

DURBAR Volume 24, No.4, Winter 2007

EDITORIAL

Our members, particularly the longer serving ones, will appreciate the crucial role Tony McClenaghan has played in the dual roles of General Secretary and Editor, the latter for almost twenty years. Our thanks go to him for his stewardship of the Society and for the circa eighty editions of Durbar that he has shed blood, sweat and tears to put together. Fortunately for us, he will carry on as General Secretary and Membership Secretary and we may therefore be sure that the Society will continue to benefit from his guiding hand.

The Society would also like to thank Ms Jane Farrow for her generosity in acting as a most efficient Honorary Auditor for the past three years. At present the editorial cupboard is almost bare. For this current edition I am bound to thank Alan Harfield for yet again providing material in his usual competent fashion. However, I appeal to other members to see what information they might have stored away in their files that could, with a little effort, be converted into an interesting read.

Some weeks ago new members Tom Donovan and Simon Docherty pointed me in the direction of a French society that has recently published an excellent book entitled *Les Troupes Indiennes en France 1914-1918* (Douglas Gressieux for the 'Association les Comptoirs de l'Inde', 2007) available via 'www.amazon.fr' for €23 plus postage. Even if French is a challenge, the illustrations on their own are worth having including countless photographic images (some never before published) and many fine sketches by war artists Paul Sarrut, Eugene Delabarre, Maurice Millière and others. Although much of the narrative is translated from well-known British sources, twelve fascinating pages describe contacts between Indian soldiers and the local population. This includes the testimony of the French grand-daughter of a cavalry risaldar, including his photograph treasured within her family for so many years! The 'Association les Comptoirs' has exhibited its collection featuring India soldiers to the general public in France regularly over the past seven years, most often in town halls.

In some ways this mirrors a similar activity of the Chattri Memorial Group in Brighton in perpetuating awareness of the Indian Military Hospital between 1914 and 1918 and commemorating the men who died there. An exhibition organised by the Chattri Group was first shown in Brighton, and then repeated on a somewhat broader theme at the 'In Flanders Field' museum at Ypres during July and August 2007. There are tentative plans for the exhibition to be repeated in Brighton on an even larger scale. I hope that a future edition of Durbar will provide more information about this admirable endeavour.

THE JAVA CAMPAIGN OF 1811-1816, PART IV

ADMINISTRATION of the EAST INDIA COMPANY'S FORCE in JAVA and an ADDITIONAL LIST of EAST INDIA COMPANY OFFICERS SERVING in JAVA

Alan Harfield

Following the return of Lord Minto to Bengal Thomas Stamford Raffles was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Java and adjacent islands and as such was responsible for the administration of the forces serving under his control. As Lieutenant Governor he was authorised to publish 'General Orders' similar to those published in the three Presidencies in India. Such orders covered all aspects of administration which included movement of units and detachments, movement of officers, including promotion and the granting of furlough as well as giving approval for furlough on a 'sick certificate'.

A few examples of the type of order authorised and published by Lieutenant Governor Raffles show that the system closely followed that in use in India:

Examples of unit and individual moves:

Batavia May 1.1813

The Detachment of Madras Pioneers serving on Java are to be held in readiness to return to India in such vessel as shall be pointed out. The office of DAQMG having been ceased from this date Lieutenant Bayley ¹ will return to Madras at the first opportunity.

Lieutenant McIver² Cantonment Adjutant and Quartermaster Sourabaya to be Major of Brigade in the Samarang Division.

Batavia May 13.1813

The detachment of Horse Artillery on board the Honorable Company's Ship Fairlie will be forthwith disembarked and will march by land to the Eastern Districts. The horses of the Madras Horse Artillery will be delivered over to this detachment, and the stores with such baggage as is not actually required on the march, will be sent to Samarang by Sea.³

¹ Lieutenant James Bayley, 11th Regiment Madras Native Infantry

² Army List for 1811, p289; Lieutenant John M'Iver. 78th (Highland) Regt of Foot (or the Ross-shire Buffs)

³ BL (IOR), L/MIL/17/2/411, *Java General Order*, Order dated 13 May 1813

Examples of appointment order:

Batavia May 14.1813

Captain Baynes,⁴ of the 5th Volunteer Battalion, is appointed Acting Military Chaplain at Weltevreden.

Batavia May 28.1813

Lieutenant [James] Hanson is appointed Major of Brigade at Weltevreden, vice Macintosh⁵ returning to Madras.

Batavia August 13.1813

Matross Lewis, of the Bengal Artillery, is appointed Bullock Serjeant at Sourabaya.

Example of granting of furlough:

Batavia February 3.1814

Captain/Lieutenant Duncan Stewart of the Madras Establishment permitted to proceed to Europe on emergent sick certificate.

ADDITIONAL LIST OF EAST INDIA COMPANY OFFICERS SERVING IN JAVA

As a result of further research in respect of officers who 'served' in Java the following list is in addition to that published in *Durbar*, Volume 24, No 2, Summer 2007, pp72-83 and gives a reference which confirms their service in Java.

The Bengal European Regiment served in Amboyna, Java and Macassar and although Macassar came under the command of the Commander-in-Chief, Java, the troops at Amboyna were independent of Java and were under the command of Lieutenant Colonel J. Eales.

Rank	Name and Forename	Parent Regt	Java Unit
Bengal			
Lieut	Bunyon, Joseph ⁶	Bengal Euro Regt	Served in the Bengal Euro Regt in Java 1812
Capt	Campbell, Alexander ⁷	4 Bengal	Served in the 4 Bengal Vol

⁴ Incorrect spelling; entry is in respect of Captain George Veal Baines, 5th Bengal Volunteer Bn

⁵ Lieutenant James John Macintosh, Madras Artillery

⁶ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*, p206; also Hodson, *List of Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834*. Part I, pp. 248-249

		NT	Bn in Java
Lieut	Cockburn John ⁸	Bengal Euro Regt	Served in the Bengal Euro Regt, Java
Lieut	Craig, Edward ⁹	16 Bengal NI	Served in the 3 Bengal Vol Bn 1814-1815
Lieut	Crossley, Francis ¹⁰	Bengal Euro Regt.	Stationed at Macassar
Lieut (F)	Delafosse, Henry ¹¹	Bengal Arty	Bengal Arty and Temporarily in command of a detachment of the Javanese Corps at Sourabaya 1813
Major	Dewar, James ¹²	13 Bengal NI	Commanding, 3 Bengal Vol Bn in Java
Col.	Eales, John ¹³	Bengal Euro Regt.	In command of the Bengal Euro Regt at Amboyna but was periodically with detachments in Java
Ensign	Fraser, Alexander ¹⁴	Not known	3 Bengal Vol Bn 1811-1812
Lieut	Fulton, John ¹⁵	Bengal Euro Regt.	Adjutant of the Amboynese Corps 1812-

⁷ Thorn, *The Conquest of Java*, p68; *The London Gazette* of 17 December 1811, p2401 records the officer as being 'wounded'. See also Hodson, *op cit.* Part I, p279.

⁸ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*, p203. The forename of Lieut Cockburn is sometimes shown as 'Joseph'. See also Hodson, *List of Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834*, Vol, p279.

⁹ *East-India Register & Directory for 1815*, p68. See also Hodson, *op cit.* Part I, p403

¹⁰ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1812*, p203; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part I, p416

¹¹ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*, p205; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part II, p41

¹² BL (IOR), L/MIL /8/20, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*, p199; also Hodson, *op cit* Part II, 54

¹³ Hodson, *op cit.* Part II, pp. 15-116, and BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*, p203

¹⁴ Not listed in Hodson. Rank and name included in BL (IOR) L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement*, p205

¹⁵ BL (IOR) L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*, p 203; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part II.p234

			1814
Lieut	Grant, James Cruikshank ¹⁶	Bengal Euro Regt.	Served with 3 Bengal Vol Bn 1812-1813
Lieut (F)	Hele, John Selby ¹⁷ (also shown as 'Hale')	Bengal Arty	Bengal Arty in Java 1813-16
Lieut	Hepworth, Thomas Alexander ¹⁸	4 Bengal NI	Bengal Infantry Vol Bn, Java 1812
Lieut	Hogg, Metcalf Stanwix ¹⁹	Bengal Euro Regt.	Actg Adj & Qmr to the Bengal Euro Regt detachment in Java 1812-1814
Capt	Home, William ²⁰ . Died at Macassar 12 August 1815	Bengal Euro Regt.	Served with the Bengal Euro Regt from 1812 until death Served with the Amboynese Corps and as Fort Adjutant at Temate
Lieut	Kirchoffer, Thomas ²¹	Bengal Euro Regt.	Served in the Bengal Euro Regt detachment in Java 1815-1816
Lieut	Ledlie, Robert ²²	Bengal Euro Regt.	Served in the Bengal Euro Regt. Detachment in Java 1815-16
Lieut	Mackenzie, Kenneth ²³ . Died at Java in September 1811 of wounds received at the battle of Meester Cornelis in August 1811.	5 Bengal NI	Serving as a Staff Officer (Assistant Deputy Commissary General) Java 1811

¹⁶ Hodson. *op cit.* Part II. 0315

¹⁷ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/22, *Bengal Military Statement for 1812-1813*. p202; also Hodson, List of Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834, Part II, p426

¹⁸ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*. p210; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part II, p433

¹⁹ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*. p203; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part II, p463

²⁰ Hodson, *op cit.* Part II, pp474-475

²¹ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*. p203; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part III, p600-601

²² Hodson, *op cit.* Part III, p35. Hodson does not record his services in Java.

²³ *East-India Register & Directory for 1813*, p429 (Casualty List)

Capt	Morris, Edmond ²⁴	Bengal Euro Regt.	In command of detachment of the Bengal Euro Regt in Java 1812-1813
Lieut	Oliver, Thomas Samuel ²⁵	9 Bengal NI	Served in the 3 Bengal Vol Bn from March 1813
Lieut	Palmer, Vaughan Lloyd ²⁶	25 Bengal NI	Served in the 6 Bengal Vol Bn from 1814
Capt	Richards, William ²⁷ Severely wounded by explosion of cartridges on 24 August 181 I which necessitated his return to Bengal.	Bengal Arty	With the Bengal Arty in Java during the initial occupation of 1811
Lieut	Ruddell, David ²⁸ Served as Private Secretary to Lieut-Governor Raffles, 1815-1816.	Bengal Euro Regt.	Arrived in Java in 1815 and was employed on the 'Staff'
Lieut	Shadwell, Henry ²⁹ Died at Malacca on 24 July 1813 en-route from Java to Bengal.	7 Bengal NI	Served with the Java Inf. Vols, 1813
Capt	Stewart, John Lewis ³⁰	Bengal Euro Regt.	Served as Assistant Commissary General Java 1812 to 1815
Capt	Walker, Forster ³¹	Bengal Euro	Served in the Bengal Euro

²⁴ BL (IOR), L/MIL/17/2/411, *Java General Orders*. Order dated May 4 1813; also Hodson. *Op cit.* Part III, p336

²⁵ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/24. *Bengal Military Statement for 1813-1814*, p212, also Hodson, *op. cit.*, Part III, p428-429

²⁶ Hodson, *List of Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834*, Vol III, pp451 -452

