



Soldiers of Empire

How are soldiers made? Why do they fight? Reimagining the study of armed forces and society, Tarak Barkawi examines the imperial and multinational armies that fought in Asia in the Second World War, especially the British Indian Army in the Burma campaign. Going beyond conventional narratives, Barkawi studies soldiers in transnational context, from recruitment and training, to combat and memory. Drawing on history, sociology, and anthropology, the book critiques the “Western way of war” from a postcolonial perspective. Barkawi reconceives soldiers as cosmopolitan, their battles irreducible to the national histories that monopolize them. This book will appeal to those interested in the Second World War, armed forces, and the British Empire, and to students and scholars of military sociology and history, South Asian studies, and international relations.

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Indian and British Armies in World War II

Tarak Barkawi

London School of Economics and Political Science



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For mama and papa

No one who saw the 14th Army in action, above all, no one who saw its dead on the field of battle, the black and the white and the brown and the yellow lying together in their indistinguishable blood on the rich soil of Burma, can ever doubt that there is a brotherhood of man; or fail to cry, What *is* Man, that he can give so much for war, so little for peace?

– John Masters, *The Road Past Mandalay*

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I dedicate this book to my mother, who taught me to love books and inadvertently introduced me to the subject of war through her passion for John Wayne films, and to my father, whose very existence made me aware from a young age of the wider world and its armed conflicts.

Acronyms

AA	Anti-Aircraft
ALFSEA	Allied Land Forces Southeast Asia
BO	British Officer
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CO	Commanding Officer
EA	East African
ECO	Emergency Commissioned Officer (British)
EICO	Emergency Indian Commissioned Officer
GHQ(I)	General Headquarters (India)
GO	Gurkha Officer (Gurkha equivalent of VCO)
ICO	Indian Commissioned Officer
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
INA	Indian National Army
IOR	Indian Other Rank
KAR	King's African Rifles
KCIO	King's Commissioned Indian Officer
LMG	Light Machine Gun
MG	Machine Gun
MT	Motor Transport
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
OC	Officer Commanding
OR	Other Rank
PoW	Prisoner of War
RAF	Royal Air Force
RWF	Royal Welch Fusiliers
SEAC	Southeast Asia Command
VCO	Viceroy's Commissioned Officer
WA	West African

Abbreviations Used in the References

BEC	Museum of the British Empire and Commonwealth, Bristol, UK
CC	Churchill College Archives, Cambridge, UK
CSAS	Cambridge Centre of South Asian Studies, UK
DL	Durham University Library, Durham, UK
GM	Gurkha Museum, Winchester, UK
IWM	Imperial War Museum, London, UK
LH	Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London, UK
NAM	National Army Museum, London, UK
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collection, British Library, London, UK
RWF	Royal Welch Fusiliers Regimental Archives, Caernarfon, Wales, UK
SWB	South Wales Borderers Regimental Archives, Brecon, Wales, UK
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, UK
WA	Firepower, Royal Artillery Museum, Woolwich, UK



Map 0.1 Burma and India during the Second World War