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THE GURKHA MARCH TO TORA BORA

Pushpindar Singh Chopra

(This article first appeared in *The Asian Age* on 7 January 2002. Events have, of course, moved on since then and Operation Enduring Freedom has proved not to be the end of fighting in eastern Afghanistan, but the historical association of the article remains, I think, of interest – and still in keeping with the spirit of our constitution. Ed.)

The final stages of fighting in eastern Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom) have been on since November 2001 as the last pockets of Al Qaeda forces, perhaps also Osama bin Laden himself, were cornered in the mountains of Tora Bora. This name is not familiar to the British-Indian-Pakistani forces which have over the past 150 years campaigned in this salient of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and are more familiar with the Safed Koh (White Mountains) range north of Parachinar which leads to Ali Khel in Afghanistan via the Peiwar Kotal (Pass).

This pass, at 11,283 ft. (3439 m), was the scene of the historic battle in November 1879, during the Second Afghan War, being wrested by the 5th Gurkhas (Frontier Force) and 72nd Highlanders under the redoubtable General Sir Frederick Roberts VC, later to become Lord Roberts of Kandahar, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army and affectionately known as "Bobs Bahadur" (Bobs the Brave).

A flashback into that historical campaign is pertinent in order to fully understand and appreciate the present, largely air-directed, high-tech war 122 years later.

SECOND AFGHAN WAR

The relations between the Indian Government and Sher Ali, then Amir of Afghanistan, had been strained for some years, more so because of the Amir showing favours publicly to the Russians. In September 1878, the Afghans turned back a British mission from Ali Masjid when it was on its way to Kabul from Peshawar. This was taken as an insult to British prestige and met by an ultimatum followed by a declaration of war against Afghanistan.

Three columns were formed for the invasion of Afghanistan. The first was to advance from Quetta towards Kandahar. The second, under Brigadier General F S Roberts VC, CB, was to advance from Kohat along the Kurram Valley to Khot. The third was to head for Dakka through the Khyber Pass. The columns advanced on November 21st, 1879, on their respective routes. The 5th Gurkha Regiment formed part of the second column, the Kurram Field Force, directly under General Roberts and was to serve under him throughout the Second Afghan War for the next two years and more, to win great laurels and establish itself as "one of the finest fighting corps in the service".

Advancing along the valley of the Kurram River for about 60 miles, the force reached Kurram Fort where it learnt that the Afghans were preparing a position at Peiwar Kotal, six miles further. It gained contact with the Afghan defences on the pass on November 28th. On the first night, the 29th Punjab

Infantry (later 10/15th Punjab Regiment) which had gone forward to reconnoitre the defences had to be extricated. The 5th Gurkhas went forward to cover the withdrawal of the Punjabis.

The reconnoitring party brought the information that an approach to the pass was very difficult, and a frontal assault would entail very severe losses. The Afghan position was concealed by a high range of pine-clad hills and precipitous cliffs. The General then ordered a series of reconnaissances along the spurs running up the pass, and the approaches to the Spingawai Pass, which crossed the ridge about a mile and a half to the north of Peiwar. The route to the Spingawai Pass to the east, and from thence to the Kotal, was approved by the General for the outflanking move. On December 1st, at 10 pm, Roberts himself led a column of 1,300 men on the right flanking movement, leaving behind a force to attack the pass frontally the next morning when the Afghan left flank had been sufficiently shaken. Tents were left standing, and camp fires left burning. The move was kept a secret as it was feared that the Pathans in some of the units might pass on the information to the Afghans at the Kotal position.

The 5th Gurkhas formed part of the force selected for the turning movement. The advance was led by the 29th Punjab. As the movement was slow, the General ordered the Gurkhas to lead the column. A couple of shots were fired by the Punjabis, possibly to warn the Afghans that the force was moving up the Spingawai Pass. As daylight broke, the Afghan look-out sentries alarmed the picquet at the Kotal. The Gurkhas, led by Major Fitzhugh and Captain John Cook, rushed the barricade in the front and carried it. The next two positions were assaulted by the 72nd Highlanders and the Gurkhas. The assault against the Peiwar defences was led by the 5th Gurkhas, who pushed right into the position. Roberts had, meanwhile, sent part of his force behind the pass to cut off the Afghans. The forces left for the frontal assault had also approached the main defences. With the guns taking their toll with accurate firing, the Afghans bolted from the Peiwar Kotal, leaving behind 18 mountain guns, their dead and wounded, and large quantities of accoutrements, supplies and ammunition.

Beyond the 9,500 ft. high Peiwar Pass was another range which could be crossed at the Shutargarden Pass (at 11,000 ft.). After two days at the Peiwar Kotal, General Roberts sent reconnoitring parties to the pass, and found it unoccupied. One could look far into the plains beyond the pass, and it appeared that the road to Kabul was without any obstacles except that there appeared to be no route on the other side.

General Roberts thus moved his force back towards Kurram, and decided to explore the southern route through the Sapari or Mangiar Defile. Accordingly, he moved in that direction on the 12th, taking with him, among other troops, the 5th Gurkhas. The route passed through some difficult country. The Gurkhas were placed in charge of the rear-guard bringing up the baggage. The Pathans attacked the baggage party. The steadiness and gallantry of the 5th on this occasion was most conspicuous. They repelled every attack made by the bold and numerous Pathans during a period of five hours and brought the baggage into the camp without losing a single load.

Queen Victoria sent the following message after the action of Peiwar Kotal.

> "I received the news of the decisive victory of General Roberts, and the splendid behaviour of my brave soldiers, with pride and satisfaction, though I must ever deplore the unavoidable loss of life. Pray inquire after the wounded in my name. May we continue to receive good news".

The 5th Gurkhas stayed during most of the winter of 1878-79 in the Kurram Valley which they reached after going through the defile. In April 1879, the 5th Gurkhas marched to Ali Khel where they remained for most of the summer.

When the three columns invaded Afghanistan, the ruling Amir fled the country nominating his son, Yakub Khan, as his successor. In May, Yakub Khan came to meet the force commander advancing down the Khyber Pass and signed a treaty with him, agreeing to the stationing of a British representative with a suitable escort at Kabul. The Khyber column returned to Peshawar though the Kurram Field Force continued to camp in Ali Khel and around.

In July 1879, the British representative with an escort reached Kabul. In September that year, the British embassy was besieged and its members including the escort were massacred by the Afghans (a fate suffered by the British in the First Afghan War of 1839-41). Yakub Khan sought protection of the British in Peshawar. The Kurram Field Force, now called the Kabul Field Force, was ordered to move under General Roberts to Kabul. The 5th Gurkhas, too, found themselves on the road to Kabul once again.

Leaving Ali Khel on September 8th, the regiment reached Charasia on October 6th. The Afghans barred the way to Kabul at this place, but a determined attack by the regiment in conjunction with other troops opened the route to Kabul. In his despatch of October 20th, Major General F S Roberts wrote that the Afghans "charged close up to the 5th Goorkhas, who, however, commanded by Major Fitzhugh, repulsed them with heavy loss". The regiment lost four men and several were wounded in this action. Four days later, on October 16th, there was a disastrous explosion in the Fort and the regiment lost Subadar Major Bhageeram Gurung and eleven OR s. The 5th Gurkhas had fought alongside the 72nd Highlanders earlier in the campaign. In the Bala Hissar too, the men served together and struck up a special friendship. After the explosion, the Fort was vacated and the Regiment moved into the Sherpur Cantonment to the north of Kabul.

Yakub Khan abdicated voluntarily, and the civil administration of Afghanistan was undertaken by Roberts, who was given the local rank of Lieutenant General.

Some of the Afghan tribes who had not reconciled to the British occupation of Kabul soon advanced on the capital from the west. On December 10th, 1879, they were met by the troops from the Sherpur Cantonment at Karez where the regiment took part in the battle against them. Captain J Cook VC first took the Afghans on with an advance party of two companies of 5th Gurkhas, followed by the rest of the regiment in a subsequent action the same day in conjunction with other units. Major Fitzhugh was wounded during the fighting. The next day, the retreating Afghans were pursued for some distance by the regiment which then returned to the Sherpur Cantonment.

