Forgotten Men: Post-war memory of Indian Prisoners of War of the Japanese in World War Two

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Short Abstract

During World War Two some sixty-seven thousand Indian personnel of the British Indian Army were captured by Imperial Japanese forces, including a large number at the surrender of Singapore in February 1942. This thesis examines why these colonial Prisoners of War were largely forgotten in the post-war period, and therefore represents a case study in the formation of British wartime historical memory. It does so by addressing three questions, relating to the impact of evidence that some Indian prisoners were disloyal, the role of British colonial propaganda, and the unavailability of important documentary sources. It argues that the process of forgetting can be understood in terms of three active memory practices, namely: suppression; obscuration; and selection. Examples of how each of these have impacted British memory of Indian prisoners are provided within the thesis. These practices acted in a colonial context within which a pertinent element was a "myth of loyalty", namely the idea that, whatever may have occurred in captivity, most Indian prisoners stayed fundamentally loyal to the British. Newly available sources, in particular records from British Military Intelligence, allow a reassessment of such narratives. The thesis consists of an Introduction, four thematic chapters, and a conclusion. The first thematic chapter examines British responses to the loss and recovery of Indian prisoners. The second chapter examines how the experiences of Indian prisoners were remembered. The third examines how those Indian prisoners who fought against British forces later in the war, were often marginalised and forgotten in British accounts. While the fourth reviews post-war war-crimes trials of Japanese military personnel where the victims were Indian prisoners, the focus being the effect on trial outcomes of British suppression of knowledge regarding Indian prisoners. Throughout, the emphasis is on the role of forgetting in the management of unpalatable truths.

Long Abstract

Forgotten Men: Post-war memory of Indian Prisoners of War of the Japanese in World War Two

During World War Two some sixty-seven thousand Indian personnel of the British Indian Army were captured by Imperial Japanese forces, including a large number at the surrender of Singapore in February 1942. This thesis examines why these colonial Prisoners of War were largely forgotten in the post-war period, and therefore represents a case study in the formation of British wartime historical memory. What is remembered of these men is largely confined to the twenty thousand who served in the Indian National Army (INA), formed to fight against British colonial rule in India, and it is argued that the existence of the INA has profoundly affected the post-war representation of all Indian prisoners in British accounts, including helping to foster a broad forgetting of those prisoners. The secondary literature contains little information on this large group of captured British Commonwealth troops, in stark contrast to the extensive coverage given to the experiences of British and Australian prisoners of the Japanese.

Newly available archival sources, in particular records created by wartime British Military Intelligence, combined with other sources such as memoirs and the proceedings of post-war Japanese war-crimes trials, provide the opportunity to examine the experiences of these marginalised Indian prisoners, and investigate the foundations of the existing secondary literature. The theoretical framework utilised draws on the theories of sociologist Karl Mannheim relating to the formation and transmission of generational memory. Mannheim's conception of a generation is not bounded just by time, but also emphasises the importance

of a shared lived experience or ‘generation as actuality’, contained within which are distinct ‘generation units’. It is argued that the British military officers and associated colonial officials in wartime British India, as part of the wider wartime generation, comprised a ‘generation unit’ with broadly consistent views on the INA and the perceived treachery that it represented. These views, along with wartime exigencies, informed the policies adopted regarding Indian prisoners by the military authorities and colonial state. These included the suppression of information relating to them both during and after the war, and also how the INA was later either ignored or denigrated in post-war British officer memoirs. The overall result has been a broad forgetting of the Indian prisoners. Forgetting in this context is not inadvertent but is instead an active social process, occurring within a particular historical context, and taking particular forms. Surprisingly, existing scholarship has paid relatively little attention to the role that forgetting plays in the development of historical memory.

This thesis argues that in relation to the development of historical memory relating to Indian prisoners, the process of forgetting can be understood in terms of three complementary processes, namely: suppression; obscuration; and selection. Examples of how each of these have impacted the historical memory of Indian prisoners are provided within the thesis. For suppression, these include the fact that some important documents are missing from the available archives, while the long delay, of fifty years or more, before the release into the public domain of relevant British Military Intelligence records, has inevitably curtailed previous opportunities for research. Another manifestation was the suppression of information on the INA in later British memoirs. For obscuration, it is argued that the influence of a construct termed a *facade* is central, examples being wartime propaganda which remains uncorrected in the post-war period, or forms of remembrance that imply that all the Indian troops commemorated had remained loyal, although some had not. While

selection includes the practice of highlighting episodes or individual Indian prisoners that exemplify desirable behaviour from a British perspective, while ignoring those who did not. One example would be the emphasis in later Regimental histories on those Indian prisoners awarded medals for resisting recruitment into the INA, a category of prisoner that has had a considerable impact on British post-war memory of Indian prisoners.

Taken together, the impact of these three complementary activities has resulted in the repression of knowledge regarding the disloyalty of many Indian prisoners, while simultaneously contributing to the generation of a "myth of loyalty", albeit a fragile one. For the British, this was not myth as synonym for lie, but myth acting as credo: in part an act of faith; in part a necessary fiction. Its mythogenesis was rooted in the ethos of the Regiment, the foundational organisational structure of the British Indian Army. It is argued that the loyalty of Indian personnel was socially constructed within the context of the Regiment, which manifested what constituted an infrastructure of loyalty, including: the personal relations between officers and men; the status derived from service and rank; and various financial rewards. The assertion of the animating narrative of the "myth of loyalty", combined with the associated forgetting, fulfilled its purpose for British officers and colonial officials, of avoiding the need to confront the reality of what had occurred among Indian prisoners, either during the war or in the post-war period.

The thesis addresses three core questions: *How did the formation of the INA influence the way in which Indian prisoners were remembered and represented in official British discourse and other sources such as memoirs? How did British colonial propaganda (broadly defined), during and after the war, shape the memory of Indian prisoners? How was memory of Indian prisoners constrained by official documentary sources remaining*

confidential for many decades after the war, and to what extent can these sources be considered complete?

The thesis consists of an Introductory chapter, four thematic chapters, and a concluding chapter. The first thematic chapter examines British colonial and military responses to the loss and recovery of Indian prisoners. News of the creation of the INA in 1942 precipitated considerable alarm within the British colonial state, with one response involving enhanced propaganda emphasising the loyalty of Indian troops. The alignment of such wartime propaganda with the "myth of loyalty" ensured that it was not corrected in the post-war period, becoming one of the foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners. Victory over the Japanese in 1945 brought wartime censorship by the colonial state to an end, exposing the suppressed truth of the INA to Indian public scrutiny. The subsequent public courts-martial of INA officers at the Red Fort at the end of 1945 ended in humiliation for the colonial state when Indian public opinion compelled the release of the officers, despite them having been convicted of serious military offenses. The outcome exposed to public view the post-war fragility of the British colonial edifice. It is argued that the trials had a traumatic impact on British officers and officials, reinforcing the importance of the "myth of loyalty" in later accounts.

The second chapter examines how the experiences of Indian prisoners were remembered and the way this has been portrayed in later accounts. It begins with an examination of mortality rates between different groups of Indian prisoners, the patterns they reveal, and the way that mortality rates were portrayed in the post-war period by the British authorities. This analysis challenges the British post-war assertion that those Indian prisoners who joined the INA experienced a lower death rate than those who did not. A series of case

studies of different groups of Indian prisoners are then provided to illustrate the wide range of Indian prisoner experience. These include attempts to recruit Gurkha troops into the INA in 1942, the experiences of a group of Indian prisoners sent as labourers to Hanoi, Indian Anti-Aircraft gunners who served with Japanese forces, and the provision of medical services to Indian prisoners in Singapore by Indian medical personnel. The evidence relating to claims that Indian prisoners became victims of Japanese anthropophagy in New Guinea is then reviewed, and although some of the evidence is challenged, it is argued that new sources confirm that anthropophagy did occur. Finally, the impact on post-war memory of how those Indian prisoners who died have been portrayed on British war memorials is examined, using the memorial at Kranji in Singapore as an example. This demonstrates how Indian personnel who died while serving in the INA were portrayed as loyal by British authorities in the post-war period.

The third chapter examines the portrayal of the combat performance of the INA from a British perspective. Western military accounts are dismissive of the INA's impact (for example the work of Sundaram) with many relying on the negative opinions of key British officers such as General Slim. This chapter uses newly available British Military Intelligence sources, to reassess the role of the INA during the Imphal campaign in 1944 and in Burma in 1945, examining their derogatory portrayal in British accounts such as that of Slim, and the impact that the suppression of knowledge regarding the INA had on the secondary literature in the post-war period. Engagements examined where INA involvement has been suppressed, include the subversion of captured Indian paratroopers following the battle at Sangshak in March 1944, and a failed river assault by a British battalion during operations to cross the river Irrawaddy in Burma in March 1945. The chapter also examines the

circumstances surrounding the largely forgotten executions of INA personnel conducted by British military authorities during the war, and the deaths in British custody of others.

The fourth chapter examines a subject that until recently had been largely ignored: post-war Japanese war-crimes trials where the victims were Indian prisoners. The archival material relating to these represent a rich but underused source, providing insights into a wide range of Indian prisoner experience. Four trials have been selected (three British, one Australian) to illustrate the range of experiences present in the trial records. The first trial involves the beheading of an Indian prisoner by a Japanese officer, a trial that opens to scrutiny the inter-personal dynamics between Japanese personnel and Indian prisoners. Their radically different interpretations of events reflect the power differential between guard and prisoner. The next trial demonstrates how unrelated events could nonetheless be captured by trial proceedings – in this case how an American submarine crew shot survivors from a ship they had sunk, including Indian prisoners. The details of this event only entered the trial record due to the intervention of Indian witnesses, notwithstanding the fact that it had no bearing on the charges brought against the Japanese accused. The last two trials, one of which was conducted by Australian authorities, examine the impact that the suppression of British intelligence information on the behaviour of Indian prisoners in captivity, had on trial outcomes. It is argued that this suppression of knowledge led to miscarriages of justice, with, in the Australian case, an arguably unfair conviction of the Japanese accused occurring, while in the British case, there was an unjustified acquittal of Japanese personnel who had been accused of a massacre of Indian prisoners in Borneo.

In summary, the British authorities suppressed information on aspects of Indian prisoner experience during the war and in the post-war period, particularly with respect to those who

served in the INA but also for those who did not, an approach that represented an explicit act of forgetting. Indeed, many important archival sources have only recently become available, although in some significant cases material appears to be missing. Nonetheless, what has become available, combined with other primary sources, allows a reassessment of significant aspects of Indian prisoner experience, including that of the majority of captured Indian personnel who never served in the INA.

British colonial anxieties relating to the conduct of Indian prisoners during World War Two had a long antecedence rooted in the so-called 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857. With the British receiving the first detailed news of the creation of the INA in the months following the 'Quit India' revolt in 1942, it is unsurprising that the dominant British reaction was, where possible, to suppress information relating to it, given that its existence raised serious doubts about the reliability of the Indian Army in general. In addition, the associated colonial propaganda resulted in a simplistic post-war memory of Indian prisoners that was binary in nature: they were either 'loyal' or not, with no acknowledgement of the nuances in behaviour evident in British intelligence sources. The experiences of the former INA personnel who were sent as labourers to New Guinea by the Japanese, and died in large numbers, exemplifies the limitations of such a portrayal in conveying the complexities of Indian prisoner experience. The difficulty with acknowledging such realities was that it risked opening to scrutiny how Indian prisoners *en masse* had actually behaved. One example of this from the standard British account, is the emphasis placed in official statements on the fact that only twenty thousand served in the INA, while the colonial authorities were well aware that many more had been willing to serve but had been prevented from doing so by the Japanese – a fact that is never mentioned. It was far more comforting from a colonial

perspective to publicly focus on the lower number who actually served in the INA and re-appropriate the others.

The nature of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners of the Japanese is addressed in this thesis through three questions, relating to the impact of the creation of the INA, the role of colonial propaganda, and the unavailability of documentary sources. It is argued that the historical evidence now available, suggests that British colonial anxieties regarding the loyalty of Indian troops drove a forgetting that was manifested in three active memory practices termed, suppression, obscuration, and selection. These memory practices are structural in form and therefore have a universal character, rather than being indexical to the field of enquiry represented by Indian Prisoners of War. They can therefore be expected to be found in other historical contexts where forgetting has shaped historical memory. The approaching centenary of the outbreak of World War Two provides a natural focus for reassessing established narratives, particularly for marginalised groups such as Indian Prisoners of War. The examination of how British memory of these Indian prisoners was shaped, represents a valuable case study in the development of historical memory and particularly the role of forgetting in the management of unpalatable truths.

Dedication

To my wife Joanna, whose support and encouragement has been unwavering.

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This research would have been impossible without the help and assistance of the staff of many archives in Britain, India, and Australia. I will always remain grateful. And finally, an acknowledgement for the individual who unknowingly set me on this research journey. Hugh Toye, wartime military intelligence officer, author, and later Oxford scholar, whose donation of military intelligence documentation to the British Library, provided the catalyst for my journey into the world of the forgotten men.

List of Abbreviations

AA – Anti-Aircraft

AAS – Asian and African Studies collection, British Library, London

ANU – Australian National University, Canberra

AWM – Australian War Memorial, Canberra

BOD – The Bodleian Library, Oxford

CSDIC(I) – Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (India)

CWGC – Commonwealth War Graves Commission

DSO – Distinguished Service Order

GMA – Gurkha Museum Archive, Winchester

GO – Gurkha Officer

HKSRA – Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery

ICO – Indian Commissioned Officer

IGH – Indian General Hospital

IIL – Indian Independence League

IJA – Imperial Japanese Army

INA – Indian National Army

IMS – Indian Medical Service

IWM – Imperial War Museum, London

KCIO – King's Commissioned Indian Officer

NAI – The National Archives of India, New Delhi

NAM – National Army Museum, Chelsea, London

NMML – Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

POW – Prisoner of War

RIASC – Royal Indian Army Service Corp

TNA – The National Archives, Kew, London

VCO – Viceroy Commissioned Officer

Maps

Map 1: Key locations mentioned in text, p.xv.

Map 2: Japanese offensives against India, 1944, p.200.

Map 1: Key locations mentioned in text

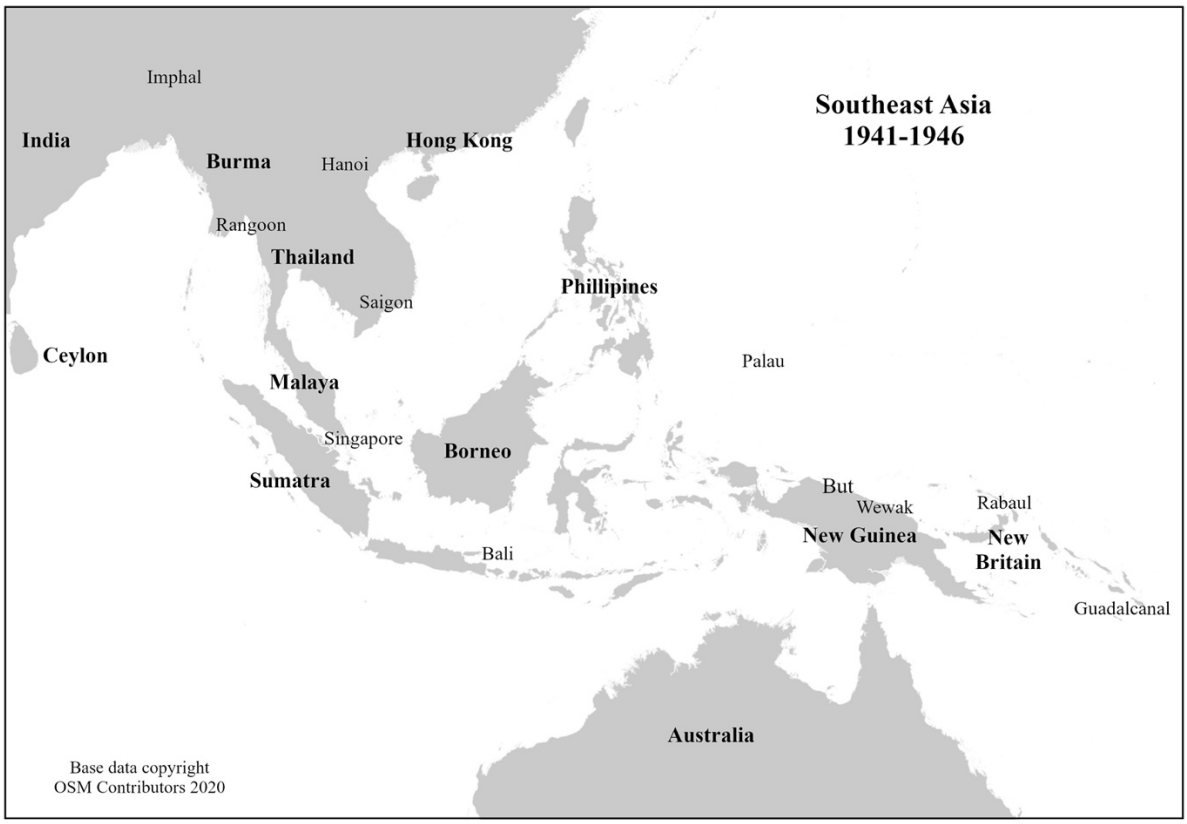


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Introduction

In November 1945, the British aircraft carrier HMS *Formidable* arrived in Bombay, India, (modern Mumbai) carrying thirteen hundred former Indian Prisoners of War (POWs) of the Japanese. A *Times of India* newspaper report entitled 'Great welcome to Indian POWS' provides a vivid description of the episode, describing how, as the ship sailed in, the 'white-clad sailors lining the bows presented a colourful contrast with the jungle-green of the troops massed deep, rank on rank, on the flight deck'.[1] These former Indian prisoners in their new jungle-green uniforms, had mostly been captured by the Japanese in 1942 during the Malayan campaign, and were drawn largely from Punjab and Dogra infantry regiments. Once the aircraft carrier had docked, the former prisoners were welcomed with an elaborate ceremony involving bands and speeches, including a message of welcome in Urdu (the *lingua franca* of the army) read on behalf of General Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Indian Army. This was followed by an elaborate tea for the men 'in the gaily decorated baggage shed', served by fifty women from welfare organisations in Bombay, wearing their 'white and blue […] uniform saris and dresses'.[2]

The most senior former prisoner on board HMS *Formidable* was an Indian officer named Lieutenant Nigam of 2/17 Dogra Regiment, and when interviewed he described how 'those who refused to join the Indian National Army were taken in batches for labour elsewhere', in his case to Rabaul in the Southwest Pacific, where excessive work and poor food led to the deaths of many Indian prisoners.[3] The military force mentioned by Lieutenant Nigam

[1] 'Great Welcome To Indian POWS', *The Times of India*, 14 November 1945, p.5.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

called the Indian National Army (INA), or *Azad Hind Fauj* (Free India Army), would have been familiar to contemporary readers of the *Times of India* as an organisation that some Indian prisoners captured by the Japanese had joined, with a number going on to fight against British forces in Burma and elsewhere. The existence of the INA indicates that the experience of Indian troops as prisoners of the Japanese had a dimension that was missing from the experiences of their British and Australian counterparts captured at the same time. Nonetheless, as other information provided by Nigam showed, for many Indian prisoners, their experiences were similar, with inadequate food and overwork among common themes.

The experiences as prisoners of those who arrived in Bombay on HMS *Formidable* will be returned to later in the thesis, but they were just a few of the approximately fifty-five thousand former Indian prisoners of the Japanese repatriated to India from across Southeast Asia during and after World War Two.[4] These were the survivors of sixty-seven thousand Indian troops of the British Indian Army captured by the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) during the war.[5] This thesis examines why these Indian prisoners were largely forgotten in the post-war period, and therefore represents a case study in the formation of British wartime historical memory. One effect of this forgetting is that the secondary literature contains little information on this large group of captured British imperial troops, in stark contrast to the extensive coverage of the experiences of British and Australian prisoners of the Japanese.

Within this context, this thesis addresses three core questions relating to British memory of Indian prisoners of the Japanese: *How did the formation of the INA influence the way in which Indian prisoners were remembered and represented in official British discourse and*

[4] A detailed analysis of casualty figures is provided in Chapter Two.
[5] S. Woodburn Kirby, *The War Against Japan: Volume I, The Loss of Singapore* (London: H.M.S.O, 1957), p.473.

other sources such as memoirs? How did British colonial propaganda (broadly defined), during and after the war, shape British memory of Indian prisoners? How has memory of Indian prisoners been constrained by official documentary sources remaining confidential for many decades after the war, and to what extent can these sources be considered complete? The necessary foundation for addressing these questions is understanding what happened to Indian troops while they were prisoners of the Japanese. This is an important field of enquiry in itself, because, as will be seen below, there is currently a dearth of information on these Indian prisoners in the secondary literature.

The remainder of this Introductory Chapter is divided into seven sections. These are: an examination of the secondary literature relating to Indian prisoners; an overview of the key events involving Indian prisoners and the INA; a review of the relevant primary sources and archives available; a section addressing the epistemological challenges associated with utilising military intelligence sources created within a colonial context; an outline of a theoretical framework relating to memory and forgetting, which has been applied to the particular case of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners; a description of the methodology employed during the research; and finally, an outline of the remaining chapters in the thesis.

Literature review

The Indian troops captured by the Japanese during World War Two served in the British Indian Army, a force that has inspired an extensive secondary literature. The army acted as the ultimate guarantor of British colonial rule in India, and its institutional history has been examined in a variety of works. Of older published work, Philip Mason's *A Matter of*

Honour spans the army's full history, from its origins in the eighteenth century until the end of British rule in 1947.[6] More recent work includes Kaushik Roy's *The Army in British India*, that with respect to World War Two emphasises the negative impact, in terms of dilution of experience within units, that rapid expansion of the army had on its effectiveness prior to the campaigns in 1942, and how it was only able to match the IJA later in the conflict through a combination of better training and tactics.[7] Daniel Marston's recent *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, utilises an impressive array of primary and secondary sources to outline the history of the army through World War Two and up to independence.[8] Marston dedicates a chapter to the impact that the INA had on the British Indian Army, arguing that its influence on the battlefield was negligible, although its post-war political impact was greater.[9] Among other recent work is an alternative view of the army from the perspective of ordinary Indian soldiers, Gajendra Singh's *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars*, that contains a chapter on the interrogation of former British Indian Army troops who had served in the INA.[10]

While works such as those of Mason, Roy, and Marston, provide an excellent review of the British Indian Army as an institution, it is worth noting that there is little discussion on the fate of Indian prisoners of the Japanese, other than those who joined the INA. A rare exception is Tanaka's *Hidden Horrors*, that contains valuable information on some of the

[6] Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An account of the Indian Army, its officers and men* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974)
[7] Kaushik Roy, *The Army in British India: From Colonial Warfare to Total War 1857-1947* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); another work that emphasises the importance of training is: Alan Jeffreys, *Approach to Battle: Training the Indian Army during the Second World War* (Solihul: Helion and Company, 2016)
[8] Daniel Marston, *The Indian Army and the end of the Raj: decolonising the subcontinent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
[9] See Chapter Three in: Marston, *Indian Army*.
[10] Gajendra Singh, *The testimonies of Indian soldiers and the two world wars: between self and sepoy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)

Indian prisoners who were sent to the Southwest Pacific area.[11] The only work providing an overview of the experiences of Indian prisoners in the published literature is Douds' 'The men who never were: Indian POWs in the Second World War'.[12] Although only an article, it is ambitious in scope, and seeks to highlight the suffering endured by Indian prisoners of the all the Axis powers through the course of the war. Noting that the suffering of the Indian prisoners had often been overlooked or downplayed by previous authors, he goes on to examine the attempts to suborn Indian prisoners both in Europe and Asia.[13] In particular, he notes the relative failure of those efforts in Europe compared to the more successful establishment of the INA in Asia, explaining part of the difference as being due to some of the captured Indian commissioned officers in Asia being willing to 'drift' into the INA.[14] However, his main aim is to highlight the forbearance of those Indian prisoners who did not volunteer for the INA, whom he characterises as a virtuous majority. Douds' article is also notable because it makes use of primary source material drawn from post-war war-crimes trials of Japanese military personnel conducted by Australian authorities. The importance of these trial documents as a primary source will be returned to later. An online article that utilises war-crimes trial material in a similar way, and is referenced by Douds', is Stanley's 'Great in Adversity'.[15] Enlightening as Douds' article is, it is a measure of the neglect of Indian prisoners as a subject of investigation, that it is the only overview yet published on the subject. This lack is emphasised by the fact that there are numerous studies of British and Australian prisoners of the Japanese, including Parkes' *Captive Memories* which

[11] Yuki Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II,* 2nd edn (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018)
[12] G.J. Douds, 'The men who never were: Indian POWs in the Second World War', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 27, 2 (2004), 183-216.
[13] Ibid., p.184.
[14] Ibid., p.216.
[15] Peter Stanley, '"Great in Adversity": Indian prisoners of war in New Guinea', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 37 (2002), < https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/journal/j37/indians> [accessed 1 November 2021]

provides a comprehensive overview of British Far East prisoner experience, and Havers' study of Changi prison camp in Singapore.[16]

In contrast to the limited secondary literature devoted to Indian prisoners of the Japanese, the literature devoted to the INA and the minority of Indian prisoners who served in it, is much more extensive. One of the earliest contributions to this literature was by British author Hugh Toye, whose *Subhash Chandra Bose (The Springing Tiger)* has been reprinted multiple times since its first publication in 1958, and remains an important text.[17] Toye held the rank of Major in the British Indian Army during World War Two, serving with a military intelligence organisation called the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (India) (CSDIC(I)), and was the interrogator of Captain Mohan Singh who had been the first commander of the INA during 1942 (see overview of events below). Despite being focussed on the dramatic wartime career of the Indian political leader Subhas Chandra Bose, it nonetheless contains useful information on the campaigns of the INA, although it has little on events involving Indian prisoners prior to the arrival of Bose in Southeast Asia in May 1943.[18] Toye also later published an article on the early development of the INA, and although useful, it contains little or no information on any Indian prisoners or civilians, other than the small elite which worked closely with the Japanese authorities.[19]

[16] Meg Parkes and Geoff Gill, *Captive Memories* (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2015); R.P.W. Havers, *Reassessing the Japanese Prisoner of War experience: The Changi POW Camp, Singapore, 1942-5* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003)
[17] Hugh Toye, *Subhash Chandra Bose (the springing tiger): a study of a revolution* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing, 1959)
[18] Bose had been President of the Indian National Congress in the late 1930s. See: Toye, *Springing Tiger*, pp.43-62.
[19] Hugh Toye, 'The First Indian National Army, 1941-42', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 15, 2 (1984), pp.365-381.

The decades that followed Toye's book saw a variety of significant works published relating to the INA. Ghosh's *Indian National Army*, published in 1969, combined interviews with many of the leading participants, including key Japanese officers, with extensive research across Southeast Asia.[20] However, Ghosh's focus is on the post-war political impact of the INA rather than its military record. Another researcher working in this period was the American Professor Joyce Lebra who published *Jungle Alliance* in 1971, later reprinted under the title *The Indian National Army and Japan* in 2008.[21] Lebra used her Japanese language skills to conduct research in Japanese archives, combining this with extensive interviews to produce a valuable account of the often-strained relationship between the Japanese Military authorities and the INA. In 1977 she published *Japanese-Trained Armies in Southeast Asia* which places the INA in the broader context of other armies and militias sponsored by the Japanese.[22] Less sympathetic to the INA than Ghosh and Lebra's work was Corr's *The War of the Springing Tigers*.[23] A professional journalist, Corr produced a highly readable account of the INA that failed to make full use of the secondary sources then available and which lacks footnotes, but which is still cited on occasion. A slim but interesting work published in 1988 was Bhargava's *Indian National Army: Secret Service*, which traced the fate of forty-two spies or saboteurs sent into India by the INA during the war (thirteen of whom were executed), by combining the examination of contemporary trial records and the later reminisces of one operative who survived the war.[24] Among those

[20] Kalyan Kumar Ghosh, *The Indian National Army: second front of the Indian independence movement* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1969)
[21] Joyce C. Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008)
[22] Joyce C. Lebra, *Japanese-Trained Armies in Southeast Asia: Independence and Volunteer Forces in World War II* (Hong Kong: Heinemann, 1977); See also: Abu Talib Ahmad, 'The impact of the Japanese occupation on colonial and anti-colonial armies in Southeast Asia', in *Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia*, ed. by Karl Hack and Tobias Rettig (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 213-238.; Lebra's last work on the INA concerned its women's regiment: Joyce C. Lebra, *Women Against The Raj: The Rani of Jhansi Regiment*. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008)
[23] Gerard H. Corr, *The War of the Springing Tigers* (London: Osprey, 1975)
[24] Motilal Bhargava & Americk Singh Gill, *Indian National Army: Secret Service* (New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1988)

involved were a small number of former Indian prisoners, although most were civilian volunteers.

The 1990s saw two works published which have come to epitomise two contrasting views of the INA. In 1993 an American academic, Professor Peter Fay, published *The Forgotten Army,* a work structured around the recollections of two of the INA's most prominent members who married after the war.[25] It remains the most comprehensive account of the INA available, covering the full arc of its history from its creation through to its campaigns in Burma, and finally the public post-war trials of some of its members. Although perhaps only a quarter of the book is dedicated to the army itself, with the rest providing the wider historical context, the final chapter's title of "The Triumph of the INA" encapsulates Fay's assessment of its impact. One author who has been critical of Fay's assessment of the INA's military contribution is Chandar Sundaram, who in 1995 published an article which has subsequently been widely cited by Western military historians: 'A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle'.[26] With a title which pithily encapsulates his view of the INA's capabilities, it examines the combat performance of the INA in Burma in 1944 and 1945, based on the limited primary sources available in the mid-1990s. The contrasting assessments advanced by Fay and Sundaram, encapsulate the current divide in the literature relating to the INA.

While Fay's book and Sundaram's 'Paper Tiger' article remain the most prominent accounts of the INA from the current literature, a variety of other works on the INA have been published since. One was a chapter by Sundaram with section headings such as '*Chalo Dilli*

[25] Peter Ward Fay, *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993)
[26] Chandar S. Sundaram, 'A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944-1945', *War & Society*, 13, 1 (1995), 35-59.

Goes Bust: The INA in Battle' which leave no doubt as to Sundaram's views on the force, and the chapter adds little to his previous work in 'Paper Tiger' a decade before.[27] Another is a chapter in *Exile Armies* written by Robin Havers.[28] Based on a review of the extant secondary literature rather than new primary research, it is firmly in the 'Paper Tiger' school when assessing the INA. A book that situates the INA within the broader field of Japanese military intelligence operations is Mercado's *The shadow warriors of Nakano*, although coverage of the INA *per se* is limited.[29] Sundaram also published an interesting chapter in 2010 examining discontent among Indian troops in Singapore and Hong Kong in the year before the outbreak of hostilities with Japan.[30] Another notable book is *Forgotten Armies* by Bayly and Harper, but while it contains some mentions of the INA, it only has passing references to the tens of thousands of Indian prisoners of the Japanese.[31]

Other more recent work includes an article by Sundaram, in which he suggests that the time may have come for a new 'Balanced and Critical Appraisal' of the INA as a military force, although whether this would involve a revision of his previous portrayal of the INA as a 'Paper Tiger' is unclear.[32] Recently, the current author published 'Renegades in Malaya: Indian volunteers of the Japanese, F. Kikan', an article detailing the involvement of Indian troops with Japanese Military Intelligence during the Malayan campaign, several of whom

[27] Chandar S. Sundaram, 'The Indian National Army, 1942-1946: A Circumstantial Force', in *A Military History of India and South Asia: From the East India Company to the Nuclear Era*, ed. by Daniel P. Marston and Chandar S. Sundaram (Westport: Praeger, 2007), pp.123-130.
[28] Robin Havers, 'Jai Hind!: The Indian National Army, 1942-45', in *Exile Armies*, ed. by Matthew Bennett and Paul Latawski (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 55-67.
[29] Stephen C. Mercado, *The shadow warriors of Nakano: A history of the Imperial Japanese Army's elite intelligence school* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002)
[30] Chandar S. Sundaram, 'Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets: Disaffection among Indian Troops in Singapore and Hong Kong, 1940-1, and the Formation of the Indian National Army', in *War and society in colonial India, 1807-1945*, ed. by Kaushik Roy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.126-162.
[31] Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2004)
[32] Chandar S. Sundaram, 'The Indian National Army: Towards a Balanced and Critical Appraisal', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 1, 30 (2015), 21-24.

went on to become senior members of the INA.[33] Another recent contribution is a chapter in Raghavan's ambitiously wide-ranging book *India's War* which provides an overview of the INA.[34] However, the popularity of studies of Subhas Chandra Bose (who acquired the honorific title of 'Netaji' from his admirers) has been a consistent theme, and this has led to the development of what Lebra has called 'a formidable Netajiana' comprised of 'some five hundred volumes'.[35] The best biography of Subhas Chandra Bose from among this large body of work is Leonard Gordon's substantial *Brothers Against the Raj*.[36] It is clear that the focus on this charismatic Indian nationalist leader has tended to overshadow the INA, which still lacks an institutional history dedicated to its organisation and operations.

An additional area of the secondary literature of relevance to Indian prisoners, is that addressing the post-war war-crimes trials of Japanese military personnel, where the victims were Indian. An important early work is Philip Piccigallo's *The Japanese on Trial*, that provides an overview of the war-crimes trials held across Asia.[37] Its limitation is that Piccigallo did not have access to the trial proceedings themselves, but instead had to rely on sources such as newspaper reports and legal reporting. Another work, *The Hidden Histories of War Crimes Trials*, wide ranging in terms of time and location, has several chapters on the Australian trials of Japanese personnel, including those relating to the abuse or killing

[33] Kevin Noles, 'Renegades in Malaya: Indian volunteers of the Japanese, F. Kikan', *British Journal for Military History*, 3, 2, (2017), 100-118.
[34] See chapter 12 in: Srinath Raghavan, *India's war: the making of modern South Asia, 1939-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2016); Other recent work worth noting includes: Vera Hildebrand, *Women at War: Subhas Chandra Bose and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment* (Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2016), and Takuma Melber, *Zwischen Kollaboration und Widerstand: Die japanische Besatzung in Malaya und Singapur (1942-1945)* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2017), in translation: '*Between Collaboration and Resistance: The Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore (1942-1945)*'. Note that Melber's documentary sources are often in English.
[35] Lebra, *Women Against The Raj*, p.32.
[36] Leonard A. Gordon, *Brothers against the Raj: a biography of Sarat & Subhas Chandra Bose* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 1990)
[37] Philip Piccigallo, *The Japanese on Trial: Allied War Crimes Operations in the East, 1945-1951* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979)

of Indian or other Asian personnel.[38] It noted however that 'the process of understanding the trials has barely begun', despite the fact that the trial records have been available for several decades.[39] Another recent book is Totani's *Justice in Asia*, with the chapter 'In the Name of Asian Co-Prosperity' examining some of the Australian-run trials relating to the work parties of Indian prisoners sent by the Japanese to the Southwest Pacific area.[40] Totani's work is particularly valuable as it makes extensive use of Japanese sources, and it makes clear that coverage of the trials is much more extensive in the Japanese language than in English, although much of it portrays the Japanese defendants as victims of 'victors justice' at the hands of the Allies.

A significant landmark with respect to those trials relevant to Indian prisoners was the publication in 2016 of *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*.[41] This provides a thematic analysis of the Australian trials, along with chapters on each of the locations at which they were held, and at nearly nine hundred pages long represents a major addition to the literature. The trials include approximately one hundred involving Indian prisoner victims, most of which were conducted at Rabaul in New Britain. One of the most controversial categories of trial involved charges of anthropophagy, and this subject is addressed in a chapter by Fitzpatrick.[42] Citing the warnings of William Arens from *The Man-Eating Myth*, where he stressed the danger of 'myth-making' regarding enemies and claimed that anthropophagy was in practice extremely rare[43], Fitzpatrick acknowledges the potentially distorting danger

[38] *The Hidden Histories of War Crimes Trials*, ed. by Kevin Jon Heller & Gerry Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
[39] Ibid., p.350.
[40] Yuma Totani, *Justice in Asia and the Pacific Region, 1945-1952: Allied War Crimes Prosecutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
[41] Georgina Fitzpatrick, Timothy McCormack and Narrelle Morris, *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Nijhoff, 2016)
[42] Ibid., Chapter Ten.
[43] William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophag*y (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979)

of the 'loaded racial tensions underlying Australian fears of the Asian invader'.[44] Nonetheless, Fitzpatrick maintains that anthropophagy did in fact occur, although she did not examine any cases involving Indian victims, a subject addressed later in this thesis.

While the new research on the Australian war crimes trials is welcome, it is unfortunate that there is no equivalent volume available of the British trials held in Singapore and elsewhere, some involving Indian prisoners, nor does there appear to be one in preparation. One set of British war-crimes trials that have been the subject of recent attention are the forty-six that were held in Hong Kong, with *Hong Kong's War Crimes Trials* providing a legal overview of the cases, although there are only limited references to Indian prisoners within it.[45] However, several articles have recently been published by Cheah, a major theme of which is the alleged cooperation between Indian prisoners and their Japanese captors, the veracity of which will be examined later.[46] The recently published work on the war-crimes trials conducted by both the Australian and British authorities provides a valuable new starting point for examining the experiences of Indian prisoners of the Japanese. Taken together, the existing literature on the British Indian Army, Indian prisoners, the INA, and the war-crimes trials, provide a foundation for the examination of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners.

[44] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.299.
[45] Suzannah Linton, ed., *Hong Kong's War Crimes Trials* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
[46] Cheah, W.L., 'Culture and Understanding in the Singapore War Crimes Trials (1946–1948): Interpreting Arguments of the Defence', *International Journal of Law in Context,* 14, 01 (2018), 87-109.; Cheah, W.L., 'Dealing with Desertion and Gaps in International Humanitarian Law: Changes of Allegiance in the Singapore War Crimes Trials', *Asian Journal of International Law,* 8, 2 (2018), 350-370.; Cheah, W.L., 'The Curious Case of Singapore's BIA Desertion Trials: War Crimes, Projects of Empire and the Rule of Law', *European Journal of International Law,* 28, 4 (2017), 1217-240.

Overview of events involving Indian prisoners

The following overview is based on the existing secondary literature and previous research by this author. It outlines the current knowledge in the field of enquiry represented by Indian prisoners, whilst also highlighting aspects of particular interest within this thesis. A total of sixty-seven thousand Indian troops were captured by the Japanese during World War Two, the vast majority during the first six months of the conflict that began in December 1941.[47] The majority, some fifty-five thousand, were taken prisoner during the Malayan campaign, primarily at the surrender of British imperial forces to the Japanese at Singapore, on 15 February 1942. The remainder, some twelve thousand, were captured at a variety of other locations across East and Southeast Asia, including Hong Kong, Borneo, and during the long retreat of British forces through Burma to the borders of India in 1942.[48]

The captured Indian troops ranged in age from seventeen to their mid-fifties, with many of the *jawans* (Indian soldiers) being illiterate. They were drawn from multiple 'classes', namely particular communities within the broader Indian population who were viewed as 'martial races', or naturally suited to soldiering, examples of which included Sikhs, Dogras, Punjabi Muslims, and from Nepal, the Gurkhas. Although most of their officers had been British there were also a smaller number of Indian Commissioned Officers (ICOs) among them, as well as a larger group of Viceroy Commissioned Officers (VCOs).[49] It is worth

[47] Kirby, *The Loss of Singapore*, p.473.
[48] Kevin Noles, 'Divided loyalties: Indian Prisoners of War in Singapore, February 1942 to May 1943' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Oxford, 2017), p.26.; Note that this research will be published in a shortened chapter form under the same title: Kevin Noles, 'Divided loyalties: Indian Prisoners of War in Singapore, February 1942 to May 1943', in *The People's War?: The Second World War in Socio-Political Perspective*, ed. by Alexander Wilson, Richard Hammond and Jonathan Fennell (McGill-Queen's University Press, in press 2022)
[49] Ibid., pp.15-16.

noting that the vast majority of Indian troops who were captured were ordered to surrender to the Japanese by their British officers, rather than surrendering on their own initiative.

However, it was during the Malayan campaign that some captured Indian troops cooperated with Japanese forces, laying the foundations for the later creation of the INA.[50] This resulted from the activities of Japanese Military Intelligence, whose operations during the campaign were commanded by an officer called Major Fujiwara.[51] Shortly after the first Japanese victory against British forces at Jitra in Northern Malaya in December 1941, Major Fujiwara made contact with a group of Indian troops from 1/14 Punjab Battalion, who had been cut off by the rapid Japanese advance. The most senior Indian officer among these was a Captain Mohan Singh, and he was soon persuaded to help organise the increasing numbers of Indian prisoners being collected by Japanese forces.[52]

The subsequent career of Mohan Singh, including serving as the first commander of the INA in 1942, would dominate the lives of most Indian prisoners up to the time of his arrest and imprisonment by the Japanese in December 1942. But in the meantime, as the Malayan campaign progressed and the Japanese advanced south towards Singapore, he organised the collection and management of Indian prisoners, including the establishment of a camp for several thousand at a captured British barracks in Kuala Lumpur.[53] By the time that the Japanese launched their assault on Singapore island in February 1942, Mohan Singh had organised a two-hundred strong armed unit from among the prisoners (subsequently known

[50] Noles, 'Renegades in Malaya', p.100.
[51] Ibid., p.103.
[52] Ibid., p.106.
[53] Ibid., p.109.

to British intelligence as the 'Fujiwara Volunteers'), who during the final battle for Singapore managed to induce several British Indian Army units to surrender prematurely.[54]

On 17 February 1942, two days after the British surrender at Singapore, and with all British officers having been separated from their Indian troops, Fujiwara and Mohan Singh addressed forty-five thousand Indian prisoners gathered at Farrer Park in Singapore, with responsibility for the prisoners being formally transferred to Mohan Singh by Fujiwara.[55] Mohan Singh's subsequent speech to the prisoners was a call-to-arms to fight for Indian freedom.[56] Notwithstanding the stirring Indian nationalist speeches at Farrer Park, the immediate prospect facing the newly captured Indian prisoners in Singapore and elsewhere was grim. With most prisoners sent to two overcrowded camps at Bidadari and Nee Soon in Singapore, conditions rapidly deteriorated, exacerbated by poor food and heavy fatigues for the Japanese over the following months. At Nee Soon alone, by June 1942, seven hundred had died from seven thousand cases of dysentery.[57] Meanwhile, by the middle of 1942, recruitment for the INA was in full swing.

Previous research has explored the nature of recruitment for the INA, outlining the importance of various influences. These included: Indian nationalist propaganda speeches by Mohan Singh and others; political concert parties that staged anti-British plays; the role that Indian officers played in either encouraging or resisting recruitment; and the impact that the "Quit India" declaration of August 1942 by the Indian National Congress under Gandhi's leadership had, in helping to drive volunteering for the INA. But it is also clear that coercion

[54] Ibid., p.112.
[55] Ghosh, *Indian National Army*, p.36.
[56] Fay, *Forgotten Army*, p.84.
[57] Noles, *Divided loyalties*, p.14.

played a significant role at times, and this took a variety of forms, including reluctant prisoners being given heavy fatigues, or being sent to the so-called 'concentration camp' where brutal methods were used.[58] The formal establishment of the INA in September 1942 was the high point of Mohan Singh's career (by this time promoted to 'General'), although it was limited in size to sixteen thousand men by the Japanese, far below the forty thousand INA volunteers among the prisoners that Mohan Singh claimed to have obtained.[59]

However, only three months later, relations between Mohan Singh, the Indian civilian leadership of the Indian Independence League (IIL) (the INA's civilian counterpart), and the Japanese authorities, reached a point of crisis. The catalyst for the crisis in December 1942 was the defection to the British of INA officers who had been close to Mohan Singh (an episode examined in Chapter One), and it culminated in Mohan Singh's arrest by the Japanese, an event that triggered the disbandment of the INA.[60] Mohan Singh's fall from grace had been as spectacular as his rise, but the power vacuum he left was soon filled by other Indian officers and within a few months the INA was re-constituted, albeit smaller, as around four thousand five hundred of its former troops refused to re-join. However, it was later apparent to British authorities that many of those who refused to re-join the INA (many of whom were Sikh), did so out of loyalty to Mohan Singh rather than because they had been originally coerced into volunteering, an important distinction that becomes relevant later in the thesis.[61]

[58] Ibid., pp.63-64.
[59] Ibid., p.26.
[60] Ibid., pp.52-53.
[61] Ibid., p.59.

While events surrounding the INA may have been dramatic, the main bulk of Indian prisoners continued as prisoners-of-war throughout this period and into 1943, mostly working on fatigue parties for the Japanese. A minority were utilised in specialist roles, for example, serving in Japanese Motor Transport units, driving or maintaining captured British vehicles.[62] But most Indian prisoners performed unskilled manual labour, and during 1943 many thousands were transported to a wide variety of locations across Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia, in order to provide labour to IJA units and work on larger building projects, such as airfield construction.[63] The extant secondary literature has very little information on the fate of these many groups of Indian prisoners, and one ambition of the current thesis is to begin to rectify this.

The INA may have been re-constituted early in 1943, but it was the arrival in Asia from Europe of the Indian nationalist politician Subhas Chandra Bose that re-energised it and gave it renewed purpose. Toye described the impression Bose made on the INA and IIL leadership when he arrived in Singapore in July 1943: 'Few of them had met anyone of his quality before. All were dazzled, flattered. To each he was the authentic leader, long awaited'.[64] The INA was soon being expanded, with two thousand additional volunteers from those Indian prisoners still remaining in Singapore and Malaya, but also many thousands of Indian civilian volunteers.[65] Ultimately, approximately twenty thousand former Indian prisoners actually served in the INA.[66] However, Bose was exasperated at the official British policy of remaining publicly silent regarding the existence of the INA, and the way this denied publicity to himself and the force.[67] Nonetheless, Bose's plans

[62] Ibid., p.32.
[63] Toye, *Springing Tiger*, p.10.
[64] Ibid., p.83.
[65] Ibid., p.85.
[66] Douds, 'The men who never were', p.185.
[67] Toye, *Springing Tiger,* p.85.

progressed, and during late 1943 and early 1944 INA formations who had completed their training (constituted largely of former Indian prisoners), were sent to Burma to support an impending Japanese offensive into Northeast India.[68]

The Japanese offensive began in early February 1944, with a large-scale diversionary attack in the Arakan in the southern part of the battlefront, which was accompanied by INA reconnaissance and subversion units.[69] However, the main Japanese assault began in March 1944 further North, with major attacks towards Imphal and Kohima in Northeast India, again supported by INA reconnaissance and subversion units. It was only in late April 1944, after the Japanese offensive had already stalled, that the INA's main force, its 1st Division, arrived at the front.[70] Although involved in numerous small-scale actions against British forces, most of its casualties were the result of disease and starvation, with one estimate suggesting a figure of three to four thousand casualties for the INA, from a total of ten thousand men deployed.[71] By July 1944, the Japanese and INA units were in full retreat, with the INA's earlier hopes of victory against the British Indian Army now a bitter memory.[72] Thereafter, the only battles that the INA would fight would be defensive ones.

The disaster that befell the Japanese and INA forces at Imphal and Kohima in 1944 was the foundation of British victory in Burma in 1945. The British Indian Army reached its apogee in the campaigns in Burma in the first half of 1945, outmanoeuvring and outfighting the IJA in central Burma, and quickly overcoming resistance from any INA units that chose to fight rather than surrender.[73] It is worth noting that by 1945 the INA units that saw action

[68] Fay, *Forgotten Army*, pp.236-237.
[69] Sundaram, 'Paper Tiger', pp.42-43.
[70] Ibid., p.48.
[71] Ibid., p.49.
[72] Fay, *Forgotten Army*, pp.302-303.
[73] Sundaram, 'Paper Tiger', p.52.

contained many civilian volunteers, although former Indian prisoners continued to dominate the command structure.[74] However, the poorly equipped INA units were outmatched by the superior weapons, training, and tactics, of the British Indian Army. By the time British imperial forces captured Rangoon at the beginning of May 1945, following its evacuation by the Japanese, they had taken prisoner over ten thousand INA personnel in Burma, some of whom were former Indian prisoners originally captured by the Japanese during the Malayan campaign in 1942.[75] Burma in 1945 was the last campaign in which the INA would see action.

While the former Indian prisoners in the INA were participating in some of the major campaigns of World War Two, most Indian prisoners were used as manual labour by the Japanese at locations across Southeast Asia. Those transported to the Southwest Pacific area in 1943 had first to endure a sea voyage that could last almost two months in cramped unhealthy conditions. Unsurprisingly, they typically arrived at their destinations ill and exhausted, with deaths on the voyages being common.[76] Once ashore, in locations such as New Britain and New Guinea, the maltreatment continued and, by the end of the war in August 1945, many had perished, with some even becoming victims of anthropophagy at the hands of the Japanese.[77] Unfortunately, despite the valuable work of researchers such as Douds and Tanaka, the experiences of many Indian prisoners in the Southwest Pacific and elsewhere during the last two years of the war, remain poorly understood.

[74] Ibid., p.53. Note: the Indian civilian volunteers were mainly Tamils from Malaya.
[75] Ibid., p.54.
[76] Douds, 'The men who never were', p.202.
[77] Ibid., p.206.

Following the Japanese surrender in August 1945, British and Allied forces undertook a major logistical operation to recover all surviving Allied prisoners, whether British, Indian or other nationalities, from within Japanese held territory.[78] The group of Indian prisoners that arrived in Bombay on HMS *Formidable*, was just one example of that process in action. However, the British authorities soon faced challenges relating to how to deal with former INA personnel among the recovered Indian personnel. It became apparent that Indian prisoners who had not joined the INA were often bitter at the treatment they had experienced from their former comrades-in-arms who had.[79] But simultaneously, the British post-war public acknowledgement of the existence of the INA triggered significant support for its former members among the nationalist-minded Indian public, and this was exacerbated by British mishandling of the public courts-martial of a small number of INA officers in late 1945. Things could have been worse for the British authorities: the death of Subhas Chandra Bose in an aircraft crash just days after the Japanese surrender, spared them the problem of how to deal with their most intransigent political opponent. Nonetheless, the outcome of the trials, in particular the release of three former INA officers after they had been convicted at courts-martial, had significantly weakened British authority in India by early 1946.[80] In practice, most INA personnel (even figures such as Captain Mohan Singh) were never court-martialled. Despite this, it has been argued that the few trials that did take place, accelerated the end of British colonial rule in India.[81]

In comparison to these dramatic post-war events in India, another aspect of Indian prisoner experience that has received relatively little attention until recently is their involvement as

[78] Ibid., pp.210-211.
[79] Ibid., p.212.
[80] See: Fay, *Forgotten Army*, Chapter 21, "The Triumph of the INA".
[81] Toye, *Springing Tiger*, p.175.

witnesses in the post-war war-crimes trials of Japanese military personnel. Both the British and Australian authorities held such trials at locations across Southeast Asia, largely during 1946, with the Australians holding almost one hundred involving Indian prisoner witnesses.[82] These trials highlighted appalling suffering at times at the hands of the Japanese, including beatings and executions, although as previously noted, it has also been argued that they contain evidence of desertion by Indian personnel.[83] The topic of Indian prisoner involvement as witnesses in Japanese war-crimes trials is a subject that deserves more attention and it is addressed later in the thesis.

In conclusion, as this overview has shown, the experiences of Indian prisoners of the Japanese were extremely varied, at times encompassing hardship as great as any faced by their British and Australian counterparts, but also involving a political dimension unique to Indian prisoners alone. At first sight, it is surprising that so dramatic a series of events as those described above, should be so little known. The questions outlined earlier, relating to the impact that the formation of the INA had on the British Indian Army; the role of British wartime propaganda; and the restricted access to information held in various archives; provide a focus for exploring why post-war memory of these sixty-seven thousand men appears so limited. But what is apparent, is that the experiences of Indian prisoners-of-war of the Japanese, the forgotten men, is a field of enquiry that is deserving of more attention than it has previously received.

[82] Douds, 'The men who never were', p.205.
[83] See: Cheah, 'The Curious Case of Singapore's BIA Desertion Trials'.

Primary sources

Although information relating to Indian prisoners may be limited in the secondary literature, the ability to address this lack is bounded by the availability of primary sources. Thankfully, the last two decades have seen a variety of new sources become available with, in particular, large quantities of British military intelligence material relating to Indian prisoners becoming accessible. Much of this British intelligence material was not available to authors such as Fay and Douds. As well as the British intelligence material, the expanded range of relevant sources now includes additional Japanese post-war war-crimes trial documentation; oral history transcripts; memoirs (both Indian and British); newspaper reports; letters written by former Indian prisoners; regimental newsletters; courts-martial proceedings; and a wide range of other official correspondence and documentary material, held in numerous archives in Britain, India, and Australia. Each of these types of primary source will now be examined.

Of particular significance for this study are the surviving records of the previously mentioned Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (India), or CSDIC(I), the role of which included screening former Indian prisoners who had been recovered from Japanese held territory. These records are present in four archives, although most are held at the British Library in London and the National Archives of India in New Delhi.[84] The CSDIC(I) material at the British Library comprises 560 interrogations of mostly Indian military personnel who had been taken prisoner by the Japanese (most of whom had subsequently joined the INA), along with a smaller number of general reports, representing an estimated

[84] The four archives are: British Library, London, Asian and African Studies collection (hereafter, AAS), The National Archives at Kew, London (hereafter, TNA), The National Archives of India, New Delhi (hereafter, NAI), and the Australian War Memorial, Canberra (hereafter AWM)

combined total of ten thousand pages.[85] The holdings at the National Archives of India are a superset of the material in London, consisting of an estimated several thousand interrogations and reports, along with other related records such as courts-martial proceedings, held in nine hundred and ninety archival files.[86] The National Archives at Kew, and the Australian War Memorial archives in Canberra, contain only a few dozen interrogations and reports each, although some of these have proved particularly valuable.[87] One such example is the CSDIC(I) interrogation report for Captain Mohan Singh held at Kew.[88]

The considerable effort expended by CSDIC(I) to create the material was driven by British concern over the degree of cooperation that intelligence sources had indicated had occurred between Indian prisoners and their Japanese captors. For example, Marston has noted that the creation of the INA in 1942 had 'caused consternation' within the Government of India.[89] While CSDIC(I) was active throughout the war, most of its interrogation reports were only written in 1945 following the capture of large numbers of INA troops in Burma, and the recovery of the remaining INA personnel and other Indian prisoners following the Japanese surrender in August 1945. Following the disbandment of CSDIC(I) in May 1946, some sixty percent of its reports at its main headquarters in the Red Fort in Delhi, India, are known to have been culled, prior to the remainder being sent to storage.[90] A working assumption is that these records are those now available for consultation at the National Archives of India. Although the British colonial authorities did not remove the CSDIC(I) records remaining in

[85] AAS, Mss Eur F275. *Selected papers of the CSDIC(I).* Note: these papers were donated privately by Hugh Toye the former CSDIC(I) officer in 1994, but only became publicly available after his death in 2012. See British Library administrative note: AAS, Mss Eur F275/2, p.27.
[86] NAI, Private Papers, Indian National Army Papers.
[87] Note that some of the CSDIC(I) material held at TNA was only released in July 2021, see: WO 203/3940.
[88] TNA, WO 325/51, *Mohan Singh CSDIC(I) interrogation.*
[89] Marston, *Indian Army*, p.117.
[90] AAS, Mss Eur F275/1, p.6.

India at the time of de-colonisation, evidence that the culled material may have included potentially interesting documents is examined later in the thesis.[91] Despite this, it is argued that the surviving records represent a valuable archival resource for studying Indian prisoners that has yet to be fully utilised.[92] Nonetheless, using the source material presents a variety of challenges, and given the importance of the CSDIC(I) material to this study the challenges are examined further in the next section of this Introduction, *Interpreting the documentary legacy of the CSDIC(I)*.

Another type of relevant source material that has become available in recent decades, are the records of post-war Japanese war-crimes trials, where the victims were Indian prisoners. Recently published research on these was noted above in the review of the secondary literature. These trials were among a grand total of 2,244 war-crimes trials involving Japanese defendants held in the post-war period by Allied governments, with 330 being conducted by the British, and 294 by the Australians.[93] Those involving Indian prisoners were conducted mainly by Australian authorities at Rabaul in New Britain (in the Southwest Pacific), with others held by British authorities in Singapore and elsewhere, and the associated trial proceedings are now available in archives in Australia and Britain.[94] A review of all the Australian trials has identified ninety-nine involving Indian victims, involving crime locations from across the Southwest Pacific area.[95] A review of a register of British war-crimes trials has revealed that only thirteen involved Indian prisoner victims

[91] For the wider context of how sensitive colonial documents were managed see: Shohei Sato, ''Operation Legacy': Britain's Destruction and Concealment of Colonial Records Worldwide', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 45, 4 (2017), 697-719.
[92] Among the few examples of their use are: Gajendra Singh, *Testimonies of Indian soldiers*, Chapter 6; and Noles, 'Renegades in Malaya'.
[93] Totani, *Justice in Asia*, p.9.
[94] See trial proceedings in: National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA) series A471; and in Britain, TNA series WO 235.
[95] Note that the files within NAA series A471 are available online.

(with most of these being held in Singapore), a surprisingly low number considering that most Indian prisoners of the Japanese were recovered by the British rather than the Australians.[96] This apparent discrepancy will be explored later in this thesis. While the subject matter of the trials is often harrowing, they generated a considerable quantity of documentation, including transcripts of the proceedings, affidavits from witnesses and the accused, and other forms of legal documentation such as legal reviews of verdicts. The material represents a significant opportunity for examining the experiences of Indian prisoners of the Japanese.

While the CSDIC(I) and war-crimes documentation represent large quantities of material, the amount of oral history material is much less, but can be very valuable. One example is an Imperial War Museum interview of a Second Lieutenant Ismail Khan, who after being captured at the fall of Singapore, resisted calls to join the INA and was instrumental in keeping his Muslim *jawans* out of the force.[97] Nonetheless, he regarded several Indian officers who joined the INA as friends, and his views on their motivations and actions are referenced later in the thesis. Among the Indian officers who joined the INA, some of the better known were later interviewed by the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), based in New Delhi. These include Mohan Singh, who although listed with his INA rank of 'General', disappointingly only talks about his early life in the army and does not appear to have been questioned about his time in the INA itself.[98] However, others are more revealing about their time in the INA, and these include some of its best-known officers, including Prem Sahgal (one of the main subjects of Fay's book), Shah Nawaz Khan, and Sardar

[96] All files held at TNA. Register: WO 235/1118. Trials: WO 235/813, WO 235/820, WO 235/948, WO 235/950, WO 235/955, WO 235/960, WO 235/962, WO 235/964, WO 235/974, WO 235/979, WO 235/992, WO 235/1000, WO 235/1035.
[97] Imperial War Museum, London (hereafter IWM), sound recording 80011491, *2nd Lt. Ismail Khan.*
[98] Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, India (hereafter NMML), Oral History, 654, *General Mohan Singh*.

Naranjan Singh Gill, who was the most senior Indian combatant officer captured at the surrender of Singapore (with the acting rank of lieutenant colonel).[99]

Memoirs written by Indian personnel captured by the Japanese, include both those who resisted recruitment into the INA and those who embraced it. Of those who resisted, one of the fullest accounts is that of Major General Gurbakhsh Singh, then a lieutenant colonel commanding a battalion of the Jind Infantry of the Indian State Forces, who were ordered to surrender at the fall of Singapore. Although he kept his battalion out of the INA, he had several friends who became officers in it, and his experiences and views are examined later in the thesis.[100] An account from an ordinary Indian *jawan* who resisted joining is John Crasta's *Eaten by the Japanese*, which largely focusses on his experiences as a prisoner in the Southwest Pacific.[101] A recent addition to published accounts by Indian prisoners is *Chint Singh: The Man Who Should Have Died*.[102] Told in his own words, it details his traumatic experiences as a prisoner in the Southwest Pacific. Although Crasta's account is well known (it is referenced by Douds for example), those of Gurbakhsh Singh and Chint Singh have yet to be incorporated into the secondary literature. However, the best-known account by an officer who resisted the INA is Durrani's *The Sixth Column*, and this work is examined in detail later in the thesis.[103]

[99] NMML, 283, *Prem Kumar Sahgal*; NMML, 402, *Shah Nawaz Khan*; NMML, 168, *Sardar Naranjan Singh Gill*; another interview quoted later is: NMML, 093, *B.M. Kaul (Lt. Gen).*
[100] Gurbakhsh Singh and Sudesh Gurbakhsh Singh, *Indelible Reminiscences: memoirs of Major General Gurbakhsh Singh* (New Delhi: Lancer, 2013)
[101] John Baptist Crasta, *Eaten by the Japanese. The Memoir of an Unknown Indian Prisoner of War* (New York: CreateSpace, 2012). Note: first published in India in 1999.
[102] Narinder Singh Parmar, *Chint Singh: The Man Who Should Have Died* (Shawline Publishing, 2021). Note: the listed author is his son.
[103] Mahmood Khan Durrani, *The Sixth Column: the heroic personal story of Lt. Col. Mahmood Khan Durrani, G.C.* (London: Cassell, 1955)

Several memoirs written by Indian officers who joined the INA have been available for some time. That of Mohan Singh is essential reading for the early stages of the INA.[104] But one of the most widely quoted memoirs is that by Shah Nawaz Khan, *My Memories of INA and its Netaji*, published in 1946.[105] Previous work has questioned the reliability of this account and more recent research reinforces this concern.[106] For example, in late 1942 he claims that he was actively resisting the INA, but his interview at NMML indicates that he was on friendly terms with the Japanese in Malaya, regularly playing tennis with the Japanese commander in Kuala Lumpur, and he later opposed the attempt by Mohan Singh to dissolve the INA.[107] As a result, while his account remains an important source for the INA, it needs to be treated with caution. Other INA officers also published memoirs, including Gill, Kiani, and Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon.[108] With respect to the INA, a notable Japanese officer memoir is that of Fujiwara, who was instrumental in establishing the INA along with Mohan Singh in 1942, although he also later served in Burma.[109]

In addition, for this thesis, several British accounts are also important, including Calvert's *Prisoners of Hope*, Masters' *The Road Past Mandalay*, Tuker's *While Memory Serves*, Wavell's published diaries, and Slim's account of the campaigns in Burma, *Defeat into Victory*.[110] These works are examined for the insights they provide regarding British

[104] Mohan Singh, *Soldiers' Contribution to Indian Independence: the epic of the Indian National Army* (New Delhi: Army Educational Stores, 1974)
[105] Shah Nawaz Khan, *My Memories of INA & Its Netaji* (Delhi: Rajkamal Publications, 1946)
[106] Noles, *Divided loyalties*, p.10.
[107] NMML, 402, *Shah Nawaz Khan*, p.37.
[108] Naranjan Singh Gill, *Story of the I.N.A.* (New Delhi, India: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2001); Mohammad Zaman Kiani, *India's freedom struggle and the great INA: memoirs of Maj. Gen. Mohammad Zaman Kiani* (New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1994); Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, *From My Bones: Memoirs of Col. Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon of the Indian National Army (Including 1945 Red Fort Trial)* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 1998)
[109] Iwaichi Fujiwara, *F. Kikan: Japanese Army Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia during World War II*, trans. by Akashi Yoji (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1983)
[110] Michael Calvert, *Prisoners of Hope* (London: Cape, 1952); John Masters, *The Road Past Mandalay: a personal narrative* (London: Michael Joseph, 1961); Francis Tuker, *While Memory Serves* (London: Cassell,

attitudes to the INA, as well as their post-war memory of Indian prisoners. A wide variety of other types of primary sources are also relevant. These include newspapers such as *The Times of India* and *The Daily Telegraph* which provide insight into contemporary views on Indian prisoners, but also include a collection of letters written by newly liberated Indian prisoners, now held at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia.[111]

Additional primary sources have been accessed from a variety of archives. These included regimental newsletters from the Gurkha Museum archive.[112] The National Army Museum also provided a range of materials relating to Indian prisoners and the INA.[113] While, in addition to those already described, a variety of other primary sources have been consulted at the British Library.[114] A range of additional sources have also been consulted at The National Archives at Kew.[115] Lastly, The Bodleian Library contains a substantial unpublished manuscript written by Hugh Toye, the former CSDIC(I) officer, which contains a wealth of information on the Indian independence movement in Asia.[116] In summary, recent decades have seen a significant expansion of the primary sources available relating to Indian prisoners of the Japanese, particularly in categories such as British military intelligence and Japanese war-crimes trials. A reassessment of the field is therefore timely.

1950); Archibald Percival Wavell, and Penderel Moon, *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997); William Joseph Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London: Cassell, 1956)

[111] Australian National University (hereafter ANU), Noel Butlin Archives Centre, C. H. Campbell collection.

[112] Gurkha Museum Archive, Winchester, England (hereafter GMA), Regimental News 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkhas, Oct 1941 to Oct 1947.

[113] National Army Museum, Chelsea, London (hereafter NAM), 1973-06-121, 2005-06-735, 1983-10-227, 1983-7-44, 1991-01-67, 1994-05-42, 9507-79.

[114] AAS, Mss Eur A73: 1943, Mss Eur F274, Mss Eur Photo Eur 397, L/I/1/1040, L/WS/1/303, L/WS/1/1433, L/WS/1/1506, L/WS/1/1576, L/WS/1/1577, L/WS/1/1578, L/WS/1/1711, L/WS/2/45, L/WS/2/46, L/WS/2/47.

[115] TNA, FO 371, FO 916, WO 203, WO 208, WO 235, WO 325, WO 344, WO 361, WO 373.

