

A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944–1945

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During the Second World War the Axis powers formed alliances with certain armies of national liberation. In the European theatre, Germany supported the Russian Liberation Army in its fight against Stalinist Russia.¹ In the Asian theatre, Japan formed an alliance with the Indian National Army (INA). For the Japanese the INA was never more than a propaganda tool to use against the Allies. However, to the Indians who formed it and served in it, the INA was an instrument by which Indians could achieve independence from Great Britain. Given the fundamentally political nature of its aim, it is understandable that the overwhelming proportion of the scholarly writing about the INA has been concerned with its political and strategic significance.² Yet, the military aspects of the INA—its recruitment, organisation and, perhaps most importantly, its combat performance in northeastern India and Burma in 1944 and 1945—have been ignored by historians. This article attempts to rectify, in small part, this imbalance in order to shed light on the issue of the INA's performance as a fighting force. I shall seek to do this by examining the battle record of the INA in the three campaigns in which it was involved: the Arakan, the Imphal, and the Irrawaddy crossings.

The INA existed for little more than three years. It was the brainchild of the Japanese Army's Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) and the Indian Independent League, an Indian extremist organisation based in Thailand, whose avowed aim was the attainment of India's freedom from British imperial rule, by violent means, if necessary.³ Contact between the Independent League and IGHQ was established in the months leading up to December 1941, and when the Japanese Twenty-fifth Army began its invasion of Malaya, Independent League operatives accompanied it.⁴ Their task was to suborn the loyalty of the roughly 45,000 Indian troops of the Indian Army deployed in the defence of Malaya and Singapore.⁵

For the Japanese the invasion of Malaya was a spectacular success. By the end of December 1941—a mere three weeks into the campaign—they were three-quarters of the way to Singapore, which was their ultimate objective. They had also captured about 3500 Indian troops.⁶ During this

time, the idea of forming an Indian Liberation Army began to be discussed by Major Iwaichi Fujiwara, the IGHQ officer assigned to liaise with the Indians, Giani Pritam Singh of the Independent League, and Captain Mohan Singh, an Indian Army officer captured in the opening phase of the campaign. It was Giani Pritam Singh who first advocated the employment of the Indian Prisoners-of-War (POWs) in such a force. The name 'Indian National Army' was proposed by Mohan Singh.⁷

Singapore fell to the Japanese Twenty-fifth Army on 15 February 1942. Two days later Fujiwara and Mohan Singh announced the formation of the INA to a captive audience of about 45,000 Indian POWs, and implored them to join. The response was overwhelming: by mid-April 1942 nearly 40,000 Indian POWs had agreed to join. They did so for a variety of reasons. Some were fired by nationalism, and seized upon the INA as a means of contributing to the extinction of the British Empire in India.⁸ Others were coerced into joining, or simply followed the lead of their comrades or superior Indian officers. Quite a large proportion joined because they thought they would receive preferential treatment from the Japanese, and some of these men hoped that they would be dispatched on missions to the Indo-Burmese frontier, where they could easily cross over to the Indian side and surrender to the appropriate British authority.⁹ Pervading all these motives was a definite sense of bewilderment concerning the stunning defeat the Indian troops had just suffered at the hands of the Japanese. This was combined with feelings of disappointment, shock, betrayal and disgust at the all too apparent failure of their British commanders to ensure the victory over the Japanese that they had predicted with a confidence that bordered on the arrogant.¹⁰

Because the INA had an essentially political aim, it was inevitable that the Japanese government and the Indians residing in Southeast Asia should try to devise a political structure within which the INA could operate.¹¹ At conferences in Tokyo (March 1942) and Bangkok (June 1942) delegates representing the Indian communities in Japanese-held territories, including the INA, formed just such a structure. The Indian Independence League (IIL), as this structure was called, was designed to be the political organisation of all Indians in the newly conquered Japanese areas. The founders of the IIL conceived of it as a national liberation movement-in-exile. This is evident from the fact that they sought approval from the Indian National Congress, which was the main nationalist organisation within India.¹² The INA was placed under the IIL's control, as its military wing.

However, friction soon developed as a result of policy and personality clashes between Mohan Singh—who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the INA, with the rank of general—and the new Japanese liaison officer, Colonel Hideo Iwakuro, who had replaced Fujiwara in April 1942. Though a competent staff officer with many staff

appointments behind him, Iwakuro lacked Fujiwara's diplomacy and sympathetic attitude towards the INA.¹³

Upon his return from the Bangkok Conference, Mohan Singh began organising the INA in earnest. With the manpower resources at his disposal, he estimated that two divisions of 15,000 men each could be formed. However, under instructions from IGHQ, Iwakuro rejected this as being entirely too ambitious. The reason for this rejection is obvious. The Japanese had accomplished their conquest of Malaya and Singapore with only 60,000 men.¹⁴ The sheer economy of their effort meant that IGHQ would be unwilling to allow the INA—the personnel of which they considered of dubious fighting quality because they had surrendered, instead of fighting to the death in the Japanese fashion—to grow to any substantial size. But the INA's very existence was of immense value to Japanese propaganda, and so, after protracted negotiations, Iwakuro and IGHQ agreed to the formation of a single INA Division.¹⁵

The 1st Division, INA was unveiled formally on 1 September 1942. It consisted of 14,000 men under arms. Nine thousand men were employed in three guerilla regiments, each named after an Indian nationalist leader (Gandhi, Nehru and Azad); the remaining 5000 formed the 1st Hind Field Force Group which was patterned after a British infantry brigade. In addition, a further 3000 were deployed in various ancillary units, such as the 'Bahadur' Group, the Intelligence Group, and the officers' training school.¹⁶ Allied stocks, captured in February 1942, were now used to arm the INA Division, but these arms had been stored improperly and were, by September, in a bad state of disrepair.¹⁷

