

SUPREME COMMANDER'S SECRETARIAT

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

Today (Monday 1 December) Field Marshal Sir Claude John Eyre Auchinleck, G.C.B., G.C.I.E., C.S.I., D.S.O., O.B.E., leaves India after nearly 45 years service, on relinquishing his appointment of Supreme Commander.

Sir Claude was born in 1884; and comes from that small district in EIRE which seems to have established almost a monopoly in the production of Field Marshals of the British Empire. His family were traditionally soldiers, his father having served in the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

Educated at Wellington and Sandhurst Sir Claude entered the Indian Army in 1903, and was posted to the 62nd Punjabis, a regiment that had lately been transferred from the Madras Army, and which is now the 1st Bn of the 1st Punjab Regiment.

During the War of 1914-18 he served with distinction in Egypt and Mesopotamia, gaining the Distinguished Service Order and the Order of the British Empire.

Between the wars, he occupied a number of command and staff appointments, and was one of the first Indian Army officers to attend the Imperial Defence College in London. Whilst commanding the Peshawar Brigade in the early thirties, he carried out two highly successful operations against troublesome tribesmen on the Northern frontiers, for which duty he was made a Companion of the Bath.

The beginning of the 1939-45 War saw him commanding the Meerut District, having previously held the appointment of Deputy Chief of the General Staff at Army Headquarters. During this war he has held many great commands, in Norway, in England after Dunkirk, in the Middle East and in India, where he was twice the Commander in Chief. The services he gave during the last war are too recent and too well-known to dwell upon. His services since the war, which although equally important to India and Pakistan are less well known, deserve however some comment. As C in C in India, he laboured unceasingly to produce a National Army worthy of the then undivided country; and also to foster the smaller and less well established RIN and RIAF. Then, with his plans approaching fruition he was faced with the partition of the Armed Forces. As Chairman of the Armed Forces Reconstitution Committee and as a member of the Joint Defence Council, he has been largely instrumental during the last 5 months, in the carrying out of this delicate and difficult task. A task, it may be added, that has never before been attempted in the history of the World.

A Field Marshal, technically, never retires; but it is understood that Sir Claude does not anticipate further active service and consequently looks forward to a well earned rest and opportunity to pursue untrammelled his favourite occupation