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INDIAN MILITARY POSTAL SERVICES

Alan Harfield

Whilst sorting through photographs sent home from India many years ago I came across a photograph of a Chaprassi who had been employed in the Headquarters of the North West Army at Rawalpindi. The Chaprassi (Chuprassy) was an official office-messenger and as such wore a local pattern military style uniform whilst on duty. These messengers were responsible for the delivery of all military mail within the headquarters, which covered quite an extensive area, and the collection and delivery of mail to and from the Post Office in the camp compound. The postal system that had developed in India had its origins in the former *dawk*, or *dak*, system that had evolved throughout India and the local mail delivery by the Chaprassi system was really an extension of the postal service. Of course, the Chaprassis were civilians employed by the military and paid from the military vote and were not employees of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department.

In order to appreciate the military involvement in the development of the *dawk*, *dak* or postal system, it is necessary to examine the origin of the country-wide network that was developed by both the civil and military authorities in the late 19th century and the early part of this century.

Mohini Lal Mazumdar writes in his book dealing with the Imperial post offices of British India that the *dak* system of India dates back to as early as 1296 and was certainly used by Secunder Lodi (1488-1518) to communicate with his army and "Along the ancient high road, highways or foot tracks in Indian and Persian empires, there were rest-sheds or halls at distances of several miles for the convenience of all travellers and caravans. In ancient India these rest sheds or halls were known as *chaturvatikas*, which meant a shed with four sloping thatched roofs on walls at a crossing or junction of four roads ..." These were the forerunner of the *Dak Bungalow*.

The Indian word '*dak*' means 'a shout' and is derived from the call that the postman, or *dak* runner with his jingling bells on the stick, or in the case of urgent mail, a galloping horseman, would shout when approaching a rest house. This warned the men in the station that a runner was approaching and to have the exchange of mail ready.

In the 16th century the *dak*, or *dawk*, runner carried a long pole in which the letters were stuck in the shaft at the top end of it for delivery. The pole was also used for vaulting over ditches, streams etc. and also became a symbol of the *dak* runner. The message delivery system gradually evolved so that by the time the Honourable East India Company became established in India it was able to inherit a message delivery, or postal service, that was already in place and effective.

As the East India Company gradually expanded in India and trade increased the Company found that there was a need for a regular delivery service for letters between its settlements, factories and fortifications and so established their own runner service. Company servants,

including military officers, were permitted to make use of this service for all official correspondence free of charge. Private individuals could not make use of this postal system although it was possible for them, either singly or collectively, to hire a private runner for the transportation of their correspondence.

The East India Company first took steps to establish a postal system between Bombay and Madras in 1688 by which letters were conveyed on an overland route. Lord Clive organised a regular postal system on 24 March 1766 and zamindars, or landlords, were asked to supply 'dawk runners' for various routes and for this service received a reduction in their rent in proportion to the number of runners provided. This was the start of the Zamindari Dawk system in the Presidency of Bengal for the conveyance of dawk into the interior of the district for civil, police and military administration. On 7 July in the same year Clive imposed a set of rules to be observed by the Postmaster and his subordinates, which resulted in the service being known as 'Clive's Post'.

The postal system set up by Clive was reorganised by Warren Hastings eight years later, on 17 January 1744, on a regulation which permitted private letters from the public being despatched through the Company's 'dawk' for the first time on payment of a fee. This plan also established the first Imperial Post Office - Calcutta General Post Office - which was set up under a Postmaster General on 31 March 1774. In the same year Bengal was connected with Madras by overland mail which was routed via Ganjam. In the following year a similar service was introduced from Calcutta to Bombay. The postal system developed as the East India Company expanded its influence and control on the continent and over the years there were a number of changes made in the actual administration of the system and variations in the charges made.

'Free' or 'Post Free' letters were transported with the authority of the East India Company who granted the right to certain officers to use this form of franking. Officials such as Governors-General, Bishops and other senior civil servants were given permission to use the 'free mailing' scheme as were some grades of military officers. Although in some instances members of the army, such as serving soldiers, were given this privilege, such mail required the personal endorsement of the Commanding Officer of the regiment. The Post Office authorities were notified from time to time in the press the title, or designation, of those persons who were permitted to use the 'Free' postal service.

The postal regulations that were published on 9 July 1798 authorised a number of appointments automatically to carry the privilege of free postal service. The instructions ruled:

"...That all letters of every description not on the public service, shall be liable to postage, except those bearing the signature of the Governor General, the Commander in Chief, or a member of the Supreme Council on the envelope or such as may come addressed to them respectively..."

The list of those authorised to use the free postal service followed and apart from the civilian appointments the following military appointments were included:

- The Commander in Chief (plus his Secretary and Persian Interpreter),
- The General Officers on the Staff and Commanding Officers at Stations;
- The Adjutant General and his Deputy;

- Military Paymaster General, Paymasters to Military Stations;
- Majors of Brigade;
- The Revenue, Commercial and Military Boards;
- Their respective Secretaries

The list was revised and enlarged periodically as and when the requirement arose. A revised list was published on 26 June 1822 together with a full instruction setting out the method of application for the privilege of free postage. The complete list was published again in the Post Office Act of 1837, and in 1854 when the postal system was reformed.