On the 12th, the 5th Gurkhas were again ordered to engage the Afghans. During the fighting Captain Cook was wounded while leading his men. One sepoy was killed and six other ranks wounded. Cook died of his wounds on December 19th. A special tribute was paid to a brave soldier by General Roberts. Subadar Major Pasru Khattri, many years later, said that he was the bravest man he had ever seen – "braver even than Roberts Sahib".

Once the tribesmen dispersed from the vicinity of Kabul, the entire force engaged itself in building up the defences of the cantonment. The Bala Hissar Fort was also occupied. Lieutenant General Sir Donald Stewart, who was senior to Roberts, took over the command of all forces in Afghanistan. Abdur Rahman, a grandson of the earlier ruler who was staying with the Russians till then, was persuaded to sit on the throne at Kabul.

All seemed apparently peaceful in Kabul and around. Plans were made to reduce the garrison in Kabul. Between May and June 1880, the 5th Gurkhas marched as part of a column, more to show the flag in the countryside than for any other reason. On July 2nd, 1880, the chief political officer asked the Sirdars of

the Afghan Court to accept Abdur Rahman as their Amir, and announced the intention of the Government of India to withdraw the bulk of the forces in Kabul.

However, a crisis was brewing in Kandahar about this time. Sirdar Ayub Khan, brother of Yakub Khan, the ex-Amir, planned a jihad against the British at Kandahar. The local Sirdar went out to meet Ayub Khan's forces. He was followed by the brigade at Kandahar, which inflicted heavy losses on the Afghans and checked them temporarily. On July 17th, 1880, the brigade encamped 46 miles west of Kandahar to block Ayub's routes to that place. When Brigadier General Burrows, the brigade commander, learnt that a body of hostile Ghazis had occupied Maiwand, 11 miles to the north-east, he resolved to move to that place. In the ensuing battle, Burrows was decisively defeated, losing a thousand men killed apart from the wounded.

As the British forces in Baluchistan were too weak, Lieutenant General Roberts left Kabul with 10,000 fighting men and 8,000 followers to aid the garrison at Kandahar. The men were experienced fighters, and selected with care. The baggage was severely restricted in view of the long march of 313 miles over rugged country devoid of supplies. The 5th Gurkhas, in this campaign from its very beginning, were retained in the force, now called the Kabul-Kandahar Field Force.

The long march began on August 8th, 1880, and the Field Force reached Kandahar on August 31st. General Roberts immediately set out to attack the force of Ayub Khan. The approach of the Field Force was enough to lift the siege of Kandahar. North-west of Kandahar are three spurs on which the Afghans had taken up their positions. General Roberts attacked these positions at 9.30 am on September 1st, 1880. The 5th Gurkha Regiment was in support of the 2nd Brigade on the left. In the next couple of hours Ayub's army was on the run after losing over a thousand men, all killed. The casualties of the 5th Gurkhas were one sepoy and two camp followers killed and two sepoys wounded. By the afternoon, the regiment was back in Kandahar.

Between 15th and 28th September, the 5th Gurkhas moved with the 2nd Brigade for Chaman, and finally back to Quetta in India after marching through the Achakzai territory. At Quetta the 5th Gurkhas bade farewell to the 72nd Highlanders with whom they had served since their meeting in the Kurram in 1878, presenting a shield to the Highlanders who, in return, gave the 5th Gurkhas a Drum Major's staff of ebony with silver mounts and chains.

When Sir Frederick Roberts was raised to the peerage, he chose as supporters for his coat of arms a soldier of the 72nd Highlanders and a soldier of the 5th Gurkhas.

In July 1881, the 5th Gurkhas received the orders that it was permitted to bear upon its Colours the following battle honours in commemoration of its gallant conduct during the Second Afghan War – Peiwar Kotal, Charasia, Kabul 1879, Kandahar 1880, Afghanistan 1878-80.

Over 120 years later the route beyond the Peywar Kandaw to Ali Kheyl (as the names are currently spelt) skirts the Spin Range, north of the Safed Koh, south west of the Khyber Pass and the fort at Torkhum which was established by Hari Singh Nalwa when the Sikhs fortified the pass against invasion from Afghanistan. Perhaps Tora Bora is the slang for Torkhum, over which the United States Air Force has mounted continuous surveillance by UAVs and reconnaissance aircraft, including Predator drones and E-8C JSTARS. The area has been pounded by B-52 strategic bombers and subjected to devastating cannon fire by AC-130 gunships in their relentless hunt for the Al Qaeda.

The Pakistan Army's 9th (Frontier) Division has been deployed along the Durand Line, west of the Tirah Valley, to seal the passes across the Safed Koh and other possible escape routes. "We have made it impossible for Osama bin Laden to enter our country", stated Lieutenant General Moinuddin Haider,

Pakistan's Minister of the Interior, and himself from the famed PIFFERS, being Colonel of the famous 59th Scinde Rifles (Frontier Force) which are today designated as the 1st Battalion, Frontier Force Regiment of the Pakistan Army.

BATTLE HONOURS – BENGAL ENGINEER GROUP (and others)

While still on the subject of Afghanistan, though now thinking of the First Afghan War, we published an article by Lieutenant Colonel A K Srivastava in the Winter 1997 edition (Vol. 14, No 4, Winter 1997, pp139-158) about the missing battle honours of the Bengal Engineer Group. In that article the author noted that the authority for the grant of honours Candahar 1842 and Ghuznee 1842 to detachments of the 2nd and 3rd Companies Bengal Sappers and Miners is not known. Brian Stevens has offered the following:

Might I suggest that the G.O.G.G. dated 18th November 1842 covers them, or alternatively those dated 4th October and 13th December 1842. I have a photocopy of the Order dated 4th October 1842, paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of which authorise "Candahar", "Ghuznee 1842" and "Cabool 1842" and require Major Generals Nott and Pollack to notify the Governor General of the designations of the several corps which would be entitled. I have not been able to check the Orders for 18th November and 13th December, which may list the corps concerned.

While on the subject of Battle Honours, my notes of the pre-1857 Honours to the Bengal Artillery contain many instances where Detachments are shown as using Honours, though they are not listed in the General Order awarding that Honour. For example, the 2nd Troop, 3rd Brigade Bengal Horse Artillery is shown in the Army List corrected to 30th September 1858, as entitled to "Maharajpore" – 2 guns Governor General's Escort; "Moodkee" – 2 guns Governor General's Escort; and the 2nd Company 7th Battalion is shown as using "Goojerat", but neither is included in the list of units so honoured.

In the Bengal Army Lists of the period, the Honours to the Bengal Artillery are shown separately from the list of authorities for the award of Honours to the cavalry and infantry. The correspondence between the Governor General and the Commander in Chief in 1828-29, prior to the issue of the G.G.O. dated 23rd February 1829, which granted Honours for as far back as Plassey, show the C-in-C stating that he was still investigating the claims of the Artillery, but I have never been able to trace any further correspondence on the subject. It was not until 1842 that the Army Lists started to include these old Honours to Artillery units, but again, I have never found any authority for their assumption by whatever Troop or Company was engaged in the various actions. They just seem to have been assumed by the Troops and Companies present.

The four First Afghan War Honours of the Regiment of Kelat-i- Ghilzie, formerly the 3rd Regiment of Shah Soojah's Infantry, were authorised by a G.O.G.G. dated 4th October 1842 after it had been taken into the Company's service. As the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers it was disbanded in 1933.

However, the 9th Bengal Irregular Cavalry, which carried the Honours

"Ghuznee", "Candahar", "Cabul", Detachment "Jellalabad", Detachment "Scinde", Detachment "Punniar", Detachment "Maharajpore", "Moodkee", "Ferozeshuhur", "Sobraon", "Punjaub", "Chillianwalla", "Goojerat"

appears to have had no authority for the use of the Afghan, Sind and Gwalior campaign Honours, a period when it was not in the Company's service. It had been raised in 1844 from the remaining Risalas

of the former 1st Regiment of Shah Soojah's Cavalry, or Christie's Horse, which had been formed as far back as 1838.

Regarding the Honours to Detachments, what appears to have happened is that, where the Honour was granted to complete units, those corps represented only by detachments also felt entitled to assume them. As the Adjutant General's Department published the Army Lists the practice must have had official sanction. An exception to this assumption was that the G.O.G.G. dated 12th August 1846 did grant "Moodkee" and "Ferozeshuhur" to Detachments of the 4th, 8th and 9th Irregular Cavalry.