²⁷ *The London Gazette* of 17 December 1881, p2401 records Capt Richards as being 'wounded'. See also Hodson, *op cit.* Part III, p642

²⁸ *Original Calcutta Directory for 1816*, p140; and Hodson, *op cit.* Part III, pp705-706

²⁹ Hodson, *op cit.* Part IV, p56

³⁰ Hodson, *op cit.* Part IV, pp205-206

		Regt.	Regt in Java and Amboyna
Capt	Walker, William Bensley ³²	3 Bengal NI	Served with the 5 Bengal Vol Bn 1815-1816
Lieut	Watson, Samuel ³³	Bengal Euro Regt.	Served with the Bengal Euro Regt in Java from 1812; sometimes acting as Adjutant
Lieut (F)	Wood, Henry John ³⁴	Bengal Arty	Served with the Bengal Arty in Java 1815-1816
Bengal Riding Master			
Riding master	McAuliffe, R. ³⁵	Civilian post	Riding master of the Java Light Cavalry
Madras			
Lieut	Aston, William ³⁶	Madras Horse Arty	Served in Madras Horse Arty in Java
Lieut	Harrison, James ³⁷	Madras Arty	Served with Madras Arty in Java
Lieut	Hunter, Nathaniel ³⁸	Madras Arty	Served in Madras Arty in Java
Lieut	Macintosh, James John ³⁹	Madras Arty	Served as Major of Brigade at Weltevreden 1812-13
Capt/Lt	Stewart, Duncan ⁴⁰	25 Madras	Served in the Madras

³¹ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812*, p 203; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part IV, pp369-370

³² Hodson, *op cit.* Part IV, p375

³³ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21, *Bengal Military Statement for 1812-1813*. p209; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part IV, p407

³⁴ *East-India Register and Directory for 1815*, 2nd Edition, p94; also Hodson, *op cit.* Part IV, pp513-514.

³⁵ BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/22, p205; L/MIL/8/23, p205; L/MTL/8/24, p233

³⁶ BL (IOR), L/MIL/17/2/41 I, *Java Factory Records*. General Order issued at Batavia on 28 May 1813, authorising him to 'remain on Java for the recovery of his health'.

³⁷ *East-India Register & Directory for 1812*, Fort St George, p105

³⁸ *East-India Register & Directory for 1813*, Fort St George p229

³⁹ BL (IOR), L/MIL/17/2/41 I, *Java General Orders*. Order dated 28 May 1813

⁴⁰ BL (IOR), L/MIL/17/2/41 I, *Java General Orders*. Order dated Batavia, 3 February 1814.

		NI	Infantry Vols in Java
Bengal			
Ass Surg	Ainsley, William ⁴¹	Bengal Med Estb.	Bengal Staff in Java
Ass Surg	Calder (no forename recorded) ⁴²	Bengal Med Estb.	Bengal Staff in Java
Ass Surg	Chalmers, William ⁴³	Bengal Med Estb.	Bengal Staff in Java
Ass Surg	Curran, William ⁴⁴	Bengal Med Estb.	Bengal Staff in Java
Ass Surg	Lamb, John	Bengal Med Estb.	Bengal Staff in Java
Ass Surg	Playfair, George ⁴⁵	Bengal Med Estb.	Bengal Staff in Java
Madras			
Asst Surg	Stephenson, Samuel Martin ⁴⁶	Madras Medical Estb.	Garrison Surgeon at Sourabaya
Bombay Marine			
Asst Surg	Purnell, William Anthony ⁴⁷	Bombay Marine later	Serving as Staff Surgeon at Buitenzorg from 18

⁴¹ *East-India Register & Directory for May 1815*, p103

⁴² BL (IOR), L/MIL/8/21. This entry may refer to 'James Calder' although he is not shown as serving in Java in the *East-India Register & Directory for 1812*.

⁴³ Crawford, Lt Col D.G, *Roll of the Indian Medical Service 1615-1930*, (London, 1930), p53 (No 568)

⁴⁴ *East-India Register & Directory for 1812*, Bengal p104. The entry shows that he was to serve with the 4 Bengal Vol Bn, although the *Bengal Military Statement for 1811-1812* shows him as serving 'on the Staff.

⁴⁵ Assistant Surgeons John Lamb and George Playfair are listed in the *East-India Register & Directory for 1811* but not shown as serving in Java.

⁴⁶ BL (IOR), L/MIL/17/2/41 I, *Java General Orders*. Order dated 12 December 1813

⁴⁷ BL (IOR), L/MIL/17/2/41 I, *Java General Orders*. Order dated 26 March 1814

		Bombay Medical Estb.	February 1814
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In addition to the British and East India Company armies a number of 'local' units were established and the local officers were given local commissions. Such commissions were authorised by Lieutenant Governor Thomas Raffles and were promulgated in the Java General Orders. A typical example of such an order is:

Java General Order Batavia, May 14, 1813.

Cornet D'Ernest is appointed provisionally to the Corps of Hussars, and attached with his present rank to the detachment of the corps on duty at Djocjocarta.

The following is a list of known locally-commissioned officers and the title of the unit in which they served. Many of these officers had previously served with the Dutch forces.

Rank	Name and forename	Java Unit
Cornet	Alexander, E ⁴⁸	Colonial European Hussars
Cornet	D'Ernest ⁴⁹	Colonial European Hussars
Lieut	De Songh, H.P.	Amboynese Corps
Lieut	Nicolitz, G.	Amboynese Corps
Ensign	Schoof, M.	Amboynese Corps
Lieut	Spanayke, J.	Amboynese Corps
Lieut	Van Driel, P.I.	Amboynese Corps
Ensign	Van Ranzow, M.	Javanese Corps
Ensign	Zurhurst, Daniel	Amboynese Corps
Lieut	-, Frederick ⁵⁰	Amboynese Corps
Lieut	-, Julio ⁵¹	Amboynese Corps

In addition to the local Corps, the Colonial European Hussars, the Javanese Corps and the Amboynese Corps, there was one other unit that was under command namely the Amboynese Dragoons. This unit did not have any East India Company officers serving in it.

⁴⁸ Serving as 'Adjutant and Riding Master of the Colonial European Hussars'

⁴⁹ The name recorded in the *Original Calcutta Directory for 1816* is shown as 'Ernst, D'

⁵⁰ The surname is not recorded in the *Original Calcutta Directory*

⁵¹ The surname is not recorded in the *Original Calcutta Directory*

The East India Company force was also supplemented by the Javanese-raised Prince Prangwedana's Legion.⁵² The Legion was originally raised to support the Dutch force in Java but was disbanded with the surrender of the Franco-Dutch force in 1811. It was reconstituted by Raffles:

to help quell the disturbances in Cirebon [Cheribon] from January to April 1812 and then deployed against the recalcitrant second Sultan of Yogya in June 1812.⁵³

The reformed Legion was trained by European instructors and also Sepoy instructors. The one problem was that the Legion's cavalry were not as well disciplined as the Company's Light Horse and Hussars.

From November 1812 the authorised dress of the Legion was the same as that worn by the Sepoys of the East-India Company. Likewise the senior officers adopted the dress worn by the Company's officers with Prince Prangwedana wearing the Company officer's uniform together with his '*pusaka*'⁵⁴ kris.

Although the legion consisted of cavalry and infantry, when a military parade was held for Lieutenant Governor Raffles it is recorded that during the march-past

“the men of the Prangwedanan (Legion) ... were dressed very variously. Five hundred in number, all on foot and carrying pikes, they salute in the Javanese fashion. The majors and captains (Prangwedana's relations) in command all look impetuously brave.”⁵⁵

MEMORIALS

Of the many officers and other ranks of the East-India Company's Army and the regiments of the British army that were either killed, or died of wounds or of fever whilst serving in Java, only three memorials have been found. Of these, two are located in the old Dutch and British Burial Ground now known as the Tanah Abang Cemetery. These are in respect of:

John Casper Leyden MD
who was born
at Teviotdale in Scotland and who died
in the prime of life
at Molenvliet near Batavia
on the 28th August 1811
two days
after the fall of Cornelis.⁵⁶

⁵² Vibart, Major H.M. *The Military History of the Madras Engineers and Pioneers*, Vol I, (London, 1881), p476.

Vibart gives the title of this local force as 'Prince Trangwedona's corps

⁵³ Cary, *The British in Java 1811-1816 - A Javanese Account*, p25

⁵⁴ Pusaka - a family heirloom. Cary, *op cit*, p25.

⁵⁵ Cary, *op cit*. p 108.

⁵⁶ Corfield, Justin. *Java: British & Empire Graves 1743-1975* (London, 1999), p 15

The second grave is that of Olivia Mariamne Raffles, the first wife of Thomas Stamford Raffles, who is buried next to Assistant Surgeon John Leyden.

The one other known memorial is that of Lieutenant Colonel William Campbell of the 78th (Highland) Regiment of Foot (Ross-shire Buffs) who died on 28th August 1811. His memorial stone has been moved from its original location and is now in the grounds of All Saints Anglican Church, Jakarta. The inscription reads:

Here lie the Remains
of Lieutenant Colonel
WILLIAM CAMPBELL
of His Britannic Majesty's 78th Regt
who died on the 28th of Augt 1811
of wounds received on the 26th of that Month
while bravely leading on his Regt to attack
the strongly fortified Lines of CORNELIS
defended by a gallant Enemy.

ORIGINS OF MUTINY

THE WORDS OF SHEIKH HEDAYAT ALI

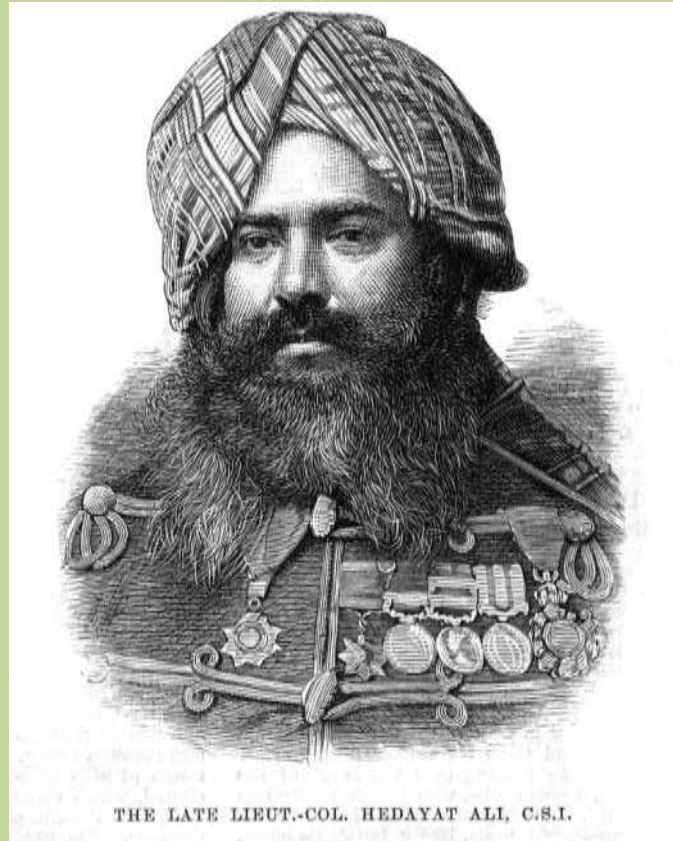
‘I am sure that some of the gentlemen would be offended at me for pointing out to Government the defects that have prevailed in the army, but I have no regard to their pleasure or displeasure. I have only the good of the State in my view.’

