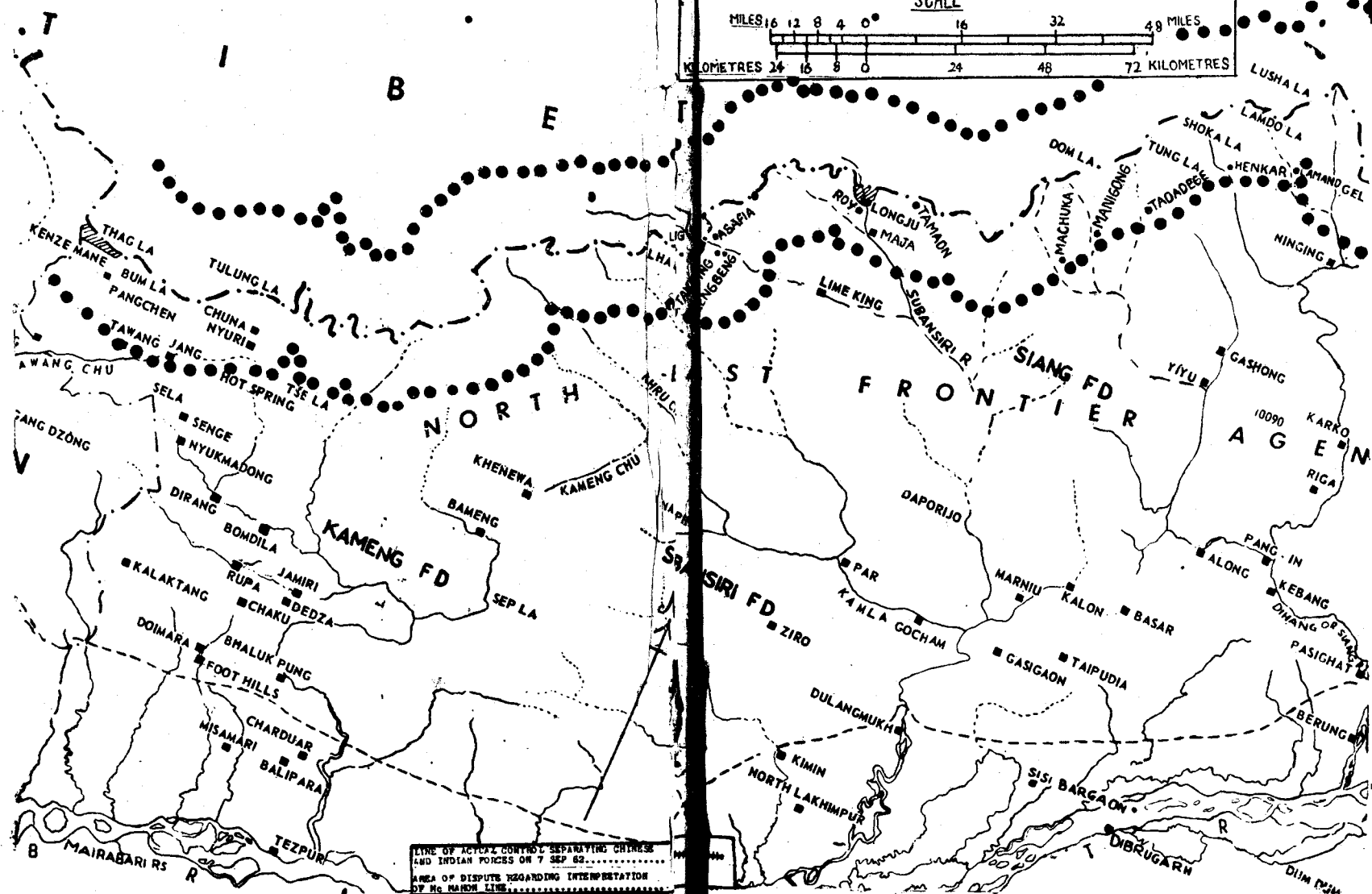


CHINESE INVASION
OF
NEFA

Major Johri

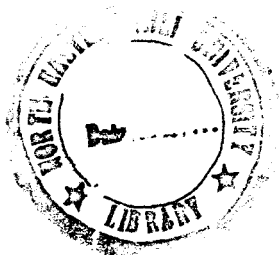


CHINESE INVASION OF N E F A

By
Major Sita Ram Johri (Retired)
M.Sc. (Allahabad), M.Ed. (Leeds).

FOREWORD

By
General KM Cariappa
1st. Commander-in-Chief of The Indian Armed Forces.



HIMALAYA PUBLICATIONS
KHURSHED BAGH
LUCKNOW-4

By the author

1. Where India, China and Burma Meet.
2. India Accepts China's Challenge.
3. Our Borderlands.
4. The Indo-Pak Conflict of 1965.
5. Chhapamar Yudh Aur Uska Vyuh Kaushal (in Hindi).

NEHU, LIBRARY

Acc. No. 182113

Acc. by. _____

Date _____

Class by _____

Sub Heading by _____

Enter by _____

Transcribed by _____

FIRST EDITION—MAY, 1968

Price Rs. 15

PC
954.04
J04

Printed at
Hindustani Art Cottage, Lucknow.

PREFACE

In March 1964 I was returning from Lachen-Lachung (North Sikkim) to Gangtok. On the way I stopped in the Singik Rest House for the night. The same evening 18 Indian Army officers also stayed in the same bungalow. All of them were young and bubbling with life. Soon after the last light their mess started functioning. One or two bottles of rum were opened and the chocolate coloured liquid was passed around in glasses. The boys were happy. Some of them became boisterous and talkative. The night passed. I returned to Gangtok and happened to meet the local divisional commander.

"How is it that your young subalterns cannot take a peg of rum even?" I casually asked.

"Surely, drinking is not the only criterion to judge officers with", came the retort.

"Correct. But those who take drinks should be able to stand at least two pegs of the liquid".

"What can I do? After all they are the sons and nephews of Panchsheelwalas".

I am sure the readers are familiar with Panchsheel. It is a by-product of *Ahimsa* meaning non-violence, a weapon used by M. Gandhi to oust the British from India. Later on Indian political leaders prostituted the term to achieve their own selfish ends and in the name of Gandhi they applied *Ahimsa* where it was least required. Gandhi is dead. It is criminal to label him with all sorts of quotations pertaining to non-violence. The very fact that he blessed the Indian Army units proceeding to the Kashmir Valley to expel the North-West Frontier tribesmen who had invaded it gives a clue to what the Mahatma would have done had he lived and served the nation as the Prime Minister of the country in the post-independence era. There is no direct evidence to suggest that the Mahatma would have helped the process of reducing the nation to impotence and making it incapable of defending itself against a foreign invasion. *And that is actually what happened.* The Indian political leaders in power constantly preached what eroded the very foundations on which an army is built and strengthened.

The leaders might have been convinced of the efficacy of non-violence after their success in forcing the British to quit India and considered that they would help the process of ushering in peace in the world through passive means. For them army became a costly but unavoidable institution. They neglected, deliberately or otherwise, the army and its problems. Probably there were other reasons also for this neglect.

