

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF GENERAL K.M. CARIAPPA,
FIRST INDIAN COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

New Delhi, August 18, 1952.

General K.M. Cariappa is the senior most Indian Officer of the Indian Army.

Born on January 28, 1900, in Coorg in South India, he received his education in the Central High School at Mercara and Presidency College, Madras. At College he played hockey, cricket and tennis.

Among the first batch of Indian cadets to be commissioned from Daly College, Indore, in December 1919, he was in MESOPATAMIA (Now IRAQ) from 1920 to 1922 as Adjutant of the 2/125th Napier Rifles and in Waziristan with the 1/17th Dogras and the 1/7 Rajputs from 1922 to 1925, went round the world visiting China, Japan, U.S.A., Canada, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, with the object of seeing as much as possible of the officers of these countries, their training, living conditions etc. He was the first Indian Officer to enter the Staff College, Quetta, in 1933.

In 1935, he visited the Singapore Naval and Air Bases after which he spent a period touring the U.P. villages dealing with the welfare of ex-Servicemen. He was then appointed Staff Captain Deccan district in 1936. In October 1938, he was appointed Deputy Assistant Quarter-master General, Deccan District, the first Indian Officer to hold a Grade II appointment. In 1939 he was Brigade Major, Khojak Brigade, later known as 20th Indian Infantry Brigade.

Serving with the 10th Indian Division, he saw service in Iraq, Syria and Iran from April 1941 to March 1942. While in Iraq he served under Major General Slim - later General Sir William Army Commander and now Field Marshal Sir William Slim, 14th/Chief of Imperial General Staff, U.K. He visited North Africa on duty for a period of three weeks only in 1942 after which he returned to India.

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As Lieut Colonel, he raised in April 1942, and commanded till March 1943, a machine-gun battalion of the 7th Rajput Regiment, thus becoming the first Indian to command a battalion.

In March 1943, he was appointed Assistant Quartermaster General (operations), Eastern Army, and in July he went to the Arakan as Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, 26th Indian Division.

In November 1944, he was appointed Member of the Army Reorganisation Committee, in the rank of a Brig. He toured the United States and Canada, visiting the American Military Academy at West Point in 1945. He was the first Indian of this rank to visit the United States and Canada.

On the conclusion of the Committee's work, he took over command of the Bannu Frontier Brigade Group from January 1946. In December 1946 he went to England as one of the first two Indians in the army at the Imperial Defence College. He was called back from the U.K. to serve as a Member on the Army Sub-Committee of the Armed Forces Reconstitution Committee in June 1947. In July 1947, he was promoted to the rank of Major General. For a brief period he was Chief of the General Staff.

In December 1947 came his appointment as GOC-in-Chief, Eastern Command, in the rank of a Lt. General. General Cariappa succeeded Lieut General Sir Francis Tuker, thus becoming the first Indian Officer to become an Army Commandar.

Early in 1948, he relinquished his post as GOC-in-Chief Eastern Command, and succeeded Lieut General Russel as GOC-in-Chief D.E.P. Command, which has since been designated Western Command. He assumed the appointment of Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army with effect from 15 Jan 49 in the rank of a full General.

Associated with the Indian Army for over thirty years i.e. since December 1919 General Cariappa has had wide experience of staff work and command. He has travelled widely. His hobby is stamp collecting.