

## DURBAR Volume 9, No.3, Autumn 1992

---

### FRONTIER TOURS – PART II - BALUCHISTAN

Lieutenant Colonel A.A. Mains, late 9th Gurkha Rifles

#### TERRAIN

Baluchistan is the most westerly part of what is now Pakistan and lies to the west of the River Indus; it is bounded on the north by Afghanistan, on the west by Iran and on the south by the Persian Gulf. With the exception of the Kachh Plain, which is adjacent to Sind and on a level with the Indus, it is mountainous with an altitude on the Quetta plateau of over 5000 ft. and with mountain ranges higher than this.

The climate is akin to that of Iran and Afghanistan, and is generally unpleasant; very hot in summer, even Quetta at over 5000 ft. registers temperatures of over 100°F, and 120°F has been known on the Kachh Plain. By contrast the winters are bitterly cold, with hard night frosts and snow. Outside of winter snow, the rainfall is negligible.

There is little cultivation except in the few places that are irrigated, mainly by "karezes". This form of irrigation, which is found only here and in the adjacent areas of Afghanistan and Iran, consists of "wells" joined together underground. Karezes are constructed by one tribe, and the craft is handed down from father to son. When an area is to be irrigated the builders go up to the nearest mountain valley and at a chosen spot dig a well; if and when they strike water, they will then go 100 yards or so downhill and dig a hole, bringing the water from the original well by tunnelling, a third hole then follows to bring the water underground from the second, and so it goes on, the holes getting shallower and shallower until close to the desired spot, the tunnel breaks surface and continues as a ditch.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Baluchistan in the thirties comprised three separate political entities - British Baluchistan, the two Native States of Kalat and Las Bela, and Tribal Territory. The two States, backward politically and economically, occupied a large tract of territory in the west and the tribal territory was mainly in the east adjoining Waziristan. The British part was classified as a Chief Commissioner's Province coming directly under the Government of India. The Chief Commissioner was also Agent to the Governor General for the States and Tribal Territory. The administration of British Baluchistan was different from an ordinary province; regular civil police were to be found in the towns, such as Quetta, but not in the countryside, which was policed by tribal levies.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

The old caravan route running from Sind to Kandahar, via the Bolan Pass, Quetta and the Khojak Pass had been replaced by a railway and motor road. For strategic reasons the heavily graded sections of the railway through the Bolan Pass and Shelabagh Tunnel were of double track. The line terminated at Chaman, actually on the Afghan Frontier. During World War I a

broad gauge line had been built from Quetta due west to a terminus at Zahidan just inside Iran, and another, narrow gauge (2ft 6in), line to the east to terminate well inside tribal territory at Fort Sandeman. In addition to the road to Kandahar, there were a number of important roads running eastwards from Quetta - to the military stations of Loralai and Fort Sandeman, and onward to Dera Ghazi Khan in the Punjab and to Wana in Waziristan.

#### MILITARY STATIONS

Baluchistan had been effectively pacified by the end of the nineteenth century, so the large garrison at Quetta was positioned for an advance on Kandahar in the event of a war with Afghanistan, and not to contain the tribesmen. The two Brigades in Quetta were classified up to 1938 as "Field Army", part of the 2nd Indian Division, and not as Frontier Brigades. Quetta itself, also the venue of the Staff College, was like any other Indian Cantonment. By contrast the stations of Chaman, Loralai and Fort Sandeman were fortified camps, but even here there were few of the precautions against attack, as we found in the Khyber or Waziristan.

#### CHAMAN

Chaman was my first station in Baluchistan, as I joined the 5/9th Gurkhas there in the autumn of 1944. It was joined to the rest of India by a motor road over the Khojak Pass and a broad gauge railway line through the Shelabagh Tunnel. The accommodation for the two Battalions was in four small Forts, the cantonment only accommodating the Officers' bungalows, Messes and the Hospital. It was wired in and patrolled by troops at night, but by this time it had ceased to be a non-family station. It was situated on the actual frontier, and one of the difficulties of the garrison was to avoid border incidents, as the line of demarcation was irregular and ill defined. One source of diplomatic incidents was mules breaking loose from their standings and going over the frontier, hotly pursued by a muleteer; both were then interned and as there seemed to be little liaison between the local civil authorities, such incidents filtered up to Kandahar and back via Quetta. On one occasion it was three days before we got our mule and man back. A more serious incident occurred when a party from the 2nd Gurkhas inadvertently crossed a tongue of Afghan territory, when marching from one of the Forts to the Landing Ground.

The area was sufficiently peaceful for the Battalion to carry out normal training, and on one occasion we took part in an exercise against the Indian Long Range Desert Group. The main enemy was the climate - I arrived in September, before the hot season was over, and it took me a long time to acclimatise, coming from an enervating sea level climate in East Bengal to a very hot, dusty and dry one. Later, when winter set in the cold was very intense, 0°F being registered on one night; by contrast in the day time, it was possible to sit outside in the sun provided there was shelter from the wind. The road from Quetta was blocked by snow in the Pass several times that winter, but the railway continued to function as the Shelabagh Tunnel, although the highest on the broad gauge in undivided India, was at a considerably lower altitude. The Tunnel was very difficult to work, as all trains coming up from Chaman required a banking engine at the rear, and occasions occurred of the crews passing out in the foul atmosphere.

## FORT SANDEMAN

The 5/9th Gurkhas moved to Fort Sandeman in the spring of 1945. This was the Headquarters of the Zhob Brigade with three battalions in Sandeman itself. It was also the Headquarters of the para military Zhob Militia; some years earlier their Officers had been allowed to bring their wives, but this concession had not been extended to Army units. The resentment this caused, particularly to Officers who had returned from active service, caused the authorities to think again, and by 1945, Army families were also allowed.

Fort Sandeman had a network of roads - to Quetta, Loralai, Wana and Dera Ghazi Khan. The two former could be used in daylight without any special precautions, but the two latter only by armed bodies, or if the road had been specially picketed by the Zhob Militia and South Waziristan Scouts. The narrow gauge railway had only one passenger train a week and part of the journey was during the night; the train carrying an escort of men of the Zhob Militia.

Routine was akin to that of the Khyber. The Brigade did go out on column and show the flag in the tribal areas near to the Waziristan border. I went out on one; I remember it well on three counts - first, it was the first time I had seen and used a "walkie-talkie" - second, the transport was camels and not mules - camels roaring when being loaded is not easily forgotten, finally - the column was abandoned and we raced for home as VE Day was imminent. Shortly after this I proceeded on home leave, the first since 1939 and when I returned the Battalion was in Wana.

---

## THE LOSS OF THE GUILDFORD

Alan Harfield

The Singapore Chronicle of Thursday 30 December 1830 reported that the ship GUILDFORD had loaded and departed for London on the 29 December and among the passengers on board were "...Major & Mrs Lake, Masters A & W Lake....". It was reported that the vessel had cleared the Straits of Sunda and headed into the Indian Ocean. The GUILDFORD then disappeared and was never seen again, nor any wreckage found. It was subsequently assumed that the ship had foundered in a storm in the Indian Ocean and was lost at sea with all hands.