The British ruled this country through the Indian Army and the Police. One of the main tasks of the Indian Army was to help civil authority in maintaining law and order in the country. As at present, the Indian Army units very often used to be deployed for the purpose. This was irksome to the Indian public. In 1942 the rulers used the army to suppress the national upheaval in the country specially in Bihar. Thus the army unwittingly invited ill-will of the Indian people and received the treatment as if it was an *army of occupation*. Obviously, our national leaders viewed this institution with a detached feeling. In their weaker moments they might have entertained the idea of clipping its wings. Had our leaders been infused with revolutionary zeal and had fought battles with the two strong arms of the British—the army and the police—they would have had enough of their own trained man-power to replace the old hands of the army after independence. Unfortunately not a single Congressman was fit to get himself enrolled in the armed forces of India. Our leaders, therefore, had to be content with what they got as the administrators of the country. Briefly they tolerated the existence of the Indian Army with suspicion. Any army officer of senior rank who showed signs of independence or initiative or martial brilliance was an eyegore to our administrators.

In 1960 General Thimayya was the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed forces. He was loved by the Indian troops. Obviously our leaders might have regarded him as an obstruction to the Congress party to lead the nation to the cherished goal of a *Socialistic Pattern of Society*. General Thimayya and his supporters had to be controlled, if not to be removed from the army. As in dictatorial countries the army was purged (quietly and decently) of such elements as were suspected of challenging the authority of those whom luck had placed at the helm of affairs in the country.

In those days there was a hot rumour in the country and probably abroad also that the Indian Army might stage a *Coup d'etat*. Inexperience in administration gave birth to inefficiency in our leaders which in turn might have produced a feeling of inferiority in them. To overcome that they showed their prowess in interfering in the army affairs. They found excuses to have their way and to install their own team of senior officers in the Indian Army. Thus, for some reason, probably political, Lieut.-General SPP Thorat who was to succeed General Thimayya was superseded. Naturally he retired from the service. This happens in every country and in every army, but here it created more problems than our leaders could solve them. This step created two factions in the army—one was said to be loyal to the country and the other to emoluments. In other words it created bad blood in the army.

General Thimayya was the only Indian general who had fought the Japanese on the Arakan front as a brigadier. His three battalion commanders were Lieut.-Cols Usman, Thorat and Sen. Usman became a brigadier and was killed in the J & K operations in Jhangar in 1948. Thorat became Lieut.-General and retired. Of this team of experienced officers only Sen remained. When the Chinese attacked NEFA Lieut.-General Sen was the Army Commander. Under the new team of officers our army was sent to NEFA to face the Chinese challenge. Briefly the higher echelon of the Indian Army was divided and weak. Can the Indian Army ever dream of gaining power in our vast country where innumerable divergent interests prevail?

A careful examination will show that our army was ill-equipped for any warfare what to say of mountain or snow warfare. Somehow or other we failed to equip the army with modern weapons. After independence the Government of India retained a few British technical officers to advise us on the right lines in increasing the production of arms and munitions. Unfortunately this costly experiment did not function satisfactorily, specially at a time when things were moving fast elsewhere. As a result our army remained ill-equipped. Further, we never thought that China would ever attack the country which did her best to popularise the leadership of Mao and Chao En-lai in the Afro-Asian nations. Consequently our army was ill-prepared for jungle-cum-mountain fighting which it faced in NEFA. Briefly, when the Chinese attacked NEFA the

Indian Army neither had the experienced leadership which could handle the task with determination nor was equipped for action in the mountainous terrain covered with forests. The enemy deliberately planned to attack us on a ground of his choice. Circumstances forced the Indian military leaders to meet the challenge held out by China. What was the result? An army which had a brilliant record and which is still a force in the world to reckon with became an object of criticism not only in the country but outside as well. Its brave deeds were overlooked and reverses magnified.

* * * *

I retired from the army in 1958. The Chinese invasion came in 1962. During these four years I had completely lost touch with military affairs. But fortunately during the Chinese invasion of NEFA I was in eastern India. In October 1962 I was in Nagaland, Ukhrul and Manipur. I witnessed the hectic activities of our government to meet the Chinese on the ground of their choice. In November I was travelling in the Assam Valley. I met many officers and other ranks who had taken an active part in this unexpected conflict. I gathered useful information regarding the India-China war. In course of time I gathered more information on the subject. When the opportunity came, and it came last year, this book was written.

The printing of this book was completed in the last week of December 1967 and it could have been released to the public in the first week of January 1968. But I was not in a hurry. I decided to give a true* and objective perspective of the India-China war in NEFA. I, therefore, sent copies of the book to General KM Cariappa, Lieut.-General SPP Thorat and Lieut.-General BM Kaul for their comments.

I am grateful to General Cariappa who very kindly consented to go through the book and write a foreword to it. I am sure it must

* Regarding the last line, page 249, and first line, page 250, the facts which have come to my knowledge now are:—The Gorkhas were attacked by the Chinese. While fighting they were ordered to withdraw. During the withdrawal the party was ambushed. It is not certain who laid the ambush—the Chinese or the local people. But it is certain that the local tribals destroyed the bridge by which the Gorkhas were to cross a river. Therefore, it appears that Lieut.-Col Taylor and his party were not the victims of snow but of local treachery.

have been very difficult for the General to spare some of his very busy time for the purpose.

I am also grateful to Lieut.-General Thorat who very graciously read the book and commented upon it.

I am especially grateful to Lieut.-General BM Kaul whose generous and impartial opinion has greatly enhanced the value of the book. Lieut.-General Kaul was one who actually directed the operations in this campaign.

Lastly I should not forget my patron—Shri SN Chaturvedi, Ex-Director of Education, Madhya Bharat and the present editor of Sarswati—without whose help I could not have succeeded in bringing out the book in 1968. I am also thankful to my friend Shri KP Lal, who helped me by his advice.

In the end I request the readers to read this book in the perspective of a universal truth that the army is a vital part of the society and to understand its successes and failures apart from the limitations and weaknesses of the society is not only to confuse the issue but to evade it. Further, they are requested to remember that “soldiers do not make wars; they fight them”.

43, Khurshed Bagh
Lucknow-4 (U.P.).

Sita Ram Johri

1. 5. 68.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I THE POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF NEFA ..	15
Approaches	16
II THE RACIAL GROUPS OF NEFA..	17
III THE UNKNOWN NEFA	20
IV THE DHOLA SECTOR	27
Defence of NEFA	30
The Dhola-Thagla Sector	33
Land Routes	39
The Dhola Operations	41
In The South of The Namka Chu	45
In The North of The Namka Chu	52
Appreciation & Plan	55
Chinese Retaliation	71
V THE SILVER LINING	89
The Battles of Bum La	101
The Garhwal Rifles in Defence	109
A Sad Moment	119
VI A CONFLICT OF DECISIONS	124
VII ROUT OR FIGHT	144
Dirang Dzong Operations	148
VIII THE FORLORN HOPE	169
Bomdi La Operations	173
Comments	190
IX THE STORM IN THE NORTH-EAST	197
The Battles of The Walong Sector	202
The Battle of Walong	210
The Main Attack	222
The Withdrawal	234
X THE REST OF NEFA	244
Siang Frontier Division	244
Subansiri Frontier Division	250
XI THE SOLILOQUY	255
INDEX	256

ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Sketches</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Sketch No. 1 The Dhola Sector	34
2. Sketch No. 2 The Tawang Sector	96
3. Sketch No. 3 The Jang-Se La Sector	125
4. Sketch No. 4A The Bomdi La-Dirang Sector	151
5. Sketch No. 4B Indian Troop Disposition in Bomdi La on 12th November 1962	175
6. Sketch No. 6 The Walong Sector	213

For NEFA less Lohit and Tirap Frontier Divisions please refer to the map in the beginning of the book.

