it vividly.

Nina was even more impressed. She began soon after to study the dance herself. She ultimately became professionally expert. She undoubtedly would have won great fame in *Bharat Natyam*. But Thumayya's career, eventually, forced her back into humdrum army existence with its constant changes and stultifying cantonment life. She never lost her artistic temperament, but as an army wife she has had a hard time keeping it.

In addition to the cultural advantages available in the Madras post, the Thumayyas shared the excitement of important political changes. India had been granted a new constitution under which Indian representation in government was increased. Thus they

saw Shri Rajagopalachariar appointed the first Indian Chief Minister of the Madras Presidency They watched him drive into Fort St George to take over nominal administration of the government His modest little car flew the Congress flag He wore—as he always did—a plain *dhoti* and shirt Everyone knew that some of the senior British officials who also saw him enter the government buildings and who now would have to take orders from him felt that the end of the world had come

Thimayya was so excited about the event that he called on the new chief minister Rajagopalachariar received him with simple dignity Thimayya could see that the nationalist leader was self-confident and unimpressed with high office Thimayya told him how proud all the Indian officers felt about the achievement The older man merely smiled “We are making progress,” he said, “but we still have far to go”

The Thimayyas stayed for four years in Madras The tenure was up in late 1939 Thimayya then applied for leave He and Nina were planning a trip through Europe At a bridge party one night, however, Thimayya received a telegram ordering him to report within 24 hours to his battalion War in Europe was starting

The battalion was in Secunderabad When Thimayya arrived at the station, he was met by Shrinagesh, who now was adjutant Majid and two other Indian officers whom Thimayya did not know were with him Their greeting was hearty, with much back-slapping and joking about the beat up they had laid on in celebration of Thimayya's return

To his surprise, the party did not take place at the mess It was held in the mansion of a local raja Lavish food and drinks were served Music, dancing beautiful girls, and entertainers kept the festivities going at a fast pace When Thimayya could catch his breath he took Shrinagesh and Majid aside What is this debauch meant to hide from me? he asked

The smiles faded on both their faces “Timmy *bhai*,” Majid said, “you've been away a long time You won't know the battalion any more”

Thimayya learned that in the rapid expansion of the army, new officers for the battalion had come and gone quickly With

each turnover, the quality of the officers had decreased. Some of the new Indian officers were weak, and so were the junior British officers. But the worst was the new C.O. and his second-in-command. They were old 'koi hai' types, still fighting the Mutiny of 1857 and rejecting any ideas acquired by humanity since Queen Victoria's death. The Indian and British officers were in conflict, and the morale of the battalion was low.

"Enjoy yourself tonight," Shrinagesh said. "It will be your last chance."

The next morning Thimayya was called up before the new C.O. The colonel was distinguished looking, with white hair and a clipped mustache, but one sensed in him an indefinable flaw. Despite his age, for example, rumors were persistent concerning his affairs with women. As an officer, he was the type who tried to assert authority with abuse and a loud voice.

Thimayya had been lax about some minor point in the proper procedure to follow when reporting back to duty. Nevertheless, no one had ever spoken to him the way the C.O. did now. What the criticism really amounted to was a blast against "natives" like Thimayya who had the temerity to think they could be officers. To Thimayya's discredit—and despite warnings from Shrinagesh and Majid—he lost his temper. He too raised his voice and made sweeping statements. The colonel outshouted him, and the interview ended in a tight lipped silence that by no means hid the antagonism. Thimayya was trembling with rage and despair when he left the office.

A few days later, he had a run in with the C.O.'s No. 2. The battalion had received orders to move out, destination unknown. On the railway platform, while waiting for the train, the unit prepared for inspection. The major called for the company commanders to report to him. Thimayya's company was still marching to its place, and he could not leave immediately. The major began shouting abuse. In the Indian Army it was considered the worst possible form for one officer to criticize another in front of the troops. Thus Thimayya paid no attention to the shouting, and when he was ready he marched toward the major at a normal pace, although the senior officer was yelling at him to double-up.

When Thumayya reached him, the major began a tirade not unlike the colonel's

This time Thumayya kept his temper "Are you finished?" he asked when the major had stopped talking "You might as well know right now," Timmy continued, "that I shall never obey orders given in such an unofficer like fashion "

Snickering was heard from the other company commanders The major turned purple and began to splutter But then he seemed to deflate, and he let the matter pass without further comment.

Thumayya had learned that officers like this colonel and major could be abominable to people whom they could browbeat, but that they often treated with respect someone who stood up to them Thus, despite the dangers of defying a superior officer, Thumayya made up his mind to take no more of their bullying

His first—but not his last—act of defiance came shortly after the train reached Madras The battalion then boarded a ship The ship would not sail for 12 hours, and although the destination was a secret, the fact of the departure was not Thumayya had had time to telephone Nina, and she had arranged a farewell party for him When he applied through the adjutant for permission to leave, however, he was refused Thumayya told Shrinagesh to tell the C O politely that the other officers had had a chance to say goodbye to their families but that he had not Therefore, he respectfully asked the C O to reconsider "If the clot still refuses," Timmy said, "he can count me A W O L., because I m taking the leave "

They were in the ship's wardroom, and although Thumayya did not know it then, the C O was sitting behind him and had overheard the ultimatum The colonel left the room, and Shrinagesh returned a few minutes later with the permission to go

Obviously, the conflict between the C O and most of his staff could not go on much longer "The very fact that my defiance was successful," Timmy said, describing the incident, "meant that the discipline which differentiates a military unit from a mob was breaking down Thus my act, no matter how much I thought it was justified, was inexcusable unless it established a relation-

ship in which I could accept the C O's authority. Inevitably the conflict must reach a point of no return, thereafter, either the colonel would change his attitude or I would have to leave the army."

The point was reached when the troopship was several days out to sea. The nights were hot, and the most comfortable place to sleep was on the deck. The use of the deck was alternated between the officers and men. Actually, the deck had room for both officers and men, so that the military caste system was the only excuse for the alternate use. Thus many officers began sleeping on deck even when the troops were there. Indeed, the only pleasant times Thumayya now had were the hours he spent with the Kumaonis, Jats, and Ahirs who made up his mixed company.

One night, however, the major made a check and caught the officers on deck with the troops. Most of the officers, including three Englishmen, managed to sneak down another stairway without being seen, but Thumayya felt it beneath his dignity to run off. Thus he, Majid, and another Indian officer named Gill were subjected to the major's abuse. The gist of the tirade was that "you people," meaning the "native" officers, were getting too damned slack and that he would report them to the C O, who, by God, would see to it that they tightened up. The fact that he was screaming at officers in front of the troops again was the last straw. Thumayya sensed that a showdown was at hand. Oddly enough, he slept better that night than he had for days.

The next morning the three Indian officers waited outside the C O's quarters while Shrinagesh reported the misdemeanor. To their surprise, the C O told Shrinagesh that he did not care where the officers slept and that the three Indians were dismissed.

But the three were too angry to let it go at that. They now demanded to see the C O. When the permission was granted, Majid decided that he had "put up too many blacks" to seek an argument with the C O now. Gill lost courage before they reached the colonel's door. Thus Thumayya went in alone.

"I was shaky," he said, "and I had a fluttery feeling in my middle. Nevertheless, I managed to control my voice and to speak calmly." He told the colonel that the morale of the Indian

officers had reached an impossible low. He said that he had been taught never to shout-out another officer in front of the troops. Yet, not only was this practice prevalent, it was applied only to the Indian officers, some of the British officers were slack, but they were never criticized. Thimayya emphasized that no officer, no matter how capable, could perform adequately under these circumstances and that the effectiveness of the unit, therefore, must suffer. Finally he told the C O that, speaking for himself, he no longer wanted to be in the army if it meant living under these conditions. He offered to resign his commission.

The C O said nothing as Thimayya talked. He stared at his desk, shuffling a pile of papers. When Thimayya finished, there was a moment of silence. Thimayya saw a nerve throbbing rhythmically in the colonel's jaw.

Finally the colonel looked up out of the corner of his eye. He managed a weak smile.

"I realized he was trying to be friendly," Thimayya said. "Somehow, this was more sickening than the abuse."

"You people get excited too easily," the colonel said. "Perhaps we've been a bit hasty at times, but I want you to calm down and think this matter over."

"From then on," Thimayya said, "we never had difficulty with either the colonel or the major. The British officers thereafter were sometimes ticked off, but none of the Indian officers were criticized at all—even though some of our subalterns could have used tightening up."

What really happened was that the Indian officers were simply left alone. They received orders and obeyed them. The British were polite and correct, and the Indians were the same. Outwardly the two groups seemed to co-operate, but the bridge over the gulf between them was shaky.

Thimayya shuddered to think what the gulf might mean for the battalion in the wartime conditions to come.

CHAPTER X

SINGAPORE

Singapore was their destination. On arrival the troops filed down gangplanks. The crowd at the docks could see them clearly and count them as they disembarked. Nevertheless, gunny sack screens had been erected from the gangplanks to the waiting lorries. The idea was to hide the fact of the troops' arrival.

This pathetic piece of military security was typical of the confusion in Singapore during 1939 and 1940. The Hyderabad battalion was part of a brigade task force. The role meant for the force was never clear, Thimayya thinks that the unit was there merely because the authorities had an uneasy feeling that more troops ought to be in Malaya.

The brigade was distributed throughout Malaya with the Hyderabad battalion held in reserve at Singapore. The battalion was assigned to the Tyersall Barracks, which had been given to the army by the Sultan of Johore. The buildings were erected in the palace gardens. The battalion settled into these pleasant surroundings to do collective training. The men were told that they would receive more modern weapons and that they would be trained in their use. As they received only wooden dummies of the anti-tank weapons and the extra machine guns, the effectiveness of this training was limited. Then someone had the idea that the men should be taught jungle warfare, the authorities soon discovered, however, that no one in Malaya knew much about it.

Oddly enough, the Hyderabad's C O did know something of jungle combat. He had had experience with bush fighting in Africa. He therefore was in great demand. He brought out a

pamphlet on the subject, and before long he was taken from the battalion

Thumayya would not have thought it possible, but the replacement was worse. The new C O had no idea of how to handle men. He imagined that his officers were conspiring against him, but instead of bringing the fancied intrigues out into the open he would take underhanded revenge on those who he thought were his malefactors. He used sneaky little tricks in the attempt to catch them out in laxity. Within a month he was hated by every man in the battalion, the British included. The morale of the unit sank to a new low.

"I knew that if I ever tangled with the new C O," Thumayya said, "I would do something I might regret for the rest of my life. I therefore kept a tight rein on myself and avoided him."

Nevertheless, it probably was inevitable that the new C O would single Thumayya out as his pet hate. This came about in an unexpected way.

The fortress commander, Major General Fitzsimmons, was a fine officer, but he had never before commanded Indian troops. He wanted to learn about them. Thumayya was asked to demonstrate with his company how the *jawns* performed in the field. During the show, Thumayya was questioned about his background by the general. When the general heard that Thumayya had been with the H L I he was impressed, but when he found that Thumayya had known Telfer-Smolett he was delighted. Telfer-Smolett was the general's brother in law, and they were lifelong friends. Thumayya's old company commander in the H L I was now retired, but he had returned to India as head of the Indian Red Cross. Moreover, he was staying in Bangalore, where Nina and Mireille were living.

As a result of this meeting in Singapore, Telfer-Smolett and his wife looked up Nina and were kind to her. They also wrote about Thumayya to General Fitzsimmons. The fortress commander began inviting the young captain to informal evenings at his home. The Hyderabad C O, when he heard of this, began to brood. He decided that Thumayya was conspiring against him with the general. He had Thumayya's company sent into the jungle.

This was the middle of 1940, and the fear of a Japanese attack was causing frantic preparations. The authorities then thought that the invasion might come from the coast, up the river to Kota Tingi, and then along the main road to Singapore. Thus Thumayya's company was sent 20 miles down the river from Kota Tingi. The men were to hold the river against approaching enemy craft. One platoon was put on the far bank and the company headquarters with the other two platoons took up position on the near side. They were in dense jungle that stretched for miles. The Japanese needed only to disembark and outflank the company. A brigade could not have held the position. Thumayya was told that he would have to hold it to the last man.

"This seemed a bit drastic," Thumayya said, "so I devised a means of withdrawing the men in case we were overwhelmed. We began the task of clearing a trail back to the main road. The job seemed impossible, but the jungle conditions were trying, and the men had little to do. Some such challenge was good for morale."

The job of making the escape trail turned out to be fine jungle combat training. It was impossible to see beyond a circle ten feet in diameter. Communications, therefore, were a problem. At first, bird calls were used, but the men became so expert that real birds chimed in and confused the signaling. Finally a system of runners was devised.

The runners, however, were in danger of getting lost. At first, every inch of the jungle looked like all the other hundreds of square miles of it. Nevertheless, the men learned to recognize landmarks. Every day men were taken out in groups of two or three and left to find their way back unaided. No one was ever lost. Experience overcame the natural human fear of the jungle, and the men even learned to be fascinated by it.

Thumayya's biggest problem was the men's health. In that enervating climate they perspired constantly, they all had to take large quantities of salt tablets to prevent dehydration illnesses. Precautions against snakes and insects were necessary. And adequate nourishment was a constant concern.

The men's normal diet consisted of milk, *ghee* (clarified butter), fresh vegetables, *dhal* (lentils), and *atah* (whole wheat flour). The rations they received, however, were tinned milk, tinned vegetables, and frozen Australian meat. The men disliked this food and had trouble digesting it. The platoon of Kumaonis were meat eaters, and they therefore managed the best. The Ahirs also ate enough of it to keep fit. The Jats, however, were vegetarians. Fresh milk was the most important part of their normal diet. They found the tinned milk unpleasant, but meat was abhorrent to them. Back at battalion H Q, 80 per cent of the Jat company had to be hospitalized for malnutrition because they could not eat the rations.

In the jungle, Thimayya spent an hour daily trying to get the Jats to eat meat. He would sit with them, take a *chapatti*, wrap it around a piece of meat, dip it into gravy, and then make a show of gourmet's ecstasy as he ate it. "From the way the Jats watched my performance," Timmy said, "I might have been dining on human flesh." Eventually, he persuaded two of the Jats to try the dish. Both gagged and vomited. Thimayya had to begin all over again. Ultimately all the Jats tried it, a bit at a time, and a week later they could eat it. "They never liked meat," Thimayya said, "but I got enough of it down them so that they did not get ill from lack of nourishment."

At the end of seven weeks, the men were hacking away at the jungle when they suddenly came to a clearing. To everyone's amazement the main road to Singapore was in front of them. Thimayya was disappointed. Now that this monumental job was through, he could think of no other activity strenuous enough to overcome the lethargy the climate induced. Fortunately, the company was moved to another post a week later.

They went to Kluang, at the junction of the roads coming from Mersing on Malaya's east coast and Kuala Lumpur on the west coast. The authorities now thought that the Japanese might land at one of the ports and then move toward Singapore along these roads. The company's job was to build defense positions in the area. Many of the local rubber plantations were owned by Japanese, who tore up the markers and wire as fast as the

materials could be put in. When Thimayya complained to H Q, he was told that nothing could be done. No emergency had been declared, and the Japanese therefore were entitled to resist the trespassing. A peculiar ambivalence marked the authorities' thinking, they knew that a Japanese attack was possible, and they were going through the motions of preparing for it, but at the same time they were doing a fine job of wishful thinking to avoid facing unpleasant truths. Reality, therefore, came to them as a rude shock.

One of these shocks happened late in 1940. Thimayya's company was then at Mersing on the east coast, practicing jungle warfare. It was a lovely place, in the evenings they had the ocean to bathe in and the sea breezes to cool them.

North of Mersing, back of the Endau Estuary, were some Japanese-operated tin mines. A Japanese invasion force might use these mines as a beachhead. To reconnoiter the area, therefore, Thimayya asked the owners to show the mines to him and his men. The Japanese agreed, and their Indian employees gave the army visitors a reception.

In the estuary itself, Thimayya and his men could see a British destroyer taking soundings. Despite the years of British occupation of Malaya, these strategic waters had never been properly charted. While Thimayya watched, a Japanese cruiser paying a courtesy call on the Royal Navy entered the estuary to salute the British destroyer. Afterward, the Japanese vessel continued up the estuary to call on the tin mine owners. The British signaled the Japanese ship to wait until a pilot could be put on board. The Japanese replied, "We don't need a pilot. We know our way around here," and they cruised up the estuary as though they had made the trip daily. The British were stunned.

Nevertheless when Thimayya and his men returned to Singapore a few weeks later, they found everyone trying desperately to pretend that nothing unpleasant would happen. The gaiety in the capital had a feverish quality. Drinking went on day and night. Brothels were everywhere and operated at full capacity around the clock. Narcotic addicts were common. The air of general depravity would depress even the most sophisticated. To make matters worse, troops were pouring into Singapore, a

whole Indian Army division had been assigned for the peninsula's defense, and the fleshpots were boiling over

Upon returning to Singapore, however, Thimayya's primary concern was the state in which he would find the battalion under the new C O It was worse than anything he could imagine The British and Indian officers were not even speaking to each other Any spirit of co-operation between the C O and his staff had vanished Worse, the troops themselves—normally simple, cheerful men, even under the most trying circumstances—had become sullen and silent All Singapore had an air of impending catastrophe, but nowhere was the feeling more pronounced than in the Hyderabad battalion

When catastrophe did strike the battalion, it was occasioned by an Indian officer named Zahir He had become pathologically anti British He wrote daily letters to a girl friend in Lahore, and poured out his hatred in violent terms His letters were censored, so that his attitude was known to the authorities and he was being watched

He became involved with a German girl She had been married to an Indian but had left her husband and India to settle down in Singapore with no visible means of support She was now employed by British Intelligence, but she was suspected of being a German spy Although many men were attracted by her, she was cool to all of them except Zahir He spent every free moment with her He began to talk like a Nazi

Nevertheless, he was approached by British Intelligence and was told to report on the German girl her activities, contacts, attitudes, and ideas Zahir obeyed, but his reports said only that the girl was a fine, honest, reliable type and that nothing was suspicious about her

Zahir, therefore, was shipped up the beach for jungle training with his company, which contained the Ahirs As his company commander was away on special duty, Zahir was virtually in control He brought the German girl with him and lived with her in his quarters The two of them worked out a campaign to make the Ahirs into Nazis

At one rally, for example, Zahir asked, 'Have you ever touched the hand of a *memsahib*?' Of course not We are filth

to the British. But this German girl who follows Hitler wants to shake hands with each of you." Thereupon, the Ahirs lined up to shake hands solemnly with the Teutonic blonde.

Whether or not the men understood Zahir's politics, he won their loyalty. The authorities finally caught up with him. The company was brought back to Singapore, and Zahir was relieved of his duties.

Before leaving, however, Zahir asked the JCO's (junior commissioned officers) to have the company stage a protest. The Ahirs' turn for quarter guard duty came that night. The Ahirs sent out a guard which stayed quietly on the post. The off-duty Ahirs, however, came out of the barracks and marched up and down, shouting slogans in a self-conscious way. When they were asked what was the matter, they said they wanted Zahir to return.

The affair would have fizzled out, but the CO lost his head. He thought that the battalion was mutinying. He did not check with the Indian officers to find out what really had happened. Instead, he began to make frantic telephone calls. The Gordon Highlanders were sent to save him. The Ahir guard was disarmed and replaced by the Scottish troops. The weapons of the whole battalion were locked in the cotes, and the CO took the keys. Armed troops from the Highlanders surrounded the barracks. No act could have been more insulting to the honor of the *jawns* and now the Ahir company really did mutiny.

Actually all they did was to stage a sit-down hunger strike. They refused to obey orders, to leave the barracks, or to eat. The next night, the company of Jats was to mount a quarter-guard. They were denied their weapons and were told that the Highlanders would be on guard. Now the Jats were insulted, and they too joined the strike.

The CO meanwhile had locked himself in his quarters. He kept most of the British officers with him, and none of them would communicate with the Indians. "They scurried from room to room," Timmy said later, "and peered out at the Indians from cracks in the doors. They could have no real idea of what was going on, but the reports they telephoned to brigade HQ were wild."

These reports soon had all of Singapore alarmed. In 1918, a

company of Pathans had run amok in the city, killing and raping as they did on the Frontier. Few people in Malaya knew the difference between the Indian fighting classes, the people now expected the Hyderabad battalion to break out as the Pathans had done.

Fortunately, however, the fortress commander kept cool. On the third night, the Kumaon Company had the turn to provide the quarter guard. The general ordered the C O to let the Kumaonis have their weapons and take the guard. The C O protested, but was overruled. The Kumaonis mounted their guard, and no trouble came from them.

The general also told the C O to get advice on the situation from experienced Indian officers. The C O agreed, but still he did not call them in.

'The sympathy of the Indian officers was with the mutineers,' Timmy said subsequently. 'Our anti British feelings were intense. The war in Europe and Africa was going badly for the Allies, and most of us greeted the news of a British defeat with delight. The subaltern hotheads and the J C O's supported the mutiny of the Jats and Ahirs and were all for joining it. Fortunately, we older officers were able to keep them in line.'

Thimayya also was able to keep his own mixed company in line. His platoons of Jats and Ahirs wanted to join their brothers in the strike, but he talked them out of it. He said that the strikers were guilty of mutiny, which in wartime could be punished by hanging. What would they gain by hanging or starving? He told his men that they were working for him, not the British. He would take care of them, but he would tolerate nothing less than their complete loyalty. They agreed.

His company, however, was not allowed to take the guard. On the fourth night the Kumaonis again put up a guard, and the strikers still refused to take orders. The C O then commanded the strikers to be sent to a concentration camp, where they would be held unarmed as prisoners. The strikers refused to move. Force from an outside unit would have to be used to make them go. Only now did the C O call the Indian officers. Thimayya was asked to reason with the strikers. 'I'll try,' he said, 'but now it is probably too late.' He told the C O bluntly that the

trouble need not have happened, he implied that the C O's incompetence was the sole cause. He ended by stating that he intended to use his own judgment concerning terms to be settled with the men. The C O was white with fury, but agreed.

Thimayya went to the barracks where the Ahirs were sitting. This had been the first company he had officered, ten years before in Baghdad, many of the same men were still with the unit. The men now had been four days without food. Thimayya sat down among them. They were grim faced and tense. They would not look at him. "Let's have a glass of rum," Thimayya said.

There was no reply.

He passed around his tin of cigarettes, but there were no takers.

"Then share a *hookah* with me," Thimayya said. "Ten years ago in Baghdad we used to smoke the *hookah* together. Remember how you laughed at my accent?"

There were a few half smiles. Thimayya called out the names of those who had been in the company in the old days, and reminded them of the good times they had had. He knew many of the men's villages and families from his winter tour four years previously, and he talked about them. There were a few more smiles and an occasional murmured reply.

He had been there more than two hours before some of the strikers began to relax. Thimayya now recalled old regimental stories to build up their pride. When he felt that the worst of their hostility was gone, he began to hammer into them the significance of what they had done. "This is mutiny in wartime. You could all be hanged," he said. "But why do you want to hang or starve? You would never see India again. You'd be a disgrace to me, to the regiment, to your villages and to India. All India would know, and your women would be ashamed to remember you."

The men stirred uneasily and looked at each other. Thimayya finished by saying, "If you behave properly now, you will not be punished. Tomorrow, I'm taking parade. I shall expect all of you out at seven in p. t. kit. After p. t., I'm going to have breakfast with you."

The next morning, Thimayya was at the parade ground early. He spent a nervous few minutes wondering whether or not the strikers would appear. Right at seven, the first of them arrived. They were sullen and reluctant, but they all turned out. Thimayya gave them easy exercises, but even so the men must have been in agony. For the last ten minutes they played games. Thimayya tried to make the games fun, hoping to take some of the grimness out of the men. It helped a little. Then they had a big breakfast, and their spirits rose.

Thimayya decided next to take them out on the rifle range. He wanted to prevent them from getting together to talk and to work up more bitterness. When he asked the C O for the cote keys, however, the colonel said, "Are you mad? They might turn the guns on us."

"They *must* be armed," Thimayya said. "Rifles and ammunition. We must show them that we trust them. If we continue to punish and degrade them for being led astray by an officer, they will no longer follow any officer. We can show them that Zahur was wrong and that we are right only by being more just and more understanding than he was."

The C O still refused. The matter went up to the fortress commander, who again overruled the C O. The cotes were opened. The Ahirs and Jats were armed, and they went quietly to the rifle range. The mutiny was over.

The C O now hated Thimayya more than ever. To make the situation worse, both the brigade and fortress commanders now took a dim view of the C O, and Thimayya was asked to write a report on him. Thereafter, working in the same unit with the colonel was next to impossible.

Thimayya felt sick when he remembered what a superb unit the battalion had been a few years before. It was hard to believe that the difference could be caused by one man. At the same time, Thimayya was fed up with the decadent gaiety of Singapore, and he wanted to get away, preferably to where he could see some action. He went to General Fitzsimmons, explained his feelings, and asked for a transfer.

This was in April, 1941. The general told him that a Japanese attack was expected momentarily, and that every avail-

able man would be needed. He asked Thimayya, however, to reapply in six months, if the situation then was easier, he would authorize the transfer.

Fortunately, Thimayya spent little of the next six months at battalion headquarters. First he took the company of Ahirs to a beach camp, where he superintended their jungle combat training, but mostly he helped them to recover some of their morale. Next he went with his mixed company to an island off Singapore, where he was in charge of a camp for 1,000 German and Italian internees.

"One day, at this camp," Thimayya said, "I was told to expect a dangerous female prisoner, whom I must keep separate from the other internees. I arranged for a hut to be put up near our mess where we could keep an eye on her. The prisoner turned out to be Zahur's Hitlerite blonde. Considering what she had done, the authorities certainly were lenient with her. Nevertheless, her air of martyrdom was heart wrenching. Moreover, she took to sun bathing on the beach in front of her hut. I noticed that my junior officers were showing definite interest in her. Rather than let her find another Zahur, I had her put in with the other female prisoners."

Six weeks later, Thimayya was ordered suddenly to load the internees into tenders and to take them out to sea in a specified direction. As they approached the appointed place, a ship loomed out of the haze. It was the most enormous vessel he had ever seen. The ship was the *Queen Mary* which was to take the internees to a camp in Australia.

That finished his job, and Thimayya had to return to battalion HQ. A week later, however, his six month period was up. It was now October, 1941. He went to General Fitzsummons. "You can have your transfer, the general said. 'We now know definitely that the Japanese will not attack.'"

Thimayya left Singapore within a few days.

Two months later, the Japanese landed in Malaya.

CHAPTER XI

AGRA

Late in 1941, the Indian Army suffered heavy casualties in Europe and Africa. In India, therefore, recruiting and training of replacements were proceeding at a furious pace. A new command—called the Central Command—was established 100 miles south of Delhi at Agra, which also was the training center for the Hyderabad Regiment.

Thus, when Thimayya left Singapore, he was sent to Agra, that famous center of Moghul culture where Shah Jehan had built the Taj Mahal. Two new infantry battalions and a machine-gun battalion were being raised for the Hyderabad Regiment. Thimayya was now a major, and he was made second in-command of one of the new infantry battalions. He plunged into the work of turning recruits into soldiers.

The new C O was Lieutenant Colonel Charles Attfield, from the Kumaon Rifles. He was charming and intelligent. Working with him was so pleasant that Thimayya soon remembered Singapore only as a bad dream.

Life became even more pleasant when Nina and Mireille joined him. They took a bungalow less than a mile from the Taj Mahal and settled down to a peaceful family existence. The family circle widened when Nina's sister, Boli, came to stay with them. Not long after, Thimayya's younger brother appeared on the veranda. He had been commissioned from the Officer Training School in Maow, and was posted as a subaltern in Thimayya's own regiment.

Thimayya also saw his older brother briefly. He helped run the plantations, the work bored him, however, and he had spent

his spare time in the Reserve Officers Training Corps. He and Thumayya used to have friendly arguments on military tactics. When war broke out, he was called up and posted to the Baluch Regiment. As soon as the Japanese began their invasions in December, 1941, his unit was dispatched to Singapore. His train passed through Agra, and Thumayya had a short reunion with him. He and his men were depressed, even then they felt that they would not get far in the war. They were right, they arrived in Singapore the day that Malaya surrendered to the Japanese. They went from the ship into a prison camp, and Thumayya did not see his brother again until after the war.

The brother's capture brought home to Thumayya the grim reality of war. He knew that his pleasant interlude in Agra could not last long, and he meant to enjoy it while he could. "By now we had no difficulty with prejudice against Indian officers," Timmy said. "We were no longer a novelty, and the official discrimination, at least, was disappearing."

Some older British resented the changes that put the Indian officers on their social level. The officer shortage had necessitated the recall of many old timers. Most of them held administrative posts or commanded garrisoned battalions. These old *koi hai's* and the Indian officers had frequent political arguments, but the old men no longer wielded power, and they were more pathetic than formidable. "Mostly," Timmy said, "they sat on the club lawns, sipped *chota pegs* viewed with alarm, damned the government, cursed the climate, and abominated the impudent young natives who had the effrontery to consider themselves *pukka King's officers*."

"But if we Indians upset these poor old diehards," Timmy said, "the Americans who began pouring into India were an even ruder shock."

A great bomber base was to be built at Agra, and the Americans undertook the project. An area containing more than a hundred villages near Agra was turned over to them. They said that they would build the whole base within six months. No one believed them. "Damned colonial braggarts," the old *koi hai's* said.

