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THE INDIAN FLYING CORPS 1914-1915

Shamus O.D. Wade

Various items of information have survived about the Indians who flew with the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War. But the Indian Flying Corps of 1914-1915 seems to have been almost totally forgotten. An Indian Army officer applied to the Commander-in-Chief in India for employment as an airman in 1910. His application was refused. A Royal Artillery officer attended army manoeuvres at Rawalpindi in 1912 with an early type of Farman biplane and a French pilot, both imported at his own expense. A few flights were made - the first in India - but ended with disaster to the plane. However, these few flights were enough to concentrate military thinking on the new weapon. An Indian Flying School was formed. It was housed in the barracks of the deserted cantonment at Sitapur. The staff were Indian Army officers who had first learnt to fly at their own expense in England when on leave, and then completed a Royal Flying Corps course at Farnborough. Mechanics and material came from England. By 1914 things had gone so well that the first instruction course was due to start in September 1914.

With the advent of the First World War, every available pilot was needed immediately. The Sitapur Flying School was dispersed. Pilots, staff and equipment were all needed for immediate active service. The Indian Flying Corps was first in action with the, Indian Expeditionary Force sent to Egypt, carrying out important reconnaissance work against the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. When this attack failed the Corps was replaced by a Royal Flying Corps squadron. The personnel were sent to Mesopotamia.

The air forces of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force consisted of a contingent provided by Australia, supplemented by trained men from India and the men of the Indian Flying Corps sent from Egypt. Aircraft and aviation stores were provided by the Imperial Government. Excellent work was done in Mesopotamia but some men and most of the stores were lost in the retreat to Kut and in the siege.

More and more air squadrons were needed at every front by mid-1915 so it was decided that air organisation for the war should be concentrated under one authority. In the winter of 1915, the Indian Flying Corps ceased to exist as a separate body.

This account is based on material in "*The Army in India and its Evolution, including an account of the establishment of the Royal Air Force in India*". Published in Calcutta in 1924, this seems to have been a semi-official publication. It was re-printed by Anmol Publications of Delhi in 1985.

Did the officers of the Indian Flying Corps wear their own distinctive badges? I do not believe I have ever come across any. Can anyone provide an answer? Ed.

THE 63rd BENGAL NATIVE INFANTRY AND THE SUTLEJ MEDAL

Lt Col A A Mains

The Sutlej campaign medal given for the 1st Sikh War, 18 December 1845 to 22 February 1846, was produced in four types with three clasps. The actual battles commemorated were "MOODKEE 1845" (Mudki), "FEROZESHUHUR 1845" (Ferozeshah), "ALIWAL 1846" and "SOBRAON 1846".

The medal was sanctioned by a General Order dated 16 April 1846, and the method of issue was unique and necessitated it being issued in four different forms. The first action in which the recipient took part conditioned the medal's form, i.e., being present at Moodkee gave the recipient the medal inscribed "MOODKEE" and his presence at any of the subsequent battles merited the issue of the appropriate clasp. The 1st and 2nd Gurkhas, who were present at (and received the Battle Honours for) Aliwal and Sobraon, received the medal inscribed "ALIWAL" and the clasp "SOBRAON".

The 63rd Bengal Native Infantry, later the 9th Gurkha Rifles, were undoubtedly present at Sobraon, where they captured a Sikh Battle Standard, and were granted the appropriate Battle Honour by General Order dated 12 August 1846. The Regimental History does not state categorically that the Regiment was present at Ferozeshuhur, but does state that it was detached to protect the flank of Littler's Division when he marched to reinforce the British main army. The Regimental History further states that "the Regiment, entrenched, saw the retreat of the defeated Sikhs", i.e., from the battle of Ferozeshuhur.

The lack of the Battle Honour "Ferozeshuhur" gave rise to the belief that the men of the 63rd BNI were only entitled to the Sutlej medal inscribed "SOBRAON", and this is given in Gurkha Museum Publication No 2 ("Campaign Medals issued to men of Gurkha Regiments in British service"). There the matter would have rested had not a Sutlej medal inscribed "FEROZESHUHUR with clasp SOBROAN" granted to a Captain Ormsby, 63rd BNI, not come onto the market. Captain Ormsby is mentioned in the Regimental History as having been wounded at Sobraon. The purchaser queried the accuracy of the entry in Gurkha Museum Publication No 2; enquiries were made and it has been established from documents in the India Office Library and Records that Sutlej medals were issued to men of the 63rd as below:

- 1017 - inscribed "FEROZESHUHUR", clasp "SOBROAN"
- 94 - inscribed "FEROZESHUHUR", no clasp
- 5 - inscribed "SOBROAN", no clasp

Thus there is no doubt that the medal inscribed "FEROZESHUHUR" was issued to the men of the Regiment as a whole.

There still remains the question of the Battle Honour. The two general principles - first, that the Headquarters and at least 50% of the unit must have been present, and second, that there was a campaign medal (and clasp), have been fulfilled. There remains the geographical area; it could be argued that if the medal was issued then the unit must have been present. But in this case the unit, if present, was not actively engaged. Indeed, Spink's *"British Battles and Medals"* lists the 63rd as being entitled to the Ferozeshuhur Medal for being part of the garrison of Ferozepur.