For Lohit Frontier Division please see Sketch No. 5. at the end of the book.

There was no fighting in Tirap Frontier Division hence no sketch or map of this region is included.

PHOTOGRAPHS

(Pp 128-129)

Killed in Action

1. Brigadier Hoshiar Singh, Commander 162nd Brigade.
2. Lieut.-Col BN Avasthi, Commanding Officer, 4th Rajputs.
3. Captain Amarjeet Singh, 5th Guards.
4. Lieutenant IS Chaudhry, 5th Guards.
5. Subedar Jogindra Singh, 1st Sikhs.
6. Sepoy Kewal Singh, 4th Sikhs.

Serving in the Indian Army

1. Lieutenant SN Tandon, 4th Garhwal.
2. Subedar Udai Singh Rawat, 4th Garhwal.
3. L/Nk Gopal Singh Gusain, 4th Garhwal.

FOREWORD

I have read this book on the War of 1962 in the N.E.F.A. between us and China with great interest. The author, Major Sita Ram Johri, certainly has put in a great deal of research into this short "War" in the NEFA and has collected a great deal of detailed accounts referring to the tactical dispositions, plans, our successes, our reverses and so on quite thoroughly. It speaks of his thoroughness and keenness for having been able to collect this mass of details in the manner he has and recording them in such a simple readable form as he has done in this book.

There has been a great deal of loose talk in many quarters in our country and elsewhere about this "War" saying that these operations in NEFA in which we did not come off well was a "military debacle". Many uncharitable tongues have been uncomplimentary about the quality of leadership and of the fighting of our brave Officers and Jawans. Looking at this matter in all its aspects I feel the main responsibility for the unfortunate setback to our operations in that area could justifiably be laid at the "political door" and not entirely at the "military door". Our Army was just "a thin green line all along that long inhospitable mountainous, wooded front hardly any depth at all". Our Commanders were starved for complete and timely intelligence about the enemy's movements. We had no fifth columnists but the enemy had I believe persons disguised as Monpas—the locals—to do intensive intelligence work for him. We had no "traitors" helping us with information about enemy concentrations, enemy's plans and so on as China is supposed to have had from some such people in our country. It was not as if our soldiers were less fighters than the Chinese that we could not have had the success we should have had but it was mainly because our fine Jawans were completely out-numbered practically everywhere and the enemy had full intelligence of our dispositions. I know as recorded in this book, there were certain

instances of failures in leadership but that was not common to our Army alone. Much much worse things have happened in other countries in previous wars but of course this is no comfort to us because of similar things happened elsewhere. I say this in fairness to our Officers and Jawans who some unkind people have said were not equal to the standard of the officers and men on the other side. In my opinion our Officers and Jawans are ten times, if not more, more superior than those on the other side. Our Army is still one of the best in the World.

We were of course deficient of some essential equipment. Here again it was not the fault of the Army nor of the army planners. I have always been saying that the strength, the training and equipment of an army are so closely related to the foreign policy of the Government of one's country. As far as I can remember at no time was there any political indication given of any physical threat to the security of our country, sufficiently in advance of time, to enable the Army planners to give serious thought to implement their plans in regard to equipment, weapons, training and so on. On the other hand on occasions the soldier's warnings of things to come were slighted. Nevertheless, with what our Army had in that inhospitable part of our country, with the very small numbers compared to the overwhelming numbers on the other side, I do think we did as well as we could have done in the circumstances. People do not talk of the very fine show put up by our Army on the Walong front nor of the splendid fighting by our Officers and Jawans in the Chushul Area on the Ladakh front.

I congratulate the author, Major Johri, on having written this book which could be read by all Officers of our Services with advantage to improve their military knowledge, in this kind of warfare.

I believe the author who has written this book as a "Private Individual" is NOT obliged to have any "Security Clearance" by any Government authority.

Roshanara
Mercara (Coorg).
2. 4. 68.

KM Cariappa

INTRODUCTION (1)

by

Lieutenant-General SPP Thorat

Ashok Chakra; Padmashree; D.S.O.

Hon. ADC. to the President of India.

• Maj. Sitaram Johri needs no introduction to the student of Military History. He has written a number of very readable books on our Northern and North-Eastern Frontiers.

In the present book, Maj. Johri gives a detailed account of the operations which were forced on us by the Chinese in 1962. He brings out the difficulties of the terrain, the adverse conditions under which our troops fought and gives useful comments on the conduct of operations. Whether one agrees with these comments or not, they show that Maj. Johri has made a detailed study of the operations. This in itself is a valuable contribution, and I hope that it enthuses more writers to study the campaign in greater detail.

I am sure that Maj. Johri's book will be well received as it deserves to be. All those who are interested in Defence of our Frontiers should be grateful to him for the present book. I certainly am.

Indu-Niketan
Tarabai Park
Kolhapur.
23-2-68.

SPP Thorat

INTRODUCTION (2)

by

Lieutenant-General BM Kaul (Retired)

Indian Army

Every author has a right to have his own opinion. So has Major Johri. Though I do not agree with some of his conclusions, I think he has compiled this book with considerable effort and has written it in a simple and a forthright manner. I hope he is widely read not only by those who were eye-witnesses of the events described by the author but also by students of military history (who will, no doubt, form their own judgement). I also hope that more books are written, in time to come, on operations in Nefa—as also Ladakh, where similar military disasters took place—in 1962. The more versions we have, the more we will learn and the better for us.

Delhi Cantt.

BM Kaul

Dated 1.1.68

CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF NEFA

“The North-East Frontier Agency is constitutionally a part of Assam with which it will be united when it reaches a sufficient stage of development”¹.

VERRIER ELWYN

After undergoing many political changes NEFA came to be divided into five divisions. Their names from the west to east are the Kameng Frontier Division (KFD), the Subansiri Frontier Division (SFD), the Siang Frontier Division, the Lohit Frontier Division (LFD), and the Tirap Frontier Division. Their respective administrative headquarters are Bomdi La, Ziro, Along, Tezu and Khonsa. Each division is administered by a Political Officer (PO). POs have also been posted at Tawang (KFD), Pasighat (Siang Frontier Division) and Roing (LFD). Thus Tawang, Pasighat and Roing have attained the same political status as their divisions. It is hoped that in the near future these regions will form separate administrative units. Further, each division is divided into sub-divisions. Thus Sepla and Bameng are the sub-divisions of KFD and Daporijo of SFD. These sub-divisions are administered by Assistant Political Officers (APOs).

