Twitter Thread by Shalini Singh Sengar



Shalini Singh Sengar
@Maverickmusafir

Post Independence, Army wanted to select the most experienced Indian commander as Army chief. But Nehru without consulting anyone appointed Gen Rob Lockhart, a senior British Army officer as the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Indian Army.



Most people were shocked to know that Nehru selected a British Man after fighting for independence for over 200 years! Major Gen A A 'Jick' Rudra of the Indian Army was completely upset with the decision.



One day Lockhart met Nehru with a strategic plan and proposed many government directive defence policies for the country. He placed it on the table and explained the point to PM Nehru. After a while Lockhart walked out of the room and met AA Jick Rudra,+

Lockhart looked shell shocked and stunned. When asked what happened he said “The PM took one look at my paper and blew his top. Rubbish! Total rubbish! We don’t need a defence plan. Our policy is ahimsa (non-violence). We foresee no military threats. Scrap the army!”

One year after the incident the Kashmir crisis had increased and Gen Lockhart used to exchange ideas with the Gen Douglas Gracey who was commander in chief of Pakistan Army.There were many infiltrations along the border which Lockhart knew and took no action. But Lt Gen Cariappa+

had infact save the Indian army and Kashmir with his bold decisions. This information was later raised in the government with many people questioning the integrity of Gen Lockhart. Nehru finding no excuses had to question the chief, he asked Lockhart whether he knew about the+

crisis in Kashmir and what measures were taken to which Lockhart replied “Aghast, Mr Prime Minister if you have to ask me that question, I have no business being the commander-in-chief of your forces. I know that there is a boat leaving Bombay in a few days, carrying British+

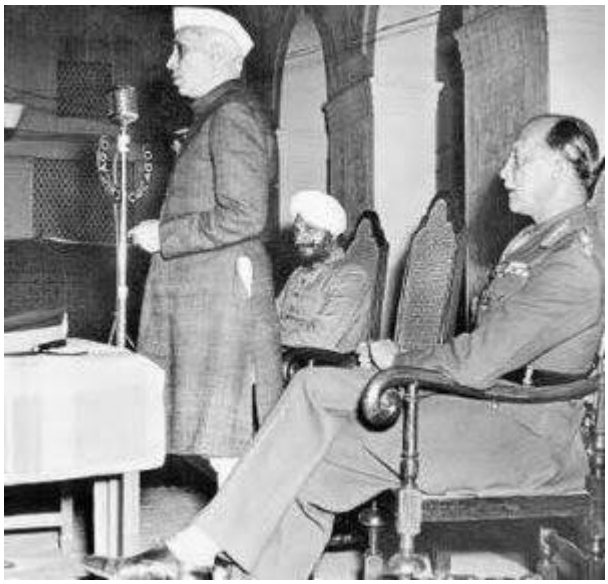


officers and their families to England. I shall be on leaving India soon.”

The next day emergency meeting was called to select the new Army Chief. Prime Minister Nehru chaired the meeting which was attended by the then Defence Minister Baldev Singh (YES MAN of Nehru),+

Gen Nathu Singh Rathore, Gen Cariappa and few defence experts. Every one knew that Gen Cariappa was the most deserving and wanted him to lead the army.

In the meeting Nehru started, “We should appoint a new Army Chief, as Gen Lockhart had resigned from the post. I consider that+



it is better to appoint a British Man as the Army Chief since we do not have a capable and experienced Army man in our Country.”

Everybody in the meeting was silent. The army officers felt very humiliated and insulted by Nehru’s words. Def. Minister

Baldev Singh immediately+

endorsed Nehru suggestion saying “Yes we do not have any capable Army man!”

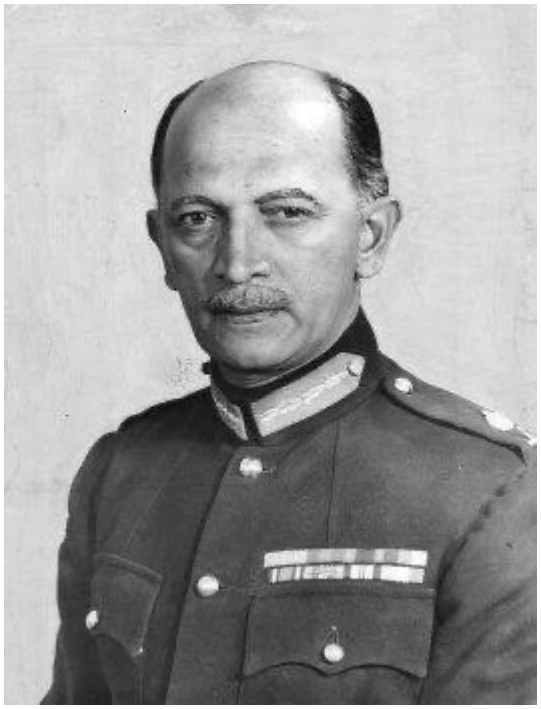
But there was one man who stood and said “Sir, I have a point….You see sir, we don’t have a man with enough experience to lead a nation too, so shouldn’t we appoint someone from Britain as the first PM+

of India?” It was none other than Gen Nathu Singh. Suddenly there was pin drop silence in the room.

Annoyed Nehru interrupted and said “Are you saying that you are ready to be the first C-in-C of the Indian Army?”



Even though the officer got a golden opportunity he replied, “Sir, why me?? we have a very capable army officer, my senior Gen. Cariappa, who is the most deserving among us, do we need a better person than Gen Cariappa to guard our Country?, How could you say that our country+



do not have capable leaders?”

The entire room stood and applauded the suggestion made by Lt Gen Nathu Singh Rathore. Gen Cariappa was made the first Indian C-in-C of the Indian Army in 1949.



Sitting L to R: Maj Gen Nathu Singh, Lt Gen KM Cariappa OBE, Lt Col Kamta Prasad MC