During the early years of the 19th century a number of HEIC Army officers were lost at sea, generally due to a disaster befalling the vessel in which they were travelling. The story of the loss of the GUILDFORD is interesting on two counts. The first is the status of one of the passengers, Major Edward Lake of the Madras Engineers. Lake had been in Singapore to plan new defences for the Settlement, which had only been founded ten years earlier by Sir T. Stamford Raffles. Due to his untimely demise his proposed plans for the defence of Singapore were shelved and the next review to upgrade the fortifications did not take place for another fourteen years.

Edward Lake was born on 12 July 1798 and was the second son of Sir Willoughby Thomas Lake KCB, one time Admiral of the White, and Charlotte, the daughter of Admiral McBride. He was baptised at Godalming, Surrey on 8 August 1798 and educated at Rugby. He was at Addiscombe during the years 1814 -1816 and was an Ensign from 30 May 1818 with service

dating from 9 April 1816. He served with distinction at the sieges of Talneir, Rajdeir, Trimbuck, where he was severely wounded, Malligaum, Jilpy, Amneir and at Asseerghur. He married Harriot Marion Goldingham and his eldest son was born at Madras on 19 June 1823 and christened Edward John Lake at St George's Cathedral at Madras. Edward Lake again saw active service during the Burma War of 1824 - 1825 and was present at the capture of Rangoon and also took part in the Pulaing and Kymendine expeditions.

On 9 August 1825 he was promoted to the rank of Captain and moved to Prince of Wales Island (Pulo Penang). Whilst serving at Pulo Penang he held various appointments including Inspector of Works, Town Major of Fort Cornwallis and Superintending Engineer. He gained further experience when he was appointed Secretary and ADC to Robert Fullerton, the Governor of Pulo Penang. In 1827 Edward Lake was appointed Inspector General for the three Straits Settlements, Singapore, Malacca and Penang and was granted the temporary rank of Major.

The entry in the East-India Register and Directories of that time show him as being under the 'Orders of the Supreme Government' and as being employed as Chief Engineer. Major Lake was commissioned to submit a plan for the improvement of the defences of Singapore, which was by that time, 1827, growing rapidly as a trading port and there was a great need to improve the defences that had been constructed soon after the Settlement had been founded eight years earlier. Lake's name is now unknown in Singapore but, had he not been lost at sea early in 1831, his name could well have been perpetuated on the island along with those of Collyer, Faber and Fullerton, and the whole development of the defences of Singapore could well have been vastly changed.

In May 1827, Major Lake wrote an extensive report, which completely changed the concept of the defence of the Settlement. He recommended extending the fortifications and batteries beyond the limits of the trading and residential areas of the Settlement and the plan gave an extended defence line from Tanjong Katong in the east to St George Island (later known as Blakan Mati Island and now Sentosa) in the west. In his report Lake wrote "...in my project for the defence of the harbour it must be considered that if an enemy were to land and make themselves masters of Blakan Mati, it would give them command of the harbour, and therefore the island should be fortified to prevent that contingency, as well as to protect the entrance of the harbour from attack by the sea...." Lake's plan concentrated the whole of the defence on the southern portion of the island of Singapore but it should be remembered that at that time the northern portion of the island was still covered with jungle and the interior troubled by tigers. In fact as late as 1852 the Government was having to plan traps for the tigers that were still causing trouble on the island. Lake's plan was submitted to the Government who considered it and passed it on to India for yet further consideration but needless to say the whole question was delayed due to reputed lack of finance. Major Lake was also acting as Inspector General and had the additional responsibility for the defences of Pulo Penang and Malacca. An examination of the shipping records show that he frequently visited Pulo Penang and Malacca, generally using the Honourable East India Company's resident vessel at Singapore, the ZEPHYR.

At the close of 1828 Major Lake set out in the ZEPHYR to survey the area in the Straits of Sunda and on this occasion he was accompanied by his family. During 1829 and 1830 negotiations were still being held on the defence plans submitted by Lake, the only problem appearing to be the cost of this radical change in the defence works of Singapore. The year 1830 was to be the final year of Lake's tour of duty in Singapore and he again used the

ZEPHYR to carry out an inspection of the defences at Malacca, arriving back at Singapore on 27 March and departing for an inspection of Pulo Penang on 31 March, and again on this visit he took his wife and two sons with him. They returned to Singapore on the ZEPHYR on 9 September and Lake made his final visit to Malacca on 14 September.

On his return he was engaged in settling his affairs prior to departing for England on furlough. He had been resident in the Straits Settlements for over five years and, at the time of his departure, his defence plan was still being delayed due to lack of finance. Lake's eldest son, Edward John, was seven at the time of the loss of the GUILDFORD and was being educated in England. He followed in the footsteps of his father and went to Addiscombe and eventually retired with the honorary rank of Major General. The shipping list, published in the Singapore Chronicle, made no mention of the daughter who had been born on 9 November 1829. Colonel H.M. Vibart later commented on Edward Lake saying his was 'a most brilliant career - cut short at the age of 31...' The service of Major Edward Lake concludes with the entry "Lost at sea".

Years later the fate of the GUILDFORD was brought into question. Among the passengers who boarded the Guildford at Singapore before its departure on its fateful voyage was a Mrs Presgrave, the wife of a former Resident Councillor at Singapore. Edward Presgrave died at Singapore on 12 March 1830 aged 35 years. His wife and family had returned to England during the latter part of 1826 and on hearing of the illness of her husband Ann Presgrave departed from London and arrived at Penang only to hear that her husband had travelled from Pulo Penang and had died the day after his arrival in Singapore. Mrs Ann Presgrave travelled to Singapore and arranged for a memorial to be placed on her husband's grave and 'took passage' on the GUILDFORD.

The GUILDFORD had been built during 1810 'on the River Thames' and was owned by T. Ward (Ward & Co) and registered as 521 tons. Her last voyage commenced at London on 31 July 1829 when she sailed for New South Wales under the command of Master R. Harrison. The GUILDFORD arrived at New South Wales on 5 November and then arrived at Bombay on 15 April 1830 from New South Wales. The vessel then sailed to China and departed for Singapore on 14 November 1830. Following her departure from Singapore, bound for London, on 29 December 1830 she was last sighted, and spoken to, by the Master of the EARL OF BALCARRAS (Mr Broughton) in the Straits of Sunda on 11 January 1831. The EARL OF BALCARRAS arrived at London, from China, on 7 May 1831.

The second interesting point regarding the loss of the GUILDFORD concerns an incident which happened some ten years after the loss of the vessel. The areas off the coast of Borneo, Bangka and the eastern end of Sumatra were notorious for pirate attacks. These attacks were carried out by fleets of Malay pirates who attacked vessels anchored in bays, or who were becalmed. There is on record many instances where whole crews were massacred and the ship plundered.

Following such an attack one member of a crew of a plundered vessel was captured and kept as a slave and later sold to a Malay Chief in Brunei. He had spent six months at Maruda Bay where he was well treated, and was then sold to Brunei. He was eventually released and on reaching Singapore made the following report ".....About three days after leaving Maoodoo for Brunei we touched at a place called Amboon (now Ambong) for water, where there is good harbour. There were about forty houses on the beach. I had previously heard when on board the boat, from the crew, that there was a European female residing at Amboon. The

house was pointed out to me, which induced me to enter. On entering, I saw, situated on a mat a European female. She was dressed in the Malay costume, there was a Malay woman seated near her, and five or six children playing about the house.....(she) did not attempt to leave nor did she say a word; she looked at me for a moment and then hung down her head...." Haji Hassan, who gave the report, then went on to describe the European woman as being about forty years of age with fair hair and blue eyes. The report was published in the Singapore Free Press of 30 September 1841 and a copy of this was eventually passed to Calcutta where the brother in-law of Mrs Presgrave read the report. The family was convinced that the European woman was in fact the missing relative Ann Presgrave.