The POs and APOs were recruited in the Indian Frontier Administrative cadre. This cadre is in liquidation under the NEFA administrative reforms which are being introduced in the Agency. As a result, the POs and the APOs will be absorbed either in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or in the Assam Civil Service.

At present the North-East Frontier Agency Headquarters is located at Shillong. The Government of India is planning to shift its location. It is a political problem which is linked with the reorganisation of Assam itself. It will not be long before a firm decision is taken by the Government. However, the prospective site for the proposed headquarters is most likely to be Pasighat.

The Chinese invasion of NEFA did not touch the Tirap Frontier Divisions. Hence this division is omitted from the present discussion.

1. *A Philosophy For NEFA* by Varrier Elwyn (Shillong 1957. p. 4.)

CHAPTER II

THE RACIAL GROUPS OF NEFA

“Despite the considerable all-round progress, made in recent years, especially after the Chinese aggression, an overwhelming majority of NEFA’s tribal population of 3,30,000 lives in squalor, disease and dire poverty.

This is revealed in a techno-economic survey, completed in December last by the National Council of Applied Economic Research. The survey which took over two years to complete was undertaken at the request of the NEFA administration.

The survey shows that agriculture is so primitive that even ploughs are unknown except in a few pockets. Diseases are so rampant that there is practically no population growth. Commerce and industry do not exist. Despite the construction of new roads, no passenger traffic has developed”.

NATIONAL HERALD 17. 3. 68.

The people of NEFA, though bundled into a single fold—the Mongoloids—, can distinctly be placed into four main groups—the Nagas, the Abors, the Daflas and the Bhotias. Besides these, there is a minority group which migrated during the last two centuries from the Shan States of Burma. The Khamptis and the Singphos of Tirap and southern LFD belong to this group.

The people of the Naga group reside in Tirap Frontier Division with which we are not concerned here.

The Abors form the most important group of the Nefaites. Their main sub-groups are the Galongs, the Minyongs and the Padams (the great). The Boris and a few other groups of the interior Siang belong to the Abor group. The entire group of the Abors inhabits the Siang Frontier Division. In addition the Padams also form an influential community of the LFD.

Akin to the Padams are the Idu Mishmis who are the inhabitants of the Roing region. They are concentrated in the Dibong basin. Another branch of the Mishmis is the Miju Mishmis who inhabit the upper basin of the Lohit river. The lower basin is populated by the Digaru Mishmis.

CHAPTER III

THE UNKNOWN NEFA

“Few nations bordering upon the British dominion in India are less generally known than those inhabiting the extreme north-east frontier of Bengal, and yet, in a commercial, a statistical, or a political point of view, no country is more important. There our territory of Assam is situated in almost immediate contact with the empire of China and Ava (Burma), being separated from each by a narrow belt of mountain country, possessed of barbarous tribes of independent savages, and capable of being crossed over in the present state of communications in ten or twelve days”.¹

MCCOSH

In ancient India very little seems to have been known about the terrain of NEFA. Later Huin Tsiang was the first adventurer-cum-religious scholar who writes in his account about the hills and hillmen of NEFA. While in Assam he expressed a desire to return to China via the hill track of north-east of Assam. He was told :

“To the east of Kamrup (Assam), the description continues, the country was a series of hills and hillocks without any principal city, and it reached to the south-west of barbarians (of China), hence the inhabitants were akin to the Mou and Lao. The pilgrim heard from the people (of Kamrup) that the south-west borders of Szechuan were distant about two months’ journey but the mountains and the rivers were hard to pass, there were pestilential vapours and poisonous snakes and herbs. In the south-east of the country were wild elephants which ravaged in herds, and so there was a good supply of elephants for war purposes”.²

It is apparent that in spite of terrain and climatic hinderances Assam had contacts with Szechuan and the Assamese knew the layout of NEFA fairly well. Probably the route to China passed through Rima and Tachienlu and terminated in Szechuan.

¹ *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* 1836.

² *Oriental Translation Fund, New Series, Vol XV, On Yuan Chawang Vol II* by Thomas Waters.....p. 185.

CHAPTER IV

THE DHOLA SECTOR

“To launch an offensive with the inadequate means at present at our disposal is not, in my opinion, a justifiable operation of war.....”¹.

AUCHINLECK

April 26, 1914 was a fateful day for NEFA. On that date the representatives of three nations—the British, the Tibetans and the Chinese—met at Simla. They fixed the Indo-Tibetan boundary in the east known as the McMahon Line.

According to this Convention Tibet was to be divided into Outer and Inner Tibet. Since the Outer-Inner Tibetan boundary, as agreed upon between India and Tibet at Simla, did not satisfy the Chinese, the plenipotentiary of China was instructed not to sign the document; the Chinese plenipotentiary withdrew himself from the proceedings and did not sign the final draft of the Simla Convention on 3rd July, 1914. He was, however, present when the British and the Tibetan plenipotentiaries concluded the Convention as applicable between India and Tibet. China did not ratify the Convention. Thereby she forfeited the rights accruing to her under it.

Recently Alstair Lamb, the well-known British historian, raised an issue over the Simla Convention in his book—*The China-India Border*. He maintains that the Convention could only be binding on the parties if it was “signed and, probably, ratified”. Nirmal Sinha, Director of the Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, has suitably answered the objection in his latest book—*Tibet* (Calcutta, May, 1967)—page 14. “So there is agreement between Britain, Tibet and China re : the fact of signing the Simla Convention. Lamb’s contention based on ‘the initialed text’ loses all force in the face of the Chinese affirmation.”

¹ *The Desert General* by Correlli Barnett (London 1960).....p. 74.

CHAPTER V

THE SILVER LINING

"A well recognised principle of defence strategy is so to organise the defences as to admit of their easy conversion into bases of offensive operation. This involves the limiting of the axis of defence and organising it in depth, for every extension would lead to weakness. The principle appears to have been generally overlooked in planning for defence in Burma."¹

BISHESHWAR PRASAD

"What should we do to fight the Chinese?"

This question was put to me by a Congress MP, who later on became a Deputy Minister, at Lansdowne on 24th October 1962, a day after the evacuation of Tawang. I had gone to Lansdowne to attend the first and only Regimental Reunion in the post-independence period.

"Change the leadership of your party."

"Cannot be done", was the prompt reply.

"Then you cannot fight the Chinese", I replied.

"The Chinese really did not want to fight. There was some misunderstanding about a small portion of the McMahon Line as applicable to the Thagla ridge."

"You will see that they will advance south. There is no misunderstanding. Their aim is to dominate the Himalayan passes. NEFA they have already claimed as their own territory."

"Tell me some other way to stop the Chinese invasion."

"Will you do it?"

"It depends."

"Declare that India will liberate Tibet."

"How will it help in the present fighting?"

"There will be a wave of enthusiasm over the country. Secondly we will be free to snatch the initiative from the Chinese by opening a second front on a ground of our own choice; we will be able to enter Tibet according to our tactical convenience."