"But one day," Timmy said, "the peace of sleepy old Agra was

shattered by the roar of hundreds of bulldozers and huge earth-moving equipment, the like of which we had never seen. The Americans gave the villagers generous compensation and hired every able-bodied person in the area. Villages, farms, and forests vanished before our eyes. At night the area was floodlit and the work continued. The entire base, complete with electric power, communications, and quarters for all the personnel, was finished within five instead of six months. The old *koi hai's* regarded this as sheer impudence."

"Even worse," Timmy added, "was the Americans' attitude toward Agra's club. Their officers were given automatic membership. Instead of contributing to its decorum, however, the Americans seemed to think the club was a place to relax and enjoy themselves! In a short time, they drank up years of the club's liquor supply. At the club dances, lacking partners, they elbowed the British away from the women. They seemed to think that saying 'Excuse me' gave them permission to dance with anyone, regardless of rank, position, class, age, or dignity. The club parties attended by the Yanks became known as 'excuse me' dances. When the Americans found that this was causing hard feelings, they began to bring pretty Anglo-Indian girls, and then the old 'Out East' British were really distraught.

"Eventually, the club held some stormy meetings. The Americans resigned en masse and started their own club. They imported a superb Negro orchestra, and the food, also imported, served at their boisterous parties was delicious. At first, the British were excluded from membership, but finally all officers were invited."

"The Anglo-American conflict was highly entertaining to the Indian community," Timmy said. "We Indians approved of the way the Americans refused to accept without question the modes established by the British. But we also felt that the Yanks sometimes went to the other extreme. We considered that they practiced a minimum of self-control. When they drank, for example, they tended to get unpleasantly drunk. In their effort to avoid stuffiness, they sometimes became merely ill-mannered and undisciplined. In general, to us Indian officers they seemed like big, healthy, happy, badly brought-up children."

"Yet what we liked most about Americans," Timmy added, "was their genuine love for children. It was a novel sight for us to see foreigners paying much attention to Indian children. The British Tommy probably was just as friendly, but the British policy was to keep their troops aloof. It became a common sight in Agra to see a crowd of laughing Indian children clustered around a few G I's. The Yanks carried the children around on their shoulders, passed out sweets and chewing gum, and played games with them. The Americans also seemed to teach a generation of Indian village children their profanity. I never got over the jolt of going through a bazaar street and hearing small Indian kids innocently calling out horrendous obscenities in an American accent."

The first American accent Thumayya heard in Agra came from a young corporal who cycled past his house looking bewildered. "The corporal asked me where he could find the Taj Mahal, pronouncing it with the flat A's and distorted syllable stress that we associated with cowboy films," Timmy said.

Thumayya invited the boy to join him and Nina on the lawn. Nina offered him refreshment, which the boy refused because, he said, his mother had told him he "shouldn't never drink alcohol." When he found that the Thumayyas had no Coca Cola, he settled for tea. He told them he was unhappy in India. The reason was that, contrary to what he had been told in 'the States,' he was not popular with Indian women, they covered their faces and refused to look at him when he passed them in the street. Thumayya explained that in India great modesty was expected of women, especially in public. The women were not rejecting the corporal, they would cover their faces to any man. "I think the boy only half believed me," Timmy said, "but he did seem a little relieved as he cycled off down the road."

Not long after, Thumayya met the American commandant, Colonel d'Isle. This American was handsome and amusing. He and Thumayya became friends at once. The colonel took to dropping in on the Thumayyas for potluck almost every evening. When the bombers began to arrive, Colonel d'Isle brought Mireille a generous hamper of delicacies every week. The Thumayyas regarded the American practically as one of their family.

He became even closer when he hired Nina's sister, Boli, as his secretary. Boli wanted a job, but as no woman in the family had worked before, she faced opposition. Colonel d'Isle settled the matter by hiring her and agreeing to look after her. He would not allow her to work for anyone else, and he promised that if he were transferred from India he would send her home.

Later, the colonel took her with him when he was transferred to Calcutta. Here, Boli met Major Peter Baldwin and was attracted to him. "Peter was educated and came from a good family in New York," Timmy said. "We all liked him, but we did not think that he would make a good husband for Boli, this was not because he was American, it was simply a matter of personalities."

Nevertheless, after the war, Baldwin returned to India to operate a private airline there. He and Boli were married, but within a few years they were divorced.

In any event, the Americans added much to the pleasant part of Thumayya's life in Agra. The unpleasant part concerned his own people. Another nationwide resistance to the British was beginning, and again the Indian soldiers faced a dilemma.

The British and the Congress Party had failed to come to terms, and Gandhi's pacifism had made the nationalists unsympathetic to the war effort. The party began a series of strikes, demonstrations, and *Satyagraha* (civil disobedience) which became known as the 1942 Rebellion. The intention was to paralyze the whole administration, both civil and military. The rebellion went beyond anything with which the police could cope, and the army was called in.

In Agra, the active battalions had moved out, and only the semi-trained recruits were left. Moreover, the most active part of the local nationalist effort was carried out by university students. "We Indian officers and men knew many of these students personally," Timmy said. "Our recruits often played games with them. The idea of taking reprisals against these lads was abhorrent to us." Nevertheless, Thumayya and his company were chosen as part of the force reserved for backing up the police in suppressing the nationalist effort. Thumayya was ordered to train his men in the army drill for aiding the civil power.

This drill was very precise. When the police were unable to control a mob, the local magistrate signed a paper stating this fact and turning over his authority to the commanding officer of the area's military forces. Once the paper was signed, the officer was in charge of the area, and his function was to disperse the mob by force.

The use of force, however, had to follow rigid rules. First, the mob was warned that the army now was in control. Next the people were told that they must disperse within a stated number of minutes, their failure to do so would mean that the soldiers would shoot to kill. Care had to be taken to ensure that the people heard both the warning and the order to disperse, and that they were given adequate time to get away.

If the crowd was still recalcitrant, the commanding officer pointed out a mob leader to one of the riflemen. The officer took one cartridge from a sealed box and gave it to the rifleman with orders to kill the indicated mob leader. After the shot, the empty cartridge was given back to the officer, who placed it in his box. If the mob still refused to disperse, the officer pointed out two more people in the crowd to two riflemen. He took two more cartridges from his box and gave them to the soldiers with the order to shoot. This went on, the number of shots increasing or decreasing as the situation demanded. The troops were never issued more than one round at a time, so that the problem of panicky firing could never arise.

When the mob dispersed, the officer resealed his box of ammunition and spent cartridges so that in the subsequent investigation the authorities would know the truth about the firing. The officer was required to see that the wounded were given immediate first aid and that any dead bodies were removed. He was expected to give every humane consideration. Finally, if the magistrate was satisfied, local authority reverted to the civil power.

"My recruits learned every aspect of this drill," Timmy said, "except the essential one. They would not shoot at their countrymen, even in practice with dummies. Whenever I handed one of the boys a cartridge and asked him to shoot at a target, the boy

would find an excuse for not doing it 'I haven't finished my rifle training yet,' he might say, or, 'I have a sore arm' I could not blame them, I felt squeamish myself "

Aside from squeamishness, Thumayya did not want ill-feeling to be worked up against the army By now, the populace loathed the police, but no one felt animosity toward the *javans* "If the army were used to suppress minor civil disturbances," Thumayya explained, "the general situation would not improve, but the people would hate the military as well as the police No soldier could be expected to fight well against his country's enemies if his own people hated him Thus the morale of the Indian troops would be lowered, discipline would be harder to maintain, and the reliability of the Indian Army would decrease I hoped that we would never be called out "

One evening, however, he and his company were ordered suddenly into the city, where a mob had surrounded the police station The police had been battling the crowd with *lathis* (heavy sticks), but could not break it up Thumayya was told to stand by with the company in case the mob tried to storm the police station.

Nightfall was less than an hour away In the dark, neither the troops nor the police could stop a mob attack Thumayya therefore told the magistrate that if the official intended to turn over the authority, the transfer should be made at once The magistrate agreed and signed the necessary paper

"I then went outside and climbed up on a table as near to the crowd as I could get," Timmy said "The mob seemed enormous and in a very ugly mood Some men in front had been beaten by the police, they were covered with blood and were in a frenzy of rage, which was contagious to the others I tried to act calm, but I was shaky as I waved for silence "

"Brothers, what are you waiting for? ' Thumayya asked them "The police are gone We army men have no fight with you It's getting late You should be going home Your wives will have supper ready and will be waiting for you "

"Will the soldiers shoot at us? ' someone yelled at him

"If you don't leave now, the soldiers will have to shoot And

we army men shoot to kill. But why should we fire on you? Go now, and you all can return to your families, there will be no dead who will have to stay."

Thimayya gave them three minutes to disperse. "It was the longest three minutes of my life," he said. "If the crowd did not obey, I did not know what I would do. No one in my company would shoot the people." The crowd shuffled and muttered, but then Thimayya saw that it was breaking up. After they were gone he felt a sharp reaction to the strain. At home, although he seldom drank, he had two stiff pegs of whisky in lieu of dinner.

Thereafter, he was called out to disperse mobs on six other occasions, but he managed to avoid firing on anyone. The students from whom the most trouble was expected gave the least. Thimayya and his men had an unspoken agreement with them, if Thimayya were sent to stop the students from tearing down telegraph wires, for example, the students would cease when Thimayya and his troops arrived. After a friendly chat, the students would leave to pull down wire in another district.

About this time, posters appeared in the Agra district, reading, "Don't be afraid of the Hyderabads—they never shoot."

Colonel Atfield was indignant. "Look at the reputation you're giving us," he said to Thimayya. "You *must* shoot."

"But why?" Thimayya asked. "Whom shall I shoot? Whenever I give the warning the mobs break up."

Soon a new assault on their loyalty came from a different—and wholly unexpected—source. The Indians began to hear rumors about the I.N.A., the Indian National Army, which the Japanese recruited from among their Indian P.O.W.s.

The Japanese recruited the I.N.A. partly by working on the nationalist sentiments of prisoner Indian officers, whose men, of course, would do as the officers ordered, and partly by threats against the Indian troops. The Japanese treated their prisoners badly. Some of the captured Indian officers co-operated with the enemy in the hope of keeping their men alive.

At the time, however, the Indians in the Allied forces knew only that many Indian P.O.W.s were joining the Japanese in order to help drive the British out of the subcontinent. "It was difficult for us, therefore, to view this action as anything but

patriotic," Thimayya said "If we accepted the I N A men as patriots, however, then we who served with the British must be traitors This conflict was especially difficult for me because I heard that my own older brother had gone into the I N A "

Fortunately, the Japanese themselves tended to resolve the confusion Their propaganda said that they would free the Indians from the British, but they remained consistently vague about how much freedom India would have under them The Asian co-prosperity policy did have much attraction throughout the East, including India, but the fact that co-prosperity benefited Japan more than any country under Japanese occupation became increasingly clear Also, the Chinese warned the Indians repeatedly against the Japanese promises

Thus the Indian nationalists felt that "the devil they knew was preferable to a strange one" "Among the Indian officers," Timmy said, "the consensus was that we should help the British defeat the Axis powers and deal with the British afterward I also felt that to sign with the British, to learn from them, and then to go over to their enemy was reprehensible, I doubt if I could have done it"

The British themselves, however, did not make it easy for the Indians to be loyal to them At the worst time, psychologically, the Indian officers were given a loyalty oath paper to sign The signer attested that he was not in sympathy with the Congress Party and would support the British with force The younger Indian officers especially were incensed by the paper, and most refused to sign it "We had heated discussions on the matter," Timmy said "I remembered the instructions that Motilal Nehru had given me, and I saw that this was one of the tempting situations he had predicted I told the younger men what I had been told, and, before long, they were convinced as well In the end we all signed the paper Refusing to sign it would have had little political significance But signing the paper, carrying on with our duties, and supporting the British by force meant that we could learn the proper use of force Who else could teach us? And when the time came to fight for our country, we would be able to fight effectively"

Thus thinking increased Thimayya's desire to get into the Staff

College, although he had little hope, few Indians were admitted, and within a year he would be beyond the age limit for entrance. Shortly after reaching Agra, he asked Colonel Attfield to recommend him for the college. The colonel was sympathetic, but he said that, as Thumayya had not yet really served under him, he did not know Thumayya well enough to make the recommendation. It looked as though Thumayya's career had run into a dead end, but then he had a stroke of luck.

The new commander of the Eastern Command turned out to be General Polk. He had been the brigade commander in Quetta and also a close friend of the Thumayyas. As he passed through on his way to Delhi, the Agra garrison gave him a reception. The general greeted Thumayya warmly. He expressed surprise that Thumayya was only a major and wanted to know if Thumayya had been to Staff College. Thumayya shook his head, adding that he wanted to go but that his colonel did not know him well enough to make the recommendation. The general turned to Colonel Attfield, he said that he knew Thumayya well and that Thumayya was an excellent officer. "Get me the Staff College papers," the general added. "I'll write the report myself and take it with me to Delhi."

A few months later, Thumayya and Nina left Agra for the college in Quetta.

Quetta itself was still in a shambles from the earthquake. The cantonment had been repaired, however, and the Staff College had been expanded with quake proof buildings. Because of the army expansion, the number of officers in the college was increased, they lived in hutments that were small but comfortable. The peacetime course required a year's hard work, but now it had been condensed to six months of brutal slogging. Thus Thumayya settled down to being a student again. He found this pleasant, after his recent years of tension and responsibility. The studying was made easier by Nina's help.

Out of 140 students, only six were Indian. Thumayya found that he was the oldest student, but that he held the lowest rank. Nevertheless, his rank was "substantive", the others were substantive lieutenants or captains, and were colonels only for the

war's duration. Thus Thimayya, as a major, was really the senior officer at the college, and he was respected as such.

He also found that these young colonels knew more than he about staff work detail. On the other hand, he was the only student familiar with the lower echelons. He could reel off every detail of a *jawan's* equipment, he could tell the weight of the soldiers' socks, he could describe his rations, he could estimate his pay down to the *anna*. He was in popular demand with the other students for help in these matters. He was even more popular with the instructors, who were tired of pseudo-soldiers who seemed to know everything about the army except the *fighting man and the fighting unit*.

Thimayya graduated second in the class. The students stated their assignment preferences, and those at the head of the class were given first choice. At the time, "combined operations" (amphibious warfare) was the most popular job. Thimayya asked for combined operations and specified a G-2 operations appointment in the field as his second choice. Combined ops had only one vacancy, and the English officer who passed first got it. Nevertheless, there were several openings for a G 2 in field operations, and the college commandant recommended Thimayya for one of them. As second in the class, Thimayya was due the choice of these openings.

No Indian before, however, had been given a G 2 operations appointment. "Operations" meant the actual strategy and tactics of employing military units against an enemy. Obviously the British were against the idea of an Indian acquiring experience in this ultimate of the military science. Instead, Indian officers who achieved high rank were given staff appointments in functions such as communications and logistics.

Thimayya was not surprised, therefore, to find that the recommendation was disregarded and that he received a G 2 staff duty appointment. He was furious. He told the commandant that he refused the appointment. He was warned that he could not refuse a staff duty posting, and if he nevertheless persisted in refusing he would never be assigned to a staff job again. That meant losing all he had worked for in the Staff College, but he

did not care. Aside from his degree, he rated a second in-command of a battalion. He told the commandant that he would take such a command and would await his turn to lead the battalion, "rather than grow corns sitting around Army H Q with the rest of those bloody overpaid, overranked office boys."

"I shall convey your comments to headquarters," the commandant said.

Once again Thimayya's luck held. Army H Q must have weighed the policy of not permitting Indians in ops against his record and the shortage of trained men. The decision was in his favor. He received new orders posting him as G-2 Ops in the 25th Division, which was training near Madras for entry into Burma.

"A week later," Timmy said, "I arrived at Twenty fifth Division H Q. Long lines of lorries, columns of troops, and masses of unfamiliar equipment were moving frantically in every direction. I had never seen military activity on such a vast scale, and to me the whole place seemed abandoned to utter confusion. The prospect of having responsibility for this chaos was terrifying."

Unlike the practice in a little battalion, no one here seemed to expect Thimayya or even to notice him.

When he entered the Ops office, however, an English colonel jumped up, exclaiming, "Thank God, you've come!"

Thimayya's first reaction was that the mess outside must be even worse than he imagined, so that his help was desperately needed. He found, however, that he was wrong. Colonel Smith, whom he was replacing, was bored with his job and had been waiting impatiently for Thimayya so that he could go back to his own battalion.

Moreover, Thimayya learned that the traffic outside, far from being confused, was moving with miraculous efficiency. Smith sat with him until three the next morning. He explained to Thimayya in detail the maneuver which the division was practicing. He showed Thimayya the hundreds of orders he had written—orders that accounted for every unit and defined its scheduled movement down to the tiniest detail. It seemed impossible that one human head could retain that mass of information.

Smith also gave personality sketches of the men with whom

Thumayya would deal. The division commander, General Davies, he said, was a good man but apt to have intense likes and dislikes of people. The G-1 was a good type and would act as a buffer between Thumayya and the old man, but unfortunately he was to be replaced soon by a jerk. Finally, Thumayya learned which of the G-3's would help him and which were stupid, which of the brigade commanders were fussy old women and which were the general's pets. Then Smith slapped Thumayya on the back and left.

Fortunately, General Davies was off checking on the exercise, and Thumayya had a few days at headquarters to find his way around before the commander returned and called him. The general was emaciated, with a lined, haggard face and unfriendly eyes. "You're Thumayya, eh?" he said. "What do you know about staff work?"

"I never did it before, sir," Thumayya said.

'No experience at all, eh?' the general replied. "Well, maybe we'll get some original thinking around here." He stalked off.

Thumayya saw that he was going to have trouble again. By chance, he had read a file of correspondence between General Davies and Army H Q about his appointment. The general had a G 3, an Englishman, who was competent and who had worked with the general for years. The general wanted to promote this captain to the post Thumayya now held. The Indian Army, however, had a strict rule that a G 2 could be appointed only by Army H Q and that he must have passed through the Staff College. The Englishman lacked this qualification, but the general had tried hard to get the promotion anyway. The Chief of the General Staff, Lord Auchinleck, then had sent General Davies "a most imperial rocket." The general was told that Thumayya was highly qualified, that the appointment would stick, and that there was to be no more back talk. "Understandably, therefore," Thumayya said, "my persona was rather non grata on the staff of General Davies, and I knew I was being watched for the slightest mistake."

Luckily, the orders for the present exercise had been drawn up by Smith. As the maneuvers proceeded, Thumayya could follow them through these orders and thus get an idea of the

process. The exercise represented an advance and a retreat of the division along a network of bad roads such as would be found in Burma. By now the withdrawal was in progress. Thousands of troops and hundreds of vehicles had to be moved back along three routes to a central point. Dividing the division into three parts, getting each part started on time and moving on schedule so as to arrive at base when the preparations for receiving it had been completed seemed infinitely complicated. Thimayya studied it day and night, however, and by the time the exercise was over he began to see some light.

The next exercise involved the moving of divisional headquarters. The H Q was divided into separate units, each with its own drill and transport. At a signal, the H Q could be dismantled, loaded, and on the road in 25 minutes. An advance party arrived at the destination in time to prepare the new location. Thus when the main body arrived, the H Q could be re-erected and fully operative within another 25 minutes. Thimayya was given this drill as his first assignment. He studied it with the utmost care. He checked and rechecked the orders before issuing them.

But without the manual, it was too complicated for him to keep every detail in his head. Just before the exercise began, the general called him over and asked him where "E" group concentrated. Thimayya said that he did not know exactly but that every individual had orders and knew where to go. Thimayya added that the exercise would move on schedule.

This was not good enough. The general began shouting at him. "I told you that you were to bloody well know everything about this drill, why the hell haven't you learned it?" he wanted to know.

Thimayya nearly lost his own temper. He walked away to keep from speaking.

The move, however, was made on schedule. The exercise went along smoothly—until the general got lost.

Every officer had a copy of Thimayya's map, which indicated the route. The crossroads were clearly marked on the map. On the roads themselves were signs and even M P's to signal the proper turns. The general, with his G-1, preceded the main column. About ten miles down the road, he should have made a

right turn. He failed to see the sign or the frantically waving MP and went sailing down the highway toward Bangalore. Behind him, the Intelligence G-3 merely followed the general's car. Thumayya was next, and of course he made the correct turn. He arrived at the location, and the HQ was erected in the prescribed 25 minutes. Fifteen minutes later the general arrived, frothing at the mouth. "He tried to blame me for the mistake," Timmy said. "Again I managed to keep my mouth shut. I accompanied the general on the inspection, and although no further fault was found I made up my mind to leave."

Later, Thumayya saw the G-1 and told him that he wanted a transfer.

"The G One had arrived two days before to replace the experienced man," Timmy said. "This new G One was an odd little creature with effeminate mannerisms that became more pronounced when he was upset. He was always picking at an absurd little mustache, as though amazed at himself for having produced anything so virile."

"Please, please, don't bring me more trouble," the G 1 said to Thumayya. "I simply couldn't *stand* it—not today when the general has a *liver*."

"Blast his bloody liver," Thumayya said. "I refuse to be bullied by any general for any reason. Get those papers."

Thumayya walked out and returned to his quarters. He began packing. He told his orderly to be ready to move out at short notice. An hour later, he received a message saying that the general wanted to see him. "Here ends my short happy life with the army brass," he thought as he followed the aide.

The general was sitting at a desk, sipping a *chota peg* and reading a newspaper. "Sit down, Thumayya, and have a drink," he said gruffly.

Thumayya obeyed. He sat stiffly on the edge of the chair. He accepted the glass from the orderly, but he did not drink.

The general shook out his newspaper and peered at Thumayya. "I understand you were upset about what happened this morning," he said.

"So much so that I do not want to stay here," Thumayya replied. "I'm prepared to chuck my commission."

"That's a bit drastic, isn't it?" the general asked

"What happened this morning was not my fault," Thumayya said "Quite frankly, sir, it was yours "

"Was it indeed, by God," the general said

"From the day I arrived, I obviously was unwelcome here If you don't want an Indian on your staff, that's okay with me I'll leave "

The general put down his newspaper "Thumayya, I've served my whole life in the Indian Army," he said "I've got nothing either for or against Indian officers "

"Then it must be me personally," Thumayya said.

"I'll tell you what I think of you personally," the general said, leaning forward "You have an inflated opinion of yourself, and you're too damned sensitive You fancy you can lead this division better than I When you find you can't, your tender little feelings are hurt You want to run off and hide "

Thumayya blinked Then he found that he could not suppress a smile The general's picture of him seemed so fantastic "I suppose I am being difficult," Timmy admitted. "At least you're honest "

"I'm also being honest when I say that you *are* a good officer," the general said, adding, "You can leave if you want, but I'll be happy if you stay "

Thumayya found that the air had cleared He took a drink of the whisky and-soda "In that case, sir," he said, "I would like to give it a try "

A few days later, the division moved into the Nilgiris mountains for "Exercise Malabar " The men were to practice moving the unit along a narrow hill road against another division approaching from the opposite direction This required a great deal of staff work, and both the G-1 and Thumayya had to see the general constantly

The G-1's habit of picking at his little mustache began to get on the general's nerves The more the general complained about it, the more the G-1 picked and fluttered Finally, the general couldn't stand the sight of the G-1, and Thumayya alone was called in

"I began to appreciate that the general was isolated by his

rank and was under the strain of many responsibilities," Timmy said "The general was a lonely man with no one to share the burden of his job. He began by asking my advice on matters directly concerning the Indian troops and officers. Soon he was calling me in when he made his appreciations. He thought out loud, talking at me and using me as a sounding board for his ideas. Finally I got a glimmer of the process of his thinking. I began increasingly to know what the general would want done. Eventually I realized that the general was a brilliant soldier. Learning to think as he did, therefore, was invaluable experience."

By the end of Exercise Malabar, Thimayya knew all the other officers in the brigades and in the H Q. Friendship had developed among every one of them. The morale of the 25th Division was superb, and the men now were ready to face the enemy.

At this time, the Japanese were mounting their counter-offensive in Kohima and Imphal. The 5th Indian Division was taken back, and Thimayya went in with the 25th Division, which was the replacement.

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CHAPTER XII

MAUNGDAW

The 25th Division entrained at Madras. The long journey to the front took the men first along India's sandy, palm-studded east coast. After Calcutta, the long trains pushed through the red clay, the paddy fields, and then the jungles of Bengal. From Chittagong, the division moved on its own wheels to Maungdaw in Burma. The road was a track cut out of the jungle. The dust was so thick that Thimayya tied a handkerchief across his nose and mouth to keep from choking. After a tropical downpour, the road was an impassable bog.

The 25th changed places with the 5th Division a brigade at a time. One of the 25th's three brigades moved down and took over a position held by a 5th Division brigade, which then withdrew up the dusty L of C (line of communication). Another of the 25th's brigades moved down, looking smart and eager. They had fresh equipment and clean uniforms. As they passed the withdrawing 5th Division men, they called cheery greetings to the veterans. These tough heroes of the Abyssinian and North African campaigns laughed at the replacements. "Wait till you see what you're getting into," they said.

That began a fear complex which gripped the forces in the Arakan. Their route was south along Burma's west coast. To the east, a few miles from the coast and running parallel to it, was the Mayu Range, a line of hills covered with jungle. Farther east, beyond the Mayu Range, was a valley down which the 26th Division was moving parallel to the 25th toward the valley town of Buthidaung. The 25th Division's base at Maungdaw on the coast was parallel with Buthidaung across the hills and in

the valley. The towns were connected by an east west road that crossed the hills and at one place penetrated them in a series of tunnels.

The Japanese were in Butudaung and were strongly dug into the tunnels. Also the enemy was able to control the spine of the Mayu Range all the way to the north. Thus, between the 25th Division moving down the coast and the 26th Division moving down the valley, the Japanese could move up secretly along the ridge, swoop down the slopes through the jungle, and attack either the coast or the valley at any point they chose. The Indian troops never knew when they might find the enemy behind them, cutting off their L. of C from Chittagong. Finally, the enemy in the tunnels were so well fortified that attempts to dislodge them had resulted in fearful losses. Thus the position of the Indian troops was insecure and the Japanese kept them jittery. The enemy, from positions atop the Mayu Range, could watch their every move. The Japanese struck whenever the Indian forces appeared off guard.

They struck brutally just after the 25th Division arrived in Maungdaw. Thumayya was with General Davies' party while the general inspected a battalion of the Mahratta Light Infantry who were taking over a position from a 5th Division battalion in the hills just below the tunnels. The general stopped to rest on a hill-top, he sat on a log to chat with the Mahratta C O. Thumayya suddenly heard a swish, a loud bang, and then the whistle of shrapnel. A shell had landed 30 yards away. The general continued chatting as though nothing had happened. Seconds later, another shell landed, this one 20 yards away. The Mahratta C O persuaded the general to take shelter in a trench.

"Taking his cue," Thumayya said "I leapt into another trench with an alacrity that came from years of hockey playing. In my seventeen years of service, except for some sniping in the Fort Sandeman area, I had never been under fire. I had often wondered how I would react to it. I found now that my trench had another occupant. He was a *jawan* with a big grin, he seemed delighted to see senior officers being shot at and in the undignified position of scrambling for cover. The shells were falling faster now, and overhead the air seemed full of bursting metal.

I hugged the wall of the trench. The *jawan* laughed. He told me that this shelling was nothing and that it happened all the time. I learned that the *jawan* was a sweeper from the 5th Division battalion. The *jawan* was so casual about the shelling that I was able to overcome my fear. It seemed a delightful piece of whimsy that despite all my military experience I should learn from a poor sweeper how to behave under fire."

Meanwhile, although Thumayya did not know it, a Japanese sortie was creeping through the jungle toward the Mahrattas' position. When the shelling stopped, the general's party continued back to the base. The Mahrattas, however, hot and dusty from their journey, left their position and went down to a stream to bathe. They were untrained in jungle warfare or they would have known better. The enemy caught them in the stream and opened fire with automatic weapons, grenades, and mortars. A British officer, two JCO's, and over a hundred of the Mahrattas were killed. The rest of the battalion was driven from the position. The next morning, the demoralized survivors streamed into the Maungdaw base.

The survivors were made into the reserve battalion that guarded Division HQ. The 8th Hyderabad, who had been in that post, were sent to recapture the hill feature. They succeeded, but their losses were more than a hundred men.

Losses thereafter were less, but they were constant. For the present, the 25th Division was to undertake no major operations. The men were to hold their positions until the 26th Division, moving down the valley on the other side of the Mayu Range, could neutralize Buthadaung and bottle up the far end of the enemy held tunnels. Nevertheless, orders had to be made out for almost constant patrols to ensure that the Japanese were not building up for an offensive at any point on the front.

The front held by the 25th Division was three-cornered. The base was at Maungdaw village, where one of the division's three brigades was stationed in reserve. Another brigade was ten miles east of the village in the Mayu hills in front of the tunnels. The third brigade was at the base of the hills 12 miles south of the tunnels. This unit was to prevent the enemy from coming out of the hills to the coast and pushing up on Maungdaw from the

south. The area within this three brigade triangle was hilly and thickly forested. Nevertheless, the Japanese could keep the entire triangle under observation. The 25th Division men on the other hand, despite two observation planes, rarely spotted enemy activity. Thus the Indians could keep in contact with the enemy only by constant patrolling.