THE BEKASI MASSACRE

I published a request from Colin Cummings of Northamptonshire concerning the massacre of RAF aircrew and Indian soldiers at Bekasi on 23rd November 1945. Stephen Le Mere Goff has provided the following extracts from a book called "*The Moon Upside Down*" by David Wehl, published by James Barrie, London, in 1948.

> "A troop-carrying Dakota plane, with a British aircrew and eighteen Indian soldiers, had crashed in some padi fields about four miles from Batavia. Crew and passengers escaped unhurt, and after watching their plane go up in flames (they were seen from the air standing round the burning wreckage) they set off on the four-mile tramp back to Batavia, no doubt laughing and rejoicing over their wonderful escape……
>
> That is the last that we know about them so far, except for a number of soldiers' army pay books found scattered on the ground, one body of an Indian soldier found without arms or legs, and another arm and a head in a canal……
> We left early this morning in an armoured column for Bekasi, taking with us an old Ambonese woman who had been rescued from Bekasi gaol the day before, and who brought us the news of the missing men……
>
> We took a long time to reach the village, as we had to stop at each kampong while Punjabis scouted ahead to clear any possible Indonesian ambush, and Thunderbolts circled overhead. Every kampong was deserted except for a few Chinese villagers peering from their huts, and we reached Bekasi without incident. The village intelligence system is very good, and news of our advance must have reached Bekasi hours before we did, because the entire village was completely deserted except for the Chinese inhabitants and half a dozen Indonesians in the uniform of the Indonesian Red Cross, who were sitting on a bungalow balcony playing cards. I don't know why they had stayed behind…….
>
> The Ambonese woman, who had been a prisoner in Bekasi gaol, told us that men from the Dakota had been brought to the village the day after the crash. They were naked, with their hands tied behind them. That night, Saturday, they had been kept in the gaol, and the next day they were brought out one by one to the top of a steep bank of the river. The Ambonese woman, who had been drawing some water from a well, had hidden in the long grass to see what was happening. Practically the whole village was assembled on the river bank, the principal officials being two village butchers. As each man was brought up to the butchers he was cut to death and the body toppled down the bank. When they had all been killed the earth from the bank was shovelled on the bodies, and they were left…….

Such was the Ambonese woman's story, and that the bodies were there, under the earth, was only too evident as we stood on top of the bank, for we could smell the faint sickening odour of human flesh, quite different from any other animal flesh…

The Indonesian Red Cross men were sent down the bank to dig, which they did in a very half-hearted way, protesting ignorance of the whole affair. For a long time they scraped away at the soil with no result, then somebody noticed fingers poking up from the ground. The sun beat hotly down upon us. The stench was terrible. In all we found twenty-two bodies, nineteen with their hands still tied behind their back, some without heads, some without arms or legs…..
When I returned to the office I found two members of the Indonesian Ministry of Information waiting to see me. They looked extremely smart in their impeccable white duck suits….
It would be a mistake to place too much significance upon the contrast between the headless bodies in Bekasi and the ministerial calm in Batavia….

Today saw the end of the story of Bekasi. Once again we drove out through deserted kampongs, with Thunderbolts circling overhead, to the village emptied of its Indonesian inhabitants, while Chinese crowds gather round wondering apprehensively what was going to happen….

The whole village, with the exception of the Chinese quarters, was burnt to the ground, and some of the Chinese houses later caught fire from the flames blown by the wind. The wood and thatch burnt fiercely, coconut palms caught alight and flamed like torches, chickens, cats, dogs, horses scampered terrified into the jungle. As we drove back to Batavia a vast column of smoke marked the end of the tragedy of Bekasi, a dark column that at night changed into a pillar of fire that was intended to, but doubtless did not, warn over-enthusiastic Indonesian politicians that they must not be too energetic. Round the ruins of their houses the Chinese, bewildered, but patient, wait for the cinders to cool, and glance fearfully over the shoulders for the returning Indonesians…..

Had no action been taken against Bekasi the Indonesians would have interpreted our restraint as weakness; a punishment having been meted out, we are now accused of having staged a 'second Leidice'. The punishment can scarcely be considered very severe, as in a week or two the entire village will be rebuilt….."

As Stephen Goff points out, the fact that some army paybooks were found is interesting. Who was David Wehl? His book shows that he was in the army, that he went to Burma and then moved further east through Siam, Malaya, Java, Indo-China and China, but always, it seems, as an observer. There is nothing further to identify him.

WHERE ARE ALL THE *GORA SAHIBS* GONE?

Shamus Wade provided the following extract from a letter he had received from Sharad Keskar, Editor of the Kipling Journal.

I cannot be precise about date and place, as it was 42 years ago. The year was definitely 1960, I was then in Hodson's Horse and I was Recce Troop Leader. Young subalterns were usually detailed to do this job. Sometimes he acted as Security Officer and was given a jeep with a driver and two sowars, and several red flags to demarcate an area that was dangerous to non-military personnel. Every year, usually between February and May, the Regiment would establish a training camp in fairly deserted

(sparsely populated) areas, miles away from base, for the purpose of carrying out training exercises. In an armoured regiment this involved establishing a shooting range. However, nearby villagers got to know the "drill" and would finely time the intervals between shooting details. They, mostly women and children, would then raid the butts to dig out lead shot which was a source of income to them. I am told that accidents and casualties happened, but not in my time. However, it was the job of the Security Officer to warn and discourage the villagers, and the best way to achieve this was by talking to the village Headman – who also had some knowledge of Hindustani. Some of these villages were little more than hamlets, and could only be found on an ordnance survey map – and their names were very similar. As the area I am talking about is among the low hills in remote sandy areas of Central India – *dacoit* country – communications had to be on a head to head basis. In this particular year I approached the village Headman, waving a swagger stick and looking terribly important – glad also in the thought that I had a lance corporal and two soldiers with me. I told him about the need to warn his folk of the dangers to life and limb if they encroached the demarcated area. He listened with a bemused expression and then asked when I had finished speaking: "Tell me one thing. These days I see a lot of brown officers – he used the word *deshi*, meaning of the country – but where are all the *gora sahibs* [white officers] gone?" I gave him a "you-cannot-be serious" stare. "Don't you know", I said, "that India's been independent since 1947 – over 12 years ago!" [*gora* = fair, white; not to be confused with *ghoda* = horse]. This is an example of how cut off from the world parts of India were. All this has now changed thanks to radio, TV and modern technology.

(The Kipling Journal is the publication of The Kipling Society (subscription £20), details of which can be obtained from its Membership Secretary, 295 Castle Road, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SB).

OBITUARY

BHANDARI RAM, VC

Bhandari Ram, VC, died on 19th May 2002, aged 82. He won his VC on 22nd November 1944, when, as a Sepoy with 16/10th Baluch Regiment in the Arakan, he silenced a machine-gun that had been preventing his platoon from advancing along a narrow ridge, thus enabling the Japanese position to be captured. We carried a brief not about his exploit in DURBAR, Vol. 12, No 3, Autumn 1995, p87, and also featured his picture courtesy of Lieutenant Colonel Neville Poulsom in Vol. 14, No 1, Spring 1997, p22. Following Independence he transferred to the Dogra Regiment and served for a further 22 years, receiving the Param Vishisht Seva Medal before leaving the army with the rank of Captain in November 1969.

MAJOR R F RUTTLEDGE MC DSc

With the exception of some late members of this Society, we do not normally feature obituaries for former Indian Army officers. We have reached that period of time when even the newest and youngest of subalterns joining the Indian Army in its final days before Independence will now be in their seventies. Patric Emerson lists the recently departed in his Indian Army Association Newsletter, and this seems to grow with each issue. I was, however, struck by a recent obituary in The Daily Telegraph on 8th March 2002 for Major Robin Francis ("Jim") Ruttledge, late of the Poona Horse (17th Queen Victoria's Own Cavalry). I had, only days before this appeared, been contacted by Lieutenant Colonel Michael Weippert, himself a former Poona Horse officer, to tell me that, although the Newsletter of The Poona Horse Regimental Association had ceased to be published in the UK in 1998, it has now

been taken up by the Regiment in India and appears under the title "The Poona Horseman", though for private circulation only. The 2001 edition, published in January 2002, carried an article on Major Ruttledge who had celebrated his 102nd birthday on 11th September 2001. It was a sad irony, therefore, to be reading his obituary within days of receiving this letter.