Was the Honour claimed and refused, or did the Regiment not claim it? An intriguing question which will probably never be answered.

THE HEIRESS AND THE VICAR'S SON

Tim Ash

On a grey, clouded morning in February, 1989, I arrived at the India Office Library and Records, all set for an absorbing day of research. It was closed!

Not to be defeated I decided on a perambulation around London to places where subjects of Indian interest might be found. At my final port of call I was rewarded with a darkly tarnished Mutiny medal awarded to Lieutenant C.K.M. Walter, suspended from an old and faded riband. His Regiment had been erased, which suggested to me a subject possibly worthy of further research, though the vendor obviously deemed it a rather unworthy item.

Charles Kenneth Mackenzie Walter, the son of the Reverend Weaver Walter and Lillian, his wife, was born on the 10th of June 1833, at Gate Burton, Lincolnshire, where his father was Vicar. The Reverend Walter had the pleasure of baptising his son some two months later.

For the next eighteen years the boy remained "living under his father's roof", latterly at Bonby, Barton-on-Humber, and was educated by him - a possibly secluded life style to prepare him for his future career. Nevertheless, on 2nd March 1851- the Professors of Mathematics and Classics, Fortifications, and French at Addiscombe Military Academy pronounced him qualified as a Cadet for the East India Company's Military Service in the Infantry, and without further ado he was despatched as an Ensign to Calcutta.

To obtain a Commission in the East India Company's Military Service aspiring applicants, or more likely their fathers on their behalf, had to conform with the custom of the day - to seek patronage. To get through the door of East India House it was necessary for the anxious applicant to have been "nominated" by a Director of the Company, to whom the young man had been "recommended" by a person of quality who would certify that he, or in Walter's case, a lady, was "well acquainted with his family, character and connections".

The lady who "recommended" Walter, and who was "well acquainted with his family", was a very formidable female of the period - a 35 year old heiress, Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts, and one wonders how the Reverend Weaver Walter, a humble village parish priest from the north of England, became acquainted with her. Angela Burdett-Coutts was a philanthropist whose interests extended throughout the English speaking world. She was particularly concerned with advancing the cause of the dark skinned races, and was a patron of Rajah James Brooke of Sarawak. She was the friend of many politicians of the highest standing and a whisper from her sometimes had the effect of an Order in Council. Tall, slender and elegant, she held council in her palatial house at 1 Stratton Street, Piccadilly, from whence she had found the time to write to the Honourable Court of Directors on behalf of Charles Kenneth Mackenzie Walter.

After three and a half years in India, in December 1855, Walter left regimental soldiering with the 73rd B.N.I. and joined the ranks of those Military Officers in Civil or Political

Employ, being appointed to the staff of the Agent to the Governor General for the States of Rajpootana (Rajputana), and it was in this employment that he was to spend the remainder of his career.

In 1857 there occurred the Indian Mutiny, for which Walter received his one and only campaign medal - awarded for his pursuit of the Nusseerabad mutineers - which so fortuitously came to my notice on what had appeared to be a day of gloom. The Mutiny passed and Walter continued in his Political Employment in various posts in Rajputana.

However, it is as the founding father of the Mayo College at Ajmer that Walter should be remembered, as the following extract from "*The Mayo College, the Eton of India*", by Herbert Sherring (1897) shows. It is an educational establishment that flourishes still.

- "The credit of originating the idea of the Mayo College must be given to the late Colonel Walter who, in his Bhartpur Agency Report of May 28, 1869, wrote as follows:-
- "It is no easy matter to decide what course we ought to pursue in order to ensure to the sons of the aristocracy of this country a liberal and enlightened education: but I think the time has, or must shortly come, when the Government of India will find itself compelled to move in the matter.
- When the natural guardians are alive, we could of course only earnestly press and urge upon them the desirability of receiving every advantage that education can offer to their children, but when as in the case of Bhartpur, the Government becomes the guardian of the minor I think we ought in future, without fear of the consequences on the score of prejudice or misinterpretation of our intentions, to insist upon the youth being brought up as a gentleman should be.
- But to carry this into effect, we must first of all establish an Eton in India. We require a college on an extensive scale, with ample accommodation within its walls for a large number of pupils and the followers, (a few in number, of course), who would accompany them. A complete staff of thoroughly educated English gentlemen, not mere book-worms, but men fond of field sports and out-door exercise, would be necessary, and with these should be associated the elite of the Native gentlemen belonging to the Education Department. The pupils, or rather their guardians, the tutors, should be allowed ample funds from the coffers of the State to which they belonged, and the holidays should be spent in constant travel all over the continent of India with an occasional visit to their own homes.
- Many will say that such a scheme is impossible. I admit it is surrounded with difficulties, but I do not think they are insuperable. If we desire to raise the Chiefs of India to the standard which they must attain in order to keep pace with the ever advancing spirit of the age, if we wish to make clear to them that our only object is to perpetuate their dynasties, and to make them worthy feudatories of the crown of England, we must place within their reach greater facilities for bestowing on their sons a better education than they can possibly now obtain. Then, and not till then, can we hope to see the Native Princes of India occupying the position they ought to hold as the promoters of peace, prosperity and progress amongst their own people, and the hearty supporters of British authority and power."