The facts were put before the Governor of the Straits Settlements but due to various delays a search for the woman was not made for a further two years. The search was made by Captain Sir Edward Belcher of HMS SAMARANG but as a further period of time had elapsed no further trace of the European woman could not be found, although it was generally believed that news of the search had reached Amboon and the European woman had been moved to another kampong.

There the story ends. Haji Hassan was convinced that he had seen a European woman and the Presgrave family were also sure that it was Ann, the lost widow of Edward Presgrave. A visitor to Ambong in the 1980s confirms that the story of the 'white woman' who lived as a prisoner with a Malay family was still very well known.

The question remains, did the GUILDFORD sink in a tropical storm in the Indian Ocean sometime after 11 January 1831, or was she attacked in the area of the Straits of Sunda and the crew and passengers killed with the exception of Ann Presgrave? We will probably never solve this question.

#### Sources

- Belcher, Captain Sir Edward, *Voyages of H.M.S. Samarang*. London. 184
- Harfield, Alan, *Early Cemeteries in Singapore*. London, 1988
- Rittoi, Owen. *The Pirate Wind*. Singapore. 1930
- Vibart, Col H.M., *Addiscombe, Its heroes & Men of Note*. London, 1894
- East-India Registers
- Lloyds Lists, 1831
- Singapore Chronicle, 1830
- Singapore Free Press, 1841

---

#### THE TRUCIAL OMAN SCOUTS

Tim Ash

Brigadier Randle's article, "The Last of the Mounted Infantry"(Durbar Vol.8, No.3 Autumn 1991), made mention, if only in passing, of the Trucial Oman Scouts. I thought it might, therefore, be appropriate in this the 20th Anniversary year of the Scouts passing into history, to write a few words on this Force, the "Foreign Office's Private Army".

The geographical area in which the Force operated was a part of the overseas territories of the old Bombay Presidency, and Government of India. The Trucial States, formerly known as the Pirate Coast and from independence in 1971 as the United Arab Emirates, lies on the southern shore of the Arabian/Persian Gulf, adjacent to the Straits of Hormuz to the east. It comprises the seven Sheikdoms of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Quwain, Ras al Khaimah and Fujairah. Treaty relations between the British and the Ruling Sheikhs of these small city states existed from 1820 until the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971. British involvement in the Gulf until the mid-20th century was mainly concerned with maritime affairs but with the coming of the oil companies to the region "on shore" involvement inevitably increased.

The Force, first known as the Trucial Oman Levies, was raised by the Foreign Office in 1951 with a nucleus seconded from the Arab Legion of one British Major, two Jordanian Officers and a handful of other ranks. The Headquarters was based in Sharjah and the aim was to recruit and train a small number of soldiers from the local tribes. Its initial strength was about 60 and the task of the Force was to provide a degree of security and safety for the Political Agent and others resident or travelling in the country for whom Her Majesty's Government was responsible.

The following year a major event in local history ensured that the Levies should increase in potential and significance. The Saudis attempted by a coup de main to exercise their territorial claim to the Buraimi Oasis. The oasis comprised 9 villages, three subject to the Sultan of Oman and six to the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi. A small party of about 40 Saudi soldiers moved into the Omani village of Hamasa. The Sultan's reaction was understandably hostile and he at once raised a force of local tribesmen to evict the invaders. Such precipitate action was, however, thwarted by H.M.G. who, less excitably, began to expand the Levies.

The first and immediate step was not a success; a Squadron from the Aden Protectorate Levies had to be returned hurriedly to Aden after a mutinous incident at Buraimi in which two British Officers died. But expansion continued with increased recruitment from the local tribes and a change of status occurred. Hitherto the Levies had been a Foreign Office concern, paid by it and officered by men of its choice. The Force was now to come under War Office direction, with Officers seconded from the British Army and the burden of payment split between the F.O. and W.O.

With expansion came action. Hamasa was blockaded and the Saudis contained. But they had friends close at hand. The Sheikh of the Beni Ka'ab tribe, a subject of the Sultan of Oman, threw in his lot with the Saudis and with his supporters attacked the Levies' supply route from Sharjah. A battle ensued; the Sheikh was deposed and forced to flee Hamasa with his adherents for their protection by the Saudis.

The matter of ownership of the Buraimi Oasis went for arbitration in Geneva and, as a preliminary to negotiation, a neutral zone was set up around the oasis from which it was agreed that both the Saudis and the Levies should withdraw, leaving in their stead small parties of one Officer and 15 men from each side. The negotiations dragged on for about a year before coming to a premature and unsatisfactory end and H.M.G. decided to re-occupy Buraimi by force. On the 26th October 1955, the Saudis, assisted by the Sheikh of Beni Ka'ab and his followers, resisted in vain the Levies assault and the oasis was restored to its previous ownership.

At Foreign Office instigation the Force was now renamed the Trucial Oman Scouts and considerably increased in strength, from three to five Rifle Squadrons and the number of British Officers nearly doubled. Early in 1957 tension due to border disputes between two of the Sheikdoms of the northern Trucial States resulted in the establishment of a Squadron camp of the Scouts in the northern territory for the first time. In July of the same year the Muscat Armed Forces, of the Sultan of Oman, suffered a severe reverse at the hands of rebels in the interior of Oman led by the Imam. The Scouts, forming a part of a composite British Force, were sent into Oman to assist the Sultan to re-impose his authority. By the end of August this was partially achieved, with the Imam and his rebel followers forced to retreat to the heights of the Jebal Akdhar. However, throughout the remainder of that year and 1958 the rebels waged a guerrilla campaign against the Sultan's forces and detachments of the Scouts were employed in containing the insurgents. It was not until January 1959 that a concerted operation was mounted against the rebels on the Jebal Akdhar, the rebels were dispersed with the leaders taking refuge in Saudi Arabia. The Scouts maintained a Squadron presence in northern Oman for a short time thereafter and continued to carry out patrolling duties until February 1961.

1959 also saw certain inter Sheikdom problems within the Trucial States; these were territorial disputes and in at least one case came to tribal war with the Scouts moving in to stop the fighting. Disputes of this nature were fairly common, the Scouts acted to keep the peace whilst the Political Agent used his good offices to encourage the disputing parties to settle their differences by negotiation.

In August 1960 the Desert Regiment was formed. This was a grouping of two Rifle Squadrons under a mobile Regimental Headquarters. However, this was found to be too cumbersome for both command and administration and in September 1961 the Desert Regiment was disbanded. A new Establishment for the Scouts was made in October 1961, with five Rifle Squadrons of increased strength, a Support Group of mortars and machine guns together with a reorganisation of the administrative functions designed for field operations. In the winter of 1963 a full-scale exercise of the Force took place in the west of the Trucial States to test the effectiveness of the new Establishment.