The purpose of this article is to record the views of an astute observer who was in a position to understand and sympathise with the grievances of the Indian sepoy and yet at the same time remained a staunch and loyal servant of the *Sircar*.¹ It does not draw any conclusions as to the causes of the Indian Mutiny, nor does it consider the extent to which it was a mutiny of the Bengal Army or a popular uprising and the first step in the long struggle towards freedom from British rule. Suffice it to say here that in the years prior to 1857 there was a steadily growing level of unrest within the Bengal Army regiments relating to matters of caste and religion, conditions of service and employment prospects. This broad-based discontent was a significant contributor to the general outbreak of mutiny.

The majority of men in the Bengal Army were recruited from Oudh territories. The annexation of the previously independent state of Oudh in 1856, and the consequential disbanding of its army, gave rise to fears for their future livelihood of men from Oudh who were already serving in the Bengal Army. The HEIC's newly raised Oudh Irregular Force included new classes of men recruited from the Punjab to the general detriment of men from Oudh. The recently created Punjab Irregular Force itself represented a challenge to the previous exclusivity of the Bengal regiments for service in Bengal, Oudh and the Northwest Provinces. Rumours were circulating amongst the native soldiery that the *Sircar* was intent on defiling their caste and forcing them to convert to Christianity. Much has been written on the introduction of lubricated cartridges to be used with the new Enfield rifle, which required the rifleman to bite off the end of the cartridge before ramming it down the barrel. Alarm was spread when it was bruited abroad that the cartridges were greased with fat from the venerated cow or lard from the unclean hog. It was the combination of many loosely connected factors that incited otherwise professional soldiers to consider rebellion.

There are few contemporary sources that paint an authentic picture of the discontent that was smouldering in the Bengal Army, or reveal just how long the problems had been festering. There was however an erudite and perceptive soldier who was aware of the seeds of unrest and expressed his views in a lengthy written report submitted to the Military Department as early as February 1857 before the outbreak at Barrackpore. He warned of impending mutiny but his words fell on stony ground. It would take another eighteen months, and a second lengthy report, for his words to be taken more seriously. By that time, the crisis of the Mutiny had passed its critical point.

¹ The State, Government or Supreme Authority, in this case the Honourable East India Company



Lieutenant Colonel *Khan Bahadur* Sheikh Hedayat Ali Khan, *Sardar Bahadur*, CIE, OBI, IOM,² enjoyed a remarkable and exceptionally successful career in the Indian Army. He was born into the 8th Bengal Native Infantry, a regiment in which both his father and his grandfather had been subedars, and in 1842 he was serving in it as a young private. By the time he came to Captain Thomas Rattray's attention in the mid-fifties, he was a Havildar with a reputation as a smart, well behaved and zealous officer, an excellent drill instructor, who had received high testimonials from those under whom he served.³ In February 1856 he was appointed Subedar in the 1st Bengal Police Battalion at Lahore, newly raised and commanded by Rattray, and was of great assistance to his commandant in quickly knocking the Battalion into shape. In 1857 when the Bengal Army regiments were wavering from their allegiance and threatening to mutiny, he assisted the civil police in arresting rebel activists, for which service he was admitted exceptionally to the 1st Class Order of British India with the title *Sardar Bahadur*.⁴ During the Mutiny campaigns he was engaged in several sharp actions with rebels in the turbulent province of Behar, and for outstanding gallantry in the field he was admitted directly to the 1st Class Order of Merit.⁵ After the Mutiny campaigning was over, his illustrious career continued from strength to strength. At a time when even the most capable Indian officer might aspire at best to an honorary captaincy upon retirement, Hedayat Ali held the unprecedented honorary rank of Lieut. Colonel while still on the active list.⁶

² The *Illustrated London News* published his obituary together with a portrait

³ *National Archives of India, Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A* – May 1875, Nos. 106-108, 'Services of Capt. Hidayut Ali'

⁴ *NAI Military Dept Progs*, 13 Nov 1857, Nos. 393-396 (and GO of the same date). This was a 'special admission' directly to the 1st Class. Direct admissions to the higher classes of both OBI and IOM occurred only during the Indian Mutiny between 1857 and 1859.

⁵ GO 1708 of 23 Dec 1858.

⁶ For further biographical details of Hon. Lieut. Col. Sheikh Hedayat Ali, see *JSAHR Vols. LXXVII No.312* and *LXXX No.323* (articles by Cliff Parrett and Rana Chhina)

Apart from his soldierly skills, Hedayat Ali was also highly intelligent and articulate. Following his appointment to the Bengal Military Police Battalion in 1856, he became a close confidant of his politically well-placed commandant. Indeed all the evidence points to him being Rattray's right hand man throughout the crisis of the Mutiny campaign, in which his new police battalion played an important part. It thus transpired that, when Hedayat Ali had words to say about the threat of an uprising in the Bengal Army, Rattray got him to write them down in Urdu and then translated them and forwarded them to the highest level of military administration within the Government of India hierarchy. The first report was submitted shortly before the outbreak at Barrackpore on 29th March 1857, which is generally considered to be the precursor of the Indian Mutiny.

The content of this first submission by Hedayat Ali is not known, but in all probability it is mirrored in large part by the report that was finally submitted to the Governor General and the Commander in Chief in November 1858. It is reproduced here in full. It presents a perceptive and uninhibited personal assessment of the root causes of mutiny stretching back over more than thirty years. These early seeds were nourished by discontent arising from service during the 1st Afghanistan War, and little was done to address them in the intervening years up to the outbreak of mutiny at Barrackpore in March 1857. The fact that this perspective of mismanagement derives from the experiences of a serving soldier of the Bengal Army adds greatly to its usefulness and authenticity.

*Extract from the Proceedings of the Hon'ble the President of the Council of India in Council in the Home Department, Fort William 26 October 1858*⁷

Received a letter No. 3424 dated the 24th ultimo from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, forwarding twelve copies of a second paper on the late Mutiny and rebellion written by *Sardar Bahadur* Subedar Hedayut Ali of the Bengal Police Battalion.

Ordered that, in continuation of Extract from this department No 1040 dated the 24th April last, a copy of the foregoing paper be sent to the Military Department.

A few words relative to the late Mutiny of the Bengal Army and the Rebellion in the Bengal Presidency by Sheikh Hedayat Ali, Subedar and Sardar Bahadur, Bengal Sikh Police Battalion, commanded by Captain Thomas Rattray who has translated this paper from the original Urdu.

Delhi, 7th August 1858

I consider it my duty to explain, as far as my knowledge extends, what has been the course of disaffection in the native army and many of the Sirdars and Rajas of Hindostan. In my

⁷ NAI Mily Dept Progs, 12 Nov 1858, Nos. 318-320: Extract Home Dept No. 3506

former paper⁸ I did express my willingness to go down to Calcutta if the Right Hon'ble the Governor General wished to ask me any questions on the subject. Having, however, not been honoured with the invitation I take this opportunity of again laying before the Government a full account of which I consider to have been the causes of this general discontent and disaffection, including herein what has been said before.

It is a well known fact that the country of Hindustan was in ancient times governed by Hindu Kings and inhabited by the people professing Hindu religion, and that it was a long time afterwards that the Mahomedans made their appearance into this country. The antiquity of the Hindus may be gathered from the fact of there being many places in the country held sacred by them and where they resort in large numbers as pilgrims. These are Jugun Nath [Jagannath], Ayodhya, Peryag [Prayag], Gaya, Mathura, Brindabun, Dwarka, Kashee, Budree Nath [Badrinath], Jwala Mookhee [Jwalamukhi], Byjunath Lachutry, Koorooksheter [Kuruksheetra], etc., and many more. There were in ancient times a great number, of which many have been destroyed by the Moosulman king Aulumgeer [Alamgir]. In consequence of the multiplicity of these places of devotion, the Hindus stick to their religion with great prejudice and obstinacy.

It was in 1838, when an army was ordered to Kabul, that the sepoy for the first time showed symptoms of disaffection. They began to grumble and grew discontented from the time they crossed the Attock⁹. A story runs among the Hindus that when Rajah Maun Sing, Wazir of one of the former kings of Delhi, went to wage war with the Afghans, he ordered his army after crossing the Indus to take off their *janeos*¹⁰, telling them that the Hindu creed extended only as far as the Indus. This fact is very well known to all the Hindus whether sepoy or others. Further, it is a custom with the Hindus never to eat or cook their food until they have bathed and performed other ceremonies required by their religion. On reaching Kabul they were obliged to leave off their bathing, etc., on account of intensity of cold to which they were unaddicted; whatever they bought for their daily food they received from the hands of Moosulmans, as the country was a Mahomedan country. Being thus compelled to abstain from the performance of their religious duties and to receive their food from the hands of Mahomedans, they grew dissatisfied. After a short time, when the weather grew excessively cold, the commanding officers of the regiments, pitying the condition of their sepoy, gave them *posteens*¹¹ to wear. This produced a further discontent among them, because the Hindus do not like even to touch the skin of dead animals. But as they could not help otherwise, they consented to wear them. They could make no disturbance in that country with the English as it was not fit for them to live in, for they thought if they dared show their disaffected feelings

⁸ Hedayat Ali explains later in his narrative that his first paper on the Mutiny was discussed in February 1857 with Rattray, who translated and forwarded it to Col. Birch, Secy to the Govt of India in the Mily Dept. No reply was received. A second paper was prepared at Arrah, although it is not clear how and when this was submitted. It seems from the reference to an 'Extract' dated 24 Apr 1858 that one or other of these earlier papers had been reviewed at some time. It is less evident that it produced any outcome. The paper written in August 1858 probably repeated Hedayat Ali's earlier thoughts and added some further reflections. Having been circulated within the Mily Dept in October 1858, it was evidently considered of sufficient merit to be ultimately, albeit belatedly, presented to the Governor General and the Commander in Chief (see below).

⁹ Attock was the name used for the stretch of the Indus below the similarly named settlement, where the road from Rawalpindi to Peshawur traverses this formidable river.

¹⁰ The sacred thread worn by upper caste Hindus, mainly Brahmins but also Rajputs

¹¹ Sheepskin top coat, usually poorly cured and odorous

to the English they were sure to be compelled to Mahomedanism by the Afghans. These considerations served for them as a check to throw off their allegiance. Many sepoy of the 27th and 54th Regiments Native Infantry were forcibly made by the Afghans converts to their faith at Ghuznee.