Lord Mayo, Viceroy and Governor General from 1869 until his assassination in 1872, attached the greatest importance to these words, and when he came to Ajmer in October 1870, in the course of his eloquent speech delivered in full Durbar before the Chiefs and Princes of Rajpootana, he set forth his wishes on the subject of starting a Raj Kumar College.

The Mayo College was opened at Ajmer in 1875, the inspiration of Charles Kenneth Mackenzie Walter, in which he maintained an active participation until his retirement to England. It was not, however, his only achievement, for amongst his other acts was the founding of the Walter Hospital for Women at Udaipur, where he served for some years. In April 1888 he received the cordial congratulations of the Governor General in Council on the result of his efforts to promote the social welfare of the Rajpoot classes, as evinced by the proceedings of a large Committee from the Rajpoot States, assembled at Ajmer for the purpose of curtailing marriage and funeral expenses amongst Rajpoots and raising the marriageable age of children. He left the Service in 1890 and, in May of that year, was appointed by Queen Victoria to be a Companion of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India.

Colonel Charles Kenneth Mackenzie Walter died in London on Christmas Day, 1892, after a long and painful illness. I wonder if Angela Burdett-Coutts had followed the career of the young man she had "recommended" for the East India Company's Military Service? If so, she must have felt some particular sense of satisfaction in his achievements, which so coincided with her own aspirations. She died at the age of 92 in 1907 and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Colonel Walter's last resting place, alas, is unknown to me.



ANOTHER FIRST DAY POSTAL COVER - 3rd CAVALRY

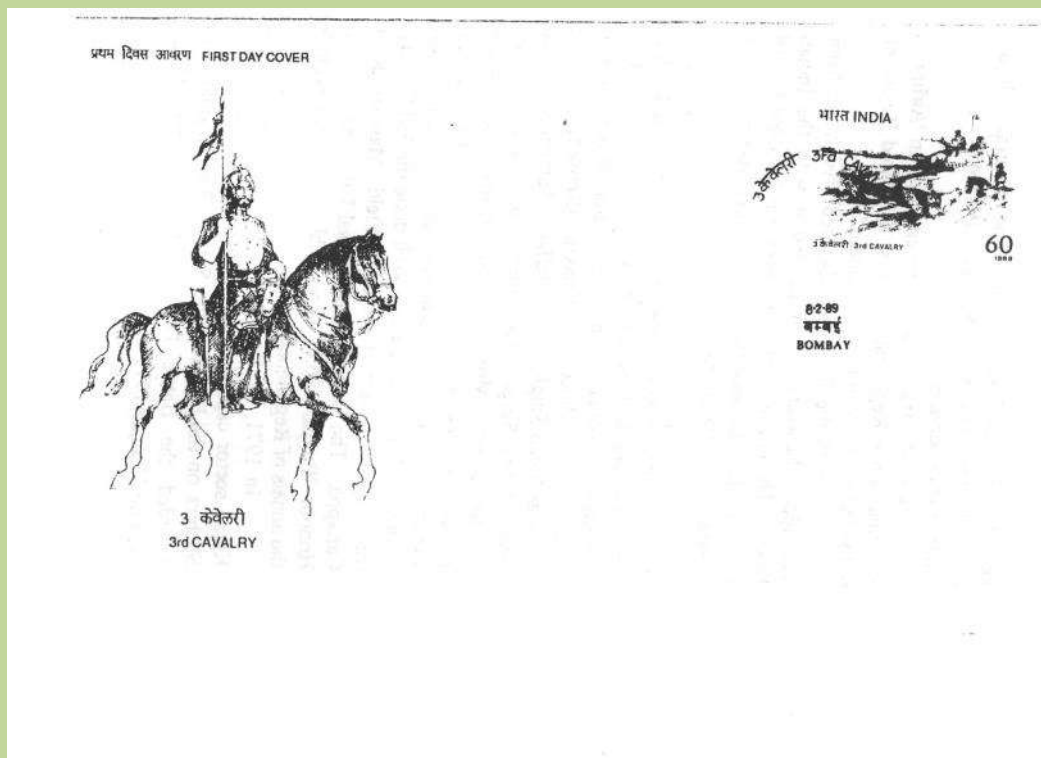
Cyril Walters

The cover illustrated was issued on 8 February 1989 and features a modern tank on the stamp and a nineteenth century Sowar on the cover. It was designed by Pulak Biswas and the cancellation by Alka Sharma. The accompanying descriptive article read as follows:

"Born and bred in the Cavalry tradition, 3rd Cavalry draws its lineage from 7th Irregular Cavalry raised in 1841 at Bareilly, and its off-spring, 17th Irregular Cavalry raised at Sultanpur in 1846. Often re-designated, by the turn of the century they were called 5th Cavalry and 8th Cavalry. The two regiments serving in India and abroad saw action in Afghanistan, Bhutan, Mesopotamia and Palestine earning Battle Honours Afghanistan 1879-80 and Mesopotamia 1916-18.