The design for the '**Free**' stamps used in the earlier years of the Post Office varied from Presidency to Presidency and even from town to town within each Presidency. These stamps included the name of the town or city, the date, sometimes the weight and the word '**Free**'. Rule 3 of the Rules for stamping, laid down in the Post Office Act of 1837, stated that '...service, soldiers and other free letters..' should be stamped with an oval, bearing the word '**Free**' and a standard design was then used throughout India. In 1852 the stamp '**Free**' was replaced by the word '**Service**' although the reason for this change appears not to have been recorded, but the change was only used in a very limited number of stations. This was the first instance of the military using a free postal service with the word 'Service' being inscribed on the envelope, to ensure that the letter or package was transported free of any postal charge. The most important development in the middle of the 19th century was that of the railways and, in a Minute dated 9 September 1853, Lord Dalhousie recommended the use of the newly opened railways for the transportation of the Post Office mail, imposing on the Railway Companies (which were then private companies) a definite obligation to carry both letter and "bhangy (banghy) parcel mails...". This system was introduced with a view to replacing the earlier and traditionally slower means of the use of the dak runner.

The privilege of the use of free postage varied from Presidency to Presidency and, while it is recorded that the privilege was granted within the Bombay Presidency, no such concession was given in Madras. The following notice appeared in the Bombay Gazette on 5 December 1832, in order to guard against the misuse of the free mail concession granted to the military:

"...In order to guard the Post Office Department against loss in revenue, officers whose duty is to frank letters of soldiers and sepoys of the native army are in every instance to have such letters brought open to them and after having satisfied themselves that they are virtually the letters of the soldiers or sepoys to see them sealed in their presence previous to franking them. They will also be pleased not to frank any such letters containing enclosures or exceeding 1 Tola in weight and strictly to limit the above mentioned privileges to non-commissioned officers and privates of His Majesty's and Honourable Company's Naval and Military services, public Lascars and Dooly Bearers. By Order of the Governor in Council...."



1937 issue 2 annas vermillion stamp - Dak runner

Notes:

- Chuprassy, Chaprassi an office messenger - the bearer of a chapras, i.e. badge plate inscribed with the name of the office to which the bearer is attached.
- Dawk, Dak Post - property transport by relays men and horses and thence 'the mail' or letter post.
- Tola - an Indian weight. By the Regulation VII of 1833, putting the British Indian coinage on its 19th century footing, the Tola weighed 180 grams.

(*HOBSON-JOBSON*, by Col. Henry Yule and AC Burnell, London, 1903)

(to be continued)



A MEMORABLE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY - 1907

Tim Ash

We are now well into the season of years towards the close of the 20th Century when Golden Anniversaries to commemorate the concluding events of the Second World War are becoming prominent. However, the early years of this century also provided a noteworthy event, the Golden Commemoration of the Indian Mutiny Veterans at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on 23rd December 1907.

It was very much an event for the surviving Veterans of the Mutiny themselves, rather than the broader general public. A high powered committee of 26 members was formed headed by Field Marshal Earl Roberts KG, VC. The War Office was given the task of verifying the claims of Veterans which was achieved mainly by reference to the Medal Rolls. For many months preceding the Commemoration wide publicity was given to the task of tracing surviving veterans, which resulted in a list of 1374 names, considered to be at least 80% of the survivors

"This list of surviving Veterans, by far the most complete and trustworthy that has ever been issued, private or publicly, has been compiled from many sources. Information was at first requested from two hundred and fifty special centres, including all the Veterans' Associations in the Kingdom, and the police in all the counties and chief towns; afterwards the services of a body of two hundred special correspondents in all parts of the country were enlisted, and each district was again searched. The Committee desire also to thank the kindly and untiring co-operation of about seventy of the chief provincial newspapers."

The salient points of the Programme of Commemoration were as follows:

- 1 pm. Inspection of the Mutiny Veterans in Hyde Park by Field Marshal Earl Roberts
- 1.30 pm. The Commemoration Dinner - Mock Turtle Soup: Roast Stuffed Turkey: Roast Beef: York Ham: Potato Salad: Plum Pudding: Mince Pies: Plum Cake: Dessert: Ale: Stout: Lemonade: Punch.
- 2.15 pm Toast to H.M. the King, proposed by Earl Roberts. Toast to the Survivors of the Indian Mutiny, proposed by Lord Curzon of Kedleston.

- Concluded by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" and "God Save the King"

A 42 page souvenir Programme was printed for the occasion by W.H Smith & Son. Its cover bears the insignia of the Star of India, in blue and gold, with beneath "IN MEMORY 1857". It is a significant little publication because it lists by name all those Veterans who had been traced. Whilst it would be too lengthy to reproduce these pages in DURBAR I give below the breakdown by Regiments and numbers traced and would be happy to check any names members might wish to query. The inclusion of a name does not necessarily indicate the Veteran attended as only 700 were able to do so. However, it would be verification that he was still alive 50 years on from the Mutiny. The 600 who were not able to attend were sent a Christmas hamper.

