

## A NEW BEGINNING

It was in the capable hands of Col SD Verma, a senior Indian officer on the Directing Staff (DS) of the Staff College, Quetta, that the Indian Army HQ chose to entrust the setting up of an Indian Staff College. In early October 1947, he was sent a signal from the Director of Military Training, Army HQ, stating that he must proceed, reconnoiter and locate the new college, that should start functioning from the 1st of April, 1948. The signal also stated that he had been appointed as the Commandant of Staff College, India.

The 15th Staff Course at Quetta terminated on 10th of October 1947, with thirty two Indian officer graduates. A special train, well escorted by some Baluch and Gorkha jawans, left Quetta on 15th October 1947. Its passengers, the Indian officers, their families and many civilians reached Ambala Cantonment safely three days later.

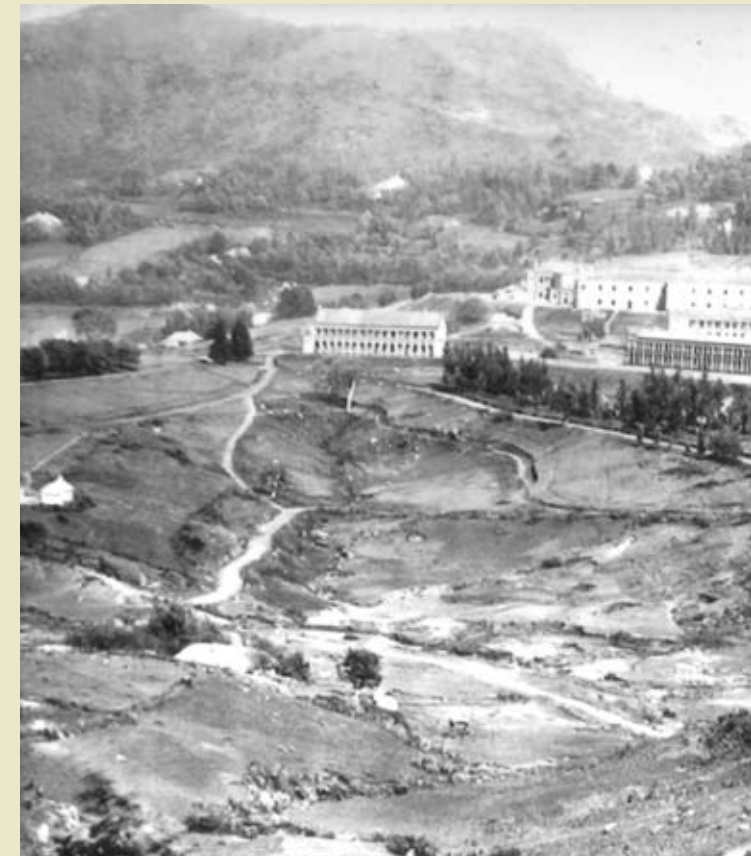
### Wellington Calling

Expecting more instructions, Col S D Verma reached Delhi to find everybody preoccupied with the mayhem in Kashmir. In Col (later Lt Gen) S D Verma's, own words, "Eventually I managed to corner an officer in the Quartering Directorate and asked him to give me a list of places where there was some accommodation lying vacant. He was kind enough to give me a list, and then, as an afterthought, he said, 'Oh, yes and there are a few barracks and some empty British Other Ranks family quarters in a place called Wellington near Madras'.

