

Field Marshal K.M Cariappa

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The birth anniversary of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa, the **first Commander-in-Chief (1949-1953)** of the Indian Army, was commemorated recently on January 28.

[ref-Britannica]

About K.M Cariappa:

- A national hero, Cariappa's leadership played a pivotal role in the **transition of the Indian military from colonial to independent India.**

Early Life and Education:

- Born on January 28, 1899, in **Shanivarsanthe**, Coorg province (now Kodagu district), into a

farming family of the **Kodava clan**.

- Nicknamed '**Chimma**,' Cariappa's interest in the military was sparked during his studies at **Presidency College in Chennai**.

Military Journey:

- His distinguished military career spanned almost **three decades**.
- After World War I, Cariappa, at the age of 19, earned the King's Commission in 1919, becoming part of the **first batch of King's Commissioned Indian Officers (KCIOs)**.
- **Daly Cadet College**: Selected for the first batch of KCIOs at **Daly Cadet College** in Indore, where he excelled and graduated as the first Indian cadet.
- He was commissioned as a temporary **first lieutenant into the 2/88 Carnatic Infantry**.
- He became the **first Indian officer to attend the Staff College**, Quetta, and later commanded the **1/7 Rajputs**, making him the **first Indian to lead a battalion**.
- He served in various staff roles and commands, eventually becoming the **Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army**.
- Cariappa served in **Iraq, Syria, and Iran** (1941-1942) and later in **Burma** (1943-1944), earning accolades for his leadership.
- **Post-Independence Roles**: As the **deputy chief of the general staff**, he played a crucial role in operations like Kipper, Easy, and Bison, focusing on strategic areas in Kashmir.

Legacy and Contributions:

- **Military Architect**: Cariappa's appointment as the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army was a landmark in **India's independent defense sector**.
- **Other contributions**: Key contributions include the integration of troops, raising the Brigade of the Guards and Parachute Regiments, and establishing the National Cadet Corps (NCC) and Territorial Army (TA).
- **Post-Independence Roles**: Played a pivotal role in the **division of the Indian Army** during the Partition, ensuring an amicable transition.
- **Post-Retirement Service**: After retiring in 1953, he served as the **Indian High Commissioner** to Australia and New Zealand.
- **Founder of IESL**: In 1964, he founded the **Indian Ex-Servicemen's League (IESL)** and played a key role in establishing the **Directorate of Resettlement**.

Honors and Passing:

- **Legion of Merit**: He was awarded the Legion of Merit in the degree of Chief Commander by the American President Harry S. Truman.
- **Order of the British Empire**: Cariappa was awarded the Order of the British Empire in June 1945.
- **Field Marshal Rank**: Awarded the **Field Marshal rank** on April 28, 1986, in recognition of his outstanding service to the nation.
 - One of the only two Indian Army Field Marshals with the Five-star rank, the other being Sam Manekshaw.
- **Demise**: Cariappa passed away on May 15, 1993, leaving a lasting legacy in India's military history.