THE TIMES of Tuesday, December 24th, carried at page 6, columns 1-3, a lengthy report of the event, including a message from the King, telegrams from the Viceroy and Lord Kitchener and the texts of the speeches by Lord Roberts and Lord Curzon. Whilst this was a commemoration for the British Veterans of the Mutiny, the Native Indian ranks who had fought beside them were not forgotten, as Lord Curzon reminded the assembled company:-

"Lord Curzon, who was received with loud cheers, said the ceremony in which they were taking part that day - for it was a ceremony much more than it was a festival - was the natural complement to an incident that had occurred at the Delhi Durbar, close upon five years ago. There they were commemorating the Coronation of our King, whose gracious message had just been read. In a great amphitheatre, built within sight of that famous ridge, were assembled the Princes of India, the Civil and Military Officers, and the representatives of all the peoples and races of the mightiest Empire that East or West had ever seen. Suddenly there walked into that arena, unexpected by the audience and unannounced, a small and tottering band of veterans, some of them in civil dress, others of them in old and frayed uniforms, but all of them, bearing the medals and the ribbons on their breasts that told a glorious tale. The whisper went round that they were the Indian survivors of the Mutiny, who had been bidden to that famous scene of their heroism and their bravery nearly fifty years before. As soon as this fact was known, a roar of acclamation burst from that vast assemblage, and, amid shouting and tears - for even strong men broke down and wept - the veterans, the heroes of the great rebellion, passed to their appointed seats. (Cheers). What India did for its Indian veterans on that occasion, England, by the liberality of a great newspaper [The Daily Telegraph] and its proprietors, was doing for the English survivors that day. (Cheers)."

"Lord Roberts, on rising to reply, was warmly cheered by the veterans. He said that he could assure Lord Curzon that they, old soldiers and sailors, who were privileged to serve in India during the Mutiny of 1857, had listened to his eloquent speech with the keenest interest. Lord Curzon's tribute of praise and appreciation of the men who took part in quelling that Mutiny was cordially endorsed by all of them, while those of them, who had the privilege in assisting them in their difficult work were greatly gratified by his kind recognition of their efforts. (Cheers) He wished that the duty of responding to the toast could have been undertaken by someone with more claims that he had (cries of "No, no") to speak for the spirits of 1857, but the lapse of 50 years had carried off all those to whom the country then looked to protect its interests and to guard its honour. They who were left were little more than boys at that time, and there was no one alive now who held any position of responsibility at that period. It was not

upon them who were present that the burden of the crisis rested; it was upon the men whose names were inscribed around that hall. They who were feted there that day remembered what the men did by whom India was saved in 1857, and they were proud to think that they were privileged to serve with them. They had all gone to their rest, their "Last Post" had been sounded, and even the youngest among them could not have long to wait for the summons to join that glorious band."

And so, as the Veterans left the Royal Albert Hall that day, they marched off into the dusty pages of history, but even today their stories still appear to show that though (hey may be gone they are not yet forgotten. The break down by numbers of Veterans traced is as follows:

- Officers 366
 - NCOs and Men 950
 - Civilians of Lucknow 22 Men
- 36 Ladies
- Grand Total 1374

The numbers of NCOs and Men by Regiments:

Naval Brigade	48	32nd Regiment	21	82nd Regiment	32
1st Dragoon Guards	1	33rd Regiment	1	83rd Regiment	2
2nd Dragoon Guards	1	34th Regiment	19	84th Regiment	28
6th Dragoon Guards	24	37th Regiment	7	86th Regiment	1
7th Dragoon Guards	1	38th Regiment	43	87th Regiment	9
7th Hussars	1	42nd Regiment	46	88th Regiment	1
14th Hussars	7	51st Regiment	1	90th Regiment	43
9th Lancers	26	52nd Regiment	31	93rd Regiment	57
Irregular Cavalry	1	53rd Regiment	26	95th Regiment	1
Royal Horse Artillery	5	58th Regiment	1	Rifle Brigade	121
1st Regiment	1	60th Regiment	27	97th Regiment	2
5th Regiment	44	61st Regiment	5	1st Madras Fusiliers	57
8th Regiment	12	64th Regiment	20	2nd Bengal Fusiliers	1
10th Regiment	23	70th Regiment	7	Bombay Fusiliers (108th)	1
13th Regiment	1	75th Regiment	18	5th Bengal European Infantry	1
23rd Regiment	49	78th Regiment	21	106th Regiment	1
24th Regiment	6	80th Regiment	2	Military Train	6
27th Regiment	7	81st Regiment	25	2nd Military Train	7
					950

[Editor's Note: Regarding Lord Curzon's reference to the Mutiny Veterans at Delhi in 1903, "*History of the Delhi Coronation Durbar*" by Stephen Wheeler, published by John Murray, London, 1904, records that the original idea had been to invite any old soldier who had

fought on the British side during the Mutiny to attend at Government expense, but when it was found that over 1400 survivors fitted this description it was decided to limit it to officers and NCOs who had fought at Delhi and Lucknow. 28 Europeans and Eurasians and 387 Indians were present and all are named in the Durbar history, by Regiment. As with Tim Ash, I would be happy to confirm a name against the list if anyone is interested. One sentence in the description of the event stands out: "It may be added that there was one officer, and one alone, still serving on the active list of the Indian Army and present at Delhi, who might have headed the procession had he not been otherwise engaged. This was Lieutenant General Sir R. Low, commanding in Bombay". By the time of the 1911 Durbar the number had dropped to 113, again limited to those who had fought at Delhi and Lucknow, and all are named - checks available if anyone is interested.