[116] The Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter BOD), Hugh Toye, *Subhas Pasha: an account of the Indian independence movements sponsored by Germany and Japan in World War II* (Unpublished manuscript, St Antony's College Library, 1954). Note: another copy of this text is held at the British Library.

Interpreting the documentary legacy of the CSDIC(I)

As was noted above, one of the most valuable sources of information relating to Indian prisoners is the documentary legacy of CSDIC(I). However, the material presents significant epistemological challenges. Although at face value the CSDIC(I) interrogation files contain a rich pattern of stories and "facts", the context of the interrogation room from which they originated renders every word potentially equivocal, shaped by the interplay between interrogator and interrogatee. Engaging with such material requires an interpretive framework attuned to the textually mediated form of the CSDIC(I) files. Gajendra Singh, one of the few scholars to have worked with CSDIC(I) material, utilised textual analysis to read against the grain of CSDIC(I) interrogations, although he acknowledged the fundamental limits of such an approach for recovering the 'voice' of those being interrogated, given the 'angry voice' of the interrogators who wrote the reports.[117]

The CSDIC(I) material must also be situated within a long history of British investigations undertaken within an Indian colonial context. One relevant study is Wagner's interpretation of British investigations of the phenomena of Thuggee in nineteenth-century colonial India.[118] As Wagner has noted, the initial British encounter with the highway robbers who allegedly inflicted both theft and strangulation on their victims, the 'thugs', triggered what C. A. Bayly termed an 'information panic' by the colonial authorities in the 1810s.[119] A similar effect can be seen in the reaction of the British colonial authorities to news of the creation of the INA in 1942, discussed later in this thesis. In both cases, a key response involved the use of interrogations of Indian suspects to investigate the phenomenon in

[117] Singh, *Testimonies of Indian soldiers*, p.178.
[118] Kim A. Wagner, *Thuggee: banditry and the British in early nineteenth-century India* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
[119] Ibid., p.6.

question, resulting in the generation of a significant documentary legacy. Wagner highlights that the colonial representation of Thuggee in the texts he examined from the nineteenth century 'cannot be taken at face value', but that equally, neither can it be dismissed as a 'colonial phantasmagoria'.[120] He argues that by approaching the texts critically, reading them 'against the grain', much of historical value can be recovered.[121]

The importance of interrogation material in both Wagner's sources and the CSDIC(I) archives, suggests a continuity of colonial methods over a long period, but as well as similarities there are also differences between the two cases. For example, Wagner highlights that at least some of the later interrogations of 'thugs' from the 1830s appear to have been conducted for the sole purpose of later publication.[122] In contrast, the CSDIC(I) files appear to have remained confidential, generally accessible only to a very limited cohort of military intelligence personnel. Nonetheless, in a similar way to Wagner's sources, although the identities of most interrogators remain anonymous in the CSDIC(I) files, most appear to have been British, despite isolated examples of interrogations conducted by Indian officers.[123] To give one example, the most prominent attributed interrogation report is that of Captain Mohan Singh, written by Major Hugh Toye.[124] However, this does not mean that Indian commissioned officers were not involved with CSDIC(I). It is worth noting, that the senior CSDIC(I) officer sent to Thailand in the immediate post-war period to deal with the residual INA forces there, was an Indian colonel (his experiences are examined later in the thesis).[125] This emphasises the institutional character of CSDIC(I) as part of the British Indian Army, an army that by late in the war was utilising large numbers of Indian

[120] Ibid., p.7.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid., p.18.
[123] For an Indian example see: NAI, INA 244, p.6.
[124] TNA, WO 325/51.
[125] AAS, F275/10, p.5.

commissioned officers. Therefore, unlike the earlier interrogations examined by Wagner, the later CSDIC(I) interrogations cannot be framed as a straightforward case of 'othering' of Indian interrogatees by colonial British interrogators, but instead must be situated within a more complex institutional context, albeit one that was established by the British colonial authorities. As a result, it makes sense to look beyond the immediate colonial context for an analogous model.

Although historians have rarely utilised CSDIC(I) material, other similar material, in particular the interrogation and intelligence files of the former Soviet Eastern Bloc, have received considerable scholarly attention, a recent product of this research being the edited volume: *Secret police files from the Eastern bloc: between surveillance and life writing*.[126] Such a comparison raises the question of how similar the methods of CSDIC(I) were compared to the later practices of the East German *Stasi* or the Romanian *Securitate*, who were willing to use physical torture to obtain information. While evidence of 'mental and physical torture during the interrogations' did emerge in the immediate post-war period from a British interrogation centre in Germany run by a separate branch of CSDIC, there is no evidence of physical maltreatment during the interrogation of Indian prisoners by CSDIC(I) in Asia.[127] An account of the methods used by CSDIC(I), written by an Indian officer who experienced them, is discussed below. Nonetheless, while there may be differences between the approaches taken by CSDIC(I) and the Eastern Bloc security services, this analysis does seek to leverage the methodological insights of scholars who have previously worked on the

[126] *Secret police files from the Eastern bloc: between surveillance and life writing*, ed. by Valentina Glajar, Alison Lewis and Corina Petrescu (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2016); see also: Cristina Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Alison Lewis, 'Reading and Writing the Stasi File: On the Uses and Abuses of the file as (Auto)Biography', *German Life & Letters*, 56, 4 (2003), 377-397.
[127] Oliver Hoare, *Camp 020 : MI5 and the Nazi Spies : The Official History of MI5's Wartime Interrogation Centre* (Richmond: Public Record Office, 2000), p.7.

textual outputs of interrogations, by acknowledging the similarities in function and form between the interrogation texts from these different contexts. To demonstrate how such work is relevant to the interpretation of the CSDIC(I) material, an overview of the approach used in *Secret police files* will be given, followed by an examination of the similarities and differences between the two contexts.

The secret police archives of the former Eastern Bloc were generated as a result of the 'deeply suspicious mindsets' of the regimes.[128] The result was the creation of huge quantities of written material, with the size of the *Stasi* archive alone amounting to 180 kilometers of files.[129] These archives contain files that are 'a variation on the genre of the criminal record'.[130] The police files have proved useful for 'constructing biographical narratives' of those involved with the security services, whether as subjects or sources, helping to illuminate the 'surveillance methods' of the police and to 'recover lost stories about the past'.[131] However, their use presents several challenges to historians, including that they sometimes 'appear to straddle the divide between fiction and fact', notwithstanding their embodiment as bureaucratic texts that 'capture lives in a typically impersonal manner'.[132]

The approach outlined in *Secret police files* is to view such file writing as a form of life writing, based on a broad definition of life writing 'as a form of nonfictional writing about the lives of real people'.[133] It is therefore similar to other forms of life writing such as biography, albeit one written from a particular 'political and bureaucratic perspective', and displaying a preoccupation with themes such as loyalty and betrayal, as well as behaviors

[128] Glajar, *Secret Police Files*, p.1.
[129] Ibid., p.2.
[130] Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics*, p.32.
[131] Glajar, *Secret Police Files*, p.3.
[132] Ibid., p.9.
[133] Ibid., p.10.

such as lying, simulating and dissembling.[134] By subjecting the files to a 'critical and ethical reading' and engaging with them empathetically, the editors argue that they can be used to reveal 'compelling micro-histories of the past that we can use to forge narratives' that represent 'file stories'.[135] Glajar, in her work on the files of the Romanian *Securitate*, has used this approach to construct the file story of a secret police source codenamed "Fink Susanne", assembling 'fragments' of her life from various police files. While Glajar acknowledges the 'inherent lacunae' in these files, the finished result is a convincing narrative of a dramatic seven-year period in the life of a young woman called Marianne Siegmund.[136] The approach taken to handling interrogation and intelligence material within *Secret police files*, represents a compelling methodology for handling similar CSDIC(I) material, and this is the approach that has been taken during the research for the current project. Nonetheless, there are differences between the two contexts that need to be examined.

The CSDIC(I) archives originated from the need of the British authorities to assess the behavior in Japanese captivity of captured Indian troops, and additionally to assess their political reliability from a British colonial perspective. The files within the archives present an institutional view that can appear orientalist in character, namely a tendency to view the interrogatees through colonial stereotypes.[137] One example of this, is the disclaimer found at the beginning of interrogations from the Australian branch of CSDIC(I): 'All informants are Indians belonging to the Martial Races of India'.[138] The files consist of three main types of document: interrogation files focused on individuals; joint interrogation files, covering

[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid., p.11.
[136] Ibid., p.57.
[137] For a similar phenomenon see: Wagner, *Thuggee*, pp.6-7.
[138] AWM, AWM54, 423/11/51 Part 1, p.1. *CSDIC(I) "A" Section, Report No. 20.*

two or more individuals; and summary reports on particular topics derived from existing interrogations, one example being a review of those Indian officers who were killed on active service with the INA.[139] Individual interrogation files make up the bulk of surviving material, but were only created for those Indian prisoners suspected of collaboration with the Japanese, typically through membership of the INA. In the case of Indian Commissioned Officers, this meant that around half of the nearly five hundred who had been prisoners of the Japanese were subjected to the CSDIC(I) interrogation process, along with thousands of lower ranking Indian military personnel.[140] This inevitably leads to a strong bias in the surviving CSDIC(I) material towards those who joined the INA or worked with the Japanese in other ways, although the files still contain information about Indian prisoners who remained 'loyal' in British terms.

The memoir of one Indian officer who was interrogated by CSDIC(I) in Singapore following the Japanese surrender in August 1945, provides an insight into how Indian officers suspected of collaboration were processed by CSDIC(I).[141] Captain Durrani had spent the last year of the war in INA military custody, but following the arrival of British forces in Singapore in September 1945, was housed in a camp with other Indian officers, most of whom had joined the INA at some point. The detainees during this initial period were allowed to freely associate with each other and appear to have spent their time preparing for their impending interrogation. The next phase was more rigorous, with Durrani and others moved to another camp where he had to sleep on a concrete floor and was given only limited rations while being interrogated eight hours a day over the course of two weeks, although in

[139] NAI, INA 499, part 13, p.86. *Posthumous reports on Indian officers who died or were killed whilst serving with the INA*
[140] For a full list of Indian officer prisoners see: AAS, Mss Eur F275/9, p.282. *CSDIC(I) No. 2 Section Report No. 19, dated 27th June 1946.* The total includes officers of the Indian Medical Service.
[141] Durrani, *Sixth Column*, pp.298-334.

his case allowances were made for his frail physical condition. Durrani was finally exonerated by CSDIC(I), transferred to a camp for loyal Indian prisoners, and recommended for an award for his conduct while a prisoner. Ultimately awarded the George Cross, his 'file story' is utilised later in the thesis. In contrast, an officer assessed as having been a key member of the INA was sent to Pearl Hill jail in Singapore.[142]

However, it needs to be acknowledged that those being interrogated, even if not physically abused, would have been under intense psychological pressure, with the prospect of long prison sentences if they were convicted at a subsequent court-martial of active involvement in the INA. At CSDIC(I) headquarters at the Red Fort in Delhi, at least two Indian officer detainees appear to have committed suicide in 1944, with at least one other suffering a mental breakdown in 1945.[143] In the case of a few INA personnel captured in 1944, their interrogations were the first stage in a process that led to their execution following a subsequent court-martial, a pathway examined in more detail later in the thesis.[144]

As well as assessing previous actions, another key objective of the interrogations was to assess the future political reliability of the subject. In one example, a CSDIC(I) interrogator highlighted his concerns about the Indian nationalist sympathies of one officer by stating that he 'sees himself occupying a prominent niche in the gallery of national heroes'.[145] In this respect, the CSDIC(I) files resemble the secret police reports previously discussed, as they too focused on individuals suspected of representing a threat to the authorities, while also containing information on other individuals. Nonetheless, despite the attention given

[142] Ibid., p.331.
[143] AAS, L/I/1/1040, *File 462/80(e)vii INA trials,* p.1.
[144] NAI, INA 486, p.38. *SGCM of Fitter Sardar Singh and Havildar Lachman Singh.*
[145] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.87. *Interrogation of Captain Thakur Singh*

by CSDIC(I) to assessing the latent political threat of those it interrogated, there appears to have been little interest in appreciating the nationalist politics of many who served in the INA, with a focus instead on their collaboration with the Japanese and the association with fascism, one trope being the description of Subhas Chandra Bose as a 'Fuhrer'.[146] Within the CSDIC(I) material, the conflict in Southeast Asia is situated within a broader British metanarrative of the war as a 'fight for freedom', with no acknowledgement of the anti-colonial dimensions of the conflict in the region.

In one structural respect the CSDIC(I) files differ from the Eastern Bloc material, as they consist almost entirely of one-off interrogations and reports rather than collections of secret police material that grew over a period of years. Unfortunately, generally all that has survived are the final CSDIC(I) interrogations, with none of the supporting documentation that clearly existed when they were written. Only when extracts are incorporated within the CSDIC(I) interrogations or reports, do we glimpse the full range of material that was once available, the text moving from the third-person narrative of the interrogator to the first-person narrative of statements and diary extracts. This lacuna is frustrating, as it is evident that there was originally a considerable amount of supporting material that the CSDIC(I) interrogators were able to draw on. For example, one account of the interrogation process states that those officers being investigated were required to write a statement describing their experiences as prisoners.[147] One of the few examples of such a statement that has survived is that of Lieutenant Colonel Gill, who was a prominent member of the INA in 1942. In his interrogation report, the statement he provided was partly reproduced by his CSDIC(I) interrogator in order to condemn him, by contrasting his declaration of loyalty to

[146] AAS, Mss Eur F275/14, p.99. *Interrogation of Captain Taj Mohd Khanzada*
[147] Durrani, *Sixth Column,* p.310.

the British within it, with a strikingly similar written declaration of loyalty provided to the Japanese in 1942, and which had been separately recovered.[148]

Extracts from diaries are more common in CSDIC(I) interrogations, although again, any quotes are highly selective and attuned to the preoccupations of the interrogator. In one file, extracts of anti-British sentiments were reproduced from a recovered diary, as well as copies of notes on what the interrogator described as 'National Heroes (terrorists etc.)', in order to condemn the individual involved.[149] Only rarely have diaries survived, one example being an account of events relating to the INA in Singapore in 1943, which appears to have been copied and preserved for its wider historical value.[150] A sense of the scale of material that was lost is given by one description of a bonfire used by CSDIC(I) to destroy records at its headquarters in the Red Fort at the end of the war, 'which turned the sky over part of Delhi black for three weeks'.[151]

But while much has been lost, much of value remains. The CSDIC(I) interrogations read as ready-made biographical narratives or file stories of Indian prisoners, albeit ones written from a particular bureaucratic and political perspective. They contain a range of experiences as diverse as acting as labourers for the Japanese, fighting in the INA against British forces in Burma, and being sent to India as spies and saboteurs. They also catalogue extreme suffering at times, including malnutrition, torture and even anthropophagy. The largest interrogation, that of Mohan Singh, is 130 foolscap pages long. While that is exceptional in terms of its scale and ambition, the interrogation reports generally follow a standard pattern

[148] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.187. *Interrogation of Major Naranjan Singh Gill*
[149] AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.51. *CSDIC(I) Report No. 698*
[150] TNA, WO 208/814, *Indian National Army: organization charts and diary of important events*
[151] Alan Stripp, *Codebreaker in the Far East* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), p.47.

of providing background biographical information, a chronological description of events, and finally a review and conclusion.[152]

Additionally, the confidential nature of the CSDIC(I) interrogations allowed comments to be recorded that would not have been possible in more public official documentation. For example, the attitude of one officer who joined the INA was put down to being like 'many another of the better type of regular officer, [who] just could not bear to be left out when there was soldiering to be done', a verdict that is surprisingly generous towards an officer who had switched sides and fought against British forces.[153] A grudging respect for some of those interrogated is also evident elsewhere, including for an officer who although being 'most unpleasant' to interrogate was also 'a shrewd enemy of our forces in battle'.[154] However, the dominant attitude is much less forgiving, with acerbic comments in many interrogations, one example being the concluding remarks on another officer: 'Loyalty, it is evident, has no meaning for him: courage, he has none; of convictions he is incapable'.[155]

While the CSDIC(I) interrogations can be read as compelling file stories, the question arises: can they be trusted? While truth can be difficult to prove *per se*, not least because the files typically contain material that is not available from any other source, one characteristic of the files suggests that they do at least represent a coherent institutional view. This is because the CSDIC(I) files do not exist in isolation, but in practice form a network of cross-referenced reports that were generated at different times and in sometimes widely separated geographical locations by a variety of authors, a structure reflected in the subject index

[152] TNA, WO 325/51, *Interrogation of Captain Mohan Singh*. Note: written by Hugh Toye.
[153] AAS, Mss Eur F275/16, p.228. *Interrogation of Captain Inayatullah Jan Kiani*
[154] AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.163. *Interrogation of Captain Gulzara Singh*
[155] AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.218. *Interrogation of Lieutenant Braja Mohan Pattanayak*

created by CSDIC(I) in Singapore.[156] While this file topology helped ensure the internal consistency of the CSDIC(I) files, it would be unreasonable to expect that every statement within them is correct, not least because those being interrogated were often uncooperative. One example of an interrogation where details may not be reliable relates to an officer who had previously been a pilot in the Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF). In his interrogation CSDIC(I) stated that the officer had withdrawn from the RIAF due to disgruntlement about his seniority within the service, although another credible source suggests it was due to his refusal to participate in punitive bombing raids against villages on the Northwest Frontier of India.[157] This is a reminder that however compelling CSDIC(I) file stories may be, wherever possible, they must be tempered with other sources.

Although the majority of the surviving CSDIC(I) files consist of interrogations, it also produced a variety of other types of report. One example is a useful summary history of the INA that has been noted by previous authors such as Marston.[158] Other reports focus on individual episodes, such as the landing of an espionage party consisting of former Indian prisoners by the Japanese on the Indian coast in 1944, an episode examined later in this thesis.[159] Also, some of the reports that have proved the most valuable for this study relate to Indian prisoners who were not necessarily members of the INA. One example is a report written by an Indian Medical Officer (IMO) named Lieutenant Colonel Malhotra, who ran the medical services for Indian prisoners in Singapore until the end of the war.[160] Another, is a summary report of those groups of Indian prisoners transported by the Japanese to the

[156] AAS, Mss Eur F275/19, p.73. *Alphabetical Serial and Subject Index to S Section Reports*
[157] See: AAS, Mss Eur F275/5, p.122. *Interrogation of Captain Burhan Ud Din*; and, IWM, sound recording 80011491, Reel 5, 23:30, *2nd Lt. Ismail Khan*
[158] AAS, L/WS/2/45.
[159] AAS, F275/3, p.291.
[160] NAI, INA, 379, part.2, p.160.

Southwest Pacific area.[161] Many of the CSDIC(I) reports that detail the experiences of Indian prisoners who were not members of the INA, are only available in the National Archives of India, and their contents helped shape key parts of this thesis.

In conclusion, the CSDIC(I) interrogations and reports represent a genre of writing that could have profound consequences for those interrogated, including in a few cases acting as the first stage in a process that led to their execution. When interrogations are interpreted as 'file stories' they provide a compelling insight into the experiences of Indian prisoners of the Japanese. Fay's lament that the sources on the INA were 'beggarly' can now be challenged, while the information simultaneously collated by CSDIC(I) on Indian prisoners in general, provides new opportunities to explore the experiences of the majority of Indian prisoners who did not join the force.[162]

Memory & Forgetting

With the central questions of this thesis relating to British memory of Indian prisoners, it is necessary to outline a theoretical framework within which the examination of memory will be situated. In particular, this framework will draw on theory relating to memory and generations from the field of sociology. The sociologist Maurice Halbwachs is generally considered to be the 'founding father of contemporary memory studies', especially those aspects involving its 'social or collective nature'.[163] His importance derives from the way in

[161] NAI, INA, 379, part.5.
[162] Fay, *Forgotten Army*, p.563.
[163] Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.5. Note that Halbwachs work was originally published (in French) in 1925 as *Social Frameworks of Memory*.

which he 'gave the term "collective memory" a theoretical weight previously unknown', providing the foundations for subsequent work.[164] Of relevance to this study, Halbwachs emphasised the importance of an individual's social context in shaping their own memory, the 'social frameworks of individual memory'.[165] However, despite the widespread continuing use of the term "collective memory", this thesis follows Olick and others in preferring the term "social memory" to distinguish 'socially framed individual memory' from a form of collectivist 'common memory of groups', a distinction that Halbwachs did not always make clear.[166] In addition, as Beiner has recently noted, Halbwachs 'had little to say about forgetting', a tendency that has continued in much of the subsequent scholarship on memory.[167]

Although the role of forgetting in the development of "social memory" has been relatively neglected, some researchers have emphasised its importance, including Burke who has proposed the umbrella term 'social amnesia' to encompass the various ways in which it can occur.[168] In addition, Connerton has sought to challenge the 'commonly held if not universal' view that forgetting always represented a failure, defining a typology of seven types of forgetting, including 'repressive erasure' and 'structural amnesia', although he emphasised that he did not regard his catalogue of types as definitive.[169] A key aspect emphasised by authors such as Burke and Connerton, is the *active* nature of the forgetting they are describing. This is not the inadvertent decay of memory over time, but rather memory that has been affected by deliberate actions, and it will be argued that the

[164] Ibid., p.16.
[165] Ibid., p.18.
[166] Ibid., pp.40-41.
[167] Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.22.
[168] Peter Burke, 'History as Social Memory', in *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, ed. by Thomas Butler (Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989), p.108.
[169] Paul Connerton, 'Seven types of Forgetting', *Memory Studies*, 1, 1 (2008), pp.59-60., p.64., p.70.

development of post-war British memory of Indian prisoners of the Japanese, was shaped in a similarly active way.

In terms of this thesis, two broad influences on British post-war memory of Indian prisoners are proposed. The first involves the investigation of what Burke has described as 'the official censorship of embarrassing memories' and therefore has an institutional character.[170] A prominent example of this type of research is the body of scholarship relating to the British colonial archives revealed to exist at Hanslope Park, with some of this material now available for viewing at The National Archives at Kew, although none has proved relevant for the current study.[171] In the case of this study, it involves the role of the British colonial state and the institution of the British Indian Army in bringing about the forgetting of Indian prisoners. But as well as the impact of 'exclusion, suppression or repression' of knowledge regarding Indian prisoners, there were also other institutional sources of distortion.[172] Examples discussed later in the thesis will include the lasting effect of official wartime propaganda, post-war memorialisation practices, and later official and regimental histories.

Secondly, in addition to such largely institutional processes, another important influence on British post-war memory of Indian prisoners were the later memoirs and diaries of British military officers who had served in the British Indian Army, sometimes over many years and often in senior roles. Examined later in the thesis, these British officer accounts display remarkably consistent views regarding Indian prisoners. However, the limited commentary is typically focussed on those who switched sides and fought against British forces, and who

[170] Burke, 'History as Social Memory', p.109.
[171] See document series: TNA FCO 141. Files examined: FCO 141/14377, FCO 141/14392. For background on Hanslope Park see: 'Uncovering the brutal truth about the British empire', *The Guardian*, 18 August 2016.
[172] Burke, 'History as Social Memory', p.108.

are invariably described in derogatory terms. It will be argued that this consistency of views among British officers, resulted from a form of "social memory" that had emerged during the war.

But from where did this "social memory" originate? Theoretical work on the nature of generations provides a possible answer, in particular the framework proposed by sociologist Karl Mannheim in his essay 'The Sociological Problem of Generations'.[173] As well as an extensive discussion of age-related generations, Mannheim also outlined the concept of a 'generation as actuality', in other words a generation formed through shared lived experience, particularly during a period of 'dynamic destabilisation' such as a war.[174] Further, Mannheim argued that such a broadly based 'generation as actuality' could contain within it multiple 'generation units', each characterised by the 'great similarity in the data making up the consciousness of its members'.[175] According to Mannheim, it was not the data that produced a 'generation unit', but what he describes as 'those formative forces which shape the data and give them character and direction'.[176] An issue of terminology arises here, in that Mannheim's definition of the term 'generation unit' equates to the typical definition of the term 'cohort' in sociology, although as Pilcher has noted 'generation meaning cohort remains in wide circulation within social science', and for the purposes of this thesis Mannheim's original terminology of 'generation unit' will be retained.[177]

[173] Karl Mannheim, 'The Sociological Problem of Generations', in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952)
[174] Ibid., p.303.
[175] Ibid., p.304.
[176] Ibid., p.305.
[177] Jane Pilcher, 'Mannheim's Sociology of Generations: An Undervalued Legacy', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 45, 3, (1994), p.483.

Insightful as Mannheim's theoretical sociological framework is, Pilcher has highlighted that his 'seminal work' on generations is a 'theoretical treatment of the problem' and does not provide any guidelines or examples as to how to apply his theory of generations in practice.[178] For the purposes of this historical study, in the case of the British officers, it will be argued that the 'forces' invoked by Mannheim included the impact of the institutional context of the Army itself on their views, and their own experience of successfully commanding Indian troops in action against the Japanese. It was this institutional and experiential context that generated the wartime "social memory" of the 'generation unit' of British officers, although it needs to be recognised that their views on Indian prisoners would have represented only a small part of their total wartime "social memory".

With respect to Indian prisoners, a pertinent element of Army institutional policy during the war, and of British officer "social memory", was the role of what will be termed a "myth of loyalty": namely the assertion that whatever may have occurred during their time in captivity, most Indian prisoners remained fundamentally loyal to their British-officered regiments. The precise nature of what is meant by myth in this context is important to define. For the British, this was clearly not myth as a synonym for lie, but myth acting as credo: in part an act of faith; in part a necessary fiction. It will be argued that its mythogenesis was rooted in the ethos of the foundational organisational structure of the British Indian Army: the regiment, although it also drew on more general wartime and colonial propaganda themes that emphasised the loyalty of Indian troops. Later, as wartime imperatives faded and the 'generation unit' of British officers completed publishing memoirs, the "myth of loyalty" took on the meaning of myth that has been described by Todman as the 'history you

[178] Ibid., p.492.

can remember'.[179] Crucially, the role of the myth was an active one during the war and afterwards involving, as Barthes has described, 'the task of giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal'.[180] It will be argued that the "myth of loyalty" had a range of impacts, including inflecting wartime policy regarding the treatment of recovered Indian prisoners, and framing British officer attitudes in the post-war period.

It should be emphasised that while 'loyalty' may superficially appear to be a straightforward concept, its character within the broader colonial context of British India is complex. At its broadest, British perceptions of military loyalty were shaped by experience of which Indian troops had proved reliable during the colonial crisis represented by the rebellion of 1857. This experience resulted in the preferential recruitment into the colonial Army, in the later nineteenth century, of classes such as Sikhs, Pathans, and Gurkhas, namely what became known as the 'martial races', a preference that persisted until World War Two.[181] As Gajendra Singh has noted, for the British 'martial race' theory encompassed a complex amalgam of racial, climatic, and behavioural ideas, that could even envisage those included as 'proto-Britons' and therefore naturally loyal, distinct from rest of the Indian population.[182] However, with respect to the individual *jawan*, 'loyalty' was framed for British officers by the institutional context of the regiment - the military home for both British officers and Indian troops alike. It is argued here that for the Indian troops the regiment manifested what constituted an infrastructure of loyalty, including the personal relations between officers and men, that could span many years; the status derived from service and rank; and the

[179] Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p.xiii.
[180] Barthes, Roland., trans. by Annette Lavers, and Sian Reynolds, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2009), p.168.; see also: Todman, *The Great War*, p.233.n.6.
[181] Gavin Rand and Kim A. Wagner, 'Recruiting the 'martial races': identities and military service in colonial India', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46, 3-4 (2012), 232-254, p.234.
[182] Gajendra Singh, *Testimonies of Indian soldiers*, pp.16-17.

immediate and long-term financial rewards of serving.[183] For British officers, their response to any evidence of disloyalty from Indian troops of their regiment was mediated through a complimentary lens. One example of how this could work in practice is a theme explored in the next chapter – the persistent belief that Indian troops who had actively served in the INA could be re-claimed for their respective regiments, an example of the "myth of loyalty" in practice. An indication of the utility of the British regimental system is that it was retained by the armies of both India and Pakistan following independence in 1947 (as was the practice of recruitment according to 'martial race' theory).[184] For British officers, their understanding of loyalty in the Indian colonial context shaped and directed policy at various levels, while also framing British responses to evidence of disloyalty, both during and after the war.

Returning to the nature of British officer social memory, while Mannheim's theoretical concept of the 'generation unit' can be used to frame its emergence with respect to Indian prisoners, it cannot address the nature of the *active* processes that brought about the general forgetting of Indian prisoners. Here the central role of the "myth of loyalty" during and after the war is crucial, as it will be argued that the myth acted as a lens through which information on Indian prisoners was assessed, with material that contradicted the myth being repressed or modified, while that which corresponded to the myth was affirmed and emphasised. This is the mechanism by which myth, as Barthes has put it, 'harmonizes with the world, not as it is, but as it wants to create itself'.[185] In the case of the assessment of the "myth of loyalty" against information relating to Indian prisoners, it will be argued that 'harmonization' became primarily a synonym for forgetting. Examples of such 'harmonization' will be examined at various points in this thesis.

[183] Roy, *The Army in British India*, pp.133-134.
[184] Ibid., pp.6-7.
[185] Barthes, *Mythologies*, p.184.

But at a practical level how did this occur? It is proposed in this thesis that with respect to information relating to Indian prisoners, this process of assessment against the "myth of loyalty" acted at a practical level through three complimentary *active* processes', namely: suppression; obscuration; and selection. *Suppression* involved restricting access to information on Indian prisoners both during the war and afterwards. Material suppressed in this way contained information that would have directly challenged the "myth of loyalty" and was only accessible during the war to a restricted group of officers. One manifestation of *suppression* is the fact that some key documents that clearly existed appear to be missing from the various CSDIC(I) archives. Examples of this phenomenon are highlighted at various points later in the thesis, one being missing courts-martial of captured INA troops. Other manifestations include the suppression of information on the INA in later British memoirs, again discussed later in the thesis.

Another related factor that has had an impact on British post-war memory of Indian prisoners, has been the long delay before most archival material became publicly available. Nonetheless, to be clear, the delayed release of official documents is standard practice and should not therefore be seen as unusual *per se*. Indeed, the timing of release of the largest CSDIC(I) archive at the National Archives of India, was determined by the successor Indian government rather than by British officials. While the rationale for the timing of this release is unclear, the delay until the late 1990s may have been influenced by the fact that the CSDIC(I) files contain a considerable quantity of personal information on Indian nationals.[186] Unfortunately, the long delays before this and other material was released

[186] 'Received from Ministry of Defence Historical Section in 1997', see description in: NAI, Private Papers, Indian National Army papers, file list.

resulted in the restriction of available sources for earlier historians, with an inevitable impact on the secondary literature. It will be argued that *suppression*, combined with delays in making official documentation available, have together had a significant impact on British post-war memory of Indian prisoners.

The second process is termed *obscuration* and involved the use of a construct which will be termed a *facade*. This in its various forms had a structural function, in that where information on Indian prisoners was made public, the facade facilitated its presentation in a controlled way to avoid any challenge to the "myth of loyalty". A facade therefore presented an acceptable public face to material that in its unvarnished form would have challenged the myth and prompted awkward questions, thereby allowing problematic knowledge to be forgotten by obscuring it from public view. Examples of the application of facades discussed later, include wartime propaganda (intended to reinforce public support for the war and bolster Army recruitment) which remained uncorrected or was even reinforced in the post-war period, and commemorative practices that implied that all those being memorialised had remained loyal to the British colonial state when some had not.

The third and last process is termed *selection*. This involved the practice of highlighting events, or individual Indian prisoners, that demonstrated behaviour that conformed to what would be expected from the "myth of loyalty". Those selected for mention in this manner therefore exemplified desirable behaviour from a British perspective. One example discussed later in the thesis, involves a regimental history where Indian prisoners awarded medals for resisting recruitment into the INA were highlighted, while simultaneously other prisoners from the same regiment who joined it are studiously ignored. This process therefore involved more than simply mentioning only a limited number of individuals, as it

required the active forgetting of those whose behaviour did not resonate with the "myth of loyalty".

Taken together, the three complimentary processes of suppression, obscuration, and selection, buttressed the "myth of loyalty", although only at the price of forgetting much of what had happened to Indian prisoners of the Japanese. During the war, for the British to discuss Indian prisoners was to risk highlighting a living reminder of British military failure, while to publicly acknowledge the INA would have seriously diminished British colonial prestige, with the attendant danger of undermining the colonial war effort. The unavoidable post-war acknowledgement of the INA's existence, led to a crisis of both colonial and Regimental authority, that subsequently was partly addressed by reaffirming the "myth of loyalty" in later British narratives. It will be argued that the myth, combined with the associated forgetting, fulfilled a purpose for British officers and colonial officials, of avoiding the need to publicly confront the reality of what had occurred involving Indian prisoners, both during the war and afterwards.

Methodology

As the title of this thesis makes clear, this study approaches the field of enquiry represented by Indian prisoners of the Japanese, through the lens of memory. Previous research in this field, including that of the current author, has tended to frame their experiences in terms of whether they remained loyal to the British or not, thereby ventriloquising the preoccupations of the contemporary British colonial authorities. The current approach represents a deliberate shift in focus away from those preoccupations towards examining how British post-war memory of Indian prisoners emerged, with the aim of exploring the nature of that

memory, while allowing a more nuanced framing of Indian prisoner experience. It should be emphasised that the focus on memory does not mean that the question of loyalty is discounted: the historical reality is that the British colonial authorities were indeed preoccupied with the loyalty of their Indian troops, and this is reflected in the role of the "myth of loyalty" outlined in the previous section. But by de-emphasising loyalty *per se*, one benefit is that Indian prisoner experience is no longer flattened into a simplistic binary stereotype, of loyal or disloyal. Another benefit of this approach with respect to Indian prisoners, is the de-centring of the role of leaders such as Captain Mohan Singh, and above all Subhas Chandra Bose, who often dominate existing accounts to the extent that Indian prisoners are often reduced to minor characters in their own play. A core objective has therefore been to bring to the fore the experiences of Indian prisoners themselves, an objective facilitated by engagement with their CSDIC(I) 'file stories'.

Clearly, the exploration of how British memory of Indian prisoners has developed, can only be founded on a deep knowledge of the field of enquiry itself, and this has been approached in the following manner. As has been previously outlined, there are now a wide variety of archival sources relevant to the field, and these have been engaged with through a combination of physical visits, electronic access, and the use of research agents. All the main relevant British archives were visited in person, including the British Library, the National Archives at Kew, the National Army Museum in Chelsea, the Imperial War Museum, and the Gurkha Museum Archive in Winchester. The two archives in India, the National Archives and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, both in New Delhi, were also visited in person during two research trips in 2018 and 2019. It is worth highlighting that neither of the two main CSDIC(I) archives, at the British Library and the National Archives

of India, allowed photography or other means to capture large amounts of material quickly, and as a result most of the content was captured through note taking.

Although it was not possible to visit Australian archives in person, key sources, such as Japanese war-crimes trial material held at the National Archives in Canberra, were available for digital download, while CSDIC(I) interrogations held at the Australian War Memorial were obtained through the archival copying service. Finally, a research agent was used to obtain photographs of Indian prisoner letters held at the Australian National University in Canberra. Archival work was supplemented by relevant site visits. In India these included the INA museum at the Red Fort (*Lal Qila*) in Delhi, including the cells where INA personnel were held.[187] In Singapore a variety of sites were visited, including the Kranji War Memorial which is discussed later in this thesis. Sites were also visited in Japan, although none of the research was ultimately utilised within the project. In summary, the methodology adopted for this project, allows new questions to be addressed to a field of enquiry that has been enriched with significant additional sources in recent decades.

Chapter outline

The thesis consists of six chapters: the current Introductory chapter; four thematic chapters; and a final concluding chapter. Each of the four thematic chapters examines several incidents or episodes, both during the war and afterwards, in order to explore a particular theme while simultaneously situating them within the necessary context. The four themes examined are: British responses to the loss and recovery of Indian prisoners; the experiences

[187] The museum was subsequently relocated elsewhere within the Red Fort in 2019.

of Indian prisoners themselves, and the portrayal of it; the British portrayal of INA combat performance; and the post-war Japanese war-crimes trials involving Indian prisoner victims. Each of these themes is examined through the lens of memory in order to explore the development of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners. An outline of each of the chapters is now provided.

The first themed chapter, *The Missing: Foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners of war*, examines British responses to the loss and recovery of Indian prisoners. It examines how the British authorities first became aware of the scale of the INA after its formation in 1942 and the responses this engendered. One of the British responses involved carefully framed propaganda emphasising the loyalty of Indian troops, an explicit manifestation of the "myth of loyalty". The role of this wartime propaganda in influencing post-war memory of Indian prisoners is explored by examining how the surrender of an espionage party consisting of Indian prisoners, landed on the Indian coast from a Japanese submarine, was portrayed during the war and afterwards. The challenges that the British authorities faced towards the end of the war and afterwards when recovering tens of thousands of Indian prisoners are then addressed, with a particular focus on the difficulties faced when publicly court-martialling some of those prisoners who had joined the INA. It will be argued that the outcome of these trials, which in one notable case involved convicted INA officers being immediately released from military custody, had a traumatic impact on British military officers, and impacted the post-war memory of Indian prisoners by reinforcing the importance of the "myth of loyalty" in later British accounts.

The second chapter, *Indian prisoners of the Japanese: experience and memory of captivity*, examines how the experiences of Indian prisoners were remembered, and the way that this

has been portrayed subsequently. It begins with a detailed review of the mortality rates while in Japanese custody between different groups of Indian prisoners. While confirming a lower death rate in percentage terms of Indian prisoners compared to their British prisoner counterparts, it argues that this came about by chance. It also challenges the official British position, that Indian prisoners who joined the INA, had a lower death rate compared to those who resisted recruitment. A series of case studies of different groups of Indian prisoners are then provided to illustrate the sheer variety of different experiences found in the sources, little of which is visible in the current secondary literature. The evidence suggesting that Indian prisoners became the victims of anthropophagy at the hands of the Japanese is also examined. Finally, the impact on post-war memory of how those Indian prisoners who died were later memorialised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is explored.

The third chapter, *British memory of an enemy: The Indian National Army in battle*, examines the British portrayal of the combat performance of the INA. Western military accounts have typically been dismissive of the INA's impact on the battlefield, with many leaning on the negative opinions of influential British officers such as General Slim. This chapter interrogates this consensus, utilising the expanded range of primary sources now available to reassess the impact that the INA had, thereby critiquing the portrayal of the INA in the extant secondary literature. It examines an episode from March 1945 in which the INA inflicted significant casualties on an attacking British force, but in which the role of the INA has previously been ignored. The role that the INA played during the Japanese offensive against Northeast India in the first half of 1944 is also examined, with a particular emphasis on the activities of the INA reconnaissance units that accompanied the attacking Japanese forces during the offensive. The picture that emerges is that the INA was much more successful in many of its tactical operations during this offensive than has previously

been recognised, although the campaign nonetheless ended in a catastrophic defeat. The British wartime courts-martial of captured INA personnel are then examined, with a particular focus on those that ended in the execution of the accused. It will be argued that the post-war memory of those Indian prisoners who joined the INA has been profoundly shaped by British suppression of their activities on the battlefield.

The fourth chapter, *Eyewitnesses to suffering: Memory of Indian victims in post-war Japanese war-crimes trials, 1946-1948*, examines a subject that until recently had been largely ignored. The archival material relating to these trials conducted by British and Australian authorities, represent a rich but underused source, providing insights into a wide range of Indian prisoner experience. After providing a general overview of the war-crimes process, four trials are examined in detail (three conducted by British authorities and one by the Australians), in order to illustrate the wide range of experiences represented in the trial proceedings. The events examined involve the beheading of an Indian prisoner for trying to escape, the sinking of a Japanese transport ship carrying Indian prisoners and its aftermath, the killing of an Indian officer for refusing Japanese orders, and a massacre of Indian prisoners. It will be argued that suppression of information relating to Indian prisoners in the immediate post-war period by the British authorities, in particular information on who had or had not joined the INA, resulted in miscarriages of justice, including both unfair convictions and unjustified acquittals of Japanese accused.

In summary, taken together these chapters will seek to demonstrate how British authorities suppressed information on aspects of Indian prisoner experience both during the war and in the post-war period, both with respect to those who served in the INA and for those who did not, an approach that represented an explicit act of forgetting. The former Indian prisoners

who arrived back in India aboard HMS *Formidable* in November 1945, may have been given a warm reception on the day they arrived, but they were soon to be forgotten. The development and character of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners, represents a case study in the development of historical memory. The processes by which it emerged, and the form it ultimately took, has the potential to provide insights into the formation of memory in other historical settings.

Chapter 1: The Missing: Foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners of war

The Imperial War Museum in London holds several Japanese newsreel clips that show the surrender of Singapore, and near the beginning of one of these are scenes portraying prisoners, including captured Indian troops.[188] The first half minute of this newsreel shows British and Australian prisoners, but then in the following half minute there are scenes showing Indian prisoners, both individually and *en masse*. In one scene the Indian prisoners are seen marching, in another, sitting in groups, before a long panning shot that shows a sitting crowd of many thousands, that is almost certainly a view of the mass gathering of Indian prisoners held at Farrer Park in Singapore on 17 February 1942 (see Figure IV). There are many Indian faces visible in these pictures, some clearly apprehensive, others apparently smiling, while in most cases their possessions seem to be limited to the clothes they are wearing. But while the Japanese public viewed Indian prisoners in their cinemas, the British authorities in India were unsure how many of their Indian troops had been captured. The war against Japan had developed so quickly, that the movements of many of the Indian troops who had participated in the campaigns in Malaya, Burma, and elsewhere, had not been adequately tracked, and the result was both confusion over numbers of Indian troops lost and a lack of information for their families (see Figure I).[189] This is emphasised by a newspaper report from September 1942 that provided details of Indian casualties in the war up to that point. There are precise figures for most theatres of war, but a major exception is Malaya, where the figures are dominated by the statement 'missing about 70,000'.[190]

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[188] IWM, JYY 61, *Japanese capture of Singapore* < https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060044212> [accessed 4 February 2020]
[189] Yasmin Khan, *The Raj at War: a People's History of India's Second World War*, (London: The Bodley Head, 2015), p.294.
[190] 'Indian Army Loses Only 2,096 Killed', *Times of India*, 24 September 1942, p.4.

This chapter examines how British responses to the loss of so many Indian troops, and particularly how they reacted to later evidence that some had engaged in anti-colonial activities under the banner of Indian nationalism, laid the foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners. It will be argued, that during the war, responses included the active suppression of information regarding anti-colonial activity, and propaganda which invariably presented Indian prisoners as loyal to the British. British responses to the threat of subversive activities, whether directed at the colonial state or the Army, were broadly successful during the war. However, in the immediate post-war period, the court-martialling of former Indian prisoners who had served in the INA, resulted in humiliation for the British colonial state. It will be argued that this outcome had a profoundly negative impact on British officers serving with the British Indian Army, and that this contributed to the denigration of the INA in later British military memoirs and other sources. Although only a minority of Indian prisoners served with the INA, the British responses to its existence shaped British post-war memory of all Indian prisoners.

The chapter is divided into four sections that together review the foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners. The first section, entitled 'News of treachery: Escapees, suspects, and the Dhillon party', begins by reviewing the role played by Army Regimental centres in India in caring for the families of Indian prisoners. It then addresses how and when the British authorities became aware of anti-colonial activities by some Indian prisoners, and their policy responses to that development. The difficulties faced by the British authorities in evaluating the accounts given by Indian escapees of their experiences in captivity are examined, before reviewing the impact of the arrival of the Dhillon escape party.

The second section, entitled ‘The Pasni espionage party: propaganda and reality’, examines how a failed Japanese intelligence operation has been remembered in the post-war period. The Indian prisoners involved, who surrendered to the British authorities after being landed on the Indian coast from a Japanese submarine, were utilised by the British for wartime propaganda purposes. The propaganda version of events was reinforced in the post-war period through the award of the George Cross to an Indian officer, for encouraging them to surrender on arrival in India. New primary sources allow a reappraisal of these events. The episode illustrates how wartime propaganda has influenced British post-war memory.

The third section is entitled ‘Sorting ‘Blacks’ from ‘Whites’: Recovering and assessing Indian prisoners’, and reviews how British post-war memory of Indian prisoners was influenced by war-time policies regarding the treatment of recovered INA personnel, who made up the bulk of recovered prisoners during the war. The British authorities were forced to modify the relatively lenient wartime treatment of INA personnel, following the recovery of all other Indian prisoners after the end of the war. It finishes by examining how managing captured INA personnel in the post-war period proved problematic for the British.

The fourth and last section, entitled ‘Crimes and punishment: The post-war INA trials’, reviews a subject that has received considerable attention from historians, but from a novel perspective: the impact on British officers serving with the Indian Army. It argues that the humiliating outcome for the colonial state of the most prominent trial, deeply affected British military officers and represented a milestone on the road to decolonisation. Taken together, the four sections explore the foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners.

News of treachery: Escapees, suspects, and the Dhillon party

Although the Japanese public viewed pictures of Indian prisoners in their cinemas, as was noted above, there was little or no news of the captured men available to the British military authorities or their families in India. During 1942, the prisoners' regimental centres adapted to caring over the long term for the families of the missing men, while in parallel, small numbers of Indian prisoner escapees began arriving from Japanese-held territory. This section addresses the question: how did the British authorities assess the veracity of the accounts provided by Indian escapees from Japanese-held territory, and how did they react to evidence of subversive activity?

Family matters: the role of the Regimental centres

With little or no news of the captured men, the Army's regimental centres became the focus of efforts to care for the prisoners' families, with one example being the 2nd Gurkhas centre at Dehra Dun in India, whose regimental newsletters detail some of the challenges associated with providing for them. The regiment had lost its second battalion during the Malayan campaign and by mid-1942 the newsletter, written by the British commanding officer of the centre (and based on its tone with a largely British audience in mind), was reporting that 'Dehra, quite rightly, continues to attract our abandoned wives and our colony is increasing', and although 'there are two kindergarten schools of sorts and some decent doctors', it reported that 'houses are almost impossible to get'.[191] A later newsletter, from the end of 1942, reported that news was 'still very meagre but we have had several messages from our men over the enemy Radio (Saigon)' and 'it is obvious that several of those reported missing in the early actions are definitely alive'.[192] Nonetheless, 'the fate of the wives of those

[191] GMA, *Regimental News 2nd Gurkhas*, No.3, 1 August 1942, p.5.
[192] GMA, *Regimental News 2nd Gurkhas*, No.4, 1 January 1943, p.2.

missing in Malaya has worried me considerably. Under existing rules these missing men are presumed dead after seven months, their family allotment ceases and wives draw a reduced allowance. The effect of this would be that many women would remarry and the situation when the missing husband returns after the war, can be imagined', although by the time of the newsletter he could report that 'these women are now getting a fair deal'.[193]

By the end of 1942 there was 'no less than 350' Gurkha families at the regimental centre, while 'the last count of children showed 670', but the British commanding officer also highlighted a couple of incidents to illustrate some of the difficulties he faced, acting as the *de facto* head of this large group of Gurkha women and children. The first involved a 'wife who was under the impression that her marriage allowance was increased for every additional child. Fortunately, we discovered this and disillusioned her before she had time for more than two', while another incident involved 'the abandoned wife of a "missing" rifleman whom I excommunicated for incipient amour. When brought up at orderly room she demanded, publicly, in a loud appealing voice, what I myself would do if I were placed in a similar predicament. I wonder.'.[194] While such regimental centres were certainly paternalistic environments, they were a critical source of support for the families of Indian prisoners, who faced their own unique set of difficulties.

Escapees and suspects

As early as the retreat from Burma in 1942, the British colonial authorities became aware that not all Indian personnel arriving from Japanese territory were *bona fide* escapees, and additionally that attempts were being made to subvert the loyalty of front-line Indian units.

[193] Ibid., p.3.
[194] Ibid., p.7.

Hugh Toye, the former CSDIC(I) officer mentioned in the Introduction, described the situation during the withdrawal from Burma as follows:

> During the withdrawal – and a bitterly fought withdrawal it was – some of the Indian units were subjected to pro-Japanese propaganda by groups of Indians who had been taken prisoner of war in Malaya a few months earlier […] Some of the propagandists used the opportunity of their mission to escape, others joined the flow of refugees, others were caught in the act. Other Indians, again civilian and military, were being despatched by the Japanese for infiltration into India as spies and agents.[195]

By September 1942, a joint Army and Police screening organisation had been established in Eastern India, along with a 'Suspects and Escapees' section of the CSDIC(I), that performed more detailed interrogations of those snared by the screening process. Those processed by CSDIC(I) were given one of three gradings: 'White', for those assessed to be 'genuine escapers or refugees'; 'Grey', for 'men who had been affected by enemy propaganda but who were thought fit for return to service or release after rehabilitation and leave'; and 'Black', for those assessed as 'actual or potential enemy agents who would be a security risk if released'.[196] The racial overtones of categorising Indian subjects as 'white' if they supported the colonial regime and 'black' if they did not, are unremarked on by Toye. He seems to have been confident regarding the effectiveness of CSDIC(I), but also aware that what they were investigating could be challenging from a British perspective: 'Lies could nearly always be spotted by the Information Section: a greater problem was perhaps that the truth itself was sometimes barely credible.'[197] Among the many cases investigated by CSDIC(I) in 1942, are a number that suggest that the screening process was not always as effective as the British authorities would have liked, and some of these will now be examined before reviewing the experiences of multiple escapee officers, including an

[195] AAS, F275/1, p.2.
[196] Ibid., p.3.
[197] Ibid., p.4.

episode that would transform British knowledge of the extent of collaboration between captured Indian personnel and the Japanese: the arrival from Burma of a group led by a Major Dhillon.

One case that illustrates the methods used for screening and the attendant difficulties is that of Havildar Abdul Rahman of 5/1 Punjab Regiment, who had been wounded in action and captured in Burma on 19 April 1942. The next time that the authorities identified him, was when he was arrested in India on 17 September 1942 at Chittagong railway station (close to the Burmese border) having just bought a ticket, and the following day he 'made a false statement, concluding with an oath on everything he held sacred "that while I was in Burma I was never approached by anybody to act on behalf of the Japanese and betray the cause of the British"'. He was clearly believed, because he was then sent on to his regimental centre at Jhelum, rather than being sent for further interrogation. It was in March 1943, as a result of 'new information', that he was finally ordered to report to CSDIC(I) in Delhi, although he arrived bearing a letter of recommendation from his British commanding officer that stated:

> Judging from the Court of Enquiry held on this man, which I have seen, and his general character and behaviour, which I have enquired into very carefully, I do not think that any suspicion can be attached to him.

Nonetheless, by this date CSDIC(I) had learnt from other sources that he had volunteered to lead a four-strong anti-British espionage party, and it assigned him a security classification of 'Black'.[198] The case illustrates the difficulties faced in assessing the motives of returning personnel, even by their own regiments. The fact he had been wounded would presumably

[198] AAS, F275/2, pp.152-153.

have helped explain the long delay before his return, although it is puzzling why his sudden reappearance inside India did not arouse more suspicion.

The British screening organisation was also having to evaluate civilians arriving from Burma. One civilian infiltrator, a Sikh called Muni Singh whose occupation was described as a 'servant of a Sherbert-seller in Rangoon', was intercepted along with ten military personnel trying to penetrate into India, but after giving a false statement he was given a security classification of 'White' and allowed to proceed to his home in India. It was eight months later that based on new information he was re-arrested, and subsequently re-classified as 'Black'.[199] While it is impossible to quantify how many others were able to avoid detection entirely, these cases serve to illustrate the challenges the British authorities faced assessing such individuals, within an often complex and ambiguous intelligence environment.

A later CSDIC(I) interrogation from 1945 of a Bengali civilian called Biren Roy, who ran a training camp in Burma in 1942 for infiltrators, provides an insight into how agents were prepared and organised for their missions into British India. One challenge they faced related to the language difficulties facing the military personnel involved, few of whom originated from Bengal due to the recruitment policies of the British Indian Army:[200]

> Parties were to be mixed and to include both Bengalis and Hindustanis (usually INA). They would cross the lines – the Bengalis shepherding the Hindustanis across Bengal where the difficulty of language would otherwise be insuperable. The first aim was espionage and propaganda – the civilians amongst civilians and the INA disguised as hawkers, camp followers etc among [troops]. Sabotage and guerrilla activity was to wait until the Japanese were actually advancing into India.[201]

[199] AAS, F275/2, p.120.
[200] Roy, *Army in British India*, p.126.
[201] AAS, F275/21, p.72.

Although subversives were a key concern of the British authorities, particularly given the context of ongoing political agitation in India in 1942 as a result of Gandhi's 'Quit India' movement (launched in August), genuine Indian prisoner escapees were also arriving. Among the most remarkable of these escape stories is that of three Indian officers, all captains, who escaped in disguise from Singapore in early May 1942, and over the next four months traversed Japanese-occupied Malaya, Thailand, and Burma to reach the Indian border.[202] All were Sikhs, and they travelled primarily by moving from one Sikh Gurdwara (temple and meeting place) to the next, sometimes together and sometimes alone, making use of pre-existing networks of travel, and often relying on local people for advice and in some cases funds. The first two of these officers reached British-held territory in India in late September 1942, and they brought a wealth of intelligence on what had occurred during the Malayan campaign, and life as prisoners prior to their escape less than three months later. The third officer reached India having joined with another group of Indian personnel escaping from Burma: the party of Major Dhillon.

The Dhillon escape party

While the three officers mentioned above made their remarkable journey incognito, under the constant fear of discovery, the group headed by Major Dhillon had travelled openly and with the active help of the Japanese military, making the final jungle crossing from Japanese-held Burma in late October 1942, riding on elephants.[203] The statement that Major Dhillon subsequently gave to CSDIC(I) of his experiences since surrendering to the Japanese had at its heart a Sikh Indian officer who he claimed had also wanted to escape but had been unable

[202] AAS, L/WS/1/1576, pp.182-197. They were: Captain Balbir Singh and Captain Parab of 4/19 Hyderabad Regiment, and Captain Pritam Singh of 2/16 Punjab Regiment.
[203] Lebra, *Indian National Army*, p.86.

to: Lieutenant Colonel N.S. Gill. Prior to his escape, Dhillon had acted as a loyal aide to Gill, accompanying him on various trips across Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia, for Gill during 1942 was a key figure in the INA, arguably the closest confidant of its first commander, Captain Mohan Singh (see Figure V).[204] Dhillon's loyalty to Gill is evident in the statement, always giving the best possible pro-British gloss to Gill's actions, as well as to his own. His statement provided CSDIC(I) with a remarkable insight into the range of Indian anti-colonial activity occurring in Southeast Asia in 1942, fostered for their own purposes by the Japanese. But the episode also provides an insight into the difficulties that the British authorities faced, when evaluating whether arrivals were genuine escapees.

Major Dhillon's statement begins with events following the surrender of Singapore, starting with the gathering of all Indian prisoners in Singapore at Farrer Park on 17 February 1942, where Gill's role included translating Major Fujiwara's speech from English (provided by a Japanese interpreter) into Hindustani, so that the Indian troops could understand it. The statement continues: 'Captain Mohan Singh then made a stirring, emotional, anti-British speech, at the end of which there was great excitement and wild cheering. The Officers' lines were quiet, but the troops appeared to be deeply moved. […] This emotional display worried Gill and me considerably'.[205] Dhillon then describes how afterwards Gill organised the improvement of living conditions for Indian prisoners, and how Dhillon himself was posted as 'Prisoners of War Liaison Officer' to the headquarters of Captain Mohan Singh.[206]

At the end of February, Gill and Dhillon were sent to Saigon on an inspection tour, stopping in Bangkok *en route*, in the process meeting a variety of Japanese intelligence officers and

[204] Dhillon statement: AAS, L/WS/1/1576, pp.199-201; Gill's role: Lebra, *Indian National Army*, p.87.
[205] AAS, L/WS/1/1576, p.199.
[206] Ibid.

Indian civilian revolutionaries, as well as the Indian officers manning the Saigon propaganda radio station, that later in 1942 would start transmitting short messages from Indian prisoners back to India (mentioned earlier in this chapter), returning to Singapore in early March. Although it was only a few weeks since they had been captured, Gill and Dhillon were clearly highly trusted by the Japanese, although the reasons for this are not immediately apparent from Dhillon's statement. Later in March, Dhillon stayed in Singapore while Gill attended an Indian Independence League (IIL) conference in Tokyo, although Dhillon claimed that afterwards Gill spoke in confidence to a group of Indian officers, asserting that the Japanese were only out to exploit them.[207]

At the end of April, Dhillon and Gill travelled to Bangkok, where Dhillon would stay until September, a period in which he claimed he and Gill formulated several escape plans, although none proved practical. In June, a major IIL conference was held in Bangkok, an event that Dhillon attended, and it was after this, as well as witnessing the local impact of the news from India of the 'Quit India' declaration by the Indian National Congress in August 1942, that they decided 'to escape to India with full information, and to contact the Government of India without delay'. They therefore agreed to a conveniently timed Japanese proposal that an Indian espionage group should be formed, with the aim of using the organisation to escape to India. Dhillon described how: 'Mohan Singh sent 20 men to Gill for this scheme. Gill selected the Officers, namely, myself, Tehl Singh 1/8 Punjab, J.B.S. Grewal 5/2 Punjab and Bakhtawar Singh ([Indian Engineers]). These officers were specially selected by Gill because they had had difficulties with the INA'.[208]

[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid., p.200.

By mid-September 1942 these men had been moved to Rangoon in Burma, divided into three groups, and had started moving towards the frontier. It was while visiting the Sikh Gurdwara in Monywa in central Burma, that Dhillon encountered Captain Pritam Singh, one of the three Sikh officers mentioned earlier, and Dhillon offered to help him escape into India.[209] Dhillon's party was however delayed for ten days at Monywa waiting for suitable river transport up the Chindwin, and could only proceed when it was offered a lift by a Japanese colonel, although it meant sharing boats with Japanese troops for the next nine days.[210] Having declined an offer from the colonel to send troops with him for his protection, Dhillon finally left the Japanese and started sending groups of men across to British held territory, the first led by Captain Pritam Singh and the next by Second Lieutenant Bakhtawar Singh, and Dhillon followed with his own group soon afterwards, making contact with British forces on 25 October 1942. In his statement, he goes to some lengths to justify his decision to leave without Gill, citing the practicalities of getting a message to him in time.[211] Unsurprisingly, all the officers of the Dhillon party were interrogated by CSDIC(I), although they had also brought with them a variety of documents.[212] Overall, the information represented a major intelligence breakthrough for the British authorities, although one that suggested that Indian prisoners, including officers, had switched allegiance on a large scale.

Of the documents brought by the Dhillon party, one of the most remarkable was an INA organisation chart. This detailed the names of dozens of Indian commissioned officers who were serving in the INA, including Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians. Among those listed were Lieutenant Colonel Gill, listed as an 'Advisor' to the INA's commander, Captain

[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid., p.201.
[212] Ibid.

Mohan Singh; Major Kiani, Chief of the General Staff, who had been awarded the Sword of Honour as best cadet at the Indian Military Academy (IMA) at Dehru Dun in 1935; Major Bhagat, Commander of the Officer Training School, whose brother was Major P.S. Bhagat – the first Indian officer to be awarded the Victoria Cross in World War Two; Lieutenant Colonel Bhonsle, who commanded one of infantry units, and like Gill had been trained at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in England; and Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, of the Officer Training School, who had also won the Sword of Honour, and later became one of the best known INA commanders.[213] For the British authorities, the fact that so many Indian officers with distinguished careers had joined the INA would have been deeply disturbing, although they also had concerns about Dhillon's conduct. As a covering note to his file put it: 'Reading between the lines of the account, it seems probable that he has been of use to the Japanese during the past eight months'. It also expressed suspicions about one aspect of his background:

> Dhillon is not married. He had trouble with his family over refusal to marry in his own caste. He wanted to marry a girl outside it. This might loosen his ties with India and single him out as a man whom the Japanese might expect to return to them.[214]

A British colonial tendency to view a willingness to cross caste boundaries as synonymous with a predilection to revolt is a theme that will be returned to in Chapter Three. The British intelligence officer concluded:

> In my opinion, Major Dhillon is uncertain in his own mind as to his future attitude. It will depend a good deal on our attitude towards him. He is clever and potentially very useful to us. […] It remains for decision whether we are to trust him or not. Half measures would be useless, he is much too clever to be taken in by eye-wash.[215]

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[213] Ibid., p.202; Gill: AAS, F275/7, p.178; Kiani: AAS, F275/16, p.183; Bhagat: AAS, F275/6, p.123; Bhonsle: AAS, F275/6, p.290; Khan: AAS, F275/6, p.129.
[214] AAS, L/WS/1/1576, p.198.
[215] Ibid.

There were also the other members of the party to consider, in particular Second Lieutenant Bakhtawar Singh, although his statement and interrogation are brief in comparison, with the final summary reading: 'he is likeable, efficient, trustworthy, but somewhat unimaginative officer'.[216] It was an assessment that would prove to be flawed. Despite their reservations, the British authorities chose to accept the men's accounts, and both Major Dhillon and Second Lieutenant Bakhtawar Singh were awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in March 1943.[217] The granting of such a prestigious award to the two men was due to the value of the intelligence material they had provided, although doubts soon arose regarding their behaviour.

One CSDIC(I) report from April 1943, highlights the case of a civilian named Ram Datta, a former shopkeeper in Burma, who had arrived in India as part of the group led by Bakhtawar Singh, but was subsequently caught spying. The report noted that because he 'did slip through the security net reflects doubt on the *bona fides* of both Maj. Dhillon and 2/Lt Bakhtawar Singh, who were well aware of [his] identity'.[218] Worse was to follow, although it was not until late 1944 that CSDIC(I) became aware of serious allegations against Bakhtawar Singh relating to his conduct during the final stages of the battle for Singapore in February 1942. Based on reports from members of his engineer unit who had just been recovered from captivity, he was alleged to have aided the Japanese in capturing the unit - an episode that led to the deaths of the British officers present, with one who was initially taken prisoner 'shot by the Japanese allegedly with the encouragement of Bakhtawar Singh

[216] AAS, F275/2, p.274.
[217] TNA, WO 373/62/598, p.1.
[218] AAS, F275/2, p.158.

so as to cover up his role in the surrender'.[219] By February 1945, CSDIC(I) had collated several allegations against him, including that in October 1942 in Burma he addressed infiltration agents and 'ordered them with threats and show of firearms not to disclose that they were agents being sent to infiltrate into India, but to say they were genuine refugees', an episode that occurred shortly before he crossed into India.[220] From the CSDIC(I) conclusion:

> Up to the time when [he] was interrogated in November 1942, only 18 persons who had come back from enemy-occupied Burma and Malaya with information of the INA had previously been interrogated in India […] There was at that time nothing to show that [his] version of his experiences was incorrect, and he was accordingly categorised WHITE, and granted an award […] it appears that the orders passed on [his] case require revision.[221]

The report ends by suggesting that Bakhtawar Singh should be interrogated again, although frustratingly the archival trail ends there. But this information helps explain why the Japanese were so trusting of the Dhillon group – it contained officers who they knew were profoundly compromised from a British perspective.

There is another significant CSDIC(I) source relating to the Dhillon party: the interrogation of Lieutenant Colonel Gill. Conducted after he was recovered from Japanese detention at the end of the war, it suggests that Dhillon omitted some awkward facts when he provided his statement to CSDIC(I) in 1942. Among these are Dhillon's involvement in April 1942 in framing the 'Bidadari Resolutions' that first codified the basis for cooperation between Indian prisoners and the Japanese.[222] Nor is there any mention of the earlier escape attempts that Dhillon claimed they had planned together. British disappointment with Gill is palpable

[219] Noles, 'Renegades in Malaya', p.114.
[220] AAS, F275/9, p.195.
[221] Ibid., p.196.
[222] AAS, F275/7, p.182.

in his interrogation report: after all he was a Sandhurst-trained officer, who prior to the outbreak of hostilities with Japan had been trusted with an espionage mission to spy on Indian revolutionaries in Bangkok. CSDIC(I) concluded:

> In his position as the most senior combatant officer in Singapore after the surrender, [Gill] could have been able to set a useful and correct example to the PW by taking a firm stand from the start against the Japanese, Mohan Singh and the INA. […] [Gill] is in fact, primarily a diplomat, skilled in the arts of duplicity.[223]

Gill was necessarily evasive at the time of his interrogation, as he must have feared court-martial, but an oral history source from 1972 provides a revealing view of the Dhillon party episode from his perspective. The transcript explains his general attitude following his capture, and the events surrounding the Dhillon party episode:

> we were all really mercenary soldiers, all of us, from the top to the bottom. […] There was really no attachment to the British, no ideological attachment or anything and the break was not anything difficult. […] Perhaps my major contribution to the first INA, being the senior most, was the fact that my example, caused many other people, who might have hesitated, to go in also, though a number could think politically also. […] When I sent Major Mahabir Singh Dhillon my instruction to him was to go to India and await further instructions, but do nothing. 'Go back and join the army," I said. […] we were now more suspicious of Japanese. So Mahabir was left to do what he felt fit. Mahabir Dhillon reported to the British as their man. He later became a Brigadier and is since dead.[224]

Gill had returned to Singapore by the time the Japanese learnt that the Dhillon group had crossed to British lines (they were informed by Dhillon's Burmese guides), and Gill, along with other members of his group still in Burma, were arrested by the Japanese in December 1942. During their investigations the Japanese discovered letters that Gill had written to family members, but also the British military authorities, the contents of which revealed that

[223] AAS, F275/7, p.187.
[224] NMML, Mss 168, Gill, pp.56-60.

he was insincere in his commitment to the Japanese. Gill would spend the rest of the war in a Japanese prison, although the other members of his group were released in early 1943.[225] Gill's arrest was an important catalyst for the crisis that engulfed the INA in December 1942, and which resulted in Mohan Singh himself being arrested, and the temporary disbandment of the INA.[226]

The breadth and quality of information now available to the British authorities on the INA by early 1943, of which the intelligence brought by the Dhillon party formed an important part, had an impact on British policy at the highest level. Raghavan has written of the concerns expressed about the reliability of Indian troops, by Prime Minister Churchill and others, that influenced debates about the appropriate size of the wartime Indian Army in 1943 (with Churchill wanting to reduce it). But the intelligence also prompted an army propaganda effort aimed at Indian troops known as the 'Josh' programme, where 'the content of the propaganda would range from conveniently potted histories of Japanese expansionism and Indian nationalism – [Subhas Chandra] Bose being held up as a renegade – to stories about Japanese atrocities and heroism of Indian prisoners'.[227] The INA were always referred to in the propaganda effort as 'JIFs', or 'Japanese-Inspired Fifth Columnists', the acronym itself simultaneously an insult and a denial of Indian nationalist agency. How effective the anti-INA component of the 'Josh' programme was is debatable. As Raghavan puts it, 'even at the end of the war the Indian soldiers' attitudes towards the INA would be considerably removed from the ideas peddled by the Josh groups'.[228] Nonetheless, events such as the escape of the Dhillon party were invariably presented as

[225] AAS, F275/6, pp.224-226.
[226] Ghosh, *The Indian National Army*, p.121.
[227] Raghavan, *India's War*, pp.395-398.
[228] Ibid., p.399.

unambiguously pro-British episodes, with the 'Guide to JIFC (Indian) Activities', a British Indian Army guide to the INA issued at Divisional level in April 1945, framing it as a straightforward conspiracy 'to escape to India at the first opportunity'.[229] This pattern of propaganda, a response to evidence of anti-colonial activity, was driven by wartime exigencies but also fuelled by colonial anxiety regarding the loyalty of Indian troops. The propaganda has helped shape British post-war memory of Indian prisoners, and the following section examines an episode that illustrates this.