At Division H Q, Thimayya and the other officers settled down to a monotonous existence. They lived in what had been Maungdaw's police lines. The quarters were primitive but comfortable. In the "A" mess, the general kept only the officers he needed every day. Besides Thimayya and the fluttery G-1, these included the general's A D C, Captain Edelshain, a charming young Londoner who was fond of the old man and took good care of him, a fiery old brigadier who commanded the artillery and some magnificent profanity, a signals colonel who was withdrawn and scholarly, the A Q (quartermaster), who was just the opposite—a big extrovert named F L Roberts—and finally General Sharma, the medical director and the only other Indian in the mess.

General Sharma was called the "father" of the mess. All the officers, including General Davies, loved him. Sharma was a little old fellow whose sun helmet always seemed to slip down over his ears. He was a devout Hindu and fearless. He would walk about in the open during heavy shelling, indifferent to his safety, as he inspected the medical facilities. The officers in the mess were an odd assortment, but they were held together by their affection for General Sharma.

Sharma spent more and more time with General Davies. At first Thimayya could not face the fact that General Davies was going to pieces. It was tragic that the man who had led the division so brilliantly in training should begin to break up when he finally had the chance to lead it into combat. He was cracking under the strain of too many responsibilities. Physically, he was getting ulcers, and he was drinking too much. He suffered bilious attacks during which his temper was uncontrollable. In the evenings, after he had had a few whiskies, he was pleasant for a while. He would play darts or bridge with his staff. But soon he developed insomnia. The slightest unexplained noise set him

off into fits of shaking, and the staff spent much time reassuring him that everything was all right. During this period, he would call Thumayya to his quarters and talk to him most of the night. Thumayya was getting little sleep himself, and the strain also began to tell on him.

Fortunately, Thumayya did not endure the strain for long. He had been made a lieutenant colonel, and his turn to command a battalion was coming up. The brigade, which was at the foot of the hills southeast of the H.Q., contained the 8th Battalion of the 19th Hyderabad Regiment, thus was the one he had helped to raise in Agra. It was now commanded by Colonel Gibbs. According to custom, Thumayya would serve as Gibbs' No. 2 for a few months before taking command himself. Thumayya knew that Gibbs was getting shaky. As soon as Thumayya was promoted, therefore, he applied to rejoin the battalion. "In an officer's career," Timmy said, "no post is more satisfying than command of a battalion. Junior officers look forward to it eagerly, and generals recall it wistfully. Thus I was excited at having at least partial command of the battalion in combat."

Thumayya approached the Battalion H.Q. late in the afternoon. His jeep got entangled with a mule convoy. While they were stopped, the alert Japanese began shelling them. Several mules were killed before everyone found cover. The barrage was heavy and was concentrated also on the Battalion H.Q. area. Thumayya had just started toward the H.Q. again when an ambulance jeep approached. It contained Colonel Gibbs. The C.O.'s arm had been nearly severed, but he was still conscious. He told Thumayya to take over command of the battalion. He gave a few words of advice, and wished Thumayya luck. "I felt first a marvelous thrill of pleasure at having full command of the battalion," Timmy said "but then a sense of responsibility settled on my back like a heavy burden."

At the Battalion H.Q., Thumayya found the men still stunned from the barrage. They had been caught unawares. The Japanese shelled the position every day at exactly 1830 hours. Everyone knew the routine. At six, a rush for baths and food began, and a half hour later everyone was in the bunkers. Today, however, because of the tangled mule convoy, the firing began 15 minutes

early, when many of the men were still in the open, Colonel Gibbs, however, was the only casualty

At the H Q , Thumayya was greeted pleasantly by the adjutant, a stooped, gray haired, nearsighted Englishman Thumayya learned that the man was a coffee planter from Mysore Thus Thumayya and he had much in common, and they knew some of the same people He was popular and Thumayya liked him, but the man was *hopeless as an adjutant* Thumayya had to explain every administrative detail, and often the telling took longer than doing the job himself Nevertheless, Thumayya found little else to do at the front, and he preferred keeping busy

His first job was to meet the men in his battalion The four companies occupied positions that formed a south-curving arc several miles across with the H Q at the center of the chord

Thumayya first visited B Company, the Jats, who were at the western end of the arc The company was in the safest position, in fact it was out of touch with the enemy, and Thumayya was curious to know why It seemed to him that the company should fortify some weak point in the front to the east and south, at the least, the men should be near his H Q as reserves

Thumayya found that the Jats were demoralized—so much so that for the present they were incapable of fighting Even if ordered on patrol, they would merely go out of sight and return two hours later with nothing to report At this time, the Jats in many battalions were causing trouble, there was even talk of replacing them with another unit "This surprised me," Thumayya said, 'because I knew that the Jats could be magnificent fighters What was eating at them?'

"In B Company, Timmy said, "one fact was immediately apparent the Jats hated their company commander The commander was a tough Australian, but he had bluster rather than authority The Jats required good leadership to bring out the best in them, and the Australian was not a good leader Nevertheless, this by itself could not account for the company's sorry state"

"I talked to the Jats all morning" Thumayya continued 'Finally I perceived an *undercurrent of conflict* between the East Punjab and the U P Jats I suspected also that J C O 's had been aggravating this conflict with nepotism, favoritism, and graft.

I could do nothing immediately, but I determined to get at the bottom of it”

Next Thimayya visited A Company, which held the extreme eastern end of the arc. The men here were Ahirs. The company commander, a young Englishman named Roy Pead, seemed a good officer and the men liked him. The morale was excellent, even though the company endured nightly attacks from the enemy.

The A Company protected the left flank. Except for mule drivers, mortar men, signalers, orderlies—anyone who had no specific task and who was used to protect H Q—no reserves were available. The Ahirs therefore had a heavy responsibility to hold their position. In front of them, the ground dropped away sharply, leaving a ‘dead’ area into which they could not shoot. Every night, the Japanese crept into this area to lob grenades and mortar shells into the Ahirs’ position. Moreover, the L. of C was under enemy observation and was shelled whenever there was movement on it. Thus, all supplies to the company had to be laboriously manhandled. Cooking fires could not be permitted even during the day, warm food had to be brought in hot containers two and a half miles from Battalion H Q. The Ahirs had been living under these conditions for two months. Thimayya arranged that, during the day, ten men at a time could return to Battalion H Q for baths and rest. This gave them some relief, but it was far from enough.

Finally, Thimayya visited C and D Companies, which fronted the battalion’s position south of his H Q. Both companies contained Kumaonis and were well officered. These companies were under a worse strain than even the Ahirs. The Kumaonis were pushed up as close as they could get to the northern wall of a 400 foot hill. On the hilltop, 250 Japanese were dug in. By clinging close to the vertical wall, the Kumaonis were in the ‘dead’ spot for the enemy above. Any movement back from this spot, however, brought immediate fire.

By occupying the top of this one hill, a small enemy force could harass every position held by the battalion. If the Hyderabads had this hill, however, the Japanese would be forced back all the way to the top of the Mayu Range. Their observation

would be difficult and their shelling less accurate. The Hyderabadis would be able to spot any daytime forays in time for adequate preparation. Above all, the strain which the men endured would be less.

"If I attacked the hill, however," Thimayya said, "the battalion would take heavy casualties. Also, our orders were that the battalion was only to hold the position. But men were being lost daily, and tension was piling up. To me, the idea of spending casualties all at once in order to earn release for everyone seemed cheaper in the long run."

Thus, when Thimayya returned to his H.Q., he telephoned his views to the brigade commander. The brigadier could not countermand the orders against offensive action, but he gave Thimayya permission to discuss the matter with the division commander. Thimayya convinced General Davies that an attempt to take the hill would be worthwhile.

An hour later, however, the general called back to tell Thimayya that the Hyderabadis could not participate in the attack. The brigade contained a British battalion. Lately, feeling had developed that only Indian troops were getting the dirty work, to counteract this, the division commander decided to use the British troops against the hill. Thimayya was disappointed, but the main objective was to capture the feature.

He telephoned the British battalion C.O. and offered to help, after all, Thimayya's men had been under the hill for several months and knew every detail of the situation. A supercilious English voice replied, however, that Thimayya needn't bother. "We can manage by ourselves, thank you very much."

"And to hell with you too," Thimayya said after ringing off. Three sides of the enemy held hill were almost vertical and were covered with thick vegetation. On the west side facing the coast, however, the hill was approached by a gentle incline comparatively free from brush. This seemed the logical access. The British battalion planned to attack up this incline. They made their approach at night, intending to attack at first light.

As they moved into position, they should have been quiet. The Hyderabadis, however, could hear them easily, this meant that the Japanese also heard them. Worse, the British seemed to

fear the Hyderabads more than the enemy To ensure that the Indian troops would not fire on him by mistake, the colonel kept calling out that he was arriving Listening to the voice in the dark made Thumayya sweat with fear for the Englishmen, but the enemy refrained from a night attack

In the traditional manner, the British C O had ordered a preliminary shelling of the hilltop Thumayya already knew that the Japanese were so well dug in that the barrage would serve only as final confirmation of the impending attack.

"I had a perfect view of the attack," Timmy said "I saw two British scouts leave cover and make their way up the slope Half-way up, a short burst of machine gun fire from the crest killed them Then a platoon commander shouted, 'Charge' and twenty more British soldiers appeared Another burst of machine gun fire killed them all The English C O now had had enough and ordered withdrawal The battle had lasted ten minutes "

"Two hours later," Timmy said, "I received via telephone from General Davies a most imperial rocket I had let him down I had misinformed him about the strength of the hilltop I had gone off half-cocked I had shown bad judgment I was responsible for the deaths of twenty two men I asked to be allowed an attempt to take the hill but was flatly refused "

Thumayya was right to think that his reputation was irrevocably ruined In the corps' evaluation of the attack, the word of an experienced British commander would be weighted against that of a newly appointed "native" C O , there could be no doubt about whose opinion would be accepted Thus, at the moment when Thumayya was given full command in the field, he was credited with a blunder Henceforth no commander would willingly give him responsibility, a commander could not afford to take a chance with someone who supposedly had failed in a matter of basic judgment

And yet Thumayya could not believe the failure had been his He was sure that the British C O had gone about the attack in the wrong way Thumayya could prove that he was right and that the English colonel was wrong, however, only by disobeying orders and taking the hill with his battalion.

"This would mean a terrible risk," Timmy said "If I failed I

was sure to be court martialed. Even if I took the hill but with many casualties, I would be finished. Nevertheless, in my judgment, the hill could be taken cheaply. If I was wrong, I had to know it now, otherwise I would never be sure of myself again. If I did lack judgment, I deserved to be removed from command. In any case, my situation could not be worse than it was, and I decided to take the risk."

Thimayya began with a reconnaissance of the hill's three vertical sides. Two places were found—one on the north wall and the other on the south—where an ascent to the top might be possible. The Kumaonis, being mountain men, probably could make the climb. The problem was to prevent warning the enemy with unavoidable noise of the climb.

To solve this problem, Thimayya thought that artillery might be useful. Trying to neutralize the hilltop with shelling was pointless. If a barrage was kept up most of the night on the Mayu Range, however, the Japanese might think that a push was planned in that direction. The noise might blanket the sound of the climbing Kumaonis.

Finally, Thimayya knew that the Japanese expected attacks to come at first light. Thus he decided that the attack would have to take place at night.

Early one evening, Thimayya gathered the Kumaoni commanders and JCO's and explained his plan. He cautioned the men to sling their rifles and depend instead on their deadly *kukri* knives. He also called in the Jats, he wanted to give them some feeling of participation, and he also wanted reserves. Finally, he prohibited the use of radio signaling, this could be intercepted too easily, and even if his men did get into trouble, he would not be able to send them help in the dark.

"At twenty three hundred hours," Timmy said, "the Kumaonis pushed off into the jungle, moving silently, in single file. I looked at the face of each man. I had a sinking feeling as I wondered if I would see those faces again. Thereafter, I spent the time studying my watch. At midnight the men were to be in position, ready to start climbing when the barrage opened up. The guns began on time and kept up a steady racket until four thirty A.M., when the Kumaonis were expected to reach the top and begin

their attack. The barrage ceased, but no sounds of fighting came from the hilltop. The hands of my watch crept on, and I was beginning to panic. Still no sound came from the hill. Five o'clock passed, and the sky began to lighten. "In God's name what is *happening*?" I thought.

"A few minutes later," Timmy said, "the silence was ripped apart by the scream of '*Hanuman ki jai*' our battle cry, from several hundred throats. There followed the bursts of hand grenades. The shouting and explosions went on for half an hour. In my excitement, I climbed a tree to get a better view. Then three flares arched up—red-green-red, the success signal! Now I could see the Kumaonis running all over the top of the hill and coming down the west slope. I could wait no longer. I took the Jats with me up the west approach where we met the jubilant Kumaonis. My first question was 'How many men have we lost? To my amazement not one of our chaps had been killed. Two had received slight wounds, but they were not incapacitated. Everywhere I saw Japanese bodies.'"

Thumayya learned that the attack had gone off like a practice exercise. The men had climbed carefully and silently. At 4:30 they had reached the top and had crawled through the underbrush. Both companies met in the center without finding the enemy. Rather than blunder around in the dark, they decided to wait where they were until first light.

When the sky lightened, one company moved eastward. They found that the Japanese had bored tunnels into the eastern end just under the hilltop. The Kumaonis threw smoke and H.E. grenades into the tunnels from above. As the Japanese ran out, they were decapitated one at a time by the Kumaon *kukris*.

Meanwhile, the other company had moved westward toward the slope. Here they found two Japanese machine gun posts. The gunners were scuppered before they knew that the Kumaonis were upon them.

About a hundred Japanese got away through an escape tunnel. Most of them managed to return to the main enemy positions. Another 30 escaped into the Allied part of the jungle and were mopped up. But over a hundred Japanese had been killed, mostly by *kukris*. It was a real victory.

Thumayya ordered the Kumaonis to dig in for a two-company

position on the hilltop. Then he took the Jats and hurried back to his H Q. On the skyline to the east, the Ahurs were waving and shouting themselves hoarse. The men at battalion H Q were wild with joy. Brigade, who had heard the barrage, was on the telephone wanting to know what all the excitement was about. Thumayya had given orders that no one was to report anything until he returned. He took the receiver from the adjutant and told the brigadier about the victory. At first the brigadier was incredulous. "Good show," he said then. "Oh, jolly good show! I must signal this to Corps."

Not long after, Thumayya received a call from the corps commander, who congratulated Thumayya warmly. He said that in the entire corps so many Japanese had never been killed in one engagement before.

"Minutes later," Timmy said, "I got the call I had been dreading—one from General Davies in Division H Q. Despite the success, I had disobeyed orders, and the general might take a dim view. 'I'm coming out to congratulate you in person,' the general said, and I could tell from his voice that everything would be all right. I was vindicated. I felt sick with relief."

General Davies made Thumayya take him to the hilltop and describe the battle. He complimented Thumayya on the tactics and made no mention of the fact that he had prohibited the attack. As the general was leaving, however, he said, "You took a big chance, Thumayya. You had a close call."

Thumayya said nothing.

"You're one of the lucky ones," the general added, and drove away.

Thumayya remembered again what the sergeant major at Sandhurst had told him about luck—"It's the most important quality a soldier can have."

Thereafter the entire division felt that its luck had turned. Morale rocketed, and the fear complex about the Japanese disappeared. "The enemy was formidable only because he was willing to take so many losses," Timmy said. "Thus to defeat him took a lot of killing, but once this had been done he had nothing left to fight with. Our troops no longer doubted that they could kill enough Japanese to defeat the enemy."

In the Hyderabad battalion, however, the Jats were more de-

pressed than ever. The Kumaonis were covered with glory, and of course the Ahirs had been performing magnificently for months. The Jats felt that they were disgraced. Thumayya began spending an hour with them every day. When he could, he replaced their Australian commander with a good officer. When Thumayya had sufficient evidence against the grafting JCO's, he cracked down and the offenders were returned to India. At the same time he was reminding the men constantly of their historic valor, trying to re-awaken their pride.

Finally, Thumayya used them in an experiment to increase the efficiency of the battalion's patrolling. It seemed to him that the patrols were too large—often as many as ten men—and that they were sent out to cover too much territory. Sometimes they were ambushed by enemy patrols. Thumayya wanted to try three- or four-man patrols which would go to designated places, hide, and report what they saw on the trails. Thus, they would be likely to get more information about enemy movements, and would be in a better position to do some ambushing of their own. Thumayya tested the theory with the Jats. It worked well, and after the Jats had dispatched a few enemy patrols, they began to think better of themselves. Their self-confidence improved.

Also improved was the state of everyone's nerves. With the Hyderabad on the hilltop, the enemy's shelling became inaccurate. The men could move about freely, and the casualty rate dropped.

In fact, the only real source of casualties was the nightly forays against A Company. The Ahirs were getting insufficient sleep, which was affecting their health. Thumayya observed that the Japanese would creep silently into the 'dead' spot. At a signal, they began a fearful racket with firecrackers and drums. The Ahirs would open fire, shooting in the direction of the sound. This revealed their position and gave the enemy the targets they wanted.

Thumayya could not get the Ahirs to cut down on their shooting. They were too jittery to control it. Finally, he decided on a dangerous gamble. He issued only five rounds to each man. He told them they would get no more for the night. They had

enough ammunition to kill five hundred Japanese, if they held their fire until they were sure of targets. But if they shot off everything at the first sound of the enemy, they would be defenseless.

"That night I was as nervous as when I waited for the Kumaonis' attack on the hill," Timmy said. "Although the Ahirs did not know it, I had ammunition ready in case they got into real trouble. The Japanese came at two A.M. They fired their crackers, beat their drums, and yelled like madmen. The Ahirs, however, did not fire a shot. The enemy, evidently confused, withdrew. Not one mortar shell or grenade had hit the A Company position. This convinced the Ahirs more than all my admonitions, and the whole battalion began holding its fire better."

Next Thumayya tried to find means of discouraging the enemy forays. The trails used by the Japanese to approach the position were found. Ambushes along these trails were set up. This meant that some of the Ahirs got no sleep at all. Soon, however, they were killing Japanese in large numbers, and the forays became less frequent.

Such tactics reduced the strain under which the men were living, but enough sleep was still a problem. Daytime forays were rare, Thumayya therefore instituted "silence hours." At designated times, all work ceased, no telephoning and no movement were permitted. The men had to be in bed. This helped, but what the men really needed was to get away from the front for several days at a time. This was not practicable, however, because the battalion had no reserves.

"Nevertheless," Timmy said, "I established what was laughingly called a rehabilitation center in the rear, well away from the shelling. Bamboo huts were constructed to accommodate about fifteen men. Crude but workable showers were improvised from perforated petrol tins. Thus, with plenty of soap, and hot water, the men could get themselves thoroughly clean and allow their sores and bites to heal. I saw to it that the beds were comfortable so that the men could sleep soundly. In the daytime, they could have nonstrenuous games and read books. A gramophone and a radio were installed so they could hear good music and tune in on the troops' hour from Delhi. Personal messages

to be broadcast frequently to the units were arranged "The father of Lance Naik (Lance Corporal) Kuldeep Singh sends a message,' the announcer might say 'The buffaloes are doing well. The rains have filled the watering places. The village is fine . . .'"

The men were rotated so that those who needed relaxation the most could get about five days a month in the center. This did wonders for the troops. Thumayya's chief concern now was their nutrition. Fresh milk was the basis of their diet, but in Burma they were getting almost none. Eventually the deficiency would affect their health, but there seemed little he could do about it.

Plenty of nutritious kidney soup from America, packed in self heating tins, however, was available. The trouble was that the soup was made from pork or beef kidneys. Pork was taboo to the Moslem Ahirs, and the Hindus would eat no meat. It seemed incredible that anyone could be so ignorant as to order such food for Indians. Yet tons of it were everywhere.

"At the center one day," Timmy said, 'I got ahold of a Jat *subedar* and showed him a tin of the soup. I said that it was something special from America. I pulled the heating mechanism and drank the soup with lip-smacking appreciation. Then as a favor I got a tin for the *subedar*. I talked fast about the heating mechanism so that the *subedar* could not ask what was in the soup. The *subedar* tasted it and agreed that it was delicious. I told him I would use my influence to get more of it for the men in the rehabilitation center. With such a small group I was able to control the situation, and within a few days the men were drinking great quantities of the healthful soup. New batches of men came in every day, the troops already there passed on the taste for the soup to the new arrivals. Soon I could expect the whole battalion to be getting the needed nutrition.

'One day, however, I returned to the HQ and noticed a strange Indian officer wandering about looking purposeful. Fortunately, I happened to ask who he was. The stranger was a 'catering officer,' a kind of kitchen snoop who went around talking to mess officers, suggesting menus and checking on facilities. One look and I recognized the officious type of high-caste Hindu who would be horrified by the soup, he would spill the beans

on my deception I rushed up to the group, shouting orders as though the whole Japanese Army were breaking into the perimeter. Before the catering officer knew what was happening, he was in my jeep and all the way back to Division H Q. It was a close call. I felt that deceiving the men into eating something which their religions prohibited was morally reprehensible, but my conscience bothered me not the slightest. The men were innocent, they suffered nothing spiritually, and physically they showed visible improvement."

Good food, more rest, and less enemy harassment improved the stamina and morale of the men, but Thumayya had a worry about which they knew little. Intelligence reported that the Japanese were preparing to use the I N A Indians against the division. At the time, the reaction of the *jawans* who found themselves in combat with their own countrymen could not be determined. At best, Thumayya figured that the shock of this realization would be demoralizing. He did not know whether he should explain the situation to his men, or whether he should not raise the issue at all, hoping that they would not have to cope with it. In the end he did nothing, and fortunately the I N A. was not used in attacks against them. Occasionally, the I N A. men co-operated in the Japanese psychological efforts. They would tap Allied telephone lines or cut in on the radio. They talked anti-British propaganda. But because their contact under these circumstances was mostly with Allied officers, who knew more than the I N A. did about the war situation, the propaganda had little effect. When this problem ceased to worry Thumayya, he began to look upon this period during which he commanded his own battalion as the most satisfying in his career.

To Thumayya, the most amusing aspect of this period concerned his now well known orderly Ram Singh. "The day I took over the battalion," Timmy said, "I told the *subedar* major I wanted an orderly who was the biggest bonehead in the outfit. I was tired of shrewd orderlies who became expert at intrigue and who used their contacts to wheedle promotions, and favors. The requirements for my comfort called for no intellectual.

"The request was taken seriously, and ultimately Ram Singh, an eighteen year-old Jat from the U P, was produced for my

inspection 'Sahib,' the *subedar* major said proudly, 'here is a man of vast stupidity. He is a veritable monument to ignorance.'

"Ram Singh grinned happily at this compliment. He was huge. He had ox like shoulders topped with a coconut head. The boy had an excellent record as a fighter, but because he was illiterate he had no chance for promotion." He was told that if he became Thumayya's orderly he would never get promoted, in fact he would never get anything but the doubtful pleasure of serving the commander. Nevertheless, he accepted.

"From then on," Timmy said, 'he became my nursemaid. Of course, I often felt that I was Ram Singh's nursemaid. I marveled that a human being could have such low voltage cerebration and still remain mobile. Yet to this day, Ram Singh regards me as slightly half witted. He really believes that I manage to keep going only by the benefit of his ministrations."

Ram Singh learned to minister for Thumayya magnificently. Regardless of the circumstances, Thumayya never lacked good food, a fresh uniform, or a hot bath. Often Thumayya watched, his heart in his mouth, while the orderly walked nonchalantly in the open, carrying a can of hot bath water, through bursting shells and flying shrapnel.

On other occasions, Thumayya felt that Ram Singh was in more danger from him than from the enemy. "Once, for example," Timmy said, "I received a present of a Coorg knife and I wanted to 'blood' it. I went to a forward position where the Japanese made nightly forays. Ram Singh was in the trench with me, sitting bored and sleepy in the corner. Finally, I heard a Japanese creeping closer and closer. I drew my knife, ready to have the enemy's head the moment it appeared over the top. Suddenly Ram Singh jumped up, grabbed a grenade, pulled the pin, and placed the grenade on the top edge of the trench. I threw myself down flat, but the explosion slammed my face into the mud and left my ears ringing for days afterward. Ram Singh merely squatted, and of course the blast had no effect on him whatever. There was not enough left of the Japanese to cut, let alone to blood my knife. And Ram Singh stood there proudly, convinced that he had saved my life. The truth is, he almost lost his own life—and blooded my knife at the same time."

The time for fighting in Burma ended with the monsoon, when the rains made the jungle unfit for human habitation. By an unwritten agreement, both sides withdrew from their forward positions when the monsoon began. As soon as the rains were over, however, both sides raced back to be the first in the line. If one were fast enough, one might claim a feature that had been occupied previously by the enemy.

When the 25th Division withdrew for the monsoon, therefore, Thumayya began at once to toughen his men for the rush back to the line. He concentrated on their physical fitness, marksmanship, and on the self-control that enabled them to hold fire until sure of a target.

Just as his training program was started, he was granted 28 days' leave in India. He joined Nina and Mireille in Bangalore. When he settled into these peaceful surroundings, he realized that he had been under great strain. The days passed blissfully. Nina was perfecting her technique in *Bharat Natyam*, some of Thumayya's happiest times were spent watching her perform her beautiful dances.

When he was in Bangalore, the war in Burma took a favorable turn. The Japanese were being driven back from the Kohima-Imphal area. When the rains finished, the Allied 14th Army planned to take the offensive. In this push, the 15th Corps—of which the 25th Division was a part—was to drive down the Arakan from Maungdaw to Akyab. Then, if possible, the men were to push inland and cut off the retreating Japanese.

Thumayya was excited at the prospect of leading his battalion in a big offensive. Also, when he returned, he found that the training program had been well carried out. The men were in superb condition, eager to take on anything.

Unfortunately, however, General Davies had become an invalid. Shortly after Thumayya returned to Maungdaw, the general was carried from the quarters on a stretcher to a waiting plane. The old man had wasted away shockingly. Everyone knew how disappointed he was not to lead the big offensive. As he was carried past his staff, he turned his head away, but Thumayya saw tears streaming down his cheeks.

He was replaced by Sammy Wood, a British service general.

Thumayya was called back to Division H Q and made temporary G-1. Thus he was responsible for drawing up the orders for the division's part in the offensive. General Wood was a big, balding man, affable and easy going. He was not the soldier that General Davies was, but he left his staff alone. As long as he had a good staff, therefore, he was a good general. Thumayya knew what to do, and it was pleasant to work without the old man breathing fire down his neck.

Just before the offensive began, General Wood asked Thumayya to stay on as the permanent G-1. "I felt, however, that the colonel who would take over the Hyderabad was a bad type," Timmy said. "I remembered from Singapore what havoc a bad C O could play with a good battalion. I did not want that to happen to my battalion when it had just reached perfection. Besides, I wanted the excitement and experience of leading my own men into battle. I explained this to General Wood, who understood. I returned happily to my own H Q."

CHAPTER XIII

BUTHIDAUNG

The first move in the offensive was against the tunnels in the Mayu Range. Thimayya's battalion was not engaged in this battle, which cost many casualties. The Japanese had to be killed to the last man. When the Allies finally entered the tunnels, they found that the enemy had been living in indescribable filth. From the bodies, they could tell that the Japanese had been half starved and ill.

Beyond the tunnels on the way to Buthidaung, Thimayya's brigade was to clear the enemy from the remaining three hills. Thereafter a West African unit would come through and take Buthidaung in the valley.

Each of the battalions in the brigade was assigned one of the hills. Thimayya had the first one, called "Poland." When this had been captured, Lieutenant Colonel L. P. Sen (now Master General of Ordnance in India's Army), commanding a Baluch battalion, was to come through and take the next hill, two miles beyond, called "109." Finally, Lieutenant Colonel Thorat (now G. O. C. in C. Eastern Command) was to take the last hill feature, after which the road dipped down into the valley.

Thimayya was given ten days to capture "Poland." Two hundred Japanese were dug into the top. The hill ran north and south for half a mile. The south and west sides were steep and so thick with vegetation that ascent seemed impossible. The northern slope was gentle, it ascended from the east-west road between the tunnels and Buthidaung. Along this north slope the British had tried repeatedly to take the hilltop, but had always

been stopped with heavy losses Thimayya decided that unusual tactics were called for again

From reconnaissance patrols, he learned some interesting facts about "Poland" The hilltop had no water Thus the enemy sent parties down the east slope to a spring The trail continued on to the east to hill "109," where another concentration of the enemy could quickly reinforce "Poland"

Next, the Japanese were so used to attacks up the north slope at first light that the area was heavily fortified The Japanese would stand to at dawn, ready for action If an attack did not come, they stood down and ate a big meal Thus by nine they were stuffed and ready to rest.

At first Thimayya considered a night attack, but the hill was so thickly forested that his men were likely to get lost Moreover, another aspect of the situation suggested that 9 00 A M was a good time At this hour a mist covered "Poland's" summit, the mist came down a few minutes before 9 00 and was gone by 9 30

Further reconnoitering now paid off A place was found on the south wall where the Kumaoni mountaineers might manage an ascent As before, the difficulty was with the noise the men would make while climbing Thimayya sent a brave boy up the route at night The boy reported that no Japanese occupied the south end of the hilltop, thus the ascent probably could be made without the enemy hearing it

Finally, at this time, a deception unit offered Thimayya its facilities The equipment could amplify the sound of tanks, artillery, and machine gun fire Thimayya's plan began to take form

The first part of the plan required artillery preparation Every day for a week before the attack, "Poland" was shelled from 7 00 to 9 30 A M Thus on the morning of the attack the shelling would seem normal to the enemy

During the night before the attack, C and D Companies, the Kumaonis, circled to the south, climbed the cliff, and crawled northward through the forest close to the enemy bunkers Here they hid themselves until nine o'clock, the zero hour, when the mist was heaviest

Meanwhile, the barrage was hitting the enemy bunkers At

nine, however, the artillery switched from HE to smoke. The Japanese, being under cover, would not know the difference, and the Kumaonis then could move through the smoke shelling and catch the enemy still in the bunkers.