At the close of 1964 the total strength of the Scouts was 1,324. There were 38 British Officers and 85 British Other Ranks, all seconded from the British Army. The Force Headquarters was still located in Sharjah, there were 5 Rifle Squadrons, a Support Group of mortars and machine guns, a Signal Squadron, Supplies and Transport Squadron, Workshops, Medical Services, H.Q. Squadron, Boys School and a "training Squadron."

On the 2nd December 1971 the Trucial States became the new independent nation of the United Arab Emirates and the Trucial Oman Scouts passed into the control of the Ministry of Defence of the U.A.E. and was redesignated the Union Defence Force. With subsequent reorganisations of the U.A.E. Armed Forces the U.D.F. became the 3rd Yarmouk Brigade.

Medals awarded to all ranks of the Trucial Oman Scouts are the G.S.M. 1918-62 with the clasp "Arabian Peninsular" for the operations in the Sultanate of Oman in 1957/60. Those medals awarded to Arab ranks have them named "T.O.S.", however British ranks had theirs named under their parent Regiment or Corps. In 1968 a Trucial Oman Scouts 'Loyal Service Medal' was instituted, the qualifying period of service for this award was eight years. The L.S.M. was unnamed. Only four British Officers qualified for this award, three with Rosettes on the ribbon denoting twelve years' service.

During last year (1991) two reunions of past members of the T.O.S. were held in London, with approximately 100 present at each. It was indeed "a bonny wee Force".

---

## THE OLDEST EVER SERVING SOLDIER IN INDIA

Maj. Gen. Chand N. Das OBE

Risaldar Major Mir Sher Ali was killed while charging with 8th Bengal Light Cavalry at Ramnagar on 22 November 1848. He had sixty years' service and was 78 years old.

### 8th BENGAL LIGHT CAVALRY

8th Bengal Light Cavalry (BLC) was raised in 1805 as a Regular Regiment along with 7th BLC and named Native Cavalry. On 1 January 1819 the word 'Native' was replaced with 'Light'. They had a total of 10 such regiments and all were disbanded in 1857 for reasons of disaffection of troops. 3rd BLC was most seriously involved in the Revolt as it provided the main fuse for it on 10 May at Meerut. 8th was not directly involved yet disbanded along with the rest.

### RAMNAGAR

During the Second Sikh War (1848-49) the Sikh forces rallied around Sardar Sher Singh. In order to prevent the junction of Sikh forces, a division of a mix of a Cavalry and two Infantry Brigades under Brigadier Cureton was despatched to Gujranwala located between Ramnagar and Lahore. On 21 November 1848 Lord Gough joined up with Cureton and reorganised their forces into a Cavalry Division of three Brigades, of which the first Cavalry Brigade was commanded by Brigadier Michael White, with 8th BLC being one of the four regiments.

Gough moved against Sher Singh's forces on the night of 21/22 November but found him across Chenab. In an artillery duel that followed, the Sikhs had the better of the exchange from the higher west bank and in order to capture the stranded British guns, sent their Cavalry across the river to the east bank. The 8th BLC and 3rd Light Dragoons (British) of first Cavalry Brigade charged the Sikh Cavalry to drive them back.

Though successful in driving the Sikhs back, the above two Regiments suffered some casualties and Mir Sher Ali, the 78 year old Risaldar Major of the 8th Bengal Light Cavalry, was killed.

The action at Ramnagar was not important except for the errors of Cavalry where 14th Light Dragoons and 5th Bengal Light Cavalry under Havelock charged without identifying their objective. On seeing them going for the wrong objective Brigadier Cureton galloped off to stop them. As a result both Cureton and Havelock, as well as three other officers and nearly forty troopers, were killed. The loss of Cureton, considered to be the best Cavalry officer in India, was 'grievous'.

Since the Regiment was disbanded over a century ago, perhaps no documents may be available in respect of Mir Sher Ali. However, as Mir Sher Ali had 60 years' service and his Regiment only existed for 52 years he must have enrolled into an older Regiment in 1788. As

he must have been a legend of those times and a personality no one could ignore, an ex-officer of the Armoured Corps must be able to throw more light on him, particularly someone from 18 King Edward's Own Cavalry who descended from 6 or 8 Bengal Irregular Cavalry who perhaps inherited the property, if not the legacy, of their "Regular" ancestor on the latter's disbandment on 15 May 1857 at Mian Mir, which today is the Lahore Cantonment.

---

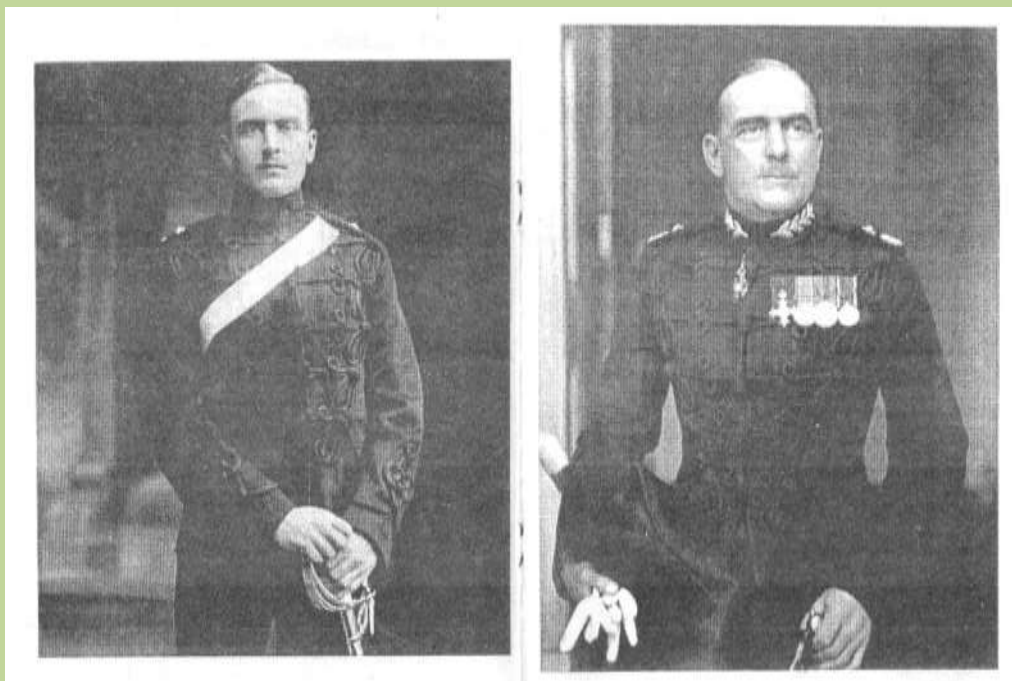
COL. G.H.R. HALLAND. C.I.E. O.B.E.

INDIAN POLICE (PUNJAB) AND CHIEF CONSTABLE, LINCOLNSHIRE, 1889 -1981

John Brooks

There are times when the collection of other people's medals brings pleasant surprises. A year or two ago I traded a C.I.E. group to an Indian Army "postman" for this group to an Indian "policeman" and had the happy windfall of a 400 page unpublished autobiography and account of life in India and China from 1909 to 1931. It gives a splendid insight into Indian life and politics and the Indian police forces of that period.