The Pasni espionage party: propaganda and reality

In March 1944, a Japanese submarine landed an espionage party on the Baluchistan coast near Pasni, in modern Pakistan, then part of British India. The party of twelve men was composed of former Indian prisoners who had been captured by the Japanese in early 1942, and although they had been carefully selected for their apparently anti-British views, and subsequently trained over a long period by the Japanese, they surrendered to the British authorities following their arrival in India. The British authorities made use of the surrender of the group for wartime propaganda purposes, and it is the propaganda version of their story that has continued to shape the post-war memory of the episode, with its core theme of Indian soldiers remaining loyal, despite Japanese threats and propaganda.[230] This section addresses the question: how was British memory of the Pasni party shaped by propaganda, both during the war, and afterwards?

[229] TNA, WO 203/515, p.47.
[230] One example: Toye, *The Springing Tiger*, p.114.

The British version of events was reinforced in the post-war period by the award of the George Cross in 1946 to a former Indian prisoner officer named Captain Durrani, who had been arrested and tortured by the Japanese for encouraging the Pasni party to surrender once they arrived in India.[231] One typical post-war British portrayal of Durrani is an article written in the newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* in 2011 entitled "Fifty Great Heroes", in which he appeared as number thirty in a list that detailed the stories of fifty recipients of the Victoria and George Cross. As the article described it:

> While he was in a POW camp, Durrani not only refused to join the INA, but he did all he could to gather intelligence on this subversive organisation and its attempts to infiltrate members into India. Durrani even acted as a double agent setting up a school to send men back to India "to champion the Nationalist ideology of the Indian National Congress". In fact, the men had been hand-picked by Durrani to spy for Britain. The Japanese eventually became suspicious of his activities and tortured him to try to identify his accomplices: burning cigarettes were repeatedly stubbed out on his legs. When Durrani was handed over to the INA, he was even more brutally tortured and condemned to death.[232]

However, Durrani survived the war, although he spent the remainder of it in an INA prison. He went on to become one of only two Indian prisoners of the Japanese awarded the George Cross for their conduct as prisoners (the other was a Captain Ansari who was executed in Hong Kong for his role in an escape attempt).[233] While elements of *The Daily Telegraph* account are true, not least the severity of the torture endured by Durrani, CSDIC(I) material, along with other sources such as Captain Durrani's memoirs, allows a reassessment of the Pasni episode.[234]

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[231] In 2019 his George Cross was on public display at the Imperial War Museum in London.
[232] Lord Ashcroft, 'Fifty great heroes', *Daily Telegraph*, 16 January 2011.
[233] Chi Man Kwong and Yiu Lun Tsoi, *Eastern fortress: a military history of Hong Kong, 1840-1970* (Hong Kong, China: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), p.231.
[234] Durrani, *Sixth Column*.

One of the most valuable sources on the Pasni party is a CSDIC(I) report written in May 1944, following the interrogation of its members. Thirty-one pages long, it provides background on the selection and training of the twelve men of the party, all of whom were Muslims, as well as a detailed account of the mission.[235] Before reviewing the history of the party it is worth quoting CSDIC(I) on one aspect of the background to their surrender: 'As regards any possible pre-conceived plan to surrender, it seems quite clear from interrogation that the question of coming to India and not carrying out the mission had never been discussed in Malaya', a statement that suggests that the currently accepted account of the Pasni party may not be correct.[236] CSDIC(I) also emphasises the central importance of one individual in the party: Asal Noor Khan, a Technical Warrant Officer of the Indian Army Ordnance Corps, who had served for over twenty-five years in the Indian Army before his capture at the fall of Singapore, and who 'exercised a hypnotic influence over the other eleven members of the party, whom he dominated completely'.[237]

The Pasni party originated from a group of Indian prisoners selected in August 1942 'to form a Secret Service Group to work directly under the Japanese', and was sponsored by a Lieutenant Colonel Gilani of the Bahawalpur Infantry (Indian State Forces). CSDIC(I) noted that 'It would appear that the formation of this party was a move made to offset a similar party of Hindus, mainly Sikhs, which was being organised by Col. Gill, and was being assembled at the Europe Hotel, Bangkok, about the same time'.[238] The two officers and their respective cliques were rivals, with Bakhtawar Singh (who escaped with Dhillon to India), describing Gilani to CSDIC(I) as 'a clever, wicked man' who had 'a personal grudge against

[235] AAS, F275/3, p.291.
[236] Ibid., p.305.
[237] Ibid., p.304.
[238] Ibid., p.292.

Gill'.[239] CSDIC(I)'s view was that Gilani was concerned about Gill's plans for intelligence work in India, 'partly because he felt that Muslims must not be behind in this matter and that Sikh parties would be likely to tell a tale in India unfavourable to the Muslims'.[240] The origins of the Pasni party were therefore closely linked to the origins of the Dhillon escape party, although it would be 1944 before they would reach India. Gilani chose Captain Durrani, also of the Bahawalpur Infantry, to act as his second-in-command, and it was Durrani who selected the sixty Muslim prisoners for the group who arrived in Penang to begin training in September 1942.[241] Durrani later claimed to CSDIC(I) to have given the men 'secret spiritual lectures' where, with the IIL and INA clearly aligning themselves with the political struggle of the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi, he 'told them also of the real and secret ideology of the Congress Party and pointed out where it cut across Muslim interests. The only hope, he would say, of a satisfactory future for the Muslim community lay in good relations with the British'.[242] An Indian prisoner named Second Lieutenant Ismail Khan, who was later praised by British authorities for helping to prevent the men of his own battalion from joining the INA, knew both Gilani and Durrani in this period. He seems to have been taken by surprise when Durrani, without any prompting, told him that the intention was to facilitate the escape of Muslim prisoners to India. As Khan put it, the issue with Durrani was that he was 'very gregarious, could never keep a secret', a potential problem for someone involved in a scheme that was dependent on secrecy, although it does provide independent evidence of the real intent behind the scheme.[243]

[239] AAS, F275/2, p.273.
[240] AAS, F275/14, p.112.
[241] Ibid., p.84.
[242] Ibid., p.86.
[243] IWM, sound recording 80011491, Reel 12, 1:18, *2nd Lt. Ismail Khan.*

Meanwhile the group, now known as the 'Gilani Party', settled into a long period of training under Japanese instructors in the relatively comfortable surroundings of Penang, although as early as November 1942 the instructors were reporting that Gilani 'was spending more time dancing with Chinese girls than he was at his duties'.[244] Despite the crisis in the INA at the end of 1942 the party continued training, although changes in leadership, including Asal Noor Khan being placed in charge at one point, exacerbated a schism that was developing within the group between the Pathan's led by Asal Noor Khan, and the Punjabi Muslims who backed Gilani and Durrani.[245] Towards the end of 1943, with the Indian revolutionary leader Subhas Chandra Bose having arrived in Asia to take charge of the INA, and a review of the espionage groups underway, Asal Noor Khan took his chance to undermine the opposing faction by reporting against Gilani 'for his loose living in the town', and Durrani 'for contacting Muslim civilians outside'.[246] The result was the temporary dissolution of the party although by January 1944 a twenty strong group, picked and led by Asal Noor Khan, was back training in Penang under a Japanese intelligence officer named Lieutenant Yamanouchi, who had spent 'several years in the Middle East' prior to the war.[247] By December 1943 therefore, twenty men handpicked by Asal Noor Khan were the only ones preparing for what would become the Pasni landing party, with none of Durrani's faction involved.

The mission finally began on 27 February 1944, when Asal Noor Khan and eleven men boarded a Japanese submarine at Penang, after a send-off that had included taking an oath on the Koran that they would fulfil the mission – something that Yamanouchi had insisted

[244] AAS, F275/3, p.293.
[245] Ibid., p.294.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Ibid., p.297.; Lebra, *Indian National Army*, p.72.

on. Among the supplies they were issued with was a valuable quantity of diamonds.[248] The twelve men were organised into three equal squads, each with its own wireless transmitter, and each meant to head to a different area of India.[249] The submarine had been used for such landing parties before (they were shown an autograph of a previous Indian party commander, S.N. Chopra, by the crew), but they found life on board cramped and uncomfortable, and were perturbed to discover that the Japanese crew had been cooking pork along with the vegetables.[250] They would be on board for almost a month, and during that time the submarine attacked several merchant ships, on one occasion having to dive because of Allied aircraft, while on another being depth charged.[251] On the evening of 13 March 1944 the submarine successfully attacked a large tanker with torpedoes, before surfacing and sinking two out of three lifeboats with its deck gun ('the gunner was greatly elated by his marksmanship'), the Indian personnel all being shown the burning wreck through the periscope.[252]

On 16 March 1944, the men were given a farewell party in the ward-room by the Japanese Captain and his officers, before making a series of attempts to land. The first of these on 17 March saw one of their canvas boats swamped while being towed by the submarine (they also lost a radio), an episode that almost drowned some of the men and left them 'considerably shaken', while on 18 March another attempt had to be aborted when another canvas boat was found to be damaged.[253] It was the early morning of 25 March before they could try again, and after being told to row towards the Pole Star, 'they rowed away from

[248] AAS, F275/3, p.301.
[249] Ibid., p.300.
[250] Ibid., p.302. Submarine listed as number 'E.26'.
[251] AAS, F275/9, p.4.
[252] Ibid., p.5.
[253] Ibid., p.6.

the submarine whose engines they heard to fade away in the distance'.[254] Although only four miles from the coast, when they finally reached it seven hours later, they were exhausted. Nonetheless, they followed their training and dug holes to bury the boats.[255]

Two months later, in May 1944, *The Times of India* would carry an article entitled "How Indian soldiers duped Japanese". An exemplary piece of British wartime propaganda, the article describes how the men, described as "Trusted Men" of the Japanese, immediately gave themselves up following their landing, before framing the story as follows:

> The story, as told by the men themselves, shows the spirit of loyalty and determination, as well as good sense and resourcefulness, of Indian fighting men captured by the Japanese.

After highlighting a previous story that had reported the execution of four civilian infiltrators from a previous landing party, the article goes on to name three of the men from the Pasni party including Asal Noor Khan, but curiously names another, Jemadar Mohammad Yusuf Khan, as its leader, although this is probably because he is quoted extensively in the remainder of the article. Notwithstanding that it is impossible to know whether the words are his, the following extracts are typical of the content:

> I feel as if I have suddenly stepped out from a dark grave into a new world – a world full of life and freedom. […] we landed on Indian soil […] and proceeded on foot to the village of Pasni. We met the zamindar of the village to whom we told our story. We had been sent to India by the Japanese but we never had an intention of doing what the Japs asked us to do […] We showed him the things the Japanese had given us – six revolvers and ammunition, dry ration and two wireless sets – one hidden in a bucket and the other in a hookah, and money. Every one of us had Rs. 900 and packets of diamonds worth thousands of rupees.

[254] Ibid., pp.7-8.
[255] AAS, F275/3, p.303.

It is notable that although Subhas Chandra Bose is mentioned in the article, there is no reference to the merchant ships the submarine had sunk, or of the INA - British wartime policy being not to publicly acknowledge its existence. Within the article, the choice faced by Indian prisoners of whether to cooperate is framed only with reference to the Japanese, with no acknowledgement of the broader Indian nationalist context.[256]

In reality, CSDIC(I) knew that what had happened was less straightforward. Their general plan on landing, in common with other similar parties landed from submarine on other occasions, was to get to a railway station as soon as possible. For example, the earlier party led by S.N. Chopra (who had landed South of the 'Dwarka Temple' on the coast of Gujarat in December 1943), found themselves only a short distance from a railway station, and quickly made their escape.[257] The Pasni party therefore split into their three four-man groups, and set off separately at intervals, with Asal Noor Khan's group in the lead. His group learnt from a young goat-herder that they were close to the village of Pasni, but soon stopped to rest because they were so tired, and the other groups caught up. In the discussion that followed, led by Asal Noor Khan, the dangers of their position and the realisation that because of where they had landed on the coast they would have to talk to local inhabitants in order to proceed, led them to decide to surrender. But before doing so they did one more thing – they buried the diamonds so that they could collect them later, a fact that only emerged later under interrogation.[258]

While CSDIC(I) did not believe the Pasni party had any pre-determined plan to surrender, they did note that while on board the submarine, 'talk turned on the legend of Moses and

[256] 'How Indian Soldiers Duped Japanese: "Trusted Men" tell of atrocities', *The Times of India*, 22 May 1944, p.5.
[257] AAS, F275/3, p.353; NAI, INA 279, p.2.
[258] AAS, F275/3, p.303.

Pharaoh, the parable being that of the adopted son who turned against his foster-father, and it seems that the choice of this particular legend was actuated by some of the party wishing to sound the others as to their outlook on what to do when they reached India'. But, 'it also seems apparent that the burying of the boats on landing was so that the party need not commit themselves to any particular policy until they had found out the lie of the land in Baluchistan'.[259] CSDIC(I)'s conclusion was that while they were 'genuinely pleased to be rid of their Japanese masters […] it is not thought that these men have any loyalties other than to their religion'.[260] The Pasni party would have known the potential penalties for those caught in the act of espionage, with *The Times of India* article mentioning four members of a previous landing party who were executed, so that once they had surrendered it made sense for them to cooperate fully, and this they did in a variety of ways, including attempting to identify other agents and taking part in propaganda broadcasts. A post-war account, written by a member of a later landing party, describes the impact these activities had.[261] As well as divulging 'the codes, names of agents, their modus-operandi, etc.' men from the Pasni party were spotted in Calcutta 'along the Esplanade, watching the passengers in the buses and tramcars'.[262] Some of the Pasni party were even sent to Ceylon to try and identify the 'Lanka Group' who were collecting intelligence on Force 136 (a branch of the British Special Operations Executive).[263] As part of the propaganda effort two of the party gave interviews in Urdu on All India Radio. According to Second Lieutenant Ismail Khan (the prisoner who was mentioned earlier), at one point Asal Noor Khan said too much, apparently indicating that other Indians still in Singapore had helped them.[264] All India Radio was monitored by

[259] Ibid., p.305.
[260] Ibid., p.318.
[261] Bhargava, *Indian National Army Secret Service,* p.96.; This was Americk Singh Gill who with his party landed near the Konark Sun Temple in Orissa in April 1944.
[262] Ibid., p.108.
[263] Ibid., p.109.
[264] IWM, sound recording 80011491, Reel 12, 4:20, *2nd Lt. Ismail Khan.*

the Japanese, and it was towards the end of May that they began arresting suspects, some of whom, including a civilian policeman (a relative of Ismail Khan) and Captain Durrani, were soon being tortured for information.[265] The first significant casualty of the episode however was Japanese, with Lieutenant Yamanuchi, the Pasni party's chief instructor, committing ritual suicide to atone for the public failure of the mission.[266]

The torture that Captain Durrani endured at the hands of firstly the Japanese, and later the INA, is documented in both his memoirs and also his CSDIC(I) interrogation file, as is his subsequent incarceration until the end of the war in August 1945.[267] The fact that he was put through a post-war interrogation is interesting in itself, because (as was outlined in the Introduction) CSDIC(I) only interrogated those they suspected of collaboration with the Japanese. Durrani describes in his memoir how after being released from INA incarceration at the end of the war, he was then re-arrested and placed in CSDIC(I) custody along with prominent INA officers, such as Captain Muta-al-Mulk (discussed in Chapter Four), Lieutenant Colonel Gilani, and also Lieutenant Colonel Gill.[268] It is clear that CSDIC(I) had no idea before they interrogated Durrani that he had tried to subvert the Pasni party mission, although they were ultimately convinced that he had wished to, not least because he had managed to contact two members of the party in Penang, just prior to their departure.[269] Among many events described in the interrogation report was a visit to the training school in Penang made by Subhas Chandra Bose in August 1943, including a lecture he gave in which 'he harped on the disadvantages of Pakistan, and the mistake which he said was being made by the Muslim League in supporting British rule'.[270] Durrani also attended a lunch

[265] Ibid.; AAS, F275/14, p.81.
[266] AAS, Mss Eur, C743, p.5.
[267] AAS, F275/14, pp.81..96.
[268] Durrani, *The Sixth Column,* p.310.
[269] AAS, F275/14, p.91.
[270] Ibid., p.88.

with Bose at which 'he gave him a book on T.E. Lawrence that it might inspire him to carry out his mission successfully'.[271] While it may seem unlikely that an Indian revolutionary would make a gift of a book about a British officer, the methods of T.E. Lawrence (a.k.a. 'Lawrence of Arabia') were studied by some Japanese military intelligence officers, not least Major Fujiwara who helped establish the INA in 1942.[272] It was subsequent to this visit by Bose that Durrani claimed that Asal Noor Khan had denounced him to the Japanese for being pro-British.[273] But the dominant aspect that CSDIC(I) had become aware of was the impact the torture had had on Durrani's physical and mental health. The physical abuse at the hands of the Japanese and then the INA had included flogging, crushing of his fingers, and water torture that imitated drowning, leaving his health 'radically and probably permanently affected' and his mental state such that he suffered 'considerably from a kind of persecution mania'.[274]

It is interesting to note that historians have often struggled to make sense of Durrani's memoirs, *The Sixth Column*, filled as they are with stories of personal persecution, conspiracy theories and malicious gossip. Some conspiracy theories have a basis in fact, such as when he heard about the Gill party in 1942: 'he had heard Mohan Singh and his officers plotting in secret. Mohan Singh was about to send parties of shaven Sikhs to India to spread propaganda among the Muslims. Lt.-Colonel N.S. Gill […] was to be selected to take charge of this job'.[275] On other occasions his account descends into repeating scurrilous gossip, such as how Mohan Singh was 'enjoying the performance of an orchestra stationed at his house', while simultaneously 'a Gurkha boy, who was Mohan Singh's favourite, was

[271] Ibid., p.89.
[272] Fujiwara, *F. Kikan*, p.227.
[273] AAS, F275/14, p.89.
[274] Ibid., p.96.
[275] Durrani, *The Sixth Column,* p.77.

made to put on the costumes of a dancing girl and dance before him. Thousands of rupees from public funds were handed out as tips on these occasions'.[276] While it is true that Mohan Singh had a Gurkha orderly (he is described as 'a typical young and cheery Gurkha' in his CSDIC(I) interrogation), there is no evidence from any other source that such conspicuous events occurred.[277] A core theme of Durrani's conspiracy theories is that Gandhi's Indian National Congress, to which the INA was politically aligned, had a secret plan to subjugate the Muslims of India.[278]

In contrast, Fay in his history of the INA, *The Forgotten Army*, suggests that Durrani made up his account of being tortured in order to explain his long association with the Japanese, and portrays him as 'a six-foot-four crybaby with a pathological hatred of Hindus and Sikhs'.[279] Durrani had after all been the protégé of Lieutenant Colonel Gilani, one of the most senior officers in the early INA. However, Fay was writing before the CSDIC(I) material became available and it is clear from several interrogations that Durrani was severely tortured, in particular by an INA military policeman named Rasul Bux, a former naik (corporal).[280] Indeed, in the light of the CSDIC(I) comments about his mental health, Durrani's memoirs need to be read more sympathetically than Fay and others have done, as the personal account of someone who had been permanently traumatised by torture, although it needs to be acknowledged that his version of events should be read with caution at times. The Durrani encountered in his CSDIC(I) interrogation, and his later memoir, is a striking contrast to the gregarious figure met by Ismail Khan in 1942.

[276] Ibid., p.89.
[277] AAS, F275/17, p.14.
[278] For example: Durrani, *The Sixth Column,* p.60.
[279] Fay, *Forgotten Army*, pp.103-104.
[280] AAS, F275/14, p.209. A member of 2/9 Jat Regiment.

However traumatic Durrani's torture may have been on a personal level, it represented a significant opportunity for the British authorities. As well as Subhas Chandra Bose (who had been killed in an air crash in August 1945), senior INA officers had also been present at his initial questioning, and according to evidence collected by CSDIC(I), some had even witnessed the early stages of his torture. These officers were now in CSDIC(I) custody, and the Durrani case therefore represented an opportunity to prosecute senior INA personnel, including Major General Bhonsle its Chief-of-Staff, for cruelty towards a fellow officer.[281] The potential significance of this was noted in a report from early 1946: if 'Bhonsle is brought to trial it will probably assume more importance than any previous trial in view of his seniority and the influential positions held by him under Bose'.[282] Preparations for the trial included offering immunity against prosecution to Rasul Bux, Durrani's primary torturer, in return for him testifying against his former INA officers.[283] The post-war INA trials are discussed in more detail towards the end of this chapter, but in late April 1946 plans for the Durrani torture trial were cancelled, along with all other on-going INA prosecutions.[284] It was in late May that the award of the George Cross to Captain Durrani was announced for 'carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner', although it is unclear whether the timing was related to the cancellation of the trial.[285]

In summary, it is apparent from CSDIC(I) reports that the Pasni party were unlucky in the choice of landing zone: the submarine had to drop them a long way from shore because of the nature of the coast, and once ashore they were unable to get to a railway station without having to run the risks of interacting with local people. Other parties who were landed at

[281] AAS, F275/7, p.195.
[282] NAI, INA 429, p.9.
[283] AAS, F275/14, p.209.
[284] Marston, *Indian Army*, p.148.
[285] 'George Cross for Indian', *The Times of India*, 25 May 1946, p.6.

other locations, including one transported by the same submarine the previous December, had faced no such difficulties. CSDIC(I) was clear that it was these practical problems, rather than any pre-conceived plan, that resulted in their decision to surrender so soon after landing. The subsequent accounts of these men that appeared in *The Times of India* and elsewhere, were simply exercises in wartime propaganda.[286] CSDIC(I) clearly had no idea about the possible role that Durrani had played until it interrogated him as a possible Japanese collaborator after the end of the war. If he was so central to the surrender of the party, why was his intervention not mentioned by any of its members when they were interrogated by CSDIC(I) in 1944? In the event, his unique status as an Indian officer who had been grievously tortured by both the Japanese and the INA, and the role he claimed to have played in the surrender of the Pasni party, led to the award of the George Cross. The post-war narrative that became the standard account of these events was therefore based on wartime propaganda that was later reinforced by the award of the medal.

The release of the CSDIC(I) material, some sixty years after the landing at Pasni, allows a reassessment of these events and reveals a much more ambiguous story which could easily have developed differently. Durrani was not the only one arrested and tortured because of the Pasni party's surrender, although he was the only one awarded a medal. The Pasni party episode is a reminder that sources such as wartime newspaper reports, and medal citations, need to be handled with care. In particular, it demonstrates the importance of wartime propaganda in shaping post-war British memory.

[286] An example from England: 'Indian "Spies" Double-Crossing the Japanese', *The Manchester Guardian*, 22 May 1944, p.6.

Sorting 'Blacks' from 'Whites': Recovering and assessing Indian prisoners

While the numbers of Indian military personnel arriving from Japanese held territory had been relatively few in 1942 and 1943, from 1944 onwards increasing numbers were recovered, although at first these were mostly those who had served in the INA. The British authorities had to deal with three main influxes: those recovered during the Imphal campaign in 1944 (discussed in Chapter Three), numbering around fifteen hundred; those recovered during the British campaign in Burma in 1945, numbering around eight to ten thousand; and all remaining INA personnel and Indian prisoners following the Japanese surrender in August 1945.[287] This section addresses the question: How did the way that the British authorities manage the recovery of Indian personnel from Japanese-held territory, influence British post-war memory of the men?

The broader context for the development of British policy, was the consistent refusal of the Japanese to accept that captured Indian military personnel had equivalent status to captured British or Australian personnel. For example, one British note from March 1943 states:

> The Government of India are naturally and justly concerned at the failure of the Japanese Government to telegraph the names of Indian prisoners of war. […] only a few names of Indian Officers have been notified and that no names of Indian Other ranks have been notified, whereas we have had over 17,000 names of European prisoners of war.[288]

Another note from June 1943 expands on the point:

> we are anxious to obtain as quickly as possible any information which the International Red Cross Committee possess on the attitude which Japan is adopting towards Indian and other Asiatic prisoners […] The Swiss have been strangely reserved on the subject of Oriental prisoners of war in Japanese hands; and it seems possible that they consider that their status is now so dubious that

[287] AAS, F275/2, pp.34-35.
[288] TNA, FO 916/756, p.2.

> they cannot, as Protecting Power, interest themselves in their fate. No doubt the Swiss are conscious of the great delicacy of the whole position. You probably know that the India Office are seriously worried over the question of the status of Indian prisoners of war.[289]

The concerns expressed in the note show just how anxious the British were regarding the behaviour of Indian prisoners, although the attitude of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is explained in its post-war official history:

> It should be noted that before the capitulation of Japan, the ICRC was never allowed to give its attention to the Chinese, Indian or Malayan prisoners, since they were considered by the Japanese to belong to the "Asiatic sphere of co-prosperity". The refusal was so peremptory and absolute that it precluded any further attempts in this direction.[290]

The British authorities did however continue to try and utilise the ICRC, including protesting when they had clear evidence of Japanese atrocities against Indian prisoners. One example from September 1944, concerned a group of nineteen Indian prisoners from 1/16 Punjab Regiment, captured in November 1943 in Burma. Four escaped in December 1943, although all were ultimately recaptured by the Japanese. The first to be brought back to the prison camp was Sweeper Ramlal, who was tied to a tree and then:

> Jap soldiers fell-in in a single line in front of him, at a distance of 20 yards. There they charged him, one after the other, using the same rifle with bayonet fixed. The first few Japs bayonetted him mercilessly on the non-vital points, such as hands and thighs and then the rest on the chest. Ramlal died when the 9th man bayonetted him in the heart.[291]

It is worth noting that a 'sweeper' was a non-combatant attached to an Indian unit to perform domestic duties. The other three recaptured prisoners suffered a similar fate. The British

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[289] Ibid., p.6.
[290] International Committee of the Red Cross, *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War*, *September 1, 1939-June 30, 1947,* 3 vols, (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1948), I, p.469.
[291] TNA, FO 916/1069, p.7. Statement of Naik Tara Singh.

submitted ‘a complaint through the Protecting Power to the Japanese Government’, although they accepted that ‘there is little chance of identifying or punishing those responsible’.[292]

One consequence of the Japanese policy towards the ICRC regarding Indian prisoners, was that the amount of contact between Indian prisoners and their families in India was extremely limited. There are examples of some letters having been received by Indian prisoners, including one ‘received from his parents’ by a Naik (Corporal) Ajit Singh, probably in 1942, but such instances were rare.[293] From the middle of 1942, the Japanese allowed the INA propaganda radio station in Saigon to send messages from individual Indian prisoners to their families in India, ‘on condition that the soldiers should say that they were being well treated’. However, this practice appears to have been discontinued when ‘replies to these messages, sponsored by the British Government’ were sent in reply describing the ways in which the families were being looked after – information that apparently led to a decline in INA recruitment.[294] In practice, most Indian prisoners went for years without any meaningful contact with their families back in India, one respect in which they appear to have been worse off than their European and Australian counterparts in Singapore, who at one point were allowed to send short radio messages but also received mail, albeit infrequently.[295]

As mentioned previously, another constant concern for the British authorities from 1942 until the end of the war, was the arrival of Indian nationalist agents from Japanese territory, whether by land across the Burmese border (the most common), by sea from submarines, or

[292] Ibid., p.6.
[293] AAS, F275/3, p.51.
[294] AAS, F275/6, p.289.
[295] Havers, *Changi*, pp.108-113.

by air – the dropping of parachutists continuing until at least late 1944, with such individuals being termed 'Bats' by CSDIC(I). One example of a 'Bat' from April 1943 involved a *jawan* named Audishwar Pande, who had been captured at the fall of Singapore, but became a member of what CSDIC(I) designated 'the Flittermouse 'B' party'.[296] The four men of his party parachuted at night, but were unable to locate the containers with the radio and other equipment and they therefore dispersed, with Pande returning to his home village where he was able to live for three months before he was arrested and given a security classification of 'Black'.[297] Another example from September 1944, involved the dropping of three infiltrators from a Japanese flying-boat that had taken off from the Chindwin river in Burma – a mission that was seen off by Subhas Chandra Bose.[298] The impact on the British colonial state of these activities was seemingly limited, although countering the threat will have diverted intelligence and police resources.

An important aspect of wartime British policy that influenced British post-war memory of Indian prisoners, relates to how CSDIC(I) security classifications (such as 'Black', 'Grey', and 'White'), were assigned to interrogatees. It is important to recognise, that the classification was often heavily influenced by CSDIC(I)'s assessment of the interrogatee's future security threat to the colonial state, rather than simply a verdict on their past behaviour. While the two were certainly related, with past behaviour dominating the classification in some cases, in many others the final security classifications can appear lenient, with an example from 1944 illustrating the point. According to his CSDIC(I) report, Havildar Tulasing Thapa of 2/2 Gurkha Rifles had been captured by the Japanese during the Malayan campaign, on 8 January 1942. His distinguishing features included a 'picture of

[296] AAS, F275/2, p.112.
[297] Ibid., p.113.
[298] TNA, WO 106/5881, CSDIC(I) Report No.810, p.8.

woman tattooed on left arm', and a 'picture of a soldier with Union Jack tattooed on right arm'. According to CSDIC(I), he willingly joined the INA, was trained at an espionage school in Penang, and was then sent to Burma. It was much later in 1944, while operating in the Naga Hills area, that he surrendered himself and his six men to British forces.[299] The CSDIC(I) conclusion reads:

> The actions of [Tulasing Thapa] up till the time of his surrender have been those of a traitor, but in view of the fact that he did surrender, and that his attitude since has been straightforward and friendly, it is considered that his loyalty has now been transferred back to the British. It cannot therefore be considered that [Tulasing Thapa] is still a danger to security and it is recommended that he be categorised 'Grey'.[300]

It is difficult to believe that this Gurkha's new-found loyalty to the British was, like the tattoo of a Union Jack on his arm, anything more than skin deep. There are also other similar examples, with a report from December 1944 on six men recommending 'in view of their long association with disloyal and anti-British elements, it is felt that they would benefit from rehabilitative treatment in a Holiday Rest Camp'.[301] This is a reference to the standard treatment of interrogatees categorised as 'Grey' prior to the end of the war, who according to Hugh Toye: 'were sent to Rest camps (which really were rest camps and sometimes holiday camps as well), given a good period of leave and sent back to their regiments'.[302] An important characteristic of many of these cases is that they involved voluntary surrender to British forces rather than having been captured, but while it made sense to take such mitigating factors into account, the nature of previous behaviour that was sometimes overlooked is often remarkable. It demonstrates that Indian troops were viewed through a colonial lens that did not impose the same standards of behaviour as would have been

[299] AAS, F275/3, p.181.
[300] Ibid., p.182.
[301] AAS, F275/4, p.277.
[302] AAS, F275/2, p.32.

required of British troops (the way that this policy changed towards a harsher policy after the end of the war, is discussed later in this chapter). This was the "myth of loyalty" in action: that once the Indian soldier had returned to the fold of their regiment and was again under the command of their British officers, the infrastructure of loyalty was re-established, and they could be re-incorporated into the regimental family. One consequence of this contextual approach to loyalty was that it suppressed the number of recovered INA troops categorised as 'Black', and consequently in the post-war period has tended to disguise the seriousness of what occurred – an effect that will be revisited in Chapter Two.

By 1944, Allied military advances in the Southwest Pacific area were starting to liberate groups of Indian prisoners from Japanese captivity, and this provides another example of the way in which wartime media reports can be misleading (Chapter Two examines events in the Southwest Pacific in more detail). Those liberated from the Hollandia area of New Guinea in April 1944, included some from the 5/11 Sikh Regiment, a unit with a distinguished fighting record during the Malayan campaign.[303] A *Times of India* story entitled 'Jap's Cruelty To Indians' from May 1944, describes how:

> At Hollandia the Japanese denied them latrines and the usual military camp health facilities, punished them when they refused to work and generally treated them like slaves […] As the Americans approached the landing beaches of Hollandia emaciated turbaned Indians, deserted by their guards, ran jubilantly forward, some shouting with joy.[304]

A separate story on the same page describes another rescued group, again with many from 5/11 Sikh Regiment, who had been on islands north of New Guinea:

[303] Prem K. Khanna, and Pushpindar Singh Chopra, *Portrait of courage: century of the 5th Battalion, the Sikh Regiment, XLVII (D.C.O.) Sikhs* (New Delhi: Military Studies Convention, 2001), pp.149-185.
[304] 'Jap's Cruelty To Indians', *The Times of India*, 15 May 1944, p.6.

> When the Americans landed in the Admiralties, they did not expect to find any Indians there and therefore, when first approached by two emissaries whom they could not identify, the Americans shot them. The Indians were determined, however, to get away from their oppressors. They sent two more emissaries and this time, convinced of their genuineness, the Americans agreed to help the escapees.[305]

These men had certainly been badly treated by the Japanese, but CSDIC(I) knew that many of the Indian prisoners liberated in the Southwest Pacific in 1944 were former members of the INA, who had withdrawn from the force during the crisis in December 1942. A CSDIC(I) report from November 1944 provides details on the men of 5/11 Sikh Regiment. One of the men quoted in the second newspaper report, Subedar Galzara Singh, 'stated that the 5/11 were volunteers, were armed, and were under training' during 1942, with CSDIC(I) concluding that 'the unit is believed to have allied itself unreservedly to [Captain] Mohan Singh without pressure, intimidation or threats', withdrawing from the INA 'more from a sense of consanguinity with its leader than from an essentially revolutionary or nationalistic sense of patriotism'.[306] It is unclear when the British authorities first became aware of the behaviour of 5/11 Sikh Regiment in captivity, and it may well have been after the newspaper articles were written, but it is another reminder that wartime newspaper reports need to be utilised with care.

As was mentioned above, it was also in 1944 that CSDIC(I) processed INA personnel captured as a result of the failed Japanese offensives in Northeast India and the Arakan. These events are discussed in Chapter Three, along with the circumstances surrounding the courts-martial and execution of nine former British Indian Army personnel for serving with the INA, the last of these occurring in May 1945. Although CSDIC(I) played a central role

[305] 'Indians Killed by Lethal Drug', Ibid.
[306] AAS, F275/3, pp.48-49.

in investigating the INA, intelligence also came from other sources, with one example being an agent with the codename BACKHAND whose remarkable story has been neglected in the literature. His actual name was Zahir-ud-Din, and a description of him by someone unaware of his true mission can be found in a CSDIC(I) interrogation of an INA officer from 1944, who 'was told by [a senior INA commander] and others that this officer had been dropped by parachute in [Burma], with a wireless set, and that on making a safe landing [had] informed the Japanese that he had been sent over to join the INA and send back information'.[307] The subterfuge of Zahir-ud-Din was so convincing that in July 1944 he was appointed as head of propaganda for the INA in Burma, a role that included making propaganda radio broadcasts directed at India, but also gave him unfettered access to INA and IIL personnel.[308] An example of the type of intelligence he gathered for British intelligence, involved identifying an Indian officer who had prematurely surrendered his battalion to the Japanese during the battle for Singapore in February 1942.[309]

The reason that Zahir-ud-Din was able to convince the INA that he was double-crossing the British was his previous history: in 1940, while serving as a lieutenant in the 4/19 Hyderabad Regiment in Singapore, he had triggered a mutiny, with his men going on hunger strike in his support following his detention. His arrest was caused by his sending a seditious letter outlining anti-British views to a European woman in India, although the circumstances were exacerbated by his attractive blonde German girlfriend in Singapore, being a double agent working for both British and German intelligence. Although Lieutenant Zahir-ud-Din was removed to India for court-martial, the episode escalated to the point where the entire unit was temporarily disarmed, highlighting serious tensions between its British and Indian

[307] Ibid., p.128.
[308] NAI, INA 379, part 35, p.7.
[309] AAS, F275/6, p.221.

officers. A detailed account of the mutiny has been published, although it makes no mention of Zahir-ud-Din's later intelligence activities.[310] Why he agreed to work for British intelligence is unclear, although his mission was certainly an audacious undertaking, and one that illustrates how effective British intelligence work directed at the INA could be. Zahir-ud-Din was recovered following the recapture of Rangoon in May 1945, and after independence from Britain became one of the founding officers of Pakistani Military Intelligence.[311] His successful mission against the INA, emphasises the scope of the intelligence available to the British military authorities regarding the INA.

By the middle of 1945, British victory in Burma against the Japanese was assured, the INA forces in the country had been comprehensively defeated, and preparations were underway to recapture Malaya later in the year. It was then that the unexpectedly rapid end to the war in August 1945 transformed the situation with respect to Indian prisoners.

Post-war recovery of Indian personnel

The end of the war presented the British authorities with a range of major logistical challenges of which the recovery of Indian prisoners was only one. As Toye describes it:

> The sudden end of the war with Japan in August 1945 took India Command as much by surprise as did its outbreak in 1941. […] It was generally assumed that there would be another year of war. […] Now, suddenly and with the utmost urgency because of the state of the prisoners of war and internees in Japanese hands, all South-East Asia had to be re-occupied. Resources were inadequate. Everything had to be improvised.[312]

[310] Sundaram, 'Seditious Letters and Steel Helmets', pp.126-162.
[311] Owen L. Sirrs, *Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate: Covert Action and Internal Operations* (London: Routledge, 2016), p.21.
[312] AAS, F275/1, p.5.

Before the Japanese surrender, most Indian personnel recovered by the British authorities had served in the INA in some capacity, while after the surrender they recovered tens of thousands who had not. These prisoners were scattered across many locations in Japanese-occupied Asia including Malaya, Borneo, Indochina, Hong Kong, and many sites in the Southwest Pacific area. The experiences of these men as they were repatriated varied considerably, with those viewed as having remained loyal to the British being repatriated quickly, while some ex-INA personnel were only returned to India in 1946. The remainder of this section reviews the experiences of three different categories of Indian prisoners: those viewed by the British authorities as having remained unambiguously loyal; those who had had some involvement with the INA; and those viewed as committed INA personnel. It will be argued that the recovery of those who had resisted joining the INA led to a significant change in British Colonial policy towards those who had, while simultaneously a dispute developed within the British military as to how the hard core of INA personnel should be managed.

One group of Indian prisoners who had resisted joining the INA was based at Kluang in Malaya. Its commander was Lieutenant Colonel Gurbakhsh Singh of the Jind Infantry - a largely Sikh unit from the Indian Princely State of Jind. Although he heard of the Japanese surrender earlier, it was on 25 August 1945 that the Japanese transferred command of the camp, with the effect on the Indian prisoners being that:

> A wave of joy spread like lightening in the camp: songs and folk-dances broke out spontaneously and involuntarily. Men started rounding-up the Japanese. With great difficulty, they were halted from doing so. Prayers were offered at the Sikh Gurdwara as well as the Hindu temple. All troops visited the camp cremation area where wreaths of flowers were laid. A play was staged at night and Quawalies [group songs] – specially written for the occasion were sung.[313]

[313] Gurbakhsh Singh, *Indelible Reminiscences*, pp.139-140.

On 4 September 1945, two British officers parachuted into the camp, and 'were amazed to see our emaciated condition' but arranged for an air-drop 'of medicines as well as luxury items', the silk parachutes being refashioned into underwear.[314] Soon afterwards, Gurbakhsh Singh learnt that he had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for his conduct during the battle for Singapore in February 1942.[315] The Jind Infantry were treated as a priority for repatriation to India, sailing from Singapore on 22 September 1945 to Madras and then by train to Delhi, arriving on the evening of 2 October. However, on arrival in Delhi, Gurbakhsh Singh was unhappy for several reasons, including because he and his officers would be missing out on a special meal he had arranged at Delhi station. When he was approached in the dark by someone he assumed was the military Station Commander, 'I did not take much notice of him. When he wished me a hearty welcome I let off full steam at him. He appeared some-what taken by surprise', although the officer ordered a staff officer to arrange transport to get the officers to the meal.

> Now the visitor desired to meet the troops. Flared up as I was, I put him in the hands of the Subedar Major and, taking all the officers along, drove away. Great was my astonishment when the staff officer, […] divulged to me during the drive that the visitor I had so shabbily treated was no other than the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, himself.[316]

The then General Auchinleck, had spent most of his career serving with the Indian Army, could speak several Indian languages fluently, and was an exemplar of the paternalistic British officer.[317] As Commander-in-Chief of the British Indian Army, he would have a pivotal role in determining how former INA personnel would be treated. All that Gurbakhsh

[314] Ibid., p.143.
[315] Ibid., p.146.
[316] Ibid., p.159.
[317] Philip Warner, *Auchinleck: The Lonely Soldier* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2006), p.17.

Singh could do was 'send him a note of profound apologies the following morning' before heading with the Jind Infantry to their final destination of Sangrur in Jind State:[318]

> The station was swarming with people who had gathered to welcome us. But, also neither the Ruler, nor the Yuvraj [heir], nor even the Chief Minister of the State could be seen among the throng. […] When we reached our barracks we were shocked to find that even our cots were missing. Hay and husk had been spread on the floor for the jawans to sleep on. […] The cold reception on one front was amply compensated by a flood of warmth […] shown by Delhi Headquarters.[319]

While the attitude of the state government in Jind appears to have been ambivalent towards the returning men, the welcome from the British authorities appears to have been genuinely warm, an attitude epitomised by the consideration shown by Auchinleck at Delhi station.

Another group of Indian prisoners from Malaya who had priority for repatriation, were the men of 2nd Gurkha Rifles. By late September 1945, they were back at their Regimental Depot in Dehra Dun (discussed earlier in this chapter) where they were visited by the Viceroy of India, Viscount Wavell, who recorded in his diary that 'both battalions had brought back more men and in rather better shape than I expected; both were exceedingly bitter about the INA from whose hands they had had worse treatment than from the Japs'.[320] The experiences of the Gurkha battalions at the hands of INA recruiters is examined in Chapter Two, but it is clear that the recovery of such men, some of whom were 'full of bitterness against the INA', forced the British authorities to adopt a harsher policy towards former INA personnel 'however good his previous or subsequent record, (for many had already gone back into the Indian Army)', and the result was a review of past cases with 'stricter gradings' to ensure that returning prisoners were not required to serve alongside former INA personnel who had

[318] Gurbakhsh Singh, *Indelible Reminiscences,* p.159.
[319] Ibid., pp.160-161.
[320] Wavell, *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p.174.

previously been categorised as 'Grey', and been allowed to return to their regiments.[321] It was a shift in policy that represented a significant *volte face* for the British authorities.

While the speed with which the Jind Infantry and Gurkhas from Malaya were repatriated was unusual, in the coming months former Indian prisoners would arrive in their tens of thousands, at ports and then regimental centres across India. The case of one Indian officer illustrates some of the issues that the British authorities were facing. The arrival of the aircraft-carrier HMS *Formidable* in Bombay in November 1945, carrying former Indian prisoners, was described at the beginning of the Introduction. This highlighted a newspaper interview given by a Lieutenant Nigam of 17 Dogra Regiment, in which he had stated that he and the other former prisoners had refused to join the INA. However, suspicion fell on Nigam following allegations made later by other former prisoners, and in his subsequent CSDIC(I) interrogation he 'at first denied all association with the first INA; but later admitted having volunteered for it'.[322] In fact, 'the bulk of 17 Dogra from SW Pacific were all ex-volunteers from the first INA'.[323] Despite this, all the prisoners from this ship had been sent directly to their regimental centres because there were no CSDIC(I) staff in Bombay to screen them. In practice, most prisoners were arriving in Madras, but the aircraft-carrier HMS *Formidable* was too large to dock there.[324] Despite having been 'extremely evasive under interrogation', Nigam was 'considered to show an undoubted conviction in the ultimate triumph of British power', and was classified as 'Grey'.[325] The case illustrates some of the challenges that CSDIC(I) faced: in particular the limited manpower available to deal with the mass return of Indian prisoners, some of whom had INA links.

[321] AAS, F275/1, p.6.
[322] NAI, INA 499, part 10, p.62.
[323] Ibid., p.65.
[324] Ibid., p.76.
[325] Ibid., p.77; Final officer classification list: AAS, F275/9, p.282.

Dealing with INA prisoners

While the screening of returning Indian prisoners was important, a more intractable problem was how to manage the thousands of former Indian Army personnel captured while serving with the INA - an area of policy where significant disagreements would emerge within the British military hierarchy. A *Times of India* article from January 1946 provides details of a disciplinary episode in a prison camp at Bahadurgarh near Delhi in October 1945, which held men it described as the 'European wing' of the INA.[326] These were Indian prisoners captured by the Italians and Germans, whom Subhas Chandra Bose had persuaded to join his 'Indian Legion' military force while he was in Europe, but who had since been captured and shipped to India (the 'Legion' became a regiment in the German Army and was incorporated into the Waffen-SS towards the end of the war).[327] As the article explained, 'many of them had become accustomed to new standards of living in Germany', and provides an example 'of a former sweeper who has married in Germany, where he used to live in a luxury flat, and received 800 marks as pay. He is a complete misfit in India and wants to go back to Germany'.[328]

In October 1945 an attempt to arrest seven of the prisoners within the camp by the Gurkha guard resulted in 'the great majority of the other men' swarming around the guard, who reacted with force 'including bayoneting' with 'a good number' being injured. The prisoners complained that in the subsequent collective punishment of the camp 'men who were compelled to double [run] were physically unfit, and when they fell from exhaustion, the guard bayonetted them in order to make them rise'. In response, the authorities asserted 'that

[326] 'I.N.A. Prison Camp Incidents', *The Times of India*, 8 January 1946, p.1.
[327] For background on its formation see: Romain Hayes, *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany: Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda 1941-43* (London: Hurst, 2011)
[328] 'I.N.A. Prison Camp Incidents', *The Times of India*, 8 January 1946, p.5.

men who were unfit were exempted. Bayoneting, the authorities emphasise, is not resorted to in cases in which the men fall from exhaustion', although the punishment seemed to have the desired effect as 'since October, no cases of mass defiance has taken place'.[329] It is unknown what General Auchinleck thought of the measures used at Bahadurgarh camp, but a dispute over how to handle INA personnel taken prisoner at Bangkok in Thailand provides an insight into the differences of opinion between him and some of his commanders.

Before the war, Bangkok had been an important centre for Indians opposed to British colonial rule in India, and it was from within that community that Japanese Military Intelligence had recruited civilians to help them suborn Indian troops during the Malayan campaign (one of their earliest successes was Captain Mohan Singh, later the first commander of the INA).[330] At the time of the Japanese surrender in August 1945, several thousand INA personnel were in Bangkok, including the men of 'X Regiment' of the INA who had retreated from Burma during the preceeding months.[331] By early September 1945 the British 7th Indian Division had arrived in the city, one situation report stating:

> Subject INA. Col Sheodatt Singh briefed by GHQ(I) and presumably with due authority reported today and is handling INA problems. He interviewed Maj General Bhonsle (INA) and reduced him to his proper rank of Major […] INA allotted three camps Bangkok area and allowed keep officers bungalows.[332]

The arrangements agreed by Colonel Sheodatt Singh, an officer from CSDIC(I), meant that INA personnel continued to be seen around Bangkok. One British NCO reported on 26 September that 'a three-ton truck passed me crammed full of what I presumed to be INA personnel and kit […] carrying furled flags. All the men were cheering and they saluted

[329] Ibid., p.1.
[330] Noles, 'Renegades in Malaya', p.102.
[331] AAS, L/WS/2/46, 'Chapter 16', p.3.
[332] AAS, F275/10, p.5.

passing Indian civilians who returned the salutes and seemed pleased at the attention', while another NCO reported seeing a bus full of Indians 'voicing war cries' and 'flying a large tricolour flag', while following them 'was a truckload of Jap tps who were enjoying the fun'.[333] Tensions appear to have grown between Colonel Sheodatt Singh and British officers in 7th Indian Division over the INA policy, culminating in a belligerent order on 19 October making a Brigadier Lauder responsible for INA matters, and forbidding the colonel from contacting headquarters in Delhi directly.[334] Having been side-lined, the colonel wrote a report for CSDIC(I) before leaving Bangkok, which detailed that there were nearly two thousand INA personnel in and around the city, including seven 'Ranee Jhansi girls', a reference to members of the women's regiment of the INA (they are always referred to as 'girls' in CSDIC(I) reports).[335] One difference between these INA prisoners and the previously mentioned prisoners at Bahadurgarh was that they included three hundred and fifty 'Malay Tamils' - former civilians who had volunteered for the INA. He concluded: 'It is hoped to organise the INA into original Indian Army units in the near future', but noted that 'there is no doubt about it that although they may appear to be frightened or appear to cooperate, they still have genuine love and respect for Bose.'[336]

With Colonel Sheodatt Singh removed from his role, the attempt to reorganise the INA personnel into their original Indian Army units began, although an intelligence summary from early November noted that it was 'receiving opposition' from the prisoners.[337] It was in this context that a strongly worded 'Secret Cipher' was received on 10 November by

[333] Ibid., p.28.
[334] Ibid., p.159.
[335] Ibid., p.163. CSDIC(I) report on 'INA Thailand', 23 October 1945. Exact numbers were: 10 former Indian Army officers; 1969 other ranks; 7 'Ranee Jhansi'.
[336] Ibid., p.165.
[337] Ibid., p.174.

Brigadier Lauder from the Commander-in-Chief General Auchinleck, who had been informed (almost certainly by Sheodatt Singh) of the Brigadier's plans to use force:[338]

> plan is to move INA in batches from the detention camp to a jail outside Bangkok and deal with each batch in turn in the jail using Gurkhas armed with lathis [heavy bamboo sticks] for the purpose of bringing them to their senses. These ex INA are IA [Indian Army] personnel in military custody and I cannot insist too strongly that they must be treated in every way as other personnel of the IA detained in military custody and the punishments must be confined to those permissible under the Indian Army Act. Gurkhas […] should not be specially singled out for guarding INA personnel [339]

In the exchange of messages that followed Lauder complained about the way his officers were being insulted, and stated that he had been told not to use Sikh troops to guard them because of the number of Sikhs' in the INA, although he did obtain the concession from Auchinleck that the INA could be moved to the jail.[340] This would not prove to be as helpful as Lauder hoped.

Although Lauder had been denied the use of force, the transfer of INA personnel to a criminal jail near Bangkok named Bangwang went ahead, although the overcrowded and unsanitary conditions soon created a crisis.[341] A report dated 26 November 1945 by Major Davis of 4/8 Gurkha Rifles, the British commander of the jail, highlights his concern that because of the conditions 'both the INA doctors here, and the doctor of 4/8 GR consider that an outbreak of dysentery is very probable', in part because the number of latrines was totally inadequate.[342] Another factor was the diet 'which is worked out on bare subsistence level', including for hospital patients, who were suffering from conditions varying from 'dysentery

[338] See note from 1985 written by Hugh Toye: Ibid., p.5.
[339] Ibid., p.184.
[340] Ibid., pp.182-183.
[341] Almost certainly modern Bang Kwang Central prison (the 'Bangkok Hilton').
[342] AAS, F275/10, p.187.

to malaria'.[343] Despite the conditions, he reported that 'the morale of the INA is still very high' and noted that 'they are now people with a grudge', while 'as regards imprinting our discipline upon the INA the position in the Jail is hopeless'. His final recommendation was 'to get them out of this jail as soon as possible' and 'treat them as normal prisoners of war as per the Geneva conventions', because the current policy was 'having exactly the opposite effect to that desired'.[344] Many of the INA personnel in the jail are likely to have been from 'X Regiment', a scratch force that was formed in Burma in April 1945, from the survivors of various INA combat units.[345]

It is unclear from the archive what measures were subsequently taken regarding Bangwang jail, but later information suggests that the attempts to coerce the INA prisoners ultimately failed. In January 1946, while INA personnel were being transported on a ship from Bangkok to Singapore, a British major onboard was 'told by the INA officers that during the past four months many efforts had been made in Bangkok to segregate the Indian Army and civilian elements of the INA, but all had been successfully resisted'. Problems arose on arrival in Singapore however, when it was announced that the civilian INA personnel were meant to disembark in Singapore, with only the former Indian Army INA continuing to India, and as a result 'a sit-down strike ensued'. Two CSDIC(I) officers were sent on board to negotiate, including Major Hugh Toye (the future author), but initially made little progress 'amidst much shouting of slogans'.[346] With the ship marooned in Singapore harbour, plans were made to use force, although 'it was recommended that apart from the Gurkha guard already on board, British troops only should be used'. Ultimately the situation was resolved

[343] Ibid., p.188.
[344] Ibid., p.189. A total of 1453 INA prisoners were in the jail.
[345] AAS, L/WS/2/46, 'Chapter 16', p.3.
[346] AAS, F275/10, p.208.

peacefully, primarily because the former Indian Army personnel among the INA cooperated – the lure of a passage home to India ultimately proving too great.[347]

In summary, the recovery of Indian personnel in the months following the Japanese surrender, posed a variety of challenges for the British authorities. Not only did they need to recover tens of thousands of Indian personnel from across Southeast Asia, many of whom required specialised medical treatment, but they also needed to screen them for previous INA activity, as well as assessing any future political threat they might pose to the colonial state. The bitterness felt by some Indian prisoners who had resisted the INA towards those who had joined it, forced the British authorities to reassess the relatively lenient policy hitherto adopted towards many who had served in the force. The preferential use of Gurkhas' to guard INA personnel, rather than other classes of Indian Army troops, reveals the deep anxieties that the British authorities had regarding the political reliability of other classes in the immediate post-war period. There were also disagreements within the British Military hierarchy as to how to manage intransigent INA personnel – an issue that would crystallise around the post-war trials of INA personnel.

Crimes and punishment: The post-war INA trials

Salimgarh Fort lies immediately North of the Red Fort (*Lal Qila*) in Delhi, and it has been used as a prison at various times in its near five-hundred-year history. Within its precinct, a colonial-era brick cell block where important INA prisoners were held can still be seen,

[347] Ibid., p.209.

although it receives few visitors compared to the grand Mughal-era buildings in the Red Fort itself. Among the prisoners held there were a number put on trial by the British authorities in the immediate post-war period, although one trial has come to dominate post-war memory: the joint trial of Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, Captain Prem Sahgal, and Lieutenant Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon (they were indicted according to their original Indian Army ranks), held during November and December 1945 in the Red Fort. This trial (hereafter the 'Red Fort' trial) has a prominent place in the post-war history of India before independence in 1947, including in the work of Marston, Raghavan, and Fay, with a broad consensus that it galvanised nationalist sentiment in India, forcing the British colonial authorities to free the men despite them having been convicted of serious charges, including waging war against His Majesty the King-Emperor of India (George VI).[348] With this trial so prominent, this section addresses the question: what impact did its outcome have on the British officers of the Indian Army?

The broader context for the Red Fort trial was that it was one of a series held by the British involving captured INA personnel. The trials held prior to it were conducted in secret and have been largely forgotten, although in some cases they resulted in executions.[349] These earlier trials largely involved INA personnel taken prisoner during the campaigns of 1944, and they are discussed in Chapter Three. A note written just before the Japanese surrender in August 1945 indicates that the British authorities were planning 'about 600' further trials for those designated as 'Black', although ambitions to prosecute a further fourteen hundred were constrained by the 'considerable practical difficulties'. The punishment for those found

[348] See: Marston, *Indian Army*, pp.127-142.; Raghavan, *India's War*, pp.445-448.; Fay, *Forgotten Army*, pp.465-492.
[349] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.19.

guilty was expected to be 'either death or transportation for life', with around fifty executions anticipated.[350]

However, the end of the war changed the context within which any trials would be held, as the British authorities had to publicly acknowledge the existence of the INA for the first time, while the Indian press was freed from the constraints of wartime censorship. The result was that by October 1945 General Auchinleck was reporting that: 'The Indian Press is full of articles extolling the INA as heroes', coverage that was being encouraged by Indian National Congress politicians such as Jawaharlal Nehru (the future first Prime Minister of independent India), who had only recently emerged into the political light after being released from almost three years in a British prison.[351] The new post-war context meant that by October 1945 the number of trials planned had been reduced to one hundred and twenty, with an anticipated twenty death sentences, and a new deadline of April 1946 to complete all trials before new democratic elections.[352] It was within the precincts of the Red Fort, the 'former seat of the Mughal Emperor', that the trial of the three officers began on 5 November 1945, although according to Mason, Auchinleck's 'maladroit choice was interpreted as a deliberate taunt' to Indian nationalists, a mistake accentuated by the three officers being respectively a Muslim, a Hindu, and a Sikh, and therefore appealing to a wide cross-section of Indian society.[353] The symbolism of all three main Indian religions being represented in the trial was attractive for the leadership of the Indian National Congress 'who wanted to emphasise secularism in the future life of the country and counteract the Muslim League'.[354] Fay emphasises the importance of this trial in bringing into the public domain many aspects

[350] Nicholas Mansergh, ed. *The Transfer of Power, 1942-1947*, 12 vols (London: HMSO, 1970-1983) (hereafter TOP), VI, p.50.
[351] Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p.520.; TOP, VI, p.434.
[352] TOP, VI, p.435.
[353] Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p.521.
[354] Khan, *Raj at War*, p.304.

of the INA for the first time, with Indian newspapers avidly reporting the proceedings, and protests and strikes in support of the defendants becoming widespread.[355]

By the end of November 1945, with the trial continuing, it was becoming apparent to the colonial authorities that it was catalysing increasing nationalist sentiment in India, and a note from Sir George Cunningham, the Governor of the North-West Frontier Province, to the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, provides an insight into the dilemma facing the colonial authorities. After stating that he thought all INA trials should be stopped immediately, he goes on to explain:

> Some [British] Army Officers of great experience […] have said that leniency at this stage would have a disastrous effect on the Army. I do not believe that that is true. […] Most Indian soldiers who have said to me "Hang the lot" have, in my opinion, said so because they thought it was what I wanted to hear […] every day that passes now brings over more and more well-disposed Indians into the anti-British camp […] I feel terribly for Your Excellency and for Claude A. [Auchinleck] in this. It is the most difficult problem to tackle that I have ever known in India.[356]

Cunningham may have been correct about most Indian personnel in the British Indian Army, but he was overlooking the impact that leniency would have on another key group: the British officers themselves. Nor should it be forgotten that returning Indian prisoners who had suffered at the hands of the INA were often very bitter at the treatment they had experienced.[357] In the event, Auchinleck did not stop the Red Fort trial and it ran to completion at the end of December 1945, with all three officers being convicted of waging war against the King Emperor, and Captain Shah Nawaz Khan also convicted of abetment of murder. All were sentenced to 'cashiering (dismissal from the service), forfeiture of pay

[355] Fay, *Forgotten Army*, p.485.
[356] TOP, VI, p.546.
[357] Marston, *Indian Army*, p.132.

and allowances, and transportation for life', although Auchinleck remitted the sentence of transportation, with the result that they were able to walk out of the Red Fort as free men.[358] Such an outcome was well beyond what their defence team (which included Jawaharlal Nehru) had thought possible, with later information suggesting that the best they had hoped for was the reduction of their sentences to five years imprisonment.[359] The outcome was viewed by the Indian public as an unequivocal defeat for the British colonial state, 'and convinced India that independence was at last really in sight'.[360] It simultaneously 'seemed a negation of justice and a betrayal of those who had stood fast' to the 'majority of British officers', and in the weeks ahead it would be Auchinleck who would be the focus of their anger.[361]

The sense of outrage felt by many British officers can be observed in a variety of accounts and memoirs. A contemporary account from a British officer who had been a prisoner of the Japanese himself, Major Milligan of 2/15 Punjab Regiment, bitterly summarises the handling of the INA issue by the Army as 'the present chaotic shambles'.[362] In his view, INA disciplinary matters should have been dealt with by the regiments themselves, rather than being handled centrally. This would have involved concentrating all recovered INA personnel in Singapore, where their former regimental British officers (who had themselves been prisoners) would 'carry out enquiries and interrogations', rather than relying on CSDIC(I) intelligence personnel. They would then have performed the required courts-martial on those charged, and those found guilty would have been 'dealt with', with the result that the 'whole problem' would have been solved.[363] This was a utopian solution based

[358] Fay, *Forgotten Army*, p.493.
[359] TOP, VI, p.807.
[360] Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, p.522.
[361] Ibid.
[362] NAM, 1994/05/42/7B, p.30.
[363] Ibid., p.29.

on the unrealistic premise that the whole matter could be kept as an internal Army disciplinary affair, but it captures a common sentiment: that the INA trials should have been dealt with outside of India, in the operational theatres.

Another critic of Army policy at this time was Lieutenant General Sir Francis Tuker, one of the most senior British commanders in India, whose memoir *While Memory Serves* contains a detailed exposition of his views on the INA.[364] Lamenting how nationalist politicians had taken up the cause of the INA in India, as he put it 'a country where some politicians could easily write *The Prince* more convincingly than could its author', his account also touches on questions of honour and betrayal.[365] Reflecting on the example of Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, he writes:

> His photograph is on the wall in the Commandant's office in the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun […] standing next to Brigadier Peter Collins, one of the most upright men and best of soldiers, then commanding the Academy. Collins lavished all he had of his sympathetic personality and his considerable abilities on the young Indians of the Academy. So here is Shah Nawaz, winner of the sword of honour or the belt at the I.M.A. A Muslim too; quite unbelievable.[366]

Given the broader context of the struggle for Indian independence, it would be easy to dismiss Tuker's emphasis on the personal honour of commissioned officers as atavistic, but this was the lens through which the actions of the INA officers were understood by many British officers, a view sharpened by a sense that those involved had also betrayed those who had mentored them. The sense of outrage felt by such officers was fuelled by a realisation of the implications of the Red Fort trial for the Army that officers such as Tuker had dedicated their professional lives to, because clearly, if Indian officers could wage war

[364] Tuker, *While Memory Serves*: see Chapter IV.
[365] Ibid., p.70.
[366] Ibid., p.53.

against the King Emperor and walk free, then the days of the Army, and by association the British Raj, were numbered. As Tuker describes, such outrage led to disillusionment:

> To a man they were appalled at what was being done by their seniors and from now onwards they turned away from Delhi. From that time, then, dates the indifference of the British officer of the Indian Army towards his higher command. […] A most loyal and capable servant had lost faith. He slogged along at his job for the sake of the regiment and its men.[367]

Auchinleck became aware of the strength of feeling against him, and in February 1946 circulated a confidential note to senior British commanders justifying his approach.[368] Arguing that the sentences imposed on the Red Fort trial defendants were a 'heavy punishment' because for commissioned officers they carried the 'stigma of disgrace', he continued:

> the effect on many British officers has been bad, and has led to public criticism which has not been in accordance with the traditional loyalty I am entitled to expect. To these officers, perhaps not always very perceptive or imaginative, an officer is an officer, whether he be Indian or British […] Moreover, they forget, if they ever knew, the great bitterness bred in the minds of many Indian officers in the early days of "Indianisation" by the discrimination, often very real, exercised against them[369]

As for the ordinary Indian soldiers:

> the men's allegiance for all practical purposes was focussed on the regiment, and particularly on the [British] regimental officers, on whom they depended for their welfare, advancement and future prospects. In these officers their faith and trust was almost childlike […] As I have tried to explain, they had no real loyalty or patriotism towards Britain as Britain, not as we understand loyalty[370]

[367] Ibid., p.59.
[368] AAS, Mss, Eur F274/95.
[369] Ibid., p.2.
[370] Ibid., p.3.