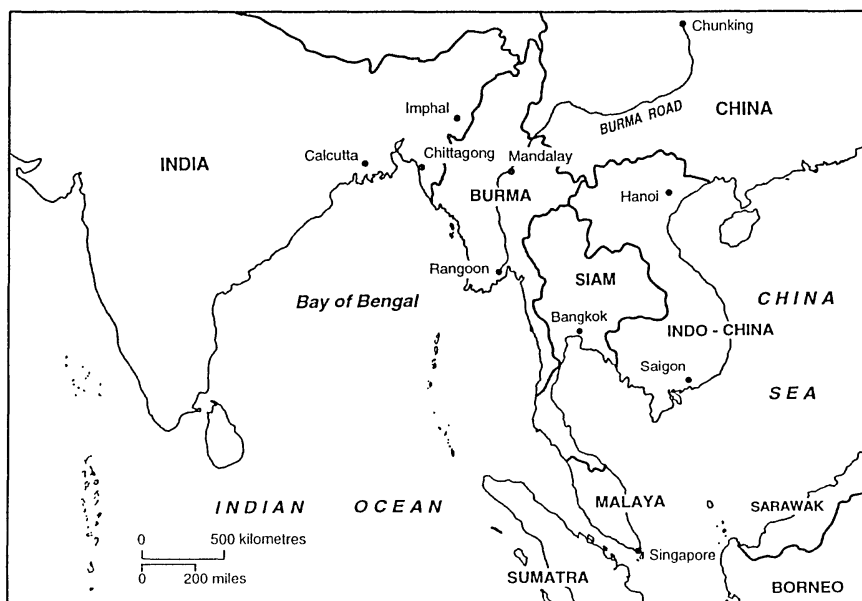
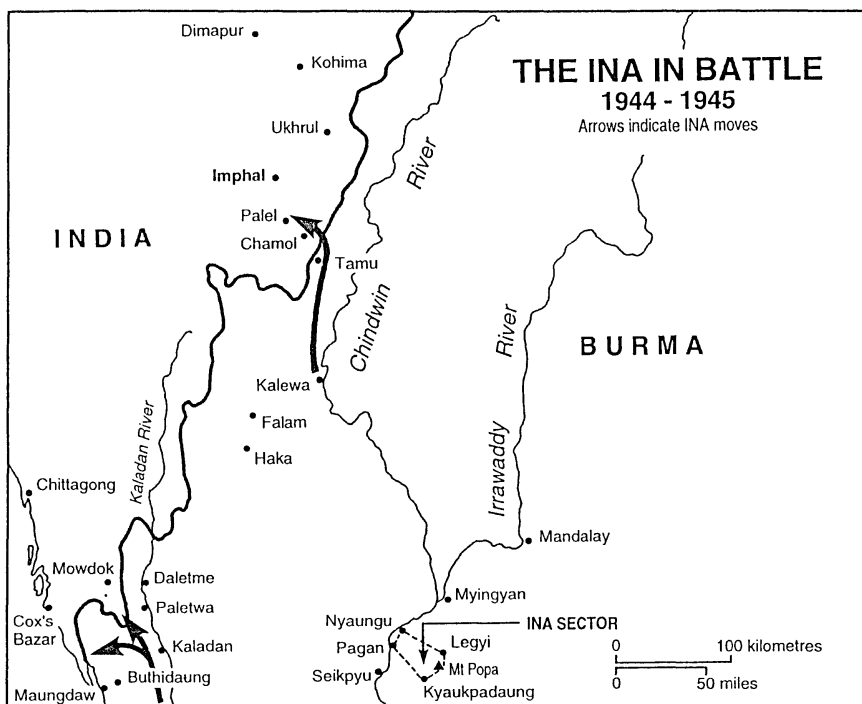
Between September and December 1942, INA-IGHQ relations deteriorated steadily. IGHQ refused Mohan Singh's repeated requests that 1st Division, INA be supplied with arms that were in good working order. Then, in November 1942, Iwakura ordered certain INA units to the Indo-Burmese frontier, without first consulting Mohan Singh. This was a clear infringement of the INA's autonomy, both in terms of its operational integrity and its status as an allied army. This, in turn, led to increasing disagreements between Mohan Singh and Rash Behari Bose, the IIL's President, as to the proper role of the INA.¹⁸ Matters finally came to a boil when a key officer on the INA staff defected to the British. IGHQ and IIL, already irked by Mohan Singh's non-pliant attitude, now began to doubt his reliability as C-in-C, INA. Accordingly, on 21 December 1942, with the full support of Rash Behari Bose, Iwakuro ordered the arrest of Mohan Singh. Before this order could be carried out, however, Mohan Singh issued a directive dissolving the INA. That all INA personnel complied with this order is not surprising, when one considers that Mohan Singh had insisted that all who joined the INA pledge their allegiance to him, and him alone.¹⁹

IGHQ chose not to recognise the dissolution of the INA, and deputed Rash Behari Bose to ascertain whether it could be re-constituted.²⁰ The

Japanese Government was also eager to see this happen. Together with the IIL leadership they realised that, if the IIL and the INA were to be of any value, as propaganda or otherwise, they would require a leader of considerable standing in Indian nationalist circles. Subhas Chandra Bose was just such a leader. An Indian nationalist politician who had been in the forefront of the Indian National Congress since the 1920s, Bose's emphasis on the winning of independence by militant action put him increasingly at odds with the non-violent, non-cooperation strategies of the Congress leadership, most notably Gandhi.²¹ After serving as President of the Congress in 1938, Bose broke with that body the following year. Having always believed in a form of national socialism, Bose journeyed secretly to Germany in 1940. There he began broadcasting against the British. He also organised the Free India Legion, composed of Indian soldiers captured by the *Wehrmacht* in North Africa. The aim of this legion was identical to that of the INA: to secure India's independence by engaging in armed struggle against the Raj. However, since the fall of Singapore Bose had been trying to reach Southeast Asia, where the possibility of waging war against the British in India seemed more realistic.²²

Upon arriving in Singapore in June 1943, Subhas Bose immediately revitalised the IIL and the INA. He effected a complete reorganisation of the IIL, greatly expanding its scope and functions.²³ Ever the politician, Bose proclaimed in October 1943 the Provisional Government of Free India (PGFI). He hoped that the institution of the PGFI would lend political legitimacy to the position of Indians in Southeast Asia vis-à-vis the Japanese.

Bose also completely reorganised and expanded the INA. A keen student of military affairs, he was conversant with theories of modern war, and now called for the total mobilisation of the civilian Indian population of Southeast Asia.²⁴ This total mobilisation manifested itself chiefly in recruitment to the INA. Whereas Mohan Singh had concentrated mostly on recruiting Indian POWs for the INA, Bose extended INA recruitment to Indian civilians. The recruiting drives mounted under the aegis of the PGFI were moderately successful. When, in the aftermath of the collapse of the first INA, Rash Behari Bose had canvassed Indian POW opinion on re-constituting the INA, only 9000 had expressed interest.²⁵ Now, the INA grew to about 40,000. While the Indian POW element grew only moderately, to about 15,000, around 25,000 Indian civilians joined. Most of these were Tamils, of the labouring classes of Burma and Malaya. Arrangements were made to form three INA divisions. The guerilla regiments, less Nehru Brigade, were to form 1st Division. The 2nd Division was to include the 1st and 2nd Infantry Regiments, and Nehru Brigade; and the 6th, 7th, and 8th Infantry Regiments formed the 3rd Division. Only the 1st Division was to be composed entirely of Indian POWs; the 2nd Division was to be of mixed Indian POW and civilian composition, while the 3rd Division was to be composed entirely of Indian civilians.²⁶ To train these civilians, numerous training centres were formed.²⁷



While the expansion and training of the INA were in progress, Bose met with Field Marshal Count Hisaichi Terauchi, C-in-C of the Japanese Southern Army command, in order to secure a firm commitment to the deployment of the INA in the Japanese offensive into India, which was then in the planning stages. The object of this offensive was to extend the Japanese defensive sphere to include the Imphal Plain and Arakan regions of northeastern India, in order to destroy British offensive capabilities there that could threaten Japanese security.²⁸ To Bose, however, this offensive provided a golden opportunity for the INA to begin its 'march on Delhi'. Bose proposed the deployment of all the INA divisions in spearhead roles in the forthcoming Japanese offensive because, as he informed Terauchi, a Japanese victory over the British in India would be meaningless if Indians themselves did not participate in it.²⁹

Terauchi was unenthusiastic regarding the deployment of INA units in frontline operations. Indeed, he did not conceal from Bose his low opinion of the INA. Terauchi's reservations stemmed from a basic doubt regarding the fighting ability of the Indian POWs who formed the core of the INA. Terauchi held that the confidence of these men, having already once been shattered as a result of being defeated in the Malayan campaign, would not be sufficiently reliable in frontline duties. Moreover, since the Indian POWs had been trained under the British system, and since it was fair to assume that the INA's training regime would conform to this pattern, Terauchi felt that the INA's fighting men would not be able to withstand the rigours of a Japanese-style campaign. In his opinion, the Indian POWs were little more than mercenaries serving a foreign empire. This meant, therefore, that they would have little or no qualms in changing sides at the opportune moment. For all these reasons, Terauchi suggested that the INA be used in support and intelligence roles, thus leaving the 'real' fighting to the Japanese Army.³⁰

But Bose persisted in his demand that the INA be allotted an operational role in the forefront of the Japanese offensive. He predicted that Indian troops of the Indian Army, upon coming into contact with the INA, would immediately be won over to the INA, thereby striking a mortal blow to the British Empire in India. Finally, a compromise was reached. It was agreed that one INA regiment would be deployed in the forthcoming Japanese offensive. This was to be done as an experiment to ascertain its fighting abilities. If this regiment performed its duties well, the way would be open for the frontline deployment of other INA units.³¹