Up to that time President Rajendra Prasad had not made any announcement regarding Tibet. I felt that our military operations

1. *Retreat From Burma* Edited by Bisheshwar Prasad p.xxviii.

CHAPTER VI

A CONFLICT OF DECISIONS

“In my experience it is not so much asking men to fight or work with inadequate or obsolete equipment that lowers morale but the belief that those responsible are accepting such a state of affairs. If men realise that every one above them and behind them is flat out to get the things required for them, they will do wonders, as my men did, with the meagre resources they have instead of sitting down moaning for better.”¹

SLIM.

The Se La pass is the gateway to the Tawang-Jang sector. After the withdrawal of the 4th Garhwal Rifles and the 1st Sikhs from the Tawang area the Se La pass was the last place in the Nuranang valley where the 62nd Brigade could make a bold stand against the Chinese. Obviously from a defence point of view the area from ‘Twin Lakes’ to the Kya La is important. The Se La automatically becomes the Vital Ground of the formation responsible for the defence of the sector.

Enemy Information :—The Chinese regiment which crossed the Mukto Bridge climbed the Se La ridge. It proceeded to Dirang valley to cut the lines of communication of the 4th Division at various places. A second column comprising a battalion followed the Garhwalis and a third also comprising a battalion crossed the Se La ridge via the Kya La pass. The third column was followed by another battalion which attacked the Se La pass. Besides these four columns another force comprising two battalions appeared in the Poshing La area. The terrain on the right of the Se La area was rougher and more mountainous than that on the left. Therefore, the Chinese had greater difficulty in getting supplies on the right than on the left. Consequently the number of Chinese troops advancing from the left towards the Se La ridge was more than that from the right.

1. *Defeat into Victory* p. 168.

CHAPTER VII

ROUT OR FIGHT

“True an army without morale is nothing but a collection of unhappy, frightened men, but a nation without morale is just a collection of quarrelling, discontented sects and parties without unity and no real aim”.¹

SLIM

The Indian defences were being rolled up from north to south in Kameng. The Dhola sector had ceased to exist. The Tawang sector also ceased to exist on the evening of 17th November. The storm passed through the Se La pass and now threatened the Dirang sector.

The Dirang Sector:—This area is the home of the Monpas. The Daflas, the Akas and the Mijis etcetera are not found here. It is triangular in shape bounded by the Se La, the Manda La and the Lagam ridges. The Se La separates the Tawang sector from the Dirang sector.

The Manda La ridge is a bifurcation of the Se La ridge. Its average height is 9,000 feet. It bifurcates from the Se La ridge in the vicinity of the Orka La and forms the watershed between the basins of the Dirang Chu and the Rupa Chu. It ends at the confluence of these two rivers. Its important passes are the Samya La, the Manda La and the Rib La (Bomdi La II in the sketch No. 4B). Bomdi La, the headquarters of the Kameng Frontier Division, is about 1,000 feet below the Rib La.

The Lagam ridge is a spur of the Se La ridge and bifurcates from it in the vicinity of the Tse La pass. It is breached by the Sangti Chu. It contains the Poshing La (11,950 feet) pass. From here, with the exception of the Kyala (12,500 feet), it loses height till it comes down to 5,000 feet near Thembang from where it runs in an easterly direction. It disappears at the junction of the Bhreli

1. *Courage and Other Broadcasts* —Field Marshal Sir William Slim.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FORLORN HOPE

“The Indian people, fiercely proud of their nationhood, have been deeply humiliated and shaken by the hated Chinese.”¹

TIME

Last from the Tawang side but first from the south is the Bomdi La sector. Its northern limit is the Manda La ridge and the southern the Piri range which terminates at the NEFA-Assam boundary. Its eastern limit is the Bhreli river and the western the Bhutan boundary.

In the entire NEFA the Bomdi La area is peculiar, In every other division of NEFA the heights of outer hills do not exceed 5,000 feet but here the altitude of the Piri range at places touches five figures. In fact the Piri ridge is a bifurcation of the Se La offshoot and separates from it near the Orka La pass. It runs parallel to the Manda La ridge in an arc. Its bulge is towards the plains of Assam extending a few miles to the south of Shergaon. It runs up to the great bend of the Bhreli river.

Besides the Piri range there are many of its branches, each separating a pair of streams rising from the Piri range itself. These spurs have given a south-easterly direction to these streams and rivulets. In the rainy season these streams make it difficult to journey from the south to the north or vice versa.

The Piri range is usually crossed at the Pankhim La (9,000 feet). The former is the entrance of Shergaon and the latter for Rupa. The heights of the Pankhim La and the Piri La are above 9,000 feet, but there is a third opening in the south of the Jamiri village which is less than 5,000 feet high. During the 1962 operations some groups of Indian stragglers avoided the Shergaon route.

1. Time.....*The Weekly News Magazine of 30 November 1962.*

CHAPTER IX

THE STORM IN THE NORTH-EAST

“Many countries are devoted to peace. But I imagine that no country is more passionately devoted to peace and peaceful methods than India. To us war is hateful”¹.

JWAHAR LAL

In the Chinese invasion of 1962 Walong, a collection of small villages, in the north-east corner of India became famous. It attained the same importance as Tawang and like the Tawang sector the Walong sector also attracted the attention of the reading public.

The Walong Sector :—In the north-east corner of India is situated the Diphu La (16,850 feet).

“The international frontier between Burma and Tibet is considerably north of the Diphu La, and a little above the junction of the Dichu with the Lohit”².

“...the trijunction of India, Burma and China is five miles north of the Diphu L’ka Pass, and not at the Diphu L’ka Pass itself. The co-ordinates of the trijunction are approximately longitude 97°23’ east and latitude 28°13’ north”³.

The Chinese claim that the Diphu La is the trijunction itself. It makes a difference in the territorial extent claimed by India and China. If the Chinese claim is accepted the crest of the spur (Ndap range) branching from the Diphu La becomes a disputed feature. The spur separates the waters of the Di Chu and the Sat Ti Chu. The Chinese aim has always been to claim the crest of the last highest range from the Tibetan side as the Indo-Tibetan boundary and by including the Diphu La in Greater China the Ndap range provides the opportunity for raising a controversy where none exists. The Ndap range extends to Walong. In that case this village becomes Chinese territory and India loses more

-
1. *White Paper No. VIII* Govt. of India (Delhi 1963).....P. 50.
 2. *Salween* by Ronald Kaulback (Hadder and Stouton, London).....P. 46
 3. *White Paper No. V* Govt. of IndiaP. 20.

CHAPTER XI

THE SOLILOQUY

“War is produced by, and receives its form from the ideas, feelings and relations obtaining at the moment it breaks out”¹.

CLAUSEWITZ

China succeeded in making Longju, Khinzemane and the Diphu La a subject of discussion with India, before 1957. Later on her troops intruded into India several times. India resisted the intrusions. China used force against India. This was a blunder on her part. The Chinese invasion of 1962 was an eye-opener to the nations of the world. Even Russia became suspicious.