Policemen see things differently to soldiers and, although Halland served in Army intelligence during the 1914 -18 war and for a short period in China, he was still essentially a policeman. A Lincolnshire parson's son, good at cricket and most county sports including shooting, he enjoyed the opportunities afforded by his various Indian postings and was fortunate to return home to become Chief Constable in his own county in 1931.



My main reason in writing this is to make a wider audience aware of this autobiography - full of names, places and incidents of great interest to anyone researching that period. There is a good account of the organisation of the Punjab Police Force, which was probably comparable with many other states - a force of 21,000 divided into 29 districts each under a District

Superintendent and supervised by an Inspector-General, 4 Deputy I-Gs, 1 Assistant I.G.(Railway Police) and with another 7 District Superintendents in specialist posts. Most of these were British but by 1909 a few posts were filled by Indians promoted from the ranks. In addition there were 60 expatriate assistant superintendents. The 21,000 Indian personnel held ranks of constable, head constable (sergeant), sub-inspector, inspector and deputy superintendent. The latter was a gazetted officer of provincial rank broadly equivalent to the assistant superintendents of Imperial rank who, like Halland, entered the force by competitive examination. A small number of the provincially appointed inspectors and sergeants were locally appointed British, and were often used to deal with criminal cases involving Europeans.

The 1911 Durbar is covered in considerable detail. While there were over 6,000 police employed in overseeing the vast organisation which was involved, Halland was second in command of those responsible for the security of the top brass including the King and Queen. He actually rode escort beside the royal carriage in the procession and on various state drives. He gives a valuable description of the domestic and police arrangements of the 25 square mile camp site which was prepared for the event, which for a short while increased the 250,000 population of Delhi to over a million. There are too many reminiscences to quote here, but he tells one story which confirms the tale of a British private being found lying on the King-Emperor's bed in the royal suite of tents. However there is the qualification that it actually happened several days before the arrival of the royal party when the suite was being opened to public view.

Among the many wartime experiences is an account of the massacre at Amritsar and some of the preceding and subsequent events. Halland was the Intelligence officer sent by the General Staff to investigate and report on the event. It would appear that Halland was largely responsible for the cancellation of the order which compelled all Indians to crawl along the street where Miss Sherwood was set upon and left for dead. However Brigadier-General Dyer comes out of the whole happening rather better than in some accounts which have been published.

From 1921 to 1926 he was Principal of the Police Training School at Pillaur, and the book covers in great detail the training and work of the establishment.

In 1927 he was seconded to the Army Intelligence and posted to Shanghai for 2 ½ years to keep a watching brief for the Indian Government. At that time there were several Indian Army units and a large Sikh population, especially in the Municipal Police Force. China was in a state of upheaval at the time and Shanghai was virtually besieged. It was only later that Chiang-Kai-shek formed the Nationalist government at Nanking, and all this time the Chinese communists were gaining ground underground. It appears that Indian government circles feared the introduction of even more unrest into an India that was already simmering.

At the end of this posting Halland returned to India to become head of the police in Delhi, which had by now become important as the capital of India - a force of some 2,000. This was a period of serious unrest with considerable terrorist activity as well as the civil disobedience campaign by the Congress Party. Lord Irwin, who later became the Earl of Halifax, was the Viceroy, and it appears that life was made difficult for the police because of his strong objections to any arrangement made for his personal safety. Halland gives great credit to Lord Irwin for his physical and moral courage, and for his successful attempts to make contact with Mahatma Ghandi to produce more normal conditions.

I can do little more in these short notes than to highlight some of the incidents in a 400-page book covering 32 years' experience as an Indian policeman. There are appendices giving details and facts and figures of value to a researcher. He names names and places in great detail, sometimes boring but often painting a picture on their own. One appendix gives the roll of the Special Constabulary in Shanghai. In one section Halland is listed as a sub-inspector and among its membership is a patrol of 12, under a Sergeant with a C.I.E., C.B.E. and D.S.O. and some of the constables with an assortment of C.I.E.s, D.S.O.s and M.C.s.

He must have found policing Lincolnshire rather quiet and humdrum, but perhaps something of a relief. Unfortunately the book ends with his appointment as Chief Constable in 1931.

---

## CHINSURAH MILITARY AFFAIRS

C. Walters

The following is an extract from:

*A Sketch of the Administration of the Hooghly District from 1785 to 1845 with Some Account of the Early English, Portuguese, Dutch, French and Danish Settlements.* George Toynbee, Magistrate and Collector of Hooghly 1888. Calcutta: Printed at the Bengal Secretariat Press 1888. Price.Re.1-8

Quote

## CHINSURAH MILITARY AFFAIRS

No account of Hooghly would be complete without some reference to the military affairs of Chinsurah. It appears to have been originally intended to use it as a depot for the purpose of acclimatising young soldiers newly arrived from Europe. The arrival of the first draft in 1826 has already been mentioned on page 15. They must have occupied the old Dutch barrack, as the magnificent ranges now existing were not built by Captain W. Bell until 1829. In this year, too, a committee was held on the object of the arrangements to be made for the reception of a whole regiment of European troops, and in 1831, 8 ½ beeghas of land were taken from the Khas Mehal for the purpose of a regimental bazaar. In this year the 60th Regiment was permanently established at Chinsurah, the married officers and non-commissioned officers being permitted to reside in the town. (168. V. 14-4-31.) This arrangement appears to have lasted until about 1840, for the Collector, writing in 1843, says:- "Formerly a regiment of Queen's troops was quartered at Chinsurah, but for the last three years, though there have been depots of recruits and one or two regiments, they only remained a short time." (203. V. 4-10-43.) At the time of writing the above, he says that "there were no troops at Chinsurah, but that a large number of recruits was shortly expected," and he mournfully regrets, in a later letter, the falling off in the excise revenue caused by the absence of troops. The barracks were finally vacated by the Military Department in 1871, but they are still under their superintendence, and those who rent quarters in them do so on condition of vacating them at one month's notice in case they should again be required for troops. To control the soldiers and to protect the inhabitants from their vagaries, a special establishment was allowed of two European constables, with one havildar, and 16 sepoy

from the provincial battalion (18. V. 16-5-26.) A house was hired for their accommodation, and called the "town-guard"

Stringent restrictions were placed on the movement of the European soldiers. They were only allowed to walk on the Bandel and Chandernagore roads as far as the bridge and the *Tolaphatak* respectively. They were expressly forbidden to talk to or interfere with the convicts working on those roads or in other parts of the town. They were not to go into the bazaar without a pass from the Commanding Officer, and were forbidden to wear their sidearms when off duty. The European constables and the havildars under them had to see the soldiers in their barracks at gun-fire or at drum-beat at 8 p.m., and afterwards to visit the guards. They were only allowed to buy liquor from their own canteen or from sellers authorised by the Colonel. Other necessary excise arrangements were made by the Collector, who nevertheless had to complain of their "vicious propensity to ardent spirits."

This propensity was a source of constant trouble to the authorities and of terror to the native inhabitants. There were constant affrays and skirmishes between the soldiers and the police, in which the latter were generally outnumbered and worsted. In 1830 the Commanding Officer invoked the aid of the Magistrate in preventing Thomas Atkins from selling his shirts, socks, &c., in order to procure money to buy liquor. The Magistrate, on his part, requested the Colonel to prevent his young officers from "perambulating the streets by night armed with spears and fire-arms for hunting dogs and cats, and by day baiting with their dogs cows grazing in the fields." The Colonel reports that "the station is at this moment *inundated* with spirits," and remonstrates against the "shameful manner in which spirits are sold to soldiers and their wives in defiance of orders."