When in the year 1842 the Kabul Field Force came to Ferozepore, I was also there in the Light Company of the 8th Regiment in which my father was a subedar and I a private. One light company from each regiment was taken and they were formed into one regiment. The regiment was under orders to Kabul but was never sent. I visited every regiment that had returned from Kabul. The sepoy spoke that they had lost their caste by going to Kabul because they said they were obliged to wear skins of animals; and because they could do there none of the acts prescribed by their religion in consequence of intensity of the cold weather. The Moosulmans also did not perform their work with loyalty because they said the British Government had forced them to fight [against] the people professing Islam creed which was forbidden in the Koran. They also boasted amongst themselves that they always fired upwards and never took aim. For this reason a subedar of the 24th Regiment was shot dead. The Hindu sepoy who had returned from Kabul were not allowed by the Hindustanis to touch their cooking utensils, being looked upon by them as out-castes. It was said that the 24th Regiment which was at Ghuznee had been all forced to Mahomedans by the Afghans and imprisoned for a long period and that many of the sepoy of other regiments had also lost their caste. When this was known to the troops that were in Hindustan they got dissatisfied with the Government. Zalim Sing, a subedar of the 41st Regiment, told the sepoy of the 33rd [35th]¹² that they have become Mahomedans by going to Kabul and that none of their comrades could eat with them. For this offence he was tried by a general court martial and dismissed the service. When the army returned from Kabul they related what they had suffered in that country. Every sepoy in the native army grew dissatisfied with the Government for having ordered them there.

In those days the first symptoms of mutiny were shown by the 64th Regiment who were ordered to Scinde and who mutinied for their pay. The 7th Light Cavalry mutinied at Ferozepore. A few men in the 64th were hanged, some were transported, and others disbanded.

Some years after this the Punjab being conquered by the British, the native army occupied the country. The Government was pleased to give double *batta*¹³ to those regiments who were stationed on that side of the Indus but it was not declared how long would this *batta* continue. After a short time the regiments in the Punjab were relieved by those of Hindustan. The latter were not allowed double *batta*. For this, the 66th at Amritsar mutinied and were disbanded. This was very proper, in my humble opinion, for as one does so should he receive. In Wazirabad the 32nd, 22nd and 18th threw off their allegiance. Some sepoy from each regiment were punished.

¹² The regimental number is indistinct. Both the 33rd and 35th Ben.NI were at Kabul.

¹³ Extra allowance paid during field service or on other special grounds

The Government must be well aware that when any sepoy shows once or twice a mutinous disposition he is not fit as a soldier because the society of such a one leads others to mutiny. Every commanding officer should have reported any such occurrence in his regiment with full details to the Government, that some arrangements might have been made to prevent such a spirit from spreading. As far as my knowledge extends, many of the commanding officers always concealed the truth and reported their regiments all right, until at length the sepoys began murdering their officers.

I have a thorough conviction that the Government is not as yet well acquainted with the cause of the mutiny and the feelings of the country at large. Therefore I take the liberty to explain my views on the subject. The authorities at Saharunpore put up a Hospital for the sick of all creeds and persuasions. A proclamation was issued by the principal authorities to the effect that all sick men or women high or low, *purda nashins*¹⁴ or others, should resort to the Hospital for treatment, and all the native physicians were prohibited to attend the sick people. When this was known to the chief persons of the city they collected a large body of men with a view of making a disturbance. The Government, they imagined, intended to take away their honour and for this reason they attempted to offer opposition, but were restrained from doing so, in consequence of want of arms and of the order having been withdrawn.

Some time afterwards, my regiment was cantoned at Shahjehanpore where I had frequent visits with the chief people of the city and many hours passed in conversation, in the course of which I heard them say: 'When any of our brethren commits an offence, he get punished according to the law of the land. This is all right and proper, for it is just that every one should receive punishment adequate to his offence; but indeed it is very objectionable to us that everyone's caste is taken away. For instance, when a person is sentenced to imprisonment his beard and moustaches are cut. This is very grievous to us and causes great injury to our religion. Besides, in jails, the prisoners are ordered to eat in messes. A Brahmin cooks for all the Hindus and a Mahomedan for all the Mahomedans. This arrangement can do no harm to a Mahomedan but by all means a great one to the feelings of a Hindu, for our religion forbids us to eat food cooked by one not belonging to our sect.'

It is well known to government there are many sorts of Brahmins in Hindustan, for instance Tewaries, Doobies [Doobeys], Pandies [Pandeys], Missers [Mishras], Pathaks, Opathiahs [Upadhayas], Baghpais [Bajpais], Ugunihotries [Agnihotris], Umasthies [Awasthis], etc. None of these eat from each others' hands. For this reason they imagined that the Government wished to do away with all caste. When the prisoners are released from jails, they are not allowed by any Hindu to touch his utensils and are looked upon as outcastes. This makes the prisoners and their families discontented with Government. These messing and beard cutting practices prevailed for a long time in many jails, and are yet in existence. On account of these, disturbances arose in the Arrah, Benares and Deegha jails, and many prisoners were killed.

¹⁴ A woman who sits behind the screen or *purda*; including (but not necessarily) widows

After these events it was heard that the missionaries, having collected an assembly of *pundits*¹⁵ and *maulvis*¹⁶, put them this question: ‘Why do you not let your women come out?’ They argued that even the prisoners are allowed to go out, so why not allow the privilege which the convicts enjoy to the women kind. They also told them that they ought to circumcise and invest their children with [*poita*]¹⁷ at eighteen years of age and that these circumstances should not be held without the permission of the *zillah*¹⁸ authorities. These observations of the missionaries produced great fear in the minds of both the Hindus and Mahomedans who were puzzled to know what the Government intended by these things. Many persons collected in Calcutta to lodge their complaint, but the authorities having consoled them they became silent. The missionaries in the *mofussil*¹⁹ also preached to the same effect and issued many books and papers. Many persons became displeased and considered that it is with a view of corrupting their religion that the missionaries have been approved by Government.

It is a well known fact that the Hindus think what their forefathers have done as constituting their religion, any digression from which they construe into irreligion. In every instance they follow the footsteps of their ancestors; for instance, they wear clothes of the same fashion with their predecessors. If any one were to tell them any thing for their good, they think it must in some way affect their religion. Nay, many there are foolish enough in India that they even do not follow what is inculcated in their religious books but only act up to their old customs. It is owing to their foolishness and ignorance that all this anarchy and ruin has come to pass.

A short time after the kingdom of Oudh was annexed to the British dominion, it was then talked abroad that the British Government had a treaty with the Nawab of Lucknow; that his kingdom should never be taken from him, for the Nawab’s forefathers had in former times given valuable assistance to the British Government. When the British troops were sent to Oudh the Nawab issued a proclamation throughout his dominions that none of his subjects should offer any resistance to the army, but should give their ready assistance as regards provisions, etc. This order was accordingly obeyed by the Nawab’s *sirdars*²⁰ and the army. It was also a subject of common discourse among the people of Hindustan that, if the Nawab has done good or bad, it is only in his own dominion and he has no way broken faith with the Government. If the country of such a faithful ally is confiscated, what independent chief may not expect the same towards himself? For the above reasons, every chief of Hindustan was seized with fear and suspicion. Had the king of Oudh been at that time in his country it is by no means improbable that the *sirdars* in Hindustan would have risen to support him.

In 1854 and 1855, it was rumoured abroad that the British Government intended to overthrow the king of Oudh. In those days the sepoys talked amongst themselves that if the English attack the Nawab’s domain all the chiefs will take up arms against them. They will also not

¹⁵ A wise or learned man; properly a man competent in Sanskrit law

¹⁶ A religious teacher

¹⁷ The meaning of this word has not been established.

¹⁸ Administrative district of British India

¹⁹ Literally suburbs; the territory surrounding the main Presidency towns

²⁰ Commander or leader; at a lower level, the head or foreman of a team of drivers or lascars

perform their duty faithfully because they said that their brethren were in the service of the Nawab and they therefore cannot and will not fight with their brethren. When the Nawab went down to Calcutta the chiefs had attempted to make a disturbance, but they were helpless as they had no army with which they could have opposed the English. They therefore remained silent for the time being, waiting only for a favourable opportunity to rise.

It would naturally be asked how I came to know the feelings of the Oudh people. In order therefore to satisfy this curiosity, I relate the history in full. On the 3rd February 1856 I was transferred from the 8th Regiment N.I. into the Sikh Bengal Police Battalion. On the said day I left Barrackpore for Lahore where the Corps was being raised. In my way thither, I reached Cawnpore on the 24th March when the Nawab of Lucknow also arrived there en route to Calcutta. I put up in the inn where the Nawab's *Vakeel*²¹ etc. also took their temporary lodgings. The chief persons of the city, the *Vakeel* of the Rajah of Bithoor and the officers and sepoy from the regiments stationed there, used to pay visits to the *Vakeel* and servants of the Nawab. They were all of opinion that the annexation of the country of Oudh by the British Government was an unjust act. The *Vakeel* of the Rajah of Bithoor said that his master was much angry and displeased with the English for annexing Oudh. I stopped three days in the *serai*, being compelled to leave it in consequence of the multiplicity of occupiers and their visitors. I then went to Raheem Bux, Subedar, 1st Regiment, 2nd Company N.I. and stopped with him three days more. When there I found the sepoy expressing their displeasure against the British Government for [displacing] the Nawab of his dominion. On the 19th March I left Cawnpore and joined my Corps at Lahore.

When the Punjab was taken by the British, a General Order was issued to enlist 200 Sikhs and Punjabis in each regiment. The order was carried out by many of the commanding officers. Some enlisted 200, some 150, some 100, and some 50. When the Punjabi Mahomedans came for enlistment, they were promised by the commanding officers that their hair will never be interfered with. Some time afterwards a General Order was issued by General Anson²², the late Commander in Chief, directing every sepoy to cut his beard on the chin. The Punjabis then petitioned their respective officers representing that they had been promised on their enlistment not to have their beards cut, so they said they can not and will not let their beards be touched. This was reported by the commanding officers to the Commander in Chief but to no avail. His Excellency directed that the order should be enforced and that those who refused to submit should take their discharge and go to their homes. The Punjabis would not let their beards be touched and therefore left the service. Some Punjabi sepoy from the 2nd Regiment, which is now at Achanuk, and some from the 63rd, which was then at Lahore, having obtained their discharge took their way to Punjab. On their way homewards they gave vent to bitter complaints against their commanding officers in regard to their having broken the promise which they had made with them. They said no reliance should be placed on the English, they say one thing and do another. The army having heard this report grew disaffected. Several good men among the Punjabis who were in the

²¹ Authorised representative; ambassador

²² General the Hon'ble George Anson, H.M.'s service died on cholera at Karnal on 27 May 1857 soon after the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny.

37th and 57th Regiments, and who took discharge on account of this beard cutting order, re-enlisted in this regiment and I have after heard them talking of it.

In the month of September 1856 a General Order was issued by the Commander in Chief to the effect that all recruits enlisted from the 1st of the month should be required to swear that they would go wherever they be ordered. Accordingly, all the soldiers that were enlisted after the said date swore to this effect. When the old sepoy heard of this they got frightened and displeased. They said that up to the present moment those who went to Kabul are not allowed to eat with their comrades and are considered as outcastes, and now we cannot tell where would the Government force us to go. They will, we think, be next carrying us to London. As I have above remarked that the inhabitants of this country are such fools as to look upon any novelty with suspicion, they were seized with fear at the issue of this order.