They were amalgamated in 1922 to form the 5th/8th Cavalry, re-designated in 1923 as 3rd Cavalry, which was amongst the first Regiments to be Indianised.

In 1941, whilst still in the process of being equipped with armoured cars, 3rd Cavalry campaigned in Malaya to stem the Japanese tide. Names of battle fields like Taiping, Sungei Pattani, Penang Island, Perak River and Slim River were added to its history. Defying the Japanese in combat, the Regiment earned the commendation, "The Third Cavalry stood fast". It earned the Battle Honours "North Malaya" and "Central Malaya" and Theatre Honour "Malaya 1941-42" for its commendable services.



In 1946, 3rd Cavalry converted to an 'Airborne Reconnaissance Regiment', the first armoured Regiment of the Indian Army to be so designated.

In 1948 the Regiment liberated Hyderabad from marauding Razakars and integrated it with the Indian Union. The era of Centurion tanks was heralded by 3rd Cavalry which became the first armoured regiment to be re-equipped in the fifties.

On 8 September, 1965, when enemy tanks swept through Khem Karan village to capture the Beas Bridge, they were checked by the 3rd Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Salim Caleb (later Major General Salim Caleb, Maha Vir Chakra (Retired): Lance Daffadar Sahib Singh, Lance Daffadar Tarsem Singh and Sowar Udmi Singh were among those who received gallantry awards. Most treasured perhaps is the 'Shabash" it received personally from the late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Prime Minister of India, and a note recording "Well done Caleb - Well done the 3rd Cavalry" from India's foremost soldier Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa. The Battle Honour "Asal Uttar" and Theatre Honour "Punjab 1965" were emblazoned with pride in the annals of Regimental history.

In 1971, the Regiment struck again in the Khem Karan sector capturing the hostile defensive position of Shehjera on the banks of the Sutlej. The Regiment was awarded the Battle Honour "Shehjera" and Theatre Honour "Punjab 1971".

Personnel of all communities serve in the Regiment, and have earned two Param Vishisht Seva Medals, one Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, one Maha Vir Chakra, two Vir Chakras, eight Sena Medals, eleven Mentions in Despatches and three Commendation Cards.

MILITARY FIELD TELEGRAPH IN INDIA IN THE 19th CENTURY

PART II

Alan Harfield

Following the establishment of the civil telegraph office at Jalalabad a military line was laid behind the advancing troops and this was successfully laid from Jalalabad to Safed Sang on 12 April 1879. Communications were established over a distance of thirty miles with a military telegraph office being established at Safed Sang which operated continuously for 19 days until it was replaced by a civil office. There was, however, a major problem when setting up permanent stations due to the differences in operating procedures, so that the military lines were never connected to the civil lines. It was normal procedure to set up two separate offices, one manned by military telegraphists and the other by civil operators and, when necessary, messages were transferred from one office to the other by hand.

The Kandahar Field Force, which was operating in South Afghanistan, had a telegraph train from the 4th Company, Bengal Sappers and Miners, under the command of Lieutenant P. Haslett RE. This section was only used on two occasions and in the report of the operation the comments by the Force commander show that he was not greatly impressed with the field telegraph capability. He commented:

"... In purely field operations, however, opportunity can seldom be found for the employment of the field telegraph and, in a climate where heliographs can nearly always be used, army signalling would be resorted to in preference to establishing regular telegraphic communications between detached posts but it seems unnecessary to maintain a separate company of Sappers & Miners as a telegraph company..."

It was obvious at that time the introduction of communications by telegraphy was meeting with opposition within the army. The extensive and successful employment of the military telegraph system in the Khyber Field Force was due to the enthusiastic efforts of Colonel FR. Maunsell, who commanded the Royal Engineers.

Appreciating the reluctance of officers to use the telegraph system he nevertheless continued to promote the advantages of this form of communication. In his report he comments:

"...It was fully apparent to me, and had I not exercised considerable determination and energy, the military line would certainly not have been used at all, the junior officers in charge would have succumbed under the opposing difficulties; but having been chiefly responsible in the formation of the train, and being in a responsible post, I was enabled to keep it under my immediate direction, and so was fully cognisant of all that happened and managed to smooth out all difficulties. It was easy to perceive that it was not according to the idea of the Civil Telegraph Department (although the officer present was most obliging) and the Quartermaster General's Department had been led to adopt the same idea..."

The Telegraph Train gained credit through the speed and efficient manner in which the lines were laid. One report comments that the

"...Sappers commenced an overhead line directly the troops moved and with a rapidity which reflects great credit on their construction, the office getting into Gandamak the same time as the advance guard..."

There was, of course, a certain amount of rivalry between the military telegraphist and linemen and those employed by the Civil Telegraph Department. The Civil Superintendent on the line to Gandamak expressed his feelings in his report, saying

I commenced my line on 14th April, the moment I received permission to do so but the Sapper line was already going, and all interest and heart was taken out of my work, which was simply replacing another line..."