That Thomas Atkins was a real source of terror to the peacefully disposed inhabitants of the bazaar, the following reports of his "pleasantries," as made by the European constable, will amply show :-

- 29-7-31 - A soldier supplies himself with brickbats from a heap on the road-side and barricades a narrow lane, refusing to allow anyone to pass by. He indulged in this amusement for several hours and until overpowered by the police.
- 11.10.31 - Two soldiers are seen leading a native through the bazaar with a rope, after tying his hands behind him.
- 14-2.36 - Another takes 60 cheroots from a shop without paying for them, and on the shopkeeper venturing to remonstrate, stabs him through the shoulder with a bayonet and escapes into cantonments.
- 4-6-36 - A soldier, after breaking all to pieces a palanquin which he met on the road, enters into the house of one Hosan Bux, breaks all his cooking utensils, and strikes his wife with a brickbat.
- 7-5-36 - A drunken soldier tries to seize everything within his reach - tape, buttons, &c. On being remonstrated with, draws his bayonet.

Over Thomas Atkins behaviour to the women of the town it is necessary to draw the veil of silence.

The letter, which is reproduced below, represents the feelings of the inhabitants in their own words. Babu Lal Behari Dutt tells me that a still worse state of terrorism existed in 1858, when the troops returned from up-country flushed with victory and full of resentment after

the events of the Mutiny. No fewer than 20 European constables were, he says, procured from Calcutta on this occasion.

No.97.

From: Baboo ESHAN CHANDRA BANERJEE,

(Hon Secretary, Municipal Committee)

To: G.P. LEYCESTER, Esq.

Magistrate of Hooghly

Sir,

"I am directed by the Municipal Committee to bring to your notice a nuisance which has of late assumed so serious an aspect and created such an unusual excitement in the minds of the people, that the adoption of some severe measures, and that immediately, for the restoration of confidence is imperatively called for. The soldiers from time to time stationed at Chinsurah have never been, unfortunately, on amicable terms with the inhabitants. The over-anxiety, and even the timidity, which these latter manifest in keeping themselves out of the way of the troops, partly in consequence of their ignorance of the laws but chiefly, from an impossibility of obtaining prompt assistance from the police, and the difficulty of eventually recognising the offenders, have all along been taken an unfair advantage of. But all this was looked upon by the soldiers in the light of diversions and pleasantness, superinduced by the intoxicating nature of the liquor, under the influence of which such mischievous propensities were indulged: the people, too, making a merit of what they did act think fit and prudent to withstand, apparently participated in their rather unpalatable jocularities, but never seriously entertained thoughts of prosecuting them. But the soldiers now stationed here seem to be above all conciliatory measures. They are almost always to be found parading in large bodies the public thoroughfares, and in some instances armed with heavy cudgels. These they most unmercifully fully apply on all they take a fancy for, and make no distinction of caste or colour, age or sex. But the mischief perpetrated by them is not confined, even here. They have in more instances than one violently forced themselves into shops and private dwellings, and the committee have strong reasons to suspect that they have not in these cases evinced a backwardness to commit petty theft. But what outrages the feelings of the community most painfully, and makes them heap on the heads of these delinquents curses not loud but deep, is the brutality and savageness with which they have attacked the modesty of the sex, and forced some young and innocent women, who the strong calls of necessity had alone exposed to the views of these inhuman wretches, in broad day light and in the presence of many, to be reluctant victims of their lust.

"2nd. These, the Committee are confident, are grave charges, and they would have hesitated to prefer them against the troops had not these charges been strongly confirmed by the fact that a murmur for grievances of the nature I have described above runs through almost all classes of the people here, and it is to be presumed this is not entirely unknown to you from the complaints already before you. Others have hitherto refrained from preferring complaints against them only from a consideration of the difficulties they will experience in substantiating their charges.

"3rd. The Municipal Committee is fully satisfied that yourself and the police use proper precautions to check these outrages, but they apprehend that the means at present at the disposal of the police are insufficient for the purpose, and therefore the Committee trust that you will be pleased to strengthen the hands of the police in a manner that will at once restore confidence and peace to the inhabitants. The Officer Commanding the troops may also be applied to look after them sharply and have a roll-call at certain hours of the day and at night, and all absentees punished. The Committee thinks that it is an invariable ruse in all military cantonments not to allow the men to go out of the barracks after a certain hour of the night, but these men seem to be exempted from this wholesome check, as they are seen to be wandering about in the streets doing mischief late at night. The Commanding Officer may do a great deal by enforcing thus rule.

I have, &c.,

ESHAN CHANDRA BANAJEE

Hon Secretary, Municipal Committee

CHINSURAH, The 19th March 1849

#### NOTES

1. The above work attempts to put together in readable form a mass of information scattered over many rapidly decaying books and records, not easily available to Government Officers and quite beyond the reach of the general public.
2. References (e.g. 168. V. 14.4. 31.). means that the letter referred to is to be found in its chronological order in the volume marked 168.
3. Chinsurah: Dutch settlement from 1653 located 25 miles upstream on Hooghly River from Calcutta. Ceded to William IV together with £100,000 in exchange for Sumatra. Population. 1837 Census was 10,070.

---

#### BOOK NOTES

● *LAHORE TO LUCKNOW. The Indian Mutiny Journal of Arthur Moffat Lang.* Edited by David Blomfield. Introduced by Christopher Hibbert. Barnsley: Leo Cooper Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 1992. £19.95, 192 pages, 17 illustrations and 13 maps.

For anyone interested in the history of the Mutiny, or indeed in the general history of the military in India, this book is a must. As Christopher Hibbert says in his introduction, the letters and diaries of Lang have long been known to historians of the Mutiny. In 1931/32, some years after his death, the Society for Army Historical Research published edited extracts in the Journal. But they have not before been published in book form. David Blomfield, a grandson by Lang's second marriage, has done a wonderful job of editing the journals to produce an exhilarating account in a most readable form. He had, of course, superb material with which to work. Lang's style of writing transports the reader to the battlefield and one can almost smell the battles he describes. His maps, carefully copied for

this book, are wonderfully clear and one can follow the progress of each action along with the narrative.

The Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, at Lahore when the troubles started, Lang chaffed at the bit for three months before he finally joined the army before Delhi. That he was from then on in the thick of the fighting is obvious. Though his own diary entries make no mention of it, the book recounts how he was mentioned in despatches four times (twice at Delhi, once at Agra, and once at the Capture of Lucknow) and recommended for the VC on three occasions (at Delhi, at the Relief, and the Capture of Lucknow). The book also draws out much about the man and his character, his love for Sarah left behind in Lahore, his feeling of abhorrence for the mutineers. Amazingly he and his closest friends came through the fighting relatively unscathed until, after Lucknow, Elliot Brownlow was killed in an accidental explosion. The effect on Lang was immense and, foregoing further excitement in action, he returned to the comparative quiet of an engineer's life in Public Works. He did not receive the VC and, in fact, received little acknowledgement of his part until the autobiography of Field Marshal Lord Roberts was published in 1897. In 1908, twenty years after his retirement, he was awarded a CB.