After this the government desired to introduce the Enfield rifle into the ranks of the native army. The rifle throws a ball at a distance of 900 yards and is therefore far superior to the musket, which cannot throw so far. This object in introducing the rifle was simply to protect the lives of the army in action. Three depots were appointed to teach the rifle exercise; one at Dum Dum for the army of the Bengal Presidency, one at Ambala for the troops stationed between Benares and the Sutlej, and one at Sialkot for those of the Punjab. One European officer, one jemadar, one havildar, one naik and four sepoy from each regiment were ordered to be sent to learn the exercise. Among those who were sent there were many Brahmins. At the time when they were learning the exercise, a *khalassi*²³ from Calcutta came to the sepoy who were on duty at the Fort and told them that the new cartridges were made up from the fat of cows and pigs, and that they would therefore lose their caste if they bit them. When they heard this, they grew suspicious and began to talk amongst themselves. The Brahmin sepoy at Dum Dum especially objected to touching these cartridges. It is well known to Government that the Brahmins do not eat food cooked by a Mahomedan or a Christian. They even objected to touch it thinking that they would lose their caste if they did so. Bread is the staff of life and it is for the sake of bread that the sepoy have enlisted the service. As they object even to touch the bread which is essentially necessary to keep one's life, when they saw the cartridges they said 'if we touch these cartridges our caste will be gone; how can we therefore bite them with our teeth?' At this time the sepoy at Dum Dum began sending letters to all the regiments in the service. When these were read all the army were led to entertain the false belief that the Government intended to force them all to Christianity. All this I learnt from the regiments at Dinapore.

All the above mentioned facts *viz.*, the carrying of the army into Kabul, the erection of the hospital at Saharunpore, the issue of the order that all the sick men or women whether high or low caste should resort for treatment to this hospital, the swearing in of recruits to go wherever they were ordered, the messing together in jails, the cutting of beards of prisoners and also of the sepoy in a prescribed fashion, the annexation of Oudh, the observation of the missionaries, the introduction of the rifle and further the confiscation of the *jagirs*²⁴ that had been granted for perpetuity by the emperors of Delhi, the introduction of house tax, and the

²³ Camp follower, tent pitcher

²⁴ Annuity from an assignment of land

sepoys required to pay postage for their letters which formerly they were not required to pay - all these facts combined together to set the whole army and the country mad. They thought that the Government intended to take away their religion and said that it was with this view that they have been subjected to such [indecipherable]. It is from the last 16 years, viz. from the time that the army was ordered to Kabul, that the sepoys have been becoming more and more disaffected. They first showed their mutinous spirit in Scinde and then in the Punjab, and this having been ripened for so long a period at last broke out. The sepoys considered that it was better to die than to lose their caste. It was for this reason alone that the 19th Regiment at Behrampore mutinied and were disbanded. After their discharge where they left Achanuk for their homes, they gave out all along the way that the Government wanted them to bite the cartridges that were made up of the fat of cows and pigs, but that they, rather than lose their caste, left the service. Whatever they gave out were all lies and falsehood only to turn the minds of the people against the State. The Enfield rifle had not been issued to them till that time. The old blank cartridges that they had been using were the only ones that were issued and those were made with their own hands. When other sepoys heard these falsehoods they imagined that they would also be forced to bite these new cartridges. Under this notion the regiments that were at Meerut came to a determination to mutiny. The commanding officers then began promising their men that they should never be forced to use the new rifle. The sepoys, however, would not believe their words but stuck fast to what their comrades told them.

Therefore, at Meerut, having broken out into open rebellion they went off to the king of Delhi and told him that the whole army have thrown off their allegiance to the British and would assemble under his banner. 'So now', said they, 'you are our king. Give us the order to fight with the English and drive them out of the country.'

The king of Delhi was a very old and infirm man and his sons had never seen a battle. They have had very little intercourse with the world having all their lives remained in the company of females. They believed all that the sepoys said and thought they would, by the aid of these ungrateful wretches, regain their lost empire. Preparations to fight were at once commenced. The force at Cawnpore, hearing what was going on at Delhi, mutinied. The traitor Nana Sahib took command of them. The acts of cruelty performed by this traitor are patent to the world. This devil thought he would now become *malik* of the country. It was in imitation of the cruelties exercised by this fiend that the sepoys of every regiment began murdering the officers, their wives and their children, for it is the practice of the people of this country to do whatever their brethren do. I would here take the liberty to state that all the native army without exception are inwardly dissatisfied with the Government.

A short time afterwards the force at Dinapore mutinied, and coming up to Arrah put themselves under the command of Koer Singh²⁵. With these three regiments Koer Singh waged treasonable war with the state and thought he would become Rajah of Bihar. A full account of Koer Singh's rebellion will be found in another place in this paper. At the time of this mutiny I was also present at Dinapore, and since I came to Patna I tried my utmost endeavours to deter the sepoys from mutinying but without effect, for the sepoys always

²⁵ Often known by the British as Kunwar Singh, one of the ablest and most popular of the rebel leaders and generals

thought me as not one of their brotherhood. The day that the regiments were going to mutiny, I reported the circumstances to my commanding officer and to the then commissioner and to all the English gentlemen whom I knew at Patna. The commissioner on my giving the information collected all the English ladies and gentlemen at his Bungalow. All the acts of loyalty on my part, both at Patna and Dinapore, have been reported by my commanding officer to the Government of India and to that of Bengal, and for which I have been handsomely rewarded. I cannot be too grateful to Government for the patronage and kindness, which my family and I have received for three generations.

When the English took this country they entertained only the high caste men into their army, such as Brahmins, Chhatris, Rajputs, Sheikhs, Syeds, Moguls, Pathans, etc., and they were too particular in not interfering with the religion of the people. I am sure had the lower castes been also entertained, *viz.* Talees, Tumbilees, Chamars, etc., as is the practice of the Bombay and Madras armies, this calamity would never have come to pass, for the lower caste men would have done any thing and gone any where that the Government desired, and a mixture of creeds would have proved a check upon one another.

Another reason why the army grew disaffected is that promotion all went by seniority and not by merit and proficiency; all the old men that had become unfit for duty received promotion whilst younger men who were in every way fit were not advanced. The latter said there is no use in us exerting ourselves, we cannot get promotion until our turn arrives, *viz.* till our beards grow grey and our mouths toothless. For this reason the sepoys were ever careless of their duty. The higher ranks of the native army had lost their understanding and, in consequence of their stupidity, instead of preventing the men from mutinying they rather persuaded them to do so.

I would now explain why the feelings of the army were not known to the European officers. In former times the officers used to call the sepoys to their bungalows and converse with them. They thus got better acquainted with the character of their men and the state of the regiment and did good service to the State. Latterly, the officers that have been appointed are better educated than the officers of former times were, but I am sorry to state that they dislike the company of the natives. Whether this is owing to their being learned, or to any other cause, I cannot make out. When any sepoy goes to see or speak to them at their Bungalows, they get much displeased and say that if he has anything to say he should be in his uniform with the Orderly Havildar. Thus a sepoy who goes to impart some secret to his officers is deterred from doing so. It is for these reasons that of late the sepoys have not confided in their officers and the consequence of all this has been that the officers did not receive any information of the mutiny. Those officers who like their sepoys and are read in Urdu and Nagri get better acquainted with the character and religious customs of the sepoys, but they are generally transferred from the military department. Every colonel in the army is transferred after three years from one regiment to another within which period he can get no knowledge of the state of the regiments under him.

In January 1857 I learnt that the force at Barrackpore will be the first to mutiny and that the rest of the troops were also inclined to mutiny. Whatever I heard in regard to every regiment I

instantly reported to my commanding officer and likewise I do the same now. My commanding officer²⁶ is well acquainted with the character and customs of the people of this country. When he hears anything he immediately makes the requisite arrangements. All these circumstances were known to me in the following manner. When our regiment had been raised at Lahore we were ordered in October to march from Amritsar to Soorie in Zillah Beerbhoom. On reaching to that side of Sherghatty, we met with the Body Guard of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal who were going from Calcutta to Seegowlee. They spoke to our men of the new cartridges as having been made up with the fat of cows and pigs, and that in consequence of these cartridges the sepoy's at Barrackpore were ready to make a disturbance, and that the chief people of Calcutta and Barrackpore were promising them to side with money if they rose. The very day I heard this I spoke to my commanding officer who said that he thought such cannot be the case; that if any regiment would have attempted to rebel it would surely have come to his knowledge, and that there would have been some hint of it in the newspapers. He also told me that if he got any correct information he would report to Government. On 7th February our regiment arrived at Raneegunje where the 5th Company, 2nd Regiment N.I. were stationed. They said to me that the army at Barrackpore were determined to mutiny and that they had burnt up many bungalows in that place. They also spoke as to their own intentions being the same and that they had three times set fire to their adjutant's bungalow but that the fire was put out every time and that the European gentlemen at Raneegunje were in great confusion and perturbation. They further stated that Alif Khan, a subedar of their regiment, had made all the arrangements to rise with the armies at Dum Dum and Barrackpore.

As soon as I heard this I went and spoke to my commanding officer. He instantly went to the commanding officer of the 2nd Regiment to enquire whether the sepoy's of that regiment were dissatisfied. He was told that they were not and the fact of the burning of the adjutant's bungalow was not mentioned. He then came back and having sent for me asked whether I would bring any witness to substantiate my story. I said that none of the native officers or sepoy's of the 2nd Regiment will give evidence against their brethren for they were all of one mind but that if any of our Sikhs would have heard the conversation he would doubtless have deposed to it. He therefore felt reluctant to report the matter to Government. On reaching Sooree I heard the same story with regard to the Barrackpore force from the 63rd whom also I found ready to make a disturbance. I was there directed by my commanding officer to draw out into Urdu a narration of what I knew in regard to the state of the army. I accordingly did so and he, having made a translation of that narrative into English, sent it to Colonel Birch²⁷ in Calcutta, but no answer to it has yet been received. I again drew out another narrative at Arrah and that likewise having been translated by him was forwarded to the government and I have had the honour to receive an answer to it. I have now the honour to despatch this, my second narrative, in detail to the Government.

I would beg leave to state that had all the native officers of the different regiments kept their commanding officers informed of the state of their respective regiments like myself and had

²⁶ By now Hedayat Ali had transferred to the Bengal Military Police commanded by Captain Thomas Rattray.

²⁷ Colonel Richard James Holwell Birch CB, Secretary to the Govt of India in the Military Dept, was at the highest level of the military administration with direct access to both the Gov.-Gen. and the C-in-C.

they told them of their grievances, if any, the mutiny would never have taken place. The cause of their not having done so is that they have two tongues. They speak with one to their commanding officers and with the other to their comrades. This I will illustrate hereafter. In my humble opinion the native army is only suited for Police because they are averse to serve in a foreign country. It must be well known to Government that the natives of this country always grow discontented when they are required to go on board a ship or to any other country. There is the instance of the army that returned from Kabul. They showed their disaffection in Scinde and the Punjab. In Scinde the 64th mutinied; the 7th Light Cavalry and the 34th Regiment mutinied at Ferozepore; the 32nd, 22nd and 13th in the Punjab; the 66th showed a most mutinous spirit at Amritsar. It is well known to Government that the native army has been dissatisfied for the last sixteen years, but no notice was taken of the bad feelings evinced and no proper arrangements were made for the army. On the contrary, the Government placed great confidence in the sepoys and daily increased their privileges, which made them more and more heady and stubborn and at last turned them to disloyalty and mutiny. As above stated, the native army were not fitted for military duty they would have done better as militia.