At the same time, diversion tactics would take place on the gentle but fortified northern slope. At zero hour, A Company, the Ahirs, covered by noise from the deception unit, would simulate an attack up the slope as the Japanese had learned to expect. The Ahirs were not to press the attack hard enough to sustain casualties, but they were to be seen, moving energetically, by the enemy.

Next Thumayya employed B Company, the Jats, in a flanking movement. The Jats wanted to be used in an important action so that their bravery would be proved. The Jats circled around the north to the east slope and moved toward hill "109." They were to neutralize "109" and prevent enemy reinforcements from reaching "Poland."

One final small task was planned. HQ wanted a Japanese prisoner and offered a thousand rupee reward for the capture of one. Thumayya ordered *Naik* (Corporal) Man Singh and his squad to make an ambush near "Poland's" waterhole.

That was Thumayya's plan for "Poland." His self confidence was greater than before, and his men were full of fight. He checked and rechecked every detail but could find no weak spots.

"Nevertheless," Timmy said, "the attack did not go off as planned. The Kumaonis made their climb and got into position without being seen or heard by the enemy. At zero hour they left their cover and moved through the smoke shells. Instead of finding the Japanese in the bunkers, however, the enemy was running toward them, and the fighting was hand to hand.

"What had happened was that the Ahirs, intended only for diversion on the northern slope, got carried away. In a burst of enthusiasm they charged up the slope and overran the defenses. They drove the enemy from the bunkers back onto the Kumaoni's *kukris*.

"While the slaughter on 'Poland' was going on, the Jats, who were to neutralize hill '109,' also got carried away. They charged

up the slope and overran the whole feature. More than half the Japanese on both 'Poland' and '109' were killed, and most of the survivors were scattered in the jungle, where later they were easily mopped up. The Hyderabad's casualties were negligible."

They failed, however, in the matter of capturing a live prisoner. "Man Singh and his men hid themselves by the waterhole," Thumayya said. "As expected, when the attack began, a Japanese officer with several men came running down the trail. Man Singh leaped from the ambush, waving his *kukri* and screaming the battle cry. The Japanese officer drew his sword and charged. The officer also was holding a suicide grenade to his chest. Man Singh said that he did no more than touch the officer's head with his *kukri* but I found that the officer's head had been neatly sliced off just above the eyebrows. In any case, the Japanese had been blown apart by the suicide grenade. Thus Man Singh would not have had his prisoner in any case, but I felt that he overestimated the brittle quality of Japanese heads."

As soon as Thumayya saw the success signal go up on 'Poland,' he jumped into a jeep with his orderly, a clerk, and a gunner. The road had not been used for months, and bricks were scattered all over it. He had to zigzag around them, but he got to "Poland's" north slope without a bump. His troops were rushing around, yelling excitedly, and there was much confusion. Suddenly Thumayya felt himself hurled through the air and slammed into a ditch. He stood up and shook himself, his ears ringing from an explosion. Ram Singh and the gunner also were getting up. Thumayya began ordering everyone to cover, but the the gunner shouted, "That was no shell. It was a mine."

They discovered that each of the bricks they had dodged on the road covered the spring mechanism of a mine. They had managed to travel several miles, stop the jeep, and wander about without setting them off. The clerk, however, while passing out drinking water, had pushed aside one of the bricks with his foot. The poor fellow's leg was blown off, and he died later.

"As soon as the road was clear of the mines," Timmy said, "Bogey Sen came roaring up, indignation expressed in every angle of his lean frame. He seemed to feel that I had been

greedy in taking both hills Sen's Baluchis were all keyed up for a crack at the Japs and were disappointed at the anticlimax. He pushed on, grumbling and muttering, to place the Baluchis on the already-captured '109' "

A day later, the last hill was taken by Thorat. These first battles of the campaign went much better than anticipated. The excellent start was good for morale throughout the corps and seemed a good omen for the campaign. The command was pleased. Thumayya was congratulated by brigade, division, and corps. A few days later, he was told that Lord Louis Mountbatten also would congratulate him in person. Mountbatten was touring the front with his staff, American General E. G. Wheeler, and many newspapermen.

When the Supreme Commander's party arrived, the first person Thumayya saw was a tall, elegant officer. "Boy Browning!" he exclaimed. "Imagine seeing you here!"

Meeting him again reminded Thumayya of those days at Sandhurst when Browning was the cadets' ideal of the perfect soldier. *Browning was as immaculate as ever, but somehow he seemed unreal in the harsh reality of the Burma jungle.*

"You must have been with me at Sandhurst," Browning said, grinning. "What a delightful surprise."

A moment later, Lord Louis Mountbatten, big, handsome, and hearty, was shaking Thumayya's hand while photographers took pictures. "Well done, Thumayya," he said. "Good show." Then he turned to the newspapermen. "You see?" he said. "The press says the morale of our Indian officers is low. Look at Thumayya. He's been doing splendidly. Does he appear disgruntled?"

Mountbatten was referring to a recent statement made by American General Stilwell. "Vinegar Joe" had said, in effect, that the Indian officers were demoralized, and he had wanted to know how an army could fight properly under these conditions. His comment had stirred a storm of press controversy, which now Mountbatten was trying to settle.

Later Thumayya ran into more of this controversy when a public relations officer asked to see him. "I sent word that I was too busy," Thumayya said, "but Corps H Q. contradicted me, I

was to find time promptly. The PRO was an Indian and rather apologetic. He asked if he could ask questions about my background. I told him the records would supply it. Then he said he wanted to arrange a ten-day leave for me in Kandy [in Ceylon], where I could broadcast a message about the Indian officers and their part in the war. I agreed to write down my ideas on the subject and give them to the PRO the next day. The day after that, the little man returned with the official ideas of what should be my ideas concerning Indian officers. As the official ideas and mine differed widely, I refused to participate in the broadcast."

In addition, Thumayya did not want to leave his battalion just as the important part of the offensive was getting underway. Buthidaung was taken by the West Africans, and a springboard was now available for the leap down the coast. The 53rd Brigade moved down the river in boats from Buthidaung. The 74th Brigade moved down the coast road. Thumayya's brigade followed in the rear and in reserve. Its duty was to mop up the enemy remaining in the Mayu Range. Thus Thumayya's battalion fought a series of small skirmishes through the mountains.

Just as the drive began, however, the brigadier of the 53rd Brigade felt ill, and Thumayya's brigadier was sent to replace him. Thumayya was given temporary command of the brigade. Thus he personally saw little of the operations.

Despite these operations, the main body of the Japanese was in full retreat. The division pursued as fast as the transport could carry it. The men reached Foul Point even before the boats to take them to Akyab Island were ready. When they reached Akyab, the Japanese had gone, and the mission was completed.

The next mission, however, was to drive inland from a spot down the coast and cut off the retreating enemy. Thumayya's division was assigned to the task. The British Third Commando Brigade secured a beachhead near Myebon on the coast. The division's 74th Brigade followed through, but the enemy escaped. HQ planned, therefore, to cut in from farther down the coast to catch the Japanese at Kangaw.

Brigadier Hutton returned, and Thumayya went happily back to his battalion. Shortly after he arrived, the division commander visited him. The British Commandos, he told Thumayya, were

to secure the new beachhead at Kangaw Thimayya's battalion was to accompany the Commandos as reserves

Previously, the battles in which Thimayya had participated were relatively small Few of his men had been hurt Tactics were an intricate game, and victory was a wonderful excitement.

The battle of the Kangaw beaches, however, had no such pleasant aspects It was filth, exhaustion, savage brutality, and death, it was all the horror of war

CHAPTER XIV

KANGAW

Thimayya and his battalion sailed from Akyab to the mainland aboard a battleship, the *HMS Phoebe*. This was his first experience with the navy, but he was too tired to be interested. Few in the battalion had had much rest for the previous two weeks, and all were filthy from the jungle. As soon as they boarded the ship, they fell to the deck, asleep at once.

Later, the coffee planter adjutant awoke Thimayya. "Sir, the captain sends his compliments," he said, "and wishes you to take the admiral's cabin."

"Leave me alone," Thimayya muttered.

The adjutant, however, kept waking him at intervals with the captain's request. The Royal Navy was indignant because Thimayya was not observing protocol. Thimayya pulled himself up and staggered after a naval officer.

The cabin shown to Thimayya astonished him. The room was richly carpeted. The furniture was elegantly upholstered. The bed looked extravagantly comfortable. Whisky and soda waited on the sideboard. Through an open door he could see a spotless bathroom. He thought he was dreaming. He was too filthy to enter the room, so he stripped in the corridor. Inside he poured himself a whisky and then stretched out luxuriously in a hot bath. He promptly went to sleep again, glass in hand, his head just above water.

Finally the adjutant reported that the captain again sent compliments and a request that Thimayya join him on the bridge. The captain was a typical British Navy type with a red face, solid figure, and a gruff manner but a good heart. The English

man was busy with the intricate process of running his huge vessel. He seemed pleased at Thumayya's interest in his mysterious duties and explained them patiently.

"Why are we maneuvering in this complicated zigzag?" Thumayya asked him. "Why don't you steam straight ahead?"

"Danger of submarines," the captain replied. "If a few shells land on your unit, you might lose ten men, but the same number of shells could knock out hundreds of my chaps and ten million pounds' worth of equipment."

When Thumayya checked on his men, he found that they had become acquainted with the British sailors. His troops had prepared their evening meal and the sailors were curious about the food, sampling *chapattis* and *dahl* (lentils). The Navy men had known the jungle only as a green smear in the distance, but seeing the troops, worn and filthy and covered with sores and bites, gave them an idea of what the soldiers had been through. The sailors were impressed, and a fine spirit of camaraderie developed between them and the *jawns*. The sailors passed out cigarettes and in the morning gave each *jawan* a cup of good tea with milk and sugar and a fresh bun with real butter. It was a great treat for the troops.

As soon as they landed, Thumayya looked for the Commando brigade. It was dark when he found them in a forest. He asked a young private to tell him where he could find the brigade commander. The boy leapt to his feet and snapped a salute. "Sir, I will take you to him," he said.

Brigadier Hardy and his second in-command, Colonel Young, were sitting on a blanket chatting and smoking pipes. The blanket was H.Q. No chairs, cots, tables, files, telephones, or even a red light marked the H.Q. The two officers were so casual that Thumayya could not tell them from the rest of the men.

"Good evening, sir," Thumayya said, saluting. "I'm Thumayya, commanding the Hyderabad. I'm detailed to join your operation tomorrow."

"Glad to have you with us, Thumayya," the brigadier said. He offered Thumayya a whisky and invited him to sit down.

After joining them on the blanket, Thumayya said, "I've come for orders, sir."

"Orders? There are no orders," the brigadier said 'We push off at six You tag along after us at about nine"

'But how many of my companies do you want?' Thumayya asked 'How should I plan the loading of the landing craft?'

Brigadier Hardy pooh poohed such technicalities "No use worrying about details," he said "Tomorrow's op is a shot in the dark We don't know what we'll find We'll figure out what you should do when you get to the beaches"

Hardy was tall well built, and good looking He had yellow hair and a clipped mustache He was in his middle thirties

Colonel Young was shorter, stocky and powerful, with a hard face He looked like a tough soldier, but he was only 28

Both men had the DSO with bars In the talk that evening, Thumayya learned that they and every man in their brigade had volunteered from regiments throughout the British Army They had the Commandos green beret, but each man also wore the badge of his parent battalion They had carried out amphibious operations along the French and Italian coasts The brigade had no administrative tail They carried a minimum of equipment They were trained to capture a beachhead and to hold it for 24 hours After the capture, regular army units moved in to establish the position

'Misuse of the unit by making it fight inland for extended periods' Timmy said, "could mean terrible casualty rates As I listened to these officers, I realized that they were not bothered by the beach landing or even by the fact that nothing was known of the conditions at Kangaw, they were worried that they might be made to fight in the jungles Their men knew nothing of jungle combat If they should be pinned down, their lack of supplies would render them nearly helpless"

Nevertheless the Commandos departed the next morning full of confidence "Watching them embark," Timmy said, 'I realized that they worked differently than our Indian troops Being educated, the Commandos did not need specific orders My men required good leadership and detailed instructions I worried about what might happen if Commando officers should give their casual type of orders to my *jawans* I issued instructions that my men were to take orders from no one but me

"When we set off in the landing craft," Timmy continued, "the battalion was 'tactically disposed', this meant that two companies went first, followed by the H Q, which led the last two companies. When we were out to sea, I received a signal from Brigadier Hardy saying that the landing had been strongly opposed and that our help was needed quickly. As we had no way to make the craft go faster, I could do nothing about it."

They sailed south along Burma's coast. Then they rounded a point and sailed back north up a narrow bay. They were now proceeding parallel to the main coast road several miles inland. The town of Kangaw was on the road down which the main body of the retreating Japanese was due to come within a week. Running eastward toward the road from the north-south bay were a number of *chaungs*, long narrow tidal inlets that reached almost to Kangaw and the road. On a block of land between two of these waterways were the beaches where the Hyderabads were to land. A mile or two inland to the east of the beaches was hill feature "170," which the Commandos had already taken and were holding, despite Japanese counterattacks. Not far north of "170," but across another eastward running waterway, and situated back toward the bay, was an enemy-held hill called "Fingers." From this position, the Japanese could shell both the landing beaches and hill feature "170."

The landing-raft pilots were *jawns* from ordinary infantry battalions. The Indian Army was raising combined ops units, but so far the men had had little training in the specialized techniques. Thus the drivers were inefficient and did not make good time.

Thimayya was 20 minutes behind his lead companies, but when he approached the landing places he saw that these companies had stopped. The tide was coming in, and the water was already into the roots of the mangrove swamp. Up ahead, where they were supposed to land, narrow strips of beach were still clear, but were under shellfire. The pilots, however, were trying to make the men get off in the mangrove roots where there was no beach and, of course, no shelling. Thimayya had to threaten the pilots with his revolver to make them go on. He ordered that, after landing, his men should move off the beaches as

quickly as possible and take up positions away from the shelling on two small hills a few hundred yards inland

"The beaches seemed a solid wall of flying steel," Timmy said, "but miraculously we got through it without a casualty. Not far inland we came upon the Commandos' artillery support. These men also had been taking a terrific shelling. Obviously the enemy guns were so well dug in that they could not be blasted out. The British gunners were slithering around in the mud and their aim was poor. Their morale was low, many of them already had been killed.

"It was now almost four P.M. I found Colonel Young, who ordered me to carry out a night assault on the feature across the *chaung* to the north, the one called 'Fingers', it was from here that the Japanese were harassing both the landing beaches and hill '170'. Colonel Young insisted that 'Fingers' had 'only a few Nips and a couple of machine guns'.

"I replied that I could not undertake such an operation with my men. The *Javans* needed to know precisely where they were going and they required a detailed plan if they were to be used effectively. The colonel objected, but he sent me to '170' to talk it over with the brigadier.

"Hardy also told me to take 'Fingers' that night. He too insisted that the feature was lightly held. I insisted that my company commanders and J.C.O.'s needed to see the hill, study it, and work out an attack plan. The brigadier finally agreed and called for a gunboat, which took my officers and me, a gunner, and Colonel Young farther north up the bay and then eastward into the *chaung*. As soon as the boat came in sight of 'Fingers' on the north bank of the *chaung*, all Asia seemed to break loose. The boat was fired at with everything from pistols to the heaviest artillery. We jumped overboard and swam to the south shore to hide in the jungle. The boat's pilot got the craft out of range just in time to save it. Hardy and Young treated all this as a joke. 'Seems you were right, old boy,' Young said to me, they decided to put off trying to take 'Fingers'."

Meanwhile, the Commandos had been attacking a hill called "Pinna," three miles farther east of "170." In a brilliant maneuver the feature was taken, and 130 Commandos stayed on top

to hold the hill through the night Due north of "Pinna," across the *chaung*, was another enemy-held hill called "Duns," from which the Japanese put heavy fire on "Pinna"

Thimayya stayed that night on "170" with Brigadier Hardy. The brigadier was reclining, smoking his pipe, under a tree that made a perfect target Thimayya went over the edge of the hill and had a cave dug, in which he was safe and comfortable "Damn it, Brig," he called, "come down here out of that muck," but Hardy replied that he was happy where he was

Later, however, he called to Thimayya He pointed east to "Pinna," where the shell bursts from "Duns" could be seen clearly "I've counted over seven hundred shells hitting 'Pinna,'" he said "My chaps must be going through hell Take two companies and relieve them"

Thimayya replied that in the dark the task was impossible, but he sent a patrol to see what was happening The patrol returned to say that the shelling on "Pinna" was so bad they could not get to the top They added that the screams and groans from the wounded Commandos were terrible to hear

"At first light," Timmy said, "I took two companies and hurried to 'Pinna' The Commandos had no tools with which to dig themselves in Moreover, the Japanese used shells that exploded among the trees, raining death on the unprotected men below The scene on that hilltop in the misty dawn was horrible beyond description Dismembered bodies were everywhere My men and I had to step over arms, legs, heads, and unrecognizable parts of human anatomy The pitiful screams from the badly wounded were now less—only thirty of the Commandos were still alive A hundred men had been killed"

Thimayya's men helped the wounded back and buried the dead They were to occupy "Pinna," and Thimayya ordered them to dig, dig, dig That night the enemy on "Duns," across the *chaung* to the north, rained more than 800 shells on the feature, but the unit suffered not one casualty

The next day the rest of the support brigade arrived The Commandos fell back to "170", they were to hold this feature, which was still being shelled from "Fingers" Thimayya was given the task of taking a feature called "Perth"

"Perth" was to the east, across the north south highway To get at "Perth," the men first had to take two hills directly in front to the east and to the southeast Also, "Duns," to the north, had to be neutralized Finally, the town of Kangaw itself, which was on the highway east and north of "Pinna," also had to be taken before the attack on "Perth" could be made

Thimayya began with "Duns" A Kumaoni company crossed the *chaung* and crawled up the hill at night In the morning the men pushed northward along the crest but found few Japanese Still farther to the north, the land dipped and then rose to another hilltop, on which they could see more Japanese Thinking that this distant crest was another feature, the Kumaonis dug in where they were That night they were surrounded by 2,000 Japanese At first light, Thimayya sent in the other Kumaonis to reinforce the first company At dark, both companies were surrounded and again fought all night They suffered many casualties

"I now told the Jats that this was their chance to vindicate themselves," Timmy said "I ordered a bayonet charge That morning the Jats went wild They smashed through the Japanese lines and kept on, using their bayonets until they had taken the whole feature, including the northern ridge I left the exuberant Jats to hold 'Duns,' but I had to bring back the Kumaonis to 'Pinna' The casualties were so heavy that I had to give up the task of taking 'Perth' for the present"

Meanwhile, Colonels Thorat and Sen had been attacking the two hills east and southeast of 'Pinna' They also had many casualties They were lodged halfway up the hills the enemy still above them

The next day, the Japanese, far behind on "Fingers," to the north across the *chaung*, attacked the Commandos back on "170" "I had a perfect view of the action," Timmy said. "I saw the Japanese officers pointing out the way, with swords, to their men The Commandos put up a devastating fire, but the Japanese still came on Then the Commandos, yelling wildly, charged down the hill to fight the Japanese hand to hand I signaled, offering to help, but I was refused Finally I saw the Japanese

remassing for another assault, and I could not resist. I ordered our mortars to open on the closely grouped enemy. It was pure slaughter. I saw the Japanese being killed by the hundreds. The Commandos made another charge. This time the enemy broke, and before dark the entire enemy attacking force was wiped out."

While the enemy were still stunned from this defeat, Thumayya sent a sudden smashing attack on Kangaw village. His men drove out the Japanese and dug in. The Allies now were on the main highway, but just beyond towered "Perth," where the enemy had strong fortifications and could pour down devastating fire.

"Before working on a plan to take 'Perth,'" Timmy said, "I called for one of our bravest *lance naiks*. I ordered him on a fire patrol up the hill. 'Sahib, what is this fire patrol?' the *naik* asked me. 'I know nothing of such things. I want to take hill.' I told him to go ahead.

"I watched the *naik* and twenty men creep expertly up the slope. Suddenly, the platoon turned into maniacs. They leapt from their cover and charged up the hill right into the enemy guns. They threw grenades, and I could see the flashing of their *kukris*. The enemy were demoralized. They left their posts and ran. The *naik* and his men chased the whole enemy force from the hilltop! I saw the *naik* plant the regimental flag on top and then crumple with three bullets in his leg. I was with him soon after, when he was put on a stretcher, still hysterical with delight at having captured the famous hill. He was later decorated and awarded five acres of land."

With the capture of "Perth," the enemy defense collapsed. The remaining Japanese were mopped up and the Allies were ready to meet the enemy's main body retreating down the highway from the north. Part of the Japanese force managed to detour to the east around Kangaw and escape, but their strength was depleted by the attacks from the Commandos and Thumayya's brigade.

The Allied force had had weeks of constant fighting, and the men were exhausted. They were withdrawn to Akyab for a rest before returning to India. The two brigades were placed alongside each other, and they staged celebrations together. Thumayya admired the Commandos, he was as fond of them as of his own

men. They also were impressed with his men, and they presented the Hyderabadists with a green beret, symbolizing that they considered the *jawans* as good as the Commandos.

"One night our brigade invited the Commandos to dine" Timmy said "The Commandos brought their own food. Some of it must have been beef or ham. Nevertheless, our chaps did not hesitate to take bites of the English food while they gave the guests bites of theirs. At the huge banquet the two units were seated with one of the Commandos alternating with one of the *jawans*. I was touched to see these men who came from such different backgrounds but who had grown so close together in shared experience. After dinner, rum was passed around, and the Kumaonis performed their colorful hill dances."

Thimayya headed a party that returned to India to reconnoiter a rest area for the division near Coimbatore. He was just beginning to enjoy his stay in India when he was called back to Burma. He was appointed second in-command of the 36th Brigade which was part of the 26th Division. This brigade was on Ramri Island. Before reaching the island, however, he learned that the brigadier had been removed and that he was the new commander. This was a proud moment for Thimayya, he was the first Indian to command a brigade in the field.

His previous brigade in the 25th Division had contained many Indian officers—indeed all three battalion commanders were Indian—and the unit had become used to them. In this new brigade, however, only a few officers were Indian, so that an Indian commander must have been a shock. Nevertheless, no one was unpleasant about it. The troops seemed delighted, they welcomed Thimayya with much ceremony.

Thimayya learned that three Jat companies in the brigade were giving trouble and he set out at once to find the cause. He had learned that the Jats were easily demoralized by bad leadership. Sure enough, he found that two incompetent British officers and a few corrupt JCOs were the source of the trouble. He removed the cause, and the Jats improved quickly.

Thimayya's first task was to improve and intensify the brigade's training in combined ops. Toughening up drill was increased. The men practiced getting into landing craft and dis-

embarking in the heavy surf of beaches Thumayya introduced techniques he had learned from the Commandos. Before long, he felt that the brigade was becoming efficient. No one told him, however, how his unit was to be used.

One day he learned that within a week he was to make a landing in Rangoon itself. Mountbatten wanted this key city in Burma before the monsoon, so that during the rains the docks could be repaired for a later offensive against Malaya and Indonesia. The drive down Central Burma was not going as quickly as expected, and now the Allied army had little hope of reaching Rangoon before the monsoon. Thus, Thumayya's division was to take Rangoon in an amphibious assault.

For some reason, Allied intelligence could tell nothing about Rangoon's defenses. Monkey Point, where the river met the sea, had heavy gun emplacements. Bombers were to plaster the emplacements, and paratroops were to be dropped nearby to ensure that the guns were neutralized. But if the river banks between the sea and city were fortified, the division faced a bloody battle. With only a few days for preparation, the men felt edgy.

To Thumayya's chagrin, three days before the jump-off he came down with diarrhea. He told his troubles to a doctor, explaining that he had to be kept on his feet until after the operation. The doctor gave him some medicine, but it did no good.

"Finally," Timmy said, "I stopped fooling myself and went to the casualty clearing station. The doctor took one look at me and ordered a couple of tests. Before I knew it, I was in bed. I protested, but the medic said I had acute hepatitis and should resign myself to a long spell in the hospital."

"What happened almost immediately was precisely what I expected. As the one Indian brigade commander in the corps, the senior British officers were not above thinking that 'the native' had gone soft in the face of a big action. Within an hour, both the division and corps commanders showed up. There were whispered consultations with the doctor and a general air of 'bad show, this.' Fortunately, the medic was emphatic that I was not malingering, and by then I was a ghastly shade of yellow. The corps commander was convinced, and now, probably con-

trite because of his previous doubt, was solicitous. He asked if he could do anything for me. I made him promise that when I was fit again I would be returned to my brigade."

Thumayya was still in bed when the operation against Rangoon took place. Overhead, he heard the roar of the bombers that were to plaster the gun emplacements on Monkey Point. Then the paratroopers flew off. He was as depressed as he has ever been in his life.

He felt more cheerful two days later, however, when the news of the action came through. The Japanese had withdrawn from Rangoon ten days earlier, so that the operation met no resistance. Some of the bombers sent to bomb Monkey Point arrived late, but bombed the place anyway, killing a few Gurkha paratroopers who already were occupying the position. Also, a battalion C O who wanted to be the first to enter Rangoon had raced up the river in a speedboat which hit a mine and finished him. These were the only casualties.

Thumayya's brigade was the first to enter Rangoon. The men were amazed to find that the city was held by Indians of the I.N.A. In the enemy retreat, the Japanese were abandoning the I.N.A. After the enemy left Rangoon, the local Chinese population began looting. The I.N.A. men stepped in to restore order, but they were anxious to turn over authority to the Allies.

By a twist of fate, Thumayya's older brother was A.Q. to the I.N.A. forces in Rangoon and was captured by Thumayya's brigade. His brother demanded of the English officer who arrested him that he be taken to Thumayya. The Englishman told him that Thumayya was not there, and added, "Even if your brother *were* here, he would have you thrown into the clink straightaway."

"You are wrong," Thumayya's brother replied. "He would give me a cold beer, a hot curry, and *then* he would have me thrown into the clink."

"My brother knew me, all right," Timmy said. "That is precisely what I would have done."

When he was strong enough, Thumayya was sent to a hospital in Calcutta for 20 days, after which he recuperated in Coorg. Meanwhile, the corps returned to India. When the doc-

tors pronounced him fit, Thumayya telephoned the corps commander's secretary and said that he was reporting back to his brigade the next day. The secretary told Thumayya to wait while the orders were checked. Thumayya had heard rumors that he was not going to be taken back. Sure enough, when he called again he was told not to report to the brigade. "There's a possibility of your being sent to Delhi," the clerk said.

"I was really upset," Timmy said. "I was the first Indian to command a brigade. I had served only a few weeks and then had fallen out before a big operation. If I did not return to my unit, the inference would be that I had proven incapable of a command at this level. My record could be used by the British to indicate that no Indian officer was capable of brigade responsibility. My personal record was clear. The corps commander knew that I had not malingered. But no one else would believe it if I failed to return to my brigade. Thus I demanded to see the corps commander."

"The commander hemmed and hawed. He told me that plans had changed, but I interrupted to remind him of his promise. I was blunt. 'If I've failed in my duty in any way, then say so,' I said. 'I'm either getting my brigade or I'm resigning my commission.'"

The corps commander was sympathetic. When he understood what worried Thumayya, he telephoned someone high up in Delhi—probably Lord Auchinleck himself. The orders for the staff appointment were canceled, and the next day Thumayya was sent back to command his brigade.

"Again I had refused to play unless I could have my own way," Timmy said. "The British must have found me difficult indeed. But I know that if I had not held out, I would have spent the rest of my career growing corns. Worse. I doubt if any Indian would have achieved a brigade command under the British."

Thumayya believed—and probably with reason—that he alone had the chance to prove the capability of Indian officers in field command of units larger than a battalion. He therefore returned to his job, intending to make his brigade an outstanding unit. His brigade was to be part of a scissors operations against the

Japanese in Malaya and Indonesia. Just when his men were reaching perfection, the whole reason for the effort vanished. The Japanese surrendered

"The following week is hazy in my mind," Timmy said "I remember it as one long wild celebration Nina and Mireille joined me to share the fun The Telfer Smoletts arrived, and their parties reminded me of my carefree days in Bangalore with the H L I One of their parties provided the high point of my week's celebration The door opened, and in came General Fitzsimmons He was Telfer Smolett's brother in law, and he had been the Singapore fortress commander who had been so kind to me there He had just been released from a Japanese prison, where he had spent the war years Seeing him there brought the past into focus, and I finally believed that the war was really over For a moment before we all had a joyous reunion, I stood speechless with a lump in my throat.'

A few days later, Thumayya learned that he would participate in the Japanese surrender ceremony in Singapore He flew down to Kandy to the Supreme Headquarters of the Southeast Asia Command 'I found here," Timmy said, "that officially I was known as an 'accelerated promoted acting temporary unpaid brigadier '" Despite the somewhat nebulous quality of his rank, Field Marshal Slim called him in for a pleasant chat Thumayya was told that he had been awarded the D S O Colonels Sen and Thorat also received the D S O The fact that all three battalion commanders in one brigade had been Indian and had received this high decoration was a unique record.