In view of the fact that the INA's operational future was to rest on the performance of a single INA regiment, Bose authorised, in consultation with the INA's general staff, the formation of a new guerilla regiment. This unit was established in September 1943. Although this unit was officially designated 1st Guerilla Regiment, it came to be known as 'the Bose Brigade'. The best troops from the three other guerilla regiments were selected for service with the Bose Brigade. The brigade was organ-

ised along the lines of a Japanese army brigade. Apart from regimental staff, the Bose Brigade comprised three battalions, each of which was divided into five companies. Each company was divided into three platoons, and each platoon into three sections. Each battalion of the Bose Brigade had a headquarters staff, which conformed with Indian Army practice.³²

In January 1944 IGHQ authorised implementation of the offensive into India. This was to proceed along two main axes: operation U-GO on the Imphal front, and operation HA-GO on the Arakan front. Of the two, HA-GO was the secondary operation. It was designed to distract the attention of the British forces from the Imphal front, where the main Japanese thrust was to occur. More importantly, HA-GO was to keep British forces in the Arakan occupied and off-balance, so that they would not be able to reinforce British positions on the Imphal front. Accordingly, 28th and 55th Japanese Divisions, to which HA-GO was entrusted, were to execute a wide flanking manoeuvre, originating to the east of Buthidaung, and advancing northwards to Taung Bazaar, well behind British lines. Japanese forces were then to overrun 7th Indian Division from the rear. Once this was completed, the offensive was to proceed across the Mayu Range, and annihilate 5th Indian Division in the Muangdaw sector.³³

Between mid-November 1943 and early January 1944, the Bose Brigade travelled to Rangoon where the final preparations for its frontline deployment were made. At this time too, Bose arrived in Rangoon where he set up the INA's forward headquarters. In a series of meetings with the Burma Area Army commander, General Masakazu Kawabe, he made it clear that the Bose Brigade was not to be deployed in units smaller than a battalion, and that command of all frontline INA units should remain with INA officers. Reluctantly, Kawabe agreed to this.³⁴

On 27 January 1944 Bose and Lieutenant-Colonel Shah Nawaz Khan, the commander of the Bose Brigade, met Lieutenant-General Tadashi Katakura, Chief of Staff of the Burma Area Army, to finalise the battle-field deployment of the Bose Brigade. In the offensive the brigade would be split into two. The 1st Battalion was to operate in close conjunction with detachments of 55th Japanese Division in the Kaladan Valley, east of Buthidaung. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions were to deploy at Haka and Falam, in the Chin Hills, south of Tiddim.³⁵ Neither of these sectors was of critical importance for the Japanese. Their presence in the Kaladan Valley was to guard against a British outflanking manoeuvre, but Burma Area Army did not view this as a major threat. Similarly, the Haka-Falam area was a quiet support sector for 33rd Japanese Division, part of which had the task of isolating British forces in the Tiddim-Fort White sector. Both Bose and Shah Nawaz Khan expressed some dismay that the roles allotted the INA were so minimal, and only in support of the Japanese forces which were to bear the brunt of the fighting. Nowhere was there evidence of the spearhead role for the INA that Bose desired.

But, as HA-GO was set to begin a week later, on 4 February, and operation U-GO a month later, Bose had no time to negotiate a more central and significant role for the Bose Brigade.³⁶

The logistical arrangements of the Bose Brigade were far from ideal. While in Rangoon, Bose and Shah Nawaz Khan tried strenuously to procure transport and supplies essential to the brigade. They were not very successful. By the time Bose Brigade moved out for deployment, it had only five trucks for the transport of rations, ammunition and equipment. Moreover, these trucks were not in the best condition, and spare parts were hard to come by. Matters were not helped by the fact that Japanese motor transport units were themselves overworked, and thus could not assist the INA. For most of their journey to the front, therefore, the rank-and-file of the Bose Brigade had to transport their rations and equipment themselves.³⁷ The Bose Brigade also found itself short of warm clothing. Despite being aware that, in the months of February and March, the climate of the Chin Hills and the Arakan tended to be quite cold, INA forward headquarters could not procure warm clothing for the brigade. The best Burma Area Army could offer amounted to a thin cotton blanket and a flannel shirt for each INA soldier. Bose made some headway in the matter of emergency rations. Despite the fact that the notion of emergency rations was abhorrent to Japanese combat doctrine, Bose managed to obtain limited amounts from various civilian sources.³⁸

Bose's hopes that the Bose Brigade would spearhead the invasion of India were dealt a further blow by the fact that its 1st Battalion, commanded by Major P.S. Raturi, only left Rangoon for the front on 4 February 1944—the day HA-GO began. A combination of poor road and rail networks and constant allied air attacks meant that 1st Battalion arrived in the Kaladan Valley only in late March.

However, these were not the first INA troops to see frontline service. That distinction went to the propaganda and intelligence detachments of the INA's Intelligence Group and Bahadur Special Service Unit. The Intelligence Group had been established in June 1943 under Major S.A. Malik. In September of that year, it was transferred from Singapore to Rangoon. There were 350 men serving in it, divided into two companies. In January 1944 approximately 50 men of this group were performing general reconnaissance duties in the Arakan.³⁹ In preparation for operation HA-GO, Intelligence Group's activities were stepped up. On 22 January 1944 Malik was ordered to deploy 40 of his men in the Muangdaw–Buthidaung sector; the remainder of his force—approximately 310 men—was in the Kaladan Valley, attached to the reconnaissance battalion of 55th Japanese Division. In both these sectors, the Intelligence Group had the task of collecting information about British troop movements.⁴⁰ Also active on the front was the INA's Bahadur Special Service Group. Company 'A' of this unit, commanded by Major L.N. Misra, was engaged in military espionage and raiding on the east-

ern part of the Muangdaw–Buthidaung road. Misra's company was part of the Japanese outflanking drive towards Taung Bazaar, which began on 4 February. Its task was to form small raiding parties that would act as a screen for the advancing Japanese column. It was also charged with trying to cause confusion among the enemy.⁴¹

By nightfall on 6 February detachments of the Japanese outflanking column, along with 30–40 INA troops, had reached the Muangdaw–Bawli Bazaar Road in the vicinity of the Briasco Bridge. The INA personnel formed themselves into raiding parties to harass British communications along this road, and to suborn any Indian troops they might encounter. These raiding parties—consisting of 10–15 men armed with rifles, pistols, and a few grenades—would move to a section of the road under the cover of darkness and conceal themselves in the tall elephant grass that grew thickly on either side. They would then attempt to disrupt the enemy convoys that used the road and, if Indian troops were present, these raiding parties would try to win them over to the INA.⁴²

On 10 February Misra's company was joined by No. 3 Section of the Intelligence Group and 110 men of the INA Field Force. Thus unified and joined by a detachment of 50 Japanese troops, this force proceeded to an area southwest of Taung Bazaar where they dug in. Their main task was to act as a forward outpost, watching any British offensive moves on Taung Bazaar from the southwest.⁴³ By mid-February 1944 there were 400 INA personnel deployed in the forward sectors of the Arakan battlefront.⁴⁴

The raiding parties constituted a sustained effort on the part of the INA to contribute to the Japanese offensive. On average there were two forays daily but, because of the light weaponry allotted to them, INA units in this sector could not develop their raid into sustained attacks that would have been of greater value.⁴⁵ Their attempts to suborn the loyalty of the Indian troops they encountered were largely unsuccessful. Some Indian troops, such as a platoon of 5th Gwalior Rifles guarding the eastern approaches to Taung Bazaar, were induced to join the INA.⁴⁶ But such instances were rare; more often than not, Indian troops of the Indian Army opened fire on INA raiding parties that were trying to win them over.⁴⁷

By the last week of March 1944, 1st Battalion of the Bose Brigade had assembled at Khabaw, south of Kaladan. Here it was to undertake operations in conjunction with Kubo Force.⁴⁸ The state of 1st Battalion's equipment was unenviable. It had no signals, bicycles or motorcycles to facilitate independent communications. Only one three-ton truck was allotted to the battalion to transport its rations. Each platoon was given a mule-cart for its equipment but, because of the shortage of pack animals, these carts had to be drawn by the men. In terms of equipment, each company was given light arms with limited ammunition. Every company also received a specified number of hand grenades, but these were entrusted to the Bahadur unit that was attached to 1st Battalion in the