The note represents a remarkable insight into the views of the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army at this critical time, although it is difficult to agree with his assertion that 'the Red Fort was the most convenient place from nearly every point of view' for the trial, given the way that the location appears to have exacerbated anti-British feeling.[371] The fact that Auchinleck felt compelled to circulate a lengthy explanation of his decision to his senior commanders, indicates how serious the criticism of his approach had become, a situation confirmed by Marston in interviews with retired Indian Army officers.[372] Despite the prominence of the Red Fort trial, other trials of former INA personnel were already underway as early as December 1945, with seven begun up to March 1946.[373] Among those prosecuted was Sweeper Nimbu, who had started working at the INA detention camp in Singapore in 1942 performing 'sanitation duties', but was soon tasked with 'flogging' prisoners on a regular basis, his low social status as a Dalit adding social humiliation to the physical pain of punishment.[374]

However, it should be noted that all the trials held involved allegations of offences against Indian personnel (as did the proposed Durrani trial discussed earlier). A striking absence is any attempt by the British authorities to prosecute Indian personnel who had killed or abused British officers or men, a prominent example being members of the so-called 'Changi Guard', that performed guard duties for the Japanese on the British and Australian prisoners, primarily at their main camp in the Changi area of Singapore. The Changi Guard were not part of the INA *per se*, but were a semi-autonomous unit established in March 1942 at the request of the Japanese, with Lieutenant Colonel Gill being tasked with establishing it.[375] Its

[371] Ibid., p.6.
[372] Marston, *Indian Army*, p.139.
[373] Relevant files at NAI are: INA 490 to 497. ('Red Fort' trial is INA 495).
[374] NAI, INA 493, p.66.
[375] AAS, F275/7, p.181.

first commander was Lieutenant Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, one of those prosecuted in the Red Fort trial for other offenses. He had not been the first choice, with Gill admitting to him that having to guard former comrades 'was a very dirty job' and that 'he had asked many officers' before he spoke to him, but none had wanted the command, although in Dhillon he seems to have found a willing volunteer.[376]

Dhillon's guard unit consisted of two hundred men under the supervision of a VCO named Subedar Santa Singh, and Dhillon was soon given final instructions by Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, who had 'a most encouraging attitude though he considered it to be a very bad job which we should not have taken up'.[377] However, Dhillon embraced the role with enthusiasm, with the unit soon being issued with firearms and adopting Japanese-style drill.[378] The activities of the Changi Guard deserve a detailed study in their own right, but it is clear that it had a significant impact on British and Australian prisoners, becoming notorious for its use of violence and humiliation to the extent that even as early as March 1942 one British officer could describe Dhillon as 'possibly the most hated man on the island', recounting how another British officer 'had been badly beaten up by the Sikhs' of the Guard.[379] It is important to recognise that this was not simply random violence, but was instead systematically encouraged. As Dhillon later put it, 'we had to create anti-British feeling in the minds of the men. You cannot fight a battle unless you hate your enemy', before he recalls 'an amusing incident' in which one of his *jawans* harangued and slapped his former British commanding officer.[380] Dhillon also details several incidents where

[376] Dhillon, *From My Bones*, p.103.
[377] Ibid., p.104. Note that Dhillon, Santa Singh, and Shah Nawaz Khan were all from 1/14 Punjab Regiment, as was Captain Mohan Singh the first commander of the INA, who had been Dhillon's immediate superior.
[378] Ibid., pp.113-115.
[379] J.H.H., Coombes, *Banpong Express: being an account of the Malayan Campaign, with some subsequent experiences as a guest of the Imperial Japanese Army* (Darlington: W. Dresser, 1948), p.73.
[380] Dhillon, *From My Bones*, p.123.

prisoners were shot, but it was after he had fallen ill and been replaced by another officer in August 1942 that the most notorious incident involving the Changi Guard occurred.[381]

The officer who replaced Dhillon was a Muslim called Lieutenant Rana, and it was he who commanded a four-man firing squad (which included Subedar Santa Singh) that at the behest of the Japanese, executed four British and Australian prisoners who had tried to escape.[382] There is a disturbing account describing this incident in September 1942 by a British officer, who recalled how Rana 'appeared to thoroughly enjoy the situation', and took part in the shooting himself.[383] It is unclear how widespread knowledge of such incidents was at the time outside the sphere of former British and Australian prisoners, and some of those involved, such as Subedar Santa Singh, had not survived the war and so were beyond justice. Nonetheless, it is striking that officers such as Dhillon and Rana who were in British custody, and who had overseen the killing, beating, and humiliation of British and Australian prisoners, should have escaped prosecution. The reason probably lies in a reluctance to publicise offences that were a deliberate assault on the colonial order, combined with the natural tendency of victims to want to forget incidents, that, for officers particularly, often involved personal humiliation. Whatever the motive, the result has been to suppress the truth of what occurred, with a consequent impact on British post-war memory. This may have been reinforced by the fact that, as a general policy, former British prisoners were ordered not to discuss their experiences in captivity with others, including their families.[384]

[381] Ibid., p.131.
[382] AAS, F275/5, p.308.
[383] TNA, WO 235/825, p.125. From trial of Lieutenant General Fukuei, executed in April 1946.
[384] Parkes, *Captive Memories*, p.181.

It was in late April 1946, that Auchinleck finally agreed with the Viceroy, Wavell, that due to increasing political pressure no further INA trials should take place.[385] This ultimately resulted in the release of all INA personnel still being held in British custody who had not already been put on trial. One example was Major Bhonsle, the former Chief-of-Staff of the INA, whom the British authorities had planned to prosecute as part of the proposed Durrani torture trial discussed earlier, and who was released in June 1946.[386] Others released without charge included Lieutenant Colonel Gill, and most extraordinarily of all, Captain Mohan Singh, the first commander of the INA and the driving force behind its creation. Nor did such officers disappear from the public stage with, for example, both Gill and Captain Shah Nawaz Khan working as assistants to Gandhi at various times.[387] For British officers such as Tuker and others, the prominence of such former officers was an affront to the Indian Army, the institution they had served their entire professional lives, a sense that was only reinforced when all those convicted in the INA trials who were still in custody in August 1947 were released at the time of Indian independence.[388] In later years, as officers such as Tuker came to write their memoirs, that sense of affront would be a key foundation of their intensely negative portrayal of the INA, a portrayal that would have a significant influence on the later secondary literature.

[385] Marston, *Indian Army*, p.148.
[386] NAI, INA, 428, p.15.
[387] Ramachandra Guha, *Gandhi: the Years That Changed the World, 1914-1948* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), p.798., p.830.
[388] For example: NAI, INA 490. Captain Rashid released on 15 August 1947.

Summary

This chapter has explored the foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners. An important theme has been the role that wartime propaganda played in shaping British post-war memory of Indian prisoners and the INA. The discussion of the Pasni landing party explored a wartime propaganda story that emphasised the loyalty of Indian troops, disseminated at a critical juncture for the colonial state in 1944 – when Japanese and INA troops were being fought against in Northeast India. An example of propaganda aimed specifically at Indian military personnel was the 'Josh' programme, while the way that the Dhillon party were portrayed as unambiguously loyal in a British intelligence briefing on the INA, shows how British officers were also presented only with carefully framed information. While it is entirely reasonable to employ propaganda during wartime, the issue here is that it was not corrected in the post-war period with, in the case of the Pasni party, the propaganda version of events acquiring the status of fact. Both during the war, and in its post-war afterlife, such propaganda perpetuated the "myth of loyalty", and helped shape the later secondary literature.

Another key theme involved the examination of how the British authorities in India reacted to the capture of so many Indian troops, and how policy towards them evolved over time, principally in reaction to intelligence that a significant number of Indian prisoners were cooperating with the Japanese. Disagreements within the British military command on how to deal with former INA personnel reached a climax at the time of the Red Fort trial in late 1945. The traumatic outcome of this trial for British officers, involving the freeing of Indian officers convicted of serious military offenses, inflamed a sense of outrage that ultimately cooled into disillusionment. It represented a profound defeat for the colonial order and was the harbinger of the dissolution of the British Indian Army itself, involving the sundering of

the regiments to which many of these British officers had dedicated their entire professional lives. This was the backdrop against which the later memoirs of these officers were written, and the significant influence of these accounts on post-war memory is a subject explored in Chapter Three.

Chapter 2: Indian prisoners of the Japanese: experience and memory of captivity

If there is one type of image associated in British wartime memory with prisoners of war of the Japanese, it is photographs of skeletal figures wearing minimal clothing, having somehow survived to the time of their liberation. Similar photographs exist of Indian prisoners, although they are rarely seen. Figure II is one example, showing a group of Indian prisoners shortly after their liberation in 1945, the emaciated figures showing clear signs of malnutrition as well as other medical conditions, including what are probably tropical sores on their feet and legs. These men were recovered from the Southwest Pacific area, where some of the worst conditions endured by Indian prisoners occurred (an area discussed later in this chapter), although not all those recovered across Southeast Asia were in such a poor physical state. Figure III shows two former Sikh prisoners liberated in Borneo, who although thin, appear in much better physical condition than that of the previous group. The conditions that Indian prisoners experienced clearly varied from location to location, while the formation of the INA adds a dimension completely lacking in the case of British and Australian prisoners.

As was outlined in the Introduction, few Indian memoirs or secondary sources relating to Indian prisoners are available, a marked contrast to the extensive literature detailing British and Australian prisoner experiences.[389] Nor is there any equivalent for Indian prisoners of studies such as the excellent *Captive Memories*, which builds on the work and research of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine while caring for former British prisoners of the Japanese, to provide a comprehensive view of their experiences.[390] However, one

[389] Examples are: John Baptist Crasta, *Eaten by the Japanese*, and Gurbakhsh Singh, *Indelible Reminiscences.*
[390] Meg Parkes, *Captive Memories* (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2015)

assumption that does recur in the limited discussion of Indian prisoners, is that they had a lower death rate than their British and Australian counterparts. In an interview from 1990, a former Indian officer prisoner when asked to explain this replied that the 'British observed strict discipline. Indians slightly lax in that they did a lot of pilfering which they sold to the Chinese'.[391] While pilfering probably was an important factor in the survival of many prisoners, it will be argued that such explanations are too simplistic to explain the overall survival rates of Indian prisoners of war *vis-à-vis* their British and Australian counterparts. As was noted in the Introduction, although CSDIC(I) was established to investigate the activities of the INA and related groups it also, as a by-product, gathered information on other Indian prisoners. The CSDIC(I) archives (particularly those in India) therefore represent an invaluable resource for investigating Indian prisoners and their related survival rates. Unfortunately, the long delay in the opening of the CSDIC(I) archives has helped drive a forgetting of these men in the post-war period, compared to their British and Australian counterparts.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section, entitled 'Surviving Captivity: Patterns of life and death among Indian prisoners', reviews the available figures regarding Indian prisoners, examining the way in which they have been represented, and placing them within the broader context of Allied prisoner survival rates. This section argues that the current presentation of figures relating to Indian prisoners in the secondary literature is mis-leading, representing an example of how the truth of what occurred was obscured in the post-war period. It also examines why the survival rate of Indian prisoners was higher than for many other Allied prisoners.

[391] IWM, sound recording 80011491, Reel 12, 23:30, *2nd Lt. Ismail Khan.*

The second section, entitled ‘Experiences of Captivity: case studies of Indian prisoners’, examines several groups of Indian prisoners to illustrate the wide range of experience of those who did not join the INA. This includes an examination of the role of British Regimental histories in representing what occurred, using the Gurkha Rifles as an example; the factors that allowed some who did not volunteer for the INA to have a very high survival rate, using a group sent to Hanoi as an example; an examination of some Indian personnel who served directly with Japanese forces in combat roles; and the provision of medical services to Indian prisoners in Singapore during the Japanese occupation.

The third section is entitled ‘The worst place of all: New Guinea and the Southwest Pacific’, an area that saw the highest death rate among Indian prisoners. Events included the worst single massacre of Indian prisoners in the entire war, but also involved the most extreme form of abuse, with some becoming the victims of anthropophagy at the hands of the Japanese. Most sent to New Guinea were former members of the INA, and this section argues that the way they were represented during and after the war by the British authorities represents an example of obscuration, in that the effect on the post-war memory of these men was that they were perceived as having remained ‘loyal’ to the British.

The fourth and last section, entitled ‘Returning to India: an ambiguous homecoming’, examines the immediate post-war experiences of Indian prisoners. This includes the circumstances that awaited them as they returned to both their Regiments and homes, and their preoccupations through an examination of a collection of letters. While the way that the dead were represented on British Commonwealth war memorials represents an example of the use of a facade to obscure the truth about their loyalty. Taken together, the four

sections of this chapter explore the nature of the post-war memory of Indian prisoners, and the role of the different forms of forgetting in its development.

Surviving Captivity: Patterns of life and death among Indian prisoners

In the final months before CSDIC(I) was disbanded in the middle of 1946, it produced several reports summarising its knowledge regarding various groups of Indian prisoners.[392] As was noted in Chapter One, this was a period when many prominent INA personnel were being released from British military custody, and the reports betray a sense of bitterness at times.[393] An example, from a report on Indian prisoners sent to the Southwest Pacific area, notes that 'after the conclusion of hostilities [the INA] made a peaceful invasion of India, there to be greeted as national heroes and patriots', while in contrast, 'about 15000 of the loyal and "near-loyal" elements amongst the Indian [prisoners] in Singapore, were moved southwards to the islands of the SW Pacific as fatigue labourers', an area that by 1943 was becoming a combat zone. It continues:

> Once they had left Singapore these [prisoners] became forgotten men, and today the bones of thousands of them lie in the swamps and jungles and unknown places of the SW Pacific, and those who have returned to India have returned silently, without public acclamation, without being hailed as national heroes, and for the most part, with the tale of their sufferings and agonies unrecorded and unrecognised by a country dazzled by the limelight thrown on the activities of the INA.[394]

[392] Only available at National Archives of India.
[393] Including Captain Mohan Singh, the founder of the INA, who following his release arrived in Calcutta on 22 May 1946 and was given a 'rousing reception', see: Tuker, *While Memory Serves*, p.293.
[394] NAI, INA 379, part 5, p.1.

This section uses CSDIC(I) material and other sources to address the question: Why does the death rate among Indian prisoners appear to be lower than for British and Australian prisoners of the Japanese?

Remarkably little statistical information on Indian prisoners is available from official British sources. The British official history states that 67,000 were captured by the Japanese in the opening stages of the war, although it provides no details of subsequent fatalities.[395] Another possible source of data, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) database, contains only 1757 records from the Far East where the individual is identified as an Indian Prisoner who died in captivity, a figure that is clearly too low.[396] Determining the number who died during the war is therefore problematic, although there are several sources that provide an indication. For example, in August 1946 the *Times of India* reported that 11,732 Indian personnel who were known or believed to have been Prisoners of War in the Far East were still unaccounted for.[397] But a particularly valuable source is part of a speech attributed to the Viceroy (almost certainly Lord Wavell, although its date is unclear) in praise of those Indian prisoners who did not join the INA:

> As proof of what they endured as the price of their loyalty to their ideals of a soldier's duty, I will tell you this. The 45,000 Indian prisoners of war who stood firm are estimated to have lost about 11,000 or one quarter of their numbers, from disease, starvation and murder; the 20,000 who went over to our enemy's side lost only 1,500, or 7 ½ per cent.[398]

Examining this, the combined total of 65,000 is only slightly below the figure given in the later official history, while the figure of 20,000 for the number who joined the INA has

[395] S. Woodburn Kirby, *The War Against Japan: Volume 1, The Loss of Singapore* (London: H.M.S.O, 1957), p.473.
[396] Email correspondence with CWGC, 16 August 2018. Information supplied included a list of those prisoners.
[397] '18,000 Servicemen Still Missing', *The Times of India*, 6 August 1946, p.4.
[398] Quoted in: Tuker, *While Memory Serves*, p.564.

become the accepted figure.[399] The nature of the claims in this statement will be examined shortly, but it does provide one of the few indications of actual death rates, a figure that is missing from the current secondary literature.[400] Adding the total number of deaths together suggests that 12,500 of those captured died from a variety of causes, and when combined with the total prisoners figure from the later official history, this results in an overall death rate of 18.7 per cent. It is worth comparing this with the death rates of other Allied prisoners:

Allied Prisoner of War death rates in Japanese hands[401]

Country of origin	Total number	Deaths	Death rate (%)
India	67,000	12,500	18.7[402]
Britain	50,016	12,433	24.8
Netherlands	37,000	8,500	22.9
Australia	21,726	7,412	34.1
United States	21,580	7,107	32.9
Canada	1,691	273	16.1
New Zealand	121	31	25.6

Apart from emphasising the sheer number of Indian prisoners, it confirms that they had the lowest death rate of any large group of prisoners, although in absolute terms more Indian prisoners died than from any other nationality. The Viceroy's statement however presented the figures differently, emphasising a lower death rate among INA personnel, but information from CSDIC(I) reports suggests that the numbers presented are misleading in several respects: firstly, while the figure of 20,000 is the number who actively served in the INA, it represents only a minority of those who CSDIC(I) believed had been willing to serve

[399] For example: Marston, *Indian Army*, p.118.
[400] Including: Douds, 'The men who never were'.
[401] Other nationalities from: Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, p.3.
[402] The percentage is 19.2 if the figure of 65,000 is used.

in the force; secondly, a significant number of those counted as having 'stood firm' and who subsequently died were former INA personnel; and thirdly, other CSDIC(I) sources suggest that more than 1,500 INA personnel died while serving in the force.[403]

One CSDIC(I) report is particularly relevant to the first of these issues. As well as providing detailed INA volunteering figures for multiple (mostly Infantry) units, it provides estimates of overall figures for the approximately 55,000 Indian personnel captured during the Malayan campaign, from whom the first INA under Captain Mohan Singh was largely raised. It notes that of those personnel around 15,000 served in the first INA (the remainder only joined the second INA in 1943), while up to a further 30,000 remained as surplus volunteers, leaving only 10,000 who did not sign volunteer forms. As it notes, if Captain Mohan Singh had been allowed by the Japanese in 1942 to utilise all the volunteers, then 'the three Divisions would it is believed, have been raised from the total of 45,000 volunteers, and the term 'surplus volunteer' would never have gained currency'.[404] In other words, the only reason the numbers who joined the INA was ultimately limited to approximately 20,000 was because of Japanese policy. This does not mean that all of those who 'volunteered' were always willing, for example CSDIC(I) believed that the majority of at least 650 Gurkha prisoners identified as volunteers had been coerced, but it can be argued that the statement is misleading.[405]

The second issue relates to the number of 'loyal' prisoners counted as having died which includes nearly 3,000 who died in New Guinea in the Southwest Pacific (see Map 1). The experiences of those in New Guinea are discussed later in this chapter, but the relevant point

[403] Some CSDIC(I) sources suggest that 22,000 served in the INA, for example: NAI, INA, 379, part.5, p.1.
[404] NAI, INA, 414, p.10.
[405] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.37.

is that most of the Indian prisoners sent to New Guinea were former members of the INA, who had served in Captain Mohan Singh's INA but had refused to serve subsequently.[406] As was discussed in Chapter One, CSDIC(I) was aware that the refusal of many of these men to continue serving in the INA was driven by loyalty to Captain Mohan Singh, rather than loyalty to the British.[407]

And finally, while a figure of 1,500 INA deaths is given in the statement, CSDIC(I) sources suggest that the figure was greater than this. For example, one report indicates that during the Imphal campaign in 1944 some 1,800 INA troops died (the campaign is examined in Chapter Three).[408] Although the figure should be adjusted downwards, because around five percent of the INA troops committed to the campaign were civilian volunteers, a reasonable estimate is that over 1,700 former Indian Army personnel died during the Imphal campaign alone.[409] Determining a total death toll for former prisoners who served in the INA on active service is problematic, because the higher estimate of 2,250 provided by CSDIC(I) includes civilian volunteers, but the figure is probably closer to 2,000 than 1,500.[410]

The statement by the Viceroy is significant because it already contains key elements of what will become the standard British account: that only 20,000 were persuaded to join the INA; that those who stayed loyal to the British suffered the worst conditions; and that INA personnel experienced lower death rates than non-volunteers. Such assertions have continued to be reproduced in the secondary literature, including for example in Douds' article, 'The men who never were', although in fairness the author was clearly unaware that

[406] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'.
[407] Example provided were men from 5/11 Sikh recovered in 1944, see: AAS, F275/3, pp.48-49.
[408] NAI, INA, 402, p.21.
[409] Percent of civilian volunteers in INA at this time: AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.27.
[410] NAI, INA, 402, p.26. Note: 2,250 figure comprises 750 killed in action and 1500 from disease and starvation.

the Indian prisoners in New Guinea were mostly former INA personnel. Drawing on the conceptual framework outlined in the Introductory chapter, it is argued that the way that the numbers related to Indian prisoners were presented in the Viceroy's statement represents a clear example of obscuration. The figures given acted as a facade to mask the reality of what had occurred, although the CSDIC(I) sources demonstrate that every element of the statement is questionable in some way.

Although the presentation of the figures may have been misleading in some respects, it does not explain why the overall death rate of Indian prisoners was lower, compared to other prisoners. While the experiences of different groups of Indian prisoners could vary greatly, driven by their particular local circumstances, CSDIC(I) sources suggest some broader patterns in how they were deployed by the Japanese. A report from April 1946 recognises three categories of Indian prisoner: those who joined the INA, which it suggests numbered 22,000; a group of 15,000 to 20,000 who did not join the INA and were employed 'in the comparatively sheltered and civilised regions around Malaya' (including Java, Sumatra and Singapore); and 15,000 sent to the Southwest Pacific, including former INA personnel (see Map 1).[411] CSDIC(I) noted that Japanese policy was to keep British and Indian prisoners separate with, in general, most British prisoners being sent north to locations such as Thailand and Japan, while typically Indian prisoners were kept further south, or deployed to the Southwest Pacific (including New Guinea).[412]

As previously outlined, while little has been published on Indian prisoners, the experiences of other prisoner nationalities, such as British, Australian, and American, have been

[411] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, p.1. Note: Total of 57,000 prisoners appears limited to those captured in Malaya, Singapore, and possibly Borneo. Former INA personnel sent to the Southwest Pacific may be being double counted within the 22,000 total.
[412] Ibid.

extensively documented. British post-war memory of what these men endured and how they died tends to be dominated by the horrific conditions that many experienced during the building of the Thai-Burma railway, although another factor also led to many deaths: their transport in Japanese ships which were often sunk by Allied forces. Although Indian prisoners were also transported in Japanese ships, there were significant differences in how this occurred, which can help explain the overall differences in death rates.

One of the most comprehensive accounts of the voyages of Japanese transport ships is Michno's *Death on the Hellships*, which includes an appendix listing voyages and sinkings.[413] Unfortunately, there are few references to the transport of Indian prisoners, Michno describing them as 'voyages of which we know very little'.[414] Although the casualty figures Michno provides for Allied prisoners are misleading because they are significantly inflated by the inclusion of civilian deaths, he emphasises that the majority of fatalities occurred when their ships were sunk by Allied submarines or aircraft, in other words by what he terms 'friendly fire'.[415] He highlights that 'radio intelligence was a key factor in providing information about convoys, cargoes, and routes travelled', with the cargo information including whether Allied prisoners were being carried. As he puts it, 'we not only killed our own, we often knew we were doing it', although it was only from late 1943 that such signals intelligence was consistently available.[416] He also argues that variations in survival rates between different nationalities, for example the lower Dutch death rate *vis-à-vis* the Americans (see earlier table), can in part be explained by the Dutch being transported by sea less often, and therefore less susceptible to the loss of large numbers of prisoners in

[413] Gregory Michno, *Death on the Hellships: Prisoners at Sea in the Pacific War* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2001).
[414] Ibid., p.280.
[415] Ibid., p.292.
[416] Ibid., p.293.

one incident.[417] Michno's inflated total for the number of Allied prisoners who died while being transported was 21,000.[418] A more widely accepted figure (although still an estimate) would be 11,000.[419] However, even this lower figure suggests that the fatalities caused by the sinking of Japanese transport ships were a major contributor to the overall number of Allied prisoner deaths.

Despite the details of Indian prisoner transport journeys and deaths at sea being largely missing from the secondary literature, there are references to both in several CSDIC(I) reports and other sources, including the proceedings of post-war war-crimes trials. Two incidents stand out. The first is the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* on 26 January 1943 (see Figure XIII), in which approximately two hundred Indian prisoners lost their lives - the controversial circumstances of these deaths are examined in Chapter Four.[420] The second is the sinking of an unidentified Japanese transport ship on 25 February 1944 near Macassar, in which six hundred and sixty Indian prisoners died, with the survivors being taken to Bali.[421] The scale of the death toll suggests that this was the largest loss of Indian military lives in any one incident in World War Two, and yet it is unmentioned in official histories or the secondary literature.[422] Eyewitness accounts of this sinking suggest that the high loss of life was due to at least two factors: the ship sank in just a few minutes at night; and many of those Indian prisoners who escaped were assaulted by Japanese survivors, with the result

[417] Ibid., p.282.
[418] Ibid., p.283. One example is the sinking of the *Junyo Maru* in September 1944 by HMS *Tradewind*, where Michno assumes all 5,620 deaths were Allied prisoners, although at least 4,000 were *romushas*, or civilian labourers. See details in: IWM, 'The sinking of Prisoner of War Transport Ships in the Far East', < https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-sinking-of-prisoner-of-war-transport-ships-in-the-far-east> [Accessed 6 November 2020]
[419] Ibid.
[420] See Chapter Four: 'Curating the evidence in the *Suwabe* trial'.
[421] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix A, Group Serial 24.
[422] Transport probably either the *Tango Maru* or *Ryusei Maru*, both sunk in this area on this date by American submarine *USS Slasher*.

that the 'next day scores of dead men were seen floating on the sea with cuts and wounds which were inflicted by the Japs'.[423]

There are also other sinking's reported, including that of another unidentified ship in July 1943 which cost the lives of forty-six Indian prisoners, but there do not appear to be any others involving large scale loss of life, although this is a subject that would benefit from further research.[424] A reasonable estimate for the number of Indian prisoners lost at sea in this way is therefore at least a thousand, although probably not dramatically higher than that. This is clearly a much lower figure than for other nationalities of prisoner such as the British, but it is suggested that this is due to two main factors: the numbers of Indian prisoners transported by sea was relatively low (largely represented by the fifteen thousand sent to the Southwest Pacific); and most of the larger movements were completed by the middle of 1943 after which, as Michno has pointed out, travel by sea became much more dangerous.[425] The experience of one Indian prisoner named Havildar Karam Ilahi illustrates this, as during November and December 1943 he survived four sinkings while being sent from Rabaul to Hollandia in the Southwest Pacific, the attacks involving both aircraft and submarines.[426] It is also notable that the greatest loss of life among Indian prisoners occurred in early 1944.

While the precise numbers of prisoners of all nationalities who died at sea cannot be known, it is argued that the most significant factor in explaining the lower overall death rate in captivity of Indian prisoners compared to other nationalities is the difference in the scale and timing of their transport in ships by the Japanese. However, this comparison relates to

[423] NAM, 9405-42-7A, p.15.
[424] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 1, p.105.
[425] See timings in: NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'.
[426] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 1, p.104. Ilahi had been torpedoed before (July 1943).

overall death rates, while a key claim in the Viceroy's statement outlined above was that those who joined the INA were more likely to survive than those Indian prisoners who did not. This claim relies on including the deaths of nearly three thousand former INA personnel within those considered 'loyal' to the British, because allocating them to the INA side of the equation reverses the position. The experiences of these men, who died in the Southwest Pacific area between 1943 and 1945, and the question of whether it was reasonable for the British to categorise them as 'loyal', will be returned to later in this chapter. In conclusion, the post-war memory of Indian prisoners has been profoundly affected by the way that the numbers have been represented. The official British numbers presented a facade that obscured the truth of what had occurred, laying the foundations upon which later British histories were built.

Experiences of Captivity: Case studies of Indian Prisoners

Within the broad patterns outlined in the previous section, individual groups of Indian prisoners endured years of captivity, and a series of case studies are now used to explore their varied experiences. With Chapter Three focussing on the INA the emphasis here is on those who did not serve in the force. What emerges is a more ambiguous picture than the clear-cut distinction between volunteers and non-volunteers suggested in British accounts. The case studies include the experiences of Gurkha prisoners in Singapore during 1942; a group of prisoners sent to an airfield near Hanoi; Indian Anti-Aircraft gunners who served with Japanese forces; and the provision of medical services in Singapore. The selection of these cases, from among many possible examples, highlights how diverse the experiences of Indian prisoners were.

Gurkha prisoners

The first case study examines the experiences of Gurkha prisoners in Singapore, for which there are a range of sources, including CSDIC(I) material and later regimental histories. Three battalions of the Gurkha Rifles were captured during the Malayan campaign, with many of the Gurkha prisoners being retained in the vicinity of Singapore.[427] Much of the writing about these men focusses on attempts to induce the Gurkha prisoners to join the INA, with a general theme emerging from regimental histories and secondary sources such as Gould's *Imperial warriors*, of Gurkha Officers (GO's), the Gurkha equivalent of VCO's, leading the resistance to INA recruitment.[428] Previous research by this author on INA recruitment methods was outlined in the Introductory Chapter. With respect to Gurkha prisoners, the research highlighted a CSDIC(I) view that most resisted recruitment despite several senior Gurkha officers defecting to the INA, although it did not examine events in detail.[429] Subsequent research on CSDIC(I) material and other sources, including from The Gurkha Museum in Winchester allows a more thorough analysis of what occurred. This case study examines how the story of Gurkha resistance has been portrayed in British accounts, and critiques this portrayal using CSDIC(I) sources.

It is clear that some Gurkha officers and others suffered greatly at the hands of both the INA and the Japanese, and these are the individuals celebrated in the British accounts. One of the best known is Subedar-Major Hari Sing Bohra of 2/2 Gurkha Rifles, whose regimental history describes how at the height of the INA recruitment drive in September 1942, he:

> addressed a dignified and impressive letter of protest to the Japanese commander. He pointed out that the Gurkhas were not citizens of India and consequently were not interested in serving in the Indian National Army. Their

[427] The battalions were: 2/1 Gurkha Rifles, 2/2 Gurkha Rifles, and 2/9 Gurkha Rifles.
[428] Tony Gould, *Imperial warriors: Britain and the Gurkhas* (London: Granta, 1999), pp.269-271.
[429] Noles, *Divided loyalties*, p.47.

> services had been contracted to the British Raj and as prisoners of war they were entitled to honourable treatment under the laws of war.[430]

However, his resistance led to severe consequences for himself. A regimental newsletter describes how the Japanese, up to his death in May 1944, used 'the most brutal treatment conceivable' against him, and that as a result he 'successively became blind and deaf and then lost his reason, eventually dying from the treatment meted out to him'. In 1946 he was posthumously awarded the Indian Order of Merit for 'outstanding personal example, courage, loyalty and fortitude unto death whilst a prisoner-of-war'.[431] Most of his battalion was kept in Singapore throughout the war, and it was given priority for repatriation to India following the arrival of British forces in early September 1945, approximately 950 men returning home to its regimental centre in Dehra Dun on 21 September 1945 (wartime events at the centre were discussed in Chapter One).[432]

The regimental history of 2/1 Gurkha Rifles also provides graphic descriptions of the sufferings of Gurkha officers resisting INA recruitment:

> Subedar (later Subedar-major) Dilbahadur Gurung and Subedar Jitbahadur Gurung seem to have been picked out for special persecution. They were both repeatedly knocked senseless, brought round, and knocked out again. Dilbahadur had his left wrist broken while shielding Jitbahadur from what was likely to have been a final and fatal assault. But at last the INA guards desisted and allowed medical treatment to be given.[433]

The history then lists the bravery awards given to these men and others, summarising that: 'The Gurkha officers' conduct throughout was beyond all praise. Having borne the brunt of

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[430] G.R. Stevens, *History of the 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkha Rifles (the Sirmoor Rifles), Volume III, 1921-1948* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd, 1952), p.196.
[431] GMA, Regimental News 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkhas, No.10, June 1946, p.19.
[432] GMA, Regimental News 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkhas, No.9, December 1945, p.5.
[433] F. Loraine Petre, *The 1st, King George's Own, Gurkha Rifles, The Malaun Regiment: Vol. 2: 1920-1947* (Aldershot: Aldershot, 1956), p.146.

the INA storm, they continued to shield the men from it'.[434] The final casualty figures for the battalion show that of 1070 Gurkhas (including twenty Gurkha officers), 182 were not recovered, although seventy were killed during the Malayan campaign.[435] The battalion therefore suffered a death rate of eleven percent while prisoners, well below the nineteen percent for all Indian prisoners, probably due to most of the battalion remaining in Singapore throughout.

While the regimental history of 2/1 Gurkha Rifles offers a straightforward portrayal of fortitude in the face of INA and Japanese pressure, not once does it admit that those who joined the INA included men from the battalion. A notable example is one of its havildars, who was captured while fighting against British forces during the Imphal campaign in 1944 and subsequently court-martialled and executed (his case is discussed in Chapter Three), but there were also others.[436] These included Havildar Ramsing who became well known as a 'singer, dancer, and broadcaster' for the INA, but more seriously, had been a member of the Japanese F. Kikan during the Malayan campaign.[437] While another is a Gurkha officer, Jemadar Dilmansing, who was identified by CSDIC(I) as a recruiter for the INA.[438]

However, the most notorious example was that of Jemadar Puran Singh Khawas of 2/1 Gurkha Rifles, who was prosecuted in a post-war court-martial in February 1946 for attempted murder.[439] The incident that gave rise to the prosecution occurred on 24 September 1942, at a camp in Singapore containing men of 2/9 Gurkha Rifles, who at that time were resisting recruitment into the INA. A detailed account of this incident is available

[434] Ibid., p.149.
[435] Ibid., p.143.
[436] Havildar Durga Mal, see: AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.203.
[437] AAS, Mss Eur F275/4, p.250.
[438] AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.236.
[439] NAI, INA, 491, p.1.

in the CSDIC(I) interrogation of Subedar Paras Ram Thapa of 2/9 Gurkha Rifles.[440] Khawas arrived at the camp with around a dozen Gurkhas 'who had enlisted in the INA', as well as an armed INA guard unit, and ordered the Subedar to collect the men. One of the interesting aspects of this incident is that Khawas was there to speak to one group of the battalion in particular: the non-combatants, or battalion followers. After calling the followers forward, 'he told them that it was they who were spreading wrong information against the INA and thereby dissuading others from joining it'. It was then that the Head Bhisti (water carrier), named Birja, 'faced up to Puran Singh [Khawas]' and told him to 'get away', with the result that Khawas 'tapped Birja with a light stick and told him to "shut up"', although the incident began to escalate with others becoming involved. Soon, 'all the men stood up and three men among them shouted out "Maro maro" (Attack attack)', and although Khawas told them to sit down 'they threw wooden shoes at him instead', and Khawas and his men began to run away. However, the armed INA guard did not run, and as the Gurkhas surged towards them it opened fire.[441] A medical officer who later saw the wounded claimed that four or five Gurkhas were hit.[442] The 2/9 Gurkha Rifles would ultimately provide the bulk of those Gurkhas who volunteered for the first INA, but it was not the shooting incident, but rather the leadership of Gurkha officers that CSDIC(I) ultimately blamed. Subedar Paras Ram Thapa was one of the senior Gurkha officers identified as having shown a 'dereliction of duty' in joining the INA, and in CSDIC(I)'s view appeared 'to have supported this enemy-inspired organisation wholeheartedly'.[443] It is a reminder that the leadership of Gurkha officers could work both ways, but the leadership of Head Bhisti Birja during the shooting

[440] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.30.
[441] Ibid., p.38.
[442] AAS, Mss Eur F275/5, p.131.
[443] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.45.

incident also demonstrates how resistance to the INA could come from unexpected quarters, subverting the standard military hierarchy.

The shooting incident demonstrates that resistance did not necessarily follow the hierarchical template found in the Regimental histories, although it is these types of sources that have dominated British accounts. For example, Gould in his history of the Gurkhas draws heavily on the Regimental histories to describe the resistance of figures such as Subedar-Major Hari Sing Bohra, who has become revered within the Regiment for steadfast Gurkha loyalty while a prisoner.[444] Gould asserts that few Gurkhas volunteered for the INA, with 'the few notable exceptions being mainly from 2/1 GR, a battalion with a high percentage of Dharmsala line-boys, whose Indian origins made them more amenable to nationalist propaganda than native-born Nepalis'.[445] Without access to the actual numbers it is difficult to assess this claim, but in one respect it is unfair to 2/1 Gurkha Rifles because it is clear from CSDIC(I) sources that the majority of Gurkhas who volunteered for the first INA in 1942 were from 2/9 Gurkha Rifles, although many later withdrew from the force.[446] It is also clear that not all those Gurkhas who served with the INA had Indian rather than Nepali origins. Gould does not mention the shooting incident described above, but Jemadar Puran Singh Khawas was from Nepal, and as Gould points out, he later went on to become 'Inspector General of Police in Nepal', his wartime activities and later trial apparently no impediment to his future career.[447] But while the CSDIC(I) sources can provide a valuable counterbalance to regimental hagiography, they provide few insights into the motives of key resisters such as Birja, the Head Bhisti. As was outlined in the Introductory Chapter,

[444] Gould, *Imperial warriors*, pp.270-272.
[445] Ibid., p.269.
[446] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.37. Note: 650 joined first INA, 500 from 2/9 GR.
[447] Gould, *Imperial warriors*, p.270.

CSDIC(I) investigated those who joined the INA rather than those who resisted, but other sources can provide insights. The research of the anthropologist Mary Des Chene on the Gurkhas (who is also referenced by Gould on occasion) is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, but it contains an interesting oral history explanation of why one ordinary Gurkha, who was badly treated by the Japanese, resisted them:

> They didn't hate us. We are much like them you know. We look alike, our cheeks and eyes and faces. They saw us as brothers. They understood that we fought for the British because we are very poor and what else could we do. That is the only service available to us. They understood this. They told me I shouldn't serve the British, that they only made us poor, and that they (the Japanese) would make Nepal rich. This might have been true, they are like us and feel like brothers. They are Buddhists too. But if I went with them where would my pension come from? Would they give me a pension? And then what would my family eat? So I had to stay, and they had to keep me like that because soldiers do what they're told. They didn't like it either, but that's how it was.[448]

It is impossible to know how representative such sentiments were among the thousands of Gurkha prisoners, but it does highlight that the British Regimental histories only give a partial view at best, and can provide no explanation as to why the resistance on the day of the shooting was led by the Head Bhisti of the battalion, rather than the Gurkha officers. Nonetheless, such histories have shaped the post-war memory of Gurkha prisoners, and it is argued here that in terms of the scheme outlined in the Introductory Chapter, they represent an example of selection being used to construct a version of events. The effect is to celebrate desirable exemplar behaviour while constructing a version of events conducive to regimental tradition. The dominance of such accounts reflects the effectiveness of such an approach.

[448] M.K. Des Chene, 'Relics of Empire: A Cultural History of the Gurkhas 1815-1987' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stanford University, 1991), p.328.

The Hanoi group

The next case study involves a group of three hundred Indian prisoners who were sent to Hanoi from Singapore in early April 1942, although in contrast to the Gurkha prisoners described above, a CSDIC(I) report is the only source of information on this group. Most of the men were from a Pioneer unit with others from the Indian Army Ordnance Corps (IAOC) and other units.[449] It was commanded by Lieutenant S.G. Chaphekar of the Pioneer unit with Captain K.L. Bannerjee as the Medical Officer, while six VCOs volunteered to escape from the 'most insanitary' conditions in their camp at Bidadari.[450] On 4 April 1942 they embarked on the *SS Nishi Maru* at Singapore, sharing the voyage with eleven hundred British prisoners (mostly Royal Artillery) who at first seem to have assumed that they were volunteers for the INA, although Lieutenant Chaphekar 'cleared their doubts'. They found the ship small and the arrangements primitive, while at night the hatches were closed and the 'temperature rose almost to suffocation point'. However, unlike many later voyages endured by Indian prisoners this one was relatively short, and on 11 April 1942 they arrived in Saigon, where they were kept with around one hundred British prisoners until they could all be sent by train to Hanoi. In a rare exception to the general Japanese policy of keeping Indian and British prisoners separate, the two Indian and three British officers in the group 'were allowed to live and mess together'.[451] This arrangement continued when they finally arrived in Hanoi at the end of May 1942, although the Japanese required their men to live in two separate camps at Gia Lam airfield where they were based.[452] The work involved repairing runways and other facilities for eight to nine hours per day, although they had Sundays off, and were paid regular wages. At first the Indian prisoners worked separately from the local 'Annamite

[449] AAS, Mss Eur F275/9, p.336. Including: 224 Pioneers, 50 IAOC, plus others.
[450] Ibid., p.335.
[451] Ibid., p.336.
[452] Ibid., p.337. (In 1973, at the end of the later Vietnam conflict, Gia Lam airfield would be from where American prisoners were repatriated).

Coolies', but they were soon supervising them due to Japanese staff shortages, while 'occasionally dummy rifles were given to practice arms drill'.[453] In November 1942 the British prisoners were sent back to Saigon, bringing to an end one of the few instances where Indian and British prisoners were stationed together, while in December the Indian prisoners were redesignated by the Japanese as a 'Special Labour Group' (*Takashi Romu Tai*), and told that they had to mount their own guard. Despite later claiming to CSDIC(I) that they protested at this, they started guard duties using dummy rifles, and additionally, six of the men began guarding a Japanese ammunition dump.[454]

In April 1943, forty men were transferred to work for a Japanese civilian airline named Nampokoko. Their duties included loading and unloading stores from planes, while 'a few of them were made to sleep in the Nampokoko stores to guard against pilfering'. A number of these men could eventually 'speak good colloquial Japanese'.[455] It is worth noting that the Nampokoko company (the name means 'Southern airfields') fulfilled Japanese military contracts across multiple locations in Southeast Asia including Singapore and Penang, utilising Indian prisoners as guards. Another CSDIC(I) report describes how Indian prisoners 'and members of the INA who were not Nampokoko guards paint beautiful pictures of the life these guards led', although the precise working conditions of the guards in Hanoi is unclear.[456] It was not until 1944 that any serious attempt was made to obtain volunteers for the INA from among the Indian prisoners in Hanoi. Lieutenant Chaphekar stated that he had resisted the propaganda, which came in the form of leaflets and films, and ultimately only sixteen volunteered, although only ten left the group. However, CSDIC(I)

[453] Ibid.
[454] Ibid., p.339.
[455] Ibid., p.340.
[456] Ibid., p.259. (From separate report on Nampokoko guards in Singapore and Penang).

concluded that the lack of a sustained attempt to get the men to volunteer by the Japanese was due to them being more useful to them where they were.[457] They were finally liberated by American parachutists on 27 August 1945.[458]

One of the most striking aspects of the experience of the Hanoi prisoners is the high standard of medical care given to them by the Japanese. This included major surgical cases being sent to military hospital, with seven cases of appendicitis and other operations successfully treated. An American medical report noted that following their time as prisoners the men were in good condition, stating that 'there have been 3 deaths in that period, none of which can be assigned to disease developing during captivity'.[459] Other aspects of their time as prisoners were more typical, for example they had had no contact with the International Red Cross, nor any mail from home.[460] Another constant theme was what CSDIC(I) described as 'the usual beating of [Indian] PW by the Japanese', one example involving Lieutenant Chaphekar and others being beaten in April 1945 for refusing to mount an armed guard on a Japanese petrol dump.[461] CSDIC(I)'s final assessment was that two hundred and eighty of the men had never had any connection with the INA.[462] But it is also clear that some of these men had at times cooperated closely with the Japanese, and as their American liberators noted, the result was that they were treated much better than French prisoners in the area or the local civilian population.[463] In particular, it is worth noting that while their food supply remained adequate, they were based in an area that experienced one of the worst famines of

[457] Ibid., p.350.
[458] Ibid., p.349.
[459] Ibid., p.344.
[460] Ibid., p.349.
[461] Ibid., p.350, p.343.
[462] Ibid., p.350.
[463] Ibid.

the war, with an estimated two million deaths among the civilian population in late 1944 and early 1945.[464]

Anti-Aircraft gunners

If the Hanoi group cooperated with the Japanese on occasion, the next case study examines Indian personnel who fought alongside Japanese forces: Anti-Aircraft (AA) gunners. One of the last CSDIC(I) reports addresses these men, providing details of six parties of Indian AA gunners who served in areas including the Southwest Pacific, Sumatra, and the Andaman Islands (see Map 1).[465] These men were not part of the INA, but were instead incorporated within Japanese forces under Japanese officers, and were therefore unconnected to another five units of AA gunners raised separately by the INA and deployed to Burma and Thailand from 1943 to 1945. CSDIC(I) discovered that the men had, as a minimum, been involved in 'fighting against Allied forces in the Philippines and Solomon Islands'. It noted that when the men were interrogated, 'they related carefully prefabricated and mutually concocted stories', although two VCOs eventually provided details.[466] Figure IX shows Indian AA gunners pictured in the Japanese weekly pictorial magazine *Shashin Shuho* from August 1942.

While a large party of two hundred men was sent with their AA guns to the Andaman Islands, it was three smaller parties sent to the Southwest Pacific that drew particular attention from CSDIC(I) because of their combat role against American forces in 1942, although the Indian personnel were reluctant to admit what had occurred. One parties' explanation of their involvement in one engagement against American aircraft on

[464] Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, p.250.
[465] NAI, INA, 379, part.7, p.1. (52 pages, 5 June 1946).
[466] Ibid.

Bougainville in the Solomon Islands in September 1942, was dismissed by CSDIC(I) with the comment that 'the statement that a Japanese officer supported the party with the argument that they were not bound to open fire against the Allied planes is wholly incredible'.[467] Another party of Indian AA gunners was deployed to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands in September 1942, accompanying Japanese reinforcements to the ongoing battle there. The day following their landing the beach area was attacked, and 'Havildar Sher Dil's party manned their guns against the Allied aircraft and fired over 3 boxes of ammunition'. As CSDIC(I) noted: 'No pressure was brought on the party by the Japanese and they simply fired under orders of Havildar Sher Dil'.[468] Following the ultimate Japanese defeat the men lost their AA guns, and were evacuated when Japanese forces withdrew. CSDIC(I) summarised the history of the AA gunners sent to this area as follows: they 'moved down to Guadalcanal in the first wave of the Japanese landing forces, and took part in the historical battle of Guadalcanal which both American and Japanese authorities have since classified as the turning point in the Pacific war'. During this period 'they were all engaged in action trying to shoot down American aircraft', although despite this most of the men were assigned a CSDIC(I) security classification of Grey.[469] A remarkably lenient classification considering what they had been involved with.

The CSDIC(I) report details the experiences of other AA parties as well. A party of 150 men was dispatched to Burma in April 1943, but their ship was torpedoed, their guns lost, and their casualties included some with burns.[470] Thereafter they were employed as fatigue labour on Sumatra, although CSDIC(I) noted that: 'It does not appear that any attempt was

[467] Ibid., p.25.
[468] Ibid., p.32.
[469] Ibid., p.49.
[470] Ibid., p.35.

made to recruit the men of this party into the INA, presumably because the party "belonged" to a Japanese regiment and were regarded as being outside the purview of the INA'.[471] Another group was a party of 35 men sent to Sumatra, where they were allotted the defence of Medan airfield, manning their guns until the end of the war. Despite the death of two of the men at the hands of the Japanese, CSDIC(I)'s assessment was that 'it appears clear that from March 1942 onwards the men of [this] party remained active collaborators and would-be co-belligerents of the Japanese', although again, they were classified as Grey.[472]

The motives of the men in Sumatra and those of the other parties remain unclear. Their coordinated obscuration clearly posed difficulties for CSDIC(I), and its report offers no insights into why they acted as they did. CSDIC(I) acknowledged that their information on these men was incomplete, while mentions of locations such as the Philippines without any substantive information being provided suggests that there was much they did not know. Although the numbers of men involved is small compared to the many thousands who served in the INA (the report concerns just under five hundred men), the surprising fact that Indian AA gunners fought as part of Japanese forces in key engagements such as Guadalcanal emphasises how much there is still to learn about the "forgotten men".

Medical services in Singapore

The next case study looks at another aspect of Indian prisoner experience which has received little or no attention: the provision of medical services. However, a report written for CSDIC(I) by a senior Indian medical officer offers an insight into how medical services were provided to Indian prisoners in Singapore until the end of the war.[473] An under-

[471] Ibid., p.50.
[472] Ibid., p.52.
[473] NAI, INA, 379, part.2, CSDIC(I) Report No.10, 8 March 1946, by Lieutenant Colonel G.D. Malhotra.

appreciated aspect of the British surrender at Singapore on 15 February 1942 is the sheer number of Indian personnel from the Indian Medical Service (IMS) who became prisoners. CSDIC(I) listed one hundred and eighty officers of the IMS as having been captured, the majority holding the rank of captain.[474] At the time of the surrender there were six 'Indian General Hospital' (IGH) units present in Singapore, although not all were fully operational (for example, most of 12 IGH had been burnt down on 12 February 1942).[475] The Indian commissioned officers who ran the IGH and other medical units were supported by a large number of medical VCOs and other ranks (likely to have been several thousand), although the precise number taken prisoner is unclear.

Major medical units such as an IGH, were commanded by a lieutenant colonel, and seven of these appear in the CSDIC(I) list of officers.[476] Of these, three would join the Indian independence movement and later went on to hold senior roles in the Provisional Government of India established by Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943, including Lieutenant Colonel A.C. Chatterjee who was appointed as 'Foreign Minister Designate'.[477] The other officers continued to work in a medical capacity, with Lieutenant Colonel G.D. Malhotra acting as the senior Indian Medical Officer in Singapore, where he faced many challenges during the years of captivity including the care of many disabled battle casualties, and it was he who wrote the report for CSDIC(I) that provides much of the detail that follows.[478]

Immediately following the surrender of Singapore the issues included looting by Japanese troops, although when a large number of blankets were taken from 27 IGH (situated next to

[474] AAS, Mss Eur F275/9, p.282.
[475] NAI, INA, 379, part.2, p.160. Numbers: 12, 17, 19, 20, 27, 40.
[476] AAS, Mss Eur F275/9, p.282. Surnames: Loganadan, Alagappan, Chatterjee, Malhotra, Chadhuri, Chowla, Dutta.
[477] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.12.
[478] NAI, INA, 379, part.2, p.160. For example, at the surrender 27 IGH contained 852 battle casualties.

Raffles Hotel), Major Fujiwara's F. Kikan organisation was able to intervene to help.[479] But soon the various Indian medical units were amalgamated onto three sites on Singapore island (which by 1944 were caring together for around three thousand patients at any one time), and the report details some of the key events in the years that followed.[480] It is clear that being based in Singapore was a significant advantage that helped with challenges such as accessing medical supplies. In January 1943 for example, they received a delivery of fifteen lorry loads of medicines and dressings which Malhotra believed came from a combination of a donation by the INA, and also some Red Cross supplies. Much later, in May 1945, they would receive a further consignment of medical supplies from the Red Cross, after their ship the *Eva Maiu* was able to call at Singapore.[481] The Japanese also gave small quantities of drugs to the hospitals, although this did not prevent the shortage of drugs becoming acute from the end of 1943 onwards, 'when the accumulated stocks had exhausted', despite efforts to find substitute drugs locally.[482] It is interesting to note, that a story repeated by several prominent INA personnel that the British had moved medical drugs from Indian hospitals to British ones in the immediate aftermath of the surrender is explicitly refuted by Malhotra, and he even suggests that some drugs and equipment were removed in March 1942 by Captain Patnaik IMS (of the INA) from British stores in Changi.[483]

As well as acute shortages of medicine at times, another major issue was the provision of food for the patients. The Japanese provided rations for the patients on the same scale as other Indian prisoners, with no extra rations to help with recovery, although the Indian Independence League (IIL) did help when it could. At first, extra food was bought with the

[479] Ibid., p.161.
[480] Ibid., p.164.
[481] Ibid., p.162.
[482] Ibid., p.169.
[483] Ibid., p.168. For example, see allegation by Doctor Lakshmi Swaminathan (first commander of the INA's women's Rani of Jhansi Regiment): NAI, INA, 244, p.8.

pay the men received because 'until April 1944, the Japanese authorities continued to pay all men the same rate whether in Hospital or doing fatigue in camps', but after the payments ceased the food situation became acute.[484] With rations deteriorating, an outbreak of Beriberi occurred from July 1944 until the end of the year, only being brought under control when, after repeated requests, the Japanese 'issued Soya Beans in October which helped considerably'.[485] Malhotra also reached an agreement with senior British officers at Changi in 1944 that allowed him to take out loans in order to purchase food.[486]

The difficulties were exacerbated during 1944 by the Japanese deciding to reduce the number of Indian military hospitals from three to two. Malhotra commanded the largest, with a total of four thousand five hundred patients and staff under his command, while the other had two thousand five hundred patients and staff. It was soon apparent that the reorganisation had been a mistake, with the second hospital becoming grossly overcrowded, and the Japanese ultimately re-opened the third hospital.[487] A previous Japanese policy had also caused problems. In order to supplement the patients' diet two duck farms had been established in late 1942, and through most of 1943 these produced a steady supply of eggs to augment the meagre diet of the patients. However, ducks were also widely kept by the civilian population, and unfortunately in October 1943 the Japanese authorities announced that all ducks would have to be sold by their owners to the Japanese for a token price. The predictable result was the mass slaughter and consumption of privately-owned ducks, resulting in the loss of the eggs as an important supplementary food source for the Indian patients, an outcome viewed as a major set back by Malhotra.[488] Another constant feature

[484] Ibid.
[485] Ibid., p.164. Note: Beriberi is caused by deficiency in Vitamin B.
[486] Ibid., p.165.
[487] Ibid., p.164. Second hospital commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Chaudhry.
[488] Ibid., p.165.

was the poor treatment of his Indian medical staff by the Japanese, as he put it, 'no concession was made to them by the Japanese authorities in any shape or form and they have suffered both mental and physical torture'.[489]

Despite the difficulties, Malhotra and his staff were remarkably successful in providing care to the many thousands of Indian prisoners in Singapore and Malaya, who fell ill during their captivity. Particularly notable is the survival of over five hundred permanent invalids to the end of the war, most of whom were battle casualties from the Malayan campaign. Being based in Singapore was clearly a significant advantage, with better access to food and other supplies, and none of the dangers faced by those sent to war zones such as the Southwest Pacific area. Malhotra was also one of the few Indian officers who had contact with representatives of the International Red Cross, although Japanese obstructionism limited the benefits.[490] For example, such obstructionism was probably why a plan to medically evacuate six hundred permanent invalids to India did not proceed.[491] In conclusion, the work of Malhotra and his staff saved the lives of many Indian prisoners, but although he was subsequently awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in recognition, it is clear that his contribution and that of his staff has been largely forgotten.[492]

These case studies only provide a small sample of the experiences that Indian prisoners had, although they were selected to provide an indication of the diversity to be found in CSDIC(I) sources and elsewhere. The Viceroy's statement examined earlier suggested a simple dichotomy among the prisoners between those who joined the INA and those who did not,

[489] Ibid., p.167.
[490] Ibid., p.166. International Red Cross representative was Mr M. Schweizer.
[491] Ibid., p.163. Including 450 battle casualties.
[492] Ibid., p.160.

but as several of these case studies have shown (as do other examples throughout this thesis), this was not always the case. In practice, cooperation with the Japanese lay on a spectrum, ranging from absolute refusal, to being willing to fight alongside them, whether under the banner of Indian nationalism or not.

The worst place of all: New Guinea and the Southwest Pacific

While Indian prisoners were deployed by the Japanese across the breadth of East and Southeast Asia, one area stands out in the sources as the epitome of suffering: the Southwest Pacific area, and in particular New Guinea (see Map 1). This was an extensive geographical area, with the direct distance from Singapore to Rabaul in New Britain further East being five thousand four hundred kilometres. However, in practice the distances sailed by the Japanese transport ships that carried the Indian prisoners were much longer, as they typically visited multiple ports *en route*, including for example, Batavia (modern Jakarta) and Palau. CSDIC(I) was able to identify twenty-five parties of prisoners who had been sent by transport ship to this area, the largest consisting of one thousand men, although many were around half that (in addition, there were two parties of AA gunners discussed in the last section).[493] In most cases these parties are identified as consisting of either former INA personnel (termed 'ex-volunteers'), those who had volunteered but had not served ('surplus volunteers'), and those who were never involved with the INA ('non-volunteers'), with no apparent mixing of the different categories within groups.[494] The fact that membership of a

[493] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. CSDIC(I) assigned each party a serial number.
[494] Additional details can include: Indian officer names; destination; dates; numbers of men; original Indian Army units; casualties.

particular party acted as an indicator of the degree to which an individual Indian prisoner was involved with the INA, will have important implications later in the thesis.

CSDIC(I) estimated that about 15,000 Indian prisoners were sent to the Southwest Pacific, including around 4,000 'ex-volunteers' who had served in the first INA but refused to serve in the second, and another 4,000 'surplus volunteers' who had signed INA volunteer forms, but not served in it. The remainder were 'non-volunteers', with many of these from Indian State Force units, such as the Mysore and Hyderabad Infantry.[495] However, in practice, the Indian prisoners sent to the Southwest Pacific were drawn from virtually every Indian military unit captured by the Japanese. One group that left Singapore at the beginning of May 1943, consisted of 520 'non-volunteers' commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ishaq of the 1st Hyderabad Infantry (see Figure VII).[496] Their journey to Rabaul (New Britain) via Palau, and subsequent experiences, are documented in several post-war war-crimes trials of Japanese personnel (see also Chapter Four), and their experiences are representative of many sent to this area.

The 1st Hyderabad Infantry was one of five Indian State Forces battalions posted to Malaya and Singapore to protect British airfields prior to the Japanese invasion. Following the surrender of Singapore, these battalions proved to be relatively resistant to INA recruitment efforts, with the Hyderabad Infantry refusing to join *in toto*.[497] Details of their transportation to Rabaul are given in a statement provided by an Indian officer named Captain Charmarette.[498] Labelling the transport ship, the *Hibi Maru*, as a 'Hell Hole', he describes

[495] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, p.2.
[496] Ibid., Serial No.9.
[497] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.13. Another example was the Jind Infantry. The notable exception was the Kapurthala Infantry which joined the first INA *en masse*.
[498] National Archives Australia (hereafter NAA), R138, *Ogata*, p.35., Exhibit 'B'.

how the journey took almost two months and involved: 'men all herded together in one hold, - starvation – no sleep – drinking salt water – dead bodies lying amongst us for more than 24 hours'. The result was that on arrival they had eighty stretcher cases ('50 dysentery and 30 beriberi'), but soon had many more, with 'new cases coming in daily […] the after effects and reaction to our trip'. The dysentery cases included Captain Adams the Medical Officer who died in New Britain on 25 July 1943.[499] A similar pattern, of a spike in deaths during and after transportation to the Southwest Pacific, can also be seen with other groups.[500]

While the transportation of this group was a traumatic experience, they still faced another two years of captivity in New Britain. The trial proceedings of a Japanese Medical Orderly named Corporal Ogata, who was accused of cruelty towards them, provides insights into the conditions they endured. Lieutenant Colonel Ishaq made numerous allegations against Corporal Ogata, including the selling of medicine meant for the prisoners, and described how he would 'press ulcers and abscesses with an old tooth brush […] and then show visible signs of pleasure when victims would cry in pains'.[501] Another statement, by a Subedar Major Ramarau, described how Ogata 'used a knife very extensively, hacking and cutting pus and flesh out of large ulcerated sores. No anaesthetic was ever used'.[502] One of the victims was *jawan* Puran Singh, who after developing sores on two toes of his left foot, was repeatedly treated and left with bone exposed in his foot. Unsurprisingly, he 'suffered great pain from this'.[503] Ogata was convicted at his trial in June 1946 and sentenced to death, although this was commuted to twenty years imprisonment.[504] The trial proceedings contain

[499] Ibid. Note that John Baptist Crasta was almost certainly on the same ship in a different group, see: Crasta, *Eaten by the Japanese*, pp.35-39.
[500] For example, see Chapter Four, *Gozawa* trial.
[501] NAA, R138, *Ogata*, p.29., Exhibit 'A'.
[502] Ibid., p.37., Exhibit 'C'. Ramarau was not a member of 1st Hyderabad but was attached to the group.
[503] Ibid., p.39., Exhibit 'E'.
[504] Ibid., p.4.

many other details of the conditions the Indian prisoners endured, with Ishaq cataloging a wide range of Japanese cruelty, including: the torture and execution of prisoners for allegedly stealing food; testing to see whether collapsed prisoners were really unconscious by burning them with cigarettes; and beating to death a fifty-five year old *jawan* who had collapsed from fatigue.[505] Ultimately 200 of 520 prisoners in the group died, a death rate of thirty-eight percent, much higher than the average for Indian prisoners as a whole.[506] Figure II illustrates the condition that these men were in when finally liberated in September 1945. However, even the privations experienced by these men were eclipsed by what happened to prisoners sent to New Guinea.

Before reviewing events in New Guinea, it should be noted that on occasion it involved situations that transgress beyond what could be considered regular prisoner experience. Some events mentioned below, such as the massacre of Indian prisoners at the settlement of But in June 1944, seem comprehensible within the standard expectations of what being a prisoner of the Japanese involved. However, it is with reports suggesting that Indian prisoners became the victims of anthropophagy at the hands of the Japanese, that such familiar frameworks are stretched and challenged. An appropriate response is a critical and close reading of the sources, because reports of anthropophagy, often sensationalist in tone, have become one of the few ways in which Indian prisoners have been remembered in the post-war period. To evaluate such reports, the context of events involving Indian prisoners in New Guinea needs to be understood.

[505] Ibid., pp.29-33., Exhibit 'A'.
[506] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. Serial No.9.

An account by Drea provides an overview of the campaign in New Guinea from a Japanese perspective. Focussing on the Japanese commander General Adachi, he outlines the desperate fighting against American and Australian forces, and the conditions that 'transformed New Guinea into one of the major battlegrounds of World War II and one of the great killing grounds of Japanese'.[507] Tanaka summarises the outcome thus: 'A total of 157,646 Japanese troops were sent to Eastern New Guinea; only 10,072 survived to the end of the war, a mortality rate of ninety-four percent. The majority of these deaths were from starvation and tropical disease'.[508] The impact on the Indian prisoner groups sent to new Guinea was equally catastrophic. As CSDIC(I) puts it: 'Of 3000 Indians known to be in the Wewak area, only 186 were recovered alive', representing an estimated death rate of ninety-four percent.[509] The Indian prisoners therefore suffered a death rate identical to the Japanese forces they were with, an important factor being the lack of food. One former Indian prisoner described how food was plentiful when they first arrived, but after August 1943 progressively decreased to the point where, from June 1944, they 'were dependent on what they could forage in the jungle'.[510] It is worth noting that the Indian prisoners in this area included a large proportion of former INA personnel. The CSDIC(I) list of prisoner groups shows that of four groups shipped directly to Wewak on the North coast of New Guinea in May 1943, all consisted of former INA personnel.[511] The number of Indian prisoners in this area was later augmented by transfers, although these also included some former INA personnel, including some commanded by a Captain Pirzai.[512]

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[507] Edward Drea, *In the service of the Emperor: essays on the Imperial Japanese Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), p.103.
[508] Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, p.144.
[509] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, p.3.
[510] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 3, p.9.
[511] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. Groups: No.15 (560 men), No.16 (520 men), No.17 (565 men), No.22 (545 men). All departed Singapore on 5 May 1943.
[512] Ibid., Group No.18 (609 men to Palau, of which 314 later sent to Wewak).

After his recovery by Australian forces in May 1945, Captain Pirzai of the 1st Bahawalpur State Infantry, would become an important source of information for CSDIC(I), as he was the most senior surviving Indian officer of those sent to Wewak.[513] About a quarter of the Bahawalpur Infantry had joined the first INA, including its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Gilani (mentioned in Chapter One), but unlike Gilani, Pirzai had refused to serve in the second INA.[514] CSDIC(I) was confident Pirzai had been a member of the INA because, among other information, he had been observed wearing INA uniform by the Singapore Medical Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Malhotra.[515] Pirzai's group travelled first from Singapore to Palau in May 1943, but then he and 314 men were sent to Wewak in July.[516] What followed was a litany of neglect, abuse, and exploitation by the Japanese, that became ever more extreme as their own circumstances became ever more desperate.