On the subject of the Mutiny, spotted by Tim Ash in THE TIMES of 7 December, 1864. "The Maharaja Jung Bahadoor was lately invested with the Indian Mutiny medal by the Resident at Katmandhoo"

HYDERABAD - A MISCELLANY

Tony McClenaghan

Richard Head and I recently spent a most interesting day with Lieutenant Colonel John Maitland-Hudson, a former Commanding Officer of 1st Hyderabad Imperial Service Lancers and the founding officer of 4th Hyderabad Imperial Service Lancers. John was born and brought up in Hyderabad and it was taken for granted that he would follow his forebears into the Nizam's service. So it was that on 25 November 1932 he was commissioned into the Hyderabad Lancers. His initial training was done "in State" though in January 1937, by then a Lieutenant, he was sent to the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun. The fact of his rank was quietly ignored and to all intents and purposes he was just another Gentleman Cadet. John passed out of the Academy in June 1939, winning the Gold Medal in the process. This is the first time I have seen such a medal and, though it had in recent years been cut into cuff links by John's son, nevertheless all parts had been retained and it has now been put back together again as a medallion, only the oval shapes of the links showing that it had for a time become something else. The medal, which is about 46mm diameter, has on the obverse the engraved monogram IMA. On the reverse, around the top edge, PRESENTED TO, on four lines in the centre, A HUDSON/FOR OBTAINING THE/HIGHEST AGGREGATE/IN THE, around the lower edge on two lines, PASSING OUT EXAMINATION/SUMMER HALF 1939. The medal was not intended to be worn and is contained in a presentation box.

John Hudson no longer has any memorabilia from his Hyderabad days, but he possesses a clear memory and has compiled a set of notes, "*Memories*", which, supplemented by subsequent discussions with Richard and me, form the basis of this article.

HYDERABAD ARMY 1937-1950

IMPERIAL SERVICE TROOPS mobilised with British and Indian troops for active service under the Crown, 1939:

- 'A' Battery Horse Artillery - Frontier Defence, Burma., Java 1939-45
- 1st (Nizam's Own) Hyderabad Lancers - India/Burma border, Palestine, Aden
- 2nd (Nizam's Own) Hyderabad Lancers - Quetta, Khandwa, Cyprus, Haifa.
- 1st Bn Hyderabad Infantry - Malaya, Prisoners of War 1942-45
- 2nd Hyderabad Infantry – Iraq, Iran
- 3rd Hyderabad Infantry - British India - Prisoner of War camp duties.

REGULAR FORCES HYDERABAD STATE ARMY

Cavalry Brigade

- 1st (Nizam's Own) Hyderabad Lancers
- 2nd (Nizam's Own) Hyderabad Lancers
- 'A' Battery Field Artillery
- Cavalry Training Centre

1st Infantry Brigade

- 1st Bn Hyderabad Infantry
- 2nd Bn Hyderabad Infantry
- 3rd Bn Hyderabad Infantry
- Combined Army Training (Goshabul) Centre

2nd Infantry Brigade

- 5th Bn Hyderabad Infantry
- 6th Bn Hyderabad Infantry
- 7th Bn Hyderabad Infantry

Support Troops

- Divisional Pioneer Regiment
- Army Education Corps
- Mechanical Transport Platoon (Workshops)
- Hyderabad Medical Corps
- Hyderabad Veterinary Service

IRREGULARS

- 3rd (Nizam's Own) Golconda Lancers
- Africa Body Guard

HEADQUARTERS RIFLE BRIGADE

- 9th Hyderabad Rifles

- 10th Hyderabad Rifles
- 11th Hyderabad Rifles
- 1st Nazam Battalion
- 2nd Nazam Battalion
- Hyderabad Army Training School
- Military Hospital
- Labour Corps

HOUSEHOLD BRIGADE

- Jamiet Nizam Battalion
- Nizam's Bodyguard
- 4th Bn Golconda Infantry

PAIGAH BRIGADE belonging to:

- a) Sir Asman Jah and Nisson Moin-ud-Doulah
- b) Sir Khurshid Jah and his grandson, Lutfud Doulah
- c) Sir Vicarul-Umara and his son, Sultanul Mulk

In addition to the above, the Nizam had his Sarfikas (Royal Household) Brigade; 1, 2 and 3 Battalions the Nizam's Sarfikas Palace Guards.