Following the close of the Afghan operations the Sappers & Miners continued to train telegraphists and had formed Telegraph Sections whilst the Civil Telegraph Department continued to advance the network of telegraph lines and stations throughout India. In addition, the Civil Telegraph Department men and equipment were used in many of the military operations such as the Naga Hills campaign of 1879-1880, and even extended their commitment and provided a service for the expeditionary force which was sent to Upper Burma in October 1885.

The Madras Sappers & Miners provided a Telegraph Section from 'E' Company for the Egyptian War of 1882. The Section of telegraphists embarked with instruments and cable for 10 miles, together with mule transport, and joined the expeditionary force at Suez. However, as this short account is of the development of the military telegraph in India, the full details of the Suez operation will be the subject of a separate article.

In 1885 the Sappers & Miners Corps was reorganised. A Depot Company was formed in each of the three Corps. The Madras and Bengal Corps were allocated two telegraph sections each. 'A' Company of the Bombay Corps was allocated one telegraph section. The establishment of the Telegraph Section was published in India Army Circular number 97 of 31 July, 1885, which gave the rank structure as follows:

- British NCOs 6
- Havildar 1
- Naik 2
- Sepoys 24 Total - 33

However, by the end of that year, the establishment of the troop was increased and, in addition, an order was published changing the title of the Sapper & Miner Sepoy to that of 'Sapper'. The revised establishment was promulgated in Special India Army Order number 174 dated 16th December, 1885, and consisted of the following ranks:

- British NCOs 8
- Havildars 2
- Naiks 3
- Sappers 32 Total - 45

The Telegraph sections continued to gain active service experience and were used during the Third Burma War (1885-1887), when a section of the Madras Sappers accompanied the

expeditionary force and were under the command of Lieutenant F. Glanville RE. Lieutenant Colonel E.W. Begbie was given the appointment of Director of Signalling and became responsible for the development and training of the military telegraph sections. The Service Companies of the Corps continued to train sappers in telegraph construction work, in addition to their normal Sapper duties. Telegraph Sections contained the men who were 'specialists' in telegraph construction and operation and these were used to supplement service companies when they were called upon to undertake telegraph installations.

The Bengal Corps provided a telegraph section, under the command of Lieutenant C.C. Percival RE for the Hazara Force in 1888 during the operations against the Black Mountain tribes. The telegraph sections provided excellent service during these operations and it was due to the increasing awareness of the need for such communications in an active service situation.

TELEGRAPH LINE RUNNING THROUGH the KHYBER PASS





The PESHAWAR TELEGRAPH OFFICE and TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

In January 1890 the Indian Telegraph Department assumed full control and responsibility for all the telegraph work in connection with military operations within the borders of India. With this change the telegraph equipment held by the Sapper Corps was handed over to the Indian Telegraph Department. The exception to this order was that equipment required for training purposes. It was ordered that in all future operations the 'civil' Telegraph Department would be responsible for the supply of telegraph communications for the army. This would be by the use of either the civil establishment, or the Sapper establishment of the officers and men who were to be attached to the Telegraph Department. The military would be attached to the civil department from time to time for a period of two years for training. This would, of course, solve the problem whereby the military and the civil operators were using different procedures, which had caused some small difficulties during the Afghan operations.

Two sub-divisions of telegraphs north of the river Ravi were to be operated entirely by Sappers. The army was to make 2 British officers, 3 British and 24 Indian sappers available, to be seconded to the Director General of Telegraphs to provide the staff for this commitment. In addition, reliefs were to be supplied, and a reserve to meet any emergency had to be catered for by the military. To meet this permanent requirement ten squads, each of 1 British and 8 Indian ranks, were to be retained at the headquarters of the Sapper Corps. Four squads were allocated to both the Bengal and the Madras Corps and two to the Bombay Corps.

The system, although sound on paper, proved to be ineffective as, at the end of their training course, officers did not necessarily return to their normal duties. They were then given the option of remaining with the military or being employed by the Public Works Department. Likewise, the other ranks who returned to the Corps headquarters after training gradually

became due to be posted to other companies and stations, and were eventually 'lost sight of', so that the ten squads were rarely, if ever, available should the need arise.

The question of raising a Telegraph Battalion, similar to that raised within the Royal Engineers in the British Army, was put forward but was rejected by the Government of India who did not see any requirement for such a unit and the resultant expenditure. It was said that it was probably not so essential in India as the field lines must necessarily be extensions of the existing telegraph system of the country, though an establishment available to accompany Indian troops to countries across the seas would be of great value.

The military continued to provide field communications and the Sapper Telegraph Sections supplied men and equipment for the frequent operations on the north-west and north-east frontiers of India, as well as providing telegraph sections for the Third China War (1900-1901).

At the close of the 19th century, telegraph communications within India were under the control of the Director General of Telegraphs and, during the closing years of the century, the future of the military telegraph sections in the Indian army appeared to be in some doubt. But the need for such sections was firmly established by the frequent calls for their use in operations and campaigns.