When the Dinapore regiments mutinied and came up to Arrah, the authorities of that place with fifty Sikhs of our Regiment under a Jemadar took refuge in a fortified house. For seven days they were surrounded by the rebels. The Sikhs all freely ate and drank in the fort but there was one Brahmin Naik among them who did not even take a mouthful of water as long as he remained inside and was reduced to a mere skeleton. It is useless to employ such men in the army.

I am of the opinion that Sonthals would make excellent soldiers. [They believe] things that God has made are good and they therefore eat every thing. They have no prejudices of caste. If the Government entertain them in the army they would go any where without any objection. Although these men are mere savages yet they could be taught. In primitive ages all were in a state of savageness; they all have now improved by degrees and the Sonthals could improve if educated.

I am well convinced that, whatever orders the Government had passed, they were all intended for the good of the Chieftains and the army of this country. But the people of this country are averse to novelty. They only stick to the customs and manners of their forefathers; any deviation from that they think must spoil their caste. They even do not follow their religious commands but only the customs of their ancestors. If any gentleman invites the natives for consultation on any new thing which he intends to introduce into the country, they are so foolish that they tell the gentleman that the proposition was very useful and good while they think just the reverse in their hearts, and when they return to their comrades they say that the gentleman had asked their opinion upon such a point and that they by way of flattery told him that it was very proper and good. This shows clearly that they have two tongues, or at least two hearts. They say one thing before the English and another before their brethren. For this reason I am of the opinion that the Government is not to be blamed. All the blame lies with the natives who from their stupidity have brought all these calamities upon themselves, for they did never inform the state that such and such a thing interferes with their religion.

It should be known to Government that disturbances in this country have always taken their rise from the Brahmins. In 1824 the 47th Regiment, which was then at Barrackpore, being ordered to China showed a most disaffected spirit and even excited the other Regiments that were at Barrackpore to make a disturbance. But the Government took a speedy notice of the matter and blew up the 47th at once, so that the account of their disaffection did not spread throughout the army. Had the 47th not been punished and had the account of their disaffection spread in Hindustan, all the army I believe would have risen in the same year. The other Regiments that were at Achanuk were struck with fear which prevented their rising, but the fact of their having been of the same mind with the 47th was afterwards known to persons.

In these days a Jemadar of the Sikh Regiment, a Brahmin by caste who was at Allygunj Sewan having not opposed the enemy and fled away, was tried for this offence and sentenced to imprisonment for five years. As long as this man remained in the Arrah jail he used to cook his food with his own hands. Afterwards he was transferred to the Patna jail where the messing order was in force. The man refused to eat food cooked by another Brahmin for which reason he received two dozen lashes and this made him eat. It is on account of the Hindus being averse to eat food cooked by another man that disturbances have always taken place in jails. Jails are places for punishment and not for favours; this they know full well, nevertheless they go on with their religious prejudices.

When the 47th mutinied at Achanuck in the year 1824, it became clear to Government that the Hindus object to go to a foreign country and that those who object are worthless as soldiers. It is a matter of great regret that nothing was done from that year towards the proper management of the army. After the return of the Kabul Field Force the mind of every Moosulman and Hindu sepoy was turned from the state, and disturbances were raised by the 64th in Scinde and by the 7th Light Cavalry at Ferozepore. The 34th also showed a mutinous spirit and was broken up. After this, when the Punjab was annexed by the British and the native army occupied the country, some of the sepoys of the 32nd, 13th and 22nd showed symptoms of mutiny, and the whole of the 66th at Amritsar broke out into mutiny and was disbanded. In 1855 the 63rd at Cawnpore, having been ordered to Barrackpore by river, showed some disaffection on the Ganges and several other regiments did the same in different places. From this narration of facts, it is evident that the army had been showing a spirit of discontent and disaffection since the year 1824, but alas proper notice was not taken by the Government since that year. Had proper arrangements been made in regard to the army, it would have saved the Government from the discharge of so much money and the loss of so many valuable lives. I am sure that some of the gentlemen would be offended at me for pointing out to Government the defects that have prevailed in the army, but I have no regard to their pleasure or displeasure. I have only the good of the State in my view.

Formerly the sepoys who became sick were not given their pay for the period they remained under treatment. Lately this order was cancelled and they were allowed to draw their pay for the period they remained ill. The Government further gave promotions according to seniority for which reasons the sepoys grew stubborn, obstinate and heedless to the commands of their

naiks, havildars, and jemadars because they thought they were sure to get promotion whenever their turn arrives.

In 1853 when our Regiment was cantoned at Shahjehanpore a general order was passed to the effect that no sepoy was to be punished with drill for more than five days. Formerly the commanders of companies had authority to punish them for 10, 20 or 30 days as they thought proper. This made them still more stubborn. In 1853 another general order was passed providing that havildars and naiks were only to be warned for the first offence and that for the second they were to be tried by Court Martial. This caused the naiks and havildars to turn haughty and they said to themselves that for the first offence they would receive no punishment, and that if they chanced to commit a second offence they would find out some means of escape. The higher ranks of the native officers considered that, as they were old servants of the state, they would not be punished for one or two offences. Now when such is the state of the officers and sepoys, how can order exist in the army? By the issue of the above orders, all authority was taken from the hands of the commanding officers. It rested wholly with Government. Of this the commanding officers generally complained. If the commanding officers had an entire authority over their subordinates, the army would have been kept in good order, for every offender would have then received a speedy punishment. Now in this case, when any offence was committed, the commanding officer was obliged to report it to Government and the infliction of punishment was put off until the order was received. Within this interval the native commissioned officers were gained over by the offender and they brought on his escape. This was not an infrequent practice. The native officers had great intimacy with the sepoys; they used to eat and play chess with them which obliterated from the hearts of the sepoys the fear which a subordinate ought to have towards his superior, and led them to neglect their orders. It was owing to the intimacy of the native officers with their sepoys, and to the Government bestowing favours upon them, that the army grew daily more and more stubborn and ungovernable. It is the nature of the people of Hindustan to prove haughty and disloyal when highly indulged by their masters. As an example I would state the case of Koer Sing. This man was so much indebted that his *zemindaree*²⁸ would have been all lost in satisfaction of the demands of his creditors. The Government was however pleased to give him every protection. The management of his *zemindaree* was taken by Government into its own hands in order to defray his debt, and the demands of many of his creditors were not heard. But not withstanding all these favours, the old fellow turned a traitor.

In January 1857 when I heard of the disaffection of the native army, I did also hear of Koer Sing's determination to make a disturbance. When the 6th Company of our Regiment marched from Sooree to Patna, we stopped at Bhaugulpore where the European and native officers called upon Mr Yule the commissioner, and before all the audience I told the commissioner that Koer Sing was sure to turn a traitor. I heard of Koer Sing's intention when at Shahjehanpore, and that it was owing to him that disturbances had been made in Arrah, Patna, Gaya and Benares jails, and lately I did also hear that, if the army were to make any

²⁸ Landed proprietor or land holder paying revenue directly to the Government

disturbance, he would take part with them, and I am also told that it was through Koer Sing's instigation that the Dinapore regiments mutinied in May 1857.

Afterwards when we arrived at Patna, I observed that all the Hindus and Mahomedans of the town were ill intentioned. The Mahomedans who came to our regiment used to say, 'Thanks be to God that our king has been reinstated on the Throne of Delhi.' When I heard them speak so, I immediately informed my major and Mr W Taylor²⁹ the commissioner, who directed me that whenever I saw any Mahomedan speaking in this manner I should bring him in. I then ordered some of the sepoy, that if any Hindu or Mahomedan spoke to them such seditious words they should apprehend him instantly. The town folks learning this ceased their visits to the regiment. I then appointed two spies to bring me daily news of what was stirring in the city, and whatever information I got from them I immediately reported to my commanding officer and to other English gentlemen. One day I learnt from my *geinda*³⁰ that the people from Bihar, Gaya, Moozafferpore and from several other places assembled in the city with the intention to make a row, and that they were engaged in hiring men at 2 *annas* per diem and in polishing and mending their arms. On the 13th June I informed my commanding officer of this and one or two other gentlemen, but they did not believe my *geindas* and I therefore dismissed them. The 27th June a letter being received by the commissioner from Mr Wake³¹, magistrate of Shahabad, informing him that some mutineers from Gorruckpore had come into that district. I was ordered with 50 Sikhs to go to Arrah. I however found no trace of the mutineers, only a musket with pouch, etc, which I made over to the magistrate on the 22nd July. I left Arrah for Patna where I arrived on the 4th, and to my great grief heard of the murder of Dr Lyell³² which had happened one day before my arrival at Patna. This brought to my mind what the *mookhbers*³³ had told me, but it was now too late. The cause of my spies not having been believed by the English gentlemen was that in those days and even now the English gentlemen place no confidence on the people of this country from their habitual falsehood. When Dr Lyell was killed by the mob, a person name Imamoodeen, one of the *budmashes*³⁴, was apprehended and in consequence of wounds which he had received was sent to the hospital. From him some information regarding the *budmashes* was received and they were accordingly apprehended and brought to justice.

When the Government heard of the disaffection of the native chieftains, and when the army determined to mutiny, the commanding officers began telling their men that Government never had interfered with their religious usages, nor will they ever do so. They also told them that if they objected to receive the new rifles, they would never be forced to use them. But the sepoy put no belief in the words of their commanding officers, because their minds had been dissatisfied from a long time and because they considered their commanding officers as deceitful as themselves.

²⁹ Mr William Taylor of the BCS (season of appointment 1828); commissioner of revenue and circuit for the Patna Division

³⁰ Spy or informant

³¹ Mr Herwald Craufurd Wake, BCS (season of appointment 1851)

³² Asst Surgn Robert Lyell MD, Bengal Medical Establishment; killed at Patna on 3 July 1857. He had previously been on civil employ as principle asst to the opium agent at Behar.

³³ Informant or spy; the nuance between *mookhber* and *geinda* is not clear.

³⁴ Rogue, villain, scoundrel

I have in several places had the occasion to state that the people of this country have two tongues. I will now illustrate this by an example. In 1855 His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, being given to understand that some people have ignorantly and viciously promulgated the false report that Government intended to interfere with the religious ceremonies and usages of the Hindus and Mahomedans, and that it has involved the people in injudicious fears, highly pitied their condition for not having enquired the real fact and perplexed themselves by mere words of some wicked men, and was pleased to issue a proclamation to set all the people right on this subject. Indeed if the chieftains of Bengal had taken the *ishteihar*³⁵, which was intended really for their good, in its true light, they would never have proved themselves disloyal, for it clearly shows that the Government never desired to interfere with the religious usages of the people but only wished to promote their good. When this proclamation was issued, all the *zemindars* and chieftains of Bengal expressed their high gratitude to Government by means of presenting petitions to the commissioner. But these thanks were all pretended and hollow, for had these men been open hearted and had they but one tongue, they would have never joined in the mutiny. The above mentioned proclamation is inserted here for the perusal of my readers in order that they may get a full idea of what I have above stated.