There are two CSDIC(I) reports available for Captain Pirzai, the first, written in Australia in July 1945, and the second, written at the Red Fort in Delhi in February 1946.[517] It is worth noting that there is no hint of Pirzai's membership of the first INA in the Australian report, with the first year of his captivity summarised as: 'source was located in various P.W. Camps in Singapore until the end of Apr. '43'.[518] The Australian report charts the inexorable decline of his party of 305 prisoners who arrived at Wewak in July 1943. By May 1944, the 268 men still alive were acting 'as porters to the Japanese front-line troops at Aitape', (West of Wewak). By the middle of 1944 the group was dispersed at various locations, and in October 1944, Pirzai and forty-five other prisoners were forced to march from Wewak inland towards Maprik, to avoid advancing Allied forces. However, Pirzai and five others managed to break

[513] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.73.
[514] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.13.
[515] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.61.
[516] Ibid., p.65.
[517] See: AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 3, p.2.; AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.59.
[518] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 3, p.2.

away and return to their previous camp at Wewak – events during this journey will be returned to shortly. Having attached themselves to another Japanese unit, it was in May 1945 that Pirzai and two others were able to escape and join about seventy other Indian prisoners from various groups hiding in the jungle, from where they eventually contacted advancing Australian forces.[519] The final CSDIC(I) tally of the number who survived from the original group of 305 was thirty-four.[520]

While the suffering of the Indian prisoners was intense, Pirzai also witnessed the decline of the Japanese forces. One example of this was that 'a large number of their troops […] deserted' during the withdrawal inland from Wewak in October 1944, and he had heard from other Indian prisoners 'that the Japanese were shooting these deserters'.[521] They were certainly suffering high levels of casualties during combat operations, with Pirzai speaking to one Japanese soldier 'who had lived in Hawaii and had been a tourist guide at the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo before the war', who described how out of 3,000 men of his unit, only 340 remained, with most losses 'due to starvation and sickness'.[522] But there was one aspect of Pirzai's account of the Japanese that would find a much wider audience than his CSDIC(I) interrogators: anthropophagy. It was on 24 August 1945, in Brisbane, Australia, that he was interviewed by newspaper reporters along with two other former Indian prisoners. The next day, among several Australian newspapers to publish accounts, the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* published a detailed article entitled 'Jap Cannibalism: Horrifying Wewak Story', quoting Pirzai as he described the background to events: 'The Japs attempted to form a puppet army in Singapore […] We all refused, and were packed on typical hell ships bound

[519] Ibid.
[520] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. Serial No.18.
[521] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 3, p.4.
[522] Ibid., p.5.

for Wewak'. He then gave graphic details of how nineteen Indian prisoners became victims of anthropophagy at the hands of the Japanese over a period of four months, all of it orchestrated by a named Japanese Army Doctor, a practice that continued even after 'some of the Japs who were a little squeamish' reported his actions to a senior officer.[523] Newspaper reports originating from this event continue to be referenced, including in a *Times of India* article from 2014.[524]

However, there are aspects of Pirzai's account as quoted in the *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, that are problematic. For example, he suggests that he did not join the INA, although it is clear from his second CSDIC(I) report that he did. This form of obscuration is similar to the case of Lieutenant Nigam, discussed in Chapter One. But there is a more serious issue: as his Australian CSDIC(I) report makes clear (dated a month before the news conference), he had not personally witnessed anthropophagy, despite apparently describing it in the first person. Instead, he had been told about it by another Indian officer, a Captain Ajgaonkar, who had subsequently died. In addition, the only named alleged victim in the CSDIC(I) report was a Japanese private, although the report states that 'many Indian [prisoners] had also disappeared in this area', and that Pirzai had been 'given incontrovertible evidence that they were victims' of anthropophagy, although the nature of the evidence is not stated.[525] Probably the best known Indian accusation of Japanese anthropophagy is that of John Baptist Crasta, but again, it is not a first-hand account.[526]

[523] 'Jap Cannibalism. Horrifying Wewak Story', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 25 August 1945, p.1.
[524] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.323.n.133.; Manimugdha Sharma, 'Japanese ate Indian PoWs, used them as live targets in WWII', *Times of India*, 11 August 2014.
[525] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 3, p.3.
[526] Crasta, *Eaten by the Japanese*, pp.75-76.

This pattern, where the evidence presented for anthropophagy often takes the form of second-hand accounts has been noticed before, including by Arens in *The Man-Eating Myth*, while as Fitzpatrick highlighted, Arens also warned against the 'propensity towards myth-making about enemies', a factor which suggests caution is required when approaching a subject as emotive as anthropophagy.[527] Nonetheless, the prevalence of reports of anthropophagy in the post-war memory of Indian prisoners of the Japanese, as well as some sources (including Japanese) suggesting that anthropophagy did occur in New Guinea and elsewhere, drive the need to investigate the topic. The question therefore arises, are there any first-hand accounts of anthropophagy available from former Indian prisoners?

The answer is yes, and one of those is another account given by Captain Pirzai in his later CSDIC(I) report. As was mentioned previously, in October 1944 Pirzai and five other Indian prisoners had managed to break away from Japanese forces withdrawing into the interior of New Guinea, and return towards their previous camp at Wewak, with the aim of obtaining food. During the journey, they met a Japanese corporal named Fujino from the same group as them, who had straggled due to illness. He knew they had escaped, 'but was too ill to worry', and was pleased by the assistance given to him. This was not necessarily an entirely altruistic act by the Indian prisoners, as they would have needed a cover story to explain their return to Wewak. The account continues:

> One night the party stopped and accommodated themselves in three deserted huts. There were three persons in each of the two huts (this included Cpl Fujino) and as [named *jawan*] was the odd man, he slept in the third hut. […]. [Captain Pirzai] and [*jawan*] Feroze's attention was attracted by a dim light outside the hut of [named *jawan*]. On approaching the hut they saw two Japanese carving the flesh of [named *jawan*]. When the Japanese heard [Captain Pirzai] and [*jawan*] Feroze approaching, they extinguished the light and disappeared. Next

[527] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.299.

> morning [Captain Pirzai] and the others of his party found part of the body of [named *jawan*].[528]

Researching the experiences of Indian prisoners of the Japanese has provided many examples of cruelty and abuse, but few can match the murder of this *jawan* for its sheer visceral horror. The group subsequently continued towards Wewak, although before they reached it Fujino died. On arrival, they were arrested for desertion, but were saved from the consequences by Pirzai being able to show a nominal roll taken from Fujino, which matched their prisoner identity discs.[529] This account has not previously appeared in the secondary literature, but another first-hand account has been repeatedly referenced: that of Lance Naik (Corporal) Hatam Ali.[530]

The account is contained within a war-crimes investigation file, that begins with the sending of a questionnaire to him in July 1946 by Australian war-crimes investigators, asking for further information about his allegations. By this point he was back at his Regimental Centre (of the Bengal Sappers & Miners) at Roorkee in India. The statement he returned alleges anthropophagy on a large scale, with one hundred Indian prisoners becoming victims (although none were named), as well as the disturbing claim that flesh was removed from living victims. Despite the length of the statement that was returned, and the details within it, the war-crimes investigators struggled to make headway.[531] One aspect of this was the difficulty they experienced in identifying the Japanese unit involved. It is apparent that the Australian investigators did not have access to the information compiled by CSDIC(I) on Indian prisoners sent to the Southwest Pacific. Details in the statement, including Japanese

[528] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, pp.67-68. Note: names of victims and some witnesses have been redacted in extracts relating to anthropophagy.
[529] Ibid., p.68.
[530] Including: Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, p.134.; Douds, 'The men who never were', p.206.
[531] AWM, 54, 1010/9/94.

unit number, commanders name, and location, match one of the groups identified by CSDIC(I) as having been deployed to New Guinea.[532] The Indian medical officer of this group, a Captain Das, had been recovered in 1944 and was interrogated by CSDIC(I) in both Australia and Delhi. In neither of these reports is anthropophagy mentioned, although he was recovered by American forces in May 1944, which is earlier than the events that Lance Naik Hatam Ali described.[533] This episode illustrates an important point: that information about Indian prisoners compiled by CSDIC(I) was unavailable more broadly, even to Australian war-crimes investigators.

Tanaka includes an extensive extract from Lance Naik Hatam Ali's statement in his book *Hidden Horrors*, which includes the core allegations about anthropophagy, but as he states: 'Investigators located no other witnesses to corroborate his story'.[534] The investigators were particularly keen to identify a Gurkha mentioned in the statement at key moments, whom Hatam Ali had apparently met again while recovering in hospital in Bangalore in India, but he could not remember his name.[535] In the event the investigation failed to progress, and no further action was taken. The statement remains an outlier in terms of both the scale and nature of allegations of anthropophagy that it makes, the truth of which will remain impossible to ascertain.

Whatever the veracity of Hatam Ali's statement, the occurrence of anthropophagy perpetrated by the Japanese in both New Guinea and elsewhere is now broadly accepted in the secondary literature. Of particular importance is the work of Tanaka, who has drawn on

[532] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. Serial No.8. (report dated 30 April 1946).
[533] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 1, p.145.; AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.73.
[534] Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, p.134.
[535] AWM, 54, 1010/9/94, p.18.

Japanese sources that place the Indian victims in a broader context. According to Tanaka many of the victims were actually Japanese, but they also included the local indigenous population and Australian military personnel, behaviour Tanaka ascribes to a combination of 'starvation and group psychosis'.[536] Corroborating accounts include those of former Japanese colonial troops from Formosa (modern Taiwan), highly regarded by their Japanese officers, but who also engaged in anthropophagy.[537] As Fitzpatrick has pointed out, there were attempts by the Japanese military in New Guinea to control and regulate the practice, including the execution of thirty Japanese soldiers for having committed anthropophagy, although Fitzpatrick believed that such executions 'related only to Japanese bodies'.[538] However, there is a first-hand account from an Indian medical subedar that suggests that this was not always the case.

Subedar Gurcharan Singh had arrived at Wewak in New Guinea in May 1943, and by April 1944 had been moved to Boiken, along the coast.[539] By late 1944 this area harboured many Japanese deserters who 'were armed and harassed abandoned sick' Indian prisoners, but also harboured some escaped Indian prisoners who were 'free to wander' and who 'were successful in killing Japanese and capturing their rifles and in replenishing supplies of food from enemy stocks'.[540] It was within this increasingly chaotic context, that on 1 April 1945 an episode of anthropophagy occurred:

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[536] Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, pp.123-148.
[537] Chih-huei Huang, 'The *Yamatodamashi* of the Takasago volunteers of Taiwan: A reading of the postcolonial situation', in *Globalizing Japan : Ethnography of the Japanese presence in Asia, Europe, and America*, ed. by Harumi Befu and Sylvie Guichard-Anguis (London: Routledge, 2001), 222-250., p.233. This material supports Tanaka's emphasis on group dynamics in explaining anthropophagy committed by Japanese forces.
[538] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.306.
[539] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 3, p.8.; Listed as member of Japanese No.19 party, this was: NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. Serial No.22. (Former INA volunteers).
[540] AWM, 54, 423/11/51, Part 3, pp.10-11.

> In Boiken an [unknown] Japanese corporal killed [identified Indian prisoner] and with 6 [unknown] Japanese [other ranks] cooked and started to eat his flesh. On hearing this, Japanese [Medical Officer] [identified], armed with a pistol, enquired who had killed [Indian].
>
> On the [unknown] corporal's admission of guilt, [Japanese officer] asked him if he wished to die by his own hand or whether he [Japanese officer] should shoot him. The corporal, after electing to die by his own hand, washed his hands, put on clean clothes, asked for a glass of water and a cigarette, then kneeling down before a trench, put a rifle to his mouth and fired.
>
> The Japanese officer remarked that he was sorry for the death of the Indian […], but that retribution for his death had now been obtained.[541]

Shocking though the incident is, it confirms that Japanese officers were attempting to control the practice, as well as challenging the expectation that Japanese troops who committed such acts against Indian prisoners were immune from summary Japanese Military justice.

One other aspect of anthropophagy in New Guinea requires comment: the systematic suppression of its memory in the post-war era. As Tanaka has noted, the Australian authorities chose to suppress information relating to Japanese anthropophagy, one reason being the potential traumatic impact of such knowledge on the relatives of known Australian victims.[542] Although there were some newspaper reports, including the newspaper interviews of Captain Pirzai mentioned earlier, as well as multiple post-war war-crimes trials (see Chapter Four), it was only in 1989 that full details of the Australian victims were disclosed.[543] Discussion of Indian victims has typically been very limited with, for example, Douds' article 'The men who never were', quoting a short extract from the Hatam Ali statement (with no caveats attached), although there was always a persistent echo of what had occurred in primary and secondary sources, typically based on second-hand accounts.[544]

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[541] Ibid., p.11.
[542] Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, pp.144-145.
[543] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.323.
[544] See: Douds, 'The men who never were', p.206.; Crasta, *Eaten by the Japanese*, pp.75-76.

It is only recently, with the publication of the work of Tanaka and Fitzpatrick, that things have begun to change. Anthropophagy remains a taboo subject, and examination of it can be disturbing at times, but its Indian prisoner victims in New Guinea should not be forgotten.

The few Indian prisoners who survived being sent to New Guinea often did so because they were able to escape from the Japanese. The experiences of one such prisoner, Havildar Rattan Singh, are particularly notable because he was awarded the Military Medal, a quote from the citation reading: 'the only authenticated record of an Indian P.O.W. recovered from [Southwest Pacific] who has taken extreme measures against the Japanese to facilitate escape', a reference to his killing of two Japanese soldiers.[545] His personal account is a valuable source written by an ordinary Indian soldier. His battalion, the 3rd Dogra, fought in the Malayan campaign, and he was captured at the surrender of Singapore. Subsequently, as he puts it: 'we were subjected to intense INA propaganda. Most of us, however, refused to have anything to do with it and as a result we were eventually ordered overseas'.[546] Arriving in Wewak in May 1943, it is clear from the Indian officers he names (for example Lieutenant Kishen Singh), that despite what the previous quote suggests, he was actually a member of a group of former INA volunteers.[547] In the four months following their arrival in Wewak some sixty men died, mostly due to Malaria and Beriberi. The deaths continued after they moved to Port Booth (which has proved difficult to locate), including five men who were shot after trying to escape. In May 1944, Rattan Singh was part of a smaller group moved a few miles away and was therefore separated from the main group of prisoners when a major massacre occurred.[548]

[545] London Gazette, 1 November 1945.
[546] AAS, Mss Eur C786 Dogra, p.2.
[547] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. Serial No.17.
[548] AAS, Mss Eur C786 Dogra, p.3.

The massacre he describes, from an account by one of the survivors, is most probably the same as that recorded by CSDIC(I) as having occurred at But (on the coast West of Wewak) on 26 June 1944.[549] It was triggered by the arrival offshore of 'American patrol boats' that some of the prisoners attempted to reach. When the boats left the Japanese returned, and then attempted to kill all of the Indian prisoners in the camp, of whom only twelve survived. Those who died included Lieutenant Kishen Singh.[550] CSDIC(I) estimated that the number massacred (from Rattan Singh's original party) was over 250, which would make it the largest massacre of Indian military personnel in World War Two, although the event remains unknown.[551]

While Rattan Singh was lucky to have missed the massacre, by September 1944 the food situation was acute, and the prisoners he was with concocted a plan to escape. As he describes it: 'There were only 13 guards in the camp and they were fond of music. One of our sweepers had a harmonium which he used to play, so we invited all the guards to a concert. Our plan was to murder them all at the concert and then get away'. This approach proved impractical, but later that night sixty-five men managed to slip away, including Rattan Singh in a group of twenty-eight. Walking in the jungle four days later, 'we found a magnificent looking fruit tree, covered with fruit looking like almonds but much bigger', and they ate them. It soon became apparent that the fruit was poisonous, and they 'became very ill'. It was three days before they recovered enough to move on, although they had to leave one behind (the most senior survivor of the massacre at But), as he was still

[549] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. Serial No.17.
[550] AAS, Mss Eur C786 Dogra, p.4.
[551] NAI, INA, 379, part.5, Appendix 'A'. Serial No.17.

unconscious from the poisoning. After twelve more days, and now very weak, they came upon an apparently deserted camp:

> But on looking closer we were suddenly confronted by a Jap Captain and a private soldier, and realised that the remaining Jap soldiers must be out at work. We realised our only chance was to get rid of the two japs before they could call for help, so we caught hold of them and tied their hands and feet. I then beheaded them with a hatchet.[552]

His medal citation makes no mention of the fact that the two Japanese were tied and helpless when they were killed, or that they were beheaded - a reminder that citations do not always provide the full picture. After another two weeks of walking they encountered an American patrol, a total of twenty-five of his group having survived to the end.[553]

Although Rattan Singh survived, the vast majority of Indian prisoners sent to New Guinea did not, and CSDIC(I) was well aware of the level of suffering that the few survivors had experienced. This became a key driver of its policy that all former INA personnel recovered from the Southwest Pacific area were automatically given the security classification of White (implying exoneration of any involvement with the INA), 'in view of the men's subsequent experiences'.[554] Although undoubtedly humane, this policy was also convenient, as it allowed the truth of their previous actions to be obscured, while presenting them as having suffered due to their loyalty to the British. The truth was that many were still committed to the ideals of the INA, and the leadership of Captain Mohan Singh.[555] Of course, many non-volunteers had also been sent to the Southwest Pacific area, and this made it easier to obscure the true past of the former INA personnel. This outcome had immediate

[552] AAS, Mss Eur C786 Dogra, p.5.
[553] Ibid.
[554] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.71.
[555] AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.74.

consequences for the post-war war-crimes trials of Japanese personnel (as discussed in Chapter Four), but also had a long-term impact on the post-war memory of these men. Later historians such as Douds were understandably misled by the security classification, only having seen the vanilla Australian CSDIC(I) reports, and not the later more revealing versions compiled in Delhi (a good example are the two reports written regarding Captain Pirzai referenced above).[556] The post-war memory of these men, remains distorted by the colonial anxieties regarding the loyalty of Indian troops discussed in Chapter One, although they are only one example of the ways in which the British colonial authorities sought to shape post-war perceptions.

Returning to India: an ambiguous homecoming

While the conditions experienced by Indian prisoners were at times horrific, most were not sent to areas such as New Guinea, and as was outlined earlier, four out of five survived captivity. This section explores the circumstances of their return home, before examining the way that those who died were commemorated, using Kranji War Memorial in Singapore as an example.

One view of the challenges faced by returning Indian prisoners is provided by the papers of 2/15 Punjab Regiment.[557] The battalion had been captured by the Japanese in Borneo in 1942, with some of its men subsequently joining the INA, while others suffered severely at the hands of the Japanese, including becoming victims of a massacre (examined in Chapter

[556] Douds, 'The men who never were', p.201.
[557] NAM, 1994/05/42/7B INA.

Four).[558] Amongst the British officers captured was a Major Milligan who, having survived captivity himself, was given the task of rebuilding the battalion at its base in Ambala, North of Delhi. While writing an intelligence report in March 1946, he noted that returning Indian prisoners who had not joined the INA had experienced what he called 'a very indifferent welcome' from the 'civil service authorities' during their three-month leave following their return to India:

> They claim that little enthusiasm was shown over their reception and extremely little help was expended. A marked difference of attitude, they claim, is noticeable in dealings with the ex-INA.
>
> In the villages, the conditions of many homes have deteriorated and in many cases families have been maltreated by their opponents and opportunists have fully availed themselves of the absence of the Sepoy, fighting for his country. Thus the annexing of property, damage to property and the abduction of wives are common causes of complaint.[559]

In a report from April 1946, Milligan describes the tensions between those who stayed loyal to the British, and those who joined the INA:

> Considerable hatred has grown up between these two categories in prison camps, and very naturally so. One can scarcely expect anything but hatred for Volunteers from these loyal POWs who suffered untold hardship, privation, torture and starvation on behalf of their loyalty either at the hands of the Japanese or else direct from the hands of their comrades in the INA […] The INA in their turn looked down upon the POWs for their loyalty, a loyalty which, to genuine INAs filled with a spirit of nationalism, amounted to nothing more than a failure to stand up for their country.[560]

The wearing of INA badges by released members of that force was a source of particular annoyance: 'This occurs not only in towns, but also in villages and certainly pays very well since the INA (often very well regarded and respected) is well looked after by its own. These

[558] See Chapter Four, *Kamimura* trial.
[559] NAM, 1994/05/42/7B INA, p.82.
[560] Ibid., p.85.

people often receive free entertainment at hotels and restaurants.'[561] For Milligan a particular concern was what he viewed as the poor screening of former INA personnel by CSDIC(I). One striking example was the case 'of a Sikh [Lance Naik] who was notorious in Singapore as a member of the Changi Guard', but who had been employed on the administrative staff of CSDIC(I) in Singapore for seven months from September 1945, before arriving back at the battalion in India with a glowing reference, and a security classification of White.[562] The apparent gulf between volunteers and non-volunteers was emphasised by the arrival at Ambala in May 1946 of Havildar Molu Ram, along with others, 'graded BLACK and recommended dismissal at the earliest opportunity'. At a ceremony, where he was paraded under escort before the battalion, and his stripes removed in public, he shouted 'Jai Hind to all Indian Brothers', before continuing with a short statement that included 'serving in the Army under the British, I was tied up in chains of slavery'. According to Milligan, 'this speech had very little effect on the parade other than one or two retorts from Mulu Ram's victims', the gulf between the two sides apparently uncrossable.[563] Such animosity may have been true among former prisoners in this battalion (although the only account we have is from its British commanding officer), however other sources suggest the views of others were more ambiguous.

Chapter One outlined how Lieutenant Colonel Gurbakhsh Singh of the Jind Infantry, had kept his battalion out of the INA and was perceived as staunchly loyal by the British, but his memoir suggests that his views were not as straightforward as they supposed. Some days after the liberation of the Jind Infantry in 1945, and following celebrations to mark him being awarded the DSO:

[561] Ibid., p.86.
[562] Ibid., p.87.
[563] Ibid., p.89.

> No sooner did our [British] guests leave, I came to my room. My thoughts went towards our friends in the INA. Major (Now Brigadier in the INA) Aziz Ahmed Khan, Captain (now Colonel in the INA) Thakar Singh and all the other officers of Kapurthala Battalion, who had spent a year before war in Singapore, with us, Shah Niwaz, Taj Mohammed, Dara of 5/11 Sikh Regiment, their images floated before my eyes.[564]

At this time, in September 1945, a reasonable assumption would have been that these officers would face lengthy jail terms, or even execution. His later description of Subhas Chandra Bose as being 'an illustrious selfless leader of freedom struggle and a worthy son of Bharat Mata [Mother India]', reinforces the impression that his attitude was more ambivalent than the British authorities supposed.[565] He was not the only former prisoner concerned about fellow officers who had joined the INA.

Second Lieutenant Ismail Khan, who had been instrumental in keeping most of the 2/10 Baluch Regiment out of the INA, was quoted in Chapter One in relation to the Pasni party, and he knew both Captain Durrani and Lieutenant Colonel Gilani, whom he considered a friend. In September 1945, he met Gilani in Singapore, and it was clear that his friend was in serious trouble with the British.[566] This was hardly surprising given that Gilani had been a central figure in the first INA in 1942. Gilani's CSDIC(I) report is unequivocal in its condemnation, describing him as 'a wily trimmer with a ready explanation for every facet of his collaboration', while his lack of advancement under Subhas Chandra Bose is explained as being due 'to certain defects of [his] character which have been obvious to his interrogator and which could not escape the note of so acute a judge of character as S.C. Bose'.[567] Nonetheless, as Ismail Khan relates, a named British Colonel was 'very fond' of

[564] G. Singh, *Indelible Reminiscences*, p.146.
[565] Ibid., p.150.
[566] IWM, sound recording 80011491, Reel 12, 06:00, *2nd Lt. Ismail Khan.*
[567] AAS, Mss Eur F275/14, p.117.

Gilani, pleading on his behalf with the British authorities, and the result was that he was 'exonerated', to the obvious pleasure of Ismail Khan.[568] What this case, and the previous one indicate, was that the attitude of 'loyal' officers towards INA members could be more nuanced than the British authorities supposed.

While returning prisoners who had not joined the INA were often confronted by scepticism from their civilian peers regarding their loyalty to the British, former INA personnel also had to navigate through a difficult homecoming at times. Some, such as Captain Pirzai, having survived the horrors of New Guinea, arrived back in the Indian Princely State of Bahawalpur in October 1945, and appears to have been keen to put his INA past behind him, resuming his military career and acting as *aide-de-camp* to the Nawab of Bahawalpur at his birthday Durbar. It probably came as a shock to receive orders to report to CSDIC(I) for interrogation in January 1946 although, as previously stated, he was ultimately assigned the security classification of White.[569]

Others embraced their identities as former INA personnel and forged a new future for themselves very different from their pre-war lives. For example, of the better-known INA officers, Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, worked closely with leading Indian National Congress figures including Gandhi, laying the foundations for a future political career.[570] In contrast, his co-defendant from the Red Fort trial in late 1945, Captain Sahgal, while proud of his association with Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA, angered the Congress leadership when he publicly repeated advice he had been given by the leading defence lawyer from the trial,

[568] IWM, sound recording 80011491, Reel 12, 06:00, *2nd Lt. Ismail Khan.*
[569] AAS, Mss Eur F275/7, p.71.
[570] Rakesh Ankit, *India in the Interregnum: Interim Government, September 1946-August 1947* (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2019), p.235.

to ‘not fall into their clutches’, advice he chose to follow.[571] Another prominent former INA officer, Lieutenant Colonel Gill (see Figure V), would later emphasise the problems that many former INA personnel faced once independence from Britain had been achieved. As he put it: ‘If they could not be taken back in the army, I feel they should have been rehabilitated, whereas vast numbers were just left to their own fate, some of them suffered heavily’.[572] For example, many former INA personnel suffered financial hardship in later years, with the Indian state failing to provide pensions for veterans.[573] In practice, once their political value to the Indian National Congress had waned, the former INA personnel were largely forgotten.

While the views and experiences of prominent officers (whether INA or not) are often available, there are few sources available for ordinary former prisoners. One of the few is a collection of letters from Indian prisoners who had been liberated by Australian forces in the Southwest Pacific.[574] The Australian civilian to whom most of these letters were addressed was Clarence Campbell, an intriguing figure who despite being a successful industrialist was also a committed communist.[575] He appears to have come in contact with the former Indian prisoners as a result of his work with the Indian Seamen’s Union in Australia, and it is clear that these contacts made a significant impression on some former prisoners.

[571] NMML, Mss 283, Sahgal, p.74.
[572] NMML, Mss 168, Gill, p.107.
[573] Khan, *Raj at War*, p.305.
[574] ANU, Noel Butlin Archives Centre, C H Campbell collection, Item 28, *Correspondence with Indian ex-prisoners of war*
[575] Profile: ANU, ‘Biographical History’, < https://archivescollection.anu.edu.au/index.php/c-h-campbell-collection> [Accessed 11 December 2020]

The earliest letters are written from ships as the former prisoners returned to India. One, by Abdul Wahid Khan, posted from Singapore in January 1946 reads: 'Best compliments and regards from all Indian soldiers and Indian internees to you and Miss Boy. Photos of Miss Boy have been received and distributed amongst the men. It has been much liked by all'.[576] While many letters express thanks, some highlight their political activities. One letter addressed to Miss Boys, from Dalip Singh Gill in April 1946, describes how: 'The struggle for the freedom of India is going on and I am busy here to do some thing. I am putting myself hard in my work'.[577] Many of the letters however are focussed on the question of employment once demobilised from the army, including numerous requests for help obtaining Australian passports. One is from a *jawan* named Jaswant Singh, writing in June 1946 from the Regimental Centre of 14 Punjab Regiment in Ferozepore, who assures Campbell that: 'I can be released at any time from the Indian Army. If you can tell me the way to get my Passport', before sending his 'best respects to Miss Boys', although there is no sign of Campbell being able or willing to help with any such requests.[578]

One of the striking things about the letters is that they never mention what the men had been through while in Japanese captivity. They are focussed on the present and the future, and some are thankful for what they have returned to, after years away. One example is from a Jemadar Shib Lall, who wrote a long letter to Campbell from his home in Rohtak near Delhi in June 1946, an extract of which reads as follows:

> All other members of the […] family, which I found intact, are well. My old parents survived my long absence. Though the pangs of separation had done havoc on my dear's health, yet it is past and forgotten now. Bonds of hope and

[576] ANU, Item 28, Letter from Abdul Wahid Khan, 26 January 1946.
[577] ANU, Item 28, Letter from Dalip Singh Gill, 13 April 1946.
[578] ANU, Item 28, Letter from Jaswant Singh, 12 June 1946.

> love service again. Spring runs anew. Smiles are on dry lips. Old life has come back. Everything is lively. My daughters are literate.[579]

Hopefully this was one family that was spared the violence of Partition in the years to come. The letters end in mid-1946, as Campbell prepared to travel to India for political purposes, and it is therefore unknown what became of his Indian correspondents. In practice, the later life of former prisoners is only discernible in a few cases with, for example, Lieutenant Colonel Gurbakhsh Singh having a distinguished career in the post-Independence Indian Army retiring as a Major General, while John Baptist Crasta also stayed in the Army, later becoming a Subedar Major.[580] One who had to retire from the Army in 1947 on medical grounds was Lieutenant Colonel Ishaq, although he then settled back in Hyderabad, got married, and eventually had eight children. A photograph from the 1960s (Figure VIII) shows him surrounded by his substantial family, although he would be dogged by ill health until his death in 1966.[581] However, for most former prisoners there is no such detail available, and their later lives are unknown.

Kranji War Memorial

While most Indian prisoners survived captivity, approximately twelve thousand did not, and the main British Commonwealth war memorial that commemorates them is at Kranji in Singapore. Its site in the north of Singapore Island is distant from the modern city, and its location on rising ground is the setting for an exemplary monument that has a tangible affective impact on the visitor, and includes the 'Singapore Memorial' to twenty-four

[579] ANU, Item 28, Letter from Shib Lall, 24 June 1946.
[580] G. Singh, *Indelible Reminiscences*, p.275.; Crasta, *Eaten by the Japanese*, p.88.
[581] Email from Ishaq family, 15 May 2019.

thousand dead who have no known grave, many of whom are Indian.[582] Officially unveiled on 2 March 1957, its modernist architectural style takes the form of a 'gracious wing-like structure supported by 12 pillars', providing the setting for Portland stone inserts inscribed with the names of the dead.[583] Walking among the panels of names, the sheer scale of the losses among the units captured at the fall of Singapore becomes apparent, the names organised by Regiment with British and Indian names listed together. In front of the panels is a dedication, one line of which states that those listed were 'OF MANY RACES UNITED IN SERVICE TO THE BRITISH CROWN'.[584] However, it is argued that Kranji War cemetery, represents a monumental facade that obscures the fact that some of the Indian personnel listed had rejected allegiance to the British Crown, and illustrates this through the examination of several examples. These include: an Indian officer who was a high-profile collaborator with the Japanese; a member of the Changi Guard who executed British and Australian prisoners; and an INA soldier who died of wounds received in action against British forces.

Figure X shows the first section of the listing of the 1/14 Punjab Regiment on the Singapore Memorial. Listed on the left is Captain Muhammad Akram, who became an active collaborator with Japanese forces during the Malayan campaign, and was prominent in the early military leadership of the INA (Figure V).[585] Selected to fly to Tokyo to attend a conference, he was killed in a plane crash on 19 March 1942 (the CWGC site lists the date as 1 April 1942).[586] Akram was well known to CSDIC(I), his activities including assisting with the transfer of some Indian AA units to the Japanese, and his death was commemorated

[582] Information panel, Kranji War cemetery. Total of 4,400 buried and 24,000 others listed.
[583] Athanasios Tsakonas, *In Honour of War Heroes: Colin St Clair Oakes and the Design of Kranji War Memorial* (Singapore: Marshal Cavendish Editions, 2020), p.15, p.18.
[584] From authors photograph.
[585] Noles, 'Renegades in Malaya', p.106.; Fujiwara, *F. Kikan*, Photograph 5.
[586] Fujiwara, *F. Kikan,* p.207, p.211. Note: aircraft crashed on Mount Yakedake in Japanese Alps.

widely, including by some Indian prisoners in Bangkok on 21 April 1942.[587] Another casualty listed in Figure X on the right of the picture is a VCO named Subedar Santa Singh. A prominent member of the Changi Guard, he was identified as having repeatedly beaten British prisoners during April 1942, and was one of those who shot four British and Australian prisoners on 2 September 1942.[588] Having refused to serve in the second INA, he was sent to Wewak in New Guinea with a party of ex-volunteers where he died, although the date and circumstances of his death are unclear.[589] On a different panel at the memorial (column 147) is listed Lance Naik (Corporal) Hidayat Ullah, whose date of death is recorded by CWGC as 21 March 1945. A member of the INA, he had been captured after being wounded fighting against British forces on 15 March 1945 at Kazaung in Burma (see Chapter Three), but then died from his wounds a week later.[590]

The memorialisation at Kranji was not the first time that such individuals had been commemorated. In the final months of the war, the INA built a memorial to its war dead in central Singapore. Inaugurated by Subhas Chandra Bose on 8 July 1945, film exists of the memorial being destroyed by British Indian Army forces on 6 September 1945, shortly after their return to Singapore.[591] This action of the triumphal army was part of the process of re-establishing the British colonial order, a physical act of erasure intended to control what would be remembered. It is argued that the inclusion of individuals such as Captain Akram on the later British memorial, within a context explicitly framed as one of loyalty to the British Crown, is a clear example of the obscuration of the truth behind a facade that is deliberately misleading. It could be suggested that the inclusion of probably many hundreds

[587] AAS, Mss Eur F275/8, p.76.; AAS, Mss Eur F275/6, p.275.
[588] AAS, Mss Eur F275/5, p.308.
[589] AAS, Mss Eur F275/4, p.160. Assigned a generic date of death by CWGC of 1 February 1942.
[590] AAS, Mss Eur F275/9, p.230.
[591] IWM, JIN 104, *Demolition of Indian National Army memorial at Singapore* < https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060042527> [accessed 11 February 2022]

of other dead INA personnel among those listed on this memorial was inadvertent, given that the fate of many of these men would have been untraceable to later British investigators. But the inclusion of well-known figures such as Akram, or well documented cases such as Hidayat Ullah, demonstrates a broader intent to claim the memory of these men for the British Crown, irrespective of the fact that they died opposing it - a deliberate flattening of a richer more varied reality.

Summary

This chapter has looked at various aspects of Indian prisoner experience. It has challenged the current portrayal of volunteering rates for the INA, arguing that the higher comparative survival rate of Indian prisoners was driven by being less frequently transported by ship in the later stages of the war, rather than being related to whether they volunteered for the INA. A series of case studies emphasised how varied the experiences of Indian prisoners were. The horrific conditions that developed in the Southwest Pacific, represent some of the worst experienced by any prisoners of the Japanese, although the representation of anthropophagy in the region has been problematic at times. Indian prisoners often faced difficulties when returning home, whether they had joined the INA or not, while the way that those who died were represented on British war memorials demonstrates an intent to portray all the dead as loyal to the British Crown. A constant theme through this chapter has been the way that the British authorities restricted and distorted information on Indian prisoners. The effect has been to bolster a “myth of loyalty” which has continued to shape post-war memory of these men.

Chapter 3: British memory of an enemy: The Indian National Army in battle

The victories over the Imperial Japanese Army by the British Indian Army in Northeast India and Burma in 1944 and 1945 represented the largest defeats of Japanese forces on the continent of Asia in World War Two, the final drive to Rangoon marked by what Allen called 'blitzkreig-style panache'.[592] It was a victory that helped to balance the shocking British defeat at Singapore three years before, but it could not erase it, nor its consequences which included the creation of the INA from some of the many Indian Prisoners of War. Despite the impressive nature of its victories at the close of the war, the British Indian Army ceased to exist as an institution only two years later, being divided like the land itself between the independent successor nations of British colonial India. The INA, which fought alongside the Japanese against the British Indian Army in these campaigns, was a harbinger of this dissolution, and it was argued in Chapter One that news of it acted in the post-war period as a catalyst in bringing it to fruition. Given this context, including both the INA's post-war political impact as well as its presence on the battlefield as an enemy opposing British forces, it is argued that it is unsurprising that the INA was portrayed negatively in British post-war accounts of the conflict, with a consequent impact on post-war British memory. This chapter examines the form that this post-war memory took and the reasons that it developed in the way that it did. It argues that British post-war memory of the INA shows remarkable consistency, continuing to reflect the war-time British Indian Army institutional view of the force, with little or no change in its character in over seventy-five years.

[592] Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45* (London: Dent, 1984), p.633.

A remarkable aspect of these last campaigns of the British Indian Army, is the range and quality of the British military memoirs that were written in their aftermath. Those mentioned in the Introduction included Slim's *Defeat into Victory*, Calvert's *Prisoners of Hope*, and Masters' *The Road Past Mandalay*. The work of Slim in particular has had an impact in shaping post-war British memory of the INA negatively, and consequently will be examined in some depth, although other memoirs are also relevant.[593] The secondary literature has typically reflected the pattern exemplified in *Defeat into Victory*, although Sundaram's previously mentioned article 'Paper Tiger' intensified the rhetorical assault on the INA's reputation. The British intelligence material now available in the CSDIC(I) archives, can provide new insights into both the military activities of the INA, and how the force has been portrayed in British memoirs and the secondary literature. But while acknowledging the importance of the CSDIC(I) material, the following analysis also draws on a wide range of other sources, such as British unit War Diaries and Regimental histories, as well as oral history sources, some of which have only recently become available. What emerges is that in key British sources such as Slim, much that occurred involving the INA was suppressed, while the few episodes that are mentioned are typically selected to portray the force negatively, for example, by mentioning the INA when they surrender but not when they fight.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section, entitled 'Shaping post-war memory: portraying a 'Paper Tiger'', begins by tracing the origins of the portrayal of the INA in battle in the non-nationalist secondary literature, with a particular focus on the primary sources on which they drew. It argues that in addition to the institutional records of the British Indian Army, British officer memoirs have also played a key role in shaping the

[593] For one example of the quoting of Slim's opinion see: Ibid, p.419.

portrayal of the INA, and that their consistent opinions are a product of those officers being members of what the Manheim termed a 'generation unit' (see Introduction).[594] Among this literature, Slim has been viewed as the foremost authority, and the way he portrays the INA is examined in detail. This includes reviewing an engagement that probably involved the largest British loss of life in action against the INA.

The second section, entitled 'Marching on Delhi: portrayal of the INA in the Imphal campaign', argues that in contrast to the current secondary literature, the most significant contribution of the INA to the campaign lay in the activities of the reconnaissance and subversion units that accompanied the Japanese forces, rather than main INA forces that arrived later. This section draws heavily on the CSDIC(I) archives to explore these aspects of the INA's activities, examining the nature of the activities they undertook before and during the campaign. In terms of the memory of the campaign, it argues that key aspects of what occurred were suppressed, while the relative failure of the main INA units was selectively emphasised. The result has been a distorted post-war memory of the INA in this campaign.

The third and last section, entitled 'Crimes and punishment: forgotten courts-martial of captured INA troops', examines several courts-martial held by British military authorities before the end of the war, involving former Indian prisoners who were captured while serving in the INA. Most of the men court-martialled were captured either before or during the Imphal campaign, with nine being executed, although others also died in British custody. These included two key INA commanders from the Imphal campaign, who died in an apparent double-suicide, and the circumstances surrounding their deaths is examined. The

[594] Mannheim, *Sociology of Knowledge*, p.302.

proceedings of these courts-martial were suppressed in the post-war period, and currently only a few are available for examination in the archives. In summary, this chapter examines why British post-war memory of the INA developed in the way that it did, while arguing that the portrayal of the force has often been highly biased.

Shaping post-war memory: portraying a 'Paper Tiger'

As Sundaram has recently noted, the INA is a subject in India 'which rouses strong passions to this day', being seen as having had an important role in the struggle for independence from Britain, although it tends to be viewed as an adjunct to the career of Subhas Chandra Bose.[595] This significance is not reflected in non-nationalist memory, although it was argued in Chapter One that the post-war INA trials had a significant impact on serving British officers, and acted as a catalyst in accelerating the end of British rule in India. These differences manifest as a dichotomy in the memory of the INA, and for the purposes of this study, the non-nationalist strand is termed 'British' as it emphasises British sources. From a British military perspective, while the INA's post-war political impact may be grudgingly acknowledged, its battlefield performance has been consistently denigrated, and it is the origin, form, and validity of this portrayal, that are the subjects of this section. It addresses the question: What factors have shaped British memory of the INA in battle in the post-war period?

It is argued that there are two key sources of this British memory of the INA: the institutional records of the Army, and the memoirs of officers who served in it. The influence of both of

[595] Chandar S. Sundaram, 'The Indian National Army: Towards a Balanced and Critical Appraisal', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 1, 30 (2015), 21-24., p.21.

these will be reviewed in order to understand the origin of the current understanding of the INA's military performance. The historiography of the INA was outlined in the Introduction, and it was noted that the best overview of the INA's military activities in Burma is probably Fay's *Forgotten Army* (1993), written primarily from Indian nationalist sources.[596] However, the material being examined here encompasses secondary literature that draws primarily on British Indian Army sources, official and otherwise, with an exemplar of the type being Marston's 2014 work, *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*. The depiction of the military performance of the INA in Marston's work is unequivocally negative, with his summary of its contribution to the Imphal campaign being: 'Overall they did not perform well, with large numbers deserting to the Indian Army on contact'.[597] The stress on episodes where the INA surrendered is a standard theme. For example, while discussing the assault crossing of the river Irrawaddy by British forces in Burma in February 1945, Marston describes how 'Within hours of the first assault, more than 250 INA troops laid down their weapons'.[598] This is an episode that is explored in more detail later in this section, but Marston's negative opinion of the INA is very clear, his most prominent reference regarding their performance in battle being Sundaram's 'Paper Tiger' article, discussed below.[599] The negative portrayal of the INA in battle is a characteristic of other historians who draw heavily on similar sources to Marston. For example, Raghavan portrays the INA as solely a propaganda vehicle for the Japanese. He also states that during the Imphal campaign, in addition to underperformance of the INA's main regiments, 'the INA's field espionage and propaganda units' failed in their allotted task of suborning Indian troops, although this is an aspect of the campaign that will be returned to in the following section of this chapter.[600]

[596] See: 'A Note on Sources', in Fay, *Forgotten Army*.
[597] Marston, *Indian Army*, p.72.
[598] Ibid., p.126.
[599] Ibid., p.72.n.117.
[600] Raghavan, *India's War*, p.424.

However, it is Sundaram's 'Paper Tiger' article which has come to personify this negative view of the combat effectiveness of the INA. The impact of this article has been significant to the point where for sceptics, the epithet 'Paper Tiger' appears to have morphed into a synonym for 'INA'. 'Paper Tiger' draws heavily on the institutional records of the British Indian Army, in particular Weekly Intelligence Summaries, some editions of which refer to the INA.[601] At best, these provide a snapshot of what was known about INA activities in particular locations, although inevitably they are limited to what British Military Intelligence was aware of in real time as the fighting unfolded. However incomplete, it is these that provide much of the detail in Sundaram's article, although it also draws on unit War Diaries, memoirs, interviews, and the secondary literature that was available when the article was published in 1995.[602] It is worth noting that at the time the CSDIC(I) archives, now available in New Delhi and London, were still closed. Sundaram's conclusion states that while 'the Springing Tiger was the INA's emblem' its 'military performance […] demonstrated that the INA was rather more of a paper tiger'.[603] The article is actually a more sympathetic assessment of the INA than this conclusion might suggest, with Sundaram highlighting issues such as poor quality equipment and the logistical challenges that the force experienced, but it was the 'Paper Tiger' epithet which captured the *zeitgeist* of this strand of writing on the INA.

While the surviving institutional records of the British Indian Army have strongly influenced the secondary literature, there has also been another complementary influence: the views and memoirs of officers who served in it. The years following the dissolution of the British

[601] Sundaram, 'Paper Tiger', p.55.n.9.
[602] Other primary sources include the memoirs of Shah Nawaz Khan, *The INA and its Netaji*, and interviews with Mohan Singh, G.S. Dhillon, and P.K. Sahgal.
[603] Sundaram, 'Paper Tiger', p.54.

Indian Army saw the publication of several British officer memoirs, in particular those of Slim, Calvert, Masters, and Tuker, that have continued to influence post-war British memory of the British Indian Army and the INA.[604] To understand the attitudes displayed within these sources towards the INA, they must be placed within the broader context of how British officers and colonial troops perceived their relationship. An insight into the nature of the British Indian Army that the British colonial state had created, is provided by Masters' depiction of the force launching its final offensive towards Rangoon in April 1945: 'Twenty races, a dozen religions, a score of languages passed in those trucks and tanks'. But it is his depiction of the relationship between the British and colonial troops that is particularly relevant:

> Once we had obviously been their superiors in many qualities beside fighting ability, and we had dominated them, but the domination had seemed almost immaterial to the heart of the matter, which was love and understanding, or loyalty to each other, or faith in each other's intentions, or whatever you like to call an almost mystical sense of dependence.[605]

It is argued that the concept that the relationship between British officers and the colonial troops was based on a 'mystical' bond with loyalty at its core, is central to how these British officers responded to the INA. Such a view could only be reconciled to the INA's existence by denying it legitimacy, because otherwise it represented a direct challenge to their sense of self, to their perceived role as officers in the colonial army. When Marston claims that the INA's 'formation did not constitute a legitimate mutiny' he is reflecting that sentiment.[606] Marston is correct, but arguably for the wrong reason: a mutiny suggests a revolt against legitimate authority, but the creation of the INA was a fundamental rejection of the authority of the colonial state, and in that sense was far more serious. To some extent,

[604] Tuker's *While Memory Serves* is referenced extensively by Marston for example.
[605] Masters, *The Road Past Mandalay*, p.312.
[606] Marston, *Indian Army*, p.118.

the problem the British officers had with coming to terms with the existence of the INA is understandable: the personal experience of these writers was ultimately one of victory at the head of colonial troops. But these were troops who were drawn from the same villages, and in some cases the same families, as the former Indian prisoners who made up the core of the INA.[607] The issue here is that, as Roy has pointed out, 'the relationship between the *jawans* and the British officers was much more complex than the affectionate brotherly relationship between them portrayed by Slim and Masters'.[608] Of the academic studies into the underlying nature of this relationship, some of the most interesting have been by anthropologists.

The work of one in particular stands out: Mary Des Chene's unpublished doctoral thesis *Relics of Empire* (previously referenced in Chapter Two), examines the relationship between colonial troops and their British officers from the perspective of Gurkha veterans, based on extensive fieldwork in Nepal. Des Chene, in critiquing the nature of the loyalty of Gurkhas described by their British officers, argues that it had 'none of the qualities of the dog-like devotion often implied in [British] accounts, nor does it arise in any simple way from a sense of inferiority'.[609] De Chene noted that 'British tales of faithful Gurkhas shadowing their officers across battlefields or seeing that they have hot meals or rest' were read differently by the Gurkhas themselves, who 'explained that because the British are likely to be killed due to their in-competencies they must watch out for them', although she stressed that such remarks were not meant to be insulting.[610] Des Chene provides a valuable corrective to the standard British accounts of Gurkha troops, and is used for that purpose by Gould in his

[607] One example: Shah Nawaz Khan (see Chapter One) whose brother was a Captain in 2/8 Punjab Regiment. AAS, Mss Eur F275/21, p.136.
[608] Roy, *The Army in British India*, p.133.
[609] Des Chene, *Relics of Empire*, p.317.
[610] Ibid., p.317.n34.

study of the Gurkhas, *Imperial Warriors*.[611] In general though, the memoirs that British officers wrote about the Gurkhas, and a type example would be Masters' *Bugles and a Tiger: My life in the Gurkhas*, portray the Gurkha as the personification of loyalty and bravery, an idealised 'martial race'.[612] In contrast, the idea that Gurkhas served in the INA, and in some cases played leading roles, would have been anathema to such British officers. Nonetheless they did, and the cases of two such Gurkhas of the INA, who were captured, court-martialled, and later executed by the British military authorities are discussed later in this chapter, along with the way that memory of these Gurkhas was suppressed. While it should be emphasised that only a small portion of the Gurkhas made prisoner by the Japanese actually joined the INA (in contrast to other groups such as Sikhs for example), it is a reminder that in practice, the loyalty of even the most trusted imperial warriors could not be taken for granted.

A notable characteristic of British officer memoirs is the consistency of their world view with respect to their perception of colonial troops, and the way that this informs their portrayal of the INA. Of these, the prominence of memoirs by officers who served with the *Chindits* (who conducted long-range penetration raids behind Japanese lines), in particular Calvert and Masters, is striking given the relatively small number of officers involved, although Slim's *Defeat Into Victory* undoubtedly dominates. However, it is Tuker's *While Memory Serves* that stands out for the depth of its coverage of the INA, and its palpable bitterness at the impact it had on the British Indian Army in the immediate post-war period (see Chapter One).[613] It was argued in the Introduction that the British officers of various ranks who wrote these memoirs were members of what Mannheim termed a 'generation

[611] Gould, Imperial Warriors, pp.266-267.
[612] John Masters, *Bugles and a Tiger: a personal adventure* (London: Michael Joseph, 1956)
[613] See Chapter Four in Tuker, *While Memory Serves*.

unit' within the broader wartime generation, an identity that was forged by the experience of commanding colonial troops in action, in particular against the Imperial Japanese Army and the INA.[614] This was an endeavour that created a powerful collective identity among these officers that informed their later memoirs, and thereby helped shape post-war memory of the Army and its colonial soldiers, but simultaneously made it difficult to come to terms with the nature of the INA. In particular, the 'generation unit' of British officers viewed the formation of the INA as illegitimate, and in their writing this translated into either the suppression of any mention of them, or selective portrayals that were invariably scornful of their impact.

With references from British sources on the INA so limited, Gajendra Singh turned to a passage from Paul Scott's novel *The Day of the Scorpion* to represent the sense of dislocation that British officers felt regarding it, an extract of which reads:

> They couldn't believe Indian soldiers who'd eaten the king's salt and been proud to serve in the army generation after generation could be suborned like that […] fight the very officers who had trained them, cared for them and earned their respect. Well, you know. The regimental mystique. It goes deep.[615]

The need to turn to a novel reflects the dearth of reflective commentary on the INA in British sources, although the recourse to the mystical in this passage (in a similar fashion to the earlier quote from Masters), represents again the trope that British officers and Indian *jawans* were linked by a special bond. But to understand how the INA has been portrayed in British officer memoirs, they need to be examined directly, including cases that represent outright suppression. This will be approached by looking at the portrayal of the INA in two influential memoirs: Calvert's *Prisoners of Hope*, and Slim's *Defeat Into Victory*.

[614] Mannheim, *Sociology of Knowledge*, p.302.
[615] Quoted in: Gajendra Singh, *Testimonies of Indian Soldiers*, p.160.

Calvert's remarkable memoir is focussed on British *Chindit* operations in North Burma in early 1944, during which he acted as one of the column commanders.[616] Operating deep behind Japanese lines and relying on aircraft for supplies and the evacuation of wounded, the force included British, African, and Gurkha troops, although there were no other Indian soldiers due to 'the difficulty at that time, of special feeding, cooking, camp followers, etc., insisted upon by the Indian Army'.[617] Although his column was operating far from where most of the INA were deployed, Calvert does refer to them on several occasions. The first related to intelligence, with the recovery of Japanese documents including 'a complete record of the Indian (Traitor) National Army, and of other agents trained in Burma for India', a reminder of how comprehensive British knowledge was of the INA by this stage of the war.[618] Another incident illustrates the types of concerns that the existence of the INA could cause. Among the officers Calvert had under his command was Captain Archibald Wavell, the son of the Viceroy of India. Wavell was seriously wounded in the hand while leading an attack against the Japanese, and after he had had his hand amputated, he was earmarked to be evacuated by air to India, while in the meantime 'the Viceroy and Lady Wavell had flown to Assam to meet him'. It was a day or two later that Calvert received a message that he would be relieved of his command if Wavell was not immediately evacuated, the first time he realised it had not already happened. It transpired that Wavell had repeatedly refused to be evacuated before other casualties who were more seriously wounded than himself, and it was only when Calvert personally ordered him on a plane that he went. A factor driving the priority given to his evacuation related to the INA, because as Calvert put it, 'It was feared that if they could lay their hands on Archie, they might try to torture to influence the

[616] Calvert commanded 77 Brigade, with the total force being twenty thousand strong under the command of Orde Wingate (later killed). Calvert, *Prisoners of Hope*, p.14.
[617] Ibid., p.40.
[618] Ibid., p.65.

Viceroy'.[619] Whether torture was likely is debatable, with a propaganda photograph of him being guarded by INA soldiers a more likely scenario, but it does illustrate the level of concern that the INA could engender.

It was soon afterwards that Calvert captured INA troops. These came from an INA Anti-Aircraft (AA) unit, originally one hundred men strong, attached to one of the Japanese formations opposing Calvert's *Chindit* column. Calvert states in an appendix to his book that 'After severe casualties they surrendered to us at Mogaung and became our stretcher bearers'.[620] However, in the main text he does not mention the casualties, but says they were the captured Sikh crews of two AA guns, the men having originally been members of the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery (HKSRA). Calvert describes them as follows:

> They were an emaciated, miserable lot, completely resigned to whatever fate was due to them […] their only excuse was that they had been led astray by Jap promises. One of their objects in volunteering was to get back to their homes and families in India. […] I told them that I had known their units in Hong Kong and Singapore before the war, when they were efficient and accurate gunners. I had noticed that under the Japs they had been very inaccurate when firing at us. I considered that this must be because in their heart of hearts they did not want to shoot at us. […] they must now, in penitence, serve us as stretcher-bearers […] They did serve us well, but they never smiled.[621]

It is interesting to compare this with the CSDIC(I) investigations of AA gunners discussed in Chapter Two, as familiar tropes emerge. Of central importance is the suggestion by Calvert that when they fired at Allied aircraft they shot to miss. It will be recalled that this was also what the AA gunners interrogated by CSDIC(I) had claimed, although CSDIC(I) had not believed them. Added to this are other typical claims made by captured INA personnel: that they had been misled by the Japanese; and that their only reason for joining

[619] Ibid., pp.208-209. Archibald Wavell died in 1953 during the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya.
[620] Ibid., Appendix 4, p.298.n.1.
[621] Ibid., p.210.

the INA was to get home. Did Calvert really believe that in their 'heart of hearts' they did not want to shoot at the British? The 'severe casualties' suffered by the INA unit before the capture of these men suggests otherwise, although the details of how these casualties came about is not explained. The idea underlying this, that INA troops did not really want to fight the British, that they were not a real enemy, is central to British officer portrayals of the INA in battle. Although in this case, it involved a British officer ventriloquising the common excuses articulated by captured INA troops.

Of all the British officer memoirs from the campaign in Burma, by far the best known and the most dominant with respect to attitudes towards the INA, is Slim's *Defeat Into Victory* - one of the finest military memoirs ever written. As his biographer Robert Lyman has pointed out, Slim's reputation as a military commander was initially overshadowed in the post-war period by other British wartime commanders, but in recent decades has grown to the point where in 2011 he shared first place in a vote for 'Britain's Greatest General' (along with the Duke of Wellington).[622] Lyman cites another historian in assessing that 'Slim's encirclement of the Japanese on the Irrawaddy deserves to rank with the great military achievements of all time', and it is therefore understandable that Slim's typically scathing assessment of the INA carries considerable weight.[623] But however revered Slim may be by some, his memoirs still need to be approached critically. For example, his assertion that 'We coveted no man's country; we wished to impose no form of government on any nation', looks incongruous given the nature of the British Empire at the time, although other officers expressed similar views.[624]

[622] Robert, *Slim, Master of War: Burma and the birth of modern warfare* (London: Constable, 2019), p.xxii, p.259. Note: The biography was first published in 2005.
[623] Ibid., p.265.
[624] Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, p.183.

With respect to Slim's portrayal of the INA, it is rarely mentioned in *Defeat Into Victory* and when it is, typically only when its troops surrendered.[625] Even then, it is still sometimes ignored by Slim. For example, when his forces finally recaptured Rangoon in May 1945, the Japanese having already evacuated it, they found some 4,500 INA in the city whom they took prisoner (many of these were civilian volunteers rather than former Indian Army personnel), but their presence goes unmentioned in *Defeat Into Victory*.[626] Another key aspect of the way that the INA is portrayed is the way in which actions where the INA fought against British forces are ignored or obscured by Slim. One example of an engagement that was ignored occurred on 30 March 1945 near Mount Popa in Burma, being described by CSDIC(I) as 'The biggest pitched battle of the INA campaign. Three Battalions took part and stood allied shelling and mortar shelling very well'.[627] Another example would be the battle at Kazaung mentioned in Chapter Two. One of the consequences of this approach is the complete absence of any mention of British casualties suffered in action against the INA. It is argued that this was not the result of inadvertent forgetting, but was instead a deliberate act of suppression of what had occurred. In order to explore how this worked in practice, the role of the INA is examined in a failed British assault, that occurred during the crossing of the Irrawaddy river in February 1945.

Crossing the Irrawaddy

The episode in question was part of a series of British attacks launched on 14 February 1945. Slim describes how the main assault was to be made across the wide river by a battalion of the South Lancashire Regiment to form a bridgehead near Nyaungu, with a subsidiary

[625] Examples include: Ibid., p.429, 491, 500.
[626] Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, pp.505-507.; AAS, Mss Eur F275/5, p.241.
[627] AAS, L/WS/2/46, Chapter 16.

assault made six miles further south by a Sikh Regiment.[628] Initially the South Lancashire assault went well, with the leading company reaching the far bank undetected under cover of darkness, but then the main group of 'Lancashire men fumbled badly at the embarkation', and the resultant delayed main assault was repulsed by machine-gun and rifle fire as it became light.[629] Despite this setback, an Indian battalion secured the bridgehead a few hours later, 'under the heaviest covering fire that could be provided by artillery and air'.[630] At no point does Slim mention the INA with respect to this engagement, stating that the Indian battalion found that there were 'no Japanese at the actual crossing and that even those downstream, who had taken such a toll of the South Lancashires as they drifted past, had withdrawn'.[631] The British official history also fails to mention the INA.[632] However, there is a range of other sources relating to this incident that can provide additional context.

Among the secondary literature, both Toye in *The Springing Tiger* and Allen in *Burma* mention that the INA were present, with Allen drawing on a second-hand description of the action published by Shah Nawaz Khan in 1946.[633] But there are also other sources for this event that have not been utilised in the secondary literature, including the War Diary of the British battalion, its later regimental history, and the memoir of the INA commander involved: G.S. Dhillon (see Figure XI). This INA officer was previously encountered in Chapter One, where his role as commander of the Changi Guard in 1942, and as one of the three defendants in the Red Fort trial in late 1945, was examined.

[628] Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, pp.426-427.
[629] Ibid., p.428.
[630] Ibid., p.429.
[631] Ibid., p.430.
[632] S. Woodburn Kirby, *The War Against Japan: Volume IV, The Reconquest of Burma* (London: H.M.S.O, 1965), pp.264-265.
[633] Toye, *The Springing Tiger*, p.137.; Allen, *Burma*, p.417. (Khan, *INA and its Netaji*, p.154).

In early 1945, Dhillon was the commander of 4 Guerrilla Regiment of the INA's Nehru Brigade, with three battalions under his command. On 14 February 1945 they were deployed in defensive positions on the East bank of the Irrawaddy, with a Japanese company to their right.[634] However, all the battalions were understrength and 'were poorly equipped, armed mainly with rifles and a few light automatics', while two days before the engagement Dhillon had to cannibalise half of his medium machine-guns for parts to produce four that worked reliably. Dhillon estimated that he only had enough ammunition 'for a few minutes of an all-out battle', as well as lacking any artillery support, or even mortars.[635] Nonetheless, the river was a mile wide at this point and treacherous with sandbanks – a formidable defensive obstacle.

While the INA readied their defence, the 2nd Battalion of the South Lancashire Regiment prepared for the assault at Nyaungu. It had been selected for the operation because it had experience in boat assaults gained during British invasion of Madagascar in 1942.[636] Both its contemporary War Diary and later regimental history are useful sources. The War Diary text is a model of anodyne military reporting that makes no mention of the INA, although it does detail the casualties suffered (discussed below). However, attached to it are the operational orders for the assault that include the intelligence appraisal of enemy forces at Nyaungu, described as '200 to 250 Sikh JIFS' or INA, with a maximum of forty Japanese in the area. It also noted the preparation of 'disorganised' defensive positions near the town.[637] In contrast, the regimental history provides a vivid portrayal of events from the perspective of the British attackers. As it explains, preparations in the days before the assault

[634] Dhillon, *From My Bones*, p.268.; See map, p.275.
[635] Ibid., p.283.
[636] Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, p.426. Undertaken to over-throw the Vichy French regime.
[637] TNA, WO 172/7648, February 1945, Plan, p.1.

appeared to go well and included a series of morale boosting talks to the Lancashire Battalion by senior officers. These included one by Lieutenant-General Messervey, which included a comparison that in retrospect seems unfortunate: 'I do not believe you are going to encounter much opposition, in fact I hope you are going to have an unopposed crossing – in fact a kind of Blackpool boating trip'. As the regimental history ruefully notes, it would be anything but.[638]

The assault was launched in two stages, with one company crossing to the far bank in the middle of the night, and the main assault aiming to land just before dawn. Despite some delays, the first company successfully landed and took some high ground with the aim of providing cover for the main attack. However, the main party suffered serious delays while launching onto the river, in part due to faulty boats, and the result was that by the time they were approaching the assault beach dawn was already breaking. The following extracts describing what occurred next, are from the account of the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell:

> It was just beginning to grow light and we could see, silhouetted against the sky, the tops of the white pagodas that stood above our beach objective. […] Three boats were just nosing into the beach when a burst of machine-gun fire was heard. […] fire was brought to bear on the boat I was in. […] The next burst went straight through the boat, killing two of the Signallers. […] I ordered the signaller to get through to the Brigadier, but before he could do so another burst destroyed his set. […] My one remaining signaller, in spite of a wound, got half the message through before a long burst from a machine-gun smashed his set, killed an attached officer and wounded two more men […] Conditions in my boat and around were really serious. The dead and wounded were causing a list to port […] every movement drew accurate fire.[639]

[638] Brian Reginald Mullaly, *The South Lancashire Regiment: the Prince of Wales's Volunteers* (Bristol: White Swan Press, 1955), p.453.
[639] Ibid., pp.456-457.

Similar events were unfolding in other boats as well, and soon boats laden with casualties began to drift downstream, with another British officer observing 'no sign of life – only still figures' in two of them.[640] With the assault having obviously failed, and rescue efforts for the survivors now underway, Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell swam back across the river in order to report the situation. Despite the failure of the main assault, they still held the small bridgehead secured by the first Company that had landed in the night, and this was soon exploited to get an Indian Battalion across the river supported by a heavy bombardment.[641] However, the cost had been high, with twenty-nine killed (including two officers) and thirty-three wounded, with a further three missing.[642] While the regimental history provides a vivid description of the attempted assault, just as with the War Diary discussed earlier, at no point does it acknowledge that the British troops were being shot at by the INA.

Ironically, on the INA side, Dhillon and his men would be criticised for the ultimate outcome of this action. The reason was that following the fighting later in the day, Hari Ram, the commander of the INA troops who had opposed the landing, 'after exhausting all his ammunition' had shown 'a white flag and had offered to surrender along with his troops'. It would appear that not all the men agreed with his decision, and in the arguments that followed, Hari Ram was shot and killed by one of his own *jawans*.[643] For the INA, it was an ignominious end to an engagement that probably represented the highest casualties inflicted on British troops in action during the entire war. Whilst only a minority of Hari Ram's battalion surrendered (about one hundred and twenty men), the news 'created panic' among other INA troops of Dhillon's regiment and helped precipitate a general withdrawal from

[640] Ibid., p.461.
[641] Ibid., p.462.
[642] Ibid.
[643] Dhillon, *From My Bones*, p.292.

the river.[644] It is interesting to note that in Shah Nawaz Khan's account of the INA action, he attributes the initial success to a different INA battalion commander, rather than Hari Ram who later tried to surrender.[645]

In summary, in terms of the representation of the INA in British sources, the assault at Nyaungu illustrates some standard characteristics. Slim in his memoir was clearly reluctant to highlight the role of the INA in repelling the British assault, an approach that fits into a broader pattern of only mentioning the INA when they surrender. Despite the undoubted influence of Slim's memoir, it is only part of a broader pattern of the suppression of INA activities in British sources. Whether it is institutional sources such as War Diaries, later Regimental histories, or the memoirs of British officers, there is a consistency of approach that denies the INA the dignity of recognition as a *bona fide* enemy. In particular, by reading such sources you could easily gain the impression that British forces had never suffered casualties in action against the INA. It is hardly surprising therefore, that the secondary literature that drew on such sources, inherited a view of the INA that represented the British Indian Army's institutional view of the force. This was reinforced by the memoirs of the 'generation unit' of British Officers who fought against the INA. Together, these have shaped British post-war memory of the INA as a 'Paper Tiger'.

Marching on Delhi: portrayal of the INA in the Imphal campaign

While Sundaram's 'Paper Tiger' article has come to dominate British memory of the INA in battle, one of the earliest secondary accounts of the INA, and still one of the most valuable,

[644] Ibid., p.293.
[645] Khan, *INA and its Netaji*, p.154. This is the version found in: Allen, *Burma*, p.417.

is Hugh Toye's *The Springing Tiger* (discussed in the Introduction). In a similar manner to 'Paper Tiger', this work focussed largely on the role of the INA's 1st Division when discussing the Imphal campaign, but Toye also summarised the involvement of the INA's separate reconnaissance and subversion forces in the campaign as follows:

> The story of the INA in the Japanese campaign of 1944 is long, intricate and closely interwoven with the actions of the Japanese regiments and divisions with which its soldiers campaigned. That story will one day be told.[646]

It is clear that Toye left much unsaid, and it is argued that the CSDIC(I) archives that are now available can provide new insights into INA activities during the Imphal campaign, in some cases challenging accepted narratives. It should be emphasised that the ambition is not to replace Sundaram's 'Paper Tiger' article, but instead to augment the current knowledge of the INA's activities during the Imphal campaign by focussing on what was largely hidden from general view at the time: the intelligence and subversion activities of INA personnel operating in close cooperation with Japanese forces. This was a campaign where over ninety percent of the INA personnel involved were former Indian Army personnel, and it was therefore largely former prisoners rather than civilian volunteers who made up the bulk of what would become the INA's catastrophic casualties in the campaign (discussed below).[647] The various CSDIC(I) archives contain a significant amount of material relating to the Imphal campaign, fragmented over hundreds of interrogations and reports, and what follows is of necessity focussed on only a few incidents chosen to illustrate how the INA operated and the level of success it achieved. This section addresses the question: How was post-war memory of the INA in the Imphal campaign, affected by the suppression of information on their activities?

[646] Toye, *The Springing Tiger*, p.124.
[647] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.27.