Grand total of troops in 1948 - 17,850

COMMANDERS OF THE HYDERABAD ARMY

- 1859-64 Brigadier Rameshwar Rao - appointed Commander to reorganise Regulars and Irregulars after losing his Regular forces to the East India Company.
- 1864-74 Major Rocke. The Nizam obtained the services of Major Rocke, ex 79th (Cameron) Highlanders, British Army, to command and organise his Regular forces.
- 1874-84 Major Nevill - an Austrian Army officer. Took over from Major Rocke Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He died in Hyderabad in 1897.
- 1884-1934 Captain Mirza Muhammad Ali Baig. Promoted from Risaldar by the 6th Nizam to command the Golconda Brigade of the Nizam's forces and given the title of Afsur-Ul-Mulk Bahadur. Promoted to General in 1926 by the 7th Nizam and made Chief Commander. Knighted and made Honorary ADC to HM King George V (Sir Afsur-Ul-Mulk Bahadur, KCIE, MVO, ADC)
- 1926-30. On appointing Afsur-Ul-Mulk Chief Commander, the Nizam's son. Major Osman Yar ul Daula was appointed Commander. He died in 1930.
- 1934-37. Colonel Kadir Baig, Commander of Hyderabad Cavalry Brigade. Given command of the Nizam's forces. In 1936 he was created by the Nizam Kadir Yar Jung. Promoted Major General in 1937 and retired in that year.
- 1937-48 Brigadier Syed Ahmed El Edros, OBI. Commander of Hyderabad Cavalry Brigade. Promoted Major General and given command of all forces on the retirement of Major General Kadir Yar Jung. He officiated as head of HEH the Nizam's forces at the surrender to the Indian Army commander, September 1950, having been detained under house arrest He was subsequently appointed Governor of Hyderabad by the Indian Government 1948-50. He died in 1961.

- 1948-50 Major General Muhammed Ashraf appointed by the Indian Government to command the reduced Regular Forces.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE - FOREIGN OFFICERS CONNECTED WITH THE REGULAR TROOPS OF THE HYDERABAD ARMY

Monsieur Raymond. Connected with the Nizam's forces from the mid-1700s. Raised many units, mainly from the Arab and Afghan population in Hyderabad at the time, primarily for the protection of the Nizam's person. He was very popular with his men and a monument to him is still venerated on a hill near Hyderabad city at Maulali.

Michael Finglass (19th Light Dragoons) and Arthur O'Fallon (attached to Warren Hastings' forces). Brought in by Azim-Ul-Umara to raise the Finglass Corps - 800 men to protect Golconda. Both men were Irish, fiery, flamboyant characters - mad and fearless. They were also involved in raising forces which they commanded; their descendants were still serving the Nizam's forces right up to their disbandment in 1950. O'Fallon became Fallon in 1800.

HYDERABAD CONTINGENT - OFFICERS IN NIZAM'S ARMY 1800

- Colonel Don Clementi de Avila - Spanish
- Major Johnstone - Scot
- Capt Don Torribio Paula Denis - Portuguese
- Capt Joseph Gordon - Scot
- Capt Freeman - English
- Capt. Guest - English
- Capt Bridge - English
- Capt Drew - English

1806 - Colonel Finglass's Brigade. Officers included:

- Capt Palmer - English. (The son of General Palmer and the Begum of Lucknow (she was painted by Zoffany). In 1799 he was the first British subject to join the Nizam's Army (he was at one time Warren Hastings's secretary). Promoted to Brigadier and served in many capacities - liaison, intelligence etc. between the Nizam and the East India Company. In 1810 he formed a bank - House of Palmer - with Chandulal, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, and one of the bank's appointments was as Paymaster to the Hyderabad Army).
- Capt. Harding - Irish
- Capt. Douglas - Irish

HISTORY AND WAR SERVICE - 1st HYDERABAD (NIZAM'S OWN) IMPERIAL SERVICE LANCERS

- 1807. Raised by Fakh-Mulk Bahadur, one of Asaf Jah's premier nobles, as Fakh-Mulk Ka Risala, a feudal cavalry unit, on the sillidar basis (i.e. men supplied their own mounts)
- 1857. Given title 1st Hyderabad Lancers. Muster roll of 300 mounted men.
- 1893 Muster increased to 500. Absorbed into State Regular Forces. [In fact I believe both 1st and 2nd Lancers were disbanded on the introduction of the Imperial Service Troops scheme, and new units formed to participate in that scheme. Ed.)

- 1914-20 Posted to Egypt to join Allenby's forces as part of 15th Imperial Cavalry Brigade. Battle Honours awarded - *Suez Canal Zone, Egypt, Gaza, Damascus, Palestine, Nebi Samwil, Sharon, Megiddo.*
- 1937. 1st Hyderabad (Nizam's Own) Imperial Service Lancers. Title change on the occasion of the Nizam's Silver Jubilee.
- 1939-40. Mobilised and absorbed into Deccan Command, Indian Army. Moved to Bolarum and ordered to be mechanised. C.O. was Lt. Col G E Cox and 2 i/c was Major Habibullah, both State Forces officers.
- 1940-41 Moved to Delhi cantonment to reform as an Armoured Car regiment. Full wartime strength, vehicles and equipment. New C.O., Lt. Col Craddock-Watson (Skinner's Horse) and 2 i/c, Major Brian Inglis (6th D.C.O. Lancers)
- 1942. Mechanisation completed. Designated Armoured Recce with Humber armoured cars. Posted to 19 Indian (Dagger) Division under General 'Dai' Reece and moved to Ranchi.
- 1943. Burma Front (Imphal) with 19 Indian Division as part of 14th Army (General Slim). Lt Col Craddock-Watson replaced by Lt Col. 'Milly' Mould (2nd Royal Lancers).
- 1944. Posted to Aden Command. Lt Col David Egerton (Guides Cavalry) replaced Lt Col 'Milly' Mould before the regiment left Burma and Major George Shipway (13th Lancers) became 2 i/c.
- October 1944. Posted to Egypt and Palestine (Haifa), attached to 1st British Armoured Brigade. Lt Col A Curtis (Viceroy's Body Guard) assumed command and Major A J M Hudson (1st Hyderabad Lances) appointed 2 i/c.
- 1945. October. John Hudson promoted Lieutenant Colonel and assumed command of the Regiment, with Major Farid-ul-Zaman as 2 i/c.
- 1946. In February the Regiment returned to Hyderabad. In March/April 1946 John Hudson was asked to form 4th Hyderabad Lancers and took 5 officers and 300 men from 1st to do so. At the same time he retained command of 1st and was only relieved of this sometime later.