'Later," Timmy said "when I had the medal, I happened to show it to Ram Singh I expected him to be pleased, but instead his face fell In fact, Ram Singh was sullen all the next day When I finally asked him what the trouble was, he said it was the medal 'Why shouldn't they give me the D S O too? he wanted to know 'I've been every place you have ''

The party left Kandy for Singapore in two planes Mountbatten and his group went in one Thumayya flew with Field Marshal Slim's group In Singapore they were put up at Government House, where only officers of brigadier rank and up were quartered 'I was in one room with thirteen other brigadiers,"

Timmy said 'But none of my roommates were recognizable as soldiers, they were PRO types, film unit people, and heaven knows what I left as soon as I could get away'

His younger brother was in Singapore with a beach group battalion of Bihars Thimayya had a reunion with him, and they looked up the battalion Thimayya had commanded, the 8/19 Hyderabad, who also were part of the occupying force Thimayya enjoyed being in Singapore again now that he was a senior officer and not concerned with battalion intrigue He tried to contact some old civilian friends, but he found that most of them had died during the enemy occupation

The surrender ceremony began the next morning Huge crowds collected in the streets They shouted anti Japanese slogans, their pent up hatred was released, and they were avid to see their erstwhile conquerors humiliated At the Town Hall a color guard was drawn up for the Supreme Commander, Mountbatten The staff officers were ushered inside the hall and seated ceremoniously The Japanese were stiff and implacable Their commander was ill and could not attend the ceremony Soon sharp commands were heard, and the color guard saluted Mountbatten entered Everyone stood up until the commander had taken his seat. He read out the surrender terms and asked if the Japanese accepted them The Japanese said yes, and the documents were signed Finally, the Japanese were marched out as prisoners As the Allied officers left, the crowd cheered wildly for Mountbatten

Thereafter, Thimayya visited Allied troops who had been prisoners of the Japanese He accompanied Field Marshal Slim to Changi, the British camp Slim spoke to the Tommies Then he and Thimayya went among them distributing food packets From there they drove to Miesoong an Indian camp "The *Jawans* were in shocking condition" Timmy said "Many could not even speak They greeted us with tears of joy I gave them a talk that made up in sincerity for what it lacked in grammatical Hindustani Slim also delivered a pep talk in even worse Hindu stani'

That evening Thimayya went down to a prison camp on the south coast where his old battalion, the 4/19 Hyderabad,

were held "The men here," Timmy said, "had been treated even worse than at Miesoong, if that were possible. They looked like skeletons. Many were too far gone to know what was happening. Others could only crawl, whimpering, and try to touch my feet. To me, this was the saddest moment of the war. I was not ashamed of my own tears. Some of these men had been with the battalion since my days in Baghdad, seeing them now was like a reunion with members of one's own family."

Mountbatten and Slim flew to other surrender ceremonies in Saigon and Bangkok. Thimayya was asked to go along, but he wanted to get back to his brigade, which was in training again. When he returned, however, he found that he was appointed commander of the 268th Infantry Brigade, which was part of the British Indian Division which, in turn, was part of the British Commonwealth Force intended for the occupation of Japan.

The war was over. "We Indian officers felt the excitement of great expectations," Timmy said. "We knew that we had made a good showing in the war. We no longer lacked confidence. We knew, also, that the British Raj was irrevocably finished. We were impatient for the day when the Indian Army finally would serve its own country under its own leaders."

CHAPTER XV

MATSUE

The British Commonwealth Force for the occupation of Japan was commanded by Australian Lieutenant General Northcote. He had a headquarters unit plus four brigades which came from Australia, New Zealand, India, and Britain. These brigades made up a unit called "Brindiv," commanded by Major General Cowan, an old Gurkha officer.

Thimayya's brigade was composed of the 5th Battalion of the 1st Punjab Regiment, selected because it was Field Marshal Auchinleck's parent regiment, the 1/5 Mahratta Light Infantry, North Africa and Cassino heroes, one of whom had won the Victoria Cross, and the 2/5 Royal Gurkha Rifles, who had two VC's. Thimayya also had an armored-corps regiment, the 7th Light Cavalry.

Brindiv concentrated at Nasik in Central India to train for occupation duties. The men learned how to search for weapons and to fight in villages. Much of the training, however, emphasized ceremonial. New uniforms and equipment were issued, and hours daily were spent on drill.

One day they were rehearsing a parade for a visit from Field Marshal Auchinleck. Thimayya thought the drill was slack. He called the battalion commanders, stated his criticism, and demanded a tightening up. Afterward, in his tent, his orderly reported that a *risaldar* major from the 7th Light Cavalry requested to see him. "The *risaldar*-major was an old Jat," Timmy said. "In a voice trembling with emotion, he told me that never in his long career had he hoped to see anything so glorious as four senior British officers getting hell from an Indian officer. He

added that my rank was a source of pride to his battalion. He wanted to shake my hand.

"Actually, I was surprised more than touched by the NCO's attitude," Timmy continued. "True, his unit had been Indianized only recently, and the men were not used to senior Indian officers. Only a few years before, I myself would have been amazed to know that within so short a time I would be in a position to discipline British battalion commanders.

"But times had changed quickly. In most Indian Army units now, everyone was so accustomed to Indian officers that no one thought about it. I had ceased to think of my staff in racial terms, the officers were either good, bad, or indifferent.

"My British battalion commanders were good. Most of them were senior to me in service and experience. For this, I respected them without letting the respect detract from my responsibility. This was as it should be. My British officers, therefore, accepted me as their commander without reservation."

There was perhaps an exception in Lieutenant Colonel Townsend of the Gurkha battalion. He was a fine soldier, disciplined and correct. To Thimayya personally, he was pleasant and cooperative. Thimayya sensed, however, that the colonel was keeping him from direct contact with the Gurkha troops. This puzzled and annoyed Thimayya, because his habit was to know as much as he could about the men in his unit. But he gave the matter little thought.

He and his staff gave much thought to the choice of station in Japan. The Americans offered BCOF (British Commonwealth Occupation Force) the southeastern coastal strip and part of the north of Honshu Island. Brindiv HQ was established at the former Japanese Naval Academy in Kure Bay. The Australian contingent had Hiroshima. The New Zealanders were at Simomasake. Thimayya had chosen the northern prefectures of Hamada and Tottori with his headquarters at Matsue.

"My arrival in Japan was a shock to me," Timmy said. "The harbors and the towns had been smashed by repeated bombings I had never seen, or even imagined, destruction on such a vast scale.

"The atom bomb destruction of Hiroshima, where I spent the

next night, was something out of a nightmare. The town had been flattened as though a huge fist had squashed it to the ground. The people of Hiroshima added to the horror, many of them had ghastly disfigurements, and all of them seemed only half alive. My staff and I visited a nearby monastery where a priest who had been an eyewitness of the bombing described to us the terrible blast. Until then, the priest said, the Japanese would have resisted invasion to the last man. Judging from the terrain Japan would have been difficult to attack. I supposed, therefore, if the bomb had not been used the casualties might have been even greater."

Matsue, fortunately, was as lovely as Hiroshima was horrible. The town had its own inland sea, dotted with jewel like islands. The hills and fields around the town were cultivated so that the whole place looked like a garden.

The Indians were impressed with how the Japanese cultivated every inch of arable land. Beans were planted even on the ridges between fields and on the road shoulders. The cattle, although smaller than those in India, were immaculate and amazingly well trained, without visible herding, the cattle walked only on the paths and never disturbed the crops. The Indians were surprised that the Japanese never drank milk but did eat beef, the cattle were raised for meat and as work animals.

To Thimayya, an especially attractive aspect of Matsue was the women. They were dainty, clean, and wholly feminine in their colorful kimonos. The children were equally attractive, always scrubbed and well groomed. Like children everywhere, they were full of fun and mischief. They had no fear of the occupation troops, as had their parents.

At first the Japanese in Matsue were terrified of Indian troops. They especially feared the Sikhs, whose beards and great size made the Japanese think of demons. The people had been told that the Indians were fierce cannibals. The troops however, occupied an old barracks and had little contact with the people. And, as always, the *jawns* were disciplined and polite. Before long, the people lost fear of them.

Nevertheless, the Japanese crossed to the other side of the street when Indians approached. Thimayya learned that they

were required to do thus by a rule from the American Military Government. He did not like the custom—probably it reminded him of the days in Madras. He let it be known that the Indians would not enforce the rule. Gradually, although the Japanese remained respectful, the Indians settled in without disturbing the quiet pattern of life.

Life in occupied Japan was regulated by the American Military Government. The country was divided into zones. Each zone was administered by an Allied commander through an appointed Japanese governor. When Thimayya first arrived, the local Japanese governor paid him a formal visit. Thimayya was instructed by the AMG not to return the call.

The next formality was a surrender to Thimayya by the local Japanese military commander. The commander was to see to the carrying out of any work Thimayya wanted done. Thimayya ordered playing fields and plumbing and furniture for the barracks. The work was always well done and completed ahead of schedule. Thimayya never saw the Japanese commander again, but he never lacked co-operation.

Thimayya's only real Japanese contact was with his interpreter. "The man was a humorous old chap who had been educated in the United States," Timmy said. "He was curious about Indians and surprised that, to him, we seemed so much like the British. I was surprised that the interpreter seemed so much like an American, I called him 'Pops,' which, I gathered, was the customary American form of address to an older man."

Also, Thimayya came to know slightly the man whose house he was assigned. The house outside Matsue was small but delightful. It had four rooms divided by sliding panels of rice paper and black polished wood. The paper was painted delicately and could be changed according to the season. Mountain scenes showing snow were used in the summer, and paintings with warm colors and lines were inserted in the winter. Even more thought was given to the flowers, which were always part of the decor. The flower arrangements were changed several times daily in order to catch the sun's rays or the evening shadows or to fit in with the day's mood or weather.

These subtle creations were the art of Thimayya's two house-

maids One of the maids was the landlord's daughter The owner had asked Thumayya to take her on Thumayya had hesitated to hire as a servant an educated girl from such a good family, but the owner preferred to have a family member in the house to ensure that the property was well looked after "She was an exquisite creature," Timmy said "Every morning, she came into my room and awakened me with her soft voice Her kimonos were always beautiful Kneeling, she handed me a prettily arranged tea tray I thought it was indeed a pleasant way of starting the day The maids then were supposed to help me in my bath, but I never got used to this quaint custom, and I dissuaded them from it"

His most pleasant times in that house were spent sitting in the little garden It was typically Japanese, with mossy rocks, stunted trees, miniature waterfalls, and little foot bridges over musical streams "It was a lovely place, quiet and soothing, but it puzzled me," Timmy said "Finally, the maid told me that because Japan was so crowded, no one person could own large amounts of land or devote much space to the luxury of gardens Thus the gardens were made to give the illusion of mountains, forests, and rivers, so that the owner could feel a sense of importance beyond himself"

More than sitting in his miniature mountain scene, visiting the barracks, and taking walks in the countryside, Thumayya found little to do in Matsue Social life was made up among his mess, the officers of a nearby Commonwealth Air Force unit, and a few AMG personnel Some of the Americans brought their wives In addition, five Fany's (members of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry), English girls who did troop welfare work, lived in the area Thus, the officers managed to have a few modest dances, but mostly they gave informal dinner or bridge parties or went on picnics The favorite picnic spot was near some hot springs in the hills four miles from Matsue The small hotel with its private swimming pool here was taken over as an officer recreation center

The Indian troops often came to the springs as well They bathed in the public pool along with the Japanese This resulted in a difficult cultural adjustment for the *jawns*

The *jawns*—all Indians really—are exceedingly modest and careful never to expose themselves. To uncover oneself in the presence of others is considered insulting to the others. At Matsue, therefore, the *jawns* bathed as usual wearing some kind of covering. The Japanese, however—whole families of them—bathed naked in public.

"One day," Timmy said, "I passed the pool and saw *jawns* also bathing in the nude. At first I could not believe my eyes. Later, I caught the *subedar* major and asked him what was happening to the men. The JCO was embarrassed and apologetic. He explained that the Japanese children laughed at the *jawns* for wearing clothes in the bath. Even the adults had difficulty concealing their amusement. Eventually the *jawns* became so self-conscious at being improperly dressed—or, rather, *undressed*—for the occasion that they adopted the local custom. Never before or since have I seen Indian troops make such a concession to a foreign culture."

The Indian troops had little entertainment, and the officers had difficulty keeping them busy. Games were provided, and the troops were given plenty of drill. Once a week the men went shopping in the Matsue stores, but they found little to buy. An old paddle-steamer was refitted so that the men could be taken on excursions through the lovely islands of the inland sea. Occasionally, on orders from the AMG, the troops searched a specified place for weapons, but they never found any nor did they have trouble with the Japanese. Thus the *jawns* spent much of their time sitting around their *hookahs*.

Normally, the officers would not have been concerned about the situation, but the Japanese women were a problem. "The Japanese seemed stunned by the war's outcome," Timmy said, "but the women were affected the most. Girls offered themselves for as little as a few cigarettes. They were aggressive, and it was impossible to walk anywhere without being continually pestered. One heard that during hard times the Japanese customarily prostituted their women. Nevertheless, I often thought that the women now were being used to demoralize the occupation forces. In any case, venereal disease among the Allied troops in Japan reached fantastic percentages."

Thimayya, therefore, was worried about venereal disease among the *jawns*. He assembled the men and talked to them about it. "You may think it is smart to be seen with Japanese women, but I do not," he said. "Imagine our own women. What kind of Indian woman would go with foreign troops in our land? We hardly have women so low." Then he warned them about venereal disease, which most of the prostitutes had. He described how ashamed and disgraced the men would be, back in India, if they caught such diseases. "If you meet the decent people of Matsue and they invite you to their homes to sit with them and to play with their children, I do not mind. Even if you meet a respectable girl this way, I have no objection. But I would be unhappy about any man who mixed with the street women."

The *jawns* are naturally chaste. Nevertheless, Thimayya was surprised at how seriously they took his talk. No police were needed to keep them from the girls. The *jawns* themselves avoided the women. Thus, Thimayya's brigade had no venereal-disease cases.

The brigade was obliged to report venereal-disease statistics through the command. Thimayya's figures were not believed. The Americans sent their own venereal-disease experts to run tests on the whole brigade. "Even when they found not a single case," Timmy said, "they would not believe it, they thought that we were using some mystic oriental trick to hide the symptoms."

Yet the Indian soldiers were no different from anyone else about sex. When a boy joined the army, however, he understood that celibacy would be required of him during his time on duty. He accepted the fact just as does a monk who enters a monastery. In peacetime, the *jawan* was given liberal leave. He married young and rarely acquired a taste for promiscuity. Finally, the officers kept him busy with work and games so that he had little opportunity either to meet women or to think about them.

Indian troops in the larger Japanese cities, however, did not fare as well. Thimayya began to hear rumors of woman trouble with the *jawns* in Kure and Tokyo. When he heard further that the trouble was complicated by racial prejudice among the Allied authorities, he expected an explosion.

The trouble began when his Gurkha battalion was taken from

Matsue and brought to Kure as the Division HQ detachment. Thumayya was told that the Gurkhas were needed in Kure. The general was an old Gurkha officer, and the Gurkhas were still his pets. Nevertheless, the Division HQ assignment normally was rotated among the division's battalions. It seemed odd that only the Gurkhas were needed. Thumayya remembered Colonel Townsend's efforts in Nasik to keep him from contact with the men.

"I believe," Timmy said, "that the British were afraid Indian officers might disaffect the Gurkhas from the British. It was obvious now that a good Indian officer could win greater loyalty from Indian troops than could the British. It was also obvious that India's independence was due shortly. Perhaps some British were not sure that independence would be achieved peacefully. Maybe a few were not even reconciled to the idea of free India. They knew that Indian troops could not be counted on to uphold British authority. The British had always convinced themselves that the Gurkhas loved them and disliked Indians. Nevertheless, the Indians and the Gurkhas were Asian, and the Indians therefore might be able to contaminate them with radical ideas. Thus the British, in order to have some part of the Indian Army on which they could rely, kept Indian contact with the Gurkhas to the minimum."

Thumayya's first inkling of trouble with the Gurkhas came when he heard that three of them had been court-martialed without reference to him. Soon after, the sentences passed by the court-martial were referred to him for his signature. Discipline cases were rare in the Indian Army. Moreover, the rule was that a serious misdemeanor was reported immediately to the brigade commander, who ordered the court-martial. Thumayya could not make sense out of the case. He gathered that two JCO's and a *havildar* (sergeant) clerk had refused to obey orders. They were dismissed from the service. It all looked peculiar to Thumayya, and he refused to sign the papers. He told Division HQ that since they had started the case they could finish it, but if he were to confirm the sentences he would want a rehearing in his presence.

A fortnight later, another incident occurred which at first

Thimayya did not connect with the case. The incident concerned the Gurkhas and women, and it was serious.

Theoretically, the AMG had a rule against fraternization. In practice, however, the Allied troops went out with the girls even in public. The Gurkhas also began having girls. Moreover, the Gurkhas looked rather Japanese and found that they were popular. The Gurkhas picked up the language easily, and soon were singing the local songs and staging Japanese plays.

Whenever a Gurkha was caught with a local girl, however, British and Australian M P's warned him off or arrested him. The Gurkhas began to get angry.

One evening two Gurkhas visited a girl. While one went up to her room, the other kept watch below. Suddenly the house was surrounded by Australian M P's. The boy below was arrested, but the one upstairs jumped through a window and escaped. He returned to the barracks and told the story to his battalion. Evidently it was the last straw. All 600 Gurkhas drew their *kukris* and poured into the street, roaring like demons. A battalion of bloodthirsty Gurkhas with their *kukris* drawn for slaughter is a terrible sight, and all traffic on the street vanished. Luckily, Colonel Vivendera Singh, an Indian staff officer at Division H Q, happened by in a jeep. He pulled up in front of the Gurkhas and managed to stop them. They told him that they had been insulted by the Australians and British long enough. They were out for revenge, and they were going to free their comrade.

The colonel promised to get the boy released and to investigate the whole matter. He talked the Gurkhas into returning to the barracks. Thus a catastrophe was narrowly averted. Thereafter, no M P bothered a Gurkha, but the authorities seemed to learn nothing from the incident.

Despite evidence that the Gurkhas' morale was low, they were sent a week later as guards to the Mikado in Tokyo. The woman situation in Tokyo was worse even than in Kure. Girls often tried to force their way into the quarter guard. Colonel Townsend suspected that some of the men might be bringing women onto the post. His British officers tried to set traps for the men. The officers would hide behind bushes or make surprise inspec-

tions at night with flashlights. This infuriated the Gurkhas. They claimed that their own officers had insulted them. The entire battalion refused to go on parade. It was a sit-down strike like the one staged in Singapore by the 4/19 Hyderabad's. As guard duty at the Emperor's Palace was a showpiece function, the strike caused much embarrassment. The British were helpless. The Gurkhas would neither listen nor speak to them, they demanded to be returned to India.

It must have been hard for General Cowan to ask for help. "I can't understand what's got into the Gurks," he said to Thumayya. "Our only hope is that they will listen to an Indian officer." Thumayya's reaction was to avoid the mess. The Gurkhas were not too different from Indian troops, but he had worked with them very little. The general persuaded him, however, to do what he could.

The next day Thumayya went to Tokyo and talked to Colonel Townsend. To the colonel, the necessity of calling in another officer was a humiliation too difficult to bear. "Basically," Timmy said, "the colonel was a fine officer. Like many British in the Indian Army, he loved his unit and the men. They were his only children. But he was a stern father, cold and undemonstrative. Because his whole life was the battalion, he thought that his men should feel the same way. He had no time for parties, cinemas, or sports. He believed that the men should not waste time on such frivolities either. In the war, the unit had gone through hell. The whole world now was relaxing from the ordeal—everyone, that is, except the Second Battalion of the Fifth Royal Gurkha Rifles. If anything, their discipline was tightened in order that peacetime laxity should not mar the perfection that the C.O. demanded. The men simply had been pushed too far. But to Colonel Townsend, it was as if his own sons had repudiated him. He was a broken man, and I pitied him. The colonel would not—or could not—help me, even by arranging for me to see the men. I had to work it out on my own."

Thumayya drove to the Gurkhas' barracks with his flag flying. He was met by the *subedar* major, who saluted and stood stiffly at attention. A *subedar* major is a battalion's most senior junior

commissioned officer. A general often has more in common with him than with anyone else in the unit. Both have reached the top in their separate branches of the same profession. They are approximately the same age, and often they have shared many of the same experiences. Thus it was natural for Thimayya to be friendly with the *subedar*-major. He offered the JCO a cigarette and tried to make him relax. The Gurkha refused. He would not look at Thimayya or speak except to answer a direct question. Thimayya ordered the battalion NCO's to be assembled so that he could speak to them.

Thimayya then picked up six bottles of rum and several tins of cigarettes. When he returned, the noncommissioned officers were waiting for him. They stood up when he entered, but were sullen and suspicious. Thimayya asked them to sit around close to him. They obeyed but would not speak.

Thimayya began by praising their battalion. He mentioned the VC's they had won and the superb reputation they had earned. He said that what they were doing now was very serious. It would be a shame to spoil their reputation. The disgrace could have far reaching effects on all Nepalese. He ended by saying that if they would explain their problems to him, he would try to find solutions. If he could not, he would see that the battalion was returned to India.

Still no one spoke.

Thimayya began to talk again. He apologized for the fact that he had been kept away from them. He added that they would not have had this trouble if he could have kept them in Matsue, where they would have been as happy as his other battalions.

Suddenly one of the men jumped up and, interrupting the monologue, began a hysterical outburst of complaints. Thimayya listened quietly. When the boy had talked himself out, Thimayya asked if anyone else had anything to say. Another boy stood up and blew off steam.

"Good," Thimayya said then. "Now we know what the trouble is. Let's have a drink. We'll put our heads together and see if we can settle it." He ordered the rum and cigarettes passed around. The men relaxed a little.

They gave Thimayya dozens of complaints, but basically there

were only three. First, the discipline had become unreasonably strict, the men were not even allowed to celebrate their traditional Hindu festivals. They had lost respect for the C O and no longer wanted to serve him.

Next, they resented the treatment they had been getting about the woman situation. They wanted the same privileges the other Allied troops had.

And finally, they were angry about the two J C O's and the *havildar* clerk who had been court martialed. They wanted these men reinstated.

To Thumayya's surprise, they had a complaint against him. "We are proud to have an Indian command the brigade," the *subedar* major said, 'but you rarely visited us, even though you saw the other battalions daily.'

Thumayya explained how the British officers had maneuvered to keep him from the battalion. "But even when I did visit you, no one told me you weren't happy," Thumayya said. "Every time, I asked you, '*Sub teek hai? Cooch gult hai? Rations teek hai?*' and you always replied, '*Sub teek hai, sub teek hai.*' What was I to do? I am no mind reader or crystal gazer."

This got a weak smile, and Thumayya felt they were beginning to unbend. Their greatest fear now was that the troops themselves might be too worked up to accept any settlement at all. The noncommissioned officers were willing to give up the strike if the three suspended men were reinstated, if the C O was removed, and if the battalion was put again under Thumayya's command. Thumayya promised he would do what he could to grant their requests. Meanwhile, he said that he would keep the C O away from them, but they were to return to work at once.

Thumayya went straight to Division H Q and told the general the three Gurkha demands, adding that henceforth there should be no discrimination against them about women. The general thought that the demands were reasonable and gave orders granting them. Thereafter, Thumayya managed to visit the Gurkhas more often, and he never had trouble with them again. Even today, he gets an invitation every year to celebrate *Dussehra*, the Hindu festival for warriors, with the battalion.

"It would be wrong," Timmy said, 'to suggest that all Indian

troops in Japan were either perfectly disciplined or unjustly treated. There were Indian Engineers, Pioneers, workshop companies, dock laborers, and the Kure Hospital was staffed by Indian doctors, orderlies, male nurses, and sweepers. These service troops were a mixed lot, and few came from the 'soldier' class. Their venereal-disease and crime rates were not in line with the standards maintained by our fighting men."

The hospital group seemed the most demoralized. Originally these Indians had been brought to work in a general hospital, but because of Kure's soaring venereal-disease rate they now were given these cases only. They were disgruntled.

Many of their patients were from an Australian workshop unit. One evening two of these patients went out and brought girls back with them to the hospital. The quarter guard was armed only with pickaxe helves, but despite abuse from the Australians, the girls were sent away.

The next afternoon, the Australians got out again and brought their whole workshop company. The Australians attacked the Indian quarter guard, who sounded the alarm. The entire Indian staff of doctors, male nurses, and sweepers rushed to the defense. They picked up mop handles, rocks, bedpans—anything they could lay their hands on. The battle was wild and continued for a half hour. Finally the Australians broke and ran, the hospital Indians in pursuit. The colorful mob passed the officers' club. The noise brought the officers onto the veranda, where they were subjected to a rain of stones and abuse from the Indians. Across the street was the general's house. He too came out. A stone and some insults were hurled at him. Then the Indians returned to the hospital.

A court of inquiry was initiated, but it brought so much unpleasantness to light that the whole affair was hushed up.

"I personally saw little of the depraved aspect of the occupation except in Tokyo," Timmy said. "The first time I went, I made the mistake of taking Ram Singh. My room in the BCOF building overlooked the moat around the Emperor's Palace. The grass slopes were dotted with couples in every kind of embrace. Ram Singh saw this scene from the window first. On his face was an indescribable expression—compounded chiefly,

I think, of bafflement "What is going on out there?" he asked me "Are those people wounded?" Just then a whistle blew Every couple separated They sat up with arms straight to their sides Some M P 's passed When they were gone, another whistle blew and the couples returned immediately to their athletics There was a rule against the public display of affection and this was the method of enforcing it. *'Kia hai sahib?* Ram Singh asked me again

"'Dammit, stop wasting time,' I replied 'Get cracking with my luggage'"

Tokyo was smashed so thoroughly that it appeared to Thimayya unfit for human habitation The Japanese seemed crushed and numbed by their fate The shops, theaters, and night clubs were garish and tawdry Thimayya knew almost no one in Tokyo, and he spent as little time there as possible

Nevertheless he did have one pleasant time in Tokyo Half of the guard for the Emperor's Palace was always American, but the other half was rotated among the other Allied units When an Indian battalion first took over this half guard, Thimayya arranged for a Beating of the Retreat ceremony with the massed bands from all three of his battalions As soon as he had taken over this brigade in Nasik, he had begun making the three bands practice the ceremony until they could do it perfectly In Tokyo, the men wore their dress uniforms—rifle-green, scarlet, blue and gold The Americans had never seen anything like the show the Indians put on It seemed to Thimayya that there were more photographers than spectators He himself saw little of the parade Mrs MacArthur and her son came to the performance "The boy sat between his mother and me," Timmy said "He asked me so many questions that I was kept busy the whole time"

The period Thimayya spent in Matsue was as pleasant as Japan's big cities were depressing He waited impatiently until the wives of officers in his brigade would be allowed to come "I wanted to show Nina and Mireille my lovely little house and garden," Timmy said "I tried to imagine Nina walking through Matsue's streets in a sari. My housemaids also were anxious to

see her and were delighted when her sailing reservations were confirmed "

A week before her departure, however, Thimayya received instructions to report to Delhi immediately to serve on the Indian Armed Forces Nationalization Committee

This was in December, 1946 India's independence was now assured The Interim Government, with Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister, was beginning to govern the country Plans for the Indianization of the Indian Army were being made

Nevertheless, Thimayya felt that the political maneuvering now going on in Delhi was something for a simple soldier to avoid Also, he wanted the quiet and peace of Matsue for the rest he felt he needed after the years of war strain Thimayya obtained permission to cable Field Marshal Auchinleck directly to request the assignment's cancellation Lord Auchinleck had to refuse "The matter is out of my hands," he cabled "The decision was made by the Indian Cabinet "

It was ironic, Thimayya felt, that he should dislike so thoroughly his own national government's first decision that affected him personally

CHAPTER XVI

JULLUNDER

Brigadier Thimayya joined the Indian Armed Forces Nationalization Committee in Delhi in January, 1947. Conflict had developed between British and Indian viewpoints. The British insisted that army Indianization would require fifteen years. The Indians said it could be done in five years. "We Indians thought that British officers whose careers had been spent in the Indian Army merely wanted to keep their jobs until normal retirement age," Timmy said.

The debate was made into a political issue. The Indian officers learned that the British were warning the nationalist leaders against them. The British said that the Indian officers were getting too ambitious. They pointed out that the Indian armed forces were a powerful organization capable of taking control of the country. The British reminded the civilian leaders that in Burma army officers had assassinated the new premier. Thus a part of the Indian officers' work on the committee was to convince their own civilian leaders that they were without political ambitions.

"When we achieved this," Timmy said, "we cross-examined the British military experts on the necessity for a fifteen year delay in Indianization. It was quickly obvious that the British had no rational argument for their stand, and our viewpoint prevailed."

Meanwhile, plans for independence had been accelerated. Only the idea of partitioning stood in the way of accord between the British, the Moslems, and the rest of the Indians. Congress resisted partitioning, but the British felt it was inevitable. The

British feared, however, that when the borders between Pakistan and India were delineated, communal riots between Moslems on one hand and the Sikhs and Hindus on the other would flare up in the border areas. Thus, a division named the Boundary Force was centered in the expected trouble district. The force was commanded by Major General Rees, whose H Q was established in Lahore. Thimayya was assigned command of the force's 5th Brigade, with his H Q in Amritsar.