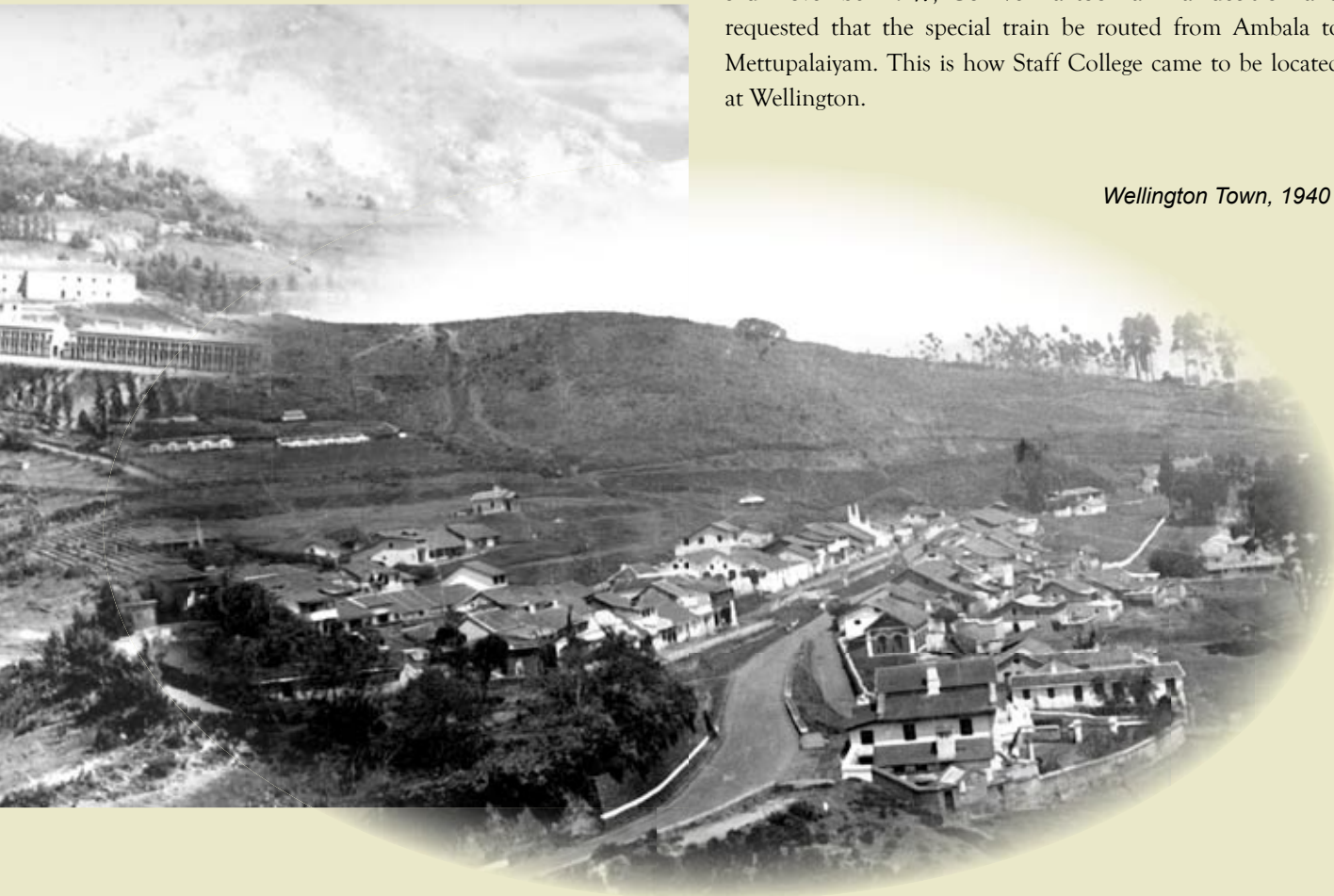


*Brig SD Verma as a Maj Gen*

*Wellington Barracks in 1879*



A quick rejection of places like Deccan College in Poona, Barnes' School at Devlali, Kamptee Barracks near Nagpur and Belgaum, for either lack of accommodation or training facilities, led him to Wellington. It was love at first sight with the exquisite Nilgiris, picturesque surroundings and the adorable climate for the army man from Quetta, and the decision was made. To top it, the hills were ideal for mountain warfare exercises, the Coimbatore plains for mobile warfare and the Mysore jungles were reasonably easy to reach. On 3rd November 1947, Col Verma took a final decision and requested that the special train be routed from Ambala to Mettupalaiyam. This is how Staff College came to be located at Wellington.



Wellington Town, 1940

The blue green Nilgiris delight the aesthetic senses and have made many men romantic while inspiring ballads in our Staff College poets. Lt Cdr OS Dawson, later the Chief of Naval Staff, wrote:

*The morning breath in fragrance wrapt,  
Of roses drenched in distilled dew,  
All nature rich and wondrous draped,  
And dressed with creeping festoons new.*

*The trees are clad in gorgeous green,  
The Vendure fresh all clothed we greet,  
Its fragrance wafts the jasmine sweet,  
The snow white bloom on wondrous sheen.*

*Lilies weave their subtle spell,  
Far off is heard the matin bell,  
The shining crags across the vale,  
Glisten spear-like in the sun.*

*Their silver crests in glory's trail,  
All joys surge festive, riotous run.  
And in their own way do proclaim,  
The gifts of Lord divine.*