



## The Fighting Cock: Being the History of the 23rd Indian Division, 1942-1947

By A. J. F. Doulton

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This division first saw light in Jhansi on 1st January 1942, under the command of Major-General R.A.Savory who had come from the 4th Indian Division in which he had been a brigade commander at Sidi Barrani and Keren (Eritrea). At first there were virtually no troops but gradually the brigades began to assemble - 1st, 37th and 49th, all of which would remain to the end of the war. Apart from the presence of the 82nd ATk Regt for a brief period in the very early days, the only British units to serve in the division were 158th Field Regiment RA and 1st Seaforths. In May the division took up station on the frontiers of Assam and Burma, the only force between the Japanese and India. The GOC's operation order included the intention: "23 Ind Div will (a) stop the Japanese invading INDIA, and (b) defeat them if they do." For the next two years and three months the division fought in the jungles of Burma and for all but five months of that time they were front line troops. They went through the length of Burma finishing up near Rangoon and in August 1944 they were withdrawn and sent back to India. Casualties totalled 2,910 of whom 605 were killed in action. A year later, just after VJ-Day, they were sent to Malaya and from there to Java to restore order in the Dutch colony and hand it back to the Netherlands. They were engaged in fighting the Indonesian rebels for more than a year, suffering a further 1,377 casualties, 407 of them killed and 162 missing. Summary of Honours and Awards and index. This is a good history which describes vividly the atmosphere of jungle fighting and the savage resistance of the Japanese soldier. On page xvi the author explains the Indian Army ranks and shows the Subedar-Major under the NCO group. This is wrong. The Subedar-Major was the senior Viceroy's Commissioned Officer in the battalion.

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