"The moment I arrived in Amritsar, I could feel the terrible tenseness," Timmy said. "This holy city of the Sikhs nevertheless had a predominantly Moslem population. Moslems also predominated in the nearby towns of Gurdaspur and Batala. The Sikhs dominated the other surrounding villages and the farming area. Wild rumors were in constant circulation. One felt that the slightest incident could touch off an explosion of hatred and violence."

On one occasion, the explosion did nearly occur. A Moslem company from Thimayya's brigade was patrolling the city when a Moslem mob suddenly attacked a Hindu quarter. Because martial law had not been declared, he could do nothing unless he personally saw the disorder when no civil authorities were present. He was nearby and rushed to the scene with the Moslem troops. He ordered the troops into action. Without hesitating, the *subedar* major put his mortars down and fired ten rounds. The crowd disappeared. Catastrophe was averted. Later Thimayya heard that the mob attack was to have been the signal for a general uprising.

"The incident proved that army discipline could prevail over communal emotion," Timmy said. "It also proved that the situation was serious enough so that martial law should have been declared. The local British officials, knowing that they would soon be relieved of their posts, tended to be indifferent to what happened, a few were not above hoping for chaos so they could say that India was helpless without British rule. Indian officials and police were themselves emotionally involved in the communal hatred and therefore were unreliable."

"Finally, I believed that the military force should have been divided sooner between the part for Pakistan and the part for

India This point had been suggested to the political leaders, but Field Marshal Auchinleck said that six months would be needed to divide the army, the matter therefore was dropped I had already proved that army discipline was strong enough so that, for example, Moslem troops could be used against a Moslem mob If Hindu and Sikh troops had been given the responsibility of protecting the Moslem minority in India, and if Moslem troops had had the chance to safeguard the minorities in Pakistan," Timmy added, "the conflagration could have been prevented"

Thimayya realized that large scale preparations for civil strife were going on He did not have the power to stop the preparations and the local authorities were doing nothing "At any moment a ghastly mess can break loose here," he reported to the authorities, "but no one will take responsibility"

Two days later Thimayya was relieved of his command and brought to Delhi to serve on the Armed Forces Partition Subcommittee

Now that the Congress Party had accepted partitioning, the division of the subcontinent between India and Pakistan was proceeding rapidly Moreover, the British set the date for independence less than two months away Thus, instead of six months as Auchinleck had estimated for dividing the army, the process had to be completed in four weeks

The split was made on a two-to-one basis, two-thirds to India and one third to Pakistan From the mixed battalions, the Moslem companies were absorbed into a Pakistan regiment whose non Moslem companies came across to be taken into one of the depleted Indian units

Thimayya's parent regiment was affected by the split The Moslem Ahirs of the 4th Battalion of the 19th Hyderabad Regiment went to Pakistan The entire battalion was changed to Kumaonis Thus, Thimayya's parent regiment now was called the 4th Kumaonis and, later, the Kumaon Regiment

On the regimental level, tradition was disturbed as little as possible In some cases the traditional home mess of a regiment had to be changed Trophies, silver, and other possessions went with the mess The regimental funds—and some of the units were very wealthy—also went, but money subscribed personally

by the men was proportioned between those who left and those who remained

Equipment was more difficult. The army, for example, had three armored-corps regiments but only one workshop to service the tanks. Again, the one Staff College was at Quetta in Pakistan, while the one famous Bodyguard Regiment was in Delhi. India had to build a new Staff College, and Pakistan had to recruit a new Guards unit. Except for accommodations, India fared better than Pakistan. India had the Academy at Dehra Dun, two Army Supply Corps centers, and most of the ordnance factories. Pakistan had two-thirds of the troops' quarters, while India had two-thirds of the troops. Some bickering went on, but actually the division went smoothly. It was completed within three weeks.

The most surprising aspect of the division concerned the ten Gurkha regiments. The British still believed that the Gurkhas would never serve Indian officers. The British wanted to keep some of these regiments because troops were needed in troubled Malaya. India allowed the British four of the Gurkha regiments and kept six. A proviso was made that each Gurkha soldier was to opt for either the British or Indian armies. British officers told the Indians, off the record, that no Gurkha would choose India. Even though all the regiments were still entirely British-officered, over 70 per cent of the Gurkhas voted for India, leaving barely enough trained men for three regiments for the British. This shocked the British, to many it was proof of the fallacy of colonialism. "The percentage surprised the Indians as well," Timmy said. "The only explanation for it was that the Gurkhas were affected by the new spirit of nationalism that was stimulating all Asia to rebirth."

The advent of India and Pakistan was accompanied by violent pain. When the Radcliffe Award was announced, delineating the borders between Pakistan and India, violence broke out in the Punjab. The division of the army was going on, but Thumayya's job on the committee was finished, and he returned to the Boundary Force.

The force was under C in-C General Lockhart, but was not under the control of either of the new governments. The force commander, General Rees, had been given a Pakistani and

an Indian military adviser, and now he was given another such adviser from each country

Thimayya was made India's alternate military adviser. He arrived at the H Q in Lahore late at night. He was asked to see General Rees at six the next morning. When Thimayya reported to the hotel room, General Rees was shaving and was attired only in a towel. Thimayya announced himself.

"How much service have you got?" the general asked.

"Twenty years," Thimayya answered.

"I've got thirty years," the general said "and if you think I intend to listen to your advice you are mistaken."

Thimayya saluted and left. He did not see the commander again during this assignment.

Thimayya returned to his brigade in Amritsar. The rioting, killing and looting were getting worse every day. Panic spread, and the mass exodus of the minority groups began. Moslems moved westward to escape slaughter at the hands of Sikhs and Hindus. The Hindus and Sikhs fled eastward to escape the Moslems in Pakistan. As the situation deteriorated, the ability of the civil and military authorities to cope with it slowly gave way. Thimayya spent day and night rushing from one trouble spot to another. "Once we arrived, we restored order quickly enough, but often the worst was over by then, and meanwhile rioting would have broken out elsewhere," Timmy said. "Transport was always a problem. The force was lucky to collect three or four lorries at a time to carry the troops, let alone the thousands of refugees who needed to be moved from a danger zone or who needed food and medicines."

It now became more obvious that some British officers were indifferent to the fate of the two new countries and were making no serious attempt to improve the situation. At the higher levels, British officers and officials accepted the policy of handing over the two countries to their new governments in a peaceful condition. Some junior officers, however, presumably wanted conditions to worsen to show the world that the subcontinent could not exist without British power.

"The Indian Army itself had little trouble with communal hatred," Timmy said. "In the Hyderabad Regiment, for example,

my first command had been with the Moslem Ahirs whom I will always admire and respect Moslem officers, I know, had similar feelings about Hindu and Sikh troops Moreover, the Indian officers, regardless of religion, had been friends for years They co-operated to bring back sanity to North India "

Moslem and Indian officers realized that they could not enforce order under the present conditions After discussion, they decided that the Boundary Force should be divided between the two countries so that the new governments, rather than indifferent British officers, would be responsible for the peace In addition, the Indians believed that as many British officers as possible should be replaced immediately by Indian or Pakistani officers Thimayya agreed to make these suggestions the next morning to Prime Minister Nehru and to the Indian Defense Minister, who had come to Lahore for a Supreme Council meeting on the communal situation

The Prime Minister listened to Thimayya's suggestions and accepted them Thimayya told him that, in the Boundary Force, British officers up through brigade commander could be replaced immediately He had doubts about a division commander, no Indian had had experience at this level, and he thought that a trained British general should remain in the post for the present

Meanwhile, as he learned later, the Pakistani officers tried to see Governor General Jinnah They got as far as the veranda of his house Liaquat Ali met them and asked them what they wanted He dismissed them impatiently, however, before they had a chance to explain the suggestions

Nevertheless, the Indian delegates brought up the suggestions at the Council meeting After a stormy session, the decision to split the Boundary Force was made The problem of the officers was to be left up to each government The Pakistanis felt that they did not have enough qualified officers to replace the British at once Thus they retained their British officers, who now worked for Pakistan The Indians decided to replace their British officers, who began to resign within a few days

These decisions brought Thimayya into conflict with the British commanders After the meeting, the C in C, General

Lockhart, was returning to Delhi with the Indian Prime Minister and Defense Minister. Before leaving, however, he called Thimayya in "General Lockhart was a pleasant chap, and I got on well with him," Thimayya said. "Now, however, he was furious with me for having made the suggestions about the Boundary Force."

"The fact that you might be right is beside the point," the general said. "You should have submitted your suggestions through General Rees."

Thimayya asked him to call in General Rees. When Rees arrived, Thimayya said to him, "Do you remember telling me in Lahore that you had no intention of taking advice from me?"

"I do," Rees replied. "I did make such a statement."

Thimayya turned to the Commander in Chief. "In that case, what could you expect me to do?" he asked. "Surely, I am obligated to advise my Prime Minister about matters on which my knowledge gives me the authority to speak."

But General Lockhart was not convinced. He made remarks to the effect that Thimayya had let him down. He said that he had lost faith in Thimayya. "When Rees left, therefore," Timmy said, "I began writing out my resignation. I said that, during the Punjab emergency, Lockhart could not afford to keep an untrusted officer. I did not really think my resignation would be accepted—not with the Indian Prime Minister and Defense Minister outside the door. But, as I had learned in dealing with British officers, compromise was fatal. One had to be accepted wholly or not at all. Before I finished writing, the C-in-C began, 'Now, now, old chap...'"

He posted Thimayya to command the 11th Brigade in the Boundary Force.

The Indian side of the force had two brigades, one in Amritsar and the other, the 11th, in Jullunder. When Thimayya reached his unit, he found that the Punjab situation had deteriorated even further. The people were insane with panic. Killings and abductions went on everywhere and were impossible to prevent. The force was still being split, and British officers were leaving by the dozens every day.

Meanwhile, the press in India had been attacking General

Rees for alleged favoritism to Pakistan. He was suddenly recalled to Delhi. Thimayya was sent to Lahore and made divisional commander of the Indian Contingent of the Boundary Force. He was promoted to major general. He helped to establish the separate headquarters for the new split force. On the day that the division of the whole army was completed, the split of the Boundary Force also was finished. Thimayya packed up his own HQ and moved to Jullunder.

The days that followed were a nightmare. During the war, Thimayya's G 2 appointment at 26th Division HQ had given him experience in how to train and fight a division, but nothing in his past was a help now.

"The most difficult part was not knowing from day to day the very size of the problem to be solved," Timmy said. "As panic settled onto the area and the migrations began, we never knew if the movement would stop abruptly or continue until the separate religious communities had been exchanged completely. The complete exchange would have involved so many millions of people that the mere thought of it was staggering. More than ten million people did migrate, making the largest mass movement in history. Every available means of transportation was taxed to the limit. Every plane, train, bus, lorry, and car that could be found was used as long as it would run to carry the Moslems to the west and the Hindus and Sikhs to the east. And this was only a fraction of the transportation needed. Most refugees walked. An average foot convoy amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand people and clogged a road for twenty miles. Accompanying cattle ate every green thing along the way. The danger of epidemics terrified us. The question of water and food for these people kept us awake. The construction of camps for the endless thousands was a never-ending problem. One never knew whether to stretch the insufficient supplies between a hundred, a thousand, or a million people. Something had to be done for them. Most of all the refugees needed hope, few knew anything but the horror of the past, and all were nearly insane with fear for the future. The seriously ill had to be given treatment. Orphans had to be cared for. And always there was the problem of disposing of the dead—thousands of them every day.

"They died of exhaustion, exposure, disease, malnutrition, thirst, and, worst of all, they were slaughtered by gangs of opposing religious groups. At any point along the route the helpless refugees might be shot down by machine guns hidden in the sugar-cane fields or in farm houses. Homicidal maniacs might leap from an ambush and attack a portion of a convoy in an orgy of killing. Not nearly enough troops were on hand to guard every convoy every mile of the way. Even when a convoy could be called heavily guarded an attack sometimes took place along its twenty mile length, and the troops could not prevent it. Usually the road itself was so clogged that the troops had to move to the point under attack over long detours. By the time they arrived, the attackers were gone, and only the mutilated dead—men, women, and children—and the crazed survivors remained."

In addition the military had responsibility for many small Moslem communities that had elected to remain, even though surrounded by maddened Sikhs or Hindus, avid to wipe them out. "We received orders from Delhi to protect these Moslems at all cost," Timmy said. "The number of troops, however, was insufficient for the job. I lived in terror that large scale violence would take place during a time when my troops were occupied elsewhere. Nevertheless, by making it clear that I would deal sternly with acts of violence, and by the rapid juggling of the available units throughout the area, all but sporadic outbreaks were prevented."

In Pakistan, Thumayya believed, protection of the minority Hindus and Sikhs was not as conscientious. "I know, however, that their leaders were as anxious as ours to maintain law and order," Timmy said. "But India was dedicated to nonsectarianism, India had many religious and cultural minorities. Unless the separate groups lived harmoniously the nation would cease to exist. Protection of the minorities therefore, was a primary concern not only at the top but among our new district administrators as well."

"The Pakistanis on the other hand," Timmy said, "were dedicated to the sectarian principle of a Moslem state. Thus while their leaders meant sincerely to protect the remaining

Sikhs and Hindus, the lesser officials often contrived means of driving out the minorities. In some places the military, police, and civil authorities, working together, devised systems for making life untenable in Pakistan for the minority groups. My first experience with such systems was at Sheikhapura."

Sheikhapura was near India but on the Pakistan side, and contained Sikhs and Hindus. Shortly after the Boundary Force was split, violence flared up in a nearby district and the survivors fled to India. A few days later, the same situation occurred in another similar district. While the Indian Boundary Force was still coping with the second migration, an influential Sikh, Bupinder Singh Man, from Sheikhapura, called at Thumayya's H Q. He told Thumayya that Sheikhapura was next on the list.

"I know the pattern," Bupinder Singh Man said. "First the Pakistanis manufacture a scare, anything to justify a curfew. Next they set fire to one of our houses. When the occupants run out, they are shot down for violating the curfew. The nearby occupants, hearing the screams of the dying, become panicky and also run out. They too are slaughtered. Any survivors flee to India. The Moslems then loot the property and kill any of us who remain."

Bupinder Singh Man pleaded with Thumayya to save Sheikhapura. Thumayya telephoned the Pakistan Boundary Force officers and checked the Sheikhapura officials. Everyone reported that all was quiet. He told this to the Sikh, but the old man continued pleading with him to save Sheikhapura. As long as the authorities anticipated no trouble there, Thumayya could do nothing.

"One night, however," Timmy said, "I had a dream. I am not subject to psychic experiences, nothing like this ever happened to me before or since. In the dream I saw Sheikhapura in flames, and I could hear the cries of the dying. It was so horrible I could not sleep. Finally, at two A.M., I dressed and called Bupinder Singh Man. I agreed to take the Sikh to Sheikhapura. I collected six lorries with drivers and guards and six Sikh soldiers. By three A.M. we were headed west."

At the border, Pakistan guards on the Ravi Bridge prohibited

their entry, despite the fact that Thimayya was a senior officer in the Boundary Force and had the right to go anywhere in the area. Thimayya had to argue with the Pakistan guards for an hour before they sullenly let him and his party through.

"At dawn, twenty miles from Sheikhpura, we sensed something ominous," Timmy said. "Whether it was a smell or a chill in the air we did not know, but we were all aware of it. Once a lorry, heavily loaded (with loot, we later learned), came toward us, on seeing us, it braked suddenly, swerved into a side road, and disappeared. As we approached the town, we smelled smoke. Four miles away we heard machine gun fire."

A mile farther they were stopped by a guard of the Pathan Armed Constabulary. When Thimayya asked what was happening, the guard said that there had been a Sikh procession and a little firing.

'Why the hell should the Sikhs demonstrate here?' Thimayya asked.

The Pathans shrugged. They were reserves, they told him. If anyone called them for help they were ready. But as no one had called, everything must be all right.

'Obviously everything was not all right,' Timmy said. "I thought I should reconnoiter before bringing in the lorries. I left the others at the constabulary station and, with Ram Singh, went on in my jeep. A dense cloud of smoke hung over the city. I could see the flames of burning buildings. The *kotwali* (civil offices) was at the far end of the main street. I stepped on the throttle and tore through the street.

"Despite the speed, I saw in those few minutes scenes so ghastly that I have never been able to get them out of my mind.

"The street was lined with shops which had been owned by Hindus. Every shop had been smashed open and looted. Unwanted articles were strewn everywhere.

"The street itself was strewn with hundreds of bodies. The clothes had been ripped from them, and most of the bodies were horribly mutilated. Many seemed to have been chopped with axes. Women had their breasts cut off, children were murdered as brutally as the adults. I saw a woman and two children run

screaming from a burning house. They tried to reach a side street, but a hail of bullets caught them, and I saw all three fall, slipping in their own blood. Police and army men were firing on helpless civilians! Bullets zipped over my head, but I ducked and raced on through without being hit.

"When I reached the *kotwali*, I sprinted into the office. An English officer with a fancy blond mustache was sitting with his feet on the desk sipping a cool drink. He stood up when I entered and greeted me pleasantly. 'Have a beer,' he said."

Thimayya was still breathless, and now the reaction to what he had seen set in, a wave of nausea gripped his throat. "God damn your beer!" he said when he could speak. "Don't you know what's going on here?"

"I heard there was some trouble," the officer answered. "A Sikh *jutha*—I'm sure the police have it in hand."

Thimayya demanded to see the district commissioner and the superintendent of police. Both were Anglo-Indians, and they seemed to copy the casual attitude of the British officer. "We did have a spot of trouble with a Sikh *jutha*," the SP said, "but a whiff of lead fixed it up right as rain." The three beamed at Thimayya.

Their smiles faded when Thimayya described what he had seen. They looked at each other, pursing their lips. They did not believe him, and he realized that arguing with them would waste time. "At least tell me where the people are," Thimayya said. "I have six lorries. I can take some of the women and children away."

"There's a curfew on," the DC said. "They must be in their homes."

Thimayya ran back to the jeep. In the city the firing had stopped, but the bodies were still there. At the constabulary post he picked up the lorries and returned to the city. "There must be survivors," Thimayya said. "We have got to find them." Not a soul was moving in the streets.

They roused some Moslem villagers and questioned them. They learned that the Sikhs and Hindus who escaped had run to the fields. Thimayya and his party went to a field on the edge of

town. Bupinder Singh Man called out his name and said that he had transport to take the people to safety. The field sprouted human beings, and soon the lorries were full.

They drove to Lahore, where Thimayya arranged an escort to take the lorries into India. Then he went to the Indian High Commissioner's office for some high level action.

A meeting was going on. Pakistani ministers, together with the Indian representatives, were discussing the communal situation. Meeting or not, Thimayya demanded to see the Indian Commissioner. The commissioner came out with a Pakistani minister. After hearing Thimayya's story, they suggested that he repeat it at the meeting. When Thimayya finished, he knew that the others thought he was exaggerating. Nevertheless, the Pakistan Inspector General of Police was called in. The I G, Qurban Ali, was intelligent and sincere. When Thimayya finished his story again, the Inspector-General telephoned the Sheikhpura superintendent of police. The S P admitted that there had been trouble, but he said that everything was now all right. Thimayya still insisted that everything was not all right, that hundreds had been killed, and that hundreds more would die horribly unless action was taken quickly. "It was like pushing against a stone wall," Timmy said. "I even began to wonder if I had imagined all that horror."

The I G, however, had the right answer. He said that he would go immediately to Sheikhpura, and he invited Thimayya's group to accompany him. They set off in the I G's fast car.

"It was evening when we reached Sheikhpura again," Timmy said. "Smoke from a single burning house spiraled skyward. The streets were being patrolled by Pakistani paratroopers. They said that they had been called in that afternoon, but that the trouble was over by then. No one except the paratroops moved in the streets, but the dead still lay where they had fallen. The bodies now were covered. We went through on foot. I uncovered the bodies to show the horrible mutilations. I even found the woman and two children whom I myself had seen killed. The I G said nothing."

At the *kotwali* the S P was surprised to see the Inspector-

General In the morning the S P had been indifferent, now he was cringing and full of apologies. Despite the evidence in the streets, he still tried to belittle the affair. There had been a Sikh *jutha*, he said, it had gotten out of hand, and the paratroopers had been called in. Why the S P had waited until afternoon was not clear.

The I G asked to see the brigadier of the paratroops. This commander said he had not been called in at all. He had heard firing in the city and had sent his troops to investigate.

The firing he had heard was at a warehouse. A number of Sikh families had sought refuge there. The Sikh men had their *kirpans* (ceremonial swords) and two antiquated shotguns. The police went to the factory and ordered the Sikhs to give up their weapons, adding that the Sikhs then could go free. When the door opened, the police opened fire and filled the whole group, including women and children. This was the firing that the brigadier had investigated, his men had caught the police finishing off the slaughter.

The S P, therefore, had made no effort to stop the killing, and he was caught out in a lie. His face turned gray. The I G went to the door, signaling Thumayya and the others to follow. The S P started too, but the I G said, "Not you."

They now tried to find the survivors. They toured the whole city. Some of the side streets in the Hindu quarters contained even more bodies than the main thoroughfare. Except for the party, the paratroopers, and the bodies, the town might have been deserted.

Finally Thumayya asked if the town had a *gurdwara* (Sikh temple). They found a small one. Bupinder Singh Man knocked on the door and called out but no one answered. They were about to leave when the door opened a crack and an old Sikh peered out. They convinced him that they were friends and the old man opened the door.

"Just inside were the bodies of three children. Timmy said 'They had been de gutted. Behind them a woman kneeled rocking back and forth. Her mouth opened and closed rhythmically, but no sound came from her. The temple was packed with people crazed with fear. The upstairs was jammed with women

and children, who had been told to kill themselves by throwing themselves down to the ground floor if the attackers came. It was impossible to reason with these people, but the I G finally managed to get them out into the fields, where a camp, guarded by paratroops, was arranged.

"One of the Sikhs said that more refugees were hiding in a school. This group, equally crazed, was found and brought to the camp.

"As the party was returning to the *kotwali*," Timmy said, "a Moslem priest, or *mullah* approached us. He told us that he had a hundred Sikhs and Hindus in his house. Despite threats against his own life, he had protected them. He wanted the authorities to take the refugees away before harm came to them. He was beside himself with anxiety and revulsion.

"He was not the only Moslem revolted by what had happened. Back at the *kotwali* I heard some odd sounds around the corner of the veranda. I saw a Moslem paratroop officer. I had known the man well, for he had served with me in the Arakan. The officer was leaning against the wall, his head buried in his arms, sobbing. When I spoke to him he said, 'Is this what we worked and fought for? Is this our Pakistan—land of the pure?'"

The I G probably felt as keenly about the horror as did the *mullah* and the officer, but he kept a tight grip on himself. While the party was at the *kotwali* arranging transport for the refugees, the I G received a call from Lahore. A message had come from the police in Churiya, a Hindu market 20 miles from Sheikhpura. The message said that a Sikh attack was expected and that a curfew had been imposed. The I G knew—as did all the rest—that the idea of a Sikh attack on a Hindu town in a Moslem district of Pakistan was absurd. The key word in the message was "curfew." The I G called the Churiya S P, who reported that all was quiet but that precautions were being taken in view of the expected Sikh attack. The I G did not argue, he said that he would visit Churiya the next morning. Obviously the Churiya S P would not start trouble until after the I G's visit. The town, therefore, was safe for the night.

The party had a few hours' rest and set off for Churiya early next morning. The S P there persisted in his statement that a

Sikh attack was imminent. The I G still did not argue. The S P. brought in a Hindu *banrya* (money lender) who obviously was in as much terror of losing his money as his life. "Oh, we are so happy here, sahib," he said, cringing. "The officials are so good to us, so kind and helpful . . ." Thimayya thought he was sickening.

Later, the Hindu edged to the back of the group, and Thimayya felt him tugging at his jacket tails. "Save us, sir," he whispered. "They are planning to attack us tonight. You are our only hope."

But the Inspector-General knew how to handle the situation. "You have a magnificent record," he was saying to his S P. "What a pleasure to find a really capable officer. Your district can be an example to some of the unruly towns. You deserve a reward. I am giving you two thousand rupees"—he sat down and began to write the order—"and I want you to know I'm proud of you. I'm proud that our friends, the Indian representatives, can see what a splendid job you've done. I know I can count on you to see that no violence occurs in Churiya."

The S P. seemed dizzy with delight, and when the party left everyone knew that Churiya would remain peaceful while arrangements to evacuate the Hindus and Sikhs could be made. Eventually they were removed without incident.

"It would be wrong to suggest that the violence was only on the Pakistan side," Timmy said. "An incident on one side of the border caused a worse incident in retaliation on the other side. This went back and forth until guilt and blame lost all meaning. When I was arranging the evacuation of Moslem refugees, there was a period when I knew they would be slaughtered if they were routed through Amritsar, where the Sikhs were blood-crazy. At times I felt that the only solution was to bulldoze a path around Amritsar. I increased the patrols along the evacuation route. I learned the places where ambushes might be set up. When my troops caught attackers, they ruthlessly opened fire on them, and soon only a warning shot was enough to disperse the gangs. I got hold of the Sikh leaders in Amritsar and told them that I had tanks ready. I described in brutal detail what I would do with these tanks to any Sikhs who tried to stop the convoys."

I meant every word, and they knew it. The trains went through unmolested."

One day, however, a refugee train from Pakistan stopped in Amritsar. Every car was crammed with horribly mutilated bodies. On the sides of the cars was written in blood, "An *inam* [present] from Pakistan." Something beyond madness gripped Amritsar. The Sikhs, with their *kirpans*, descended on the station. A Moslem refugee train, bound for Pakistan, came through. The Sikhs went through this train and filled it with chopped up Moslem corpses. They wrote in blood on the cars, "An *inam* from Hindustan." The attack was finished before troops could be brought to stop it.

These train incidents, however, marked the climax. A wave of revulsion swept through the two countries. The leaders on both sides called forcefully for sanity. The officers and troops of the Boundary Force were learning how to deal with the situation. They still had plenty of work to do, and further violence did occur, but the incidents now were small and control of the situation was never again lost.

"When I think of those weeks of horror," Timmy said, "I also remember the incidents of bravery and generosity that were as glorious as the violence was revolting. Just as the *mullah* in Sheikhpura risked his life to protect the Sikh refugees, so did many Sikhs and Hindus risk their lives to protect Moslems. These people on both sides who were able to rise above white-hot passions, who maintained their sanity and their belief in decency, proved the invincibility of the human spirit.

"Equally praiseworthy were the new civil and police officials who also had responsibility during the emergency. They were on duty around the clock week after week. They gave their time, effort, and possessions to help. They expected no reward. They had no hope even that their contribution would prevent complete chaos. I felt that the effort made by these people proved that we can have hope for mankind's future.

"As a soldier, I was most proud of our young army officers and of the part they played. In replacing higher British officers, most of them were accepting responsibility beyond their experience. Yet they performed magnificently.

"I also admit that even the few British officers who stayed with me served tirelessly as well. Colonel Micheson of the Eleventh Sikhs was one of the few who really understood the Punjab, and his co-operation was as unselfish as it was helpful.

"Finally, credit for the victory over the Punjab lawlessness also must go to the co-operation achieved by both sides of the Boundary Force. There was *no communal indiscipline among the troops*. At the top, my counterpart in Pakistan was Major General Key, whom I had known in the Quetta days. We achieved a high degree of mutual help. He and I, for example, drew up what became known as the Thimayya Key Agreement to help solve border disputes. In many cases, the border moved north and south of the Ravi and Sutlej Rivers, leaving enclaves of one country across the rivers. Protecting these enclaves posed a difficult military problem. We two commanders therefore agreed to adopt the rivers as the boundary for military purposes. Protection of the enclaves belonging to the other country could be given effectively only if the troops were above communal emotion. Considering the difficulties of terrain, the agreement made the job much easier."

The hardest part of the job extended through the summer of 1947. On August 15, 1947, India became a sovereign republic. This was the fulfillment of the dream that the Indians had had for years. All through the country there was great rejoicing. To the soldiers in the Punjab, however, the celebration of Independence Day seemed a small matter compared to the immediate problem they had to solve. "We felt a thrill of pride when we read of the ceremonies that took place in Delhi," Timmy said. "But real independence, we believed, would come only when peace had been won and the harmony necessary for progress had been established between the two new countries."

Harmony, however, did not come quickly. As the violence in the Punjab was being brought under control, a new conflagration was beginning in Kashmir.

CHAPTER XVII

SRINAGAR

During the Punjab communal violence Thumayya was too busy to concern himself with developments outside. Once, however, he went to Lahore to confer with other Boundary Force officers. That night he was the guest of General Mohamed Ifukhar, who had replaced General Key as his Pakistan alternate on the force. While Thumayya was changing for dinner, his host's other guests arrived. Most of them were Pakistani officers. When Thumayya returned to the drawing room, he caught part of their conversation. He overheard that Probyn's Horse would be located at Gulmarg and the 13th Lancers at Pahalgam. The Pakistani officers were dividing the Kashmir territory between their regiments and were talking about how pleasant these posts would be. This was the first Thumayya heard of the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Jammu and Kashmir state.

The state's 81,000 square miles are violently mountainous. India borders the southeast part of the state. Pakistan is on the southwest. West, north, and northwest of Kashmir is frontier territory inhabited by Moslem tribesmen like those Thumayya knew at Fort Sandeman. East of Kashmir, and considered part of it, is Ladakh, whose people are like the Tibetans still farther east. The Vale of Kashmir, approximately in the center of the state, runs north and south and is the valley of the Jhelum River. The valley is about 80 miles long and 30 miles wide. The state's capital, Srinagar, is northeast of the valley's center.