Although the Imphal campaign in early 1944 would end in disaster for the INA, the six months before it, from the arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose in Singapore in July 1943 to the deployment of INA intelligence personnel with Japanese divisions at the beginning of 1944, represented a kind of golden age for the force. Toye captures the impact of Bose's arrival on the wider Indian community of which the INA was part:

> The moment was his. His personal enthusiasm, his vitality, his authority and his world view won him the real allegiance of Indians in East Asia. He swept people off their feet; there were few who could stand back and consider whether he was taking them in the direction and by the means which their leaders in India would have approved.[648]

With his arrival, the INA acquired Indian political leadership commensurate with their stated objective: the liberation of India from British colonial rule. The captured diary of an Indian Medical Officer who joined the INA named Captain Pattanayak, details two extravagant parades put on at this time by the INA. Held on the Padang in Singapore, the first on 5 July 1943 welcomed Subhas Chandra Bose, while on the following day the main guest was the Japanese Premier, General Hideki Tojo.[649] It was at the first of these parades that Bose first declared that the battle cry of the INA should be 'Chalo Delhi' (to Delhi).[650]

In its entries covering the following months, Captain Pattanayak's diary assiduously records Bose's many speeches, but also the details of INA events such as a 'Wrestling Carnival' held at Bidadari in Singapore in September 1943, whose spirited proceedings were enlivened by an INA pipe band.[651] For some officers, encounters with Bose were critical in securing

[648] Toye, *The Springing Tiger*, p.81.
[649] TNA, WO 208/814, pp.35-39.; For CSDIC(I) interrogation: AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.213. Pattanayak was originally the Medical Officer for 2/1 Gurkha Rifles.
[650] Toye, *The Springing Tiger*, p.84.
[651] TNA, WO 208/814, p.63. Note: bagpipes were used by several British Indian Army Regiments, and their use was continued by the INA.

their full commitment to the INA. One formerly sceptical officer, Captain Malik of the Bahawalpur Infantry, described later how 'his own mental outlook became entirely transformed after hearing Bose's speeches', and after speaking with Bose at length he became 'absolutely converted to Bose's political ideals'.[652] Malik would go on to become a key INA commander during the Imphal campaign.

While the importance of Bose should not be underestimated, he had inherited an army rather than created one, and it had already started preparing for the struggle ahead before he arrived. An example of this was the creation of the Special Service Group within the INA in March 1943, one of several 'intelligence' units within the force that would collectively provide the manpower to accompany Japanese divisions during the Imphal campaign.[653] The period before the campaign also saw many within the INA enjoying some of the wider benefits of membership, as one source put it:

> The INA rule against marrying, and its injunctions for moral integrity were not always observed even by senior officers. […] Most senior officers had mistresses, Malayan women in the case of Muslims, and Eurasians in the case of Hindus. […] The general incidence of [venereal disease] in the INA was about 5% but was much higher in the [Special Service] Group, especially among the officers, owing to the greater freedom allowed to the men of this unit.[654]

The period before the Imphal campaign was therefore relatively comfortable for many of these men, particularly as their families back in India were still being financially supported by the British Indian Army. However, a few INA troops were already in action on the India Burma border.

[652] NAI, INA, 428, part.4, p.17.
[653] AAS, Mss Eur F275/5, p.125.
[654] NAI, INA, 499, part.3, p.208.

The origins of INA activity on the border can be traced back to February 1942 during the Malayan campaign, with the creation of a group of sixty volunteers from among Indian prisoners to accompany the Japanese invasion of Burma. The Indian commander of this group was a VCO named Ram Sarup, who would still be active on the Indian Burma border at the time of the Imphal campaign in 1944.[655] The details of the activities of the INA in these areas prior to 1944, including during the British Arakan offensive in early 1943, deserves a detailed study in itself, while its presence was apparently well known to Indian officers serving with the British Indian Army. One example involved two Indian officers who would both go on to become Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army in post-independence India: B.M. Kaul and K.S. Thimayya. It was while serving in the Arakan that many Indian troops heard INA propaganda broadcasts, including Kaul who recalled how they made a 'deep impression' on him. The two officers 'often discussed the INA with each other', particularly as K.S. Thimayya's elder brother, who had been captured at the surrender of Singapore, was serving with the INA.[656] What the two officers would not have known was that the brother, Major K.P. Thimayya, had been designated as the first commander of the INA's Special Service Group, but had been injured in a 'motor accident' and had been unable to take up the appointment.[657] Kaul's views on the performance of the INA during the later Imphal campaign are interesting: 'The INA fought here, as elsewhere, under many severe handicaps despite which its officers and men, under the inspiring leadership of Bose, displayed great heroism in battle'.[658] It is a striking assessment from an officer who later became the commander of the Indian Army, although such views have found no outlet in British accounts of the INA.

[655] Noles, 'Renegades in Malaya', p.111.
[656] NMML, Mss 93, Kaul, pp.28-29. Interview held on 13 January 1972.
[657] AAS, Mss Eur F275/5, p.125.
[658] NMML, Mss 93, Kaul, p.30.

One example of INA activity on the Indian Burma border immediately prior to the Imphal campaign, involved a unit commanded by an INA officer called Wazir Mohammed Khan, who combined covert reconnaissance with attempts to disrupt British intelligence gathering. Khan's CSDIC(I) interrogation describes him as 'a young man of moderate education, a Judo expert of remarkable physique' whose activities as a guerrilla commander on the border in late 1943 made him 'notorious' to the British.[659] Although Khan was an INA civilian volunteer many of his thirty men were former prisoners. One was a Gurkha from 3 Assam Rifles who had been captured in a Japanese ambush in May 1943, but later he 'and his two fellow captives were initiated into Wazir Mohd Khan's party with the ceremonies and heroics peculiar to that party, but received also a thorough training in reconnaissance and propaganda duties'.[660] Khan also maintained strict discipline, as CSDIC(I) put it: 'he rigorously kept his men from women and also, as far as possible, from alcohol', an approach which helped gain him a reputation among his men as 'harsh and cruel, a thing his interrogator can well believe'.[661] His unit certainly operated successfully in its guerrilla role, which included harassing various British picquets at night, while on one occasion a surprise attack led to the capture of five Indian prisoners.

In September 1943, Khan captured a named British officer from 'V' force, the British intelligence gathering formation whose men were largely recruited from the local population. Although both men 'knew each other by repute', the British officer did not recognise Khan at first, 'because of his shoulder length hair and chest length beard'. What happened next was highly unusual, because Khan allowed the British officer 'to go free after

[659] AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.195.
[660] AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, pp.20-21.
[661] AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.188.

giving him a cup of tea', although not before taking the documents he was carrying, which Khan later discovered contained the names of three hundred local informants being paid by 'V' force (some of whom were also being paid by Khan).[662] As CSDIC(I) noted, the British officer never reported his capture or the loss of the documents, although 'one list of agents with his name on it was subsequently recaptured from the Japanese'.[663] The reason why Khan released the British officer remained a mystery to CSDIC(I). Khan's subsequent activities included an intelligence mission deep inside British territory at Ukhrul (see Map 2) that ended in January 1944. It was later that month that he and his men were re-assigned to Japanese forces for the forthcoming Imphal campaign.[664]

The invasion of India

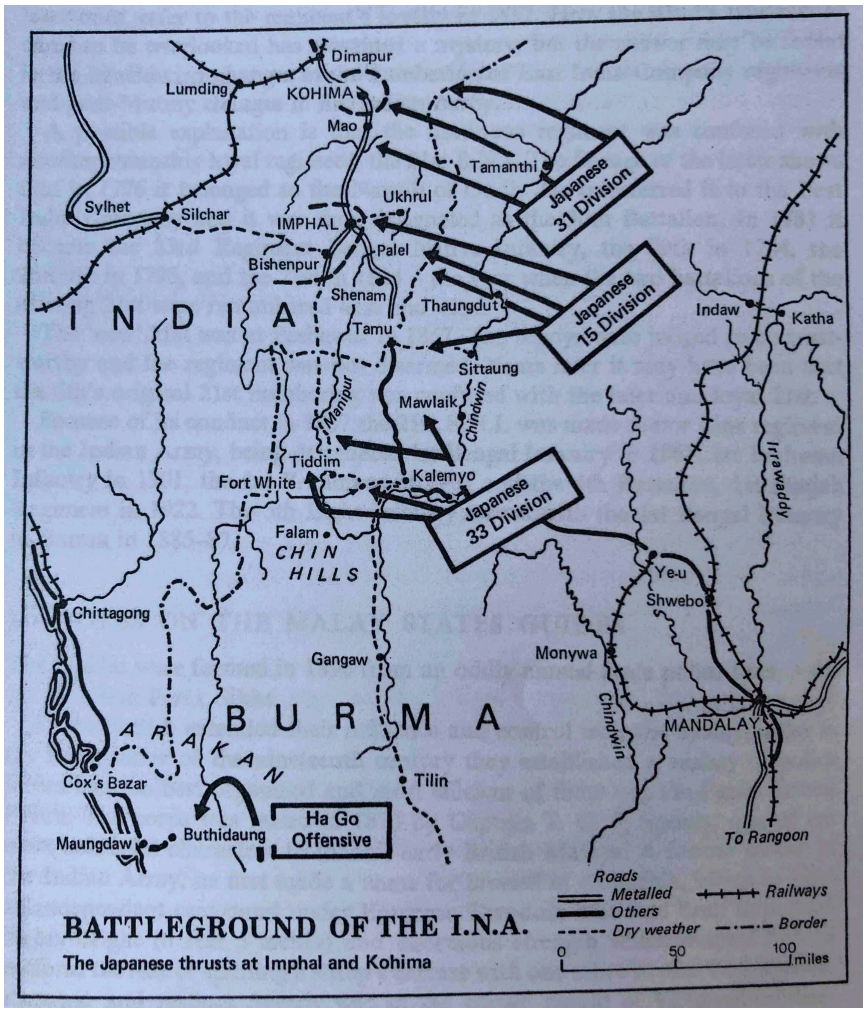
The Japanese invasion of northeast India in early 1944 has understandably generated a substantial secondary literature, with Allen's *Burma: The Longest War* providing the most authoritative account from a British perspective, while among the less well known work is the interesting battlefield guide by Hemant Katoch, *The Battlefields of Imphal*.[665] As Allen describes, the Japanese launched two offensives: a diversionary attack in the Arakan to the South, designated with the Japanese syllabary code 'HA-GO' ('Operation Z'), and the later main assault on Imphal and Kohima designated as 'U-GO' ('Operation C').[666] As was noted above, the INA had been active in the Arakan during 1943 and they participated in the HA-GO offensive under the command of an Indian officer named Major Misra, in one incident subverting a forty-five man detachment of the Gwailor Lancers in February 1944.[667]

[662] Ibid.
[663] Ibid., p.189.
[664] Ibid.
[665] Hemant Singh Katoch, *The Battlefields of Imphal: The Second World War and North East India* (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2016)
[666] Allen, *Burma*, p.170.
[667] NAI, INA 144, p.68.

However, this analysis focusses on the INA personnel who accompanied the three Japanese Infantry divisions involved in operation U-GO that began in March 1944, described by Allen as 'not a single engagement but a complex series of battles lasting five months, ranging from the banks of the Chindwin [in Burma] to the road beyond Kohima, well inside Assam' in India (see Map 2 below). The Japanese plan involved capturing the Imphal plain in order to prevent its use by British forces as a base to invade Burma, and involved a campaign that would last only three weeks.[668] The campaign would be fought across terrain memorably described by Slim 'as some of the world's worst country, breeding the world's worst diseases, and having for half the year at least the world's worst climate', the latter a reference to the annual summer monsoon.[669] This was the campaign that would allow the INA to reach Indian soil, propelled by Subhas Chandra Bose's exhortation to march on Delhi, but that would also end in bitter failure.

[668] Allen, *Burma*, pp.191-193.
[669] Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, p.169.

Map 2: Japanese invasion of India, 1944 (Corr, *War of the Springing Tigers*, p.123.)



By early 1944, the INA troops already in Burma had been joined by several other INA intelligence units and it was from this combined pool of troops that three Butai (units) were formed, named after their Indian commanders, one for each Japanese Division involved in the U-GO offensive. These were: the Ajmer Butai (177 men) supporting the Japanese 31st Division in the North; the Maghar Butai (162 men) supporting the 15th Division in the centre; and the Malik Butai (225 men) supporting the 33rd Division in the South (see Map 2).[670] The

[670] NAI, INA 256, p.8., p.132.; NAI, INA 428, p.18; For Japanese Order of Battle see: Allen, *Burma*, p.661.

Indian commanders were all former prisoners captured during the Malayan campaign.[671] The Indian Butai were incorporated within a larger Japanese command known as the Southern Army Raiding Units Headquarters, whose five hundred Japanese personnel included one hundred and thirty graduates of the IJA's elite intelligence school at Nakano near Tokyo.[672] Its reconnaissance activities prior to the offensive included a mission led by one of the Nakano graduates, whose party (including two INA personnel) scouted the entire route later followed by 31st Division, over the mountains to Kohima.[673] The route cut across the grain of the mountain ranges, making moving and supplying the Japanese and INA forces a huge challenge. The Japanese plan for the campaign relied on capturing British supplies, while moving heavy weapons such as artillery was dependent on over a thousand elephants, surely the last time in military history that a major invasion relied on elephant power.[674] The advance of the three Japanese divisions began in the first week of March 1944, with the offensive expected to last just three weeks.[675]

Advancing into India

The INA was in the vanguard of the Japanese advance, reconnoitring the route and acting as the first contact with the local population. One INA soldier named Gowd from the Malik Butai (a former Jemadar in the Mysore Infantry) who had been assigned to a Japanese battalion, later described to CSDIC(I) how the advance was conducted:

> The Japanese battalion always advanced with 4 or 5 of [Gowd's] party in the vanguard. Such men carried arms, Congress flags, pamphlets, and "Safe-conduct" cards for all Indian deserters from British forces. On contact with the

[671] Second Lieutenant Ajmer Singh (6/1 Punjab Regiment): NAI, INA 256, p.36.; Captain Maghar Singh (Kapurthala Infantry): AAS Mss Eur F275/3, p.92; Captain S.A. Malik (Bahawalpur Infantry): NAI, INA 428, p.12.
[672] Mercado, *Shadow Warriors*, pp.80-81.
[673] Harry Seaman, *The Battle at Sangshak: Burma, March 1944* (London: Leo Cooper, 1989), pp.50-51.
[674] Kazuo Tamayama and John Nunneley, *Tales by Japanese Soldiers of the Burma Campaign, 1942-1945* (London: Cassell, 2000), p.192.
[675] Allen, *Burma*, pp.191-193.

> enemy it was the task of these men to harangue the Indians and throw pamphlets […] The INA personnel which proceed the Japanese columns in the front line are not left unprotected, but are always covered by Japanese forward troops.[676]

Wazir Mohammed Khan, the INA officer discussed earlier, had been assigned to the Ajmer Butai supporting the advance of 31st Division towards Kohima, and one of his men later described how 'Khan led the column all the time and acted as interpreter in the various villages en route'.[677] Khan and a few of his men had been assigned to the Japanese 138th Infantry Regiment, and CSDIC(I) meticulously documented the routes taken by its three battalions towards Kohima.[678]

Although the assistance given to the Japanese by the INA was important, they were also receiving help from important sections of the civilian population, in particular, from the Kukis tribal group. The research of Guite has demonstrated how the Kukis provided active assistance to the Japanese as part of a broader anti-colonial struggle against British rule, including acting as scouts, helping with intelligence gathering, and acting as porters.[679] Of particular note is the way in which the British V-Force intelligence unit was compromised, with the Chin Hill Battalion suffering large scale Kuki desertions.[680] The negative intelligence impact for the British was serious: Allen describes how in the early stages of U-GO, Japanese units were passing through areas monitored by V-Force without there being any resultant intelligence reports, although he does not offer any explanation as to the reason.[681] Some Kukis also served with INA units, with twenty four known to have been killed in action against British forces, while almost six hundred were later imprisoned by

[676] AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.191.
[677] Ibid., p.134.
[678] AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.190.
[679] Jangkhomang Guite, 'Representing Local Participation in INA–Japanese Imphal Campaign: The Case of the Kukis in Manipur, 1943–45', *Indian Historical Review,* 37, 2 (2010), 291–309.
[680] Ibid., p.295.
[681] Allen, *Burma*, p.196.

the British authorities for having helped the Japanese, with many others going into hiding.[682] A recent oral history project, *Forgotten Voices of the Japan Laan* [invasion], also provides many examples of local cooperation with the Japanese.[683] One example is a civilian named Achung Kom, who is pictured displaying his Japanese sword, and who acted as a guide for a Japanese unit and 'had to move around to the various Japanese and INA positions'.[684] It is interesting to note, that in most later British accounts of the campaign, the cooperation between some of the local Manipuri population and the Japanese has generally been ignored, with only pro-British groups such as the Naga mentioned by authors such as Slim.[685] A rare exception is Seaman's book on the battle of Sangshak (see below) which mentions 'renegade Kuki tribesmen', although it provides no hint of the scale of what occurred.[686] It is argued that a figure such as Slim would have known what occurred, particularly in the case of V-Force, but suppressed evidence of collaboration by the Kukis and some other Manipuris because it would have risked highlighting their anti-colonial motivations. In terms of shaping British post-war memory, as with knowledge relating to the INA, some things were best forgotten.

Indian troops were being captured from the beginning of the U-GO offensive. One was Second Lieutenant Harswarn Singh of the 9/12 Frontier Force Regiment, described as a 'young intelligent graduate' who was stationed on the Indo-Burma border at Moreh, when on the night of 15 and 16 March 1944 his position was attacked by the Japanese. Exactly how he came to be captured was unclear to CSDIC(I). He claimed that he had attempted to

[682] Guite, *Kukis in Manipur*, p.299.
[683] Yaiphaba Meetei Kangjam, *Forgotten Voices of the Japan Laan: The Battle of Imphal and the Second World War in Manipur* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2019). This is a beautifully produced book with many colour plates featuring the interviewees.
[684] Ibid., pp.60-65.
[685] Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, pp.341-342.
[686] Seaman, *Sangshak*, p.51.

withdraw with his nine men but had then fallen in a 'dry nullah bed' and hit his head, waking to find himself alone, and was subsequently captured by the Japanese and handed over to the Maghar Butai. He named one of his men as having volunteered to act as a guide for Japanese forces.[687] It was at the end of March 1944 that he volunteered for the INA and later in the year, while based in Rangoon, he made several propaganda broadcasts over the radio.[688] In a key respect his case was a typical one in 1944, because as another CSDIC(I) report put it: 'It is of interest to note that only a small number of Indian officers were captured […] in the 1944 campaign, but most of them volunteered to join the INA'.[689]

The battle at Sangshak

One of the most significant actions fought during the early weeks of the U-GO offensive took place at a Naga village named Sangshak (near Ukhrul, see Map 2), where the Indian Parachute Brigade along with other smaller units, confronted Japanese infantry regiments from both the 31st and 15th Divisions (19 to 26 March 1944).[690] Although Slim only devotes a single paragraph to the 'savage fighting' that occurred during the week-long battle, he does note that 'the ten days delay and the heavy casualties this small force and the R.A.F. who supported them had inflicted on the enemy were of inestimable value', the latter a reference to the opportunity the delay provided to reinforce Kohima before the Japanese arrived. Slim also notes that 'with the Japanese came the Jiffs, as we called members of the Indian National Army, who were employed not in direct attacks but in unavailing attempts to

[687] AAS, Mss Eur F275/6, p.70.
[688] Ibid., p.72.
[689] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.20.
[690] The 50th Parachute Brigade consisted of the 152nd Battalion of Indian volunteers (from twenty Indian Regiments), and the 153rd Battalion of Gurkha volunteers with whom Seaman served (from nine Gurkha Regiments), as well as support units. Attached to the Brigade were artillery units, the 4/5 Mahratta Light Infantry Battalion and two Companies of the Nepalese Kali Bahadur Regiment. Seaman, *Sangshak*, p.9., p.139.

confuse and suborn our Indian troops'.[691] Allen provides a detailed description of the brutal engagement, drawing on both British and Japanese sources, but makes no mention of the INA.[692] It is Seaman's later account that provides the most detailed account of the British side of the battle, although again, there is no mention of the INA. As a British officer who fought at Sangshak, Seaman highlights that the contemporary British reaction to the battle was very different from later heroic perceptions, to the point where one of the last chapters in his book is entitled 'The Black Legend'.[693]

It was in the aftermath of the battle, as the British, Indian, and Gurkha troops who had made it back to British lines were recovering, that they first became aware of what Seaman describes as the 'scurrilous rumours'. As he puts it: 'The malice in the tales was impartial; both the Gurkha and the Indian battalions had 'faltered', 'failed', 'run-away' – or worse. Within weeks the stories were all over India', although he does not expand on what he meant by the term 'worse'.[694] Seaman maintains that these rumours were simply ill-informed and baseless and that, in particular, the British brigade commander was unfairly tarnished with the accusation of having experienced a nervous breakdown during the battle.[695] But Seaman also notes what seemed to him to be a surprising fact: in the aftermath of the battle the Japanese had apparently treated the mostly Indian prisoners they had captured very well, eventually releasing the vast majority of them.[696] It is argued that the explanation for the emergence of the 'Black Legend' is due in part to the impact the INA had at Sangshak, a factor that has been previously ignored in the secondary literature.

[691] Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, pp.299-300.
[692] Allen, *Burma*, pp.212-220.
[693] See: Seaman, *Sangshak*, Chapter 10.
[694] Ibid., p.119.
[695] Ibid., p.120.
[696] Ibid., pp.108-109.

CSDIC(I) material indicates that both the Ajmer Butai and Maghar Butai were present at Sangshak.[697] It was during their advance towards Ukhrul (see Map 2) that the Ajmer Butai first encountered paratroopers from 50th Parachute Brigade, along with some 'V' Force patrols, and suffered some casualties as a result.[698] As Seaman outlines, the prelude to the main battle at Sangshak was a fierce engagement at a feature known as Point 7378, where an isolated position held by 'C' Company of 152nd (Parachute) Battalion was attacked by the Japanese, with only a few paratroopers ultimately escaping.[699] Havildar Ganga Singh later described how the position had been overrun after all three British officers had been killed in action, with fifty two paratroopers captured by the Japanese, twelve of whom were wounded including himself. The INA then became involved, with the fit prisoners 'subjected to propaganda by a "Lt" Sohan Lal and all agreed to join the INA', and subsequently 'all 40 men went off to the front lines with the Japanese'. Because of his severe leg wound Ganga Singh was sent to a Japanese hospital, although he managed to escape a few months later.[700] The same pattern, of Indian paratroopers being captured after a fierce battle but then rapidly agreeing to work with the INA and Japanese, was to be repeated again after the main engagement at Sangshak.

With the arrival of Japanese troops in their vicinity apparently taking 50th Parachute Brigade by surprise, the initial fighting persuaded its British commander to concentrate his forces at the village of Sangshak, in order to avoid their piecemeal destruction.[701] As was outlined above, there are several excellent accounts of the subsequent battle based on both British and Japanese sources, the climax of the fighting occurring on 26 March 1944, with the

[697] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.19.
[698] NAI, INA 256, p.1.
[699] Seaman, *Sangshak*, p.64. Took place on 19 to 20 March 1944.
[700] AAS, Mss Eur F275/9, pp.221-222.
[701] Seaman, *Sangshak*, p.69.

surviving British forces evacuating that night.[702] While there is no evidence in the CSDIC(I) archives of INA attempts at subversion during the battle, there are a variety of references to what occurred afterwards. One INA soldier at Sangshak was a former Royal Indian Army Service Corps (RIASC) Jemadar named Raza Hasan Ansari, who had been captured at the surrender of Singapore, and had joined the INA Special Service Group in June 1943. Described by CSDIC(I) as 'a staunchly orthodox Muslim and a man of argumentative habits', Ansari had been assigned to the Ajmer Butai, and at Sangshak was involved in dealing with recently captured Indian prisoners.[703] In the aftermath of the battle, Ansari 'was told to report to a certain point, and on going there he saw a large number of Indian [prisoners] from 152 Parachute [Battalion] sitting on the ground with their hands tied behind their backs'. A Japanese warrant officer was menacingly 'strutting up and down brandishing his sword', apparently considering killing them. However, when the warrant officer saw Ansari, 'he approached him, saluted him in full view of the [prisoners]' and, theatrics over, left.[704] The performance appears to have had its desired effect. As Ansari later put it, he 'was impressed by the total absence of security-mindedness' among the Indian prisoners at Sangshak, who he claimed gave up information 'without even being interrogated', while many 'said that they had joined the Army solely in order to be able to go over to the Japanese side when occasion offered; most of the men also said they were members of Congress'. From the description these men come across as being in shock, and given the intensity of the fighting over the previous few days, combined with the relief of being apparently saved from imminent execution, that is hardly surprising. But they also appear to have been 'very surprised to find Indians fighting with the Japanese, and apparently had had no previous knowledge of the INA'. It was perhaps because of the level of shock that these men were

[702] Ibid., p.103.
[703] NAI, INA, 499, part.3, p.202.
[704] Ibid., p.211.

experiencing, that the suborning of these men appears to have been generally successful with, in particular, two named Havildar's from 152nd Parachute Battalion becoming 'immediate favourites' of the INA.[705]

In general, the Ajmer Butai appears to have been reasonably successful at suborning Indian troops once they had been captured, although it is unclear whether they had any success in persuading Indian troops to spontaneously surrender (unlike the Malik Butai discussed below). One CSDIC(I) report notes that 'About 100 to 200 paratroops surrendered to the [Ajmer] party and willingly volunteered for service with the INA', although this probably refers to those captured by the Japanese and then handed over to the Ajmer Butai.[706] But how much of this was known to the British military at the time? The War Diary of 152nd Parachute Battalion demonstrates that returning Indian prisoners were being screened when they arrived back at British lines, with some returnees giving cause for concern. For example, one man among a group of ten was found to have 'a suspicious piece of Japanese writing on Parachute silk', with the result that the whole party was sent to the Forward Interrogation Centre (FIC) run by CSDIC(I).[707] As Allen notes, CSDIC(I) was active throughout the campaign at Imphal and Kohima as part of broader intelligence gathering efforts.[708] A report dated 12 May 1944 gives a good indication of the comprehensive nature of the intelligence CSDIC(I) was able to gather. Entitled 'Subject: Look-out notice', it lists approximately one hundred and fifty names of Indian members of the Ajmer Butai, a clear indication of how effective British intelligence gathering could be at this time.[709] With respect to the captured paratroopers, a later report notes how 'some of the captives

[705] Ibid.
[706] NAI, INA, 256, p.1.
[707] TNA, WO 172/5063, 3 April 1944.
[708] Allen, *Burma*, p.396.
[709] NAI, INA, 256, p.36.

volunteered at once and operated with the Japanese against British forces at Kohima', although exactly when CSDIC(I) became aware of this is unclear.[710] It is difficult to reconcile this CSDIC(I) statement with Slim's claim, noted earlier, that the INA's efforts at Sangshak had been 'unavailing'.[711] Indeed, it is suggested that rumours of what these men had done contributed to Seaman's 'Black Legend' that characterised the contemporary British reaction to the battle at Sangshak, which would make collaboration with the enemy what Seaman hinted at, when he suggested something 'worse' than cowardice.[712]

Kohima and beyond

Although the Japanese advance was delayed by the battle at Sangshak, it was not stopped, and the INA continued to be in the vanguard. It was on 1 April 1944, when Wazir Mohammed Khan of the Ajmer Butai went forward with three of his men to observe a road north of Kohima at Tuphema, that he saw a British convoy moving north. He blocked the road, opened fire, and sent for reinforcements, and after about thirty minutes three Japanese Infantry companies attacked and captured the entire convoy of between forty and fifty jeeps and lorries, containing a large quantity of supplies and weapons, with the jeeps soon being used by both the INA and Japanese. Around fifteen to twenty Indian troops were also captured, and they were sent to Chizami where Khan's commander Ajmer Singh was based.[713] It was on 9 April 1944 that Khan penetrated as far as Dimapur in Assam with a seven-man patrol that included three Japanese (see Map 2). The plan had been to attack a 'small aerodrome on the outskirts of Dimapur', but this was thwarted when they came under fire from a convoy, with one man killed and the 'cooly' carrying the ammunition

[710] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.19.
[711] Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, p.300.
[712] Seaman, *Sangshak*, p.119.
[713] AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.191.

disappearing. In the end, Khan sent one of his men to reconnoitre Dimapur town, and he 'returned with some roti [flatbread] and some cigarettes'.[714] The patrol to Dimapur probably represents the furthest point of the INA's penetration into India in 1944, the high-water mark of its advance into India.

By this stage in early April at Kohima the main battle between British and Japanese forces was underway, while simultaneously the Ajmer Butai 'operated widely and actively'.[715] They were certainly noticed at night, when INA loudspeakers would harangue the British lines during lulls in the fighting. As one British officer remembered, on one occasion at least, the British fired towards the speaker but 'the voice still went on, repeating the same message over and over again. What the Indian troops thought of it, it's hard to say. But certainly none of them moved from their weapon pits'.[716] Ansari, the former Jemadar who was a member of the Ajmer Butai, later gave CSDIC(I) details on some of the more unusual men among the many who manned the loudspeakers. These included a named British private, who after being captured was kept in a hut by the Japanese and 'finally persuaded to do front-line shouting by promising him food', although 'the Japanese could only understand [him] with great difficulty, and probably had little idea of what [he] was saying'.[717] Another voice at Kohima in April 1944 was a named Gurkha rifleman who had been captured in 1942. As well as manning loudspeakers, the INA also performed tasks such as raising a Congress flag on a prominent hilltop at Kohima, while on other occasions they mounted flags on large bamboo poles.[718] However, there is no evidence that these efforts had any impact and Ansari himself escaped to British lines, although only after a shooting

[714] Ibid., p.192.
[715] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.19.
[716] Arthur Swinson, *Kohima* (London: Cassell, 1966), p.93.
[717] NAI, INA, 499, part.3, p.214.
[718] Ibid., p.214.

incident at night that he claimed had been an attempt specifically on his life, and that left another INA man who looked like him dead and the British private wounded. CSDIC(I) was unsure whether someone had tried to murder Ansari (the Japanese had dismissed Ansari's assertions), but it is clear that he provided them with a wealth of information on how the Ajmer Butai of the INA had operated at Kohima.[719] Nor was Ansari alone in taking the opportunity to escape to British lines, with CSDIC(I) stating that 'a large number' of INA troops took the opportunity to desert.[720]

One episode at Kohima involving a member of the Ajmer Butai illustrates the social links that existed between the Indian personnel on both sides. Mohammed Hussain (a former Jemadar in 2/9 Jat Regiment) was commanding one party of the Butai at Kohima in April, when he discovered that his nephew, a naik (corporal) from 152nd Parachute Battalion captured at Sangshak, was with another. He had him transferred to his party and they served together until the end of the campaign in July when, having given him some money, he helped his cousin escape back to British lines.[721] Encountering relatives in this way may have been unusual, but it emphasises again the close personal links that INA troops sometimes had with those they faced across the battlefield.

The activities performed by the three Butais normally consisted of reconnaissance and propaganda work, although on occasion this brought them into contact with British troops. One example involved an INA reconnaissance party led by a former Indian warrant officer, an Indian Christian named Gerald Lewis, in March 1944. While reconnoitring British positions they spotted footprints, and after following them managed to surprise and capture

[719] Ibid., p.216.
[720] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.19.
[721] AAS, Mss Eur F275/5, pp.50-57. CSDIC(I) described Hussain as a 'deep dyed traitor'.

two British soldiers. However, they were immediately fired upon from the main British position only a few hundred yards away, and when the British troops tried to escape, the INA men shot them. CSDIC(I) only became aware of the incident much later in 1946, and only then because the INA personnel had been awarded medals to commemorate the killing of the British soldiers.[722] In general, when it came to British troops who were captured, 'INA officers were instructed to ill-treat and humiliate all British [prisoners], and give [Indian *jawans*] a chance to strike, kick or otherwise show their contempt for them', following a dictum that stated 'To make the dog hate the rat, you must show the dog blood'.[723] In some cases things went further, with one example involving men from the Malik Butai, where a captured British soldier who had been refusing to give information was bayonetted by two named INA soldiers, of whom one 'afterwards remarked that he at least had done his duty by killing a Britisher'.[724] That said, the attitude towards captured British troops was not always so callous. On one occasion when Wazir Muhammed Khan visited the Ajmer Butai headquarters at Chizami, he saw a named British major 'who was in very poor shape as a result of Japanese treatment. Ajmer Singh and all Indians in Chizami were feeling very bad about him'. Khan arranged to 'secretly release him, and having bandaged his eyes, took him across a mountain, gave him a map, unbound his eyes and directed him to British lines', while also giving him some clothes as he was 'virtually naked'.[725] The richness of the detail in the CSDIC(I) archives, is a constant reminder of just how impoverished the post-war memory of the INA has been.

[722] AAS, Mss Eur F275/8, p.152.
[723] NAI, INA, 499, part.3, p.211.
[724] NAI, INA, 256, p.76.
[725] AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.191.

It was not long after he had released the British major, that Wazir Muhammed Khan suffered wounds that brought his active part in the campaign to an end. Khan claimed to CSDIC(I) that 'the Japanese treated him very much as one of their own' and he was 'used by them for independent missions', and on this occasion he was tasked with raiding British positions at Zubza, west of Kohima, with his own men and six Japanese. On 19 April 1944, Khan attempted to destroy a bridge north of Zubza, even though the British forces defending it included two tanks. The attempt failed when the British tanks 'opened fire on the first man who tried to lay the demolition charge', leaving Khan's raiding party exposed in the open. It was in this desperate moment, that in order to save the others, one of his INA men 'snatched' two slabs of explosive and 'stuck them in his belt and rushed a tank blowing himself up and putting the tank out of action'.[726] However, the other tank was still firing and although the party managed to get away Khan was 'severely wounded, receiving a bullet in the knee and another in the thigh', with three of the Japanese also being wounded. Subsequently, Khan and the wounded Japanese were taken by jeep to a Japanese hospital where, after being operated on, he started a slow recovery.[727] The aggressiveness that the Japanese seem to have admired in Khan had finally caught up with him.

Imphal

As Sundaram highlights in 'Paper Tiger', it was only at this point in late April 1944 that the INA's 1st Division finally reached the Imphal battle front, establishing its headquarters at Chamol, southeast of Imphal.[728] It therefore arrived when the Japanese advances had already stalled, and the campaign had developed into a contest of attrition. With the division

[726] Ibid., p.192.
[727] Ibid., p.193.
[728] Sundaram, 'Paper Tiger', p.48. Other INA forces were deployed elsewhere, for example in the Chin Hills in Burma to the South.

composed of three INA guerilla regiments named after the Indian National Congress political leaders, Gandhi, Nehru and Azad, it operated in support of the Japanese 33rd Division, in the area of the Palel to Tamu road.[729] One prominent operation launched in early May by the INA, involved an attempted attack on the British airfield at Palel, with both Sundaram and Allen claiming they attacked the airfield itself.[730] However, the War Diary of the British Gurkha unit involved suggests that the INA forces were caught in a skilfully laid ambush before they arrived at the airfield.[731] The subsequent experiences of these regiments, and other INA forces that arrived in the Imphal area even later, are summarised by Toye as involving being 'slowly wasted away by battle, disease, desertion and starvation', with one of the regiments soon being referred to as the 'Malaria Unit' by the Japanese. In particular, the beginning of the monsoon later in May marked a significant deterioration in conditions.[732] Throughout this period the Malik Butai was active in the Imphal area, and although largely ignored in the secondary literature, it would have a significant impact on the post-war memory of the INA at Imphal, at least among the local population in Manipur itself.

As Katoch has pointed out, 'For decades, the INA War Museum was the only museum dedicated to the Second World War in Manipur'. Situated in Moirang at the southern end of Loktak Lake (south of Imphal), the museum is close to the house where the Malik Butai established its headquarters, and where it hoisted its flag (whose design included a springing tiger) for the first time on Indian soil.[733] Malik's CSDIC(I) interrogation notes that the Butai operated in support of the Japanese 33rd Division during its advance, performing many

[729] Ibid.
[730] Ibid.; Allen, *Burma*, p.227. Note: Allen acknowledged that accounts varied regarding this action.
[731] TNA, WO 172/5034, 4/10 Gurkha Rifles, 3 May 1944.
[732] Toye, *Springing Tiger*, p.125.
[733] Katoch, *Imphal*, p.81.

reconnaissance patrols, during which 'several INA personnel distinguished themselves'.[734] One INA party commanded by a former Havildar named Hari Singh intercepted withdrawing British forces at Tuitim, where he 'propagandised and suborned' a platoon of Indian Sappers & Miners and captured 'vehicles and rations', although the men 'soon afterwards deserted and went back to the British line'.[735] Another incident illustrates what would become a standard pattern: the employment of a 'quick release' strategy, where Indian prisoners were rapidly propagandised and released. On 12 April 1944, a newly captured named Indian lieutenant and a named Jemadar from the Sappers & Miners were, after being propagandised, given money and 'sufficient propaganda literature' and then released back to British lines. As CSDIC(I) noted: 'These two men have NOT admitted to their fifth-column task, and are presumably still with their units'.[736]

Another remarkable episode of a similar type involved a Lieutenant Khubi Ram of the 5/6 Rajputana Rifles, who in May 1944 was the commander of a thirty-one man fighting patrol that was captured. It is unclear what Ram told CSDIC(I) during his first encounter with them, but he was classified White and it was only months later, when CSDIC(I) were interrogating captured members of the Malik Butai, that they became aware that something more unusual had occurred. When he was re-interrogated by CSDIC(I), Ram claimed that his patrol had been captured by the Japanese after a short engagement before being handed over to the Malik Butai.[737] He claimed that in subsequent discussions with Malik he persuaded him not to send him and his men to the rear and later, under the cover of several Allied air attacks, managed to escape with all the men. However, captured members of the

[734] NAI, INA, 428, part.4, p.12., p.21.
[735] Ibid., p.22.
[736] Ibid., p.23.
[737] AAS, Mss Eur F275/9, p.134.

Malik Butai gave a consistently different version of events to CSDIC(I). One striking aspect of the episode was that when Ram's platoon was handed over to the Malik Butai on 16 May 1944, they claimed it 'was armed, and equipped, and was unguarded'. A member of the Butai 'enquired why the platoon was given such unusual treatment and was told by a Japanese that it had voluntarily surrendered', while another claimed that subsequently Ram had been designated as a 'quick release' agent and had been given money by Malik.[738] One captured member of the Butai was a former lance naik (corporal) named Gauri Shankar, who had acted as the cook and orderly for a Japanese liaison officer named Captain Ito assigned to the Butai. He claimed that Ram had been tasked to go 'to the British Supply Dump at Bishenpur and persuade the [Indian troops] in charge of the dump not to destroy the dump when the INA advanced to seize it', and thereafter proceed to his own unit to spread propaganda.[739] The final CSDIC(I) report on Ram was issued on 26 December 1944, and despite the evidence against him he retained his security classification of White, apparently because they could find no evidence that he was actively spreading propaganda. Nonetheless, it concluded: 'On the other hand, an officer who can get into enemy hands with his men and get out of them again so easily, and then flatly refuse to say how he did it, is unfit for command in any combatant unit', before recommending that his retention in the service should be reviewed.[740] The lenient security classification fits the pattern noted in Chapter One, of a classification reflecting contemporaneous risk rather than being a judgement of previous actions (and thereby obscuring the extent of anti-British activity), but the episode also emphasises a key feature of INA tactics: the use of 'quick release' agents. This is a tactic that by its nature, has tended to obscure the impact of the INA during the campaign.

[738] Ibid., p.135.
[739] Ibid., p.166.
[740] Ibid., pp.173-174.

Retreat

The Malik Butai remained in the Moirang area until July 1944, although it was driven from the town for two weeks by British troops from the end of May (an episode that led to the death of Captain Ito).[741] Among Malik's activities was the creation of a civilian spy ring which provided regular reports on Allied troop positions.[742] He also organised seven infiltration parties that were dispatched towards India, although most were either captured or surrendered.[743] The Malik Butai finally left Moirang on 2 July 1944 as part of the general Japanese retreat although by that time Malik himself, along with many of his men, was seriously ill with dysentery.[744] Nonetheless, he survived the rigours of the retreat to Burma and managed to bring most of his men back from the campaign.[745] He would be the only Indian Butai commander to escape.

In the Kohima area the Ajmer Butai had continued to operate, although its commander Ajmer Singh was wounded by a shell splinter on 10 May 1944. It was at the end of May that he handed over command of the Butai to his Gurkha second-in-command, a former Jemadar in 2/1 Gurkha Rifles named Dalbahadur Thapa.[746] On 1 June 1944 Ajmer Singh 'was left behind wounded […] and fell into British hands', his later claim to CSDIC(I) that he had intended to surrender not being believed.[747] The Butai was already withdrawing by this stage and reached Ukhrul (see Map 2) by 18 June 1944, although on 29 June Dalbahadur Thapa was captured when he went into a Naga village 'with coolies' to get water. Close by had

[741] NAI, INA, 428, part.4, p.27.
[742] Ibid., p.26.
[743] Ibid., p.29.
[744] Ibid., p.28.
[745] Ibid., p.33. Malik Butai figures (total 225): Returned, 145; Killed in Action, 15; Wounded, 10; Died in hospital, 15; Missing (including deserters), 40.
[746] NAI, INA, 379, part.12, p.20.
[747] NAI, INA, 256, p.14.

been a platoon from 153 Parachute Battalion who engaged his main party, killing two Japanese and 'wounded [Sergeant] Arashima, who was subsequently "chopped up" by a Naga', the ultimate result being that thirty-one men who had been with Dalbahadur Thapa were captured. CSDIC(I) was clear how important Dalbahadur Thapa had been, summarising his role as: 'active in the Kohima area and was responsible for the suborning and absorbing into the INA of about 300 Indian Army personnel captured in action'.[748] Many of the Maghar Butai fared no better, with Maghar Singh surrendering on 25 June 1944 along with a friend of his from the Ajmer Butai, a former Havildar in the Kapurthala Infantry named Pritam Singh. CSDIC(I) concluded that their joint surrender 'was prompted by expediency alone'.[749]

The horrific conditions experienced by Japanese and INA forces on the retreat from Imphal have been described extensively in the secondary literature. Fay quotes at length from an account of it written by the Japanese Intelligence officer Fujiwara (who had established the original INA with Mohan Singh), part of which reads:

> Japanese and INA officers and men, skinny and half-naked, staggered along with the help of canes. Many of us walked on bare feet smeared with mud and blood, and our faces were ashen, swollen with malnutrition and scaly because of skin disease. Along the edge of the jungle on both sides of the road, the bodies of fallen soldiers lay in an endless line. […] Bodies of INA soldiers who died near a river were tossed into the water by their comrades according to Hindu rituals. It was painful to watch.[750]

Toye describes how many of the INA captured by British forces at this time were suffering from advanced malnutrition, and among the numerous Japanese dead 'were found many of

[748] NAI, INA, 379, part.12, p.22.
[749] AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.13.
[750] Quoted in: Fay, *Forgotten Army*, pp.302-303.

the INA who had died of starvation'.[751] Their bodies were still being found months later, with one British officer recalling finding 'skeletons with long hair' in abandoned native huts, the remains he believed of Sikh INA troops who had died during the retreat.[752] But nonetheless, many did get out. Among them was Wazir Mohammed Khan, the INA officer from Ajmer Butai who had been wounded at Zubza in April, but who had recovered enough from his wounds to undertake a gruelling six-week retreat through atrocious weather, leading a combined group of forty-two INA and twenty-two Japanese troops, although subsequently he was hospitalised until December 1944.[753] And despite the risks and privations of the retreat, CSDIC(I) noted that a 'fair number' of the paratroopers captured at Sangshak who had been 'swayed by the INA propaganda […] attempted to withdraw into Burma with the INA when it eventually retreated'.[754]

By the time the retreat from Imphal was over it was almost exactly a year since the INA's grand parades in Singapore described at the beginning of this section. The INA forces committed to the Imphal campaign, the vast majority of whom were former prisoners of war, had suffered significant casualties, with CSDIC(I) estimating that, of six thousand INA troops involved, some three thousand four hundred had been lost. These included three hundred killed in action, a thousand captured, six hundred deserters, and another fifteen hundred who had died of malnutrition or disease.[755] In addition, many of the two thousand six hundred who returned were hospital cases, although some of the fitter ones would go onto form the INA's 'X' Regiment, the unit encountered in Chapter One.

[751] Toye, *Springing Tiger*, p.121.
[752] Fay, *Forgotten Army*, p.303.
[753] AAS, Mss Eur F275/15, p.193.
[754] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.19.
[755] NAI, INA, 402, p.21.

In summary, the post-war memory of the INA's involvement in the Imphal campaign has been profoundly shaped by the suppression of information on their activities, in particular the impact of the Ajmer, Maghar and Malik Butai's during the campaign. It is clear from the CSDIC(I) archival material now available, that the INA had much greater success at subverting captured Indian troops than the current secondary literature suggests. The example of the paratroopers at Sangshak is particularly noteworthy, as it demonstrates just how effective the suppression of knowledge has been, even though CSDIC(I) and those with access to its intelligence information were aware of what had occurred. It is a reminder of the importance of forgetting in the shaping of historical narratives.

Crimes and punishment: forgotten courts-martial of captured INA troops

One of the dominant aspects of the post-war memory of the INA is the prominence of courts-martial of former members conducted in late 1945 and early 1946 which, as was outlined in Chapter One, had such a significant impact on Indian nationalist sentiment. In contrast, and almost forgotten, are the courts-martial conducted prior to the end of the war involving former Indian prisoners who were captured while serving in the INA, some of which resulted in the execution of defendants. This section examines the available material relating to these courts-martial proceedings held before August 1945, utilising court proceedings where available, but also drawing on other relevant sources. It addresses the question: how was post-war memory of the INA affected by the suppression of knowledge of these courts-martial?

It should be acknowledged that the courts-martial in question remain an area of enquiry where only a limited amount of archival material is currently available. The proceedings of

many of the courts-martial identified below appear to be missing from the archival record, and it is unclear whether the files were destroyed or are still being held but unacknowledged. Nonetheless, the National Archives of India hold four relevant courts-martial, and it is these combined with other sources that form the basis of the following discussion.[756] It begins by examining courts-martial of INA troops captured in the field who were given custodial sentences, reviews what is known about those cases that resulted in executions, and finally examines the circumstances surrounding the death in British custody of the two INA Butai commanders, Ajmer Singh and Maghar Singh.

One court-martial involved a *jawan* named Fakir Singh, originally of 1/15 Punjab Regiment, who was captured by a Gurkha patrol from 4/5 Gurkha Rifles in the Arakan on 11 February 1944, wearing civilian clothes and carrying a rifle.[757] Although a Sikh, when he was captured he had no beard and a shaven head, a fact that would be viewed as significant at his court-martial. The Gurkha patrol commander described to the court how Fakir Singh at the time of his capture 'produced a bidi [cigarette] and asked for matches to light it with. I asked him why he smoked since he was a Sikh, and he said that he felt that this was an occasion to smoke'.[758] At his court-martial in October 1944 he was charged with 'Waging War Against the King', the punishment for which could include the death penalty.[759] This was the standard charge used in all the courts-martial of this type and (as was seen in Chapter One) was also used in the initial courts-martial in the post-war period. The prosecution was able to call a former member of the INA as a prosecution witness, who described how 'it was a general thing for members of the INA, when operating in places where there were

[756] Relevant files: NAI, INA 486, 487, 488, 489. Note that the archive also contains eight post-war proceedings: NAI, INA 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495 (the 'Red Fort' trial of Sahgal et.al. (five volumes)), 496, 497.
[757] NAI, INA 487, p.11.
[758] Ibid.
[759] Ibid., p.8.

Mussalman, to change their appearance and appear a Mussulmans themselves', which in this case involved a Sikh shaving his beard and head.[760] To strengthen his largely circumstantial case, the Prosecution Counsel emphasised Fakir Singh's willingness to transgress religious norms, seemingly an attestation of guilty intent from a British perspective.[761] Apparently unable to muster a viable defence argument, the Defence Counsel resorted to claiming that Fakir Singh's behaviour was the result of stupidity. Highlighting that although Fakir Singh had joined the Indian Army in 1932, he had never been promoted, he asserted that 'this shows that his brain-power is not large'.[762] The tactic smacks of desperation, and unsurprisingly it did not work, with Fakir Singh being found guilty and sentenced to 'Transportation for Life'.[763] In practice, he would be released from prison less than two years later, although he would obviously not have known that at the time.[764]

Another court-martial was of a former Jemadar from 5/2 Punjab Regiment named Nikka Ram, who was captured by British forces in an ambush on 18 December 1943 deep inside British territory near Kohima. When taken prisoner, he had the trappings of an intelligence operative, including: a loaded pistol, two sketch maps, a line-tapping telephone receiver, compass, a Japanese grenade, a large quantity of Indian currency notes, and a Japanese pass.[765] The pass had been issued to him by the *Hikari Kikan*, the Japanese intelligence organisation that dealt with the INA, and included a statement that in translation read: 'the above mentioned person is an operative of this organisation'.[766] Despite this evidence Nikka Ram was at first acquitted (he had claimed that he had joined the INA to escape to British

[760] Ibid., p.14.
[761] Ibid., p.27.
[762] Ibid., p.28.
[763] Ibid., p.20.
[764] Ibid., p.2. Released from Lucknow Central Jail, 18 September 1946.
[765] NAI, INA 488, p.29.
[766] Ibid., p.33.

lines), but in March 1945 the court reassembled 'for the purpose of taking further evidence and reconsidering their finding'.[767] The result was that he was found guilty and sentenced to 'Death by Hanging', although the sentence was commuted to 'Transportation for Life'.[768]

The other two available courts-martial culminated in a final sentence of execution. One of these was held in September 1944 and involved combined proceedings against two men who had been detained while trying to penetrate into India. These were Havildar Clerk Lachman Singh, who was captured by the INA at Taung Bazar in the Arakan on 4 February 1944, and Fitter Sardar Singh, who had been captured in 1942, with both charged with 'Waging War Against the King'.[769] A witness stated that following his capture 'Lachman Singh did not do fatigues as other prisoners of war did. He used to converse freely with [Havildar Major] Massa Singh of the 1/15 Punjab who was at that time a Major in the INA', while 'the accused Sardar Singh had already been selected for infiltration duties into India'.[770] Interestingly, the witness claimed that after Lachman Singh was captured by the INA, he had claimed to know Mohan Singh (the original creator of the INA), and as well as joining himself encouraged others to do so.[771] The prosecution alleged that Lachman Singh had agreed to become part of a 'quick-release' party and pass off Sardar Singh as a member of his own unit, in order to penetrate into India.[772] Both men were found guilty, with Lachman Singh given seven years 'Rigorous Imprisonment', and Sardar Singh sentenced to 'Death by Hanging', although there is no indication in the file whether the sentence was carried out.[773]

[767] Ibid., p.22.
[768] Ibid., pp.23-24.
[769] NAI, INA 486, p.6.
[770] Ibid., p.11.
[771] Ibid., p.19.
[772] Ibid., p.40.
[773] Ibid., p.38.

The other court-martial that ended in a sentence of execution was a similar case to that of Nikka Ram discussed above. It involved a former Jemadar from 1st Mysore Infantry named B.G. Gowd, a member of the Malik Butai, who was captured in April 1944 during the Imphal campaign near to the Tiddum Road (and whose experiences were quoted in the discussion of the campaign above). As well as a pistol he was carrying three flags and INA propaganda pamphlets, printed in English, Urdu, Roman Urdu, and Hindi.[774] Found guilty, he was sentenced to 'Death by Hanging', although again there is no indication whether the sentence was carried out.[775]

One characteristic that all four of the available courts-martial have in common is that they all concern relatively low-ranking members of the INA. It is also clear that they represent only a small proportion of the courts-martial that were conducted, with a statement made in the Indian Central Assembly in February 1946 providing more details. Replying to questions raised regarding the treatment of captured INA personnel the War Secretary, Mr. Philip Mason, indicated that twenty-three former Indian Army personnel had been court-martialled prior to 'the recovery of Rangoon', in other words before May 1945.[776] Of these, nine had been hanged, although another eighteen personnel 'had died in custody' including Ajmer Singh and Maghar Singh, who 'had died from self-inflicted gun shot wounds as announced in the press'.[777] Because courts-martial could involve more than one defendant it is unclear exactly how many were conducted. Also missing from the statement are the details of those involved, although one archival source does at least provide details of those executed, and these are listed in the table below.

[774] NAI, INA 489, p.5.
[775] Ibid., pp.14-16.
[776] Future author of *A Matter of Honour.*
[777] '8,000 INA Men in custody: 11,000 Released, Says War Secretary', *The Times of India*, 8 February 1946, p.5.

INA personnel executed following Indian Army courts-martial

Rank	Name	Court-martial location	Date of execution
Naik	Nagindar Singh	Multan	28 August 1943
Lance Naik	Charan Singh	Multan	28 August 1943
Sepoy	Chattar Singh	Delhi	29 July 1944
Sepoy	Nayar Singh	Delhi	29 July 1944
Havildar	Durga Mal	Delhi	25 August 1944
Lance Naik	Hazara Singh	Delhi	25 October 1944
Fitter	Sardar Singh	Calcutta	23 March 1945
Jemadar	K. C. Sharma	Delhi	3 May 1945
Jemadar	Dalbahadur Thapa	Delhi	3 May 1945

It is worth reflecting for a moment on the source of this information: a hand-written list, on the back of a typed page, in an unpublished manuscript.[778] Although from an unofficial source, given that the author was Hugh Toye (see Introduction) it can be viewed as credible, particularly as some of the details can be cross referenced with CSDIC(I) material. The table confirms that Fitter Sardar Singh, whose court-martial was discussed above, was executed in March 1945. However, the absence of Jemadar Gowd from those listed suggests that his sentence of execution was not carried out. The table indicates that the majority of those executed were relatively junior in rank, with no commissioned officers among their number, and only two VCOs (the Jemadars executed in May 1945). Also, based on the names, none were Muslim, with those executed comprising six Sikhs, one Hindu, and two Gurkha's (Durga Mal and Dalbahadur Thapa). Clearly, the courts-martial proceedings of such

[778] Hugh Toye, *Subhas Pasha: an account of the Indian independence movements sponsored by Germany and Japan in World War II* (Unpublished manuscript, St Antony's College Library, Oxford, 1954), reverse of p.520. Note: another copy of this unpublished manuscript is held at the British Library, London.

individuals would be extremely interesting to review, and it is to be regretted that most are not present in the available archives. Although it is relatively straightforward to estimate the quantitative loss of material, it is much more difficult to assess the qualitative loss represented by the missing courts-martial. There are however CSDIC(I) interrogations available for two of those executed, by chance the two Gurkhas, and it is interesting to review their contents to get a sense of the type of evidence that may have been presented at their courts-martial.

Durga Mal was a former Havildar (Sergeant) in 2/1 Gurkha Rifles, who became head of what CSDIC(I) termed the 'Nippon Guerrillas'.[779] This was a Gurkha-only force, independent of the INA, that worked alongside the Japanese in multiple areas and included both military and civilian Gurkha volunteers. A CSDIC(I) report details how the Gurkha military personnel who joined this force were drawn initially from 2/1 and 2/9 Gurkha Rifles (sixteen men, captured 1942), and were later joined by Gurkhas from 3/2 Gurkha Rifles who had served with the first British Chindit operation (twenty-eight men, captured 1943), the most senior of whom was a Subedar. As CSDIC(I) noted, some of these former Chindits went on to fight against the second Chindit operation in Burma in 1944.[780] Other members of the Nippon Guerrillas operating in the Naga Hills in early 1944, often took the opportunity to escape to British lines, but Durga Mal did not, finally being captured near Kohima on 26 March 1944.[781]

In contrast, as was noted earlier in this chapter, Dalbahadur Thapa served in the INA itself, taking over command of the Ajmer Butai during the Imphal campaign. CSDIC(I) observed

[779] AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.203.
[780] AAS, Mss Eur F275/9, p.167.
[781] AAS, Mss Eur F275/3, p.203., p.206.

that ‘he has not put forward any excuse or shown any particular regret for his career of treachery’, his success at suborning captured Indian troops being particularly notable.[782] Dalbahadur Thapa would have represented an unsettling exception to Gurkha loyalty from a British perspective, with his early career giving no hint as to what was to come. Having joined his regiment in 1924 he had reached the VCO rank of Jemadar by 1940, but nonetheless, following his capture in February 1942, had joined the INA with apparent genuine enthusiasm.[783] The fact that he originated from a village in the Dailekh district of Western Nepal is a challenge to the theory advanced by Gould and others, that ‘native-born’ Nepali Gurkhas were less ‘amenable to nationalist propaganda’ than Gurkhas born at Regimental depots in India, so-called ‘line-boys’.[784] Ansari, the Muslim member of the Ajmer Butai mentioned earlier in the chapter, had observed Gurkha INA volunteers at first hand. His experience was that Gurkhas in the INA were often highly committed individuals, and he explained this by stating that ‘propaganda directed to Gurkhas either completely fails to shake the man’s loyalty, or affects his loyalty deeply. There are no luke-warm supporters of the Japanese amongst the Gurkhas’, while he noted that ‘in the INA the Japanese showed a marked preference for Gurkhas’.[785] It is argued that, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the evidence likely to have been presented at the courts-martial of Durga Mal and Dalbahadur Thapa, would have been seen as problematic by the British military authorities, the discomfort exacerbated in their cases by the fact that those involved were Gurkhas, whose loyalty to the British was publicly held to be beyond question. The absence of these and the other courts-martial files, combined with the absolute finality represented by the

[782] NAI, INA, 379, part.12, p.22.
[783] Ibid., p.13.
[784] Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, pp.269-270.
[785] NAI, INA, 499, part.3, p.210.

execution of those convicted, has acted as a form of silencing, the suppression of dangerous knowledge.

There were however two prisoners who never got as far as a court-martial: Ajmer Singh and Maghar Singh, the former Butai commanders from the Imphal campaign. Both died in the same incident while incarcerated at the Red Fort in Delhi, the official British explanation being that they committed suicide on the evening of 5 November 1944. It was in December 1945, as a result of adverse 'reports published in certain sections of the press', that the British authorities issued an account of what had occurred:

> Towards dusk […] a sentry, in spite of orders to the contrary, entered the officers' quarters armed with a Sten gun to switch on the verandah light. […] he was pounced upon by Lt. Ajmer Singh, who endeavoured to take away the gun. Lt. Maghar Singh then joined in the struggle, and getting a stranglehold on the sentry, forced the gun from his hands. The sentry had raised an alarm, but before the guard could be turned out Lt.Maghar Singh had shot Lt. Ajmer Singh and then shot himself through the forehead. […] death was instantaneous in both cases[786]

The sentry, who was the only witness to what had occurred, was subsequently 'sentenced to 28 days rigorous imprisonment' for 'disobeying orders in entering the quarters while armed'.[787] The assertion that it was a joint suicide was based on a letter reportedly found on one of the officers afterwards. Addressed to the British 'Officer Commanding', and apparently signed by both of the Indian officers, it read:

> We could easily escape from here, but did not think it to be proper. This action of ours is purely voluntary and nobody is to blame. Lastly, we thank you very much for the good treatment we received while under you. Adieu, Adieu.[788]

[786] 'No Ill-Treatment of INA Men: Press reports refuted', *The Times of India*, 3 December 1945, p.11.
[787] Ibid.
[788] Ibid.

The tone of the letter seems remarkably sanguine towards their captors given that the INA officers had apparently been driven to the point of suicide, while the claim that they 'could easily escape from here' seems curious, given that they were incarcerated in one of the most secure military stockades in British India. Despite the odd nature of the note, it is not suggested here that the British authorities were involved in their deaths: these officers would almost certainly have been court-martialled and executed anyway (although it would be interesting to discover more about the sentry involved). Nonetheless, it was a strange end to two notable INA commanders who have been largely forgotten today, although it is worth noting that the only account of their deaths is from an official British press release, a reminder of how sparse the archival record can be.

Summary

This chapter has examined the origins and nature of British post-war memory of the INA. It began by reviewing the sources of the portrayal of the INA in the non-nationalist secondary literature, arguing that the two key influences have been the institutional records of the British Indian Army, and British officer memoirs. The importance of the 'generation unit' of British officers, some of whom went on to write influential memoirs, was emphasised. Within these sources, the suppression of the role that the INA played, combined with its consistent denigration when it is mentioned, has had a profound impact on the secondary literature that has persisted to the present day.

The relatively recent availability of CSDIC(I) sources in various archives, provides a valuable new way to interrogate established post-war narratives of the INA. The examination of the INA reconnaissance and subversion forces during the Imphal campaign,

discussed above, demonstrates the potential of CSDIC(I) records for informing future research. However, the archival record of the courts-martial of INA personnel conducted prior to the end of the war, remains frustratingly sparse, a reminder of how much may be missing from the archival record in general. Gajendra Singh, one of the few scholars to have engaged with the CSDIC(I) material, has written of the 'angry voice' that characterised many reports, but on occasion, there is also another voice to be found within them.[789] Concluding a report on the role of the INA in the fighting in early 1945, a CSDIC(I) author concluded: 'A measure of courage cannot be denied to the leaders of INA front-line units in Burma in 1945 when in Feb 45 they faced up to British equipment, tanks, guns, and aircraft with rifles and bullock-carts and empty stomachs'.[790] It is not the type of opinion typically found in post-war British accounts of the INA, but it does suggest, that a more balanced assessment is overdue.

[789] Ganjendra Singh, *Testimonies of Indian Soldiers*, p.178.
[790] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.30.

Chapter 4: Eyewitnesses to suffering: Memory of Indian victims in post-war Japanese war-crimes trials, 1946-1948

In July 1945, two months after being recovered by Australian forces near Wewak in Northern New Guinea, Captain Pirzai of the Bahawalpur State Infantry was interrogated by the Australian branch of CSDIC(I).[791] Although he was lucky to have survived, the toll his experiences had taken was readily apparent to one CSDIC(I) officer, who contrasted his 'emaciated and cadaverous appearance' with pre-war photographs of Pirzai that he had kept with him as a prisoner, 'showing his robust and healthy pre-war physique'.[792] Chapter Two outlined some of the horrific conditions that Captain Pirzai and the other Indian prisoners sent to New Guinea experienced. In common with most episodes of abuse against Indian prisoners, none of Pirzai's experiences would result in a later war-crimes prosecution of responsible Japanese personnel (although his claims regarding anthropophagy were examined in Chapter Two). However, as discussed below, over a hundred trials involving Indian prisoner victims were conducted, mainly by Australian authorities at Rabaul, with a smaller number held by British authorities in Singapore and elsewhere.[793] It will be argued that in some cases, trial outcomes were shaped by a lack of access to British intelligence material on the Indian victims involved, with the result that the post-war memory of Indian prisoner victims has been distorted. This chapter therefore addresses the question: in what ways did the suppression of British intelligence information on Indian prisoners impact the conduct of post-war war crimes trials of the Japanese held by the British and Australian authorities?

[791] AWM, 423/11/51/Part3, p.2.
[792] AAS, F275/7, p.73.
[793] NAA series A471, TNA series WO 235.

The chapter also examines the way in which the trial proceedings were shaped by the legal context and bureaucratic structure of the trials, as well as by the Indian witnesses themselves. An important theme is the nature of the relationships that developed between Indian and Japanese personnel, and this is approached through the theoretical framework outlined by James C. Scott in his book, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcipts*.[794] Scott outlines a model of the relations between dominant and subordinate groups, by distinguishing between a *public transcript* and a *hidden transcript*: the former being 'a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate'; and the latter 'a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant'.[795] His analytical approach is based on the premise that forms of domination that are similar will have a 'family resemblance' to each other, and draws on historical examples such as slavery and serfdom, among others. As he puts it, 'each represents an institutionalised arrangement for appropriating labour, goods, and services from a subordinate population.'[796] A key characteristic of such relations are that they provide 'great latitude for arbitrary and capricious behaviour by the superior'; while the similarities in the type of domination means that 'they will, other things being equal, elicit reactions and patterns of resistance that are broadly comparable'.[797] The various forms of resistance taken together make up what Scott calls the 'infrapolitics of the powerless', and can manifest themselves in a variety of ways including, 'foot-dragging, pilfering, dissimulation, [and] flight'.[798] It is argued here that the experience of Indian prisoners of the Japanese, while grounded in its own unique historical context, has a 'family resemblance' to the experiences of other subordinated groups, rather

[794] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, US: Yale University Press, 1990)
[795] Ibid., p.2, p.xii.
[796] Ibid., p.x.
[797] Ibid., p.xi.
[798] Ibid., p.xiii.

than being a wholly unique experience.[799] The public and hidden transcripts of Scott, provide a framework within which to examine some of the evidence from the trials discussed below.

The chapter begins by providing an overview of the historiography and legal context, and then examines four trials that illustrate different aspects of Indian prisoner experience. Of these, three were conducted by British authorities, and one by the Australians. These are: the first British war-crime trial conducted involving Indian prisoners, that utilises the framework of Scott to explore the relationship between them and their captors; a British trial that illustrates the limits of what evidence could be presented by Indian witnesses; an Australian trial that highlights the issue of former INA personnel acting as witnesses; and lastly, a British trial involving competing accounts of how loyal Indian personnel had remained while prisoners. Although largely forgotten, these war-crimes trials represent a rich source of material detailing Indian prisoner experience.

The Japanese on trial

Research into the post-war trials of Japanese military personnel has accelerated in the last decade, propelled by the release of trial records into the public domain. An overview of the secondary literature on the trials relevant to Indian prisoners was provided in the Introduction, with Totani's *Justice in Asia,* and Fitzpatrick's edited volume *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, highlighted as being particularly valuable. As outlined in the Introduction, there were 2,244 war-crimes trials held in the post-war period by Allied governments, with 330 conducted by the British and 294 by the Australians.[800] Of these, ninety-nine of the

[799] Ibid., p.x.
[800] Totani, *Justice in Asia*, p.9.