Kaladan. The Bahadur unit was to distribute these grenades only when required—immediately before an attack, for instance.⁴⁹

The operational plan of 1st Battalion, Bose Brigade was that the Bahadur unit was to carry out a general reconnaissance of British positions in the Kaladan Valley, returning to Khabaw at 10 am on 30 March. Upon receipt of the Bahadur unit's report, the battalion was to split up into two: two of its five companies were to occupy defensive positions in the Khabaw and Kaladan area, while the remaining three companies were to launch attacks on British positions in cooperation with Kubo Force.⁵⁰

While the Battalion had been readying itself for action, events on the Muangdaw–Buthidaung front had been moving apace. Through the judicious use of air supply and the 'administrative box' strategy, the British XV Corps had been able to stand their ground against the sustained assaults of 55th Japanese Division. Indeed, by mid-March it was clear that British forces in the Arakan had taken the initiative, and were slowly pushing the Japanese back.⁵¹

In order to secure the Muangdaw–Buthidaung sector from any close outflanking movement by the Japanese, Lieutenant-General Christison, commanding XV British Corps, ordered 81st West African Division to move the bulk of its strength to the Kalapanzin River, beginning in April.⁵² Preparatory to this move, 6th West African Brigade had occupied Mi Chaung, east of the Kaladan River, by the end of March. Attached to this brigade was a detachment of 11th East African Scout Battalion which had the task of probing, in a southerly direction, the west bank of the Kaladan River. It was also to establish pickets in this area. At 7.30 am on 31 March, two platoons of 1st Battalion, Bose Brigade attacked the southernmost of these pickets. This attack, which lasted only 30 minutes, resulted in the withdrawal of the East Africans.⁵³

At 8 pm on 1 April, two companies of 1st Battalion, Bose Brigade under Captain Suraj Mal mounted a moonlight raid on a British divisional detachment five miles north of Kaladan. This attack was repulsed, with some casualties inflicted on both sides. Undeterred, despite low ammunition stocks, Mal decided to try once more. The second attack, which went in at 11 pm, made some headway but then collapsed, because the attackers had run out of ammunition. To his credit, Mal was able to extricate his force with minimal casualties.⁵⁴ On the morning of 2 April a mixed force of RAF Hurricane and Vengeance fighter-bombers attacked INA positions at Kaladan, inflicting approximately 30 casualties—17 wounded and 13 dead.⁵⁵ The same day, a company of 1st Battalion, Bose Brigade infiltrated a village six miles north of Kaladan, where they engaged the same British Divisional Defence Detachment that Mal had attacked the day before. In the ensuing hand-to-hand mêlée, the INA company managed partially to surround the British force. But the British had a greater number of machine-guns, and, when they

brought these to bear on the INA company, they succeeded in repulsing it.⁵⁶

INA units were also active on the east bank of the Kaladan River. Here, during the first week of April 1944, British divisional troops encountered small INA harrying parties.⁵⁷ These parties, never stronger than an infantry section, were despatched to cause confusion among the enemy forces they encountered. Usually attacking under the cover of darkness, these sections would fire randomly and create a lot of noise, in the hope that the enemy would be thus fooled into thinking that they were being attacked by a company instead of a mere section. Whatever success this tactic may have had was mitigated by the fact that the INA sections did not possess the requisite discipline to mount such a manoeuvre. In their desire to create noise, they would lose their cohesion. A few times, the INA harrying parties got lost in the trackless jungle. This was not surprising since compasses were in short supply and, when these harrying parties reached their designated objectives, dawn would be lightening the sky. Regardless of the loss of night's protective cover, the INA sections would press home their attack, in the hope of at least damaging the enemy's morale. Predictably, on these occasions, the INA attacks would be repulsed with heavy loss of life.⁵⁸

In mid-April 1944, 1st Battalion, Bose Brigade advanced northward on both sides of the Kaladan River in support of Kubo Force. The British force facing them was heavily outnumbered and retreated northwards.⁵⁹ Paletwa and Daletme were taken, but only after overcoming stiff British resistance. The 1st Battalion, Bose Brigade played a minor role in the capture of these two villages, acting as a flank-guard for the Japanese 112th Regiment.⁶⁰

From Daletme, India was a scant nine miles away. The idea of planting the PGFI tricolour on Indian soil appealed strongly to the men of 1st Battalion, Bose Brigade. In fact, this was what Subhas Chandra Bose had wished them to do. In a Special Order of the Day, issued in February 1944, Bose proclaimed: 'Our long-awaited march to Delhi has begun ... and we shall continue the march until the National Tricolour flag is flying over the Arakan mountains'.⁶¹

The INA thrust onto Indian soil was also necessitated by the fact that 1st Battalion was getting very short of vital supplies. Raturi had hoped to capture British stocks as the unit advanced, but the taking of Paletwa and Daletme had yielded little in the way of supplies for the INA. Moreover, since the enemy had withdrawn to Mowdok, just inside India, Raturi surmised that a considerable concentration of supplies might be there.⁶²

The attack on Mowdok was launched on the night of 3 May 1944. Part of 7/16th Punjab Regiment opposed Raturi's force. After a see-saw skirmish, the Punjab detachment withdrew, leaving a fair quantity of supplies, which included 'atta' and 'ghee', .303 ammunition, and a few trench-mortars, all of which Raturi badly needed.⁶³

Having taken stock of the rations and the general tactical situation—and also aware that the vicious monsoon rains would soon be upon them—Major Raturi decided to move the bulk of his force southward, nearer the main supply base of Kaladan. However, he left one company at Mowdok under Captain Mal, to guard the tricolour flag. Mal's company occupied Mowdok from May to September 1944. During this time a combination of factors—the monsoon, the scarcity of food, disease and the occasional encounter with British patrols—whittled away the unit's health and morale.⁶⁴

At the beginning of September 1944, in accordance with the general Japanese withdrawal from the Arakan, Bose Brigade was ordered to withdraw to Rangoon. Mowdok was abandoned as 1st Battalion, Bose Brigade withdrew. Although underfed and suffering from malaria, its retreat was orderly. It was punctuated by several spirited rearguard actions against British forces advancing southwards along the Sangu River.⁶⁵ The battalion reached Rangoon in mid-December. During the course of the Arakan campaign, it had lost one-third of its men due to disease, and its battle casualties numbered roughly a hundred. There had been only two desertions.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, the main strength of the Bose Brigade, consisting of its 2nd and 3rd Battalions, was not faring well. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions arrived in the Chin Hills sector in late March 1944. Their commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Shah Nawaz Khan, set up his headquarters at Haka. Shah Nawaz's force was to cooperate with the Japanese III/214th Japanese Regiment in offensive operations in the sector. The officers and men under Shah Nawaz' command 'were of the conviction that ... [they would] ... form the spearhead of the advance into India, or, at least, be among the first troops to enter Indian territory'.⁶⁷ However, this was not to be, for they were allotted tasks of a very menial nature: road-building and repairing; repairing bridges; extinguishing jungle fires; and, as an ultimate insult, driving bullock-carts carrying rations to frontline Japanese units.⁶⁸ All of this came as a rude shock to Shah Nawaz who, in mid-April, wrote to Bose explaining the situation, and imploring him to negotiate a fighting role for 2nd and 3rd Battalions of Bose Brigade. By the end of April Bose managed to secure from Burma Area Army Headquarters a promise that the INA forces in the Chin Hills would be redeployed in a fighting role. That securing this agreement took a full two weeks demonstrates the extent of Japanese reluctance.

