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A CONCISE BIOGRAPHY OF:

**BRIGADIER L. J. L.
ADDISON**

A concise biography of Brigadier Leonard Joseph Lancelot ADDISON, C.M.G., C.B.E., an officer in the British Army from 1923 until 1927, and in the British Indian Army between 1927 and 1948.
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A Concise Biography of Brigadier L. J. L. ADDISON

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Brigadier Leonard Joseph Lancelot ADDISON, C.M.G., C.B.E.

Generally, the career of an Army officer is associated with battles and fighting on active service, but the reality was that during the Second World War, Army officers fulfilled a variety of roles within the Armed Forces and wider society. Due to their training and the general esteem in which Army officers were and are held, many spent parts of their career in administration or other support roles.

One such officer was Brigadier Leonard Joseph Lancelot ADDISON, C.M.G., C.B.E., who joined the British Army in 1923, only to transfer to the Indian Army in 1927. During the Second World War, ADDISON served with the Government of India administering the production and distribution of food to both civilians and soldiers.

Leonard Joseph Lancelot ADDISON was born in Woolwich, London on 27 September 1902. He was a son of Joseph Lancelot ADDISON, who was a Technical Adviser to the Inspector of Army Wireless Telegraphy, and his wife Harriett ADDISON (nee JOWETT) from Charlton, London, S.E.7. The first school that ADDISON attended was the Strand School in Elm Park. This was a grammar school situated in Elm Park, south London, from where he moved to Ardingly College. In 1912, he moved to King's College School in Wimbledon. In January 1916, and now aged thirteen years, ADDISON moved school again, this time to Dulwich College in south London. Leaving Dulwich College in December 1920 at the age of eighteen years, ADDISON entered the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, as a Gentleman Cadet. He had been Captain of Athletes in the final year of his education at Dulwich College, and continued his athletics at Sandhurst, being a member of the College Athletics Team during his time there.

On passing out from Sandhurst on 1 February 1923, ADDISON was granted a commission in the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment in the rank of Second Lieutenant (service number 24359). He joined one of the two Regular Army battalions of the regiment to complete his probation. Promotion to the rank of Lieutenant came with effect from 1 February 1925. The opportunity arose for ADDISON to be seconded to the Indian Army, which took place on 22 February 1926. He applied for and was given a transfer to the Indian Army Service Corps (I.A.S.C.), joining the Indian Army on 4 July 1927 in the rank of Lieutenant. ADDISON received a new Indian Army number, 817/IA.

The first staff posting ADDISON was appointed to was as an Assistant to an Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport, which he held between 7 October 1929 and 11 April 1930. On 12 June 1931, ADDISON was appointed a Staff Captain, remaining in this post until 12 September of that year.

Promoted to the rank of Captain on 1 February 1932, ADDISON's next appointment was on 24 October 1932, when he became an Assistant to an Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport in India. He left this post on 25 April 1933, being attached to the staff of Northern Command two months later with effect from 5 June. ADDISON left Northern Command on 1 August 1933.

Port Blair is the main port on the Andaman Islands, and it was to here that ADDISON was posted next. He spent over three years on the islands, which were administered by India, arriving on 6 April 1934 and leaving on 11 October 1937. During his posting here, the I.A.S.C. was granted the prefix 'Royal' in 1935. After his return to India, ADDISON was an Assistant Officer in command of Supplies at Wana on the North West Frontier between 4 and 29 June 1938, becoming the Officer in command of Supplies at the same location from 30 June until 27 September 1938. He then assumed command of the 34th Animal Transport Company (Mule) that was stationed at Razmat, again on the North West Frontier. Two postings followed as a Staff Captain; the first between 15 March and 26 March 1939, and the second between 13 April and 29 September 1939.

ADDISON was promoted to the rank of Acting Major on 3 September 1939, the day that the United Kingdom declared war on Germany. On the thirtieth of that month, ADDISON was appointed a Deputy Assistant Director of Contracts at the General Headquarters of the Army in India. The Directorate of Contracts was a small unit within the Department of the Master General of the Ordnance, comprising a Colonel, a Lieutenant Colonel, three Majors and two Captains. This role was an administrative one, negotiating and drafting the contracts between the Government of India and private business supplying the Government and Armed Forces with a wide range of materiel, including foodstuffs, armaments, equipment and buildings. ADDISON was promoted to the substantive rank of Major on 1 February 1940.