PROCLAMATION

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal has been lately given to understand that some people have, by way of ignorance and wickedness, spread some false rumours about the religious usages of the Hindus and Mahomedans which have produced great fear and suspicion in the hearts of the people. His Honour is much grieved to find that the inhabitants of this country perplex themselves by false reports without inquiring into their truth. He has therefore been pleased to acquaint the people, by means of this *ishteihar*, with the real nature of all those circumstances that have come to his knowledge, in order to convince them that the Government never intends to make any interference with their religious customs and manners but that it has always the protection of their lives and honours in its view.

Some of the missionaries at Calcutta having, according to their usual practice, prepared some questions in regard to religious points and got them printed and sent by *dak*³⁶ to some of the people of this country, who imagined that the Government had a part in the issue of these papers whereas the Government had even no notice of the matter. It is beneath the dignity of Government to persuade any of its subjects towards Christianity. It is clear that the people of this country profess different creeds and religions. The British, as Lords of the Lands, have equal regard for them all. They have through the long period of their administration never interfered with the religion of any individual. As to the issue

³⁵ Proclamation

³⁶ Transport by relays of men or horses; hence the mail or letter post

of these papers by the missionaries, such is their usual practice, the Government having no concern in it at all. The Hindus and Mahomedans to likewise preach and circulate dissertations on their religious doctrines in temples and mosques, and debates about religion often take place between the learned of different persuasions. It is therefore a matter of great pity that the people imagine these points as having originated from Government, and thus unreasonably expose themselves to sadness and melancholy.

Someone it appears has published in a news paper and promulgated in public that the Government intend to issue an order to put a stop to the ceremonies of Fazendaree Dabee, *poogah*, circumcision, etc., required by the Hindu and Mahomedan laws. This it should be known is altogether a false and groundless report. The Government never means to interfere with the religious usages and customs of any one of its subjects.

The superintendent of jails had of his own accord, and without the knowledge and permission of Government, issued the order for taking away from the prisoners their *lotahs*³⁷, *thalees*³⁸ and other things of convenience for this simple reason: that the convicts might be made to feel a difference between the comforts which they enjoy at their homes and the inconveniences which they experience in jails, and that thus the commission of crimes might be lessened in the country and the people be made to improve their character. But when it was known to Government that the order interfered with the religion of the people, and that it had been passed merely from the superintendent's ignorance of this fact, it was immediately directed by means of the Electric Telegraph to put a stop to it. The people are therefore informed that they should rest assured that the Government does by no means design to interfere with the religion of its subjects.

It has come to the knowledge of His Honour that the people imagine the foundation of schools for the promulgation of useful arts and sciences and of the English Language as a means of corrupting their religion, and consequently pay very little attention towards their acquirements and hesitate to send their children to schools. This conception of theirs is altogether wrong and proves only their ignorance. When it was known that the inhabitants of the country, through their ignorance and want of knowledge, are kept back from obtaining the comforts of life and always remain involved in poverty and distress, the Government by order of Her Majesty the Queen established, at great discharge of money and labour, schools and colleges in different towns and *zillahs* and appointed a number of Inspectors and Sub-Inspector to instruct the *maulvis* and *pundits* at villages into the method of training young children, and great superintendence was used to promote the cause of education into this country in order that the people, by being removed from the darkness of ignorance and brought to the light of knowledge, may be better enabled to acquire their means of subsistence and to pass their lives

³⁷ Small spheroidal brass vessel used by Hindus for drinking or cooking

³⁸ Brass or steel plate with raised sides; an eating utensil.

in ease and comfort. It must be known to the people of this country that it is on account of knowledge that the Europeans manage all their concerns with such propriety, some being engaged in judicial, some in commercial and some in agricultural pursuits. The [indecipherable] is even performed by them with great excellence. Among the Europeans a son does not depend upon his father for livelihood. All these benefits they enjoy but through knowledge. On the contrary the inhabitants of this country, by reason of want of knowledge and education, are involved in all sorts of views and are always found in want of each other's aid. If they applied themselves to the acquirement of arts and sciences, they will undoubtedly be cleared of all these vices and become expert in gaining their livelihoods. Such energy and zeal of the Government for promoting the good of its subjects ought not therefore be construed into a different light.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal considers that these misconceptions of the people do not proceed from any internal evil but from want of knowledge, and His Honour hopes that when they get even a little of learning they will never speak so.

In short it must be known that the instruction of the English language is never meant to interfere with the religion of the people. They are all at liberty to learn any language or sciences that they might choose. But it must be understood that, in the English language, books of all arts and sciences can be had that are not in any other tongue, and that many experiment and inventions are daily being made which cannot be found in any other language. It must further be borne in mind that English is the language of the rulers of the land and one that prevails in all the public courts. Under these circumstances the acquirements of the English, Urdu and Bengali language is essentially necessary for gaining one's livelihood and for promoting one's honour and dignity.

Since the time that His Honour has had the occasion to visit this country and to converse with several of the inhabitants, he is highly inclined towards their enlightenment and education, and heartily wishes to see them in comfort and ease.

By order of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal

When this *ishtehar* was issued, all fear and suspicion ought to have been removed from the hearts of the people, but as the feelings of disaffection had taken root in their hearts from a period of sixteen years, as I have above pointed out, it did not produce the required effect.

Among the regiments that have mutinied there were I believe many good men who never had an inclination to mutiny, but they were forced to follow by their disloyal comrades who threatened to kill them if they did not. The disloyals told them: 'We all have served together for so long a period, it was therefore proper that you should now partake in all acts.' My father and grand father had been subedars in the 8th Regiment which mutinied at Dinapore, and I was born and enlisted in it, hence I am well acquainted with the customs and manners

of that regiment. In it there were some men who had their homes with the army. These men's families are now left in great distress at Dinapore, and subsist by begging which shows that these men have been forcibly carried away, for had they gone willingly they would have taken their families with them. These men I hear now send messages to their families stating they were forcibly taken away and set free after two or three days, and that they cannot come to them through fear of Government. The 8th have also taken with them some young musicians and several Christians and Mahomedans who fell in their hands. There were four of my own brothers in the said regiment, of whom two whose ages were sixteen and ten were employed as musicians, and the other two of whom one was five and the other seven years of age were unemployed. The two elders came down to me at Patna a few hours before the regiment broke out, on which I gave information to the commissioner and to my commanding officer that the regiments were going to rise. The two younger that were left behind have been carried away by the rebels, and hence I conclude that several other men must have shared the same fate.

The cause of the mutineers taking away my brothers is that they cherished for a long time an ill feeling towards me which did originate in the following manner. In the year 1848 when this 8th Regiment was at Lahore, the three regiments stationed at Lahore, Anarkali³⁹, intended to throw off their allegiance to the English. They had promised the Sikhs to open the gates of the city if they came up. Many of the sepoy of these regiments secretly received pay from Kham Sing, a general in the time of the Sikhs and who lived at Delhi gate. The money was received through Oomrao Sing, a disband sepoy who after his discharge had taken service with the said Kham Sing. The fact of Oomrao Sing's tampering with the army was made known to Sir F Currie, Resident at Lahore⁴⁰. One night Oomrao Sing, being reported to have come to the 8th Regiment which was then stationed at the Bhutte Gate, Captain Edwardes⁴¹, Deputy Commissioner of Lahore, went to apprehend him, but his escape was effected by the sepoy because he was a Brahmin and an inhabitant of Hindustan. Some three or four days after this, Kham Sing, the Sikh leader, was apprehended with two of his servants, Gunga and Goolab Sing by name. Kham Sing had a book in which the names of those who received pay from him were recorded, but this was thrown away when he was seized. The crime of using secret persuasions with the army was established against all of the prisoners. Kham Sing and Gunga Sing were sentenced to be hanged, which sentence was carried into execution at the Delhi Gate, and Goolab received a pardon having promised to recognize the sepoy that were ill disposed. Several men from the 5th and the 73rd ran away. Two sepoy from the 50th and one from the 8th were recognized; the latter escaped punishment for want of proof, and the two former having been convicted were hanged. Oomrao Sing now went off to Mooltan where he took service with Deewan Moolraj, who had commenced hostilities with the British, having murdered the two settlement officers who were sent to settle the country of Mooltan. A force consisting of the 8th, 51st, 52nd and 78th Native Infantry, the 7th Native Cavalry⁴² and the 13th European Infantry, was ordered to Mooltan under the command of

³⁹ Anarkali has not been identified, although it appears to be a location, possibly within or adjacent to Lahore.

⁴⁰ Sir Francis Currie, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India and member of the Supreme Council. He was at that time in Lahore to negotiate terms with the *Khalsa* (Sikh state) government.

⁴¹ Lieut Colonel Herbert Benjamin Edwardes CB, 1st Bengal European Fusiliers

⁴² 7th Ben. IC

General Whish⁴³. This force arrived there in July 1848. A force was also sent from Ferozepore to cooperate with the above, and when both the forces had collected together the operations to fight were commenced.⁴⁴ Oomrao Sing again began making his appearance in the army. He daily dropped down some letters inviting the sepoy to leave the English and come over to Moolraj who would pay them 12 *rupees* per month. When this was known to the General, it was proclaimed that whoever procures the apprehension of Oomrao Sing would be highly rewarded. One day two of the naiks of our regiment gave notice to the commanding officer that Oomrao Sing was come at Sooraj Kund in the camp of Mr Edwards the Commissioner. On this I was sent for by the adjutant and directed to go with 20 sepoy and apprehend Oomrao Sing. With these I went to the Commissioner from whom I received 25 more men, and with these 45 men I proceeded to apprehend the man and succeeded in securing him. I brought him first to the Commissioner from whom I received a reward and a certificate, and then made him over to the Adjutant. The man was either sentenced to death or transportation. This raised the anger of all the Hindu sepoy against me. They said I had brought on the death of a Brahmin and that they would take their revenge whenever opportunity occurred. The two naiks who gave the information of Oomrao Sing being at Soorajkoond were thence not allowed by the sepoy of the Regiment to partake with them in their food, and were looked upon as outcastes.

From this period the sepoy of the 8th and also of the other regiments were dissatisfied with me. I never carried a jot for their displeasure but always did my duty justly. In 1857 when I was at Patna with the [5th] Company⁴⁵ of the Bengal Police Battalion I apprehended a number of the mob who had killed Dr Lyell and thirty five men were convicted of whom some were hanged and some imprisoned. This being known to the 8th Regiment, who were then at Dinapore, raised their further dissatisfaction towards me and they determined to kill me if I stopped at Dinapore at night. This is well known to my commanding officer and to Colonel Rowcroft⁴⁶, the commanding officer of the 8th Regiment. Whenever I went to Dinapore I was told by the Colonel not to stop there at night but to go off to Patna before sunset or else I would be killed. For these reasons the sepoy remained displeased with me, and when they revolted took my brothers away with them. Afterwards when the 5th Company Bengal Police Battalion was at Debreeghat, information was received that Ummer Sing was at Mouzaw, called Shiubom. On this Captain Baker⁴⁷ with 50 Sikhs and one troop of horse went to the place. One rebel sepoy was killed and all the *russud*⁴⁸ that was collected there for Ummer Sing was taken. I succeeded in apprehending four of the rebels, *viz.*, one havildar of the 57th and one of the 49th, and one sepoy of the 7th and one of the 40th. Those

⁴³ Maj. Gen. William Samson Whish CB, Ben.A.