By mid-May 1944, two companies of 2nd Battalion, Bose Brigade were at Haka and Falam respectively, carrying out guerilla raids. One company of 3rd Battalion was deployed in the Kalemio Valley, guarding against possible allied airborne attacks in the region. Of the remaining six companies of 3rd Battalion, two were put to work widening the Haka–Fort White road; the other four were engaged in transporting rations to the front. This was not an easy task, for the main supply point

was Myitha Haka, 90 miles to the east. As two of the three trucks allotted to the INA in this sector had already broken down, and the one that remained was in danger of doing the same at any moment, most rations had to be carried to the front on foot by INA personnel. The rations that did reach frontline INA units were of poor quality, and the health of INA troops in this sector deteriorated steadily. To supplement their diet, especially as regards vegetables, some INA troops in this sector took to eating wild flowers and jungle grasses. Whereas until then they had been merely hungry, this practice made them downright ill. The situation was not helped by the outbreak of malaria among INA personnel in mid-April. Quinine was in short supply, and by the end of the month, fully 25 per cent of the INA personnel in the Chin Hills were stricken with malaria. The small INA medical unit in the sector could not cope with so great a volume of sick men. Moreover, the dispersed deployment of 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Bose Brigade, combined with the acute shortage of transport, made the treatment of the sick extremely difficult.⁶⁹

The deployment of two-thirds of the INA personnel in the Chin Hills as supply and line of communication troops severely curtailed their battle-field capability. Despite this, the two companies of 2nd Battalion stationed at Haka and Falam did manage to mount regular raids on British positions. At the end of May 1944, 'Awal' company based at Falam carried out a successful raid on a British forward piquet and took 24 British soldiers prisoner.⁷⁰

In early June Shah Nawaz Khan received orders to move 2nd Battalion, Bose Brigade from the Chin Hills to Ukhrul, 35 miles northeast of Imphal, to take part in a last-ditch attempt to capture Imphal. However, this attack never materialised, and by the beginning of July 1944 the INA force at Ukhrul—fully half of which was suffering from malaria and dysentery—had withdrawn to Tamu. August 1944 found it still at Tamu, and under orders to proceed to Mandalay for rest and refit.⁷¹

Meanwhile, 3rd Battalion, Bose Brigade was left to guard the Haka sector. At the end of July, as a result of severe starvation and sickness, two companies of this unit surrendered en masse to the British. As a result of their surrender, the remaining units of 3rd Battalion were kept under close surveillance. On 20 October 1944 they withdrew.⁷² The 'March on Delhi', at least from the Arakan, was dead.

The Japanese mounted their main thrust—operation U-GO—on the Imphal Front. Here, the Japanese Fifteenth Army, commanded by General Renya Mutaguchi, tried to isolate and destroy IV Corps of the British Fourteenth Army, capturing Imphal and Kohima in the process. To do this Mutaguchi had three divisions: 31st Japanese Division, which was to advance on Kohima; 15th Japanese Division, which was to advance through Shangshak and Ukhrul and assault Imphal from the northeast; and 33rd Japanese Division, which was to besiege Imphal from the south and southeast.⁷³

Operation U-GO began on 4 March 1944. By the beginning of April, Mutaguchi's divisions were thrusting on Imphal and Kohima. But, unlike in 1942, the British forces facing them were determined to stand their ground, making the possibility of a long siege very real. This was the last thing Mutaguchi wanted because he had not made adequate logistical arrangements for a long campaign. Moreover, he feared that the onset of the monsoon at the end of April would make his position, if he had not yet taken Imphal and Kohima, untenable.⁷⁴

The INA, like the Japanese, mounted its main effort on the Imphal front. The exact reason why IGHQ and Burma Area Army agreed to commit additional INA units to battle is obscure. Explanatory factors include Bose's tireless efforts to secure an increased battlefield deployment for the INA, and the possible Japanese shortage of manpower. In any case, 1st INA Division, commanded by Colonel N.Z. Kiani, arrived at the front in late-April 1944 after U-GO had ground to a halt. Kiani set up his headquarters at Chamol, southeast of Imphal. The force under his command comprised 2nd Guerilla Regiment (Gandhi Brigade), 3rd Guerilla Regiment (Azad Brigade) and 4th Guerilla Regiment (Nehru Brigade). Detachments of the Bahadur and Intelligence Groups were deployed in the Bishenpur-Shuganu sector. The Japanese offensive in the INA's area of deployment was being conducted by 33rd Japanese Division.⁷⁵ Kiani was ordered to conduct operations in the Palel-Tamu sector in conjunction with Yamamoto force which was part of 33rd Japanese Division. The Gandhi Brigade was deployed south of the Palel-Tamu road, with its headquarters at Chamol. The Azad Brigade was placed to the west of the Kabaw Valley, north of Tamu. Here, this unit was given the task of disrupting British communications with their forward position at Sita. Having been told that a Japanese victory was imminent, Kiani had instructed his troops earlier to leave their heavy equipment and supplies at Kalewa so as to facilitate a rapid and triumphant entry into Imphal.⁷⁶

In late April Kiani was ordered to mount an attack on the airfield at Palel, approximately 25 miles southeast of Imphal. This airfield was of vital importance to the British—as were all airfields in the region—because the maintenance of their positions depended to an overwhelming degree on air supply. For the assault Kiani assembled a force of 300 men, selected from the various companies of the Gandhi Brigade. Major Pritam Singh was to command this force.⁷⁷

On 30 April 1944 Pritam Singh's force set out from Khanjol. After two days' arduous marching through dense jungle, they reached the airfield which they attacked on the night of 2–3 May. Their first assault was easily repulsed by Indian troops defending the airfield. Undaunted, Pritam Singh mounted a second attack, withdrawing only when ammunition ran out. During the withdrawal the INA force was constantly harried by enemy gunfire. The following morning, Gandhi Brigade at Khanjol was

subjected to British heavy artillery fire, and suffered substantial casualties. In two days it had lost 250 men.⁷⁸

The attack on the Palel airfield was an eye-opener for the INA units on the Imphal front. Contrary to what 33rd Japanese Division's staff officers had told Kiani, British forces in the sector were not on the verge of collapse. In fact, by this point, they had taken the initiative. Moreover, the Indian troops that Kiani's force encountered had not instantly been won over to the INA. On the contrary, they had remained loyal to the Indian Army, and had beaten back the INA assaults.⁷⁹

In the second week of May, advanced units of 23rd Indian Division forced Gandhi Brigade to withdraw to Mitlong Khanou. It remained there for the next six weeks, mounting frequent raids on British patrols and road-blocks. British military intelligence reported that the INA fought well but always withdrew at the critical moment.⁸⁰ This was because of the acute shortages that 1st INA Division was now facing. Logistically it depended on Fifteenth Japanese Army whose own logistics were in a shambles because of their failure to capture any of the vast supply dumps that dotted the Imphal plain. During their time at Mitlong Khonou, disease ravaged the personnel of the Gandhi Brigade. By late 1944, 1100 of them were either sick or wounded, leaving a mere 800 men fit for combat.⁸¹

The Azad Brigade was operating in the Bongli area, north of the Palel-Tamu road. At the beginning of July 1944 it took part in four clashes with the enemy while on patrol. On these occasions, its patrols acquitted themselves well, inflicting losses on British patrols as well as taking British troops prisoner.⁸² Raiding parties of the brigade also attacked British positions near Bongli on 12–13 July, but these British outposts held firm and the INA raiding parties were forced to withdraw. At the end of July Azad Brigade withdrew from Bongli altogether, its strength chiefly depleted by desertions.⁸³ Desertions were also a problem for Gandhi Brigade. By 30 June it had lost 116 men in this manner. These men had deserted chiefly because of the severe privations they had had to endure throughout the campaign. When interrogated by British military intelligence, these deserters complained about the high-handed way they had been treated by Japanese army personnel.⁸⁴

By the middle of August 1944 the Japanese Fifteenth Army's back had been broken, and it was in full retreat, taking 1st INA division with it. In operations HA-GO and U-GO a total of 10,000 INA troops had been deployed. Of this number, 1500 took part in the Arakan operation, while 7500 participated in the Imphal battles. In terms of men killed and wounded, the INA suffered 1000 casualties. In addition to this, at least 2–3000 INA personnel had perished due to sickness and starvation.⁸⁵