As Christopher Hibbert says of this book, "...he (Lang) now at last has a fitting memorial". Highly recommended and a most enjoyable read.

ANM

● *SONS OF JOHN COMPANY. The Indian & Pakistan Armies 1903-1991*, John Gaylor, Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Spellmount Ltd., 1992, £28.00. 385 pages, illustrations and photographs).

In his Foreword to this book, Field Marshal Sir John Chapple says, "As a record of the services of Indian Regiments during the Second World War and subsequently, this book serves a most useful purpose and fills a long-felt gap. It will serve as a companion volume to Major Donovan Jackson's *India's Army*, which was published just before the last war. In a sense it brings that work, invaluable as it has been, up to date and to quote from Field Marshal Lord Birdwood's foreword to that book it has "been wanted for a long time".

I wholeheartedly concur. There has been many an occasion when I have wanted to trace a unit beyond the Second World War. Now it is possible, and in an easily readable form. John Gaylor pays fulsome tribute to an impressive list of experts who have provided assistance in the research for the book. I can think of one other officer who might have been consulted about post-independence Pakistan, but apart from that I would suggest we have in this book the fruits of the best knowledge available today.

The first six chapters (58 pages) are taken up with a brief overview of the evolution of the Indian Army, the 1903-23 period, aftermath of the Great War, Indianisation, the Volunteers and their evolution through the IDF to AF(I), and the States Forces.

The next 200 pages are taken up with a potted history of each regiment of the British Indian Army, beginning with a line drawing of the badge and shoulder title, covering its battle honours and allocation on partition, and ending most usefully with a list of books published. Finally there are chapters on the Indian and Pakistan armies after partition, with dates of raising of battalions where known. The book concludes with an historical overview and a

number of appendices covering uniform, regimental title changes up to 1922, and then up to the present day, and a short note on the Anglo-Indian Force 1916.

This is the sort of book that one can either read from cover to cover, or dip into for specific research points. I feel sure that over the years to come it will become a 'standard' reference work. A little expensive at £28.00 but I think that reflects the present difficulties of the book market, and the problems of producing books other than 'airport lounge best sellers'. I still think it is worth it and I recommend it.

ANM

● *FORCES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, 1914*. Edward M Nevins. Arlington: Vandamere Press, P O Box 5243, Arlington, Virginia 22205, USA, .US\$ 65.00.

The book gives a 'snapshot' of what the land forces of the Empire looked like on the eve of the First World War. While the text contains some of the information in Mr Reginald Cox's book on the same subject, it does expand some of the information on the Dismounted Rifles of the Union Defence Force, as well as lineages of the pre-war regiments of the Canadian Militia and the Australian Citizens Military Force.

As this work describes the structure of the Imperial forces in August of 1914, the units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the Australian Imperial Forces, as well as other war-time raised units, are not included. Drawings are used for illustrating cap badges of less than half of the formations listed. What is unique is the use of the author's collection of high quality model soldiers to show full dress uniforms of the forces, especially those of India.

This is a good "single source" reference for those interested in regimental lineages, uniforms, or model soldiers. I urge those interested in this book to contact the publisher first as to overseas mailing costs.

Daniel M Sebby

PUBLISHERS' LISTS (a note from the Editor).

We have recently started to receive a number of book lists from publishers specialising in Indian Military subjects. We do not as a rule circulate these, though I am happy to mention them and leave it to members to contact the publishers direct if they want to pursue the matter further. ASIAN RARE BOOKS, Suite 16-D, 175 W, 93rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10025 USA. Phone/Fax (212) 316-5334. As the name suggests the company deals primarily in the older books, in many different languages.

BOOKS FROM INDIA, 45 Museum Street, London WCI ILR. Tel: 071 405 7226, Fax 071 831 4517. The list that I received covers those books published by VISION BOOKS (Incorporating Orient Paperbacks) and includes the forthcoming publication by Major General Chand N Das, "Traditions and Customs of the Indian Armed Forces", 2nd Revised Edition. It also contains a number of unit histories (Fourth Indian Division, 3rd Gurkha Rifles 1947-80, Indian Armoured Corps to 1940 and a second volume 1941-71.

SPANTECH & LANCER, Spantech House, Lagham Road, South Godstone, Surrey RH9 8HB Tel: 0342 893239, Fax 0342 892584. Also at 3986 Ernst Road, Hartford, Wisconsin

53027. USA. Tel: 414 673 3753. Fax 414 673 9064. This company publishes such works as the Indian Defence Review, current affairs papers, e.g., "The Sri Lankan Crisis" and "Transnational Terrorism - The Danger in the South", as well as regimental/unit histories such as "History Of the 7th Light Cavalry 1784-1990", "I Serve - History of the 18th Cavalry" and "The Indian Army" (described as an illustrated presentation). A particularly good book which I have just bought and read with much interest is "History of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles 1820-1956" by Major K. Brahma Singh.

---

## LETTERS AND QUERIES

● Lt. Col. Tony Mains writes:

### INSPECTORATE OF INDIAN ARMY COLOURS

It is well known that Garter King of Arms is ex officio inspector of Colours of units of the British Army, but in view of the autonomous position of the Indian Army, subject to the Government of India, there has been some doubt if he held the same position for the old Indian Army.

Lt. Col. Patric Emerson seems to have resolved the problem - he was responsible [for the Indian Army]. Apparently a number of files were sent after Independence by the College of Heralds to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. They subsequently transferred them to the National Army Museum, where he discovered them hidden in a corner of the Archives.

There are five large boxes containing letters dated from 1880 to the mid-thirties dealing with the checking of Heraldry and correct use of Royal Insignia. The Archive number is 6708-6 - 13 onwards.

● Tony Mains also writes:

With regard to the article on the Auxiliary Force (India) by C. Walters (Vol.9. No.2.), there are more sources of information on the AF(I) than one would suspect from Mr Walter's article.

### Sources

- Indian Army Lists - from 1891 to 1917 as "Volunteers"; from 1917 to 1921 as "Indian Defence Corps"; from 1921 to 1947 as "Auxiliary Force (India)".
- Article - "The Auxiliary Force (India)" by Lt. Col. A.A. Mains late IA (Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research - Vol. LXI. No.247. Autumn 1983) This contains eight pages of history and organisation and sixteen pages of Appendices giving unit compositions, war and peacetime services etc. as at 1939.
- Article - "The Supporting Arms of the AF(I)" by A.A. Mains. This gives details of the Artillery, Engineer and Signal units. Written in 1989, I was under the impression that this had been published as a "Note" in the Journal of the SAHR, but I cannot find it. I can supply copies from my PC if required.
- APPENDIX "H" of the report of the Committee on the post war Indian Army - "Units of the Auxiliary Force (India) so far as existing since 1920". This was printed but

never published as it was overtaken by Independence. I have an original copy and photo copies are in the National Army Museum and Army Museums Ogilby Trust. Much of the information has been reproduced in the two articles quoted above but in addition it gives strengths and ethnic compositions of units as at 1939 and 1944.

- Roger Perkins' bibliography "Regiments of the Empire" 2nd edition (being published). This lists the annual reports of nineteen units and where they can be found, usually NAM or AMOT. It also gives details of a number of unit histories.