From an Irish land-owning family, 'Jim' Ruttledge, as he was known in the regiment, was commissioned into the Poona Horse in 1918 and in the following year was awarded an MC for gallantry in action in Waziristan. When the regiment was in Peshawar in 1930 it saw action in suppressing the Afridi rebellion which became known as the 'Redshirt' movement. He was at this time Master of the Peshawar Vale hounds and told a story of having tea with one of the hunt's covert owners when they were joined by a leader of the Redshirts (ex-Indian Army). "We were introduced and he laid his revolver on the table. He asked me where I came from. When I told him Ireland he almost embraced me and said how much his people had learned from the Irish about how to carry on a guerrilla war!"

On moving with the regiment to Jhansi south of Delhi he became bitten by the sport of Pig-Sticking. A few years ago, on the advice of Lt Col Douglas Gray (President of the Indian Cavalry Officers Association), himself a distinguished Pig-Sticker and last winner of the Kadir Cup, he deposited his unique Shikar log book in the Library of the National Army Museum.

His final appointment before taking voluntary retirement from the army was that of Commandant of the Bodyguard of the Governor of Madras, where he became Master of the Madras Hunt.

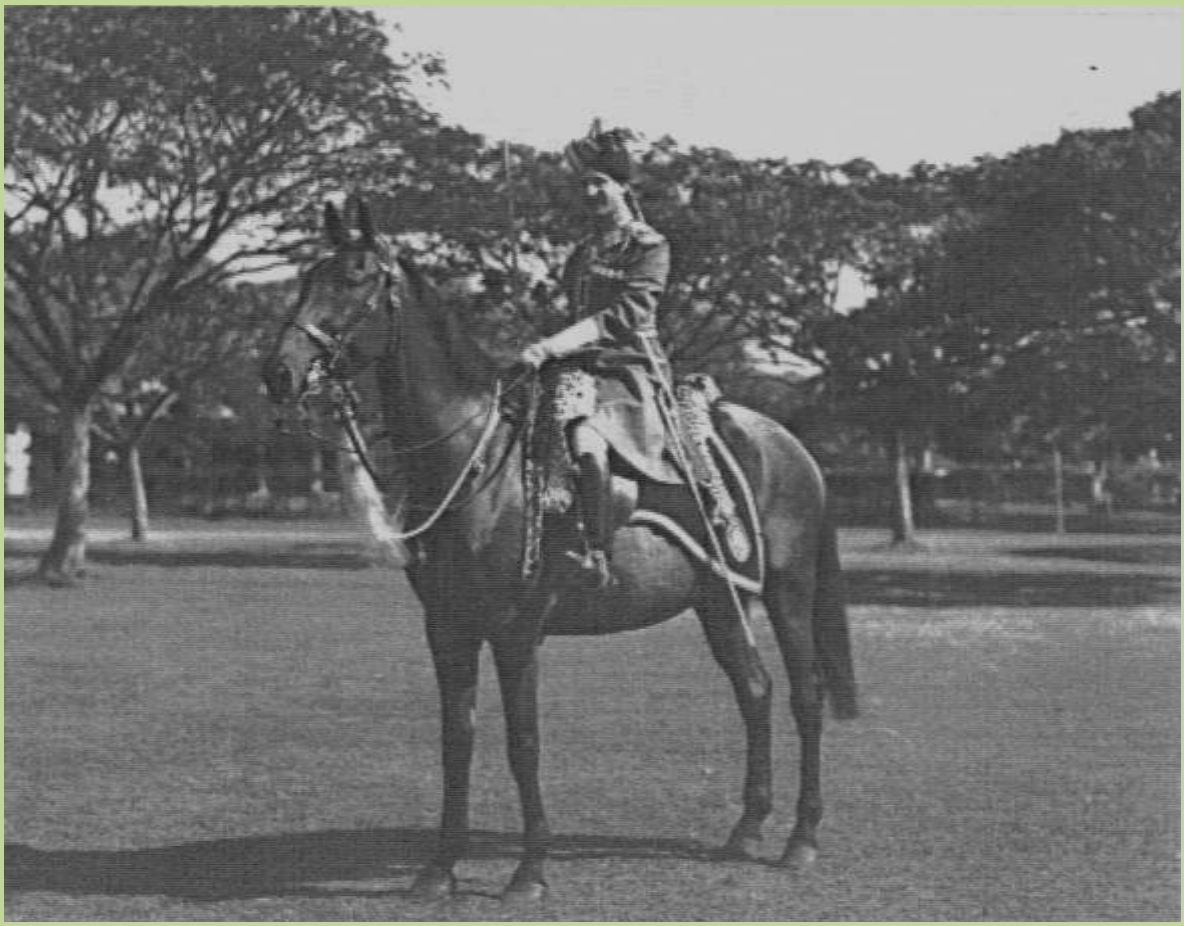
On his retirement he returned to Ireland where he became known as an outstanding ornithologist and the leading authority on Irish birds. In 1981 he was honoured by the conferment of an Honorary Doctorate of Science by Trinity College Dublin.

The Daily Telegraph obituary carried a magnificent photograph of Major Ruttledge mounted, and I am grateful to Michael Weippert for providing a copy, and to Major Ruttledge's younger daughter, Lady Veronica Fitzroy, for permission to reproduce it here. In doing so I hope members will help me clarify the detail of the uniform.

It is thought that the photograph dates from the mid-1930s when Major Ruttledge was Commandant of the Madras Bodyguard. The 1931 Dress Regulations describe the tunic as scarlet cloth, hussar pattern, with blue cloth collar and cuffs, trimmed as for hussars with gold gimp. The shabraque is blue cloth, gold embroidery – the badge certainly seems to be a crown with the monogram GBG underneath – and the throat plume is red. But according to W Y Carman's *Indian Army Uniforms – Cavalry*, the leopard skin disappeared from the Madras Body Guard uniform in the early part of the twentieth century, yet it is clearly visible in this photograph. And the throat plume seems to me to be white.

Bill Carman describes the uniform of The Poona Horse (17th Queen Victoria's Own Cavalry) as dark blue kurta with French grey collar laced all round with gold, the plain front buttoned on the chest but opened all the way down. The lungi of dark blue with gold and white stripes, red Kashmir kummerbund worn underneath the gold sword-belt which had a red central stripe. Austrian knots to the cuffs.

I would have described Major Ruttledge's tunic as a kurta rather than hussar pattern, so which uniform is he wearing? Any contributions gratefully received. Ed.



The reference to Major Ruttledge's skill as a Pig-Sticker, and to Douglas Gray and his own expertise in the sport, presents an ideal opportunity to introduce the next article. It was submitted by Douglas but written by a friend of his, Jim Froggett, a former Civilian Engineer in the Meerut District who, with John Glenn of the Indian Police Service, were the only two men left at the end of the Second World War to hunt boars on horseback.

PIG-STICKING IN INDIA

Jim Froggett

Memories are fading and it is perhaps fitting that the equine sporting fraternity, and sportsmen in general should be reminded of what was arguably the most exciting and challenging horse sport ever, that of pig-sticking in India. There can be but few participants left, I am possibly one of the last few to have hunted the wild boar under the auspices of an Indian Tent Club, the Meerut Tent Club, and sadly, in the end, alone. It should be explained for the benefit of readers with only a vague knowledge of the scene, that pig-sticking or hog-hunting was dependent to a large extent on the dedication and enthusiasm of the resident Indian Army. British cavalry units were yet to be mechanised, horses were plentiful and reasonably cheap to maintain, riding was a way of life. Tent Clubs roughly corresponded to Hunts in Britain though their beneficial effect on rural life in the remote areas under their jurisdiction was far-reaching and unique.

I suspect it is little known that a great participant and patron of the sport, later to become most famous in other fields, was one Captain R S S Baden-Powell of the 13th Hussars. To my knowledge there have only been two definitive books written entirely on the subject, one by Baden-Powell, published in 1889, entitled "*Pig-Sticking or Hog-Hunting*" and a second by Lieutenant General Sir A E Wardrop, another great stalwart of the sport, called "*Modern Pig-Sticking*", published in 1930. I have never been able to acquire the former though have been permitted to refer to it in the Archive Section at Baden-Powell House in London.