Australian trials involved Indian victims, which emphasises the importance of Fitzpatrick's edited volume with respect to Indian prisoners. As previously noted, only thirteen British trials involved Indian prisoner victims - a surprisingly low number.[801] A key objective of this chapter is to address why this was the case.

As was mentioned in the Introduction, the British-held trials have recently been the subject of research by Cheah, a major theme of which is the alleged cooperation of Indian prisoners with the Japanese.[802] The assertion that the Indian witnesses in the trials had volunteered to serve with the Japanese, and had therefore lost their status as prisoners and become subject to Japanese military law, was an argument put forward by defence counsel on behalf of Japanese defendants in numerous trials.[803] However, Cheah's characterisation of Indian troops behaviour using the pejorative term 'desertion' is problematic, given that the vast majority of Indian troops became prisoners of the Japanese having been ordered to surrender by their British commanding officers, although previous chapters have shown that some captured Indian troops did subsequently serve with, or alongside, Japanese forces. Several of the British trials that Cheah includes under the heading of 'Desertion Trials' are reviewed later in this chapter, and it will be argued that it is only by combining the trial transcripts with other archival sources, such as CSDIC(I) intelligence material, that an accurate picture of the status of Indian prisoners in those trials emerges.

The trials held by the British and Australian authorities and examined in this chapter were 'generally referred to as Class BC war crimes trials', as they 'received evidence relating to wartime atrocity', as opposed to Class A trials that considered 'evidence of crimes against

[801] For British file designations see Introduction (all held at TNA).
[802] For example see: Cheah, *BIA Desertion Trials*.
[803] Including: TNA, WO 235/979, *Ikegami*.

peace', which were conducted by the International Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal.[804] They were conducted within a bureaucratic and legal framework authorised in the British context by a Royal Warrant, and in the Australian one by an Act of Parliament.[805] Despite this difference, in practice, the form the trials took was very similar and was based on 'military courts akin to field general courts-martial, with relaxed rules of evidence'.[806] There were no juries, with each case being both heard and judged by typically three military officers. The looser evidence rules have caused controversy in recent legal studies of the trials due to the fact that, as Totani has put it, 'this violated the 1929 Geneva Prisoner-of-War Convention, and the Australian and British authorities must have known it'.[807] One practical example of this was the way that some cases relied heavily on affidavits, with no opportunity in those cases for defence counsel to cross-examine witnesses.[808] While some recent legal scholarship is critical of the way the trials were conducted, there should also be acknowledgement of the difficulties faced in bringing prosecutions against Japanese personnel. One important factor was the deliberate and systematic destruction of documentary and other evidence by the Japanese military authorities in the immediate post-armistice period, prior to their surrender to Allied forces.[809]

In researching the jurisprudence of the trials, legal scholarship has been constrained by the fact that the courts-martial process generated verdicts without the requirement for supporting reasoned decisions. Despite this, the trials generated a considerable quantity of documentation, including the trial transcripts, affidavits from witnesses and the accused, and other forms of legal documentation such as legal reviews by judge-advocates. A judge-

[804] Totani, *Justice in Asia*, p.9.
[805] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.16.
[806] Ibid., p.17.
[807] Totani, *Justice in Asia*, p.17.
[808] Linton, *Hong Kong's War Crimes Trials*, p.44.
[809] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.21.

advocate was a legally trained military officer appointed to the court to act as an advisor in questions of law to all parties in the trial, and therefore performed a key role in ensuring the integrity of the judicial process.[810] In some trials where the Japanese accused had been convicted, and where there was some outstanding question of law or process, the relevant judge-advocate undertook a legal review prior to final confirmation of sentence. As will be seen later in this chapter, in some of the cases involving Indian prisoners, the legal review resulted in the convictions of Japanese personnel not being confirmed, with the result that they were ultimately released. In addition, some of the British judge-advocate legal reviews from trials held in Singapore, are also interesting for the insights they provide into wider questions, in particular, British perceptions of the level of cooperation that occurred between Indian prisoners and the Japanese.

The foundations upon which the British and Australian trials were built, were the investigations into potential war-crimes conducted by military personnel in former Japanese-held territory.[811] One aspect of this process was the collation of allegations of abuse by Japanese personnel from former Allied prisoners, with CSDIC(I) having a central role in the case of Indian prisoners. The majority of these accounts never resulted in a trial, although reviewing those collected from former Indian prisoners provides a disturbing insight into the types of abuse they experienced in captivity. Examples from the Southwest Pacific area recorded by Australian investigators included: an Indian *jawan* who had his arm broken above the wrist when a Japanese private struck him with a shovel; a mock execution conducted by the Japanese to try and force Indian prisoners to 'actively' cooperate with them; the shooting of two *jawans* for being too weak to work; and the beating and subsequent

[810] Ibid., p.115.
[811] Ibid., p.14.

death of a Hindu *jawan* for refusing to skin and butcher a cow.[812] Even if the reports seemed compelling at first sight, with reliable identifications of individual Japanese and detailed descriptions of the incidents themselves, the perpetrators needed to have survived the conflict. As an example of the difficulties, New Guinea was an area where many atrocities against Indian prisoners were reported, but with the high death rate among Japanese personnel in the area (see Chapter Two), there was little chance of the perpetrators being brought to trial. Nonetheless, some trials were conducted involving Indian victims, and the first of these was the *Gozawa* trial, held by the British authorities in Singapore in January 1946.

Domination and resistance in the *Gozawa* trial

The *Gozawa* trial was the first war-crime trial of the Japanese to be conducted by British or Australian authorities.[813] As well as the trial records, sources include a valuable account of the proceedings written by the British officer who acted as defence counsel in the case, Lieutenant Colonel Sleeman.[814] Held in the classical splendour of the Supreme Court building in Singapore, its setting was in marked contrast to the tented enclosure in Rabaul, where most trials involving Indian victims would be conducted by the Australians. But as Sleeman points out, there appears to have been some disappointment in Singapore that the first trial held would not involve crimes committed against the local population, but instead against Indian prisoners held on a distant island in the Pacific Ocean. The reason for this prioritisation was overtly political: to help counter the damage to British colonial prestige

[812] AWM, 1010/4/179, pp. 4, 19, 24, 34.
[813] TNA, WO 235/813, *Gozawa.*
[814] Colin Sleeman, *Trial of Gozawa Sadaichi and Nine Others*. War Crimes Trials ; v. 3. (London: William Hodge, 1948)

inflicted by the outcome of the trial of former INA officers held in Delhi at the end of 1945 (discussed in Chapter One). According to Sleeman, an objective of conducting this trial in January 1946, was to bolster British prestige by demonstrating 'once more the absolute equality before the law of the rights of all Imperial subjects, irrespective of nationality, race or colour'.[815] In practice, the benefit to British colonial prestige appears to have been small with, for example, only very limited coverage of the trial in the Indian press.[816] However, using Scott's theories as a framework, the trial provides an opportunity to explore experiences common to many Indian prisoners. It addresses the question: what was the nature of the relationship between Japanese captors and Indian prisoners in this case?

The *Gozawa* trial opened on 21 January 1946 with the arraignment of ten Japanese military personnel from the same unit, including Captain Gozawa Sadaichi its commander (after whom, as the most senior officer charged, the trial was named), his second in command, Lieutenant Nakamura Kaniyuki, and eight others.[817] The unit was referred to as the *Gozawa Butai*, after the name of its commander. The two most senior defendants are pictured in Figure XII.[818] As Sleeman describes them, those charged 'were no gang of professional thugs and assassins', but were largely 'married men with families' who in the cases' of Captain Gozawa and Lieutenant Nakamura had only been mobilised from the Army reserves in early 1943.[819] While the officers may have come from unremarkable civilian backgrounds, the charges against them included failing to provide adequate food and medical supplies, beating and general maltreatment of the prisoners, and the execution by

[815] Ibid., p.xlii.
[816] A rare example: 'Ill-Treatment of Indian POWS', *The Times of India*, 22 January 1946, p.5.
[817] Film footage of the trial is available online: Imperial War Museum, London (hereafter IWM), ABY195, Opening of War Crimes Trials, Singapore, 21 January 1946 < https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060029771 > [accessed 11 October 2019]
[818] Japanese names recorded as surname first, forename second, however note that Nakamura's name is sometimes incorrectly stated in court records as 'Kaniyuki Nakamura'. Sleeman, *Trial of Gozawa*, p.16.
[819] Ibid., p.lvii.

beheading of an Indian *jawan* named Mohammed Shafi.[820] The offences occurred while the Indian prisoners were being transported from Singapore on a Japanese transport ship the *Thames Maru*, and later while stationed on the island of Babelthuap, one of the remote Palau group of islands situated almost seven hundred miles North of New Guinea (see Map 1). Major Waheed was the first and most senior of twenty Indian prosecution witnesses whose affidavits were submitted to the court as evidence, although neither he, nor any other Indian witness, gave evidence in person. Attached to his affidavit was a report written in October 1945 that provided a general overview of his experiences as a prisoner. This report detailed the history of the INA in 1942 and early 1943, the creation of 'Party No. 15' under Captain Gozawa's command (the *Gozawa Butai*) of which Major Waheed was the most senior Indian officer, the details of the journey on the *Thames Maru*, and their later experiences on Babelthuap.

Of a total of 550 Indian prisoners in the party, 117 had died by the end of the war, a death rate of 21%. Although deaths occurred throughout their time as prisoners there were two noticeable surges in mortality: one associated with the month-long trip aboard the *Thames Maru* and its aftermath, and another in the final months of the war when Babelthuap was cut off from supplies and starvation took hold. At one point in mid-1945 the Indian prisoners were receiving only fifty grams of food per day, compared to the seven hundred grams they had received in mid-1943.[821] Nonetheless, in one respect it could be argued that Major Waheed had been personally lucky, as in August 1943 he and some of his men had been transferred to Wewak in Northern New Guinea (where his camp was near that of Captain Pirzai), only for them to be returned to Babelthuap in December.[822] Given the horrific

[820] Ibid., p.4.
[821] TNA, WO 235/813, *Gozawa*, Exhibit 2 of Exhibit XXIX.
[822] Sleeman, *Trial of Gozawa*, p.18.

conditions that later developed in the Wewak area during 1944 and 1945, and the associated high mortality rates (discussed in Chapter Two), the arbitrary move back to Babelthuap probably significantly increased his chances of surviving captivity. Although no Indian witnesses gave evidence in person, several European officers did, one example being a British medical officer who was called as an expert witness. Given the high-profile nature of the case, it is surprising that at least Major Waheed among the Indian witnesses was not called to give evidence.

Three episodes dominate the evidence: the conditions endured during the journey on the *Thames Maru*; an incident where a large group of Indian prisoners were beaten for allegedly stealing sugar; and the killing of Mohammed Shafi. The conditions on the journey from Singapore to Palau on the *Thames Maru* were mentioned by Major Waheed in his evidence, but it was an Indian medical officer, Captain Ahmed, who provided detailed information on the conditions in his affidavit. According to Ahmed, the overcrowding on the *Thames Maru* was severe with 'practically no bedding facilities on the ship', while 'the food was very bad and unwholesome' with plain rice, along with vegetables that were 'generally radish and contained maggots which had been cooked in them', while 'there were only two seats in the latrine for over 2000 Indians' and no medical supplies of any kind.[823] The *Gozawa Butai* was just one of several Indian labour companies on the ship.

Having left Singapore on 5 May 1943 they finally arrived at Palau on 8 June, although according to the prosecution by this stage dysentery had 'spread all over the ship' with the result that 'a number' of Indian prisoners died.[824] All the Indian officers, including Major

[823] Ibid., pp.29-30.
[824] Ibid., p.13.

Waheed, blamed Gozawa for the conditions as he was the commander of their unit.[825] It is worth noting that the conditions described as having occurred on the *Thames Maru* are consistent with other accounts of journeys on Japanese transport ships (see Chapter Two). When Gozawa later testified in his own defence he claimed that in practice he had had little or no control over the conditions on the *Thames Maru* as another officer was in charge. He stated that he had had to sleep in a passageway on the ship, and had tried to alleviate the conditions for both the prisoners and his own men, who had christened the ship the "Rubbish Maru" because of its bad accommodation and food. However, it is difficult to reconcile his claim that there were thirty-six toilets for the Indians on board, against the evidence of there being only two from the Indian officers.[826]

Evidence relating to the beating of Indian prisoners on a variety of occasions was provided in several of the affidavits. One example was that of a *jawan*, Abdul Lateef Khan, who in January 1945 'was going to the Indonesian Camp to see some of my friends' when he was accosted by one of the accused who claimed he was actually 'going over to steal some rice' and was beaten unconscious with a stick, before being 'tied up for two days without food or water'.[827] In another example from July 1945, Cook Shaikh Madar was beaten with a stick by one of the accused after trying to cook some food while 'feeling very ill'.[828] But it was an earlier incident from April 1944, involving the alleged theft of sugar from the Japanese stores, which led to the severe beating of up to forty Indian prisoners.[829] One of the Indian witnesses to the events was a medical officer, Jemadar Zakria Khan, who described how he had seen several Indian prisoners beaten, including Jemadar Abdul Quyum who was left

[825] Ibid., p.20.
[826] Ibid., pp.183-184.
[827] Ibid., p.24.
[828] Ibid., p.25.
[829] Ibid., p.xl.

bleeding and unconscious, and had to be carried away on a stretcher.[830] Among the perpetrators named in this incident was Lieutenant Nakamura, who admitted that with others he had searched the Indian quarters and found considerable quantities of sugar 'In their lunch boxes and kit boxes, and also some of it had been made into the cakes or sweets they make for themselves'.[831] Although lacking definitive proof, Nakamura assumed that the sugar had been stolen because there was so much of it, although he went on to deny that he had beaten any Indian prisoners. There are certainly times when his testimony lacks credibility: in response to a separate accusation of beating a Subedar in 1943, he claimed that 'I merely put my hand on his shoulder to ask for his reflection'.[832] But it would be the killing of an Indian *jawan* that would lead to Nakamura being executed himself.

The victim, Mohammed Shafi, was an individual that Sleeman the defence counsel later described as 'one of those characters whom it is the object of all Adjutants in every army to remove from their units as quickly as possible', adding 'that he was generally disliked by everybody, Indians as well as Japanese, and that he flouted discipline on every possible occasion'.[833] He had not been part of the original group of Indian prisoners sent from Singapore that Major Waheed headed, but was incorporated into it after he had been left behind by another group when it left Palau.[834] Shafi appears to have been repeatedly accused of the theft of food and money from other prisoners, with Waheed investigating him on one occasion although he failed to find definitive proof of the allegation.[835] It is impossible to know what the true situation regarding Mohammed Shafi was, he may indeed have been a natural troublemaker as Sleeman seems to have thought, or he may simply have been

[830] Ibid., p.28.
[831] Ibid., p.181.
[832] Ibid., p.178.
[833] Ibid., p.xxxvii.
[834] Ibid., p.38.
[835] Ibid., p.20.

someone who had reached the limits of his mental endurance – a half-hearted suicide attempt mentioned in evidence is certainly suggestive of the latter.[836] But it was when Shafi was overheard by a Japanese soldier discussing the possibility of escape, that he was arrested and ultimately executed by being beheaded by Nakamura on 24 April 1945.[837] There was never any doubt during the trial that Nakamura had executed Shafi, because remarkably, shortly after killing Shafi, he wrote an explanation of his actions in English and gave it to Waheed, with the original note later being submitted in evidence at the trial. Although Sleeman provides an overview of Nakamura's civilian life before he was mobilised in March 1943 (he was married and was a manager in a transport business), there is no indication of when or where he acquired his knowledge of English.[838] The original note is held at The National Archives, and its faltering English provides an insight into how one Japanese officer viewed his role and the relationship between himself and the Indian prisoners.[839]

Nakamura's note is written across one and a half pages taken from a Japanese military notepad, with the sheets being approximately foolscap in size. The paper is turning brown with age and feels brittle: inviting care when it is being unfolded to reveal his long-hand scrawl written in pencil. Although not explicitly addressed to Waheed, it is clearly written with him in mind, rather than as a general explanation. Nakamura begins by outlining the broader reasons for beheading Shafi:

> I see you are very anxious for the yesterday's case, without get at the bottom of the affar, so I explain the truth of the event, and also my oppinion. I have the duty and also the responsibility to maintain the discipline and must campain for you. So I requested you strictly the maintenance of discipline alwayes and trying for your happyness and good living. Because if anyone demoralize the discipline or threaten your living and take away your happiness, I must ostracize him. Such a reason I punished Mohd Shafee severely yesterday. He is a very bad fellow

[836] Ibid., p.164.
[837] Ibid., p.18.
[838] Ibid., p.lviii.
[839] TNA, WO 235/813, *Gozawa*, Exhibit 1 of Exhibit XXIX

> who demoralize the discipline and made threats against your living and trample upon your happyness. If he shall stay here so long time in future he happens more big accident and give us more troubles, even for our captain.[840]

During his testimony Nakamura claimed that Waheed and the other Indian officers were fully aware of Shafi's misdemeanours, with the note detailing several, including 'allwayes playing gambling', 'stole meals from some other men', and 'devised to suicide', although it was the escape attempt that was the key crime in Nakamura's view.[841] Although Babelthuap and the Palau islands were situated in a remote part of the Pacific Ocean (see Map 1), the southernmost island of the group (Peleliu) had been captured by United States forces in late 1944, which made escape theoretically possible after that date if a boat or canoe could be obtained from the local population. After detailing Shafi's alleged crimes, Nakamura goes on to conclude:

> As above I have heard and saw since he came here and joined our company, and I knew more cases that befor he came here. Howevere there is no hope of repentance for him. So I gave him the capital punishment. I would never give punishment for good men, and rather be thankful for them. You shall always maintain the discipline and shall live in all peace of mind. These bad condition will be clear soon and peace will come not so far feature, and then we shall return to our each home with hand in hand each-other.[842]

Nakamura would later claim in his testimony that the Indian officers, including Waheed, had agreed with him that executing Shafi was the only option, although it is unclear why if that were true he did not mention it in the note.[843] Given that Nakamura would never have expected that the note would be used against him, it seems reasonable to accept that it represents an honest reflection of how he perceived his role, and the relationship with Waheed and the other Indian officers. Taken at face value, it does suggest that Nakamura

[840] Ibid., p.1.
[841] Ibid.
[842] Ibid., p.2.
[843] Sleeman, *Trial of Gozawa*, p.165.

believed he had a genuine working relationship with the Indian personnel, rather than one characterised simply as guard and prisoner, although he clearly saw himself as the dominant partner.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Gozawa at the end of the trial, following the return of guilty verdicts against most of the defendants including Nakamura and himself. The accused were given the opportunity to address the court prior to sentencing and Gozawa chose to speak. According to Sleeman, what followed was 'without doubt, the most dramatic moment of the trial' as Gozawa 'proceeded to address the Court in the Japanese language with such genuine feeling and pathos that all who heard him were deeply impressed even before the translation was read over by the interpreter'.[844] Gozawa's address to the Court began by focussing on events following the Japanese surrender, when the Indian prisoners were delivered to the quayside to board an American ship. He started by claiming that the prisoners had been given a new issue of clothing prior to embarkation, and then went on:

> We always did everything to please them, and when we bade them farewell by the side of the ship we did so just as if we were parting from our own children. They wept, and we wept; the regret at the separation was mutual. The Captain of the ship, seeing us bidding farewell, was much impressed with the scene and called us on board the ship and gave us lunch. […] Now we have been told in this court that the Indians had complained about our treatment of them. We cannot understand this. […] We did everything for them that we could. The times were bad. They knew this, and they appreciated our treatment of them. Why must they now complain, after having departed with gratitude? […] My subordinates worked for me under my orders. I hope that the Court will excuse them, because they acted under my orders.[845]

Following Gozawa's speech, Sleeman addressed the Court in mitigation of punishment, and then the Court retired to consider punishment. The surprise for Sleeman was that when the

[844] Ibid., p.xlv.
[845] Ibid., p.229.

sentences were announced the only death penalty handed down was for Nakamura, with Gozawa sentenced to twelve years imprisonment, one defendant released, and the remaining defendants sentenced to between seven and two years. As Sleeman put it: 'it is difficult to understand how a Court could justify convicting a commanding officer and an adjutant of identical offences, and then sentencing the adjutant [alone] to pay the supreme penalty'.[846] It seems likely that it was Gozawa's final speech that spared him.

The circumstances under which Nakamura's note to Waheed was written, and those under which Gozawa's address to the Court were made were very different, but both seem consistent with Sleeman's assertion in his closing speech for the defence that the Indian prisoners were actually cooperating with the Japanese, with Sleeman even claiming that they had become *heiho* ("sub-soldiers" or "auxiliary troops") of the Japanese.[847] Nonetheless, this was clearly not how the Indian prisoners perceived it, and it is argued that these two conflicting positions can be reconciled using the theories of Scott discussed earlier.

Within Scott's framework the statements and written evidence of Gozawa and Nakamura can be viewed as a manifestation of the public transcript, containing clear affirmations of Japanese superiority, one example being the infantilization of the Indian prisoners in Gozawa's statement: 'as if we were parting from our own children'.[848] It could also be argued that core tropes of the public transcript, for example that Indian and Japanese personnel shared the same conditions, did have some basis in fact. For example, one fact that emerged during the trial (although unremarked on during it) was that at least sixteen of the sixty-one Japanese members of the *Gozawa Butai* died from the time they arrived in

[846] Ibid., pp.xlv-xlvii.
[847] Ibid., p.224.; for a definition of *heiho* see: Totani, *Justice in Asia*, p.109.
[848] Sleeman, *Trial of Gozawa*, p.229.

Palau in 1943 to the time of the Japanese surrender in 1945, a death rate of twenty six percent, with some of the deaths being caused by starvation related conditions such as beriberi.[849] As stated earlier in this chapter, the death rate among the Indian prisoners was twenty one percent, and therefore lower than for the Japanese troops, although of a similar order. This does not in any way negate the shocking failure of higher Japanese authorities to ensure that the large numbers of Indian prisoners in their power were properly cared for, but from the perspective of the Japanese members of the *Gozawa Butai* it would have suggested equality of treatment.

Another core trope of the public transcript was that the Indian prisoners were in fact *heiho* (auxiliary troops). The *Gozawa Butai* did have *heiho* serving within it: these were Indonesian troops who had travelled on the *Thames Maru* along with the Indian prisoners.[850] In practice, there seems to have been little difference in the work performed by the Indonesians and the Indians, and there is evidence that there were friendly interactions between them (for example the evidence of Abdul Lateef Khan encountered earlier in this chapter), so that any distinction between the different types of non-Japanese personnel may have seemed immaterial to the Japanese. Another trope of the public transcript was that some actions were performed in the best interests of the Indian prisoners, with even the execution of Mohammed Shafi by Nakamura being presented as having been performed because he 'trample upon your happyness'.[851] In reality, it was an example of what Scott describes as 'arbitrary and capricious behaviour by the superior', the clearest demonstration possible of who was truly in charge.[852] There is no doubt that Mohammed Shafi was a serious disciplinary problem for Nakamura, but execution was clearly not the only option

[849] Ibid., pp.59-60.
[850] Ibid., p.73.
[851] TNA, WO 235/813, *Gozawa*, Exhibit 1 of Exhibit XXIX, p.1.
[852] Scott, *Domination,* p.xi.

available. A factor which may have played a part in his decision making process was the timing of Nakamura's promotion to full lieutenant in early April 1945.[853] Faced with the Mohammed Shafi case later the same month, the newly-promoted Nakamura may have felt the need to assert his authority, although it is important not to simply dismiss the reasoning he expressed in the note to Waheed as disingenuous: this may indeed have been the way he was justifying his actions to himself. However incongruous the contrast between the contents of the note, and the savage violence he had unleashed against Mohammed Shafi shortly before writing it may seem, the note is a clear manifestation of the public transcript, an affirmation of the unequal power relations present within the *Gozawa Butai*.

While such power relations were unassailable at the times when the major incidents outlined in the trial took place, the Japanese surrender in August 1945 led to their overthrow, and allowed the hidden transcript of the Indian prisoners to be articulated. What Scott calls 'the anger and reciprocal aggression denied by the presence of domination' understandably emerged in some of the statements the former Indian prisoners made to the American forces who liberated them, and which ultimately set in train the trial itself.[854] The affidavit of Waheed made in October 1945, and subsequently submitted as evidence to the trial, is relatively restrained given the experiences he had been through, but still includes statements such as this regarding the Japanese agenda towards the prisoners: 'It was intended to eliminate them by hard work and starvation, and in explanation state that deaths were caused by malaria and other diseases common to these places'.[855] It would be difficult to find a statement more at variance with the words of Gozawa detailed earlier. Waheed also makes it clear that he and his men were never part of the INA and 'remained loyal throughout the

[853] Sleeman, *Trial of Gozawa*, p.180.
[854] Scott, *Domination,* p.37.
[855] Sleeman, *Trial of Gozawa*, p.233.

period of prisonership'.[856] This assertion is important because it also contradicted the claim made by the Japanese defendants and reiterated forcefully by their defence counsel, that the Indian prisoners had become *heiho* and had agreed to serve alongside Japanese forces, a subject that will be returned to shortly.[857] The framework proposed by Scott is useful because it shifts the perspective away from the necessarily adversarial structure of the court room, and allows a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the Japanese personnel of the *Gozawa Butai* and the Indian prisoners, one in which the Japanese are not always brutal and the Indian prisoners are not always beyond reproach. But the framework also emphasises that the nature of the power relations in play in the *Gozawa Butai* were similar to the power relations of previous historical episodes of exploitative domination. The conditions endured by the Indian prisoners were ultimately a product of the prevailing Japanese military culture, as the recent study of the Australian war-crimes trials puts it:

> Treatment of Allied prisoners by their Japanese captors conformed in many respects to standards imposed on the latter by the dominant military ideology. This system reinforced and legitimised a strict hierarchy that maintained order and discipline through violence and repression, and demanded frugality and personal sacrifice from its own soldiers. It is difficult to imagine how soldiers indoctrinated within this system could allow captives under their command to have better rations, living conditions, or softer punishments for indiscretions than what they would have received themselves as Japanese soldiers.[858]

This highlights once again the importance of whether the Indian prisoners had agreed to serve with the Japanese at some point, either by becoming *heiho* or in some other way such as joining the INA, because this would have conditioned how the Japanese would have treated them. It would also have strengthened the defence case that they were legitimately subject to Japanese military regulations. It is worth noting that the *Gozawa* trial was included within a set of trials characterised by Cheah in recent articles (mentioned earlier) as the

[856] Ibid.
[857] For one example see: Ibid., p.38.
[858] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.55.

British Indian Army 'Desertion Trials', the implication being that the men had deserted their previous allegiance.[859] Nonetheless, the evidence presented in the trial was contradictory: the Japanese claimed the Indian prisoners had become *heiho*, while Waheed asserted they had not, and it was the major's evidence that was accepted by the court at the time of the trial. It would therefore be useful to have an alternative archival source to provide corroboration, and it is argued here that CSDIC(I) archival material can be used to provide it.

The way in which the Japanese despatched working parties of Indian prisoners by ship from Singapore in 1943, to locations largely in the Southwest Pacific, has already been described in Chapter Two. A CSDIC(I) report on these parties from April 1946 provides details of their composition, and among these is the party led by Waheed that had been incorporated into the *Gozawa Butai*. The details of the Indian prisoners provided in the report are consistent with the trial information, but the report also confirms that CSDIC(I) categorised these men as "non-volunteers" with respect to the INA.[860] They were therefore among the minority of Indian prisoners of the Japanese who never at any time volunteered for service in the INA. This categorisation is also consistent with other CSDIC(I) reports, including one which provides information on an original unit basis and that lists Major Waheed's regiment, the 1st Hyderabad Infantry, as 100% 'non-volunteer', although it should be noted that not all Indian prisoners in the *Gozawa Butai* were drawn from this regiment.[861] Cheah is correct to highlight the importance that claims of cooperation from Indian prisoners came to have for the defence in this and other Singapore war-crimes trials, but in the specific case of the *Gozawa* trial, the CSDIC(I) archival material indicates that the assertion was not true.

[859] Cheah, *BIA Desertion Trials*, p.1227.
[860] National Archives of India (hereafter, NAI), 379, Part 5, Appendix A, Serial No.14.
[861] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.13.

When it comes to assessing the behaviour of these Indian prisoners, there is an important distinction to be made between compliance with Japanese orders for the sake of survival (in terms of Scott's framework, adhering to the public transcript), and active cooperation. This example demonstrates that CSDIC(I) intelligence material can bring additional insights to the study of war-crime trial records. However, this British intelligence source was not acknowledged during the course of this trial (or any later ones), despite the fact that in this case, it could have been used by the prosecution to undermine the defence assertion that the Indian prisoners were *heiho*. It is argued that this demonstrates that knowledge of CSDIC(I) intelligence material was restricted in this period, even for those prosecuting Japanese war criminals.

The final act in the *Gozawa* trial was the execution of Lieutenant Nakamura by hanging on 14 March 1946 at Changi jail in Singapore.[862] There is a photograph that shows him being led to the gallows that morning, dressed in white, and with a hood over his head.[863] Despite the historical significance of this war-crimes trial as the first conducted by the British in Southeast Asia, it seems to have been largely forgotten. Nonetheless, the trial established a template for the hundreds of war-crimes trials that followed it, and for those involving Indian victims, some of its themes, such as the alleged cooperation of Indian personnel with the Japanese, would emerge again.

[862] TNA, WO 235/813, *Gozawa*, Death Warrant.
[863] See: IWM, SE 6985.

Curating the evidence in the *Suwabe* trial

The *Gozawa* trial was only the first case involving Indian prisoner victims in a sequence of trials held at irregular intervals over the next few years by British and Australian authorities. Each of these trials generated documentary artefacts (in particular affidavits), that represent valuable historical sources. However, it should be recognised that such artefacts were included in the extant archival files as a result of a trial process that involved investigating, sifting, ordering, and in some cases, editing the artefacts. Due to the nature of war-crimes investigations the work of curating the evidence in the trial, and thereby shaping what has been preserved, fell almost entirely on the prosecution. A key question is therefore: how were trial artefacts, such as testimony and affidavits, curated during the trial process?

While prosecution counsel in the *Gozawa* trial relied solely on affidavits from former Indian prisoners, some subsequent trials called them in person as prosecution witnesses, one example being the *Suwabe* trial held a year later by British authorities.[864] This trial, both through affidavits and the personal testimony of Indian witnesses, provides an opportunity to address the question of how artefacts were curated. This will be investigated by focussing on an episode that proved awkward for the prosecution: the sinking of the Japanese transport ship *Buyo Maru* in January 1943, although ironically this was not meant to be in scope during the trial, as none of the charges against the Japanese defendants related to it. The episode is important because the sinking resulted in one of the largest single losses of life by Indian prisoners in the entire war. The way that evidence relating to the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* presents itself in the testimony and affidavits of the *Suwabe* trial provides an insight into how such artefacts were curated before and during it.

[864] TNA, WO 235/1035, *Suwabe Masato*

The *Suwabe* trial was convened in Singapore in January 1947 and lasted for two weeks. The accused were Colonel Suwabe Masato and five subordinates, and it was one of the trials where none of the three military officers of the Court (two British and one Indian), who acted as judge and jury, had any legal qualifications.[865] Colonel Suwabe and the other Japanese accused had been responsible for a group of Indian prisoners stationed near Rabaul in New Britain, from mid-1943 until the Japanese surrender. Although two of the accused were ultimately acquitted, Suwabe along with three of his men were found guilty of a variety of charges including forcing the prisoners to work when they were ill; providing inadequate food, accommodation, and medical supplies; and specific instances of ill-treatment, including the beating of an Indian medical officer, Captain Daw.[866]

The Indian victims in this trial had been drawn from two labour groups each of approximately five hundred men, one headed by a Captain Sen and the other by a Captain James. They were sent from Singapore to Rabaul in different ships in the same Japanese convoy in January 1943, with Captain Sen and his men in the *Buyo Maru*, and Captain James and his men in the *Pacific Maru*. Captain Sen was not called in person to testify in the trial and it was Major James, promoted following his liberation from captivity, who was the first Indian witness to testify in person. Questioned at length, his evidence included the state of accommodation at their ultimate destination in New Britain, where he described the Japanese compared to the Indian as being like the difference between 'a King and a beggar's living', and also how the Indian prisoners depended on pilfering items such as cloth and

[865] Ibid., Order convening the Court.
[866] Ibid., Charge Sheet.

food from Japanese stores in order to survive, although as he pointed out 'The men risked their lives whenever they stole'.[867]

The next witness was Captain Daw, the medical officer for Captain Sen's party, and it was he who first mentioned the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* in his testimony, describing how 'On the 26th of January, at 10 o'clock in the morning we were sunk by an American submarine'.[868] The prosecution counsel did not ask questions about the sinking itself, but instead focussed his questioning on the conditions experienced by the Indian prisoners while being transported by the Japanese, and their later experiences once the men had arrived in Rabaul. It was a subsequent Indian witness, Havildar Major Ahmed Khan, who would depart from a specific question asked by prosecution counsel relating to the later stage of the voyage, and instead give a fuller description of the sinking, as this extract from the trial transcript demonstrates:

> Q. What happened to you on the 26th January 1943?
> A. Our ship was torpedoed and was sunk.
>
> Q. And did that same party eventually reach Rabaul on the 18th February 1943?
> A. Yes Sir it reached.
>
> Q. Can you describe briefly the conditions on the latter part of that voyage for yourself and for the other men?
> A. Yes I can.
>
> Q. Will you please do so?
> A. It was on the 26th at 10.00 a.m. that our ship was sunk. All the men, that is to say the Indians as well as the Japanese, left the ship. The ship was sunk after about 15 to 20 minutes. The Japanese were sitting in life boats and the Indians were either swimming or clinging on to rafts. The submarine that had sunk us emerged from the water after a while. They fired cannon shots at one of the boats. The submarine made two rounds of the area and wherever it saw people in groups it fired on them with machine guns. Although we showed them white flags and shouted that we were Indians they did not listen to us. Of course it was not easy to hear anything at that time on account of noise but they could see us.

[867] Ibid., Transcript, p.10, p.15.
[868] Ibid., Transcript, p.23.

> They completed two rounds and then went away. We remained in the sea on the 26th the whole day and the whole night. On the 27th at about 5 p.m. we saw two steamers at a distance.

It is immediately following this testimony in the trial transcript that a hand-written note has been inserted before the next question, and it reads: 'Witness is informed the Court do not wish details of the shipwreck as it is not relevant to the case'.[869] It is worth noting that a hand-written comment of this length is extremely unusual in trial transcripts, and its contents are suggestive of an awkward moment for the Court, perhaps unsurprising given that what the Havildar Major had just outlined was *prima facie* evidence of a war-crime by Allied forces, although the use of the term 'shipwreck' is suggestive of a wish to categorise the events in a way more congenial to the Court. Despite the dramatic nature of the testimony, the prosecution counsel simply ignored it and moved on to his next question – regarding living conditions in Rabaul when the surviving Indian prisoners arrived there. The motivation of Khan in providing this testimony at this point in the proceedings is unclear. Was this simply a mistake because he had mis-heard the question, or was it a deliberate attempt to take the opportunity to highlight an event that figured prominently in his recollections of captivity? Khan certainly answered a different question from the one that was asked. Evidence from affidavits relating to this case and others suggests that he was not alone in viewing this episode as significant, and the way that the affidavits were managed by the prosecution provides an insight into the curation of evidence in this trial.

Following the completion of testimony by Indian witnesses the prosecution counsel presented five affidavits to the Court from other Indian witnesses (including Captain Sen). It is worth reviewing the statement he made to the Court, prior to reading the extracts:

[869] Ibid., Transcript, p.81.

> I wish to tender in evidence five affirmations in this case. I have prepared relative extracts from those five affidavits, and I shall ask that the Court will certify and accept those extracts after comparison with the originals. These extracts contain certain references to conditions on the voyage to Rabaul. I wish to emphasise that these are not being included in any way in the responsibility of the accused, but merely serve to illustrate the physical and mental condition of that party on arriving at Rabaul […] Before reading the extracts, I shall hand in the original affidavits, plus a copy of the extracts for certification, plus three working copies for members of the Court.[870]

Why prosecution counsel felt it necessary to prepare 'relative extracts' from the five affidavits is not explained, particularly as it was apparently necessary for the officers of the Court to read the originals anyway in order to certify and accept them, although it was only the abridged versions that were included as exhibits in the trial records at this stage. Among those prepared in this way was that of Captain Sen, the Indian commander of the prisoners who were aboard the *Buyo Maru*, but for reasons that are not immediately clear, the Court in his case also preserved his original unabridged statement as an exhibit. With Sen's original statement (Exhibit 'R') amounting to ten pages of text, and the abridged version (Exhibit 'F') just over three, it is apparent that a great deal of material was removed. The process of editing is straightforward to observe as the sections selected for inclusion have been marked in blue crayon on the original statement. The abridged version has only a limited description of the sinking of the *Buyo Maru*, with the events summarised as: 'Our boat was struck with a torpedo. After the ship had been sunk there was a lot of planks of wood and rafts floating above most of us managed to get some wood or raft'.[871] In contrast, in the original statement Sen gives a detailed description of the sinking, over half a page in length, that confirms Havildar Major Ahmed Khan's testimony regarding how the submarine attacked the survivors:

[870] Ibid., Transcript, p.89.
[871] Ibid., Exhibit 'F', p.1.

> Our boat was struck with a torpedo. Immediately I instructed that everyone would adjust his life belt properly and be ready to abandon the ship if it became necessary. Shortly afterwards another torpedo struck the ship which began to sink. The ship's Captain ordered everyone to abandon the ship and we followed suit. […] After the ship went down some boats and barges floated about and the Japs crowded into these and turned out any Indian who tried to get in. But I saw one case where one of my men who had been injured was allowed to stay in the boat. After this the submarine came to the surface and started to shell the boats and machine gun also. Many of us shouted out to the submarine that we were Indian P.O.W. and some men waved white clothes or handkerchiefs. There was sufficient time for the men to abandon the ship and I do not think that any of them went down with the ship. […] Everyone of my men had a life belt as the Japs had issued more than enough. After some time the submarine went away. After the ship had been sunk there was a lot of planks of wood and rafts floating above and most of us managed to get some wood or raft.[872]

Nonetheless, competition for the floating debris was fierce, with one Indian prisoner being later accused by the Japanese of 'having fought with and killed a Jap soldier while struggling in the sea.'[873] It would be late the following day that the *Pacific Maru* along with a Japanese cruiser returned to the scene to pick up survivors, a process that continued until the following day. On arrival in Palau (having been diverted from their original destination of Rabaul), Sen discovered that only 296 of his men were accounted for, as he put it: 'I could not say what percentage of the Japs had been picked up, but from reports from my men at that time it was clear that many of my men who were still alive had not been picked up. It appeared that the Japanese were in a hurry to leave the spot as they probably feared an attack by the submarine.'[874] This meant that approximately two hundred of his men were unaccounted for (in his evidence to the Court the medical officer Captain Daw provided similar numbers), although it is impossible to know how many were shot and how many were left behind in the water.[875] The description of the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* in Sen's statement is vivid, and it is reasonable to surmise that the prosecution counsel would have felt uncomfortable

[872] Ibid., Exhibit 'R', p.3.
[873] Ibid., Exhibit 'R', p.4.
[874] Ibid.
[875] See: Ibid., Transcript, p.23. The medical officer Captain (formerly Lieutenant) Daw stated that while 477 Indian prisoners had left Singapore only 275 reached Rabaul, although a few were offloaded in other ports.

reading out such material in public court, as he was required to do in order to submit the affirmations as evidence. The sinking was an aspect of the Indian prisoners' experience that neither he nor the Court wanted to address and providing abridged versions of their statements allowed the issue to be avoided. Although Sen's original statement was included in the trial file, this documentation remained confidential, and only became publicly available decades later.[876]

While Captain Sen's original statement is the only one of the five preserved in the *Suwabe* file, the archival file of another trial held shortly afterwards allows access to other statements relevant to the sinking of the *Buyo Maru*. The prosecution case in the *Takahashi* trial (held on a single day in late January 1947) was based entirely on seven affidavits by former Indian prisoners, some of whom provided evidence in the *Suwabe* case, although in this case their affidavits were not abridged.[877] One example is the lengthy affidavit of Subedar Mohammed Hussain Shah, which provides extensive details of the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* and other incidents, that are unavailable in the abridged version of his affidavit presented as an exhibit in the *Suwabe* case.[878] Another is the affidavit of Ahmad Khan, a *jawan* of 5/2nd Punjab Regiment, whose laconic description of the incident: 'The submarine then came to the surface and opened fire on us and a few died', is missing from the version in the *Suwabe* trial.[879] Ahmad Khan's original affidavit is signed with a thumb print, a reminder that many of the former Indian prisoners would have been illiterate, and would have needed help to write their statements.[880] The prosecution would have argued that the sinking was not directly relevant to the *Suwabe* trial, and that the omission of the details was therefore

[876] TNA, WO 235/1035, *Suwabe,* remained closed until 1978.
[877] TNA, WO 235/960, *Takahashi Kohei*
[878] Compare Ibid., Exhibit 'F', p.5., with TNA, WO 235/1035, *Suwabe Masato*, Exhibit 'G', p.1.
[879] Compare TNA, WO 235/960, *Takahashi Kohei,* Exhibit 'I', p.1., with TNA, WO 235/1035, *Suwabe Masato*, Exhibit 'H', p.1.
[880] TNA, WO 235/960, *Takahashi Kohei,* Exhibit 'I', p.3.

justifiable. Nor were the details of the sinking the only material removed from Captain Sen's statement with, for example, some later details of how he was personally denied medicine by the Japanese also being left out.[881] But it does highlight that the testimony and affidavits of the Indian witnesses were only acceptable to the British authorities when their content fell within prescribed limits: their evidence was shaped and managed to suit the needs of the Court - the trial was not an opportunity to bear witness to experiences in general, however significant they may have seemed to those involved.

While knowledge that Indian prisoners had been shot in the water following the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* apparently remained obscured in the immediate post-war period, memory of the sinking and the shootings that followed it developed its own character, and found its own place, within the history of the submarine war against the Japanese in World War Two. There is a photograph of the *Buyo Maru* taken shortly after it was torpedoed - it shows the ship stationary in the water, with smoke still emerging from its smokestack, and with what may be figures standing on top of its bridge (see Figure XIII).[882] The photograph was taken through the periscope of the American submarine that had just attacked it: the USS *Wahoo*. Such photographs were captured as proof that claims made by submarine commanders of attacks on ships were true, and there is a library of such pictures from the Pacific War, including some taken by the USS *Wahoo*. The patrols of the USS *Wahoo* have a prominent place in the history of the United States submarine campaign against the Japanese, in part because several junior officers who were serving on her at the time of the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* went on to have prominent later careers.

[881] TNA, WO 235/1035, *Suwabe Masato*, Exhibit 'R', p.9.
[882] From: United States Naval History and Heritage Command archive (hereafter NHHC), '80-G-39746 Buyo Maru' < https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-g/80-G-30000/80-G-39746.html > [accessed 30 October 2019]

One of the most comprehensive accounts of the American submarine campaign in the Pacific is Blair's *Silent Victory*, which describes the USS *Wahoo* patrol that included the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* as 'one of the most celebrated of the war'.[883] The dominant figure in Blair's account of the shooting of the survivors is the captain of the USS *Wahoo*, Lieutenant Commander Dudley "Mush" Morton, who ordered the shooting of what he claimed were thousands of Japanese troops in the water, although one junior officer described the events as 'night-marish minutes'.[884] There is no hint in Blair's account from 1975 that many of those in the water were Indian rather than Japanese, and it appears to have been several more decades before this became publicly known. One of the first to mention the Indian victims is DeRose in *Unrestricted Warfare*, first published in 2000, and he describes how the Japanese Diet Library first informed him that most victims had been Indian rather than Japanese.[885] DeRose emphasizes the galvanizing effect that Morton's aggressive style had both on his own crew and on the American submarine force in general, and he structures the book around Morton, crediting him with inspiring the entire service. But the book also includes a vivid and disturbing account of the shooting of the survivors of the *Buyo Maru* that includes quotes from some of the Indian victims.

The lack of academic referencing in *Unrestricted Warfare* makes it difficult to trace the precise source of the quotes but they appear to have come from the war-crimes trial statements.[886] While he uses quotes from Indian witnesses, DeRose primarily draws on a range of accounts by members of the submarine's crew that describe the shooting incident,

[883] Clay Blair, *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War against Japan* (Lippincott, 1975), p.386.
[884] Ibid., pp.384-385.
[885] James F. DeRose, *Unrestricted Warfare: How a New Breed of Officers Led the Submarine Force to Victory in World War II* (New York ; Chichester: Wiley, 2000), p.287.
[886] Note: For some reason DeRose believed Captain Daw was British rather than Indian. He is clearly listed as an Indian medical officer in CSDIC(I) records, see: AAS, F275/9, p.282.

including one of the officers, Roger Paine, 'who was responsible for the gun crews'.[887] With as many as thirty crew on deck there were plenty of witnesses as the submarine opened fire, firstly against the lifeboats, and then against the men in the water (the weaponry included one four-inch gun, two twenty-millimeter machine guns and two Browning automatic rifles). One of the most striking descriptions is from a crewmember called Sterling, who could see that 'the water was filled with heads sticking up from floating kapok life jackets', but also 'saw one Jap standing on a raft waving a large piece of canvas in the air. "I didn't think the Japs ever surrendered", I said over my shoulder'.[888] There is nothing to suggest in the Indian accounts that any Japanese tried to surrender: almost certainly the man that Sterling observed was an Indian. Eventually the USS *Wahoo* left the area to pursue the remaining ships of the Japanese convoy. The total Japanese losses from the sinking of the *Buyo Maru* were eighty-seven men, although as with the estimated two hundred Indian deaths, it is unclear how many were killed by gunfire and how many died in the water before they could be rescued.[889]

One feature of both the Blair and DeRose accounts of the shooting of the survivors, is that it is portrayed as an exceptional event, driven by what DeRose identified as the racial hatred of the Japanese felt by Morton.[890] But as the American official history of the naval campaigns in this region demonstrates, this episode was not exceptional, with Japanese survivors of the Battle of the Bismarck Sea in March 1943 the target of American planes and ships that 'went about the sickening business of killing survivors in boats, rafts or wreckage', although those killed in that case appear to have been purely Japanese.[891] The

[887] DeRose, *Unrestricted Warfare*, p.82.
[888] Ibid., pp.82-85.
[889] Ibid., p.94. Note: estimate appears to have come from the Japanese Diet Library.
[890] Ibid., p.81.
[891] Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of the United States naval operations in World War 2. Vol. 6: Breaking the Bismarcks Barrier, 22 July 1942- 1 May 1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), p.62.

USS *Wahoo* and its commander would be lost in action in October 1943, but not before some of its officers and crew had been re-assigned, including Roger Paine the commander of the gun crews, who ended his naval career as a Rear Admiral.[892] But while the USS *Wahoo* achieved fame in its time and afterwards (as an example, when it left American waters for the last time in July 1943 it had the Hollywood star Errol Flynn as a temporary passenger), it would be over half a century after the end of the war before the truth about its Indian victims was acknowledged, and only then, because by chance, statements made by Indian witnesses were preserved by the war-crimes process.[893] The active way that the evidence in the *Suwabe* trial was curated is a reminder of how the trial process shaped what was preserved in the archives, but also highlights the role that chance plays in shaping the historical record.

Questions of allegiance in the *Mitsuba* trial

While the war-crimes trials run by the British were underway, the Australian authorities were conducting their own at various locations across the Southwest Pacific area, in particular at Rabaul in New Britain, where all ninety-nine Australian trials involving Indian victims were conducted. As Fitzpatrick has highlighted, the vigour with which the Australian authorities pursued prosecutions against Japanese personnel accused of offenses against Indian, Chinese and local civilian victims is commendable, particularly given the broader context of the racism associated with the domestic 'White Australia' policy in

[892] DeRose, *Unrestricted Warfare*, p.137, p.viii.
[893] Ibid., p.123.

operation at the time (that prevented non-white immigration), although the trials received little publicity in the contemporary press.[894]

Reviewing Australian war-crime trial files involving Indian victims reveals a depressing litany of neglect, abuse, and general cruelty, up to and including murder. One example from New Britain, mentioned in Chapter Two, was the case of Japanese nursing orderly Corporal Ogata, who was convicted of the maltreatment of Indian patients, even showing 'visible signs of pleasure at the suffering of the patient'.[895] This trial is remarkable for the number of detailed affidavits made by Indian personnel, including their commander Lieutenant Colonel Syed Mohammed Ishaq of the Hyderabad State Infantry, the same regiment of which Major Waheed from the *Gozawa* trial was a member.[896] Unsurprisingly, given the evidence against him, Ogata was found guilty and sentenced to death, although this was later commuted to imprisonment.[897] It is sobering to remember that this was just one of almost a hundred trials involving Indian victims. While reaching a fair verdict in the *Ogata* trial was a relatively uncontentious affair, several of the Rabaul trials hinged on a more problematic issue: the question of whether the Indian personnel involved had switched allegiance to the Indian Independence League and the Japanese, as it could be argued that if this was the case, they would no longer have been prisoners and would have become subject to Japanese military law. This section addresses the question: were the Australian war-crimes Courts always justified in rejecting the claims by Japanese defendants that Indian personnel had switched allegiance?

[894] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, pp.518-521. Examples include: twenty-one trials involving Chinese prisoners, and five relating to the murder of civilians on Ocean Island, see p.537.
[895] NAA, R138, *Ogata Sakari*, p.4.
[896] Ibid., p.28. Exhibit 'A'
[897] Ibid., p.3.

As with the British trials, the Australian prosecutions were founded on investigations in the field that led to the identification and questioning of Japanese suspects, and silent film exists of one interrogation session conducted on 19 October 1945.[898] Filmed at Cape Wom in New Guinea it shows a tented enclosure surrounded by barbed wire fencing and patrolled by armed guards. The interrogation of several Japanese personnel is shown, including a Lieutenant Tazaki (later convicted of anthropophagy of an Australian victim) and other officers including Captain Mitsuba Hisaneo, who would be prosecuted for the killing of an Indian officer, Captain Nirpal Chand.[899] At several points in the film an Indian soldier called Jemadar Chint Singh is visible and a still image of him captured from the film can be seen in Figure XIV, looking relaxed as he sits writing at a desk and speaking with the Australian personnel.

As Fitzpatrick has noted, Jemadar Chint Singh was a key witness in several war-crimes trials, and is mentioned frequently in *Australia's War Crimes Trials*.[900] Having survived the appalling conditions that developed in northern New Guinea towards the end of the war (see Chapter Two), his 'excellent' English helped him to become 'very useful to the Australian investigators', with his role including helping other Indian personnel compose their statements.[901] His decision to stay and help the Australian investigators rather than being immediately repatriated probably saved his life, as tragically the other ten men he had been recovered with died when the plane they were travelling in crashed in New Britain, while transporting them to join a repatriation ship back to India.[902] There are six photographs of

[898] AWM, F07377, *Interrogation of suspected war criminals* < https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C190493 > [accessed 13 November 2019]
[899] For Lieutenant Tazaki verdict see: Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.318. Unfortunately, it is not clear from the film which of the other Japanese officers is Captain Mitsuba.
[900] Some examples: Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.91., p.279., p.285., p.525., p.558.
[901] Ibid., p.424.
[902] Ibid., p.424.n.70.

him in the Australian War Memorial archive, with scenes including: writing out a statement; shaking hands with another former prisoner; and even taking a shower (with a towel on).[903] Given his prominence, Chint Singh's evidence will be examined in detail.

One of the trials he provided evidence towards was the *Mitsuba* trial, where Captain Mitsuba, two other officers, Lieutenant Murai and Lieutenant Imamura, and a Lance Corporal, were charged with the killing of Captain Nirpal Chand, at But in New Guinea, in April 1944.[904] Nirpal Chand had been the most senior Indian Officer in '19 Indian Working Party', one of five such groups sent to the Wewak area in mid 1943, comprising a total of around three thousand men, who by the end of the war had collectively experienced a death rate of ninety four percent (see Chapter Two).[905] The trial was held over four days in March 1946 at Rabaul in New Britain, with Chint Singh and another former Indian prisoner, a *jawan* named Shiv Singh, providing written affidavits but not appearing in person. Two affidavits were provided by Chint Singh for this trial, with one (Exhibit 'A') focussing on the circumstances surrounding the killing of Nirpal Chand, and the other (Exhibit 'G') providing the background to the formation of the Indian working parties in Singapore, including an account of the history of the INA in 1942 and early 1943.[906]

The *Mitsuba* trial opened on 15 March 1946 with all four defendants pleading not guilty.[907] The background to the case was that the Indian Working Party had arrived at Wewak in New Guinea in mid 1943 having travelled from Singapore by ship.[908] They then remained in the

[903] Respectively, AWM: 098105, 098097, 099771.
[904] NAA, R17, *Mitsuba.* Note that although some pages of the NAA file are out of order the physical page ordering has still been used. Unfortunately, the photographs of the defendants were not attached as exhibits which makes their positive identification in the AWM F07377 film impossible.
[905] Ibid., p.4.
[906] Ibid., p.54., p.61.
[907] Ibid., p.34.
[908] Ibid., p.62. Exhibit 'G'.

Wewak area until early 1944 when Allied landings nearby resulted in Japanese higher command ordering that they march to Hollandia, some three hundred kilometres away, via the settlement of But. Part of the precis of evidence for the trial reads as follows:

> On 10 Apr 44 the party was ordered to march from Wewak to Hollandia. Before reaching But many Indians escaped and Nirpal Chand said they had fallen out because of the heavy loads and asked that they be lightened. He was then taken away and beheaded by Murai, while Imamura sat on his stomach and Mitsuba held his hands. There was no trial.
>
> Defence alleged that Nirpal Chand was a member of the Indian National Army and not a PW, and that he was beheaded lawfully because at But he incited the other Indians to mutiny.[909]

During their initial questioning in October 1945 the Japanese officers had admitted killing Nirpal Chand and the resultant interrogation transcripts were included as exhibits.[910] Such interrogations were a standard part of the war-crimes investigation process, but clearly the Japanese being questioned often did not appreciate the legal ramifications of their answers, and lacking legal advice, often implicated themselves of involvement in serious offences. One of the defendants later alleged that Chint Singh had conducted his interrogation, which if true, as Fitzpatrick has noted, 'would have violated proper procedure' and indeed the film footage discussed earlier 'provides some substance to this allegation'.[911] Chint Singh's recently published memoir confirms his involvement in interrogations, and it is apparent that a close working relationship developed between the affable Chint Singh and the Australian war-crimes investigators.[912] Notwithstanding the context of their confessions, there was no doubt that the three officers in the *Mitsuba* trial had together killed Nirpal Chand, although the details of how the execution was performed varied both between the

[909] Ibid., p.4.
[910] For example: Ibid., p.56.
[911] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.526.
[912] Parmar, *Chint Singh*, p.60.

interrogation transcripts, and testimony given later in the trial. An extract from the interrogation transcript of Lieutenant Imamura provides the main details:

> Q. What happened to NIRPAL CHAND?
> A. He was killed.
>
> Q. Who killed him?
> A. Lt MURAI.
>
> Q. How did he kill him?
> A. He killed him with MITSUBA's Samurai sword.
>
> Q. What part did you play in the execution?
> A. I was sitting on his stomach.
>
> Q. What part did MITSUBA play in the execution?
> A. He was holding NIRPAL CHAND's hands down.
>
> Q. What did MURAI actually do?
> A. He thrust the sword into his throat and then withdrew it.
>
> Q. Did he die immediately?
> A. He died a few minutes after, then the three of us buried him.[913]

Lieutenant Murai during his own interrogation was clearly conscious of the brutality involved, as after admitting the killing he added: 'that before he beheaded NIRPAL CHAND he held his legs while another Japanese (name unknown) choked him. NIRPAL CHAND was unconscious when beheaded.'[914] The fullest background to the killing from a Japanese perspective was provided during the trial by the testimony of Captain Mitsuba, in which he described the difficulties of the march from Wewak to But including the way that the Indian personnel were escaping during the night marches, and how a crisis developed when he tried to start the next stage of the march towards Hollandia when Nirpal Chand 'said some Indian words in a very loud voice at which time the Indians raised their knives and clubs above their heads' and made clear that neither he nor his men would go any further.[915] It was this

[913] NAA, R17, *Mitsuba*, p.57, Exhibit 'D'.
[914] Ibid., p.56, Exhibit 'C'.
[915] Ibid., p.34.

refusal to proceed, despite being repeatedly ordered to do so that ultimately led to his execution, with Mitsuba claiming that his actions were legal under the 'Japanese Military Code'. When cross-examined, Mitsuba claimed that the Indian personnel were not prisoners of war and that 'NIRPAL CHAND took an oath of allegiance to CHANDRA BOSE's Army' (the INA), information he was given by the 'Advisory Office of the Indian Independence League' in Singapore.[916] This was the basis of his assertion that Nirpal Chand had lost his status as a prisoner of war and had become subject to Japanese Military Law - the foundation of his defence against the charge of murder. Determining whether the Indian personnel had retained prisoner of war status was therefore the central issue facing the Court and they drew on two main sources to investigate it: the affidavits of Chint Singh and another Indian witness, and information provided by a Japanese officer unconnected with the case.

As mentioned previously, two affidavits were provided by Chint Singh for the *Mitsuba* trial, and it is instructive to examine content from both in order to assess the veracity of the claims made within them. Exhibit 'A' primarily concerns the circumstances of Nirpal Chand's death, and details how after receiving Japanese orders to leave Wewak a secret conference between the Indian officers was held at which 'it was decided to advise all Indians not to complete a march to HOLLANDIA' and instead tell them to 'escape into the hills' in order to subsequently contact American forces. The march began on 13 April 1944 and involved four hundred Indian personnel, but by 20 April, on arrival at the settlement of But (where another Indian working party was stationed), only seven officers and twenty-four men remained. Along with the other officers Chint Singh was in the hut of the local Indian commander, named as Captain Hanover, when Nirpal Chand was taken away by the

[916] Ibid., p.35.

Japanese officers – the last time he saw him alive.[917] The other Indian witness, a *jawan* named Shiv Singh, provided additional details, including highlighting that Chint Singh was the only officer still alive at the end of the war of the seven who had reached But in April 1944, and that an Indian medical officer of the local Indian unit stationed at But 'Captain BAPAYA of 18 Indian Working Party', had spoken to the Japanese officers as they led Nirpal Chand away.[918]

Before examining Chint Singh's second affidavit it is worth reviewing what is known from CSDIC(I) sources of the background of the Indian officers and units mentioned above. The CSDIC(I) listing of the Indian working parties sent to the Southwest Pacific was consulted earlier in this chapter in relation to the *Gozawa* trial, where it indicated that the Indian personnel involved in that case had never been members of the INA. However, the same listing indicates that both the No. 19 party led by Nirpal Chand, and the No. 18 party led by Captain Hanover, were composed of former INA volunteers.[919] In addition, all three named Indian officers, namely Nirpal Chand, Hanover, and the medical officer Bapaya, are listed in another CSDIC(I) document as being former INA personnel.[920] The same document indicates that none of these officers survived to the end of the war, a testament to the high death rate among Indian personnel in northern New Guinea. It will be recalled from Chapter Two, that former INA personnel and non-volunteers were not mixed when such working parties were created, and therefore membership of a particular group can be viewed as a proxy for whether or not individual Indian soldiers had been members of the INA, even if

[917] Ibid., p.54, Exhibit 'A'.
[918] Ibid., p.55., Exhibit 'B'.
[919] NAI, 379, Part 5, Appendix A, Serial No.22, Serial No.17. Note: Hanover listed as Hanowar.
[920] AAS, F275/9, p.282, No. 2 Section information report No. 19, dated 27 June 1946. Note: Captain Bapaya listed as Lieutenant W.V. Bapaida.

specific intelligence information is not available for them. Given that Chint Singh was a member of No. 19 Party, this therefore suggests that he was a member of the INA in 1942.

The second affidavit provided to the Court by Chint Singh, Exhibit 'G', entitled 'Treatment of INDIAN Working Parties', provides background on the formation of five Indian working parties in Singapore, and includes details of the creation and history of the INA. All of the five parties he specifies in this affidavit are listed by CSDIC(I) as having been composed of former INA volunteers.[921] There is no mention of other parties formed in Singapore from non-volunteers at the same time (for example the party led by Lieutenant Colonel Ishaq mentioned earlier), and who were also transported from Singapore in May 1943 to the Southwest Pacific, although the five parties listed constituted the main bulk of those sent specifically to Northern New Guinea.[922] Chint Singh begins his narrative by describing the fatigues they performed for the Japanese following the surrender of Singapore in February 1942, before going on to describe how coercion was used during 1942 to induce Indian prisoners to join the INA with the result that 'about 20,000 on Singapore Island joined the Army, but the others still refused'.[923] He names Captain Mohan Singh as the leader of the INA at this time and mentions Lieutenant Colonel Gill, stating that 'I heard that he was beheaded' (he was actually arrested by the Japanese), although he is correct in saying that 'later Mohan Singh was arrested'.[924] He then goes on:

> Not long after this, we were addressed by Ras Behari Bose, an Indian Nationalist. He told us they did not want men in the INA who would not cooperate willingly, as they would only prove dangerous. We considered that this gave us an excellent opportunity to get out of the Army and from then on

[921] NAI, 379, Part 5, Appendix A. Parties listed by Chint Singh: 16, 17, 18, 19, 26. These correspond to CSDIC(I) serial numbers: 15, 16, 17, 22, 18, respectively.
[922] NAA, R17, *Mitsuba*, p.61, Exhibit 'G', paragraph 2.
[923] Ibid., paragraph 4.
[924] Ibid., paragraph 5.

> about 8,000 of us ceased to wear armbands or to attend parades or to take part at all in the Army. This would be about December 1942.[925]

This is an important paragraph because for the first time it indicates that Chint Singh had been a member of the INA himself. It is interesting that he does not mention any specific coercive methods being used against him personally to force him to join. It should be remembered that membership of the INA in 1942 was not simply about wearing armbands and attending parades, with one CSDIC(I) report describing events in the latter half of 1942 as: 'The 16000 men of the INA moved to Bidadari [in Singapore], were armed, and began full-time training'.[926] He then goes on to describe the attempts to persuade men to re-join the force in early 1943, after Mohan Singh had attempted to dissolve the force:

> In January however Maj KIANI became Commander of the Army and the old policy of compulsion was revived. By starting against the previous methods of illtreatment, about 3,000 on SINGAPORE were forced to rejoin, but the rest lead by a Lt-Col PARKASH, of whose group I was a member refused to rejoin. The Japanese then arrested Lt-Col PARKASH, and later other officers including myself, and placed us a camp at JOHURE BARU.[927]

The key officer mentioned here as 'Lt-Col PARKASH' was actually Major Parkash Chand, a KCIO who had attended the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in England, and who was interrogated by CSDIC(I) at the end of the war.[928] While presented in Chint Singh's account as a key resistor of the reconstitution of the INA, CSDIC(I)'s assessment of his motives and actions is more damming. According to one informant he had been 'a very staunch supporter of Mohan Singh and a great showman on all parades and inspections', while CSDIC(I) noted, that he had been appointed to a senior INA role as commander of the Azad Guerrilla Regiment in September 1942.[929] CSDIC(I) was clearly unconvinced by

[925] Ibid., paragraph 6.
[926] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.13.
[927] NAA, R17, *Mitsuba*, p.61, Exhibit 'G', paragraph 7, 8.
[928] AAS, F275/15, p.92.
[929] Ibid., p.96.

Parkash Chand's version of events, stating that 'with his phoney Oxford accent, his affectation, his oily subservience, and his continual "explanations" he has made a very bad impression', and put his role in opposing the reconstitution of the INA in early 1943 down to 'his failure to obtain in the INA the seniority to which he considered himself entitled', and was therefore rooted in his rivalry with other INA officers, rather than any wish to resist the INA *per se*. The wording used in assessing Parkash Chand by CSDIC(I) is particularly harsh, and it needs to be tempered with the recognition that the decision of such a Sandhurst trained officer to join the INA would have been viewed by his interrogator as a particularly serious offence, and it is therefore unsurprising that he was assigned the security classification of 'Black'.[930] The figure that emerges from his CSDIC(I) interrogation is therefore very different from that which is suggested by his portrayal in Chint Singh's affidavit. It should also be emphasised that CSDIC(I) did not automatically condemn an officer simply because they had been a member of the INA, and in at least one case exonerated an officer who had held a prominent role within the force.[931]

The affidavit of Chint Singh continues by outlining how those resisting re-joining the INA were concentrated in one camp, where they 'were all starved, kept in unhygienic conditions, beaten and otherwise illtreated' and were told that 'as we now refused to cooperate we would be sent as prisoners to the Solomons and New Britain', although 'All refused to rejoin the INA'.[932] They were eventually sent to New Guinea in May 1943, with Chint Singh in the group led by Nirpal Chand. The practice of allowing such affidavits to be submitted as evidence without the need for the witness to appear in person during the trial, and therefore be available for cross-examination by the Defence, meant that the information contained

[930] Ibid., pp.98-99.
[931] AAS, F275/6, p.128. The officer was Major Bhagat.
[932] NAA, R17, *Mitsuba*, p.61, Exhibit 'G', paragraph 8, 9.

within it was necessarily accepted at face value by the Court. Although this practice was driven by the impracticality of requiring Indian witnesses to travel back and forth between India and Rabaul whenever trials were being held, it was clearly less than ideal and risked the efficacy of the trials. It is worth noting that the recently published memoir of Chint Singh completely omits any details of events between the surrender of Singapore in February 1942 and the departure of the prisoners in May 1943.[933]

A notable absence from Chint Singh's affidavit is any mention of Nirpal Chand, and it could therefore be argued that the information contained therein does not help resolve what became the key question facing the Court: whether he had taken an oath to the Indian Independence League as alleged by Captain Mitsuba in his testimony, and if so, whether it had been voluntarily given. Little information was provided to the Court about Nirpal Chand prior to his death in April 1944, other than that he was an officer in the 6/14 Punjab Regiment.[934] While a CSDIC(I) report assessed that battalion as one of those that 'volunteered almost to a man' for the INA, there is no specific information on Nirpal Chand within the report.[935] However, part of the intelligence windfall provided to the British authorities by the Dhillon escape party in 1942 (discussed in Chapter One), was an organisation chart for the first INA, that shows Nirpal Chand as head of the training branch, holding the INA rank of lieutenant colonel.[936] He was therefore among the relatively small group of officers who made up the core leadership of the first INA established under Mohan Singh in 1942. It is apparent from the *Mitsuba* trial records that the Court would have been unaware that Nirpal Chand had been a leading member of the INA, or that he had held the

[933] Parmar, *Chint Singh*, p.13.
[934] His entry on the CWGC Kranji memorial in Singapore (column 241) lists him under 1/14 Punjab rather than 6/14 Punjab. This is probably because the 1/14 Punjab was the original 'indianised' battalion of the Regiment.
[935] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.13.
[936] AAS, L/WS/1/1576, p.202.

rank of lieutenant colonel within the force. It also seems inconceivable that Chint Singh would have been unaware of this fact when he was submitting his evidence.