● In reply to G.R. Putnam's request (Vol.9. No.1) for information on 1st Punjab Regiment, 3rd Gurkha Rifles and 11 Sikhs Colonel M.D. Commissariat writes:

1st Punjab Regiment has gone over to Pakistan and, as far as I know, the Regimental Centre is at Jhelum, Punjab, Pakistan. 3 Gorkha Rifles has been combined with 9 Gorkha Rifles and the Regimental Centre is at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India. 11 Sikh Regimental Centre is at Ramgarh, Bihar, India.

● Shamus Wade of the Commonwealth Forces History Trust writes:

Mr Cliff Parrett (Vol.9. No.2.) asks for my comments on Hakim Singh and the Chota Nagpore Troop. First, we can forget about the Chota Nagpur Mounted Rifles. They were just part time Europeans and too late anyway. The Ninth (1875-1889) Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica describes the local forces of Chota Nagpur as follows. British districts: 1590 officers and men of the regular police, 172 officers and men of the municipal police, 15,104 men of the village watch. Tributary States; "& small body of police is maintained by the Raja (of Sirguja) and he can at short notice put himself at the head of 1000 fighting men".

It would be nice if Hakim Singh was one of the Raja's fighting men but, alas, Chota Nagpore is in Northern India and a long way from the Burmese border. I think it is 95% certain that the Chota Nagpore Troop was part of the Burma Military Police. In its early days this was all Indian. In March 1886 the sanction of the Government of India was obtained for the enlistment of 2,300 military police from Northern India.

There is plenty of information on the Burma Military Police of Hakim Singh's time in "*The Pacification of Burma*" by Sir Charles Crosthwaite, 1912 and "*Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India* Compiled in the Intelligence Branch, Army Headquarters, India, Vol. V. Burma. The Trust has both. For some reason, the first hardly ever and the latter never names individual units of the B.M.P.

If Mr Parrett can find a copy (I cannot) there is also "*History of the Burma Military Police*" by Lt. Col. S.C.F. Peile, Rangoon, 1906.

● Colin R. Bruce seeks help with regard to the two bronze medals. **Web site note** – although illustrations were published in the original issue of Durbar the quality of reproduction was so poor that it does not merit repeating here. Descriptions only, therefore, of:

1. Bronze, 41.2mm in diameter. The inscription around the edge of the reverse reads IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SIGNING OF THE ARMISTICE" and at the bottom "WAR 1914 - 18". The inscription in the centre reads "PRESENTED BY THE CITIZENS OF BOMBAY 23rd NOV. 1918 TO THE TROOPS OF THE

DEFENDED PORT". Does anyone know how many were minted and where they were made?

2. Has on the obverse the effigy of Dupleix with, around the edge, the inscription "ETABLISSEMENTS FRANCAIS DANS L'INDE". On the reverse "MEDAILLE D'HONNEUR FORCES PUBLIQUES". The history behind or about Dupleix, the French commander in early French India, is in the encyclopaedia. Does anyone know of any reference to or record of this early colonial "militia" award? The medal, measuring 28.6mm, is cast in bronze. Colin continues, "I have done considerable research on the various Indian Princely States - especially portrait coinage from various catalogues. I would like to invite inquiries on this subject. The overlap is that the same coinage dies appear to have been used for medals also. Finally, can anyone say if the book "*India and the War*" published by Hodder and Stoughton in 1915 was ever republished?

---

## THE NORTH BENGAL MOUNTED RIFLES and

## SOUTHERN PROVINCES MOUNTED RIFLES

### THE NORTH BENGAL MOUNTED RIFLES

Prior to 1917, Mounted Rifles were classified for precedence after Engineers, but from that date any remaining units were brought into the Cavalry list. The NBMR takes seniority from 1889, and not from its original raising as a Volunteer Rifle Corps in 1873, and is in seventh place, between the Bombay Light Patrol (originally Bombay Light Horse) and the Punjab Light Horse. The 1939 composition was HQ, 2 (mounted) Squadrons and 4 Motor Troops, with a strength of 413 all Ranks (411 Europeans, 2 Anglo-Indians). In 1944, the strength was 225 all Ranks (all Europeans); 199 members joined the regular forces in WWII as Officers and 17 as ORs. It was neither embodied during WWII nor called out for ID duties since 1919.

### THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES MOUNTED RIFLES

The SPMR with seniority from 1904 took the ninth place between the Punjab Light Horse and the Chota Nagpur Regiment. Its 1939 composition was HQ, 2 (mounted) Troops, I Armoured Car Section and 10 Motor Troops. The strength was 384 all ranks in 1939 and 256 in 1944 (all Europeans in both cases; 282 members joined the Regular forces in WWII as Officers and 2 as ORs. The unit was not embodied in WWII, but part was called out for ID duties in 1921 as a result of the Moplah rebellion.

Notes: -

- The cavalry units were 90 to 100% European, unlike other units where the Anglo-Indians were in the majority. AF(I) units, classified as "British Troops", enlisted Europeans and Anglo-Indians but a few Goans, Parsees, indigenous Jews and, in one unit, Armenians, were also enlisted.
- All Ranks in the cavalry provided their own horses (hunters, polo ponies, retired racehorses etc.) against a forage and groom allowance. The Motor Troop, introduced as the horse population fell, was four or five men in a private motor car for which the owner received a mileage allowance.

## UNIT BADGES

The badges of all units as existing in 1939 are displayed in the Indian Army Memorial Room at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. In response to the same article Elizabeth Talbot - Rice (270) writes:

- .....you may be interested to know of an article by "Video", which appeared in a volume entitled U(nited) P(lanters) A(ssociation of) S(outhern) I(ndia) 1893-1953, a copy of which is held by the National Army Museum. It gives a history of the unit including some amusing reminiscences.

To summarise; raised as South Provinces Mounted Infantry February 1904 by Lt. Col. A.W. MaCrae. CIE VD of Peirce Leslie and Co. Ltd. of Calicut, who commanded the Malabar Volunteer Rifles. He was appointed temporary commandant of the new unit in addition to his previous command. "Infantry" altered to "Rifles" early 1905. It was intended to confine membership to planters but recruiting was extended. In January 1905 the corps comprised 106 planters, 30 mercantile men, 27 ICS, 25 PWD and other engineers, 19 police, 17 Salt and Abkari Dept., 11 Survey and other services and 1 missionary. There were detachments at Calicut, Munnar, Tinnevely and Bezwada. Training consisted of a two-week camp and a musketry course fired at a convenient range.

On the formation of the Auxiliary Force in 1920 only the Munnar detachment retained its horses. There was a Machine Gun Company at Madras, 15 Light Motor Patrols elsewhere, armed with Lewis guns and using subsidised private cars. The strength on 31 March 1922 was 483.

There was another reorganisation in 1933: HQ Madras; Madras Detachment (Armoured Car Section and LMP); Munnar Group (Mounted Troop): Northern Group comprising Coimbatore, N and S Anamallai, Nilgiri-Wynaad and Meppadi/Manantoddy LMPs; Southern Group with Madura, Tuticorin/Ambassamudram, Quilon/Rani Venture and Permadi/Mandakagan LMPs. The unit was disbanded 15th August 1947. To its role of internal security was added, in 1938, training for potential officers.