The modern sport arose from an innovation early in the 19th century, when mounted sportsmen pursued bear, armed with a short broad-bladed spear thrown like a javelin. Bear became scarce, and the boar proved to be a more challenging adversary. It may now be defined as the hunting of the wild boar, mounted on horse or pony, armed with a light six to seven foot bamboo shafted spear, the butt end encased in lead for balance, retained if at all possible, never thrown.

It was my good fortune that in 1944 I was assigned to the Meerut district in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) where The Ganges and Jamna Kadirs constituted the "home ground" of the Meerut Tent Club. "Kadir" literally means river bed. I would broaden that concept to embrace the terrain left behind after a river changes its course, quite unhindered, as it was then by the contrivances of man. The Ganges Kadir is the larger, about 100 miles long, 8 to 10 miles wide, some 20 feet below the surrounding country, the natural home of pig, panther, tiger, hyena, jackal and wild fowl. The visual impression is one of an immense expanse of high grass and jhow, bounded by the horizons, broken in parts by the meandering river, and studded by trees, mostly mangoes, indicating the presence of widely scattered villages. The leafy environs of these villages were perfect campsites and hunting bases.

Jhow is a form of tamarisk, which left uncut, grows to a height of some 20 feet. In this state it develops side shoots and is difficult to ride through, though it does not much impede pig. Throughout the country there are bourrh gungas, jheels and nullahs. Bourrh gungas are old riverbeds usually full of reeds. Jheels are swamps with rushes and quicksand, a refuge for pig and wild fowl. Nullahs near as can be described in English are ditches, though not necessarily man-made.

Hunting began at dawn. On the previous day the shikaris would have reconnoitred to ascertain the most suitable area to tackle and a broad plan of movement established. With the long line of beaters recruited from the villages in position, head shikari Babu astride the camel at centre to direct the line; Badla and Bahal his assistants on elephant and pony, to render such assistance as occasion demanded; and the spears (riders) in a spaced line behind the beaters, all would move forward together. Absolute quiet was the order of the day, the complete antithesis to the notion of beaters advancing noisily, to drive quarry towards waiting spears, a method more suitable in denser jungles such as in Bengal. The aim was to move stealthily and quietly on to a lone sitting boar. The thrill of doing so beggars description. Sometimes not just one boar, but a complete sounder lying up in its grassy abode would be surprised. For seconds pandemonium would prevail; grunting, squealing bodies lurching in all directions, nearby beaters galvanised into evasive action, our elephant, I know not why, never as staunch as the camel, scared into his own spectacular brand of evasive action, until brought under control by the admonishments of his mahout.

Invariably the boar will run, perhaps a mile or thereabouts. In pre-war hunting, the line of spears would have been divided into heats of three and only one heat would have pursued, but in my time that rule of engagement was academic and it was simply laid down that no more than four spears, those nearest to the breaking boar may give chase. The quarry had to be a prime boar measuring at least 28 inches from floor to withers. If at the end of the contest he measured less than that, the kill was not recorded and a fine of 16 rupees was imposed on each of the participants.

A boar will rarely run straight. In his first flight he will outpace a horse. He will jink, stop, lie low, slink along nullahs and run again. Sometimes he will outwit the spears and escape. So the first phase of the chase is keeping in touch. Pursuing spears ride in line at right angles to the line of flight and those who can see the running boar, or as is more often the case, can detect his progress by the disturbed grass or jhow in his wake, will loudly shout "ON, ON, ON" and will continue to do so while the quarry is in sight. The moment he is lost sight of, spears will stop in their tracks and remain quiet until he is seen to move again. The sheer boundless exhilaration of the chase has to be experienced to be believed. With stirrups long, reins held loose and spear held firm, the hidden hazards below are best left to horse to negotiate. No hounds, no impedimenta, no cameras, no hangers-on, just you and a brave, savage, wily boar with razor sharp tushes in miles of unpredictable jungle.

There will be stops and starts, falls, mad gallops, patient waiting and eventually the boar will tire of fleeing and turn to fight. At this stage your over-riding concern will be for the safety of your mount. The boar will charge at an incredible speed and a second rule of engagement will apply. Only one spear, he who happens to be nearest the boar, may engage at any one time. One against one. The agility of your mount is now paramount. It should be able to canter at a standstill and turn away in a flash like a polo pony. Your adversary is within easy reach of the lower part of your mount. Manoeuvring continues, always the spear nearest is entitled to engage. The ideal set-up is to close with a charging boar, spear to the heart and veer away, but the ideal situation rarely occurs. No two runs are ever the same. A not infrequent scenario is an unhorsed rider facing an angry pig. The importance of the firm grip on the spear is now self-evident.

The fight to the death is rarely swift. It may take an hour or more. Meanwhile those left behind will have followed up to the battleground and all will be together again. Mounts will be changed, injuries dealt with and hunting continued till afternoon. Speared boars, if any, will be expertly dealt with and dressed by villagers versed in that craft, carried back to camp and distributed for the pot in a manner agreed. Usually the beaters are the first recipients, then shikaris and Syces.

The hunting season was from November to June. The monsoon breaks in June and the country then becomes impenetrable till thinned by cutting, burning and grazing. The highlight of the season was the annual competition for the Kadir Cup held in March in the Meerut Kadir. It was a three day event starting on Monday. Some 100 to 150 competitors were divided into heats of three, drawn on Sunday. They would hunt in the manner described, adjudicated by umpires, the first spear to draw blood the winner of the heat. Semi-finals and finals were held on Wednesday. Each competitor could enter two horses genuinely his own property. Winners of heats and of the events were the horses, not the riders. It was a great jamboree. Competitors, their retainers, their women-folk and invited guests would converge at the weekend. Add to them about 50 elephants, camels, 100 to 150 beaters and the mind boggled at the immensity and splendour of the occasion.

The competition was first held in 1869. Baden-Powell's "Patience" won it in 1883. The Royal Calcutta Turf Club presented the existing silver cup in 1922. It was last competed for in 1939 and won by Major Tuck's, "The Squeaker". He was then the honorary secretary of the Meerut Tent Club, popularly known as Friar Tuck, and was something of a legend. I never met him. There were no contests in 1879 and 1880 because of the Afghan war and none from 1915 to 1919 during the Great War.

Earlier I mentioned my good fortune in being posted to the Meerut District. That was not all of it. John Glenn, an English superintendent of police of the Indian Police Service, was there before me. We were acquainted having met in Lucknow. He had a passionate love of pig-sticking and for a few years had managed to keep the Tent Club going, alone. He lost no time in persuading me to join with him though I needed no persuasion, and for the last year or so the two of us, expatriate bachelors, had the Meerut jungles largely to ourselves. John Glenn did all he could to gather pre-war pig-stickers for a further

Kadir Cup competition, but it was not to be. Many had made the supreme sacrifice, others had left India for good, horses and masters had parted company and, although from time to time we were joined by visiting enthusiasts, mostly army types in passage, it was never possible to raise more than about half a dozen.

It all had to end. The higher echelons of the Police Service were Indianised. John made his way to Kenya and the last I heard of him was that he had not found the wort-hog to be a worthy foe and was testing the feasibility of riding to Cheetah armed with a net. We lost touch. I stayed on for a while and hunted alone but the tumultuous events then besetting a divided India, regrettably decreed my moving on.

The Tent Club retainers were pensioned off, the elephants, camel and property sold, and the Kadir Cup sent to the Cavalry and Guards Club in Piccadilly where it now reposes in a prominent place of honour on the first floor.

Browsing through hunting chronicles revealed a strange and lusty rivalry between pig-stickers and fox-hunters, strange to me in view of the immense distance separating the two and the remoteness of one to the other, and yet Baden-Powell commented "ever since the first spear was taken controversy has raged over the rival claims of pig-sticking and fox-hunting". Of pig-sticking he wrote:- "It is a sport in which a savage quarry has to be warily hunted and boldly fought and where the whole object of the chase is his death". Of fox-hunting he continues:- "the main point is a good gallop over fenced country the death of the fox being a secondary consideration". He aptly summarised:- "In pig-sticking every man rides to hunt whereas in fox-hunting we hunt to ride". I hasten to affirm that I take no side, my comments are purely anecdotal to reveal the attitude of the time. My own impression of more recent times is that pig-stickers held fox-hunters in a sort of piteous disdain, scornful of the pompous ritual, they held, was attendant to the sport. A description of the boar might be germane to the issue.