Uniform

The 1941 ISF Army List describes the uniform of 1st Hyderabad Lancers as dark green with buff and bottle green facings and Lovett certainly shows this in his painting of 1911. ("*The Armies of India*", facing p204). According to John Hudson the full ceremonial uniform consisted of a khaki kurta with two breast pockets and plain collar and cuffs. The shoulder chains were worn over a green felt backing and a green lanyard over the right shoulder attached to a whistle in the top right pocket. A cross belt of gold thread on white calf leather was worn with silver pickers and three fine chains. At one time the Hyderabad Lancers shared with the cavalry regiments of the former Hyderabad Contingent (i.e. 20th Horse, 29th and 30th Lancers) the distinction of wearing a crown in place of the more usual circular boss on the shoulder belt but this was no longer the case at the time John Hudson wore the uniform, the chains being attached to a ring. On the rear of the belt, a shallow stainless steel message box with silver lid bearing the regimental badge (see figure 1). A waist belt with silver plate bearing the regimental badge was worn over a green and gold cummerbund. The lungi was green and gold, as was the sword knot. The uniform was finished off by cavalry sword, light grey woollen breeches, black boots, spurs and white kid gloves. Badges of rank were similar to those of the Indian Army except that a representation of the *Dastar* or Royal Turban (Figure 2) was worn instead of the crown for ranks such as Major, Lieutenant Colonel etc. Mess Kit consisted of a white linen jacket, silk lined, worn open but fastened at the

throat. The collar, cuffs and front were edged with white applique embroidery. Overalls were black with a single yellow stripe down the seams. A stiff dress shirt and black silk cummerbund finished off the uniform. The forage cap was black with yellow top.



Photos R C Worts



Figure 2 – rank badge

THE MADRAS SAPPERS AND MINERS IN WEST AFRICA - 1898-1900

Alan Harfield

Soldiers of the Indian Army serving in the latter part of the 19th century were often required to serve in countries outside of their own continent. Probably one of the most unusual stations in which men were asked to volunteer to serve was West Africa.

Lord Lugard wrote from the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria requesting the Secretary of State to assist in the supply of qualified personnel to serve in both civil and military capacities in the various Northern Nigerian departments. He commented adversely on the exorbitant costs of local labour and noted that salaries "...are fully 50 per cent higher than they should be." His solution to the problem was to bring in skilled labour from British India from where he would obtain "...a much more efficient type than the class available here, and doing half as much again in a day's work ...for less than half the rates.."

As a result clerks and foremen of works were moved from India to help set up the new administration in Northern Nigeria. The Secretary of State for the Colonies agreed that the Indian Army be invited to help the West African Frontier Force by seconding volunteers from the Sappers and Miners to assist the Force. A military despatch sent to the Viceroy, dated 3 February 1898, requested that 20 Madras sappers be recruited for service in the Niger territories. The request required that ideally the party should consist of:

- 1 Havildar (Carpenter)
- 9 carpenters
- 1 Naik (Smith)
- 2 Smiths
- 1 Naik (Mason)
- 1 Mason

- 2 Surveyors
- 1 Sadler
- 2 Bricklayers

The terms of service in West Africa were to be for three years and such volunteers would be seconded from their parent Corps and not be transferred. In addition, special rates of pay would be granted to the volunteers.

The full complement of 20 men were recruited and departed from Madras. Five men sailed on the *Oratava* on 18 May 1898 and the remaining 15 on the *Avoca* which sailed three days later. The West African Frontier Force records do not indicate the date of arrival but the whole party was in Jebba, the headquarters of one of the infantry battalions, by October. A reference to the Indian Contingent is made in the West African Frontier Force order which published the promotion of "No 1033 Lance-Naik Munisami" to Lance Havildar (WAFF Order No 279 of 1898). In WAFF Order No 286 the Madras sappers were granted a ration allowance of three pence a day instead of a meat issue.

In mid-November 1899 the Madras Contingent was sent down to Lokoja under the command of Havildar Munisami for "one month's change of air". On 11 August 1900 the Madras Sappers and Miners contingent, by then reduced to 17, left Lokoja for the United Kingdom. The few details that are available concerning this unusual detachment fail to record what happened to the original Havildar who was in charge of the party, nor does it give any indication as to the fate of the other two members of the party who failed to return to India (though all three died).