September 1944 saw 1st INA Division at Mandalay, in central Burma, to undergo rest and refit. At this time, Subhas Bose visited the division in order to bolster its morale, and also to learn first-hand from Colonel

Kiani how INA units had been utilised, and about the difficulties that they had faced during the Imphal and Arakan battles. Bose was shocked by what Kiani told him, and became determined to ensure proper treatment for the INA in future operations.⁸⁶

In October 1944 Burma Area Army began planning its defence of central Burma. Here it was decided to defend the east bank of the Irrawaddy River, south of Mandalay. The forces available to Burma Area Army for this task were: Fifteenth Army (15th, 31st and 33rd Japanese Divisions); and Twentieth-eighth Army (54th and 55th Japanese Divisions).⁸⁷

During this time, Bose was busy trying to secure better conditions for the INA and, more importantly, a greater role in the defence of central Burma. Bose sensed that, in the aftermath of their failed offensives into northeastern India, Burma Area Army might be persuaded to agree to a greater role for the INA. In a series of meetings with the Japanese, Bose and his staff officers demanded that, in the forthcoming battle for central Burma, the INA be allotted an independent operational sector not subordinate to Japanese command. They also stipulated that INA units in the field be adequately equipped and victualled, and that, as Supreme Commander of the INA, all its units should be under Bose's direct command.⁸⁸

Burma Area Army's response to these demands was not overly enthusiastic. They told Bose that, as far as logistics were concerned, they would do what they could but that the INA should not expect very much. Burma Area Army staff also opposed initially giving the INA an independent command sector on the entirely spurious grounds that desertions of INA personnel had robbed the Japanese of victory at Imphal. But, because of Bose's persistence, the manpower shortage they were beginning to experience, and pressure from IGHQ and the Japanese government to maximise the propaganda value of the INA, Burma Area Army finally agreed to allot an independent sector to the INA. However, they flatly refused to let Bose have any direct operational input in the conduct of frontline INA units; he was allowed only general contact with INA personnel at the front.⁸⁹

It was agreed that 2nd INA division, which comprised 1st, 2nd and 3rd Infantry Regiments as well as 4th Guerilla Regiment (Nehru Brigade), would be allotted the Mount Popa-Irrawaddy River-Kyaukpadaung sector. This was a thin wedge of territory between the Japanese Fifteenth and Twenty-eighth Armies. Although this deployment was frontline, Burma Area Army thought this sector would be fairly quiet, and thus were not too concerned about allotting it to the INA. In the sector itself, 2nd INA Division had the following tasks: guarding against allied crossings of the Irrawaddy River; fortifying the Mount Popa-Kyaukpadaung area; and patrolling the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy River towards Mandalay.⁹⁰

In January 1945 elements of 2nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd INA Division were moving up to the Mount Popa area to reinforce the Nehru Brigade which was already there.⁹¹ On 20 January General Shihachi Katamura, the commander of Fifteenth Japanese Army, decided that the Nehru Brigade should come directly under his command. Despite the fact that this takeover of Nehru Brigade was a direct violation of the INA's agreement with Burma Area Army, there was little Bose could do to prevent this. While this was going on, the main strength of 2nd INA Division arrived at the front, and its commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Shah Nawaz Khan, established his headquarters at Myingyan. Katamura now ordered that a wireless link be set up between 2nd INA Division and Fifteenth Japanese Army.⁹²

On 25 January Katamura ordered Nehru Brigade, commanded by Colonel G.S. Dhillon, to proceed immediately to the Pagan area to secure the villages of Nyangu and Pagan, on the east bank of the Irrawaddy River. Thus deployed, Nehru Brigade was to act as a flank-guard for Fifteenth Japanese Army.⁹³ Dhillon was also ordered to despatch strong reconnaissance patrols to the upper reaches of the east bank of the Yaw River. Also at this stage, Katamura altered his previous instruction to 2nd INA Division, ordering it to headquarters at Kyaukpadaung instead of at Myingyan. Shah Nawaz had been pressing for this, as he felt that Myingyan was too distant a place from which to command brigade-level troops who were on the banks of the Irrawaddy.⁹⁴ Once established at Kyaukpadaung, Shah Nawaz was to deploy 1st Infantry Regiment at Mount Popa.⁹⁵

Kyaukpadaung was also to be the supply-point for 2nd INA Division. Although the INA was to be responsible for its own logistics, 33rd Japanese Division, which was deployed to the north of 2nd INA Division, was instructed to provide INA formations with what aid it could spare. An extract from a captured Japanese Army document reads: 'Although the INA is responsible for the care of its own casualties and its own medical supply, all [Japanese Army] units will give necessary assistance on request'.⁹⁶

At the beginning of February 1945 Katamura ordered the construction of offensive-defensive strongpoints in the Mount Popa sector. The 1st Infantry Regiment, 2nd INA Division was to aid in the construction of these strongpoints, and was to come under the direct command of the Fortification Direction Unit of 55th Japanese Division. In one fell swoop, Katamura flagrantly disregarded the agreement guaranteeing the INA's operational integrity while also, as happened in the Arakan, forcing INA personnel to perform ancillary duties.⁹⁷

In his operational instruction No. 4, of 12 February 1945, Katamura ordered that 2nd INA Division, including Nehru Brigade, should come under the direct command of 15th Japanese Division. The remaining INA units in the Mount Popa area—mainly Intelligence and Bahadur Group

detachments—were also to be placed under direct Japanese control effective from 15 February 1945. As a final blow to the operational autonomy of 2nd Division, INA, its wireless link with Fifteenth Japanese Army was terminated.⁹⁸

Once this transfer of command was completed, the commander of 15th Japanese Division transferred Nehru Brigade back to 2nd INA Division. Shah Nawaz was then instructed to deploy three-fourths of Nehru Brigade in entrenched positions on the right bank of the Irrawaddy River. He was also told to despatch 2nd Infantry Regiment to the Mount Popa sector to help 1st Infantry Regiment complete the fortifications there. The commander of Fifteenth Japanese Army wanted these fortifications to be completed as soon as possible, for he fully expected an allied airborne attack in the vicinity of Mount Popa.⁹⁹

In the early morning hours of 14 February 1945 allied forces crossed the Irrawaddy River at a point west of Nyangu. By that afternoon, the lead elements of 7th British Division were pushing back 214th Japanese Infantry Regiment. The entrenchments of the Nehru Brigade had been overrun in the first assault, and 250 men of the brigade had laid down their arms.¹⁰⁰

The Japanese Fifteenth Army's commander was quick to counter this grave threat, ordering a force composed of the nucleus of III/153rd Japanese Infantry Regiment and the remainder of Nehru Brigade to 'crush the enemy'. There was apparently some debate as to which INA unit to use. Lieutenant-Colonel Sahgal thought that his unit, 2nd Infantry Regiment, should be involved in the counterattack, while Colonel Dhillon thought his Nehru Brigade should be allowed to redeem itself. This reportedly developed into a 'first-class quarrel'.¹⁰¹ Finally, in view of Dhillon's insistence, it was decided that, notwithstanding the loss of 50 per cent of its men, Nehru Brigade be given another chance.¹⁰²

The counterattack of III/153rd Japanese Infantry Regiment and Nehru Brigade went in on the morning of 16 February. It was beaten back with great trouble by 89th Infantry Brigade of 7th Indian Division. By that evening, Nehru Brigade was in headlong retreat to Kyaukpadaung, having lost the majority of its men.¹⁰³

An interesting report of Japanese perceptions of the INA in the Irrawaddy battles comes to us from Captain Izumi, a Japanese staff officer attached to 2nd INA Division. Writing about the INA commanders he stated that, while those at the divisional and regimental level were, because of their close association with Subhas Chandra Bose, very enthusiastic and eager to uphold the honour of the INA, this was not true of most of the INA battalion and company commanders. Izumi felt that INA captains had to be monitored closely, because of their potential influence on junior INA officers as well as INA rank-and-file. He also echoed the general feeling among Japanese army officers that the INA's fighting ability was poor, and that INA units could not deal with Japanese operational

doctrine. However, he did state that there were some exceptions, such as 1st Battalion, 2nd INA Division, which performed very well in the rear-guard action at Seikpyu on 20–22 February against much larger allied forces.¹⁰⁴

Izumi also made special mention of the Tamil troops, recruited exclusively from Malaya, that made up 60 per cent of 2nd INA Division. He maintained that, overall, these troops fought better than the Indian POWs in the INA. This opinion is corroborated by a British Intelligence Summary of the same period.¹⁰⁵ A possible reason for the relative prowess of the Tamils might be the perception among the Tamils that they were fighting for their homes, while the majority of INA personnel recruited from Indian Army units that had surrendered in 1942 were, by this time, thoroughly demoralised by their successive defeats, and were more interested in the postwar settlement. This latter group might have developed an immunity to Bose's repeated exhortations to fight on.