Although the Court drew heavily on the affidavits of Chint Singh to assess whether the Indian personnel had remained as prisoners of war, it was not the only source of evidence it marshalled to address the question. Exhibit 'H' was another interrogation of a Japanese officer, but this time one with no direct connection to the *Mitsuba* trial: Captain Nakamura Moriyuki of the 2nd Special Land Service Company.[937] An extract reads as follows:

> Q. When your unit was in NEW BRITAIN did it have Indian PW under its control there?
> A. Yes.
>
> Q. Were the Indian PW ordered by the Japanese to join the Indian National Army to fight against the Allies?
> A. Some volunteered and some were ordered to join the Indian National Army and brought to RABAUL.
>
> Q. Which ones were brought to RABAUL, the ones that volunteered or the ones that were forced?
> A. Those who were ordered to join the Indian National Army were brought here.[938]

It is unclear whether the interrogation was held as part of the preparation of the *Mitsuba* trial, or if it had become fortuitously available for the Prosecution to use as a result of other investigations, although the clear implication of its content was that those brought to the area had been forced into joining the INA. The first point to note is that the unit concerned was based at Rabaul in New Britain, a completely different location from that where the events of the *Mitsuba* trial took place, at Wewak and But in New Guinea. The Court also appears to have assumed that all Indian personnel sent to the Southwest Pacific area were in

[937] Not to be confused with Lieutenant Nakamura Kaniyuki from the *Gozawa* trial.
[938] NAA, R17, *Mitsuba*, p.63., Exhibit 'H'.

the same category, but as has been demonstrated before this was not the case. The leading Indian officer within the Japanese 2nd Special Land Service Company was Lieutenant Colonel Ishaq who was mentioned earlier in this chapter, and the men within it were all drawn from the Hyderabad State Infantry, a unit that stayed out of the INA.[939] In contrast, the Indian personnel led by Nirpal Chand were former members of the INA. It should also be noted that the last answer in the interrogation extract of the Japanese officer above is incorrect, as some of the units sent to Rabaul had also served in the INA in 1942.[940] Taken together, these differences suggest that the contents of Exhibit 'H' were in practice irrelevant to the *Mitsuba* trial, although presumably because the Court apparently lacked access to the CSDIC(I) intelligence material, it appears to have believed that it was. The assessment of the veracity of this and other evidence relating to Indian personnel may also have been affected by the fact that it would appear that none of the members appointed to the Court had direct knowledge of Indian troops.[941]

On 18 March 1946, after eighteen minutes of deliberation, the Court returned guilty verdicts for the charge of murder against the three officers, although they dismissed the charge against the lance corporal. They subsequently sentenced Captain Mitsuba and Lieutenant Murai to twenty years imprisonment each, and Lieutenant Imamura to five years.[942] The finding and sentences were confirmed in May, although Mitsuba did not live long enough for his sentence to be promulgated – he committed suicide on 13 April 1946.[943] Almost certainly this act was influenced by the outcome of another trial involving Mitsuba which took place a few days after he was found guilty in the *Mitsuba* trial. Taking place over the

[939] NAI, 379, Part 5, Appendix A. CSDIC(I) Party no.9. See also AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.13.
[940] NAI, 379, Part 5, Appendix A. For example, party no.21.
[941] NAA, R17, *Mitsuba*, p.27. They appear to have been drawn from Australian formations.
[942] Ibid., p.52.
[943] Ibid., p.4.

course of a single day on 22 March 1946, and relating to the shooting of two unidentified Indian prisoners in late 1944, the evidence against him was based solely on a confession he had made to the killings under interrogation in October 1945.[944] There is an interesting statement near the beginning of the trial proceedings: 'The Court indicates that it does not wish to hear evidence as to the status of the Indians', which was almost certainly influenced by the fact that all but one of the military officers acting as the members of the Court were the same as in the previous trial.[945] The Court found Mitsuba guilty and sentenced him to death by hanging, although he committed suicide before the sentence could be carried out.

The Court in the *Mitsuba* trial, when faced with the assertion by Mitsuba that Nirpal Chand had ceased to be a prisoner of war, drew on the affidavits of Chint Singh and information obtained under interrogation from a Japanese officer to assess the validity of the claim, which it rejected. In common with other war-crimes trials, there was no requirement for the Court to produce a reasoned judgement to justify its findings. It is therefore not possible to assess the relative weight the Court gave to each, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that the evidence of Chint Singh was critical in the decision of the Court to reject the assertion. It is apparent that the Australian Court did not have access to the CSDIC(I) intelligence material on the INA, and although it appears that the members of the Court acted in good faith in reaching their conclusions, it is suggested that they may have come to a different view regarding the status of Nirpal Chand, if they had known that he had been an active member of the INA in 1942, holding the rank of lieutenant colonel. There is no doubt that the killing of Nirpal Chand was a brutal act, but at the very least such knowledge may have influenced the sentences in this trial, and tempered the sentence given to Mitsuba in the

[944] NAA, R56, p.12.
[945] Ibid., p.13.

subsequent one. Quite why Nirpal Chand adopted a stance of open defiance against the Japanese upon arrival at But is unclear, particularly as his previously covert approach of subverting the march to Hollandia appeared to be working well, but seen through the framework of Scott's 'public transcript', a violent reaction was almost inevitable from the Japanese to such a blatant challenge to their authority.[946]

Another question relates to what Chint Singh actually knew about the INA and Nirpal Chand. It seems inconceivable that he could have been unaware that Nirpal Chand had held a senior role in the force, particularly as it is likely he had been a member of the INA himself. It suggests that Chint Singh, following his horrific experiences at the hands of the Japanese in New Guinea, and probably regretting having joined the INA in 1942, was using the opportunity presented by his release from captivity to re-frame his experience in captivity to adjust to the Allied victory in the war. Nor was he the only former INA member to do so, with the case of Lieutenant Nigam from Chapter One being another example. It will be recalled that Nigam was vociferous in his claims of having remained aloof from the INA, even giving newspaper interviews to that effect on his arrival back in India, and continued in that vein until confronted with the evidence of his involvement by CSDIC(I).[947] Like Chint Singh he also provided an affidavit that was used in a subsequent war-crimes trial, with two Japanese soldiers being imprisoned for fifteen years each for having beaten him. In this trial the issue of the status of the Indian personnel was again raised, although in this case it was summarily dealt with: 'The Court is well aware of the status of the Indians and the President announces that the Court regards them as Prisoners of War'.[948] The impact of

[946] Scott, *Domination*, p.xi.
[947] NAI, INA 499, part 10, p.77.
[948] NAA, R57, p.21.

Nigam on the Australian war-crimes process would ultimately be less than that of Chint Singh, but their stories are strikingly similar.

While Chint Singh was repatriated to India in early 1946, he returned to Rabaul in 1947 to assist the Australian authorities in several high profile trials, including that of the commander of the Japanese 18th Army, Lieutenant General Adachi.[949] It is interesting to note that in a affidavit made in 1947, the candour of his admission of involvement with the INA found in his *Mitsuba* trial affidavit is absent, replaced with the firm assertion that all the Indian parties sent to New Guinea 'were composed solely of Indian Prisoners of War', with no mention of their involvement with the INA in 1942.[950] As Fitzpatrick has emphasised, the evidence and credibility of the affable Chint Singh, was crucial in persuading the Australian authorities that the Indian personnel they recovered in the Southwest Pacific were always *bona fide* prisoners of war.[951] It is to be regretted that Chint Singh's recently published memoir provides no new information relating to this important topic.

In summary, almost a third (ninety-nine) of all the war-crimes trials held by the Australian authorities involved Indian victims, often involving horrific examples of abuse or even murder. But in some cases, their reliance on evidence from figures such as Chint Singh, combined with their apparent ignorance of the CSDIC(I) intelligence material, caused them to reject valid defence arguments. However, it should be emphasised that the Australian officers who served as Court members appear to have acted in good faith, being undoubtedly driven in part by sympathy for the victims of Japanese cruelty, whether Indian or otherwise.

[949] NAA, R173. The other two trials were: R174, R175.
[950] AWM, 1010/4/31, Chint Singh affidavit, 19 June 1947, p.1.
[951] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.523.

The post-war memory of the Indian victims in Australian trials, was shaped by the assumption that because of the hardships they had endured, it was self-evident that they must have opposed the INA, or only joined it as a result of coercion.[952] CSDIC(I) was aware that this was not always the case, but its knowledge of how particular Indian personnel had behaved, was not available to the Australian war-crimes courts. Captain Nirpal Chand, as well as Captain Hanawar (referred to as Captain Hanover by Chint Singh), are commemorated on the same panel at Kranji War Memorial as other former INA personnel (discussed in Chapter Two).[953] It is another reminder, of how the complex histories of some of those commemorated, were obscured in the post-war period.

A massacre examined in the *Kamimura* trial

One of the lesser known massacres of Indian prisoners by the Japanese occurred at Kuala Belait in what was then British Borneo (modern Brunei), in June 1945. Involving the killing of up to seventy-two Indian prisoners, it led to a war-crimes trial held by British authorities involving the commander of the Japanese unit involved, Captain Kamimura Eiikichi, as well as Second Lieutenant Yamaguchi Katsuyuki, who had commanded the troops involved. Both officers were charged with 'the killing of Indian Prisoners of War by bayonetting and beheading them'.[954] Held in Jesselton on the northwest coast of Borneo (modern Kota Kinabalu) over four days in November 1946, the trial featured a Japanese defence counsel named Matsumoto, utilising a defence that claimed the Indian personnel had been

[952] For example, see: Douds, 'The men who never were'.
[953] The standard spelling of Captain M.H. Hanawar in CSDIC(I) sources is 'Hanowar', see: NAI, 379, Part 5, Appendix A. CSDIC(I) Party no.17.
[954] TNA, WO 235/1000, *Kamimura*.

cooperating with the Japanese for most of their time in captivity, but had then turned against them when the arrival of Allied forces seemed imminent.[955] This section examines the question: how did ignorance of CSDIC(I) intelligence regarding the behaviour these Indian troops in captivity, influence the outcome of the trial?

The prosecution case was based on three affidavits from surviving Indian prisoners, all from 2/15 Punjab Battalion, and a local Sikh civilian named Gurmokh Singh who appeared as a witness. Gurmokh Singh was an engineer who had lived in Kuala Belait since 1940 and was still there when the Japanese brought Indian prisoners from Kuching following their invasion in late 1941. In his testimony he stated that around the middle of June 1945 the Japanese had left Kuala Belait 'because there was heavy bombing by Allied Air Force and a landing appeared to be imminent', although many of the Indian prisoners had stayed in the area. By 15 or 16 June he had heard 'that the Japanese were going to return and kill those Indian soldiers', and at about 10pm he 'heard the sound of a motor-boat' on the river at which point he ran and hid, although he was able to observe the Japanese disembarking at a nearby jetty 'holding rifles with fixed bayonets and some were holding swords'.[956] After identifying Second Lieutenant Yamaguchi as one of them, he described how the Japanese then headed towards the Indian camp, and after a while heard shouting in Punjabi saying 'we are being killed by the Japanese' and claimed that he was able to recognise the Indian voices as belonging to Sikh prisoners that he knew. Because he was frightened he remained in his hiding place until daybreak.[957] Once the Japanese had gone he went to look at the camp, where 'I did not go inside the barracks, but from where I stood, I stood for a few minutes, I could see the scene. There were people lying with heads cut off; some lying in

[955] Ibid., Letter dated 22 April 1947, p.2.
[956] TNA, WO 235/1000, *Kamimura*, p.5.
[957] Ibid., p.6.

the verandah and some lying outside the ground', and they also had 'bayonet wounds'. In total he saw about twenty-five to thirty bodies, and 'some were Muslims and some were Sikhs'.[958] The testimony of Gurmokh Singh was certainly dramatic, but he was the only non-Japanese eyewitness to give evidence in person, with the other accounts being submitted as affidavits.

The three Indian survivors of the massacre who provided affidavits had all been captured in December 1941, when part of the 2/15 Punjab Battalion surrendered near Kuching in western Borneo, during the Japanese invasion of British Borneo.[959] All three required the services of an interpreter in order to record their affidavits in English, which covered their whole period in captivity, not just the massacre. A *jawan* named Jogindar Singh described a history of bad treatment by the Japanese including beatings, hard labour, forcing the sick to work, and even the killing of five by a named Japanese 'by being given an injection', a practice that he personally witnessed. He was transferred to Kuala Belait in March 1943, where a total of one hundred and eighty Indian prisoners were kept in a camp, which also housed some Malays. It was there in June 1945, that the massacre occurred:

> About 80 men were bayonetted on one occasion, of whom only 8 survived. It was dark at the time so I cannot identify any of the Japanese responsible. I was bayonetted by a lance-corporal myself but I do not know his name. After I had been bayonetted they tested whether I was alive by putting things in my nose and on my neck. I shook and was bayonetted again. I was then left for dead but crept into the jungle […] The orders for the bayonetting of the men were given in my presence by Lieut. Yamaguchi.[960]

The second affidavit was provided by Naik (Corporal) Chandgi Ram, and his earlier experiences in captivity were similar to those of Jogindar Singh. On one occasion 'Some

[958] Ibid., p.7.
[959] Ibid., Exhibits 'E', 'F', and 'G'.
[960] Ibid., Exhibit 'E', p.1.

Australian and British prisoners were kept in the adjoining cell and we were beaten for giving them food', while as a result of another beating 'a bone near my neck was broken as a result and my teeth were knocked out'.[961] After being moved to Kuala Belait the abuse continued with one of the perpetrators being 'Lieut Yamaguchi (the camp commander)'. Later 'at first we given enough rice and vegetables, but when we refused to help them against the British the Japanese reduced our rations. After that they brought two Indians into the camp to lecture us to try to get us to help the Japs against the Allies, but this had no result and the two Indians went away again'. According to him the final total of Indian deaths in the camp at Kuala Belait totalled one hundred and thirty, with sixty five being killed by the Japanese and the others dying of starvation.[962] The Japanese clearly made sustained attempts to get the men to cooperate with them, and unilaterally announced that they were now part of a 'Japanese labour corps'. At one point 'five Indian officers and six ORs [other ranks]' were beaten 'with a steel pipe' and then taken to the Japanese Military Police, where 'one Indian officer died because he was beaten too much. Nobody was allowed to bury him. The Indian's name was Subedar Mohd Anwar'. Along with others, Chandgi Ram escaped the massacre by hiding 'in the bushes nearby' but saw afterwards that 'some Indians were beheaded and the rest were bayonetted', while 'Two days later the Japanese returned and set fire to the hut in which this massacre had been committed. I saw the burnt Indians – the ashes and the bones'.[963]

Another *jawan* called Hakim Khan provided the third affidavit, giving similar evidence about the abuse suffered, including the use of injections or 'needles' as he called them, to kill sick Indian prisoners. Later at Kuala Belait he managed to escape the massacre by

[961] Ibid., Exhibit 'F', p.1.
[962] Ibid., Exhibit 'F', p.2.
[963] Ibid., Exhibit 'F', p.3. Note that Subadar Anwar was later awarded the Indian Order of Merit, see: TNA, WO 373/104/138.

running into the jungle, but some time afterwards returned to the barracks at night, and 'by striking matches quickly I was able to see about 50 bodies of Indians there; most of them were bayonetted or beheaded; some were still alive, but moaning'.[964] In common with the other two affidavit's, there was no description of events immediately prior to the massacre, for example the apparent departure of the Japanese from the area several days before, and no mention of several assertions that would shortly be made by the Japanese officers as they testified in person.

Although both Japanese accused provided affidavits, they and another Japanese also testified at the trial. Called as defence witnesses, the first to give evidence was Captain Kamimura and he explained his view of the relationship between his unit and the Indian prisoners, who served in the *Romutai* or 'Special Working Party'.[965] After explaining that they had been transferred from the prison camps to work in the local oil-fields, he stated that they had 'pledged to co-operate with the Japanese' although 'they were not forced' to do so, and had taken 'a ceremony of oath at the athletic field in front of the Military office'. He claimed:

> I treated then as brothers and gave them Sundays and holidays and allowed them to do shopping and to go and see movies and places. On festival days they were allowed to buy meat and liquor as they desired. We too were invited on these occasions to take part in the entertainments, dancing etc.[966]

According to Kamimura, it was in early June 1945, with Allied landings near to Kuala Belait expected, that the oil-fields were set on fire and a withdrawal from the town was undertaken, but it soon became apparent that most Indian personnel had remained behind in the town and that weapons had gone missing.[967] He then claimed that he went back to Kuala Belait

[964] Ibid., Exhibit 'G', p.2.
[965] Ibid., Testimony, p.13.
[966] Ibid., Testimony, p.14.
[967] Ibid., Testimony, p.15., see also Exhibit 'H'.

with a small reconnaissance party, and on the morning of 13 June 1945 was informed by the 'Kempeitai Commandant' (Military Police) that on 11 June 'the Romu Tai went to Kuala Belait police station and took away 50 rifles and 500 bullets' as well as other weapons; said to locals 'they were going to fight' against the Japanese; and took large quantities of provisions from the unit farm.[968] He outlined his reasoning at this time: 'If we leave the Romu Tai in such condition it is clear that they will together hand in hand with the allies attack us', and he claimed that it was for this reason that he gave the orders for Lieutenant Yamaguchi to attack the Indian camp.[969] Kamimura was subsequently cross-examined by prosecution counsel, and one point he was challenged on was why he had made no mention of a rising of Indian prisoners in his original affidavit (he only mentions desertions), and it was put to him that it was 'an after-thought and is a complete lie', an assertion to which he gave no answer.[970]

The next to give evidence was Second Lieutenant Yamaguchi. He had already provided a long and detailed affidavit, describing how he had decided to launch a surprise attack on the Indian camp in the middle of the night (14/15 June 1945); had started with only twenty-five men, but was able to double the number with men from another Japanese unit; how 'the Indians were bayonetted and beheaded in the barrack rooms, in their beds and in the compound'; and how he was able to recover weapons and other supplies.[971] It was on 18 June 1945, with an Allied landing apparently imminent, that he ordered that the compound and bodies should be burnt.[972] During his later testimony he stated that they had killed forty three Indian personnel while just two of his men had been injured, a remarkable statistic

[968] Ibid., Testimony, p.16.
[969] Ibid., Testimony, p.18.
[970] Ibid., Testimony, p.22., see also Exhibit 'H'.
[971] Ibid., Exhibit 'I', p.3.
[972] Ibid., Exhibit 'I', p.4.

given that the Indian personnel were allegedly heavily armed.[973] The questions asked during the prosecution cross-examination led to a series of denials by Yamaguchi, including that he had never beaten Indians, had never seen any evidence of malnutrition among the Indian personnel, and even more unlikely, had not witnessed the killing in the barracks because he had been pursuing an Indian sentry who had run away at the start of the attack.[974] But the underlying theme was a repeat of Kamimura's: that the Indian prisoners were in revolt against the Japanese, were armed, and represented a clear threat. The third Japanese witness was a Sergeant Major Nomata, who when asked how he felt about the Indian prisoners replied 'I thought of them as brethren', before describing the large amount of weapons and supplies that the Indians had allegedly taken including 'ration for four months' and '70 pigs and vegetables'.[975] However, under cross-examination he struggled to explain why he had not mentioned weapons being stolen in his earlier affidavit, replying: 'I was told it was not necessary to tell that arms and ammunition were stolen'.[976]

The closing address by the Japanese defence counsel Matsumoto emphasised that the Indian personnel 'constituting a wing of the Japanese army, failed to observe the military discipline of the Japanese Army'. As he put it, 'It is certain that victory cannot be attained out of humanitarian tactics. In this case, a numerically inferior force of 40 Japanese plunged into a much larger force of 132 ROMUTAI who had already turned enemy', before going on to compare the necessity of the Japanese action with the necessity felt by the Allies to use the atomic bomb on Hiroshima to end the war.[977] Prosecution counsel in his closing address challenged 'the plea of operational necessity' put forward by the defence, describing as 'an

[973] Ibid., Testimony, p.28.
[974] Ibid., Testimony, pp.33-34.
[975] Ibid., Testimony, p.41.
[976] Ibid., Testimony, p.43.
[977] Ibid., pp.45-48.

unscrupulous lie' the idea that they were not prisoners of war, and questioned other aspects of the defence, including the low likelihood of the Japanese leaving behind rifles and ammunition when they left Kuala Belait, for the Indian personnel to later collect.[978] In the event, it was the prosecution arguments that the Court accepted, finding both officers guilty, and 'sentence of death was passed on both accused'.[979]

As with all trials, the guilty verdicts in this case were subject to legal review and five months later, in April 1947, the decision reached was to not confirm the sentences, with the result that both Captain Kamimura and Second Lieutenant Yamaguchi were freed. The long period between the sentence being passed and the confirmation decision, is indicative of a legal debate that had developed within the British legal authorities, relating to whether the Indian personnel in this case and others had made an oath of allegiance to the Japanese at some point, and what impact this could have on the culpability of the Japanese accused. This had ultimately resulted in the office of the Judge Advocate General in Singapore requesting legal guidance on the matter from their superiors in London, a factor in the length of delay before a confirmation decision was reached in the *Kamimura* trial.[980]

The *Kamimura* case was considered in London at the same time as the *Ikegame* case that had been held in Singapore in late 1946. Unlike the *Kamimura* case, *Ikegame* had seen an extensive discussion of whether the Indian personnel had in law changed their allegiance and therefore lost the protection of prisoner of war status.[981] The *Ikegame* case is another where the guilty verdicts reached during the trial were not confirmed, and it is one of those

[978] Ibid., pp.48-52.
[979] Ibid., 'Certificate of President'.
[980] Ibid., Letter 'War Crimes Trial', dated 22 April 1947.
[981] TNA, WO 235/979, *Ikegame*.

classified as 'Desertion Trials' by Cheah in the article mentioned earlier.[982] The *Ikegame* case file contains the note sent to London asking for guidance for both it and the *Kamimura* case, and it is striking how for *Kamimura* the defence assertions that the Indian personnel had transferred allegiance to the Japanese, and that they had been heavily armed when attacked in the middle of the night, appear to have been accepted by the judge advocate.[983] Indeed, there appears to have been a presumption by the judge advocate, that some form of cooperation between the Indian prisoners and the Japanese would have occurred. In the final letter from the judge advocate recommending against confirmation of the sentences in the *Kamimura* case, the key passage reads:

> The Court did not specifically find that the contention that the Indians had accepted the status of Japanese soldiers was established, but when some evidence in support of it was tendered they acted upon the assumption that it was unnecessary to investigate it. […] Had the matter been treated as one of fact in dispute it would have been open to the accused to raise as a defence that they honestly believed that they were acting within their rights towards men whom it was their duty to treat as soldiers of the Japanese army. As this issue was not before the court and as the decision upon it can only be a matter of speculation, I do not feel justified in advising confirmation.[984]

The argument therefore turned on a procedural point, although it will be recalled that the affidavit of Naik Chandgi Ram explicitly stated that attempts to get the Indian prisoners to ally with the Japanese had failed, but this evidence from a survivor of the massacre was apparently not considered compelling enough to counter the concerns over process.[985] Cheah has written at length about the legal questions raised by these trials, and in particular the importance of 'the accused person's own state of mind regarding the victims' status', in other words, whether the accused actually believed the Indian prisoners had transferred allegiance to the Japanese, because if so, 'the accused could have benefited from the criminal

[982] Cheah, *BIA Desertion Trials*, p.1232.
[983] TNA, WO 235/979, *Ikegame*, Letter 'War Crimes Trial', dated 10 January 1947.
[984] TNA, WO 235/1000, *Kamimura*, Letter 'War Crimes Trial', dated 22 April 1947
[985] Ibid., Exhibit 'F', p.2.

law defence of mistake of fact', although only if the question had been addressed appropriately during the trial itself.[986] Nonetheless, however correct in legal terms such assessments are, they are dependent on the evidence placed before the Court, which did not include intelligence known to CSDIC(I) and the Regimental Headquarters of 15 Punjab Regiment, and it is these sources which are now examined.

As previously mentioned, the Indian prisoners from the 2/15 Punjab Battalion who were ultimately massacred had been captured at Kuching in December 1941.[987] One controversial episode at Kuching in early 1942 involved an Indian officer of the battalion who 'deserted in action' and subsequently cooperated closely with the Japanese after surrendering to them. Captain Mata-ul-Mulk was a younger brother of the Mehtar (ruler) of the Indian Princely State of Chitral (in modern Pakistan), and after he had surrendered he 'found that the Japanese had been searching for him, as they had heard that he was the only Indian officer in that area of royal blood'. He was soon persuaded by the Japanese to attempt to subvert the loyalty of the other Indian prisoners at Kuching in early 1942, and he seems to have incited some of the Indian prisoners to slap a captured British officer, although ultimately he achieved little.[988] At this stage there were approximately two hundred Indian prisoners at Kuching, including six VCOs, and also two British officers, who unusually had not been separated from them.[989] Apart from the notable exception of Mata-ul-Mulk, the Indian prisoners at Kuching appear to have been resistant to appeals to cooperate with the Japanese, and in late February 1942 they were moved to another location and used as labourers. Mata-ul-Mulk was subsequently sent to Saigon to work in the INA propaganda broadcasting unit

[986] Cheah, *BIA Desertion Trials*, pp.1232-1233.
[987] National Army Museum, Chelsea (hereafter NAM), 9405-42-8, p.6.
[988] NAM, 9405-42-7B, pp.47-51. (This contains copy of Captain Mata-ul-Mulk's CSDIC(I) interrogation).
[989] NAM, 9405-42-8, p.1.

there (later in the war he was arrested and imprisoned by the INA for black-market rice trading).[990]

It was in early 1943, with twenty-seven of the men having died from heavy work and poor food, that the group of prisoners was moved to Kuala Belait, the British officers being removed from them at the same time, and there were more attempts to get them to cooperate, this time using appeals from Indian civilians.[991] In late 1943, the Japanese tried removing a VCO from the group who they thought was leading the resistance against cooperating, while on another occasion an attempt was made to get five of the men to act as guards for the Japanese, and when they refused they were badly beaten. In April 1945, in another attempt to remove anyone leading resistance to cooperating with the Japanese, the remaining VCOs were removed to a local jail where there were also some Australian prisoners.[992] The VCOs were 'beaten with an iron bar day and night for 13 to 14 days' and their food ration reduced, while:

> Subedar Makhmad Anwar had a large wound on his back which due to lack of attention developed into a septic condition and became verminous and maggot infested. He was beaten, hung up by the wrists and eventually died a slow and lingering death, his last days, being passed in a semi-conscious state. The other VCOs, IORs and Australians were taken in trucks towards Miri and later executed.

In parallel to this, there were further deaths at the Kuala Belait camp due to excessive work, poor food, and beatings, with the result that only one hundred and thirty-nine were left alive by June 1945.[993] Soon afterwards thirty-nine of the healthier men taken away to act as porters.[994] When the Japanese forces arrived at the camp at around 1:30 a.m. on 16 June

[990] NAM, 9405-42-7B, p.64.
[991] NAI, INA 379, part 4, pp.2-3. CSDIC(I) Information report No.12 dated 2 April 1946.
[992] Ibid., p.4.
[993] Ibid., p.5.
[994] Ibid., p.6.

1945 there were ninety-one Indian personnel present in the camp, who 'mainly consisted of the sick and the bed ridden'. The 'roll call at such an odd hour made the men suspicious' and forty-one managed to escape, while the remaining fifty 'were lined up and roped together in parties of six, with their hands tied behind with telephone wire'. The Japanese officer in command 'commenced beheading the prisoners until he was too tired to continue' and then ordered his men to bayonet the remainder. The few survivors later 'managed to crawl into the jungle' where they remained until recovered by Australian forces on 23 June 1945.[995] This account of the massacre, which is in line with the affidavits given by the three Indian survivors including Chandgi Ram, is very different from the version provided by the Japanese defendants, involving a surprise attack on armed and dangerous rebel troops. Not only had the Indian prisoners resisted a sustained and brutal campaign to get them to cooperate with the Japanese, they possessed no weapons, and many of them were sick and in some cases bed-ridden at the time of the massacre.

For CSDIC(I), the massacre at Kuala Belait was notable because similar massacres did not take place at other locations, such as Kuching, where other Indian prisoners were being held at the time of the Allied invasion. CSDIC(I)'s view was that the men at Kuala Belait were killed because 'the resistance put up by them was greater by far than that put up by any other Indian prisoners in Borneo'.[996] In particular, there was no justification for the Japanese assertion that these particular Indian prisoners had volunteered to serve with Japanese forces, nor can the Japanese accused have genuinely believed that this was the case. While the opinion of the judge advocate in the *Kamimura* trial may have been correct in legal terms, revealing a genuine commitment to providing the Japanese defendants with a fair trial, the

[995] NAM, 9405-42-8, p.5. Note: this account mentions a Japanese officer 'Lieut Kami Mora' which is almost certainly a conflation of Captain Kamimura and Second Lieutenant Yamaguchi.
[996] NAI, INA 379, part 4, p.7.

decision not to confirm the death sentences passed on Captain Kamimura and Second Lieutenant Yamaguchi, inadvertently allowed them to get away with murder.

In the *Kamimura* trial, the British authorities failed to provide justice for the Indian victims of the Kuala Belait massacre – men who had suffered dreadfully due to their resistance to Japanese demands for cooperation. The primary cause was the failure to access relevant CSDIC(I) intelligence information caused by its suppression in the post-war period. The regimental history of these men ends with the comment: 'Time shall never tarnish the brightness of their conduct or impoverish the hallowed memory of these lion-hearted soldiers, in the years to come'.[997] Unfortunately, that sentiment did not survive the years: the massacre at Kuala Belait appears to have been largely forgotten, and with it, its Indian victims.

Summary

The lack of access to CSDIC(I) intelligence materially impacted some war-crimes trials conducted by both the British and Australian authorities, although in different ways. With respect to the British authorities, a key question is why they conducted so few trials involving Indian prisoners compared to the Australians, even though they recovered far more Indian prisoners from Japanese hands at the end of the war. This occurred even though, as Fitzpatrick has pointed out, sixty percent of the British war-crimes trials of Japanese military personnel involved Asian rather than British victims, suggesting that this outcome was not racially driven.[998] However, these victims were largely civilians rather than military

[997] NAM, 9405-42-8, p.5.
[998] Fitzpatrick, *Australia's War Crimes Trials*, p.519.

personnel, and it is argued that it was the inability to counter Japanese claims of cooperation by Indian military prisoners, in part driven by an awareness that cooperation had sometimes occurred, that led the British authorities to mount relatively few prosecutions. Even the trials that were mounted, such as *Kamimura,* sometimes failed on this issue.

On the other hand, the Australian authorities mounted many more prosecutions, dismissing Japanese claims of cooperation by Indian personnel, apparently in ignorance of the cooperation that had sometimes occurred. It will be recalled from the Introduction, that the Japanese restricted the size of the INA in 1942, with there being far more Indian volunteers than places available. The minority who actively served with the INA in 1942, and this included the Indian personnel in the *Mitsuba* trial and others, were therefore part of a select core of INA volunteers, and therefore in a qualitatively different category to those who either never volunteered (such as the men of the Hyderabad Infantry), or those who did but never served. While the British war-crimes personnel may have been more aware in general of what had occurred, both they and the Australians were hampered by lack of access to the detailed intelligence on Indian prisoners that CSDIC(I) had gathered. The result was that justice was impaired in some cases, leading to both problematic convictions and unjust acquittals. Although the Japanese war-crimes trials represent a rich source of information on Indian prisoner experience, the limited post-war memory of their Indian victims has meant that they are largely forgotten men.

Conclusion

When arriving at the British Kranji War Memorial in Singapore, the visitor's attention is drawn upslope past hundreds of gravestones towards what is called the Singapore Memorial on the crest of the rising ground. This is the setting for panels displaying columns of names which include Indian troops who died following their capture by the Japanese, and who have no known grave. The names on the panels are listed by regiment and then rank, and the large numbers of names from some regiments are striking. One example is 14 Punjab Regiment, which lost two battalions captured in the Malayan campaign and another at the earlier surrender of Hong Kong, but there are many others, including 17 Dogra Regiment (two battalions), State Infantry units such as the Hyderabad Infantry, and others such as the Indian Engineers.[999] The way that this monument presents those listed on the panels as 'united in service to the British Crown', including men who died while serving in the INA, was examined in Chapter Two, and it was argued that this setting represented an example of a facade the effect of which was to obscure that some of those commemorated had died fighting against British forces: a deliberate act of forgetting. Given that of 12,500 Indian prisoners who died, some two thousand did so while serving in the INA, then on average around one in seven of the names listed for the battalions captured during the Malayan campaign, and elsewhere, died while actively opposing the British Crown.[1000] If the nearly three thousand former INA personnel who died in New Guinea were also included, it would average almost one in three of those listed, and this is an important reason why there are so many names recorded for regiments such as 14 Punjab and 17 Dogra, their battalions having volunteered virtually *en masse* for the original INA commanded by Captain Mohan

[999] Singapore Memorial: 14 Punjab, columns 241-260; 17 Dogra, 273-284; Hyderabad Infantry, 369-374; Royal Indian Engineers, 153-172.
[1000] See discussion of Indian prisoner casualties, Chapter Two.

Singh.[1001] It is likely that a contemporary visitor, reviewing the panels of these regiments at the Singapore Memorial, would be surprised to discover that what they were viewing was a facade that masked disloyalty on that scale. They would probably be even more surprised if they were informed that eight out of nine of the Indian prisoners captured at the fall of Singapore had volunteered to serve in the INA, but that most had been prevented from doing so by Japanese policy.[1002] The commemorative practices at Kranji, underpinned by an explicit framing of the Indian dead listed there as having been loyal to the British Crown, has helped shape subsequent memory of these men. The success of this monumental facade is an indication of just how much knowledge regarding Indian prisoners of war has been obscured in British post-war memory.

This thesis set out to explore the nature of British post-war memory of the 67,000 Indian prisoners of the Japanese based on three core questions. These addressed the extent to which the formation of the INA influenced the way in which Indian prisoners were remembered and represented; the way that British colonial propaganda (broadly defined) shaped British memory; and the extent to which British memory of Indian prisoners was constrained by official documentary sources remaining confidential for many decades, with some key material apparently missing. The thesis therefore represents a case study in the origins of historical memory, although due to the nature of what the research revealed, it came to focus on understanding the role of forgetting in its development.

As the literature review in the Introduction noted, remarkably little has been published on the experiences of Indian troops of the British Indian Army captured by the Japanese. The

[1001] AAS, L/WS/2/45, p.14.
[1002] See overview of events in Introduction.

exception has been the attention given to the minority who served in the INA, although even in this sub-field there have been no significant additions to the literature since the early 1990s, which saw the publication of Sundaram's 'Paper Tiger' article and Fay's book *Forgotten Army*. The article by Douds, 'The men who never were', remains the only study dedicated to the experiences of Indian prisoners in general. While this thesis addresses questions relating to the nature of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners, it has also sought to begin to address the lacuna in the secondary literature regarding Indian prisoners, its field of enquiry. An important development since the 1990s has been the opening of new archival sources in India, Britain, and Australia, the contents of which have been used to challenge established narratives at various points in this thesis. Foremost among these are the military intelligence files of CSDIC(I) that have been referenced frequently, but they also include sources such as the proceedings of British and Australian war-crimes trials that have proved a rich source of Indian prisoner experience. While the epistemological challenges of utilising material such as CSDIC(I) interrogations have needed to be addressed, their potential for critiquing existing narratives have proved invaluable to this thesis. In addition, as previously outlined, the existing secondary literature has tended to frame the experiences of Indian prisoners in terms of whether they remained loyal to the British colonial authorities or not, thereby ventriloquising contemporary colonial concerns. In contrast, by approaching its field of enquiry through the lens of memory, this thesis has aimed to provide a more nuanced portrayal of Indian prisoner experience, that could accommodate the wide spectrum of behaviour encountered in the sources now available.

With British post-war memory of Indian prisoners of war as the focus of this thesis, the form and processes by which that social memory came into being were central to this study. Two principle influences were identified: the institutional practices of the British colonial state

and the British Indian Army, which limited the available information on Indian prisoners and presented sanitised versions of what had transpired; and the later memoirs and diaries of British military officers which reflected a shared "social memory" of Indian prisoners and the INA. The source of this "social memory" was framed with reference to Mannheim's concept of a 'generation as actuality', deriving from the shared institutional and wartime experience of British officers, where they came to form what Mannheim termed a 'generation unit' that presented consistent views of Indian prisoners and the INA. A pertinent element of this "social memory" was what this thesis has termed a "myth of loyalty", namely the idea that, whatever may have occurred in captivity, most Indian prisoners stayed fundamentally loyal to their British-officered Regiments. The role of the myth is key, because however insightful Mannheim's formulation of the 'generation unit' may be, it is a theoretical treatment, untethered from what is encountered in primary sources. It has been argued that the "myth of loyalty" was the lens through which information was assessed by British officers and colonial officials, thereby linking the social formulation elucidated by Mannheim, to the memory practices that this thesis has termed selection, obscuration, and selection, the three structural forms of forgetting identified.

Following the Introduction, this thesis presented four thematic chapters. The first was entitled *The Missing: Foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners of war*, and it examined British colonial and military responses to the loss and recovery of Indian prisoners. Evidence of subversive activity during 1942, by both Indian military and civilian personnel arriving from Japanese territory, led to the establishment of a security screening organisation that included CSDIC(I). The arrival of the Dhillon party in October 1942 exposed the true scale of the INA, and it precipitated considerable alarm within the British colonial state. One response involved enhanced propaganda, including the portrayal of the

Dhillon party as unambiguously loyal to the British, despite doubts regarding the motives of the Indian personnel involved. This pattern, of public propaganda acting as a facade to mask disloyalty, would be a recurring theme throughout the war, including with the Pasni party in 1944. The alignment of such propagandist accounts with the "myth of loyalty", ensured that they were not corrected in the post-war period, becoming one of the foundations of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners.

Victory in August 1945 brought wartime censorship by the colonial state to an end, exposing the suppressed truth of the INA to Indian public scrutiny. While the post-war recovery of Indian prisoners viewed as loyal by the British was straightforward, one example being the repatriation of the Jind Infantry, the screening of over fifty thousand surviving Indian prisoners for anti-British activities represented a major challenge. The example of Lieutenant Nigam of 17 Dogra Regiment who arrived in Bombay aboard the aircraft-carrier HMS Formidable professing his opposition to the INA, only for CSDIC(I) to discover later that he had been an officer in the force, illustrates the challenges involved. However, the most acute cases were those who had fought against British forces, a category typically, although not exclusively, involving membership of the INA. How such men should be dealt with became a source of dispute among British officers, whether it was the INA troops captured in Bangkok, or the INA officers publicly court-martialled at the Red Fort at the end of 1945. The aftermath of the Red Fort trial, in which due to Indian public opinion General Auchinleck felt compelled to release the three INA officers despite their being convicted of serious military offences, created a sense of outrage among many British officers, which subsequently turned to disillusionment. The trial outcome was not only relevant to the Army but was also unmistakably a major defeat for the whole British colonial state, exposing to public view the post-war fragility of the colonial edifice, while the resultant disillusionment

of British officers represented a key waymark in the decline of the British Raj. The trial was also a harbinger of the sundering of the British Indian Army in 1947, the regiments of which many British officers had devoted their entire professional lives to serving. It was upon this bitter foundation that British post-war responses to Indian prisoners were built, foremost among them, a wish to forget.

The next chapter took as its theme how the experiences of Indian prisoners were remembered and was entitled *Indian prisoners of the Japanese: experience and memory of captivity*. The chapter began with an examination of mortality rates among Indian prisoners, with respect to both other prisoners such as the British and Australians, and comparatively between different groups of Indian prisoners. The number of Indian prisoner deaths from all causes was estimated at 12,500, equivalent in absolute terms to the number of British deaths, although representing a lower percentage death rate because the total number of Indian prisoners was greater. It was argued that the lower rate was due to their being transported less often in vulnerable transport ships by the Japanese. The way that Indian prisoner deaths were presented in the immediate post-war period by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, with the core claim being that those who remained 'loyal' to the British suffered a higher death rate, was challenged utilising CSDIC(I) material. The pattern evident in such claims, involving the re-appropriation in death for the British Crown of many Indian prisoners who had rejected British colonial rule, contributed to the type of portrayal that reached its culmination in the commemoration of the Indian prisoner dead at Kranji War memorial.

A notable feature of Indian prisoner experience was just how varied it was, and this was explored through several case studies. The first explored the attempts made to recruit Gurkhas into the INA in 1942, and particularly the way that these events were selectively

portrayed in later regimental histories. The next case study involved three hundred Indian prisoners based at an airfield in Hanoi who were relatively well treated, receiving good medical care and adequate food, factors that resulted in a high survival rate. The case of the Indian Anti-Aircraft gunners who fought alongside the Japanese against American forces at Guadalcanal and elsewhere, emphasised how little is known about some aspects of Indian prisoner experience. While the last study examined the provision of medical services to Indian prisoners in Singapore until the end of the war, another aspect of their experience that has been previously overlooked. No examination of Indian prisoner experience would be complete without addressing Japanese anthropophagy in New Guinea. Although just one aspect of the traumatic experience of those sent to the Southwest Pacific, the emotive nature of the subject matter demands careful treatment of the evidence, although it seems beyond doubt that it did occur. The ambiguous homecoming that many Indian prisoners experienced at the end of the war, reflected the prominence of the INA in the immediate post-war period. Nonetheless, the available evidence from letters suggests surviving Indian prisoners were focussed more on their future prospects, rather than their experiences in captivity.

The third chapter examined the portrayal of INA combat performance from a British perspective, relevant to this study because some twenty thousand former Indian prisoners served in the force. Entitled *British memory of an enemy: The Indian National Army in battle*, it began by tracing the origins of British memory of the INA in the institutional records of the British Indian Army, a negative portrayal that was strongly reinforced by the post-war memoirs of British officers, in particular General Slim. The ‘generation unit’ of British officers established a derogatory narrative regarding INA battlefield performance, that attained its apotheosis in the later secondary literature with Sundaram’s ‘Paper Tiger’ article. It was argued that the origins of this narrative lay in the concept of a ‘mystical’ bond

between British officers and their Indian troops, with loyalty at its core, a view that could only be reconciled to the existence of the INA by denying it legitimacy. In terms of British memoirs, this resulted in the INA seldom being mentioned, or if it was, typically only when it surrendered.

The portrayal of the INA was explored with reference to a failed river assault by a British battalion, during operations to cross the Irrawaddy in Burma in March 1945. Some British accounts, for example that of Slim, fail to mention that the INA was present and imply that British casualties were caused by the Japanese. However, a range of sources were utilised to reconstruct what occurred, including that many of the casualties were caused by the INA. It was argued that the suppression of the INA's involvement in combat, and particularly instances where it inflicted casualties on British units, was a standard feature of later British accounts, including memoirs and Regimental histories. The impact of the INA in the earlier Imphal campaign was also examined, particularly the role of the INA reconnaissance units that accompanied Japanese forces during the campaign. The CSDIC(I) archives proved invaluable for reconstructing events involving the INA at Sangshak and elsewhere, although it is apparent that the CSDIC(I) files still have much to reveal. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the INA had a greater impact during the campaign than has been previously acknowledged – particularly with respect to the subversion of captured Indian troops, the example of the Indian paratroopers at Sangshak being especially noteworthy.

The chapter ended by examining the courts-martial of captured INA troops conducted by British military authorities during the war, some of which resulted in the execution of the accused. These proceedings were conducted in secret and have been largely forgotten in the post-war period. Unfortunately, the documents for several of the most important courts-

martial appear to be missing, including that of Jemadar Dalbahadur Thapa, a Nepal-born Gurkha who was the most senior INA commander captured, court-martialled, and executed during the war by the British. The circumstances surrounding the apparent joint suicide while in British custody of two other senior INA commanders were also reviewed, albeit while acknowledging that the only information available comes from a British press release. However, despite the apparent suppression of some material, the CSDIC(I) files have proved invaluable in enabling established British narratives of the INA to be interrogated. Many of the tropes of such narratives, for example the emphasis on the INA only ever surrendering rather than fighting, or that their efforts at subversion were unsuccessful later in the war, have become a staple of the secondary literature, at least that portion of it that relied on British sources. Such tropes can now begin to be challenged, although much remains to be uncovered regarding the military operations of the INA.

The last thematic chapter examined a subject that until recently had been largely ignored: the post-war war-crimes trials of Japanese personnel where the victims were Indian prisoners. Entitled *Eyewitnesses to suffering: Memory of Indian victims in post-war Japanese war-crimes trials, 1946-1948*, it examined trials held by both the British and Australian authorities. The *Gozawa* trial, the first British war-crimes trial held involving Indian victims, was examined through Scott's framework of domination and resistance, thereby highlighting the similarities with previous historical episodes of exploitative domination. How representative of wider Indian prisoner experience the internal relationship dynamics of the *Gozawa Butai* were, is difficult to establish without further research, but it is argued that Scott's framework is a valuable aid for engaging with war-crimes trial material.

The *Suwabe* trial examined how evidence was actively curated, with respect to the shooting of Japanese and Indian prisoner survivors in the water by an American submarine crew. This was an episode that the British prosecution counsel clearly wished to avoid, although it was raised by several Indian witnesses. While the number of Indian deaths attributable to the shooting is unclear, it certainly contributed to the total of two hundred Indian prisoners who lost their lives overall. That details of the shooting were only captured because Japanese personnel were prosecuted on unrelated charges, is a reminder of the element that chance plays in shaping the archival record.

The last two trials, the first conducted by Australian authorities and the second by the British, examined the impact that the suppression of CSDIC(I) intelligence on Indian prisoners had on war-crime trial outcomes. It is clear from the proceedings of both the *Mitsuba* and *Kamimura* trial, that neither the Australian nor British war-crimes investigators had access to the detailed intelligence that CSDIC(I) amassed on the groups of Indian prisoners sent to Borneo and the Southwest Pacific, in particular the fact that most of those sent to New Guinea had served in the INA during 1942. While the Australian run *Mitsuba* trial led to an arguably unfair conviction of the Japanese accused, the British run *Kamimura* trial resulted in the release of Japanese officers who had massacred Indian prisoners. Such outcomes are a salutary reminder that the suppression of knowledge can have unintended consequences, while the low number of trials held by British authorities in the immediate post-war period compared to their Australian counterparts, illustrates how compromised they viewed the loyalty of Indian prisoners to have been.

The events described in the chapters, demonstrate how the active memory practices defined as suppression, obscuration, and selection, acted to bring about the forgetting of facts that

were uncomfortable for British colonial authorities. Suppression as a process is most obvious in examples such as the missing INA courts-martial files discussed in Chapter Three, and therefore had an important institutional character, but it is also seen in post-war British memoirs, such as those of General Slim, whose careful framing of his description of the river assault at Nyaungu allowed him to avoid mentioning the INA's role in that action. Suppression then, was a dominant factor in the shaping of British post-war memory. Obscuration has also been repeatedly encountered, with facades taking a variety of forms. These have included the British propaganda narrative associated with the Pasni party discussed in Chapter Two, which still represents the accepted public version of events, as well as the monumental facade represented by the Singapore Memorial at Kranji discussed earlier. Selection as a memory practice has been less prominent in this study, although the example of the Gurkha Regimental histories from Chapter Two demonstrates its potency, with those Gurkhas who resisted the INA celebrated, while those who joined it are left unmentioned. This highlights the challenges of using regimental histories as sources when the events of interest challenge the "myth of loyalty". Such histories were written with the intent of fanning the flame of regimental tradition, and when it came to events involving the INA, some things were best forgotten.

It is important to recognise that these memory practices and the resultant forgetting were directed as much internally towards British officers as they were externally towards wider colonial audiences. In practice, much of the information utilised in this thesis to interrogate established narratives, particularly the CSDIC(I) intelligence material, was only known to a restricted group of contemporary British Indian Army personnel, most of whom were military intelligence officers rather than regimental officers. For example, in Chapter One when Lieutenant-General Tuker quotes the Viceroy in claiming that those Indian prisoners

who joined the INA had a lower death rate than those who remained 'loyal', there is nothing to suggest that he realised that this was a misrepresentation of the facts. Some other senior officers would have known the truth, Lord Wavell certainly, General Auchinleck, and of course General Slim, but many British officers did not and would have accepted the statements of senior officers at face value. As was seen in Chapter Four, the detailed knowledge of what had occurred involving Indian prisoners was also kept confidential in the post-war period, with even war-crimes investigators being excluded from access to CSDIC(I) information, leading to what has been argued were miscarriages of justice. Gajendra Singh has noted the way in which the British colonial state attempted to hide details of Indian prisoner disloyalty from their allies the Americans, an indication of the 'colonialist angst' felt by the British regarding the prisoners.[1003] But the Australian authorities were also kept in ignorance, with serious implications for their post-war war-crimes process, the need to preserve British colonial prestige trumping the pursuit of justice.

With the animating narrative of the "myth of loyalty" central to the arguments presented in this thesis, it has been necessary to explore what loyalty meant with respect to Indian troops serving in this British colonial context. The Introduction situated the origin of this loyalty in the military institution of the Regiment, arguing that for Indian troops loyalty was socially constructed within its context, rather than due to any alleged 'mystical' bond between British and Indian of the type examined in Chapter Three. This is what General Auchinleck was referring to in Chapter One when he was quoted as saying 'they had no real loyalty or patriotism towards Britain as Britain, not as we understand loyalty'.[1004] This thesis has argued that such loyalty depended on what has been termed an infrastructure of loyalty: the

[1003] Singh, *Testimonies of Indian soldiers*, p.161.
[1004] AAS, Mss, Eur F274/95, p.3.

combination of personal relations between officers and men (perceived as a 'mystical' bond by many British officers); status derived from service; and financial rewards of various kinds. However, the British defeats in Singapore and elsewhere shattered that infrastructure for many of the captured Indian troops, whether *jawans* or commissioned officers. With British officers removed, and British authority delegitimised by the scale and nature of the defeats, most Indian troops opted for service in the INA, although only a minority were permitted to serve in it by the Japanese. Nonetheless, this outcome did not undermine the British military belief in the institution of the regiment as the font of loyalty. Indeed, in Chapter One it was noted that INA personnel recaptured during the war were often allowed to serve again with their regiments, a reflection of the British faith in the Regimental system: that once reintegrated into their regimental family, with the infrastructure of loyalty re-established, they could again be trusted to fulfil their role as loyal servants of the British Crown, an example of the "myth of loyalty" credo in action. As previously noted, it was only the post-war return of other Indian prisoners who had resisted the INA, at times 'full of bitterness against the INA', that forced a revision of this British policy.[1005]

Nonetheless, the Indian prisoners who joined the INA were only a small portion of approximately two and a half million Indian personnel who served in the British Indian Army during the war.[1006] It was an army that served the British colonial state well when the infrastructure of loyalty remained intact, for example during Gandhi's Quit India revolt in 1942, or while fighting to defeat the Empire's enemies in Africa, Europe, and Asia. This again emphasises the point noted in Chapter Three, that the dominant experience of most British officers, and particularly those who went onto write influential memoirs such as

[1005] AAS, Mss, Eur F275/1, p.6.
[1006] Marston, *Indian Army*, p.76.

General Slim, was the successful command of Indian troops in battle. In this wider context, the service of captured Indian *jawans* and commissioned officers in the INA would have seemed an unrepresentative aberration, and it is unsurprising that British writers sought to marginalise them in later accounts. But they did more than marginalise, they also hid the truth, and the price of this was that other knowledge that the British military authorities possessed on Indian prisoners was also forgotten, largely contained within the archival records of CSDIC(I).

At times during the research for this thesis, it has seemed as if the equivalent of Pandora's Box has been opened, with the ramifications of the revealed knowledge being many and varied. For the British Indian Army, it was imperative to keep the lid of the box shut, rather than risk releasing knowledge that could have tainted the memory of individual Regiments, or the Army as a whole. Just one example is the Indian prisoners of 5/11 Sikh mentioned in Chapter One who, notwithstanding a fine combat record during the Malayan campaign, became enthusiastic members of Captain Mohan Singh's INA, a fact unmentioned in their later regimental history.[1007] The same history also celebrates their Muslim officer Captain Khanzada, who had won the DSO during the campaign, but whose subsequent membership of the INA is also unmentioned.[1008] Exactly what the regiment knew regarding their behaviour is unclear in this case, although the example of 2/15 Punjab from Chapter One shows that on occasion regiments were supplied with some CSDIC(I) intelligence where relevant to their own men. Nonetheless, CSDIC(I) alone possessed the complete picture, with regimental knowledge apparently atomised on a need-to-know basis. Lifting the lid on this hidden knowledge relating to Indian prisoners from CSDIC(I) and elsewhere, allows

[1007] Khanna, *Portrait of courage*, p.185.
[1008] AAS, Mss, Eur F275/14, p.97.

the emergence of information that represents a direct challenge to the established British post-war memory of Indian prisoners. But it also highlights the cost that keeping CSDIC(I) intelligence information confidential in this way had, a baleful example being the impact on the post-war war-crimes process discussed in Chapter Four, just one instance being the Indian prisoners of 2/15 Punjab who were massacred in Borneo but denied justice.

The nature of British post-war memory of Indian prisoners of the Japanese has been addressed in this thesis through three questions, relating to the impact of the creation of the INA, the role of colonial propaganda, and the unavailability of documentary sources. It has been argued that the historical evidence now available, suggests that British colonial anxieties regarding the loyalty of Indian troops drove a forgetting that manifested in three active memory practices termed in this thesis, suppression, obscuration, and selection. These memory practices are structural in form and therefore have a universal character, rather than being indexical to the field of enquiry represented by Indian Prisoners of War. They can therefore be expected to be found in other historical contexts where forgetting has shaped historical memory. The approaching centenary of the outbreak of World War Two provides a natural focus for reassessing established narratives, particularly for marginalised groups such as Indian Prisoners of War. The examination of how British memory of these Indian prisoners was shaped, represents a valuable case study in the development of historical memory, and particularly the role of forgetting in the management of unpalatable truths.

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Appendix I: Figures

Figure I



Newly arrived Indian troops parade on quayside, Singapore, November 1941 (IWM FE218)

Figure II



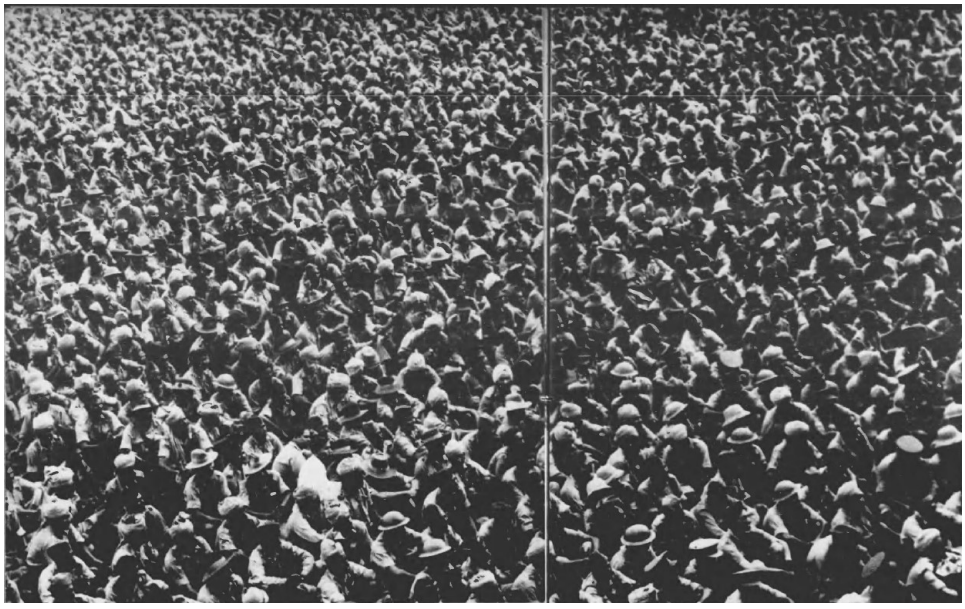
Former Indian prisoners (probably men of the Hyderabad State Infantry) following their liberation,
Rabaul Area, New Britain, September 1945 (AWM 096911)

Figure III



Recently liberated Sikh soldiers of 17 Field Company, Bombay Sappers & Miners, Lutong, Borneo, July 1945 (AWM 111405)

Figure IV



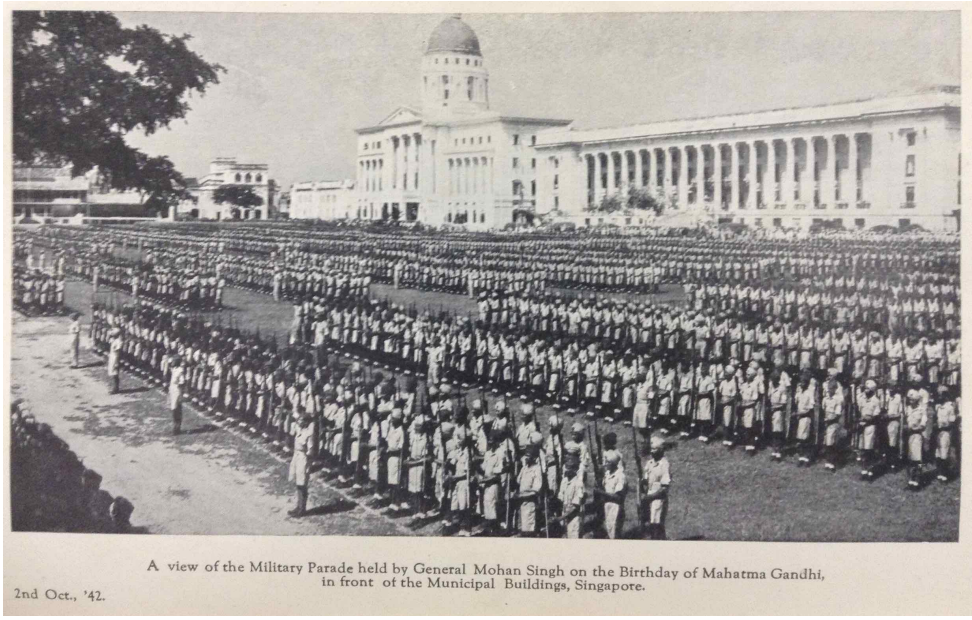
Indian prisoners assembled at Farrer Park, Singapore, 17th February 1942 (P.4, Shashin Shuho, No. 213, 25/3/42)

Figure V



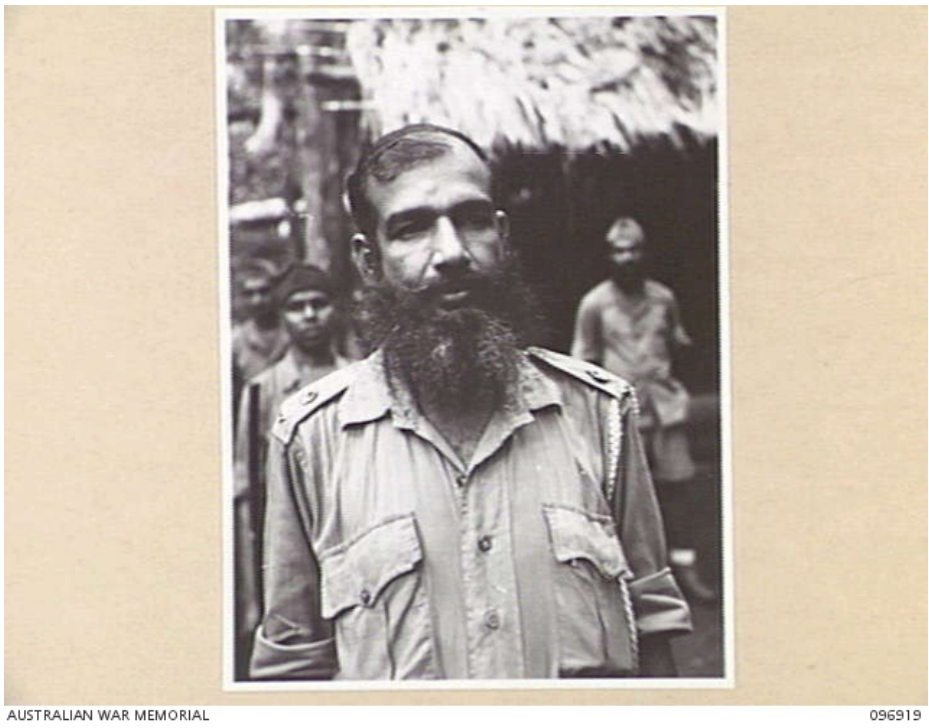
Lieutenant Colonel Gill, Captain Mohan Singh, and Captain Mohammed Akram, March 1942
(Singh, *Soldiers' Contribution*)

Figure VI



Indian National Army (*Azad Hind Fauj*) parade held to celebrate the Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, Singapore, 2 October 1942
(Chatterji, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, illustration no. 2)

Figure VII



Lieutenant Colonel Ishaq of the Hyderabad State Infantry, September 1945
(AWM 096919)

Figure VIII



The family of Syed Mohammed Ishaq, Hyderabad, early 1960s.
(supplied by family member)

Figure IX



Serving the Japanese: Indian Anti-Aircraft gunners, 1942
(P.8, Shashin Shuho, No.234, 19/8/42)

Figure X



Lower portion of panels 241 and 242, Kranji War Memorial, Singapore
(author's photograph)

Figure XI



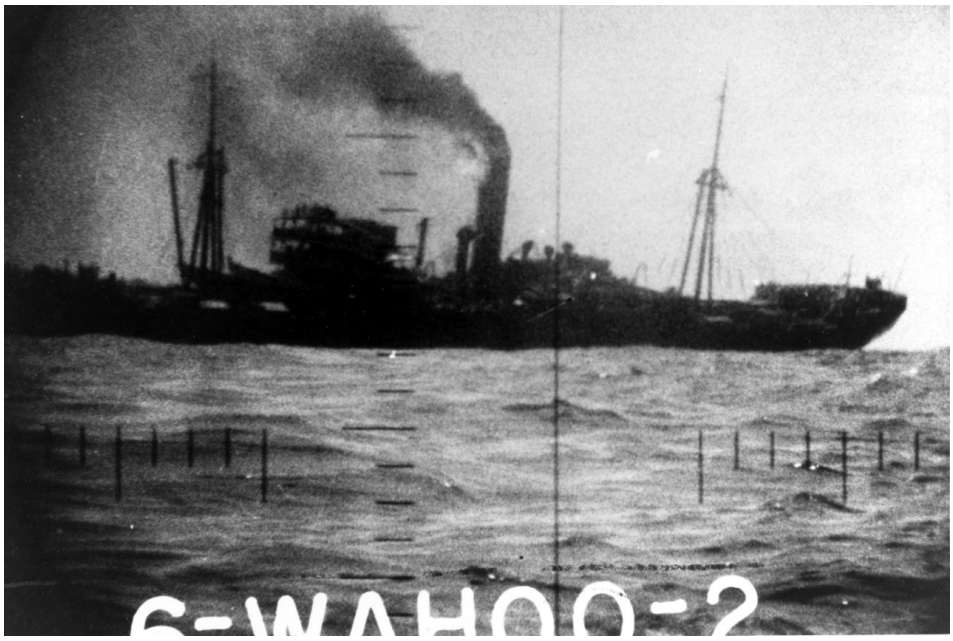
G.S. Dhillon (left) in INA uniform, with an unidentified INA soldier
(author's photograph of exhibit in INA museum, Salimgarh Fort, Delhi, India)

Figure XII



Two key defendants in the Gozawa Sadaichi trial.
(Note that 'Kaniyuki Nakamura' should read 'Nakamura Kaniyuki'.)
(From: Sleeman, *The Gozawa Trial*, Facing page 104)

Figure XIII



Periscope photograph taken from USS *Wahoo*
showing the *Buyo Maru* shortly after it had been torpedoed.
(Naval History and Heritage Command website, '80-G-39746 Buyo Maru')

Figure XIV



Jemadar Chint Singh. Still photograph from video.
(AWM F07377, 00:30)