Despite the success of the telegraph sections in the Third China War the equipment held by the Sapper sections was still only held for "...Instructional and for use at camps of exercise..." and was not seen as a permanent operational requirement. As a result of the China War the amount of equipment held was increased and the following was authorised as from 1903 "for training":

- Five miles of permanent line
- Five miles of semi-permanent line
- Twenty miles of light aerial line
- Equipment for four telegraph offices and telephone circuits.

During the early years of the 20th century the need for telegraph units was accepted and changes and improvements were gradually made which eventually led to the formation of the Indian Signal Corps.

References and additional reading

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The photographs used in this article are reproduced courtesy of the Royal Signals Museum of Army Communications.

LETTERS AND QUERIES

● Tony Mains writes:

Comment on "The Services of the Bene Israel of India in the Bombay Army" (Vol. 10, No 4, Winter 1993).

I learnt a lot from Mr Pamm's article as, while I knew that there were indigenous Jews in India, I always connected them to the early nineteenth century refugees from Mesopotamia, such as the Sassoons, Gubbays and others of that ilk.

Mr Pamm mentions the more recent service of the community in the Medical and IDC field. As regards the former, I very much doubt if many obtained commissions in the IMS, as such a Commission was conditional on holding a British or equivalent medical qualification, which could not be obtained in India. On the other hand, an Indian qualification sufficed for the appointment in the IMD (Indian Medical Department) of Assistant Surgeon (Warrant Officer Class 1) or Sub Assistant Surgeon (Viceroy's Commissioned Officer).

As regards the service of Jews in the AF(I), the successor to the IDC, Appendix "H" to the unpublished report on the post war Indian Army contains details of the ethnic composition of units of the AF(I). Men of AF(I) units were classified as British troops and, while recruitment was supposed to be limited to Europeans and Anglo Indians, a number of fringe groups were also enlisted. The Appendix, compiled from evidence produced by units, breaks down strengths into Europeans and Anglo Indians, but some units have added a note of others:

Jews are mentioned in:

- Bombay Coast Battery RA 10
- No 3 (Bombay) Fortress Company RE 17
- Karachi Contingent (no individual breakdown) comprising: 37
 - No 4 (Karachi) Fortress Coy RE
 - Sind Rifles
 - No 2 (Karachi) Company MG Corps

Other units which listed other groups as "various", which could contain Jews, are:

- Bengal Nagpur Railway Battalion 40
- Madras & Southern Mahratta Railway Bn. 14
- 2nd Bn Bombay Baroda & Central India Railway Regiment 9

I understand that the Indian Chief of Staff on the Eastern front in the Bangladesh war was Brigadier Jacob, an indigenous Jew.

Editor's Note: The above letter was copied to Anthony Pamm who replied as follows:

The information on AF(I) service is much appreciated as I do not have any information on this so far beyond a mid-1890s reference to the Bene Israel youth drilling in the Volunteer Corps.

The Bene Israel are one of two ancient Jewish communities in India. The other is the Cochin Jewish community which is the surviving portion (after massacres by the Portuguese) of a Jewish settlement on the Malabar coast dating from the beginning of the first millennium A.D. Most of the Cochin Jews have now migrated to Israel and the remaining community is aged with few young people left.

Lt Gen J.F.R. Jacob (of Bangladesh war fame) who you mentioned is, I believe, from Cochin. The Bene Israel and the Cochin Jews maintained separate existences and spoke different Indian languages (Marathi and Malayalam). The third distinct Jewish group in India was formed of the much later arrivals (mentioned by you) from Baghdad and neighbouring regions in the 18th and 19th centuries, who also maintained a separate identity.

As regards the Bene Israel having obtained commissions in the IMS, I based my remarks on the listing in the British Jewry Book of Honour (1914-18) which lists some as holding commissioned rank in the IMS. (The British Jewry Book of Honour rolls can be regarded as fairly - but not totally - complete).

Editor's Note: Mr Pamm provided a photocopy of one page from this publication. - It listed six officers of the IMS, of whom one had the qualification of M.D. (Lon), one M.B.B. S. (Born.) and the remainder L.M.&S. (Born.) He also provided photocopied photographs of some of those he had mentioned in his article, along with biographical detail. I had hoped to reproduce these in DURBAR but now believe the illustrations will not copy well. I will give further thought to this.

● Tim Ash's article "A Notable Battle Honour - Beni Boo Ali" (Vol. 10, No 3, Autumn 1993) was picked up by Major General S C Sinha, PVSM (Retd), Director of the United Service Institution of India (with whom we enjoy an exchange of journals), who passed it on to the Regimental Colonels concerned. As a result, we have heard from Lieutenant General R I S Kahlon, UYSM, AVSM, Colonel of The Grenadiers, who writes:

"I would like to inform you that due to a restriction on number of pre-independence battle honours that can be emblazoned on our colours, battle honour Beni-Boo-Ali was not included in our Regimental Colours. We, however, continue to be proud of this battle honour and it finds a very prominent mention in all volumes of our regimental history published to date."

● Andrew Clark writes:

I am currently researching the history of lacework and embroidery on British military uniforms of the period 1750-1860. This research includes Indian uniforms over that same period. I would be interested in corresponding with any members with a similar interest.