Jammu and Kashmir state was governed by a Hindu Maharaja. Most Kashmiris were Moslem. The rulers of Princely States were to make the decision whether their territories should join

India or Pakistan This rarely presented a problem, because most states fell entirely within the boundaries of one country or the other Kashmir, however, was contingent to both countries Pakistanis felt that they had a greater claim to the state because most Kashmiris were Moslem Indians felt that religions were not a political matter Just as in the United States, for example, separate religious communities lived in political harmony, Indian leaders believed that unless their different religious groups learned to do the same, justice, peace, and progress would be impossible Thus Indians rejected Pakistanis' claim based on religious grouping, and insisted instead on the agreed upon method of deciding the issue, *i e*, the choice of the Maharaja

If the Maharaja had made his choice before August 15, 1947, no conflict would have developed The Maharaja, however, procrastinated

Meanwhile, the flames of communal hatred in the Punjab ignited Kashmir as well Hindus and Sikhs, where they predominated in Jammu and Kashmir, committed atrocities against the Kashmiri Moslems The Hindus and Sikhs, being a minority in the state, probably suffered even more from Moslem attacks Both India and Pakistan wanted to enter the state in order to restore law and order, as they were doing in the Punjab But the Maharaja was still legally the ruler, and neither country could enter until he decided which nation to join And still he procrastinated

On October 20, 1947, however, Moslem tribesmen from the Frontier Province west of Kashmir swept across the border They concentrated at Muzaffarabad. In the mountains east of Muzaffarabad was the little used Tithwal Pass In the mountains south and east of Muzaffarabad was the lower and more used Uri Pass through which ran the main highway east to Srinagar The tribesmen entered Kashmir Valley through the Tithwal Pass and pushed south to the main highway behind Uri Other tribesmen pushed through the Uri Pass, the Maharaja's force was bottled and destroyed Then the marauders drove east along the highway to Barramulla 20 miles from Srinagar Here they paused for murder, arson, rape and loot

At this time, other tribesmen at the north end of Kashmir Val

ley were attacking from Guras down through the Razdhanangan Pass Also, marauders across the mountains to the northeast were pushing down to Kargil in northern Ladakh From Kargil they moved westward to the Zojila Pass and threatened Kashmir Valley northeast of Srinagar

Now that the tribesmen could enter the valley from three sides and overrun all of Kashmir, the Maharaja made up his mind He joined India At that moment the tribal attack became an invasion of India Indian troops were flown in overnight to Srinagar

When these troops arrived, the tribesmen were four miles west of Srinagar on the Barramulla Uri highway In the north and northeast, the enemy on the Razdhanangan and Zojila passes were bogged down in snow The enemy on the west sent out two prongs that were encircling Srinagar from the north and south The south prong was making for the airfield south of the capital The field was vital to the defenders The road from India that entered the valley from the south went through wild mountains and was in bad repair The Indians managed to send in armor along this road, but troops could not be moved up quickly enough by the route An air lift, even though few planes were available, was the best hope Thus the Indian troops in Srinagar defended the airfield stubbornly Thumayya's parent battalion, the 4th Kumaonis, had the task and suffered heavy losses Nevertheless, the Kumaonis held out until reinforcements arrived and the airfield was secured

Meanwhile, a battalion of Sikhs was fighting desperately to hold off the main enemy spearhead on the highway west of Srinagar The Sikhs were on the east bank of the Shaletang Canal, which they were trying to prevent the marauders from crossing The Indian armor now arrived Brigadier L P Sen, commanding the Indian forces in the area, sent the column in a northward flanking movement to fetch up behind the enemy on the west bank of the canal The armor managed the maneuver without being discovered by the enemy When the armor appeared on the highway coming from the west, the enemy thought that help from the Pakistan Army was arriving The tribesmen left their positions to gather around and cheer, "Pakistan zindabad!" They were answered by a burst of deadly fire from machine guns The

tribesmen were thrown into panic. Within an hour the western spearhead was broken up. The north and south prongs withdrew, and the enemy force retreated. The Indians lacked the transport to follow up the victory immediately, but their planes strafed the enemy and knocked out his vehicles. Thus when more supplies were received, Brigadier Sen was able to catch the main group of marauders. In a few rapid strikes, he drove them out of the valley. He established his headquarters at Uri.

In the mountains to the southwest between the Kashmir Valley and Pakistan, more tribesmen were swarming in. They were joined by Kashmiri Moslems. These men drove eastward, south of the valley, toward Jammu. Another Indian brigade was brought in to defend this area. A force HQ for all operations in Jammu and Kashmir was created. It was commanded by Major General Kulwant Singh. The force itself was called the Delhi and East Punjab Command. It was under the British General Russell, but was soon taken over by General Cariappa. In April, 1948, Thimayya replaced General Kulwant Singh as commander of the Jammu and Kashmir Force.

When Thimayya arrived in Jammu, he decided that the forces were improperly organized for major operations. Because of this and the rugged terrain, the Indians were limited to indecisive engagements on the battalion and brigade levels. He suggested that the force be divided into two, one division for the territory south of the Kashmir Valley and another for the valley itself and the territory north and west of it. He was given the division to operate in the valley. The unit was called "Sridiv." Its role was to defend the valley from further tribal penetration and then to take Muzaffarabad so that the enemy could not mount further attacks. Sridiv had barely three brigades, which were insufficient for the assignment, but Thimayya could get no more men.

He went first to Uri, which was west of Srinagar on the highway that went through the mountains southeast of Muzaffarabad. About 1,500 marauders were in the hills overlooking the highway and blocked the route. North of Uri, however, was the difficult Tithwal Pass, which opened directly onto Muzaffarabad. No real road ran between the highway and the Tithwal Pass. Moreover, to get to the pass, troops would have to climb through

wild mountains and cross the rugged Nastachur Pass. Moving troops quickly enough through this area and keeping them supplied would be extremely difficult. Thimayya could manage it if he had one more brigade to push on through the troops who reached the Tithwal Pass. He asked for more men again, but still there were none to spare.

'Even by posing only a threat to the Tithwal Pass,' Timmy said, 'I figured that most of the marauders would be drawn off to protect it. This would enable me to get another brigade along the Uri highway through the mountains. This brigade could then turn north to hit at Muzzafarabad from the south. My third brigade would be needed to secure Uri itself. The plan was workable, but it really required more troops than I had. I studied the maps again, and decided that by air-dropping supplies I might get enough adequately equipped men to the Tithwal Pass to threaten it and draw off the enemy from the main highway. The most they could do would be to harass the Tithwal area for a few days. Still, that was all the time I needed if my main thrust along the highway was not resisted too strenuously.'

When the brigade for Tithwal left, Thimayya began to suffer doubts and anxiety. A weather change, the loss of a few pack animals—indeed any number of circumstances—could render the expedition useless.

Fortunately, the men got through. They were exhausted and at the end of the supply line, but with the air drop they managed to mount an attack. The tribesmen were caught off guard and reacted frantically.

"I immediately began my push along the Uri highway," Timmy said. "Pickets were used to comb the hills, as we did in the old days on the frontier. The men moved cautiously, but with our armor spearhead they made good time. The tribesmen put up desperate resistance, but now they were outnumbered, and we overran them. Within two days, our forces were astride the road that ran north to Muzzafarabad.

"Meanwhile, to my surprise, the brigade at Tithwal despite supply shortages, had smashed through the pass. Now Muzzafarabad could be attacked from the east and from the south. No organized resistance was in front of either prong."

At this point, however, Thumayya learned that Pakistan had reacted as nervously to his thrust as had the tribesmen. A Pakistan Army division had moved behind Muzaffarabad to protect it. Thumayya withdrew his forces.

Nevertheless, he now held the Tithwal and Uri passes. Thus with only a few men he could hold Kashmir against attack from the west. Also, his men had learned that the tribesmen's reputation for invincibility was a myth. The morale of his troops was sky-high.

Thumayya next turned his attention to the Razdhanangan Pass at the north end of Kashmir Valley. He began his operation on June 1, 1948. "I used roughly the same tactics," Timmy said. "This time, however, I attacked the main pass first and sent a battalion around through the mountains on the eastern flank. It is important to realize that these mountains are indescribably rugged. In peacetime, an expedition using the best equipment and receiving co-operation from the authorities would be considered a noteworthy effort. My battalion went through with only a few days' notice. The men climbed precipices, endured blizzards, waded through deep snow, and suffered the effects of rarefied air. They had no special equipment and carried their supplies. In that vast area, getting lost was only too easy. They had to move quickly and secretly so that the enemy would not learn of their approach in time to set up an ambush. In the gorges our men would be helpless against a few of the enemy on the surrounding heights. And at the end of the trek, the *jawans* had to be fit enough for hard fighting."

Nevertheless, Thumayya's men achieved this seemingly impossible feat. When the enemy in the pass found themselves in a vice, they broke completely. Thumayya's main thrust joined with the flanking battalion, and his troops moved down to occupy the Gurais valley. By reaching this valley they secured the pass for a year, because during the winter the pass could not even be approached.

The Zojila also was closed during the winter. The battle for this pass was Thumayya's final and most spectacular operation of the Kashmir campaign. Zojila held the key to Ladakh, the territory between the Kashmir Valley and Tibet to the east.

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The Zojila also was closed during the winter. The battle for this pass was Thimayya's final and most spectacular operation of the Kashmir campaign. Zojila held the key to Ladakh, the territory between the Kashmir Valley and Tibet to the east.

To protect this territory, Thumayya had a battalion at Leh, Ladakh's capital. The men had to be supplied by a dangerous air lift over mountains four miles high. The overland route to Leh went northeast from Srinagar, entered the mountains along a trail that in some places was only a narrow rock ledge, crossed the Zojila at 10,000 feet, ran eastward to Kargil, and then turned south to Leh.

The tribesmen had pushed down from Skardu, north of Kargil. They were now only a few miles north of Leh. Also, they occupied the territory west of Kargil up through the Zojila Pass. The enemy in the Zojila could be withdrawn when the winter snows closed the area and could join the attack on Leh. Thus, unless Thumayya took the pass before winter, his battalion at Leh would be liquidated and the tribesmen could overrun all of Ladakh down to the Indian border. This would mean that except for the southeast corner, where India bordered Kashmir, all of the Kashmir Valley would be surrounded by the enemy.

"I had only a few weeks before winter," Timmy said. "Infantry attacks in the pass had failed. A normal operation would require months. I drove from Srinagar to the entrance of the Zojila and studied the road all the way. At best the road was barely jeepable, but the really difficult places were few. I thought that if tanks could be brought into the battle, we might have the decisive factor."

Thus, while the *jawans* kept the tribesmen busy defending the pass, Thumayya's main effort was spent on improving the road. In some places, even after heavy blasting, the tanks could make the hairpin turns with only inches to spare. A skid on those icy rocks meant that the tank would fall hundreds of feet into the gorge.

No battle like this had ever been fought before. It was a combination of jungle and mountain warfare. "Artillery support for an attack was useless," Timmy said "but the defenders with a single artillery piece on a commanding height sometimes could secure a ten mile valley against a brigade and necessitate a detour that might take weeks. Aircraft were no good against the dug in enemy, but were effective if he could be forced into the open. Tactics had to be based on surprise, enveloping move-

ments, and the cutting of lines of communication—in short, it was just solid infantry work ”

Next to the ease with which this terrain could be defended, the biggest drawback was the fact that the enemy were used to the climate and the altitude and were familiar with the country. Thumayya's men, except for the Gurkhas and Kumaonis, came from the humid coasts and dry plains of India. They had no oxygen for the heights, no snow clothing, no arctic fuels for the vehicles, and no special rations. A cup of tea took five and a half hours to prepare. *Dahl* (lentils), which was the staple in the men's diet, was always stone cold by the time they could eat it. There was rarely wood for fires, and to escape the freezing cold the men had to collect laboriously a few roots that burned with a weak flame.

“Nevertheless,” Timmy said, “we were training our men for fighting in these mountains. Practice exercises under the worst conditions were held. Even a ski school was started. The *jawans* adapted quickly.

‘I remember once that two Sikhs, holding a picket on a ridge sixteen thousand feet high, climbed to ten thousand feet because they had been allotted seats in a mobile cinema, after the show they climbed back to their post, a feat that would impress a professional mountain climber.

“Another time, I saw a company of Madrasis who refused to modify their habit of daily washing despite the cold. They bathed in the Sindh River which, in that area, was liquid ice—in fact the boys had to dodge ice floes fresh from the glaciers not far beyond.

‘With men like these, the tanks were pulled and pushed up to the pass. The enemy was completely surprised. When the tanks entered *Zojila*, the soaring walls echoed and re-echoed the roar of the motors, magnifying the sound many times. Thus lost part of the world had never heard anything like it. The tanks shot out the enemy high pickets while our infantry mopped up the slopes. The tanks could not blast out the deeply dug enemy bunkers, but the unexpected sight and sounds of the armor terrorized the tribesmen. They fled in panic. Our planes caught them in the open, and before nightfall the *Zojila* was in our hands ”

Without pausing, the Indians pushed on eastward toward Kargil. Meanwhile, the battalion at Leh broke out and drove up toward Kargil as well. "My men were exhausted," Timmy said, "but they did not stop. The enemy was cornered and was given such a beating that he retired all the way back to Skardu. I now held Zojila, Dras, and Kargil, and the Ladakh area was secured."

By the time winter put a stop to all military activity, a cease-fire for the Kashmir dispute was settled in the United Nations. A UN force made up of military personnel from Argentina, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and the United States arrived to establish the line and to supervise it. Thumayya was on leave in India, but he returned to Kashmir to participate in the negotiations. This was in January, 1949. The UN people arranged for the Indian officers to meet the Pakistani officers who had been directing the tribal operation.

To the amazement of the UN people, the Indians greeted the Pakistanis like old friends. "We met at the fifty third milestone from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad," Timmy said. "An old mosque had been fixed up for the occasion. The Paks supplied dinner and beer. In order not to come empty handed, we brought some delicious Kashmir apples. The first question asked me by the Pak officers concerned the Indian girl who spoke on the local Indian radio station, they wanted to know if she was as lovely as her voice. When I assured them that indeed she was, they sighed happily and then got a basket of fine oranges for me to send to her."

On the lower levels, Indians and Pakistanis got on equally well. "I remember seeing Ram Singh sharing his rations with a Pak orderly who originally had come from Ram Singh's home town, Sonapat, north of Delhi," Timmy said. "The Pak orderly described the conditions he had had to endure since leaving Sonapat. Being Jats, the two men had much to say about the relative qualities of milk on each side of the border."

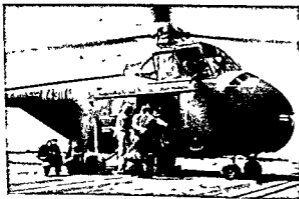
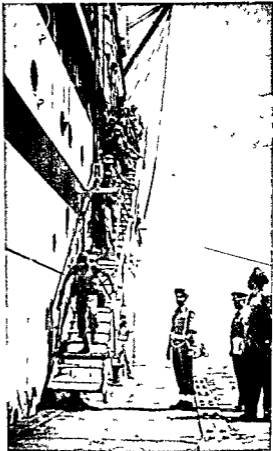
The officers, meanwhile, discussed the cease-fire line. They decided that each side should stay in the present position. They agreed to the rules that would prevent the re-opening of hostili-



World Wide Photo

General K S Thimayya Chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in the Demilitarized Zone Korea on January 8 1954

Photographs on this page and the six pages following are used by permission of the Information Service of India New York courtesy of Mr S Mukerji



A contingent of Indian troops disembarking at In chon, en route to the Demilitarized Zone in Korea

The Republic of Korea refused to allow Indian troops to cross its soil, consequently, the Custodian Force was flown by helicopter to the Demilitarized Zone

One of the Roman Catholic priests sent from India as part of the Custodian Force conducting a service attended by prisoners of war



Indian soldiers retained as much as possible of their normal lives here they are listening to a discourse on the religious occasions known as Dussehra



The Custodian Force housed itself in simple temporary dwellings This view is of the Headquarters camp





A North Korean who refused repatriation took the precaution of having his anti-Communist intentions tattooed on his arm

Women served with the Republic of Korea army these four captured by the Communist forces awaited repatriation at the NNRC camp



Smuggled weapons were a serious problem here an Indian officer discovers a knife hidden inside a Chinese prisoner's boot





The great majority of North Korean prisoners did not want to be repatriated this man violently opposed even listening to the Communist explanations



Another prisoner became so violent in the explanation hearing that three Indian guards were required to control him

Less violent but equally defiant was this prisoner of war arguing with the Communist explainer

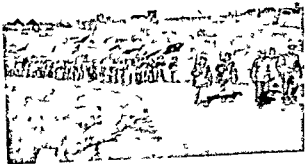




North Koreans demonstrating against repatriation attempted a mass breakout

Chinese prisoners of war who refused repatriation on being returned to the U N command on January 23 1951

Despite guarantees that repatriation would not be forced violence flared up frequently



It was inevitable under the circumstances that some casualties would occur



A South Korean family held as prisoners of war by the Communists being repatriated

The Communists attempted to broadcast their arguments to the prisoners who organized shouting groups to drown out the sound



Members of the Indian Custodian Force preparing to withdraw from their mission as the last moments of their guardianship of prisoners approached. The NNRC released prisoners from its custody on January 23, 1954.

ties. The entire agreement was made within 30 minutes, and then they all sat down to a sumptuous meal.

Thumayya moved his headquarters from Barramulla to Srinagar. Even though the war had stopped, he had much to do. The defenses were strengthened. Refugee camps for those who had lost their homes were constructed. A home for widows and orphans was built. Food, cloth, fuel, and other necessities were distributed.

Nina joined Thumayya and they began a pleasant interlude in some of the world's most beautiful scenery. The U.N. people, with their families and secretaries, added a cosmopolitan touch to the social life. Thumayya remembers that the South American members introduced the samba to the dances at the Srinagar Club, where many gay evenings were spent.

In November, 1949, Thumayya went with Sheik Abdullah, then Premier of Kashmir, to celebrate the recapture of Kargil. He ate some dried apricots—a staple of the area—and returned with a stomach ache. A check-up showed that he had high blood pressure. Probably he was having a delayed reaction to the tensions of the Kashmir fighting. He returned to India for four months of rest and treatment. When he was fit again, he was made commandant of the National Defense Academy, the college in Dehra Dun where he had begun his military career.

Before he settled into these duties, however, he went to England with General Cariappa, then the Indian Commander-in-Chief. They attended the annual Commonwealth Conference of the Chiefs of the Imperial General Staff.

An exercise took place in Camberley, and Thumayya revisited Sandhurst. "This was the first time I had seen the college since I left it in nineteen twenty-six," Timmy said. "Nothing had changed. I even found an ancient blue bottle who had been at the college when I was there. Seeing Sandhurst again filled me with bittersweet nostalgia, the years between seemed to fade. I remembered that tense moment outside Major Jackson's office when the sergeant major said, 'Being lucky, sir, is the most important quality a soldier can have.'

"Nevertheless, at the conference itself I suddenly realized how

many changes had taken place since my last time in England India had been independent for two years, but I had been so preoccupied with the problems in the Punjab and Kashmir that I had not grasped the full significance of the event. For the whole of my career, I had accepted that the Indian Army was a private preserve of the British. Even with independence, the change had not been immediate, senior British officers remained, and they disappeared gradually, one by one. Only now did I appreciate that the Indian Army was finally and truly Indian. Again I had a kind of delayed reaction—this one wholly pleasant.”

The reaction was even more pronounced in London at a reunion dinner of the Kumaon Regiment. General Sir Sydney Polk presided. He asked Thimayya countless questions about India, the Indian Army, and about the regiment. Had the mess been abolished? Did the officers wear mess kit or *dhoti* to dinner? Had the silver been sold?

He and the older British officers seemed genuinely surprised when Thimayya told them that the Indian officers were striving to keep the old traditions. The officers did still have the mess, and they wore mess kit to dinner. The regiment was, in fact, better off than it had been under the British Raj. The new government gave the unit full support. Thus pride in the regiment was as strong as ever. The British officers were impressed.

“What impressed me more than their questions was the ignorance that occasioned them.” Timmy said. “Naturally, the British officers still had a sentimental attachment to the regiment in which they had spent most of their lives. But now I realized that not only had their authority over it vanished but their contact with it was broken as well. At last, we Indian officers had full responsibility for the Indian Army.

“It was a good army. To maintain the standards it had achieved under the British, we would have to work hard. To improve it would be a wonderful challenge. Suddenly my head was full of ideas.

“I was impatient to return to India. I felt that an era had ended and that an exciting new one was beginning.”

CHAPTER XVIII

SIMLA

Although the British were gone, evidence of their recent control over the Indian Army was everywhere. The uniforms and equipment were British, and so were the drill and training. The Indian officers communicated in English, which also was used in the basic drill orders. Organization and strategy followed British patterns. "Some of what the British left could well be changed," Timmy said, "but much was worth keeping."

To Thimayya, a valuable British legacy was the traditions associated with the individual regiments. In themselves, the traditions were pleasantly meaningless, but their effect was to increase morale and fighting spirit.

An example of tradition in the Hyderabad Regiment concerns a Nazi flag kept in the trophy room of the regiment's Delhi home mess. The flag is shown proudly to guests, and peculiar irregular seams in the fabric are pointed out. The story of how the flag was obtained and why it has those seams is then told with great seriousness.

In North Africa, during World War II, a Hyderabad battalion was brought back to Cairo for a rest after weeks of fighting. While sitting in the battalion's Cairo mess one day, an officer saw through the window a scrawny little Egyptian gardener wearing an odd pair of trousers. The officer idly studied the trousers and suddenly realized that they had been cut from a Nazi flag. He immediately called all the other battalion officers. An attack plan was formulated. In a rapid enveloping maneuver, based on surprise tactics, the officers surrounded the gardener. They closed in on him and despite stiff resistance their assault

was victorious. They debagged the poor workman. They had the regimental tailor undo the trouser seams and re-sew the material into its original shape. Finally the flag was solemnly installed as one of the regiment's most prized trophies.

"The regiment, of course, has many magnificent trophies, souvenirs of historic battles and victories," Timmy said. "In fact, only a regiment with a remarkable record, whose men are supremely proud and self-confident, could tell such a joke on themselves. Thus the Nazi flag is one of the regiment's most important trophies, by belittling instead of boasting about the regiment's achievements, the men prove that the real source of their pride is not in the past, but in the sure knowledge of their present ability."

Some Indians wanted to do away with everything British simply because it was not Indian. The attitude was understandable, Thumayya thought, but it attempted to deny reality. The British were a part of India simply because they had been there for over two centuries. Their impact on Indian culture was considerable. It was they who created the army India now had. "These facts were inescapable," Timmy said. "The regiments were now completely Indian, and no less so because of the old traditions. The fact that they were entirely Indian gave Indians the chance to add even greater glory to the proud records of each unit. Thus the attitude of the Indian officers was that we should show our patriotism, not by rejecting the past, but by making improvement on it."

An equally important British legacy was their custom of keeping the military aloof from politics. "My experience taught me that a country's armed services should be an instrument, but never an arbiter, of national policy," Timmy said. "The history of countries whose military men were not taught to be apolitical shows what disruptive influences they sometimes can be. Admittedly, the Indian Army originally was divorced from politics because the British feared another sepoy mutiny. The effect on the *jawan* however, was to make him think of himself as a servant of India rather than as someone in a group separate from his countrymen. Even more important, he learned regard for his country as a whole and not just for the district from

which he came As a result, the jawans became valuable citizens "

On the other hand, the British principle of mixed battalions was no longer necessary The Indians did not have the British fear of a sepoy mutiny Oddly enough, however, armies in Europe and America had adopted what was, in effect, the mixed battalion Units were no longer composed of men who came from the same district, instead, each unit contained soldiers from every part of the country The reason for the change concerned home-front morale In total wars with modern weapons, battles were massive, and an entire battalion might be wiped out in one engagement. When this happened to units composed of troops from one district, most of the district's able-bodied men were lost The same losses, when distributed throughout the country, were not felt so badly

"Nevertheless, soldiers perform better when their units are not mixed," Timmy said "This has been proved Also, the officers of a 'pure' battalion are apt to be more careful about expending their men, and this always improves morale. Thus, the advantages of a 'pure' battalion outweigh the disadvantages In both Britain and the USA the tendency is back to the old idea of units made up of men from the same district We Indians also are making the change "

Thimayya noticed another important change when he returned from London to the military college in Dehra Dun Under the British Raj, the first consideration in appointing a cadet was the seeming loyalty to the British of the cadet's family "This imposed a rather severe limitation on both the number and quality of available cadets," Timmy said "The choice now was made on aptitude and capability I was proud to see the bright young lads preparing now for an army career "

The system for choosing and training young officers in India was changed. Every six months a UPSC (Union Public Service Commission) examination was held for applicants between the ages of 15 and 16 throughout the country Those who passed with the highest grades were sent to the new academy at Karak vasala.

This new academy had been the dream of Field Marshal

Auchunleck and was built as a memorial to the Indian soldiers who had died in the war. The military colleges in Europe, Britain, and the USA were studied so that the best aspects of all could be incorporated. Karakvasala was designed by famous architects and built of the finest materials on the banks of a beautiful lake near Poona.

The selected candidates study here for three years. The course is difficult, it is 90 per cent academic and 10 per cent military. When the boys graduate, they spend another year in special colleges for either the army, navy, or air force. Here the courses are 90 per cent military and 10 per cent academic. The Karakvasala graduates who choose the army go to Dehra Dun. The drill and turnout compare favorably with Sandhurst.

Just as at Sandhurst, however, the authorities had trouble with the parents of a few cadets. Despite examinations and aptitude testing, a boy not cut out for an army career occasionally was admitted. "Remembering poor old Baggy Bennett, I tried to be firm," Timmy said. "It was difficult to convince doting parents that their boy, even though passing the entrance examinations, lacked the qualities for leadership. Yet I knew that if I weakened and allowed such a boy to be commissioned, the boy would waste invaluable years of his life. In such cases, it was kind to be cruel."

"The most difficult cases were those with parents addicted to our national fascination with astrology. If you have a hopeless boy whose parents' argument for re-instating him is a horoscope that indicates he is destined to serve his country as a general, what can you say? I never learned what to say, even though I had this problem twice during my stay at Dehra Dun."

After leaving Dehra Dun, Thumayya was assigned to Delhi as the army's Quartermaster General, "a post," he said, "that I anticipated with complete antipathy." Nevertheless, the assignment enabled him to change another deficiency in the British legacy to the Indian Army. This was the contractor system.

Every military post had a merchant under contract to supply the officers and troops with amenities not available from the government. The contractor usually had a fancy goods store in the cantonment. He arranged for the barbers, sweets-makers, and

tailors. Sometimes he operated a cinema. Also, although it was illegal, he usually acted as a money lender to the troops, charging exorbitant interest rates. "In short," Timmy said, "his thick finger was stuck into any crack that might break the poor *jawan* loose from his hard-earned and meager pay. The contractor system was a kind of legalized robbery, and one of my first acts as QMG was to announce its abolishment."

"What a storm broke about my ears—what screams of anguish! I was inundated with requests for interviews from millionaire contractors. I refused to see them, and Nina was kept busy refusing their presents, each more ostentatious and in worse taste than the last."

Ultimately, Thumayya was forced to receive a deputation of contractors who brought a lawyer with them to put their case in legal terms. Previously, he had seen only individual contractors. "Now that I saw a whole group of them," Timmy said, "I was more convinced than ever that I was right in taking a stand against them, they were as slimy a collection of asocial types as one might see on this side of prison bars. Moreover, they had been too *paisa* (penny pinching) to hire an intelligent lawyer, their legal spokesman was so inept that out of pity I helped him outline his case."

"After which I refuted it."

No one really listened to Thumayya's arguments. The *baniyas* heard only that he intended to keep them, foot and mouth, from the trough. Immediately then a dismal wail went up. "My grandfather supplied Kitchener," one of them cried. "I have been feeding army for generations."

"You mean the army has been feeding you," Thumayya said. "And you've grown too fat."

"But this is my life," the contractor said. "What will I do?"

"You can reduce," Thumayya said. "You'll live longer."

"But you'll make soldiers into *baniyas*," another cried patriotically. "You will kill fighting spirit."

"We'll fight our fights and manage this business as well," Thumayya said.

With that, the lamentations became general. The contractors dropped to their knees to beseech Thumayya. One particularly

repulsive type squirmed on his belly, grabbed Thimayya's ankles and tried to touch the boots with his forehead. Remembering the viciousness with which for years these people had bled the *jawan*, Thimayya was nearly sick at this display. He left the room.

Now the contractors resorted to bribery attempts. The opening gambit came from a cringing little fat man. He appeared on Thimayya's veranda with a bottle of mediocre whisky under which was coyly hiding a hundred rupee note. "He was the subtle type," Timmy said. "But it was easy for Ram Singh to hold him and his present on the veranda until I could get witnesses and hide them. Thus the contractor was caught red-handed in his bribery attempt. He was arrested."

"But who will make the *halvah* for the troops?" the contractor asked in a final desperate effort to make Thimayya see reason. "What about the tailors and the barber?"

"Does the fat *baniya* make sweets, do the tailoring, and cut hair? Of course not," Thimayya said. "We'll pay the *halvah walla*, *nai*, and *dhurzi* more than you ever did and still be better off. Whom do you think they would rather work for—you or us?" Thimayya added.