Circumstances forced India to drift apart from her neighbours i. e. the Tibetans making it obligatory on their part to develop contacts with the Han. The Indian hillmen followed the Tibetans. It is a historical fact that China became the pilgrim centre of Buddhists of the Himalayan region. India did not learn anything from history and she failed to bridge the gulf which had been created during the Mohammedan period between her and the Tibetans. China exploited the situation—she planned to invade the Indian Himalayan border areas. India remained inactive. When the Chinese invasion of 1962 came Indian troops suffered defeat after defeat. For political reasons Indian leaders' attention was attracted towards Kameng. There a major portion of war effort was concentrated. Consequently the Kameng collapse attained notoriety in proportion to the effort.

The Kameng reverse was the consequence of the incompetence of the Indian leaders who invited the untimely Chinese attack and kept the nation unprepared (since 1947) under the false sense of security of Panchsheel. The cadre of military officers on whom rests the efficiency of the army could not escape its dulling effect. Under the circumstances the Indian Army's reverses were a foregone conclusion. There are two aspects of the Kameng campaign, the long term and the short term. The former is connected with the short-

1. *Principles of War* by Marshal Foch, Translated by Hilaire Belloc (London 1918).....P. 22.

INDEX

- Abors 17, 18, 247, 248
 Ahimsa 3, 256
 Ahoms 23, 24
 Aim (Chinese) 30, 45, 60, 72, 74-76, 163, 173, 189, 190, 197
 Aim (Indian) 55-57, 78, 90, 129, 137, 138, 162
 Akas 18, 145, 146, 171
 Arabala 174, 176
 Apa Tanis 18, 24, 30
 Appreciation 55, 61, 72, 73, 84, 130, 203-204
 Arakan 5, 86, 166
 Ashi Hill 202, 208, 209, 213-215, 219, 226, 228, 232
 Ashoka 23
 Asia 28, 243
 Asiatic Research 22
- Bailey FM 24, 33, 90, 193
 Bakhtyar Khilji 23
 Bara Hoti 44
 Barnet Correll 27
 Battle of
 Admin Box 166, 167
 Ashi Hill 209
 Bomdi La 182-187
 Green Pimple 216, 222
 High Plateau 232-234
 IB Ridge 205-207
 Lachhman picket 227
 Ladders 228-232
 Longju 252
 Maha Plateau 223-228
 McMahon Ridge 205-207
 Mithune 228
 Namka Chu 77
 Patrol Base 225-227
 Thembang 179-182
 Tongpeng La 103-105
 Trijunction 223-225
 Tsangdhar 82
 Tsangle 80
 Tseng-jong 62, 65, 68, 79, 80
 West Ridge 225
 Yellow Pimple 207
 Birth of Buddhism 22-23
 Bisheshwar Prasad 89
 Border
 Indo-Tibetan 43, 72, 164, 205
 NEFA-Assam 159, 169
 Roads 31, 92, 105, 106, 109, 246
- Boundary
 Indo-Burmese 24, 199
 Indo-Pak 30, 52, 53
 Indo-Tibetan 27-29, 31-33, 35-36, 43, 49, 53, 59, 163, 197, 199, 202, 203, 244, 249, 250, 254
 Outer-Inner Tibetan 27, 28, 190
 Treaty 24
 trijunction 33, 52, 71, 190, 197, 202, 203, 239
 Bridge 1 134, 152, 154, 159, 160, 161
 Bridge 2 131, 134, 137, 152, 161
 Bridge 3 92, 108, 109, 115, 119, 137
 Bridge 4 42, 91, 93, 94, 105, 106, 114, 118, 149
 Brigadier
 Gurbux Singh 176, 178, 186, 189, 195
 Hartley 210, 240
 Hoshiar Singh 127, 129, 130, 132-134, 138, 139, 142-144, 162
 John Dalvi 47, 55, 56, 82, 84
 Rolley 210, 211, 217, 238, 240, 241
 Buggering of troops 192
- Captain
 Amarjeet Singh 177, 179
 Chopra 225, 237
 Cooper 24, 199
 Kumar 226
 Mathur 216
 Rawat 157-159, 167
 Chaku 41, 42, 170, 172, 187-189, 195
 Chiang Kai-shek 29
 Chinese VIP 44, 79
 Chou En-lai 5, 253
 Chuna 44, 45, 90, 93, 98, 127
 Clausewitz 255
 Climate 20, 37, 92, 147, 170-171, 245, 251
 Comments 84-88, 122-123, 139, 163-168, 209, 220-222, 239-243
 Congress 4, 89
 Cuban affairs 64
- Daffas 17, 18, 24, 145, 146, 251
 Dalai Lama 25, 26, 30, 39, 40, 149, 252
 Dongri 148, 177, 180
 Dungma Ba 155
- Elwyn Varrier 15
 Eagle's Nest 172
- Fall of
 Bomdi La 15, 173, 183, 185, 187

- Dhola 167, 192
 Kibithoo 209, 220, 240, 248
 Poshing La 179
 Se La 129
 Tawang 89, 90, 108, 139, 191
 Thembang 131, 155, 181
 Tsangle 73
 Tseng-jong 68, 70, 71, 98
 Fauna and Flora 37-39, 92, 147, 170, 171, 199, 243
 Field Marshal Slim 124, 141, 145, 166, 167
 Flat ground 92, 105, 106, 108, 109
 Foothill 16, 32, 152, 170, 172, 182, 185, 188, 189, 195
 Frontier Indo-Tibetan 245
 Frontier Sino-Burmese 203
- Gandhi M 3
 General
 Cariappa 6, 12
 Rommel 68, 109
 Thapar 133, 139, 166, 167
 Thimayya 4, 5
 Geological aspect 22, 92, 198-200
 Goa 51, 67
 Guerrilla actions 68, 119
- Hart Liddel 68
 Havildar
 Gurnam Singh 233, 234
 Pushkar Singh 224
 Sucha Singh 101, 102
 Hayuliang 200, 204, 205, 208, 211, 225, 228, 231, 236, 237-240, 241, 243, 249
 Himalayan Range 24, 33, 37, 42, 72, 91, 94, 149, 198, 244, 245, 247, 250, 251
 Hot Springs 198, 200-202, 205, 207
 Huin Tsiang 20-22
- India-China political relations 32, 49
- JASB 20
 Jang 25, 42, 90, 92, 99, 100, 102, 104-106, 108-110, 116, 121, 130, 149
 Jorhat 20, 209, 211, 240
- Kalaktang 139, 160, 162, 170, 190
 Kalika Puran 21
 Kangto massive 90-92, 170
 Kashmir operations 5, 166
 Kaulback Ronald 24, 197
 Khampas 19, 247, 249
 Khinzemane 36, 39-43, 45, 62, 70, 73, 74, 76-80, 100, 255
 Kya La CG 91, 129, 148, 149
- Lagya'a Gompa 160-162
 Lake Chaima 21
- Lake Mansarovar 21
 Lake Sechiang 36, 77
 Lamb Alstair 27
 Lance Naik Yeshwant 117, 118
 Land routes 16, 39-41, 92-95, 147-148, 171-173, 200-201
 Landa village 94, 98, 110, 111
 Landmarks 201-202, 221
 Level ground 126, 152
 Licutenant
 Dagar 135, 136, 139
 Goswami 112, 113, 118
 Kaushik 102, 105, 138, 139
 Palta 232, 233, 242
 Roy 78, 80
 Tandon 100, 118
 Vikram Singh 208, 209, 225
 Licutenant-Colonel
 Ahluwalia 82
 Ajmer Singh 180, 181
 Avasthi 139, 153, 154, 159-163, 167
 Bhattacharjea 108, 113-115, 117, 122, 123, 130, 137
 Gurdial Singh 185-187, 195
 Kale 187
 Madiah 216, 219, 222, 224, 225, 236
 Mehta 138, 139
 Ratan Singh 78-80
 Rikh 81
 Taylor 6, 249, 250
 Licutenant-General
 Harbux Singh 71, 100, 109, 208, 210, 234
 Kaul 6, 7, 14, 50, 52-54, 56, 57, 68, 69, 71, 109, 133, 139, 140, 166, 208, 211.
 Sen 5, 53, 55, 100, 133, 139, 140, 165-167
 Thorat 5, 6, 7, 13
 Umrao Singh 51-53, 55, 65
 Log bridge 36, 51, 62
 Lok Sabha 31, 253
 Longju 23, 31, 239, 250, 251-253, 255
 Luguthang 42, 90, 94, 128, 148
 Lumpu 40, 41, 45-49, 52, 54, 62-64, 71, 75, 76, 82, 85, 87, 88, 100, 148
 Lung village 251, 254
- Machuka 244, 246-251
 Mago 90, 93, 94, 127, 173
 Major
 Chand 229-231, 238
 Chaudhry 60, 61
 D'Souza 157, 158, 167
 Gurdial Singh 81
 Gurdip Singh 138, 139
 Kukreti 153, 154, 159, 161, 162
 Nair 153-155, 160, 163, 165
 Naygam 206-207
 Nijjar 82

