

The end of British rule in India also spelled the end of the existing Indian Army and its administration. As soon the date of Independence was announced, British troops were withdrawn to their barracks.

In the weeks leading up to independence, responsibility for maintaining law and order was handed over to the Indian Army. Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck oversaw the division of this force.

When Mountbatten asked Auchinleck how long it would take to split the army, considering diversity in Indian Army, he replied it might take two, three or possibly five years. His staff was given just four weeks.

The military force to manage partition and prevent violence was therefore compromised. For example, in the first week of August, only 7,500 men were sent to the border area of the East-West division of Punjab, where 14 million people lived.

Around 260,000 men, mainly Hindus and Sikhs, went to India. And 140,000 men, mainly Muslims, went to Pakistan. The Brigade of Gurkhas, recruited in Nepal, was split between India and Britain.

Individual units were split up. The 19th Lancers in Pakistan exchanged their Jat and Sikh troops for Muslims from Skinners Horse in India.

Many British officers stayed on to assist in the transition, including General Robert Lockhart, who became India's first Chief of Army Staff, and General Frank Messervy, who became Pakistan's first Chief of Army Staff.

The last unit to leave India was the 1st Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry (Prince Alberts), which embarked at Bombay on 28 February 1948.

Although these units were now available for other duties, Britain's global military capability was actually reduced, as it no longer had the Indian Army at its disposal.

Many British officers were sad to leave India and their Indian soldiers.

Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Gray in 1990 said,  
'The awful thought was that I was leaving India in those circumstances and leaving Skinners Horse people behind. And one of them actually came to me and, with a pleading look, he said, But Sahib, we fought for you in a war, why don't you fight for us and do something and I nearly burst into tears.'



**The Indian Independence Medal was awarded  
to all Indian military personnel serving on 15  
August 1947**











**Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, c1947**



**General Robert Lockhart, First Chief of Army Staff of India**



S. I. A. O.

632

August 1947

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SPECIAL INDIA ARMY ORDER

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INSTRUCTIONS, ETC.

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S. I. A. O. 79[S]47. Discontinuance of India Army Orders.—

This is the last India Army Order.

No. 7040[49]AG(Co-ord 2).

R. A. SAVORY, *Lieut.-General,*  
*Adjutant General in India,*

*Handwritten signature*  
F.M.

*Handwritten signature*  
Lt. Gen.

**The Last Indian Army Order, printed at  
New Delhi on 14 August 1947**









**Partition of Indian Army**





BRITISH FORCES IN INDIA



H. Q. BOMBAY AREA

# FAREWELL TO BRITISH TROOPS



## BOMBAY

*28<sup>th</sup> February 1948.*



Q. BOMBAY SUB AREA



1ST BN.  
THE SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY

**Programme for the final 'Farewell to British  
Troops', Bombay, 28 February 1948**