A prime boar is from 5 to 8 years old and in this age range, unless broken in battle, his curved lower tushes of average length 9 inches and maximum 12 inches, two thirds of which are embodied in the jaw, would also be in prime condition. The shorter upper tushes about 4½ inches long are thicker and more curled. One would expect a 28 inch boar to weigh from 120 to 150 lbs. Baden-Powell recorded one of 42 inches killed by Mr J McLeod and refers to a record of a 43 ½ inch boar killed in 1856. He jumps and swims well. General Wardrop states that he saw one knock over a camel. I saw a boar bounce off an elephant more to the latter's alarm than the former's. There are records of boar getting the better of tigers.

The largest John and I have speared was 34 inches and weighed 275 lbs. Villagers reported him as being "a monster", that he had inhabited a certain jungle for the past five years, that he had attacked six villagers when trying to evict him from their sugar-cane and that he could be identified by a torn left ear. On news from our shikaris that they had a fair idea where he was, we set off one Sunday morning. Then there is ghooming. Ghooming means "wandering about". In the context of pig-sticking it is wandering about alone at dawn with the object of intercepting and surprising a lone boar returning from his night-time feeding to his place of day-time refuge. Groundwork in the very literal sense of the word would be carried out the day before. The unfolding scene as the sun rises over the horizon has a very special charm of its own. The emergence into vision, with the rising sun, of the vast expanse of yellowing grass and the faint outline of the Himalayas foothills in the distance is an unforgettable sight. Smoke will be rising from scattered villages and it is to one of these that your eyes will be glued in the expectation of detecting the progress of your quarry leaving sugar cane or grain fields around the village perimeter. It could at first be a movement of grass or a dark coloured blip. Cautious approach may be necessary for confirmation, but when the moment of certainty arrives you must be away in a

flash. With no accompanying spears to pick him up on the jink, speed is of the essence. There is a unique sense of achievement in mastering a boar absolutely unaided.

Pig-stickers down the ages have taken pleasure in verse, from a miscellany of which I beg indulgence for the following few lines:

The voices of the Kadir that sound so sweet and strong
How vivid are the pictures, how thick the visions throng,
Who shall describe the beauty, the magic of them all,
In silent hours when memory's powers those happy days recall

A DIFFERENT JUBILEE

Peter Chapman

As we are, once again, in the throes of a Jubilee year, some of us will recall days when the splendid parades featured troops from the Empire and the diversity of uniforms and glamour they brought to the London scene.

In 1887, a mere 30 years since the convulsions of the Mutiny, Indian soldiers were in the capital to celebrate Victoria's Golden Jubilee, riding down The Mall to the enormous satisfaction of the crowds.

The Graphic Magazine was one of several well-known publications of the day and it covered the celebrations in all their manifestations.

Archibald Corbould, an extremely well known 19th Century artist and book illustrator, obtained permission from the authorities, notably Captain C W Muir, Commandant of the Viceroy's Body Guard, and Captain G A Money, 11th Bengal Lancers, to sketch the cavalry contingent.

He produced two pictures, the first of the 13-strong group mounted, each man numbered and with an accompanying caption.

The other picture showed each man dismounted, individually drawn and with delightful 'margin' details, leaving the finished and published work looking like a preliminary sketch or painting guide for a future large scale picture.

(The same officers, including Captains Muir and Money, were also photographed and these photographs appear in a number of books, including W Y Carman's *Indian Army Uniforms – Cavalry*, Plate 11, [London: Leonard Hill (Books) Ltd, 1961], and Kusoom Vadgama's *"India in Britain"*, p33 [London: Robert Royce Limited, 1984]. Ed.)

1. Ressaldar Major Zafar Ali Khan, Sidar Bahador, 3rd Punjaub Cavalry, Mahomedan
2. Ressaldar Lall Singh, 14th Bengal Lancers, Hindoo
3. Ressaldar Major Nadir Ali Khan, 18th Bengal Lancers, Mahomedan
4. Wordie Major Lena Singh, and Central India Horse, Hindoo
5. Subadar Ibrahim Khan 4th Prince of Wales' Own Light Cavalry, Mahomedan
6. Ressaldar Major Narul Hussun, 6th Prince of Wales' Bengal Cavalry, Mahomedan
7. Ressaldar Major Moozuffer Khan, Bahadoor, 4th Cavalry, Mahomedan
8. Ressaldar Sher Singh, Sirdar Bahadoor, and Punjaub Cavalry, Hindoo
9. Ressaldar Hafiz Muhammad Nawaz Khan, 15th Bengal 'Cavalry Mahomedan
10. Ressaldar Major Isri Singh, 19th Bengal Lancers, Hindoo
11. Subadar Sheik Imdad Ali, Viceroy's Body Guard, Mahomedan
12. Jemadar Kanchan Singh, and Bengal Lancers, Hindoo
13. Ressaldar Muhammad Buksh, 3rd Bombay Cavalry, Mahomedans

INDIAN OFFICERS WAITING FOR THE ROYAL PROCESSION IN THE COURTYARD OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE, JUNE 21

Ressaldar Hafiz Muhammad Nawaz Khan, 15th Bengal Cavalry, Mahomedan

Ressaldar Major Nadir Ali Khan, 18th Bengal Lancers, Mahomedan

Ressaldar Major Narul Hussun, 6th Prince of Wales Bengal Cavalry, Mahomedan

Subadar Sheik Imdad Ali, Viceroy's Body Guard, Mahomedan

Subadar Ibrahim Khan, 4th Prince of Wales Own Light Cavalry, Mahomedan

Ressaldar Major Moozuffer Khan, Bahadoor, 4th Cavalry, Mahomedan

Jemadar Kanchan Singh, and Bengal Lancers, Hindoo

Wordie Major Lena Singh, and Central India Horse, Hindoo

Ressaldar Major Zafar Ali Khan Sirdar Bahadoor, 3rd Punjaub Cavalry, Mahomedan

Ressaldar Muhammad Buksh, 3rd Bombay Cavalry, Mahomedan

Ressaldar Lall Singh 14th Bengal Lancers, Hindoo

Ressaldar Sher Singh, Sirdar Bahadoor, and Punjab Cavalry, Hindoo

Ressaldar Major Isri Singh, 19th Bengal Lancers, Hindoo

INDIAN OFFICERS SUMMONED TO ENGLAND BY THE QUEEN TO REPRESENT HER MAJESTY'S NATIVE INDIAN ARMY AT THE JUBILEE PROCESSION, JUNE 21

WAS THERE REALLY A "LIEUTENANT ESMITT SAHIB" OF THE 1st. MADRAS CAVALRY, OR IS THE POEM ALL FICTION?

Jack Boddington

In the mid-1930's my father, a veteran of the 1914-18 war, was fond of delivering 'heroic' military poetry, mainly of the 'blood and thunder' type, to gatherings of his friends and fellow workers from the Lancastrian cotton mill where he worked. It was a great treat to accompany him, albeit infrequently, to some of these functions and be enthralled by his booming voice and the stories of battles and bravery contained in his repertoire of poems. From Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade", where the opening lines set the blood afire:

"Half a league, half a league, half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death rode the six hundred.
Forward, the Light Brigade - Charge for the guns" he said."

and the close which asks the question:

"When can their glory fade?"

to the most well-known of Kipling's works, which transported the listener to India, and made one almost believe that there really was a "Gunga Din":

"Of all them black-faced crew the finest man I knew
Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din."

and the emotive conclusion, after Gunga Din's heroic (and poetic) death where Kipling's loyalty to the Masonic Order is highlighted:

"So I'll meet 'im later on at the place where 'e is gone-
Where it's always double drill and no canteen.
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to poor damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din.
Yes, Din; Din; Din;
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din;
Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din."

If Gunga Din was not immortalized by Kipling's poem, he certainly was in the Hollywood version filmed in 1939 starring Cary Grant, Victor McLaglen and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. - and Gunga Din being played by an unlikely Sam Jaffe (and lots of skin darkener). Would the film depict the era in India between 1895 and 1902 when the India Medal was awarded? Perhaps with the bar(s) "DEFENCE OF CHITRAL 1895", "PUNJAB FRONTIER 1897-98" or "MALAKAND 1897"?