- Rai 106, 107, 110, 111, 113-117, 119-123, 139, 148
 Sumvatsar 226
 Major-General
 Elliot 167
 Niranjan Prasad 51, 150
 Pathania AS 131, 133, 134, 150, 156, 166, 176, 177
 Maltese Cross 16
 Manikaran 21, 200, 239
 Mao Tse-tung 5, 30
 Marshal Foch 255
 Martin Montgomery 21, 22
 McMahon Line 25, 27-29, 31, 32, 42, 45, 48, 49, 51, 66, 89, 94, 97, 101, 198, 200, 204, 244, 250, 253
 Merbia 111, 113, 121, 129
 Migyitung 24, 244, 250, 253
 Ministry of Defence 30
 Ministry of External Affairs 43, 56
 Mishmis 17, 18, 19, 24, 31, 198, 200, 201
 Missamari 32, 152, 176-178
 Moupas 18, 37-39, 50, 100, 119, 145, 146, 149, 171, 177, 181, 247
 Mt. Tsari 23, 24, 244, 246, 250, 251
 Mukto Bridge 83, 95, 110, 111, 113, 114, 117, 124, 128, 130, 131, 149, 174
 NATO power 158
 Naga ebullience 30, 52
 Nagas 17, 31, 239
 Naib Subedar
 Ao 208
 Bhairab Singh 136, 236
 Budh Singh 136
 Gurnam Singh 217, 218
 Jatan Singh 137, 138
 Udai Singh 114, 117, 118
 Naik Bahadur Singh 207
 Naik Kuldip Singh 237
 Ndap range 197, 199
 Nehru Jawahar Lal 31, 41, 45, 50, 53, 69, 150, 197, 253, 256
 Nepali-Bhotia 113-114
 Nuranang 26, 92, 95, 107, 119, 126, 131, 133
 Occupation of
 Karpo La 58, 61
 Tawang 89
 Thagla ridge 45
 Trijunction 216-217
 Tsangle 52, 58
 Tseng-jong 55-62, 64, 65
 Walong 202
 Onkar Operation 31-33, 55, 202, 248
 Open ground 92, 109, 115, 119, 120, 130
 Paitsai 35, 57, 58, 62, 66, 73, 150
 Pak infiltrators 51, 211, 243
 Pakistan 30, 32, 150
 Panchsheel 45, 255
 Parasram 21, 22
 Pass
 Bum La 33, 42, 44, 45, 72, 74, 75, 91, 94, 95, 97, 101, 149, 190, 191
 Chang La 145, 148, 174, 176, 177, 191
 Chera La 93
 Diphu La 31, 197, 198, 200, 203, 205, 255
 Dum Dum La 33, 57, 62
 Hatung La 35, 36, 41, 44, 46, 54, 71, 74-76, 81, 82
 Kya La 91, 93, 94, 116, 124, 127, 130, 131, 141, 148, 173
 Manda La 30, 131, 145, 147, 154, 161
 Orka La 16, 91, 139, 145, 152, 153, 161, 169, 170
 Pankhim La 169-171
 Pen La 90, 92, 93, 127
 Piri La 169, 170, 172
 Poshing La 124, 145, 146, 148, 149, 152, 174, 177-179, 191, 193
 Sc La 91-93, 95, 100, 105-107, 119-121, 124, 126, 127, 132-137, 139, 142, 145, 147-140, 152, 174, 192-194
 Thag La 33, 41, 42, 46, 57, 62, 190, 191
 Tse La 91, 132-134, 139, 145-148, 177, 179, 193
 Tulung La 90, 92, 93, 127, 148, 170, 190, 191, 244
 Tunga La 244, 246
 Turkya La 93, 128
 Yumtso La 33, 36, 41, 46, 62, 79
 Patkoi Range 24, 198
 Peking 76, 77
 Phudong 139, 161, 162, 170-172, 174, 178, 182, 186, 192
 President of India 14, 89
 Puranic knowledge 21-22
 Queen Victoria 234
 Raiders' Ridge 94, 101, 103
 Rima 20, 28, 31, 190, 200, 201, 204, 205, 231
 Rivers
 Bhreli 91, 145, 146, 169-171
 Brahmaputra 16, 18, 21, 22, 28, 40, 53, 103, 244, 245, 247
 Di Chu 31, 197, 199, 202
 Dirang Chu 91, 145-147, 158, 165, 181
 Goro Chu 90, 91, 93, 128, 229

- Lohit 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 25, 197-202,
 204, 208, 211, 222, 228, 231
 Namka Chu 35, 36, 45-55, 57, 58,
 60, 61, 66, 71, 73, 74, 77, 84
 Nyamjang Chu 17, 33, 35, 36, 39,
 40, 58, 78, 90
 Rupa Chu 138, 145, 146, 170, 173,
 184, 186, 187
 Sangti Chu 145, 146
 Sat Ti Chu 197-199
 Seti Chu 90
 Subansiri 23, 250, 251, 254
 Syom 245
 Tashiyangti 33, 36, 41
 Tawang Chu 35, 37, 40, 42, 83, 90,
 91, 93, 94, 106-112, 118, 122, 129,
 140, 149
 The Chu 198, 199, 205
 Yepak 236
 Rupa Defile 173, 174, 184, 185, 188