● Ernest Gardner recently stayed with Major General Chand N Das in New Delhi. As a result of this, General Das has asked us to remind members that he has an extensive library on the Indian Army and would be willing to deal with any queries our members may have. In

addition, if any member is contemplating a visit to India he would be happy to advise on planning the trip, and on details of accommodation etc.

● Ian Sumner seeks help in identifying a number of buttons taken from a trade catalogue of the badge manufacturers J.R. Gaunt, dated about 1904, all apparently of Indian units. He believes most are of Imperial Service Troops, Auxiliary Force units, or Police Forces. There is no indication of size or metal.

Web site note - In the original journal these were sketches but in some cases we have now added photographs and have also amalgamated the answers that later appeared in Vol. 11, No. 2, Summer 1994.



- The legend reads *H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam*. There are two fish at the top, on either side of a spear head (?), the lower part containing an 'Arabic' inscription. The two fish recall those of the Bhopal arms - is it a Bhopali palace guard or livery button?

[It is certainly a Bhopal piece, but not one that I have seen before. Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum GCSI GCIE CI GBE succeeded to the *masnad* in 1901 and ruled until 17 May 1926 when she voluntarily abdicated in favour of her son, Nawabzada Hamidullah Khan. The *Mashir* (fish) supporters form part of the Bhopal coat of arms. I imagine the 'spear head' at the top is the fleur-de-lis pierced by three arrows, point down, which is the crest of the State coat of arms. Difficult to make out the inscription from this drawing. **Ed.**]

- A crown above *XXII* above *TC*. Is it something to do with the Supply and Transport Corps? I note from the 1913 Dress Regulations that O.C.s of units could wear a shoulder title of the unit number above the letters 'TC', but was this extended to the buttons? It is not the usual *STC* button.



- A crown above the Prince of Wales' feathers and a coronet, between the letters *VI*; below that are letters in script that might be *PWPC*. **Photo RCW**



Web site note – subsequently identified as 6th Prince of Wales' Cavalry (1901-1903) – later amalgamated with 7th Haryana Lancers to become 18th King Edward's Own Cavalry. Appears in gilt, and silver on gilt.

- A crown above crossed lances, and across them the letters *HIST* (?Hyderabad Imperial Service Troops). There is a small circular device beneath the crown, but there is no detail in the catalogue picture. **Photo RCW**



[I believe this was worn by 1 Hyderabad Imperial Service Lancers between 1897 and 1931. The circular device beneath the crown is the Nizam's emblem *Kulcha*, a round loaf of bread. Ed.]

Web site note – In the absence of specific buttons for the two Hyderabad I.S. Lancer regiments I have since amended my description to a generic button for both 1st and 2nd Hyderabad Imperial Service Lancers for the period 1893-1922

- Crossed lances below a weapon; to either side the letters *UL*, and below the figure 1. **Photo RCW**



[Ulwar (Alwar) Imperial Service Lancers. Ed.]

- A crown above *CP* above the figure 2.
- A smaller button, with a crown over *PSP*.
- The figure 6 on what might be a domed button.
- The letters *CPAF* within a wreath.



- A coat of arms with the letters *CBPG* on a scroll below. The arms are those of Cooch Behar, hence *CB*, but what is *PG* - Palace Guard?



- An eight pointed star within a wreath, and in the circular centre the letters *CPP*.



- A crown above a bugle, with the letters *RR* within the strings. My first instinct was to say 'Rajput Rifles', but the catalogue predates the forming of that regiment by about fifteen years - and in any case, it appears on a page devoted to buttons of the three Presidency Armies, amongst the Bombay regiments.



Photo RCW

[There were three battalions of Rifle Regiment in the Bombay Infantry in the period 1889 to 1903:

- 4th Regiment (1st Bn Rifle Regiment) of Bombay Infantry, a predecessor of 104th Wellesley's Rifles and 1/6th Rajputana Rifles.
- 23rd Regiment (2nd Bn Rifle Regiment) of Bombay Infantry, a predecessor of 123rd Outram's Rifles and 4/6th Rajputana Rifles.
- 25th Regiment (3rd Bn Rifle Regiment) of Bombay Infantry, a predecessor of 125th Napier's Rifles and 5/6th Rajputana Rifles.

Might it have been one of these? Ed.]

Web site note - subsequently confirmed that it was worn by all three of the above listed regiments from about 1889, though the 4th wore it for some years before that. Major General Chand N Das also confirmed that he wore it throughout his service as an Officer in the Rajputana Rifles.

- A smaller button with an eight pointed star, and in the circular centre, the letters (*CLH* below a crown - Calcutta Light Horse?)



Photo RCW

Web site note - confirmed as Calcutta Light Horse as worn 1901-1947

- Another small one bearing the letters BP below a crown and within a wreath (the letters are of a slightly different style to those of No. 7 - are they police items?)



Web site note – subsequently confirmed as Bombay Police



OBITUARY

MAJOR GENERAL A A RUDRA, 15TH PUNJAB REGIMENT

An Appreciation

General "Jick" Rudra, who died at Delhi recently in his 98th year, had the distinction of having served in three armies, the British Army of 1915, the Imperial Indian Army and finally the army of independent India.