In his report to British Military Intelligence, Izumi commented on the composition of various INA units. He observed that, unlike the Indian Army, the INA seemed to have no clear racial policy. This buttresses Mohan Singh's assertion that, from its earliest days, the INA followed a thoroughly mixed recruitment policy in which all classes, castes and religions were represented, as far as possible, in every unit.¹⁰⁶ However, Izumi expressed some doubts as to the reliability of some Muslim INA personnel. This contention has some merit. It is true that some Indian Muslim officers among the POWs—most notably Shah Nawaz Khan and M.R. Durrani—regarded the INA as a Sikh organisation. This did not sit well with them in view of the long history of Muslim–Sikh hatred in south Asia. In memoirs published after the end of the Second World War, both Shah Nawaz and Durrani assert that the main reason for joining the INA was to protect their Muslim brother officers and men from the vagaries of both the Sikhs and the Japanese.¹⁰⁷ However, the coming of Subhas Chandra Bose, an Indian nationalist leader of great repute, considerably lowered suspicion based on caste and religion. This was because Bose had gone on record, time and again, as a firm secularist.¹⁰⁸

The generally dismal performance of the INA and the mounting desertion rate—900 in February alone¹⁰⁹—greatly alarmed Bose. He even tried to visit frontline INA troops in late February, but was stopped by Burma Area Army. Back in Rangoon, he exhorted the INA to perform greater feats on the battlefield while, at the same time, instituting capital punishment for INA deserters.¹¹⁰ Temporarily spurred on by Bose's appeals, INA units fought several spirited actions in the latter part of March and April 1945, culminating in a hard-fought battle at Legyi.¹¹¹

By the end of April 1945, in addition to about 1100 INA personnel who had deserted, the INA had lost 637 men in the Irrawaddy battles. From this point on, the INA's retreat, which had hitherto been orderly, became a rout, and mass surrenders became frequent. In early May allied forces

entering Toungoo accepted the surrender of 3158 INA personnel, the exhausted remnants of 1st INA Division. Later that month British forces took Rangoon, and a further 7000 INA troops fell into their hands. The INA was dead; all that remained was officially to surrender. This was done in August 1945 after it was learned that Japan had capitulated to the Allies and that, more importantly, Subhas Bose had been killed in a plane crash en route to the Soviet Union.¹¹²

The Springing Tiger was the INA's emblem, one that its troops wore proudly into battle. However, their general military performance in northeastern India and central Burma in 1944–45 demonstrated that the INA was rather more of a paper tiger. This stemmed mainly from the fact that the Japanese, whether at IGHQ, Burma Area Army or at the divisional level, did not have much regard for the INA's fighting capability. This attitude dictated INA–Japanese relations for the whole period of the INA's existence, and it manifested itself in a number of ways. First, there was the conscious limitation of the INA's size. Mohan Singh was prevented from forming a second INA division in 1942, and only after hard bargaining sessions was Bose able to proceed with his expansion of the INA. Second, throughout its existence the INA had to make do with substandard and often faulty equipment. In battle, INA units were affected by the same logistical constraints as the Japanese forces, but supplying the INA was not a Japanese priority. One must also remember the factor of differing combat doctrines here. What to the Japanese army was a perfectly acceptable level of logistics, the INA—a large proportion of whose officers, NCOs and men had served with the Indian Army—found inadequate. This, at least in part, explains the INA's desertion rate in battle. Third, in the Arakan and Imphal offensives INA units deployed in a 'penny-pocket' fashion, always subordinate to Japanese units. This meant that it could never develop an esprit de corps of its own, and that its commanders never had operational autonomy. Only when these offensives had failed did Burma Area Army concede a complete sector to the INA in their defence of the Irrawaddy. But, as we saw, the INA's operational autonomy in this sector was steadily encroached upon. Yet the fact that, in some cases, INA detachments acquitted themselves fairly well suggests that Burma Area Army's mistrust of the INA was misplaced. Had it been deployed as a single unified force in a fighting role, accorded proper logistical support, and had not had its operational autonomy destroyed, the INA might have indeed lived up to its 'Springing Tiger' emblem, instead of being merely a paper one.

Notes

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Senior of McGill University, Professor DeWitt Ellinwood of the State University of New York at Albany, and the anonymous referee of this article for their comments, which I found both pertinent and constructive. I dedicate this article to the memory of Professor Robert Vogel who first sparked my interest in the history of war and society, and under whose direction I first explored the military history of the Indian National Army.

Unless stated otherwise, all archival references are to documents in L/WS/1/1433, Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library.

1. The Russian Liberation Army and its commander-in-chief, Vlasov, are dealt with in Catherine Andreyev, *Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement* (Cambridge 1987).
2. The following works deal with the INA. Their focus is overwhelmingly political. Hugh Toye's *The Springing Tiger* (London 1959), the first scholarly attempt to examine the INA, looks at the INA from the perspective of Subhas Chandra Bose, its most famous leader. K.K. Ghosh, *The Indian National Army* (Meerut 1969), sees the INA from the political angle, as the second front of the Indian independence movement. Joyce Lebra's *Jungle Alliance* (Singapore 1971) explores the diplomacy of the INA-Japanese alliance, whilst Gerrard Corr's *War of the Springing Tiger* (London 1975) attempts to make the rather tenuous link between the INA and the 1915 mutiny of the 5th Indian Light Infantry at Singapore. Peter Fay's new book, *The Forgotten Army* (New Delhi 1994), is really the first attempt, besides my own in this article, to shed light on the INA's battle record. Fay's work is both greatly enhanced and in small part limited by the fact that he tells the INA's story from largely the point of view of Prem Kumar Sahgal, the founder and leader of the INA's Rani of Jhansi Regiment, and his wife Lashmi. On the INA's significance to Axis grand strategy see Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy* (Stuttgart 1981).
3. Ghosh, *Indian National Army*, 4-7, 41-2.
4. Iwaichi Fujiwara, *F. Kikan: Japanese Army Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia during World War Two* (Hong Kong 1984); Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, ch. 1.
5. Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, ch. 1; S.W. Kirby et al., *The War Against Japan*, 5 vols (London 1957-69), 1: 443, states that the total number of Indian Army personnel stationed in the Malay peninsula in December 1941 was 67,000; of these 22,000 were British troops attached to the Indian Army.
6. Mohan Singh interview, New Delhi, 5 August 1984; Mohan Singh, *Soldier's Contribution to Indian Independence* (New Delhi 1974), 96.
7. Mohan Singh interview; Ghosh, *Indian National Army*, 32.
8. Mohan Singh interview. For more on the influence of nationalism on Indian troops stationed in the Far East prior to 8 December 1941, see the present author's article, 'Soldier Disaffection and the Creation of the Indian National Army', *Indo-British Review*, XVIII: 1 (1990), 155-63.
9. India Command Weekly Intelligence Summaries [hereafter IC WIS] 53, Part III, Appendix A, 6 November 1942.