 Senge Dzong 25, 31, 94, 122, 126, 127,
 134, 136, 147, 152, 176
 Simla Convention 27-30, 43, 47
 Stand to 80, 107, 130
 Subedar
 Aswal 115, 119-121
 Banta Singh 135
 Bishen Singh 119
 Ganga Singh 223, 236, 237
 Govind Singh 220
 Jogindra Singh 1101-103
 Pratap Singh 110
 Survey parties 24, 25, 43, 202
 Szechuan 20, 200

 Tagins 19, 23, 24, 30, 246, 252
 Tashigong 33, 40, 41
 Tezu 15, 16, 22, 201, 218, 236-238
 Thembang 145-148, 155, 172-174, 177,
 179-182, 184, 186, 192, 193
 Tiger mouth 214, 226

Time magazine 150, 169
 Trijunction 201, 212, 216-220, 222, 223,
 225, 236, 243
 Tsetang 40, 64, 72, 103
 Twin Lakes 94, 95, 124, 126, 291, 130,
 132, 135
 Twin Peaks 94, 95, 97, 98, 101-103,
 111, 129, 131, 133

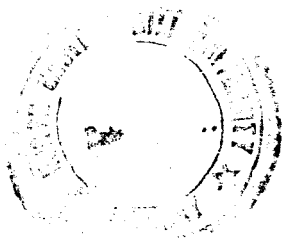
 UAR 168
 Unit Darbar 54
 Uri 17

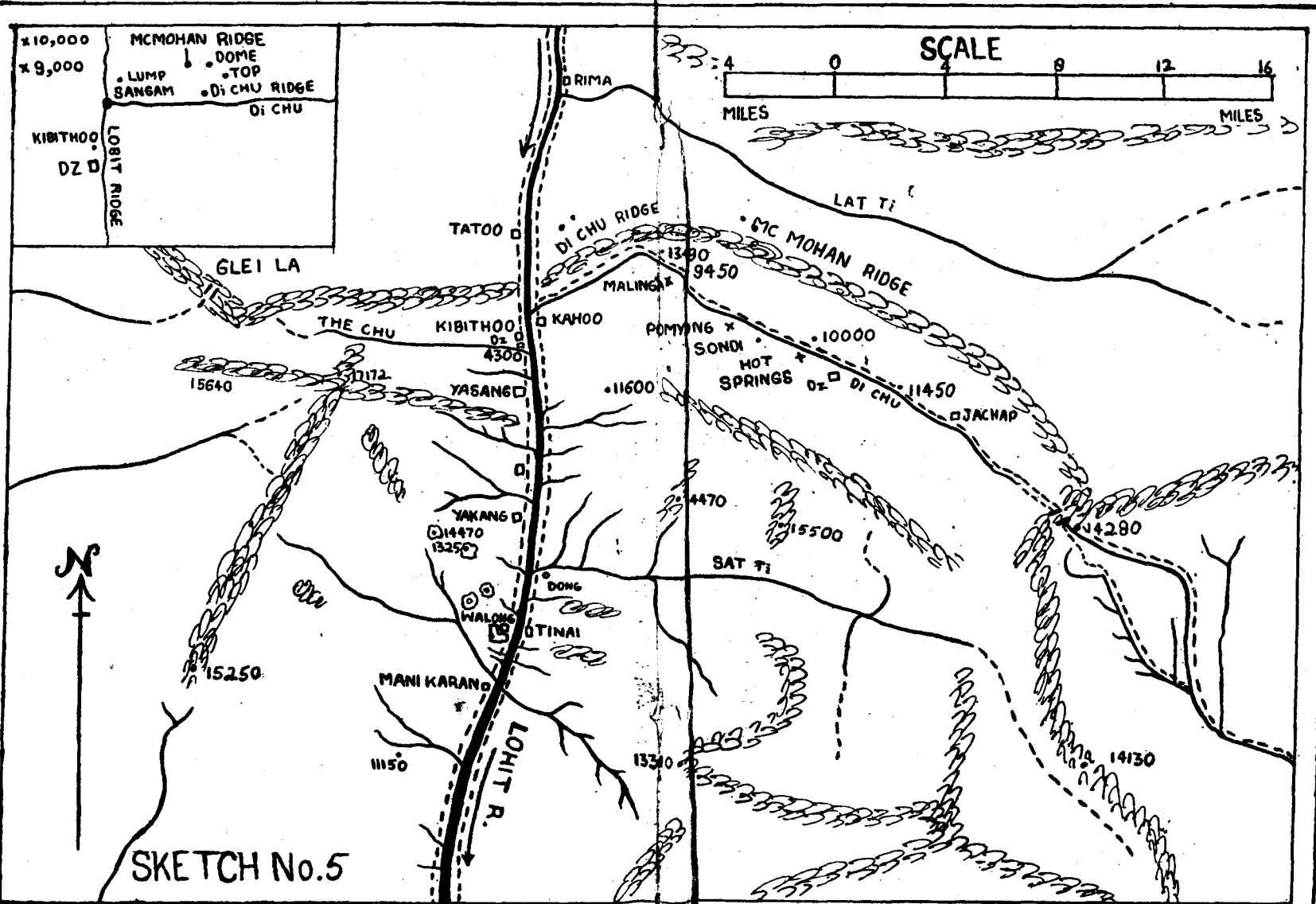
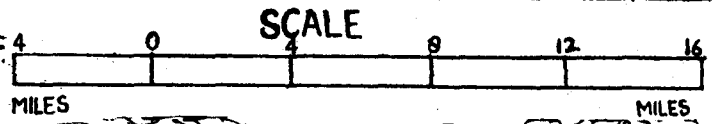
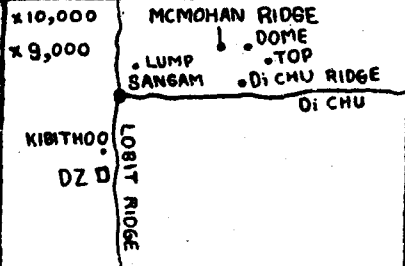
 Valley
 Brahmaputra 23, 24, 70, 159, 161,
 246-248
 Di Chu 200, 203, 205, 207
 Dirang 113, 139, 147, 150, 156-160,
 172-174, 191
 Goro Chu 95, 148
 Lohit 23, 24, 31, 203
 Namka Chu 91-93, 108, 121, 123, 124,
 126, 132, 150
 Nyamjang Chu 16, 37, 44, 83
 Rupa Chu 139, 160, 171, 172, 188, 194
 Sangti Chu 148
 Subansiri 24, 30, 251
 Syom 245, 246, 248
 Tawang Chu 90, 95, 148
 Yepak 236
 Vital Ground 43, 45, 46, 59, 90, 95, 124,
 239

 Ward Kingdom 24, 90, 146, 172, 193
 Waters Thomas 24, 90, 146, 172, 193
 Western Desert 68
 World War II 86, 166, 186, 210

 Yiyu 245, 246, 248

 Zirkhim 41, 54, 82





SKETCH No.5