The contractor had no answer and left with the police.

But still the contractors refused to give up. They began approaching Thimayya's friends and acquaintances—anyone who might have access to him and who might be persuaded to plead the contractors' case to him. By now Thimayya was really annoyed and became more adamant than ever.

Next the contractors went over his head to the Defense Minister. The minister admitted the deputation and called Thimayya. The minister listened to both arguments. Then the minister dismissed the contractors and their plea. Thimayya was free to go ahead.

Finally the contractors resorted to a whispering campaign. "If that Thimayya goes through with his order against the contractors, he won't last in his post for a week" was the tenor of the campaign. If they only had known how happy Thimayya would be to be relieved of that post they would not have bothered with such threats. Thimayya was spurred to put the order

through faster. Before long, the contractors were gone from the army.

No one could find sympathy for them. They were a small group, and every contractor was rich. In the new expanding India they found other means of making equal profits. But those who profited by their leaving the Indian Army numbered many thousands indeed. The tailors, barbers, sweets makers, and others were now better paid and happier. The *jawans* received better services cheaper. The troops had more amenities and comforts and no longer got badly into debt. To handle the stores, retired or disabled old soldiers who were glad to work again were hired. It was estimated that for every thousand men in the army, 2,500 rupees a month were saved. Thus the army was able to increase welfare funds, mother and-child clinics, sports facilities, and other amenities. In this case, changing the British system made a decided improvement.

Early in 1953 Thumayya was promoted to lieutenant general and posted as G O C-in-C. Western Command, the HQ for which, at his suggestion, was changed from Delhi to Simla, where he lived with breathtaking Himalayan views.

During this period he inaugurated another small change which saddened old British officers. Previously, British officers in the Indian Army had been required to learn Hindustani, the language of the troops. The custom, however, was to teach the manual of arms to troops in English. The troops learned to do what the orders said, but few understood the words themselves. To Thumayya, it seemed more appropriate, therefore, to translate these orders into Hindustani. Among the Indian officers English was still the language of communication and was likely to remain so. The Hindustani drill orders had a fine snap to them, and the men preferred them. To Thumayya, the use of English here was a pointless tradition and one that could be dropped profitably. Many British, however, hearing the strange new Hindustani orders, felt that the Indian Army was changing beyond recognition.

Probably the one change in tradition that saddened the British most concerned the regimental flags. The King's colours were no longer appropriate and were replaced by the President's

colours. A ceremony for the change was held at Dehra Dun. Many British officers attended, and the ceremony moved everyone deeply. "When the old colours were cased for the last time," Timmy said, "we Indians felt genuine sympathy for the British, some of whom were weeping openly. Yet when the new colours were unfurled, we Indians experienced a thrill of pride, many of the British were big enough to appreciate this feeling and to share our gladness with us."

Glad as the Indian officers were to have full responsibility for their army, one aspect of this responsibility came as a surprise. This concerned participation in foreign affairs. Now for the first time the Indian officers found themselves frequently in contact with the leaders and officers of other countries. "It was an eye-opening experience," Timmy said.

Thumayya made two more trips to Europe, one to Paris and one to Geneva, to serve on U.N.-sponsored commissions attempting to settle the Kashmir dispute. He made another trip to London and Paris with the Indian Defense Minister. No settlement was reached in the Kashmir dispute, but at the meetings the Indian officers worked with delegates from many great nations. "At first we Indians were in awe of these leaders," Timmy said. "People living under colonial domination are told that they must be ruled by others because they lack the ability to rule themselves. Until the colonials can prove the contrary to themselves, doubts about their abilities are unavoidable. Thus when we saw that our leaders were as able as the others, our self-confidence was stimulated."

Thumayya's most notable participation in international affairs began in May, 1953, when he was appointed Chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission.

CHAPTER XIX

KOREA

The Korean War had begun not long after World War II. The original agreement had been that the Russians were to remove their troops from North Korea and the Americans were to withdraw theirs from South Korea by a certain date. The two Korean governments were to continue, each with its own army, until an agreement for unifying the country could be reached. But shortly after the Americans departed, North Korean troops crossed the border, which had been set at the 38th Parallel, within a few weeks they had overrun most of South Korea. The United Nations labeled this as aggression. Troops from 16 countries went to the aid of the South Koreans. The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) was driven back. The Chinese Communists announced that if the U.N. forces crossed the 38th Parallel, the act would be regarded as a threat to Chinese security. The U.N. commanders decided that the Chinese were bluffing, and sent their forces across the border. They penetrated North Korea almost to the Yalu River. Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) now entered South Korea and cut off the U.N. supply line. The U.N. forces fell back into South Korea. Finally the front was stabilized roughly at the 38th Parallel. Negotiations for an armistice began and continued for 15 months.

During the fighting, the U.N. had captured about 170,000 North Korean and Chinese prisoners. A third of the prisoners asked not to be repatriated. During the armistice talks 40,000 of these U.N.-held 'non repats' were released from the prison camps and were absorbed among the South Koreans. The remaining 22,000 non repats were held in special camps separated

from the prisoners who wanted to return to their own countries. The Communists contended that the UN was holding these prisoners forcibly. They insisted that the non repats should be returned, if necessary by force. The UN Command refused to turn over their non repats to the Communists.

The NKPA and CPV had taken approximately 100,000 prisoners from the UN force. The figure was controversial. Early in the war, the Communists had claimed the capture of 65,000 U.N. troops, and the UN Command had evidence that the figure by the end of the war was greater. Nevertheless, at the negotiations, the Communists never admitted having more than 12,000 prisoners. Of these, 359 were non repats. The UN commanders were concerned about what had happened to at least 50,000 of their men, presumably the Communists either had slaughtered the prisoners or had pressed them into the NKPA-CPV forces. The Communist commanders refused even to discuss the matter.

In the armistice negotiations, both sides quickly agreed to re-establish Korea roughly as it had been before the war had started. No agreement, however, was reached on the matter of the non repat prisoners. Finally the Communists did accept the principle of arbitration.

A five-member arbitrating committee, with the chairman appointed by neutralist India, was acceptable to both sides. Other arbitrators from Communist Poland and Czechoslovakia and from non-Communist Sweden and Switzerland were nominated. The team was called the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC). With the creation of the NNRC, a cease fire in the Korean War was arranged.

Thimayya was appointed chairman of the NNRC. On August 18, 1953, he received instructions concerning his duties from Prime Minister Nehru. The Indian leader pointed out that Thimayya naturally would have personal opinions on the Korea problem. Also, Thimayya probably would feel more at ease with the U.N. personnel, whose cultural background might be more familiar. Nevertheless, Thimayya was to maintain strict neutrality in both his official duties and in his unofficial contacts. These were the only instructions Thimayya received. The Prime Minister ended the interview with the suggestion that henceforth in

the assignment the Terms of Reference would be Thumayya's bible

The Terms of Reference prescribed the procedure of the NNRC. The non repats were to be gathered into camps built in Korea's demilitarized zone (D.Z.) between the UN and the Communist lines. The prisoners were to be guarded by 6,000 Indian troops, called the Custodian Force India (CFI). These troops, as well as the Indian members of the NNRC, also were to be quartered in the D.Z. Thereafter, the non repats would be taken one at a time to explanation booths. Each prisoner would be told *his rights and privileges by men from his homeland*. The prisoner then could choose to go home or to remain with the side that had captured him. The NNRC was limited to 120 days in which to ascertain the desires concerning repatriation of nearly 23,000 prisoners.

To Thumayya, the terms seemed clear enough, and he anticipated no difficulty. "As a soldier, however, I was concerned with the meaning behind the non repats," Timmy said. "Why were they the one aspect of the conflict on which neither side could reach agreement? And why had such a large number, presumably on both sides, become in effect traitors to their cause?"

Thumayya's thinking on these questions followed von Clausewitz. The Prussian military theorist had differentiated sharply between inflicting *defeat* on an enemy and achieving *victory* over him. You defeated an enemy by *disarming* him. The more thoroughly disarmed, however, the more *helpless* the enemy felt. *The more helpless he felt, the more he was afraid. The more afraid he was, the more he hated those who had disarmed him. And the more he hated, the more he wanted to rearm himself and to fight back.* Thus, the more thoroughly an enemy was defeated, the greater was his *will to resist*. Victory was not achieved until the enemy's will to resist also had been overcome.

Previously this had not been too difficult, because wars were fought largely for material gain. You merely had to convince your defeated enemy that the cost of trying to get back what you took from him would be greater than the value of what you took. In an ideological conflict, however, the problem of achieving victory was much more difficult. If your objective was to make

your opponent really believe what you believed, you merely proved that your arguments were invalid the moment you gave up arguing and used force. When you defeated the enemy, you could make him behave as you wanted, but he would reject your beliefs more strongly than before, you were further from your objective than when you had begun to fight. Under these circumstances, Thumayya reasoned, the winning of battles and territory would have little meaning in the Korean War. His study of the tactics employed indicated that the commanders on both sides had been aware of this fact, at least subconsciously. Moreover, the problem of the prisoners now was more understandable. In an ideological conflict, the prisoners represented the one real opportunity for victory. In effect, you had a captive audience to proselytize. Every convert you made was proof to the world of the truth and righteousness of your ideology, and you called your proselytizing "education." Conversely, when the enemy made converts of your men, you called it "brainwashing" rather than admit that any virtue existed in his ideology. The idea that a war should be fought for the purpose of taking prisoners on whom to practice political persuasion was hard to accept. The fact remained, however, that the two sides had reached agreement on every aspect of the conflict except the problem of the non repats. To accept that the enemy had successfully converted some of your men would mean admitting that his ideology was not entirely vicious and that yours was not entirely without weakness. Neither side would make such an admission. "Nevertheless, if both sides could make this admission," Timmy said, "an important step would be taken toward a settlement of the ideological conflict that was threatening the world. The Korean War was the first example of open hostilities between the Communist and non Communist countries, as such, it was a microcosm in which the over-all conflict could be seen. An accurate understanding of the points on which both sides could agree, on which compromise was possible, and on which neither side would retract would be necessary if future hostilities were to be prevented."

This was the viewpoint with which Thumayya approached his assignment. His first official act was to meet General Mark

Clark, then the Commander in Chief of the UN Forces Thumayya arrived in Tokyo in September, 1953, and went to the UN Command headquarters "We covered a great distance of corridors," Timmy said, "passing through corps of clerks, aides, and female receptionists whose attractiveness and hauteur increased as we ascended the icy Everest of military rank. By the time we reached the summit, the office of the Commander in-Chief, one was scarcely able to breathe."

"All of this, however, was in contrast to General Clark himself. I think he was as oblivious to the ostentation around him as he would be to the rigors of the front lines. He was a tall, thin man with a strong face. He spoke with friendly directness, and I felt that he was every inch a soldier."

The American General William K. Harrison had represented the UN Command in the armistice conferences and now would be Thumayya's top contact with the non-Communist side. General Harrison had the reputation of being cold, austere, and over religious. He was unpopular. Thumayya, however, came to respect him. "I felt that General Harrison had a simplicity and straightforwardness that we Asians seldom associate with the allegedly supermaterialistic Westerners," he said.

The American commanders were in complete contrast to the North Korean and Chinese officers, whom Thumayya met when he arrived in the DZ. The NKPA was represented by Lieutenant General Lee Sang-cho. "He was a short, stocky young man, dressed in a smart Russian-style uniform," Timmy said. "General Ting Kuo-yu, who commanded the CPV, seemed even younger, although he was a full general. These men and their staff officers seemed mere boys. They all had great dignity, but they strained, I felt, to give the impression that they were just plain simple types, ignorant of ostentation. There was a stoical sameness about them. It was difficult to view them as individuals. One saw them, rather, as a group of players acting out a carefully defined role."

In dealing with the Communist commanders, Thumayya found that they were utterly consistent. Decisions were made promptly. They never disagreed among themselves. They were stubborn, once the commanders arrived at a conclusion, they themselves

never backed down, although Thumayya discovered that compromises sometimes could be reached by having his junior officers approach theirs. And finally, they always differentiated between Thumayya and his job. "Thus, after hours of heated argument," Timmy said, "they could turn off their indignation like a tap and as easily turn on their charm."

The U.N. officers, conversely, treated the negotiations on a more personal basis. "I felt," Timmy said, "that my personal stock with the U.N. people rose or fell according to the value of my decisions to the U.N. side. The press followed these ups and downs and exaggerated them. I was always either a hero or a villain—nothing in between."

The U.N. also was at a disadvantage in that their command was in distant Tokyo. The Communist officers were only a few miles away and could be reached any time, day or night, for an immediate decision. Liaison officers were supplied to Thumayya by the U.N., but they had little authority and even less understanding of the situation.

A lack of understanding of Asia and Asians was the greatest deficiency of the U.N. commanders. As an example, the U.N. officers, when preparing for the NNRC delegates, had wanted to know if Thumayya would require translators, they thought that he and his men would speak "Indian." "At first I thought the Americans were merely being polite," Timmy said, "but later I realized that they knew appallingly little about our part of the world." Unquestionably, this had an adverse effect on the U.N. case. Often the wrong approach was used in trying to win concessions from the Chinese and North Koreans. Although the U.N. people were as adamant as their opponents on matters of principle, the arguments with which their representatives defended their principles were sometimes based on faulty information. And often when the arguments could have been valid, they lost force because the U.N. representatives contradicted each other.

Despite such weaknesses, the U.N. case was clear. The Western democracies emphasized the importance of the individual. Thus if a prisoner expressed the wish not to be returned to his own country, the Westerners felt morally obligated to respect his wish.

The UN people feared that if they returned their non repats, the Communists might take reprisals against the prisoners. Thumayya was aware that the U.N Command was motivated by humanitarian concern

The Chinese and North Koreans were motivated less by individual rights. In Asia, a person had powerful obligations to his family, clan, caste, or community, and his personal desires generally were subordinate to the will of his group. The group protected the individual, who invariably felt a strong attachment to it. On this basis, the Communists took the stand that to separate a person from his group was the worst possible cruelty. Even if the U.N held non repats were not being detained by physical force, the Communists said, they had endured mental coercion which amounted to the same.

Thumayya was unable to determine what the North Korean and Chinese commanders really felt about the U.N held non repats. The Communists presented their case with cold logic and legal hair splitting. Part of their motivation concerned face-saving, the Americans in particular had used the fact of the U.N held non repats in anti Communist propaganda. The Communists wanted to refute the propaganda by proving that the non repats had been coerced. The UN people were equally anxious to prove that their non repats were genuinely anti Communist. To the extent that such attitudes dominated the thinking of both sides, the non repat prisoners were given little personal consideration, they were pawns in the ideological cold war. Thumayya became anxious to see for himself the non repat prisoners who were the cause of so much acrimony.

The prisoners began to arrive in the DZ on September 10, 1953. Before that, however, Thumayya had his first experience with conflict between the two commands concerning interpretation of the Terms of Reference which both sides had signed. The terms mentioned that observer teams, made up of officers from each side, were permitted to watch the operations of the NNRC. One such operation was the turning over of the prisoners to the Indian troops. The UN Command came out against the presence of such teams saying that the teams would cause commotion among the prisoners. The Communist commanders in-

sisted on the presence of the teams. The NNRC put the matter to a vote. The terms appeared, to all the NNRC members, to permit the teams. The feeling was that any commotion among the prisoners could be stopped by the CFI troops. The vote, therefore, was unanimous in favor of the teams. Thimayya received criticism from U.N. officers who accused him of being pro-Communist.

Thimayya could not understand why the U.N. people were against the observers. Their objection made them appear to have something to hide. The process of transferring the prisoners seemed simple, he could not believe that it would be other than orderly.

"Thus, I was unprepared for the terrific row that accompanied the prisoners' arrival," Timmy said. "They marched in with flags flying and bands blaring. They were shouting slogans and gesticulating wildly. I thought the demonstration seemed unnecessarily colorful, but I could think of no reason to try stopping it."

The prisoners were put into a compound, and the processing began. The men were brought out in batches of 25 and taken one at a time to a table where their identity cards were checked against the roster. Each prisoner was searched for hidden weapons, given tea and cake, and assigned to his camp. The first two batches went through quickly and quietly. A man in the third batch, however, suddenly noticed the Communist officers in the observer teams. He communicated the news to the other waiting prisoners. Immediately, bedlam broke loose. Several prisoners broke away, rushed to the table, and caught the Communist officer. They would have killed him if the Indian troops had not forcibly removed them. Meanwhile, the other prisoners rioted. They tore down wire and hurled stones and abuse at the Communists. The Indian troops were armed only with sticks, but they managed to restore order. Thereafter the prisoners were sullen and tense. The observer teams were a nuisance, Thimayya realized, but the Communist commanders still refused to give them up. Finally, Thimayya had the teams put behind wire so far away that they could not be seen by the prisoners. This

saved everyone's face, but Thimayya was still criticized by the Western press

He was criticized by the Communist press because of another incident that also happened on the first day. As one of the prisoners approached the table, he suddenly swerved and threw himself at an Indian guard, sobbing and pleading. The Indians learned that he wanted to be repatriated and that he had been held forcibly as a non-repat by his companions. The other prisoners began to demonstrate again. A few minutes after order had been restored, another prisoner broke away to ask for repatriation. This time, however, his companions caught him. They tried to trample him to death. The *jawans* barely managed to save him.

These occurrences seemed to uphold the claim made by the Communists. The Communist commanders insisted that the prisoners should be separated from the groups that had been formed in the UN camps. The Communists said that the UN had planted agents who organized the prisoners into groups that would resist repatriation. Thus, reshuffling of the prisoners would break up the organized groups. Each camp was made for 500 men, the process of distributing each batch of 25 men throughout the camps was more complicated than putting 500 men at a time into one camp. Nevertheless, after the two prisoners requested repatriation, the NNRC did try the reshuffling. The delegates learned that the prisoners had been promised by the UN officers that the groups would not be broken up, indeed the prisoners agreed to Indian custody only if they could remain grouped as they had been. Moreover, the prisoners resisted reshuffling attempts so strenuously that the CFI could not have enforced it.

The Communists did not agree. They insisted that if the Indians used machine guns, the prisoners would accept. Thimayya refused. "Aside from humanitarian reasons," Timmy said, "I knew that the use of real force would mean the refusal of the remaining twenty thousand-odd POWs to accept CFI custody."

Such complications and conflicts were merely the prelude to

the difficulties Thumayya and the NNRC faced when the explanations began. After the booths were erected, problems concerning observer teams, translators, the time allotment for explanation to each prisoner, and how to give explanations to hospitalized prisoners caused endless bickering. Also, at first the prisoners distrusted the Indians, and winning their co-operation required much patience.

Nevertheless, the explanations finally began. The UN-held prisoners were taken one at a time to booths where Communist officers explained the prisoner's rights and harangued him about Communism. The prisoner then could choose a gateway, one led to repatriation and the other back to his camp. Many prisoners reacted violently to the sight of the Communist officers and had to be restrained from doing violence to them. Others shouted slogans, sang, or made so much noise that they could not hear the explanations. Most of the prisoners sat numbly, waited until the officers had finished speaking, and then chose to go back to their camp.

Four per cent of the prisoners, however, did choose repatriation. The percentage was consistent throughout the explanation period. Moreover, these men gave evidence that they had been forced by their group to resist repatriation. This fact was embarrassing to the UN Command, propaganda had been spread in the West to the effect that their entire 22,000 non-repats were sincere anti-Communists. The fact that even 4 per cent were not suggested that coercion of some kind had been used.

The UN people denied that they had used persuasion on their prisoners. They also denied that they were secretly contacting the non repats in the DZ camps, to keep the prisoners worked up to refuse repatriation. One night at a party, however, an American officer who had drunk too much bragged to Thumayya that his unit was contacting the non repats. He said that radio receiver sets were smuggled into the camps in sacks of potatoes. The next day, Thumayya had the sacks checked and, sure enough, American radios were found. The UN case was weakened.

If the UN Command was embarrassed by the 4 per cent who chose repatriation, the Communists were even more embarrassed

by the 96 per cent who did not. No one could doubt that the majority of non repats were opposed to being sent back to Communist China or North Korea. Nevertheless, the Communists still maintained that the UN held non repats were being coerced into refusing repatriation. The Communists increased their demands that the camp groups should be broken up, if necessary by force. The use of force would have made discipline among the prisoners impossible, obviously the Communists would prefer to have the NNRC collapse in this manner in order to draw attention from the failure of their explanations. Finally, the Communists lengthened the explanations to several hours for each prisoner. This was almost torture to the prisoners, but still only 4 per cent chose repatriation. The lengthened explanations also made the prisoners more bitter, many refused to attend, and the others would agree to attend only after much persuasion. Finally, the lengthened explanations meant that not all the prisoners could be sent through within the allotted time.

As the period drew to a close, the 359 non repats held by the Communists were given explanations by UN officers. The UN officers were outfitted in rich American uniforms with expensive wrist watches and cigarette cases much in evidence. Soft music was played in the background. The appeal leaned heavily on the sentimental, with tearful messages from mothers, children, and sweethearts. These non repats were Communists, however, and they spurned the approach. In fact, they were politically more sophisticated than the explainers and would engage the UN officers in debates. The sentimental approach with these men could not have been less effective. Oddly enough, Thumayya pointed out, sentiment might have been more effective with the UN-held non repats who were less sophisticated, the Communist explainers however, had used dialectics that were over the prisoners' heads.

Thus the explanations on both sides ended in failure. The NNRC itself might be considered a failure because not all of the UN held non repats received explanations. The remaining prisoners merely returned to UN custody. Later, most of the non repats were absorbed into the South Korean Army.

Nevertheless, Thumayya felt that many lessons were learned

from the experience "The most obvious lesson," he said, "was that the non repats should never have been allowed in the first place. Both sides lost more than they gained because of them. In a future war, the troops on both sides should be told that all prisoners will be returned when hostilities cease. What one side can do with psychological tricks on prisoners, the other side also can do. A few prisoners from either side might be unhappy at being sent home, but the majority would be better off."

If the problem of non repats nevertheless should arise, Thimayya believed that both sides should appreciate the limited capabilities of arbitration. "Arbitrators can be useful only when both sides are capable of compromise," Timmy said. "After the Korean War, the Terms of Reference signed by both sides seemed to represent an area of mutual agreement. All that had happened, however, was that the document had been written vaguely enough so that each side could read into it its own interpretation. Neither side had really compromised at all. Thus every decision made by the arbitrators was unacceptable to one side or the other. Only the fact that both belligerents understood the futility of further hostilities prevented the NNRC from being a total failure."

The real failure had not come because the separate viewpoints were irreconcilable, but because each side committed acts which, on the basis of its own concepts of right and wrong, were reprehensible.

The U.N., for example, based its reasoning on the principle that each individual had the right of free choice. To say that the 22,000 simple Chinese and North Korean prisoners they held had a free choice was stretching the meaning of the term too far. All but a handful were simple peasants, not unlike the *jawns*. The prisoners were barely literate. Thimayya proved to himself that none really understood the difference between the conflicting ideologies or had made a real political choice. True, most of them were afraid to go home, but their reasons had little to do with politics. Some had been taught to be afraid of the Communists. Others had been filled with glowing but vague promises about their future in the non Communist world, many, for example, had been given official looking but spurious documents

that presumably guaranteed citizenship in the United States "These cruelly deluded prisoners," Timmy said, "had visions of owning motorcars and of cavorting with film stars in America. Ultimately they were disillusioned, but they refused to believe the unpleasant truth as long as they could "

The Communists based their stand on the cruelty of denying simple Asian peasants the chance to go home. The stand was weakened by the Communist insistence that the arbitrators should shoot the non repats who refused to co-operate. Ninety-six per cent of the U.N-held non repats may not have been politically anti Communists but they certainly did not want repatriation. Moreover, although the Communists refused to discuss the matter, approximately 50 000 prisoners taken from the U.N forces remained unaccounted for. Most of these were simple Asian peasants, and whatever had happened to them, they were not being allowed to go home.

In short, if each side had merely lived up to its own stated principles, the whole problem of the non repats would not have arisen, untold suffering would have been prevented.

Thumayya completed his assignment in April, 1954. When he left Korea, the commanders on both sides admitted that he had arbitrated fairly and that his neutrality had been sincere. In India this admission was considered an important event. Previously, in the cold war, each side had regarded its own ideology as wholly virtuous and the enemy's as utterly vicious. Thus the simple act of accepting the possibility of neutrality in the conflict meant the admission by both sides that virtue and vice existed in both ideologies. To the Indian leaders, this one achievement represented a small but necessary step forward and proved that their nonalignment policy was constructive.

Thumayya returned to India, therefore, in triumph. The government awarded him the *Padma Bushan* medal, and Prime Minister Nehru commended him. More important, Thumayya increased his own stature. From now on, success in his career was assured.

CHAPTER XX

NEW DELHI

Thumayya was exhausted from his Korea experiences, in Simla his duties in the Western Command now seemed like a vacation. A year later, in May, 1955, however, he was moved to Poona to take over the Southern Command, and he had to contend once again with trouble from the Pakistanis.

The trouble took place in the *Chad Bet*, a desert region along India's west coast. The area was too dry to support permanent settlers, but Pakistanis began to infiltrate it. Presumably, they were motivated by a rumor that oil was under the sand. The infiltrators, protected by Pakistani troops, refused to return to their side of the border. Officials in Delhi and Karachi feared that open warfare would break out.

Thumayya dispatched a motorized battalion with orders to move into the area at top speed. Despite poor roads, the unit pushed forward without rest, and soon was in contact with the Pakistanis. Instead of a frontal attack, Thumayya had his men fan out on both sides of the Pak position. When the infiltrators realized that they might be surrounded, they withdrew so hurriedly that they left their cooking fires and warm food. The whole incident was over within a few hours.

Back in Delhi, the officials were excitedly alerting the air force to go to the aid of the Indian attack. "Meanwhile, we in the desert were doing a lot of killing," Timmy said. "The area was stiff with partridge. We shot enough so that with the food left us by the Pakistanis we had a fine feast."

Thumayya had no picnic, however, when he was moved to the

Eastern Command to contend with the Naga troubles in August of 1956. The Nagas were aboriginals on India's northeast borders. World War II and the rapidly changing times brought the proud Nagas into unavoidable contact with modern civilization. They did not like it, and they attempted by force to break away from the Indian Union. The army was called in to bring the Nagas back under control. The Assam Regiment and the Assam Rifles were used in this action, 30 per cent of these men were Nagas. The Naga troops suffered loyalty conflict, members of their families often were among the insurgents. In no instance, however, did the Naga troops waver in their loyalty to their regiments.

Finally, on May 8, 1957, Thimayya was promoted to full general, and he took over as Chief of the Army Staff, the highest post in the Indian Army. "It was the climax of my thirty-one years of service and of course a proud moment for me," Timmy said. "I remembered that other moment in Burma when I had taken command of the battalion. This moment was similar. These new responsibilities were greater, but the burden seemed lighter than before. I think this was simply because I now had many more men to help me carry it. Although I had learned to know personally the men in my battalion, I had thought of the battalion as a unit, it was an instrument assigned to me to use as effectively as possible. I could not, however, think of the army as a unit. I saw it instead as made up of separate individuals held together less by military regulation than by shared experience, common duties, and similar problems.

"A soldier's problems today stem from the fact that, now, the irresponsible use of military force could destroy the human race. A soldier therefore has a greater responsibility to society than he ever had before in history and his duty is to learn to carry that responsibility well. To this end, his experience, or training, must make him into the kind of citizen who is beyond narrow attachments to class and province and above the passions of political conflict.

In the ideological conflict that presently divides the earth into two worlds, I feel that the *Javans* and their countrymen

occupy a unique position. Our geography and history have forced us into both worlds. It is easy for us, therefore, to accept that people are basically the same everywhere and that they struggle toward the same goals. Only ideas on how to reach the goals differ. An idea may be right or wrong but it cannot be evil in itself, evil is in the hatred toward someone with different ideas or in the effort to force ideas on others. If the ideological conflict is to be resolved without destroying us all, someone somewhere must consider the conflicting ideas dispassionately and separate the useful from the useless. Is it too idealistic of us to hope that we can make some contribution to this effort?"

Perhaps the most remarkable contribution made by Thimayya and his men was the effectiveness with which they adapted to great change. Until 1947, they were really mercenaries. They were hired and trained to follow officers of a foreign country whose national objectives they were to help achieve even when those objectives were against India. Since 1947, they have become patriots.

The transition could not have been easy. In the older Indian officers particularly, signs of conflict are evident. They cannot avoid a feeling of identification with that which they considered good in the past. But they also feel identification with the new India which, in effect, repudiates the past. What kind of Indians does that make them? In short, who precisely are they?

To Thimayya the question came when he received the request for leopard skins from an old officer of the Highland Light Infantry. I knew that he was delighted by the request, and that he was proud of having belonged to this fine Scottish regiment. I knew also that, on our tiger shoot, the old *shikari* had never allowed him to beat for leopard. The next time I saw Timmy, therefore, I asked about the furs.

"I had to buy them," Timmy admitted, "but I found some really fine pelts and sent them to the Highland Light Infantry."

A few weeks later, the H.L.I. had staged a Changing of the Colours ceremony. After presenting the new flags, Her Royal Highness complimented the regimental commander on the band's

beautiful leopard furs and asked where he had obtained them
"They were sent to us," the commander replied, "by an old
Indian Army man "

The moment Timmy told me this story, I knew that he had
found the answer to the question concerning his own identity

" 'An old Indian Army man,' the H L I commander called
me But he was wrong," Timmy said.

"I'm a new Indian Army man "