But still another of my father's poems is even more intriguing to me - "THE GRAVE ON THE PADAUNG RIVER".

The author of this epic is unknown but it appears to be set in the time when the India General Service Medal 1854-95 was issued and covers the campaigns which qualified for the bar "BURMA 1885-7". An extract from Gordon's book "*British Battles and Medals*" gives an overview of the campaigns:

> Burma 1885-7 (14th November, 1885-30th April, 1887)
>
> The troubles which developed into the cause of our many expeditions into Burma between 1885 and 1892 originated with the behaviour of the mad King Thebaw, whose reign of misgovernment and massacre ended with his interfering with the Bombay and Burma Trading Company's timber trade. Arbitration having failed, the Viceroy of India, Lord Dufferin, sent an ultimatum which demanded protection for British subjects and interests. This was rejected, so that war was declared on 8th November, 1885. An expedition under Major-General H. N. D. Prendergast, VC, composed of three brigades, was dispatched.
>
> The frontier was crossed and the forts of Minhla and Gurgyong captured on 17th November, 1885. On the 26th Thebaw agreed to unconditional surrender; the Ava forts were occupied on the 27th, and General Prendergast entered Mandalay on the 28th.
>
> After Thebaw's surrender his brother issued a proclamation against the British, whereupon banditry, or dacoitry, - call it what you will - broke out in earnest. Engagements between the troops and the dacoits took place at Nyadan on 2nd December, 1885; at Bhamo on the 28th; Moutshobo on the 29th; Kadol on 16th January, 1886; Kunnah on the 16th; Yindawango on 18th March; Zemethen on the 26th; Salem on 12th June; Tummoo on the 19th. The amount of the dacoitry increased so much in July that more troops were sent from India, and General Macpherson assumed supreme command on 17th September, 1886. He died on 20th October, and was succeeded by General Sir Frederick Roberts, who arrived in Mandalay on 18th November. Now followed a series of actions far too numerous to quote, with a sort of grand finale of an insurrection in Wuntho which started on 19th February, 1891, and ended with a Durbar held by Brigadier-General G. B. Wolseley, C.B., on 3rd March. The real troubles did not end until the capture of Boh Minlaung, the number one dacoit, who was executed. The others then decided that life in China was preferable, so that the trouble" so to speak "fizzled out."
>
> The three bars for Burma with the dates 1885-7, I887-89 and 1889-92 were given for the same series of troubles. They were, for the purpose of awards, subdivided into two periods of about two years each and one of three years.
>
> For the Campaign 1885-87 a bronze medal was issued to non-combatant troops. This custom remained in force for Indian General Service medals up to and including the bar for "Abor 1911-12,"

The poem itself follows:

THE GRAVE ON THE PADAUNG RIVER

(anon.)

There's a widow in sleepy Chester, who dreams of her only son,
There's a grave on the Padaung River, a grave which the Burmans shun,
And Subadar Prag Tawari tells how the deed was done.
A Snyder squibbed in the jungle, somebody laughed and fled,
And the men of the 1st. Madrassi, picked up their Subaltern, dead,

With a small round hole in his forehead and the back blown out of his head.

They buried the boy by the river, a blanket o'er his face,
And they wept for their dead lieutenant, these men of an alien race,
For they swore by the Holy Water, and they swore by the salt they ate,
That the soul of Lieutenant Esmitt Sahib would go to his God in state,
with fifty file of Burmah to open him heaven's gate.

The men of the 1st. Madrassi marched 'till the break of day,
'till they came to the rebel village, the village of Padaungamay,
A jingal covered the clearing, calthorpes hampered the way,
Subadar Prag Tawari, bidding them load with ball,
Halted a dozen rifles under the village wall,
Then sent out a flanking party with Jemadar Hira La1.

Then the men of the 1st. Madrassi butchered and fought and slew,
'I'urning the grinning jingal onto the howling crew,
And the Jemadar's flanking party cut down the ones who flew.
Long was the morn of slaughter, long was the list of slain,
'till five score heads were taken, Aye, five score heads and twain.

Then the men of the 1st. Madrassi marched back to their camp again,
Each man bearing a basket, red as his palms that day,
Red as the blazing village, the village of Padaungamay
And the drip, drip, drip from the baskets, reddened the road by the way.

They built a mound of their trophies, high as a tall man's chin,
Head upon head distorted, set in a sightless grin.
Anger and pain and terror stamped on the smoke scorched skin.
Subadar Prag Tawari put the head of Boh,
0n the top of the mound of triumph, with the head of his Son below,
With the sword and the peacock banner, that the world might behold and know.

Then a silence came to the jung1e, a hush fell on the shore,
And the Boh's that were brave departed and the Snyders squibbed no more,
For the Burmans said that a white man's head,
Must be paid for by heads, five score.

There's a widow in sIeepy Chester, who dreams of her only son,
There's a grave on the Padaung River, a grave which the Burmans shun,
And Subadar Prag Tawari has told how the deed was done.

So the reader arrives at the question set in the article title - was there really a Lieutenant Esmitt Sahib of the 1st. "Madrassi" or is the poem all fiction?

Well, the use of some Urdu words may give a clue - we know that a Subadar and Jemadar are Viceroy Commissioned Officer ranks; jingal is a native cannon, usually brass, wide barrel, primitive make; calthorpes are pointed stakes of bamboo hidden in grass, etc. and Boh is a Burmese chief. The only facts are that the Padaung River is a tributary of the Irrawaddy, about 120 miles north of Rangoon in Burma and the 1st. Madras Cavalry are identified in Gordon as participating in the punitive expeditions

into Burma in the war declared on November 8, 1885 against King Thebaw and, subsequently, his brother.
Can any member submit any comments on the reality, or otherwise, of the poem "THE GRAVE ON THE PADAUNG RIVER"?

ARMLETS

Trevor Kingsley-Curry and the Editor

We published a request from Trevor in Vol. 17, No 3, Autumn 2000, for the identification of two armbands, both professionally made and identical except for the initials – being on two bands of coloured cloth, red above and black below, and bearing the star of India on the red band, with the initials 'M' and 'DD' respectively in red cloth on the black band.

The 1931 Dress Regulations (India) gives a list which identifies a similar 'M' armlet as having been worn by Medical services, including Director-General, Indian Medical Service Officers, at Army Headquarters, though rather than red and black cloth with the star of India, the armlet is described as French grey cloth with royal crest in metal. The 'DD' armlet remains identified.

The Editor came across a similar list recently, dating from the First World War, while doing some research in the Imperial War Museum. Though referring to the British Army, it seems likely that the same regulation would have applied in India, though no reference is made to armlets in the 1913 edition of Army Regulations, India (Dress). The note in the Imperial War Museum referred to the number of officers entitled to wear armlets being restricted in 1915. The armlets were described as follows:

Formation	Description	Lettering
GHQ	red above blue (or black) with black crown on red stripe and red letters on black	MS – Military Staff G – General Staff A – Adjutant General's staff Q Quartermaster General's Staff P – Army Pay Command MA – Military Attaches BEF – British Expeditionary Force
Headquarters	parallel bands of red and blue (black)	
Commands	parallel bands of red/blue (black)/ red	First letter of name of Command
Divisional HQ	red	
Brigade HQ	blue	
Corps HQ	parallel bands of red/white/ red	
Royal Tank Corps	blue with red edges and embroidered tank in white.	