Brigadier-General Lugard wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 14 May 1900 and forwarded a report written by Colonel J. Willcocks, CMC, DSO, the Commandant of the West African Frontier Force, in which the Commandant recommended seven of the party "...to the Special notice of the Lieutenant General Commanding in Madras..." His report reads:

"I bring to your notice the following NCOs and men of the Q.O. Sappers and Miners attached to this force, and who are now about to return to India. I shall be glad if Your Excellency will forward this letter on to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with any remarks you may wish to make, as I am strongly of the opinion that the services of these men who have been serving so far from their homes, and who are the first natives of India who have ever reached the Niger, should be brought to the favourable consideration of the Government of India. Three of the 20 men who came out originally have died, but this does not compare unfavourably with the Europeans, and as these Sappers have had no means of getting a change of climate by invaliding or otherwise, I think Your Excellency was fully justified in believing that they would stand the climate fairly well."

The report, which was fully supported by Brigadier-General Lugard, continued and mentioned seven of the Sappers by name:

"Havildar Munisami. An NCO of excellent character, very hard-working, intelligent, and well able to command his men. I sincerely trust the authorities will see their way to promoting him to Havildar-Major, for which I beg most strongly to recommend him.

Lance Havildar Munisami. Character - very good, hard working and has been most useful. I recommend him for promotion to Havildar.

Lance Naik Rajendram. Character - very good. Work most satisfactory. Served in the expedition to the Upper Kaduna Country. Recommended for Naik.

Lance Naik Pazhaniandi. Character - very good, work always well done.

Sapper Subbarayan. A plucky fellow who, although old, stuck to his duties throughout.

Sapper Kuppiah. Has been most useful to the force, and worked very hard.

Sapper Ponnen Exemplary character, good workman, and very hard working.

The above seven men are specially selected for mention, but I would add that nearly all have worked well under very difficult conditions, and fully maintained the credit of the Corps to which they belong"

Havildar Munisami and Naik Rajendram earned the West Africa medal and the three sappers who were specially recommended were allowed to reckon 2 years as qualifying service for pension for each year spent in West Africa.

Havildar (1133) Munisami was appointed Colour Havildar and Sappers Rajendram (1991) and Pazhaniandi (1516) were appointed Lance-Naiks from 23 December 1900 in recognition of their services.

Whilst the contingent was in England they were taken to Balmoral to see Her Majesty The Queen Empress who is reported to have said "I am very pleased to see you here. I am very fond of my Indian Army, and have watched with the greatest interest the excellent work they have been doing not only in Africa, but also in China"

Thus ended a unique, but short-lived, connection between the Indian Army and the West African Frontier Force.

Additional Reading

- Roe, Lieutenant Colonel C.H. *Historical Record of the 2nd Queen's Own Sappers and Miners from 1780 to 1909*. Bangalore, 1909
- Kirk-Grenne, A.M.H., *Indian Troops with the West African Frontier Force 1898 to 1900*. Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, Vol. XLO. No 169, March 1964

BOOK REVIEWS

● *A SOLDIER WITH RAILWAYS*. Lt Col A A Mains. Chippenham: Picton Publishing (Chippenham) Ltd, 1994. £16.95 plus postage. 173 pages, illustrations and photographs).

My earliest recollection of train travel is of getting soot in my eye as I leaned out of the window to wave to my parents as I left for boarding school. Such trains soon disappeared along with much of our track under Dr Beeching's cuts and since then one British train has, to my eye, tended to look like another. As a regular commuter to London (when they run!) I take little pleasure in trains and view them as a necessary part of the daily existence. However, here is a book which gives a very different, and more interesting, view of the subject.

Tony Mains experienced another era when trains not only had individual identifying characteristics ("HP" 4-6-0, "HG" 2-8-0, Pacifics "XA", "XB", "XC", or exotic names such as "Deccan Queen", "Grand Trunk Express" and "Taurus Express") but also ran under circumstances very different to those most of us experience now (air raid bombings, war time deployments), as well as through territories now closed to many. Those who have read his early works, *Retreat from Burma* and *Field Security - Very Ordinary Intelligence* will be familiar with the general thrust of the military elements of this new story and so it is really for the train "buffs" (and I know there are many) that the book will hold a special interest. There is much detail on the types of locomotives and rolling stock used in the various parts of the sub-continent and of the different gauges; of the need for reversing stations and the intricacies of the block signalling system; and of the human needs such as feeding, sleeping and ablutions arrangements, with fascinating examples of how the "old style" travel agents, in this case Cooks, worked efficiently, even under trying conditions. A concluding chapter deals briefly with Indian railways since 1953.

What comes out very clearly is the high regard in which Tony Mains held the railway staff, especially the Anglo-Indian and Anglo-Burmese drivers and firemen who stayed at their posts under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances. An informative read. ANM

● *REGIMENTS - Regiments and Corps of the British Empire and Commonwealth 1758-1993. A Critical Bibliography of their Published Histories*. Compiled and published by Roger Perkins (PO Box 29, Newton Abbot. Devon TQ12 IXU, 1994. 810 pages. £92.50 plus postage)