He was born into a Christian family from Bengal, his father being the first Indian Principal of Delhi's St Stephen's College. Jick, an undergraduate at Cambridge in 1915, enlisted in the ranks, served in France in the Royal Fusiliers, was twice wounded and attained the rank of Sergeant.

By the end of the war he had been recommended for a Commission in the British Army, but the India Office sent him to India to join the Officer Cadet Course at Indore, for commissioning into the Indian Army, where, in spite of his previous service in the British Army, he was placed below the Cadets who had joined the course before him.

He was commissioned as a King's Commissioned Indian Officer (KCIO) into the 28th Punjabis, later the 4/15th Punjab Regiment, with whom he fought in the Third Afghan War and the associated frontier operations. When it was decided to transfer compulsorily all KCIOs to the eight Indianised Battalions, Jick was so highly thought of in his unit that they

flatly refused to let him go and, after representations, his transfer was cancelled. He was one of three, the other two being in the 2nd Royal Lancers and Bombay Grenadiers respectively.

I first met him in Landi Kotal in 1939, when he was a substantive Major and I a wartime temporary Captain; I was a member of a Court Martial of which he was President and I well remember his courtesy and fair mindedness; in fact he was a perfect gentleman. He became a member of the Commander in Chief's Josh (Morale) Group in 1942, charged with countering Japanese subversion of Indian troops. I met him again when he arrived, exhausted, in Assam on a tour arranged in Delhi, which was completely divorced from reality - expecting that trains would run to time and connections would be made. He stayed with us in our small Intelligence Detachment mess, the same courteous uncomplaining Jick.

He had been promoted Colonel and later Brigadier, with the award of an OBE, but he never received an active command. At Independence he was a Major General holding the appointment of Military Secretary; at a time when every Indian officer was going up one, if not two ranks, his absolute integrity and fairness was a great asset to the new Indian Army.

His last appointment, still as a Major General, was GOC Madras Area from which he retired in 1951. He settled in Dehra Dun and continued to keep in touch with the British officers of 15 Punjab, visiting England several times. There were those who considered he should have had a higher appointment in Independent India, but his age and lack of experience in active service conditions probably told against him.

The Indian Army and his many friends in India and Britain will mourn the passing of a remarkable and well-loved figure. One of his last remarks was "Bad show - I shall not make my century".

AAM



BOOK REVIEW

● *ODD MAN OUT - THE STORY OF THE SINGAPORE TRAITOR*. Peter Elphick and Michael Smith. Hodder & Stoughton, £17.99

This is a true story, but one which might have come from the pen of a writer of spy fiction. A regular Officer of the Indian Army, an old Cheltonian, court martialled in Singapore and sentenced to death for spying for the Japanese - this is known; but there are no records existing of the Court Martial, or whether the sentence was confirmed or by whom. What is known is of the spy, Heenan's, bizarre end - not executed by a firing squad, but shot in the back of the head by a Military Police Sergeant on the dockside and the body toppled into Singapore harbour.

There are three areas of special interest - first, the "vetting" process by which newly commissioned Officers were chosen by Regiments during their first year in India; the authors give the impression that all Officers were so vetted. This was not so - while many Regiments were sufficiently popular to have more candidates than vacancies, others had to accept what they were given. What was extraordinary was that Heenan had to do an extra six months attached to a second British regiment, rather like a "dropped term" at Sandhurst. It can only be imagined that his first British C.O. had reported adversely on him, but he was given a second chance with a different C.O.

It seems strange that he became a GSO III (Air Liaison) in Malaya without any specialised training. Pre-war candidates in India for the post of AILO (Air Intelligence Liaison Officer), which did not carry Staff Officer status, were required to attend and be recommended by a Command Intelligence Course. This illustrates the efforts of Heenan's C.O.s to pass him on to someone else. He had already been shunted off to the RIASC, but returned by them before his period of probation had expired.

The third area is that of the Court Martial. The authors have tied themselves in knots here - they devote a page to the question of an appeal and to whom it should have been made, and, further, who would have had to confirm the proceedings. They say, quite correctly, that the authorities had much on their minds in January 1942, but go further in saying that there was no precedent in a case of treason by a British Officer of the Indian Army, and this may have led to the Adjutant General's office delaying the confirmation. I do not believe that there was any confusion. Heenan, like all Indian Army officers, holding a commission in "H.Ms Land Forces", was subject to the British Army Act and the Court Martial would have been held under that Act. There was no appeal as such at that time, but the findings and sentence had to be "confirmed" by the authority that convened the Court, after receiving legal advice from the Judge Advocate's Department. We do not know who that authority was - if it was Murray-Lyon, the Divisional, or Heath, the Corps Commander. Both had much on their minds at that time. But nowhere was there a precedent for Heenan's 'hole and corner' execution, although he probably richly deserved death.

The author's go into Heenan's background at length to try and discover the reasons for his treason. A well written and researched book, which I would recommend. AAM