	From May 1918 parallel green/red/brown	
Press	vertical black and white Stripes	PRESS in black and letters

Dress Regulations (India) 1931

Viceroy's staff	light blue cloth with Imperial Cypher and Crown embroidered in Gold	none
Army HQ	French grey cloth with royal crest in metal and black lettering below	AD – Army secretariat MS – Military Secretary staff ADC – Aides-de-Camp G – General Staff A – AG's staff Q – QMG's staff MGO – Master General of Ordnance embroidered gun – RA RE – Royal Engineers ST – Supply & Transport M – Medical O – Ordnance services V – Veterinary services R – Remount services J – Judge Advocate General's officers S – Signal services ATF – Auxiliary & Territorial Force officers
Command HQ	red, black, red with scarlet lettering	as for GHQ but officers below Major General holding combined A & Q appointments wear A and Q on armlet AEC – Education officers
1st & 2nd Class Districts	red with black lettering	as for Command HQ SC – Staff Captain
Brigade HQ	blue with red lettering	BM – Brigade Major SC – Staff Captain Others – as Command HQ
Station Staff	green with black lettering	SSO
Provost Marshal	black with red lettering	PM
Assistant Provost Marshal	black with red lettering	APM

Embarkation Staff:	white with black lettering	
Assistant Staff Officer		EO
Commandant		EC
Medical Section		EO/M
Supply Section		EO/S
Rest Camp		CAMP
Military Attaches	AHQ armlet, black letters	MA
Military Missions[1]	AHQ armlet, black letters	MM
Officers under Instruction	white, no lettering	
Railway Transport Officer	white with black lettering	RTO
Recruiting Officer	green with black lettering	RO
Small Arms School India	green, yellow, green	none
Small Arms School Pachmari	green, yellow, green black lettering	BM
Signals Service	blue and white with black letters	S
Staff College	green, yellow, green black lettering	GAQ
Staff Officer to MG cavalry	French grey, black lettering	SO/MGC
Survey[2]: Companies RE Directorate RE Sections RA	blue and yellow	none

Notes:

1. For officers holding staff appointments when specially ordered
2. Worn on active service, when performing special duties with other troops at training, manoeuvres etc., or when specially ordered

As Trevor's original query indicates, however, there were other armlets not covered in either of these two references. At some stage after 1931 it would appear that the GHQ India armlet colour changed to two bands of coloured cloth, red above and black below, bearing the star of India on the red band, with the relevant initials in red cloth on the black band. The picture of Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II of Jaipur on the following page shows such an armlet, with yet another set of initials. He is seen, obviously during the Second World War, inspecting Indian soldiers, though not from his own State (he also held a commission in The Life Guards and travelled widely among Indian troops during the war).

Judging by the above descriptions his armlet is probably in the later colours of GHQ – red over black – with the star of India on the red band and the letters ISF (Indian States Forces), probably in red, on the black band. We still have some way to go, therefore, before we can say that we have identified all possible armlets. Contributions from members of other armlets not covered here would be most welcome.

LETTERS AND QUERIES

- Three queries of a medallic nature from Carl-Eric Granfelt:

1. When was the term "Public Follower" used in conjunction with a name on a medal, instead of the more specific title such as Bhisti, Sweeper etc.?
2. Were Indian followers ever issued with an official regimental identity disc or medallion? Can anyone provide an illustration, an authority for their issue, and an indication of the period in which they would have been used?
3. Did the RAF in India employ Followers such as cooks, bhistis, sweepers etc.? If so, did any receive the "Waziristan 1925" clasp to the IGS 1908.

- In response to Terry Morrison's request for two badges to be identified (DURBAR, Vol. 19, No 1, page 30), Peter Freeborn has identified the first of these, the Raj naval puggarree badge, as having been introduced shortly after the Bombay Marine Service was reorganised, by Admiral Bythesea VC, as Her Majesty's Indian Marine in 1877. This being so, he suspects that the hallmark contains the letter "A" to signify the year, in which case the badge would date from 1878, not 1875 as mentioned by Terry Morrison. Unlike other officers in the new Service, whose badges and buttons were of gilt, those for surgeons, both ship and shore based, were of silver, perhaps in keeping with the contemporary Indian Medical Service whose officers wore silver badges. Peter therefore offers the opinion that the badge is that of a naval surgeon and was worn either in the pith helmet or on the puggarree – the cloth hat band worn on sun helmets.

William J Sheridan seeks information on the Magwe Military Police Battalion and the part they played in the Kachin Hills expedition of 1892-93. Also, information on the irregular military formation called the Tribal Legion which had to be disbanded in less than a year of its formation owing to its unsatisfactory work, date approximately 1941-42.

On the same topic, Peter Chapman writes:

It occurs to me that the more obscure Levy and Militia units on the North (and South) West Frontier about which an enquiry was made in the Spring edition of DURBAR (Swat Levies – DURBAR Vol. 19, No 1, page 33) were never very large (in numbers of members) and were short lived. And they may well not have been British officered. Although answerable to someone, it could well have been the local political officer or even the police.

Charles Chenevix Trench in *The Frontier Scouts* deals only with British officered units, substantial regiments whose medals are frequently to be seen. But when I look at medals to the Kurram Militia, the Zhob Militia, the Khyber Rifles, North Waziristan Militia, South Waziristan Scouts and Tochi Scouts they are generally those awarded to sepoys – and lots of them.

Medals to the lesser known units are not only infrequently seen but almost always to Indian soldiers of some rank. The Mohmand Militia, for instance, existed for only three years (1917-1920). The two medals in my collection are both awarded to Jemadars – one, in a group, revealing his actual regiment to be 130th Baluchis. So he was just detached to take charge of a quickly raised and quickly disbanded local militia. My Mekran Levy medal is to a Havildar, the Baluchistan Levies to a Subadar, and the Chitral Scouts to a Havildar. Very low regimental numbers are also the rule on these medals.

The most obscure of these units must be the Oggi Levy. I saw a medal, an IDSM no less, in a saleroom catalogue in the last six or seven years. And it sold very well indeed…and not to me.

The only reference you will find to these odd units is in post-1918 (and others) autobiographical reminiscences. And even then they are vague. *Raiders of the Sarhad* (Brig. Gen. R E H Dyer, 1921) is typical, as is *The Making of a Frontier* (Col. Algernon Durand, 1900). Even passing references help a little, gleanings from memory.

(Rana Chhina lists 28 units under Frontier Corps and Para Military Units in *The Indian Distinguished Service Medal*, but not the Oggi Levy. I have no doubt he will wish to follow this up. Meanwhile it seems to me that recording references to such obscure units is something for which DURBAR could be used and I would welcome articles on any of them. Ed.)

Harry Fiyalko has raised a query about a silver sports fob, the inscription on the obverse of which reads "TUG-O-WAR 1932", and on the reverse "CALCUTTA SCOTTISH A.F. vs CALCUTTA LIGHT MORSH A.F., P&A DIST. SPORTS, 18-2-32". Is the word MORSH a misspelling for HORSE or does it stand for something else?

(Roger Perkins, in his *"Military and Naval Silver – Treasures of the Mess and Wardroom"*, 1999, p206, shows an example of a menu-holder where the inscription "TO ASSENT FRIENDS" has been engraved instead of "TO ABSENT FRIENDS". I think it likely that the fob falls into the same category. Any other ideas? Ed.)

Mike Taylor writes:

Two uniform formation signs have appeared in a dealer's catalogue over the past year on which I would appreciate the advice of members.

The first was identified as 73rd British Infantry Brigade Group, apparently an all British formation organised for internal security purposes in India. Based on the illustration and catalogue text it is a blue/grey shield with bullion embroidered edge, a bullion embroidered bayonet diagonally, point uppermost (bottom left to upper right) with a white embroidered rose at top left and a red embroidered rose bottom right. The only 73rd Brigade listed by Joslen served in the UK and in effect ceased to be a Brigade in December 1942. In relation to this formation, would I therefore be correct in assuming that it was raised locally in India in the period between the end of the War and Partition? Can anyone offer any additional details, such as constituent units?

The second was identified as 16th British Independent Brigade Group, apparently comprising 1 Kings, 1 Beds & Herts and 43 RTR, again an all British formation organised for internal security purposes in India. Based on the illustration and catalogue text it is a blue/grey shield with an embroidered (bullion?) inner border and the figure XVI centrally placed in bullion embroidery. Joslen lists 16th Infantry Brigade at 31 August 1945 being under command of Lucknow District and having four infantry battalions under command, 2DWR, 1 Beds & Herts, 1 Kings & 1 RSF. Prior to that the Brigade was part of Special Force / 3rd Indian Division. Can anyone offer any additional information, in particular whether the formation sign described above was used solely for the post-war pre-Partition period or whether it was worn earlier, for example while part of Special Force?

Most important, and arising from these queries, I would be grateful if members could direct me to sources for a detailed order of battle for British and Indian formations and units for the period of WW2 and up to Partition. I believe I am correct in saying that no equivalent of Joslen has been produced to date. However, I also understand that that one member may be working on something that will fill this gap and it would be helpful to know how far advanced this project has progressed. I for one would be happy to subscribe.