A massive tome, yet easy to use, describing the published histories of the military and police forces past and present, of the British Empire and Commonwealth. As with his previous effort, *Regiments of the Empire - A Bibliography*, published in 1989, Roger used an army of researchers and helpers throughout the world (I counted 18 IMHS members amongst the list of contributors) to search for and describe the 2000 main entries. Each entry comprises a technical description of the book's bibliographic features, a narrative description of its contents, and commentary on its rarity and value to the reader. This new work contains many more entries than the earlier one; for instance, there are 583 unit and related histories for India, approximately 100 more than appeared in the 1989 version, and I would be surprised if any new discoveries were to be made of existing regimental histories. The sections on Canada, Australia and Africa have been considerably expanded and a new one introduced for American Loyalists. There is a good index of entries by country, and a most welcome authors' index. *REGIMENTS* is a well-produced book in its own right. Much care has been taken to produce it on paper conforming to standards set for permanence of records in libraries and archives and it has been printed and bound in accordance with a British

Standards Institute code. For a reference book of this nature, such attention to detail is important because it will be constantly handled. It is an expensive book and many potential purchasers may be deterred by the price, but it is a book that is worth having easy access to, so if you cannot afford to buy a copy yourself then persuade your local library to do so.
ANM

LETTERS AND QUERIES

● David Harris writes:

Captain Percy Arthur Adamson CLERY

I have recently acquired a 4 clasp IGS 1908 medal to Percy Arthur Adamson CLERY. Research has revealed some interesting details about the man, not least that he was dismissed the service by court martial in 1929, and raised several questions that I hope other members may be able to answer Here is what is know so far

- Indian General Service Medal 1908-1935 with 4 clasps: - Afghanistan NWF 1919; Mahsud 1919-20, Waziristan 1919-21; Waziristan 1921-24 Medal impressed to "Lieut. P A A Clery, S W Militia". Last clasp attached separately from earlier three
- 1899. 13 June. Born Chelsea, London, the son of Col Charleton Buckley Laming Clery CB, of 25 Royal Ave, Chelsea, and his wife Jessie Violet. Father's birthplace Crossdeep Hall, Twickenham, Surrey. Irish Protestant family (Note: The Wellington College Registers for 1913-1973 show PAAC to be the son of Laurence Lumley Clery, brother of C B L Clery, but all other references show his father to be C B L Clery) 1900 2 January Baptised Parish of Upper Chelsea, London.
- Attended private schools St Augustine's, Eastbourne and St Andrews, Eastbourne.
- 1912. Michaelmas term - entered Wellington College, Crowthorne, Berks. School Prefect, Head of the Combermere, Captain of Fives, Captain of 2nd XV rugby, member of 1st XI (second in bowling averages).
- 1917. 22 January. Promoted from Lance Corporal to Corporal in the Corps.
- 1917. 10 February. Application for admission to Wellington Training College. India. Parents' address 19 Clivenden Place, Eaton Square, Belgravia.
- 1917. 1 March. Medical board at Aldershot
- 1917. Easter term, left school. Entered Wellington Cadet Training College, India.
- 1918 31 January. Commissioned Indian Army.
- 1918 7 February. Posted as Company Officer 53rd Sikhs (Frontier Force) attached to South Waziristan Militia.
- 21 December 1918 - 21 December 1922. Wing Officer Kurram Militia.
- 1919. 31 January. Promoted Lieutenant
- 1923. 31 January. Promoted Captain, 16th Punjab Regiment, war service Waziristan 1919-21, Waziristan 1922-23 (LA List 1929)
- 1928. 26 November. Company Officer 4/16th Punjab Regiment (Bhopal).
- 1929. 5 September. Dismissed the service by Court Martial (Gazette of India 21 Sept 1929, page 1081)

Carleton Buckley Laming CLERY

Born Crossdeep Hall, Twickenham, Surrey.

- 1888 Wellington College, Berks
- 1888. Royal Military College
- gazetted Royal Irish Rifles
- 1890 Indian Staff Corps
- 1900 Captain 125th Napier Rifles
- 1904 ACS Medal, 2 clasps, Somaliland
- 1907 Major
- 1909 DAAG Aden Brigade
- 1914-18 MID Ind Gaz 25 June 1915, LG 5 Apr 1916 (twice), LG 13 July 1916, LG 5 June 1919. Brevet Colonel. CB.
- 1929 shown as Major General retired in Indian Army List

Laurence Lumley CLERY

- 1885-89 Wellington College, Berks
- 1913 Wellington College register: son of Surgeon Major G.C. Clery. Address: Edenbridge. Broxbourne, Herts. (Eventually PAAC and CBLC also had this address).
- 1918 Artists Rifles.

References: Indian Office Records L/MIL/9/327 no. 89. Cadet Papers, Indian Army List 1929; Gazette of India 1929, The Wellingtonian, The Wellington Year Book; Wellington College Register.

After 1929 there is no trace of P A A Clery but the Wellington College Register has a longhand notation that states "left the service 1929" with "left the service" struck through and "resigned" substituted.

Several questions arise:

- Who was his real father? The baptismal certificate shows C B L Clery but the school records show L L Clery
- What was the reason for his court martial? The Gazette of India does not say.
- What became of him after 1929?

I am also interested in any mention of him in regimental records from 1918 until 1929, or his father or uncle. Any information or suggestions that members can provide will be gratefully received.

● R. Thornton seeks help in identifying the collar badge shown below. It is made of brass, though at one stage has been blacked over, and is stamped in high relief. Any identification of unit, date and on what dress it would have been worn would be much appreciated.