On 5 August 1940, ADDISON was promoted to the rank of Acting Lieutenant Colonel, on appointment as an Assistant Director of Contracts within the same Directorate. He was Mentioned in Dispatches for his work on 25 October 1940. With his experience of contract negotiation, ADDISON transferred to the Government of India on 18 August 1940. With the move to a war economy, the Government of India assumed responsibility for all aspects of the manufacture and supply of essential materiel to the Armed Forces. This included in the supply of food to both the Armed Forces and the population of British India. ADDISON began his work in this area with the Government of India in August 1940 as an Assistant Director of Purchase. He remained an officer of the Indian Army and was promoted to the rank of Temporary Lieutenant Colonel with effect from 5 November 1940.

The entry of Japan into the Second World War meant that the manufacturing capacity of the countries of South-East Asia, which had been coordinated by the Eastern Group Supply Council, was badly disrupted. The output of some countries, such as Malaya and Burma were lost to the Indian Government. The civilian markets were denuded suddenly of stock, shortages in some goods became apparent, and prices began to rise.

One area of concern was the supply of foodstuffs. Burma was the major rice growing country in the world at the time of the invasion in January 1942, with much production going to India. The issue became one of making difficult decisions between supplying food for the rapidly expanding Indian Army and British troops stationed in the sub-continent, and the availability of food for the civilian population. In the autumn of 1942, the Government of India agreed to establish a separate Food Department to control the purchase, storage and distribution of food for the military and civilian populations.

Formed in December 1942, the Government of India's Food Department grew rapidly during the war to handle the increasingly complex job of ensuring sufficient foodstuffs were available to feed the civilian population and Armed Forces. However, India struggled to feed its own people, with the vagaries of the weather and inefficient agricultural practices in the countryside. In 1943, there was a major famine in Bengal, resulting in the deaths of many thousands of people. The Bengal famine led to major changes in the Food Department, strengthening its links with public health.

ADDISON's role was absorbed by the Department of Food on its creation, and on 21 June 1943, he was promoted to the rank of Acting Colonel on being upgraded to the role of Deputy Chief Director of Purchase in the department. On 21 December 1943, with six months in the acting rank, ADDISON became a Temporary Colonel and War Substantive Lieutenant Colonel. ADDISON remained a key figure in the Department of Food. He was promoted to the substantive rank of Lieutenant Colonel on 1 August 1944. His work continued after the end of hostilities in August 1945. ADDISON was appointed as the Chief Director of Purchase in the Department of Food on 4 May 1946, being promoted to the rank of Acting Brigadier on the same day. He was promoted to the rank of Temporary Brigadier on 4 October 1946.

With the end of hostilities and the move towards independence, the post of Chief Director was downgraded to a Colonel's appointment, so ADDISON reverted to the rank of War Substantive Colonel, however, this did not affect his pay or allowances as they were paid according to the appointment not the rank held. In his Annual Confidential Report of 1947, ADDISON is described as follows:

He is devoted to his work to which he brings keenness almost enthusiasm, untiring energy and quick dispatch. He is very popular with the staff whose interests he carefully watches. He has been of great use to the Food Department in the disposal of our supplies.

ADDISON's work with the Department of Food was recognised with the award of Commander (Civil) of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (C.B.E.) in the King's Birthday Honours List published on 12 June 1947. In August 1947, British India partitioned into the newly independent nations of India and Pakistan. Technically, on partition, all the officers in the Indian Army transferred to the Special List of the British Army (ex-Indian Army).

In the September of that year, ADDISON sent a letter to the Military Secretary requesting his retirement from the Indian Army because he had been offered a post in the High Commission in India. This was agreed and ADDISON became a Counsellor with the U.K. High Commission to India. Following the allocation of leave days in respect of his services, he retired officially from the Indian Army on 19 March 1948, with the honorary rank of Brigadier, his substantive rank being Lieutenant Colonel. ADDISON became the United Kingdom's Acting Deputy High Commissioner to India, becoming the permanent Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta in August 1948. He held this post until June 1952, when he retired and moved back to the United Kingdom. In recognition of his diplomatic service, ADDISON was made a Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. John (C.M.G.) in the Birthday Honours List of 5 June 1952. ADDISON married Phyllis Mabel COOMBS, of Hove, Sussex in 1927. They had one son and one daughter. Brigadier ADDISON died in Chelsea, London on 30 May 1975.

On 27 July 2000, ADDISON's medals were sold at auction in London for £713. They comprised the C.M.G., C.B.E. (see above), the Indian General Service Medal with one clasp for the North West Frontier 1937 – 1939, War Medal 1939 – 1945 with M.I.D. Oakleaf, the Indian Service Medal 1939 – 1945, 1935 Jubilee Medal, 1947 India Independence Medal, and 1953 Coronation Medal.



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