10. Note by an Indian Emergency Commissioned Officer, 2, WO 208/819A, Public Record Office, Kew [hereafter PRO]. For examples of the over-confidence of British officers see Christopher Thorne, *The Issue of War: States, Societies, and the Far Eastern Conflict* (London 1985).
11. On the eve of the Far Eastern War there were about two million civilian Indians living in southeast Asia.
12. Ghosh, *Indian National Army*, 47–58.
13. Mohan Singh interview; G.S. Dhillon interview, Shivpuri, 23 July 1984. A.M. Nair, *An Indian Freedom-Fighter in Japan* (Bombay 1982), gives a more favourable picture of Iwakuro.
14. Masanobu Tsuji, *Singapore: The Japanese Version* (New York 1960), *passim*.
15. Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, ch. 2.
16. IC WIS 64, Part III, Appendix A, 22 January 1943; Mohan Singh, *Soldier's Contribution*, 122–32.
17. Shah Nawaz Khan, *My Memories of the INA and its Netaji* (Delhi 1946), 49; K.S. Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in Asia* (Lahore 1947), 44–50.
18. Mohan Singh interview; *id.*, *Soldier's Contribution*, *passim*; Nair, *Indian Freedom-Fighter*, ch. 22.
19. Ghosh, *Indian National Army*, 65–98.
20. During the period that the INA was moribund, one aspect of its activities was kept alive. This was the Japanese-supervised espionage and subversion campaign. During its operation, from March 1942 to August 1943, a total of 332 agents were sent into India on intelligence-gathering and sabotage missions from forward posts on the Indo-Burmese frontier. Most of these agents—two-thirds of whom were Indian POWs, and the rest Indian civilians living in Malaya and Burma—either gave themselves up once in India or were captured by British authorities fairly easily. For a more detailed analysis of this little-known campaign see Chandar S. Sundaram, 'The Indian National Army: A Preliminary Study of its Formation and Campaigns' (MA thesis, McGill University 1985), 94–103.
21. Bose's political ideas and beliefs are laid out fully in his *Collected Works* (ed. Sisir K. Bose), especially volume 2, *The Indian Struggle, 1920–1942* (Calcutta 1981). Recent biographies of Bose include Hari Hara Das, *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Movement* (New Delhi 1983); and Leonard A. Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj* (New York 1990). The best biography of Gandhi, which analyses both his moral and political philosophy as well as his influence upon the Indian nationalist movement is Judith M. Brown's very well written *Gandhi: The Prisoner of Hope* (New Haven 1989).
22. It is interesting to note that Bose's conversion from socialism to national socialism mirrors that of the contemporary British politician Sir Oswald Mosley who, after being a prominent Labourite, ended up heading the British Union of Fascists. The Free India Legion numbered never more than 3000. For more on the legion see Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy*, *passim*.
23. See Ghosh, *Indian National Army*, 143, for details of this reorganisation.

24. In his presidential address to the Haripura Session of the Congress in 1938 Bose expressed the then current military opinion that the next war would be lost or won through the use of strategic air power.
25. P.K. Sahgal interview, Kanpur, 28 July 1984.
26. IC WIS 178, Part III, Appendix B.
27. Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 63–4.
28. For more on Japanese offensive plans see Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War, 1941–1945* (London 1984), ch. 3. For a thorough discussion of allied strategy regarding Burma see Raymond Callahan, *Burma, 1942–1945* (London 1978).
29. Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 48–9.
30. Sundaram, 'The Indian National Army', 135–7.
31. Sahgal interview.
32. Ghosh, *Indian National Army*, 331.
33. Allen, *Burma*, ch. 3, *passim*.
34. Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 73.
35. *Ibid.*, 77.
36. P.K. Sahgal interview, Kanpur, 29 July 1984.
37. Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 71.
38. The INA's main emergency rations were 'Sheikhupura biscuits', a kind of hard tack that had been developed in the British Indian Army during the nineteenth century (Dhillon interview).
39. South East Asia Command [hereafter SEAC] and IC WIS 129, 1, 21 April 1944; SEAC and IC WIS 123, 1, 10 March 1944; SEAC and IC WIS 123, 1, 18 February 1944.
40. SEAC and IC WIS 127, 2, 7 April 1944; Kirby et al., *War Against Japan*, 3: 136, note 1.
41. SEAC and IC WIS 129, 2–3, 21 April 1944.
42. SEAC and IC WIS 123, 3, 10 March 1944, and SEAC and IC WIS 120, 1, 18 February 1944.
43. *Ibid.*
44. This total consisted of: Bahadur Group 70; Intelligence Group 70; Field Force 110; others 150.
45. G.S. Dhillon interview, Shivpuri, 24 July 1984.
46. Toye, *Springing Tiger*, 100–1.
47. Sahgal interview, 29 July 1984.
48. This force was part of the 55th Japanese Division.
49. SEAC and IC WIS 129, 1, 18 April 1944.
50. *Ibid.*, 3.
51. See Allen, *Burma*, 150–191, for a fuller description of the Arakan battles.
52. Kirby et al., *War Against Japan*, 3: 267–8.
53. 81st West African Division War Diary (January–June 1944), 6.45 pm, 10 April 1944, WO172/6589, PRO.
54. 8.30 pm and noon, 2 April 1944, *ibid.*; Sahgal interview, 28 July 1944.

55. 81st West African Division War Diary (January–June 1944), 6.35 pm, 2 April 1944.
56. 7 pm, 4 April 1944, *ibid.*
57. 3 pm, 2 April; 12.50 pm, 5 April; 11.05 pm, 7 April 1944, *ibid.*
58. Sahgal interview.
59. This force consisted of 7/16th Punjab and 1st Gambia regiments.
60. Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 87–8.
61. Subhas Chandra Bose, 'Special Order of the Day', 9 February 1944, Subhas Chandra Bose Papers, Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta.
62. Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 85–6.
63. *Ibid.*, 85–6. In Hindi and Urdu 'atta' is wheat flour and 'ghee' clarified butter.
64. *Ibid.*, 87–8.
65. Major J. Roughton, 'Sangu River, 1944', *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, 114: 4 (October 1984), 442, mentions the INA.
66. SEAC and IC Weekly Security Intelligence Summary [hereafter WSIS] 160, 25 November 1944, 1; WSIS 164, 1, 22 December 1944.
67. SEAC and IC WIS 163, Appendix A, 1, 5 December 1944.
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*, 2.
70. *Ibid.*
71. SEAC and IC WIS 160, Appendix A, 1, 25 November 1944; Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 120–9.
72. SEAC and IC WIS 160, , Appendix A, 1–2, 25 November 1944.
73. Allen, *Burma*, 191–316, *passim*.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 112–13; SEAC and IC WSIS 136, Section D, 1, 9 June 1944.
76. SEAC and IC WSIS 137, Section D, 1, 16 June 1944; Toye, *Springing Tiger*, 224, 229.
77. Khan, *Memories of the INA*, 112–14. Major Pritam Singh is not to be confused with Giani Pritam Singh of the Independent League who died in a plane crash in 1942.
78. SEAC and IC WSIS 140, Section D, 1, 7 July 1944; Allen, *Burma*, 226–7.
79. G.S. Dhillon interview, Shivpuri, 25 July 1984; Allen, *Burma*, 227.
80. SEAC and IC WSIS 140, Section D, 2–3, 7 July 1944.
81. SEAC and IC WSIS 141, Section D, 1, 14 July 1944; WIS 142, 2, 21 July 1944.
82. SEAC and IC WSIS 160, Section D, Appendix A, 1, 25 November 1944.
83. SEAC and IC WSIS 140, Section D, 1, 17 July 1944.
84. SEAC and IC WSIS 142, Section D, 1, 21 July 1944.
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90. SEAC and IC WSIS 167, Appendix A, 2, 12 January 1945.
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93. *Ibid.*
94. Letter from Shah Nawaz Khan to author, 7 June 1983.
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96. *Ibid.*, 4.
97. *Ibid.*
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100. *Ibid.*; Dhillon interview, 28 July 1984.
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102. *Ibid.*, 3–4.
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106. Mohan Singh interview.
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109. Supplementary Guide to Japanese Inspired Forces (JIF) Activities in Malaya, 3, WO203/2298, PRO.
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