⁴⁴ After receiving reinforcements for Ferozepore, General Whish's force amounted to three cavalry and seven infantry regiments, together with six artillery batteries, a siege train, three companies of sappers and two of pioneers. The description of the European infantry is incorrect. Between July and September, the two European regiments at Mooltan were H.M's 10th and 32nd Foot.

⁴⁵ Indistinct; either 5th or 6th. According to *MacRae*, Hedayat commanded the 3rd Company during the early months of the regiment's existence, although this detail is not particularly helpful. As the senior Indian officer, it seems unlikely that he would have been attached to a single company for any length of time.

⁴⁶ The C.O. was Colonel William Vincent, but he was absent on leave. The Offg Commandant in January 1857, remaining so until the regiment mutinied the following July, was Lt Col. Francis Rowcroft. He had been with the 8th Ben.NI for only a few months. He appears to have been shunted around more often than was normal, serving with nine different regiments as well as holding several staff jobs during his career. Prior to 1857 he had never seen any action in the field.

⁴⁷ Lieut Charles Thomas Baker; later awarded the VC for gallantry at Suhejnee in Western Behar on 26 Sep 1858 while in command of the 1st Ben. Mily Pol. Bn (*London Gazette*, 25 Feb 1862)

⁴⁸ Provisions of grain, forage, etc collected and stored at military posts

four were hanged at Debreeghat whence the sepoy's of the 8th would have learnt of this matter. I am sure they must have been still more dissatisfied with me. I cannot say what treatment my brothers have received from the hands of the sepoy's, but I feel nothing for that, for God's will is to be done and I am still determined to apprehend every rebel and mutineer whom I can lay my hand upon and have them hanged at once.

In my humble opinion the laws that have been in force both in the civil and military department are too lenient and mild. They should therefore be replaced with others better adapted to the nature of the people of this country. I have heard that in certain English newspapers it is stated that the mutineers are to be pardoned. This seems to me not proper. The cause of the mutiny should be first enquired into and then any order that might seem proper should be passed. I would humbly suggest that a Committee be held consisting of experienced civil and military officers such as commissioners and magistrates, captains and colonels, and the Hindu and Mahomedan chieftains, and of two or four subedars from each regiment. The native chieftains and subedars should, however, be such that they may freely and fearlessly speak out their opinions. Questions of all sorts should be first proposed to the native chieftains and officers and, their opinion being distinctly taken down, should be discussed and debated among the English members of the Committee. This I believe will enable the Government to arrive at an exact idea of the causes of the late rebellion, and to enter into better arrangements for the future management of the country. On the contrary, if the English gentlemen alone will attempt to find this out without calling the natives to their aid, they will never be able to get at the exact state of the country. I am well aware that the English authorities are quite ignorant as to the circumstances connected with the rebellion, for had they known them such a resolution would never have come to pass.

Some gentlemen are of opinion that the King of Delhi and the Nawab of Lucknow have been the chief instigators of this revolt, which I am sure has not been the case. The disturbance, as has been above stated, began with the sepoy's. The army grew more and more disaffected for the last sixteen years till at last the whole country was as if inflamed, and the King of Delhi, the Nawab of Lucknow and several other Mahomedan and Hindu chieftains made all a common cause. I am fully convinced that the King of Delhi and the Nawab Lucknow never sent any *ishtehars* into the general army. This I can establish to the satisfaction of the committee. If ever any *ishtehars* were issued by the King or the Nawab, they may have been issued in towns and cities but not in the army. This however I know full well, that the king of Delhi has always been displeased and satisfied with the British as they possess his dominion. There can be no wonder in this, for such a feeling naturally exists in one that loses his estate. The same might be said of the Nawab of Lucknow. Another reason of the disaffection of the King was the stopping of the *nuzrana*⁴⁹ which he got annually and his being made to give seats to the governor generals who went to visit him. This is very well known throughout all India. It was for these reasons that the King joined the army from Meerut. The conduct of the King in letting the English gentlemen with their wives and young children be butchered before his eyes has been indeed highly hateful. Had the King fought for his dominion and not shed the blood of the innocent ladies and children, I am sure that his family would not have

⁴⁹ Stipend

been treated by the Government in the manner that they have been. The Government did indeed act very justly in killing the Shahzadas⁵⁰. I highly approve of this and think that every sensible man will do the same.

I will now explain how the Mahomedans took part in the mutiny. It is said in the Koran that the British administration will even extend as far as Mecca and Medina, after which Imam Mahdee will be born and wrest the kingdom from them.⁵¹ But some of the *maulvis* have declared that the British dominions in India will continue for one century and then disturbances will arise in the land. The Moosulmen, learning this, imagined in their ignorance that the British administration was now to go away and they therefore joined the sepoys in the mutiny.

After the conquest of the Punjab, I was in 1847 with my regiment at Lahore when there I heard the Sikhs speak that it was told in their *Grunth* or religious book that after 2½ years the Sikhs will re-obtain Lahore. This I reported to many English gentlemen: it was under this imagination that in 1848 the Sikhs began making disturbances in Mooltan; that Nanak, their *Guru* or spiritual guide⁵², has prophesied that the Sikh army will once [again] rule at Delhi without a leader at their head. I therefore warn the Government that care might be taken to prevent the reoccurrence of any such calamity.

Since the Government have stopped the invalid pensions, the people of the country feel great pity on and sympathise with the pension holders, saying that these men had performed good services to government when they possessed their strength and health entire, and being worn out and disabled by long service received these pensions under medical certificate which, now having been stopped, they are obliged to go a-begging from door to door. As to the question put by Government why these pension holders did not come forward to impart their aid in quelling the insurrection, they argue that had the pension holders been fit for duty they would have received no pensions. A majority of them are altogether unfit for service, some being deaf, some blind, and some so infirm as not to be able to rise from their beds. When so, what assistance could be expected from them? Some of these pension holders tell the sepoys in the service that they are sure to receive the same treatment as they have, which highly disheartens the loyals. I therefore consider it my duty to have the Government informed of this matter, that steps might be taken to prevent the spirit of disaffection from rising in the hearts of the loyals.

I consider I ought to know the feelings of the late native army. In 1763 when the British took Calcutta, my grand father entered their service and rose to the rank of a subedar. He was present in all the Bengal battles and died in the army. My father was born in the army and accompanied it everywhere until he became a man. He enlisted in the same regiment in which my grand father had been a subedar and followed General Lake⁵³ in every battle. He likewise became a subedar and held the post for a long time He was present in all the battles fought in

⁵⁰ The royal princes, sons of the King of Delhi, slain by Hodson at Delhi in September 1857

⁵¹ This seems fanciful bearing in mind that the Koran had existed for more than a thousand years before the 'British administration' was conceived!

⁵² Guru Nanak (1469-1539), founding father of the Sikh religion

⁵³ General Gerard [later Lord] Lake; C-in-C in India from 1801 to 1807

Hindustan and died a subedar in 1836. I was also enlisted in the same regiment, and after passing the different ranks of naik, havildar, etc., I had the good fortune to be transferred to the Bengal Police Battalion in which through the kindness and favour of government and Major Rattray, I have now been promoted to the rank of subedar *bahadur*.⁵⁴ It is thus that I am well acquainted with the state of the army and its customs. I would here take the liberty to inform the government that I am not an inhabitant of any country. I have my home always with my regiment, and know none for my patron except Government. It was for this reason that, when the country began to rise against government, I informed my commanding officer with all the circumstances connected with this insurrection, and when the whole country broke out I assisted the government to the utmost of my power. I also felt sorry with the English when the ladies and gentlemen were cruelly butchered with their children.

In conclusion I hope that the government will take what I have stated in good part. By what I have had the occasion to state myself in the course of this narration, I do not presume to show off myself as having performed any very extraordinary service.

(signed) Hedayat Ali, Subadar, *Sardar Bahadur*

Bengal Sikh Regiment

Delhi, 7th August 1858

Postscript

Since I [Hedayat Ali] wrote the above, I have been given to understand that those pensioners who, from extreme old age, blindness, deafness or any other infirmity, were perhaps unable to render any assistance to the government during the late rebellion are exempted from that rule, and only those who were able to but did not assist the Government will lose their pensions. I am very anxious that this mistake on my part should be corrected because it is my wish only to speak the truth, and if gentlemen find that I have stated what is not correct in one place, they may say: 'We have found him out in one lie, so we will believe nothing he says.' This rule exempting the very infirm shows what a very liberal government the British Government is; yet most assuredly it is the truth, that I have heard many complaints of the hardness of Government taking away the pensions of those who had earned them by former good services. Still I am of the opinion that some thing should be done to stop the mouths of those whose pensions have been stopped, for they go about the country proclaiming how badly the Government have treated them, and in this way they do a great deal of harm.

(signed) Hedayat Ali, *Sardar Bahadur*, Bengal Sikh Regiment

⁵⁴ Hedayat Ali was the senior subedar of the 1st Battalion. At this time, the 'appointment' of Subedar Major did not exist in the Bengal Police.

Delhi, 9th August 1858

The following correspondence indicates that Hedayat's words reached the Governor General's office in November 1858. Although his persistent advice had not been heeded when it would have been most useful, it was doubtless a useful contribution to subsequent reflection on the causes of rebellion.

No. 387 to the Secretary to Government of India in the Military Department with the Governor General

No. 388 to the Adjutant General of the Army

Sir,

I am directed by the Hon'ble the President in Council to transmit to you, for submission to the Right Hon'ble the Governor General, and to H.E. the Commander in Chief, the accompanying two copies of a printed document on the late mutiny and rebellion of the Bengal Army written by *Sardar Bahadur* Subedar Hedayat Ali of the Bengal Police Battalion.

Officiating Secretary to the Government of India in the Military Department. Fort William, 12th November 1858

Note

This article is based upon a chapter in the Indian Mutiny section of the Indian Order of Merit project which the Vice President and the Editor have been working on for some time. It is hoped that Volume 1 dealing with the period to 1861 will become available within the next 12 months. **(Web site note – now published)**

VINDICATION OF THE 1ST BOMBAY LIGHT CAVALRY¹ IN THE GENERAL OUTBREAK OF MUTINY AT NASIRABAD, 28TH MAY 1857

Cliff Parrett

The mutiny at Nasirabad in Rajputana was not untypical of the outbreaks involving Bengal Army troops in some of the smaller stations across India in 1857. The situation in Nasirabad was relatively precarious insofar as no European regiments were present.² However, the composition of the garrison, noted in the margin, was somewhat unusual in that it included troops from both Bengal and Bombay. To the extent that the Indian Mutiny can be described as a military revolt, it was essentially confined to units of the Bengal Army. Yet the Bombay Army itself was susceptible to the spread of sedition from Bengal because its ranks contained a large number of Purbias³ as well as Hindustani Mohammedans from Northern India.⁴ Amongst other grievances, the former sought to reverse the injustice of the annexation of Oudh and feared the loss of caste from the new greased cartridge. For the latter, the restoration of a Mogul emperor at Delhi was a religious compulsion. The Mahratta element, in the majority, also had potential grievances arising from British interference in the governance of their country.

The fear of losing caste was very real to all Hindu soldiers whether officers or other ranks. It was an ever present concern and it pervaded most regiments to a greater or lesser extent. The poignant words of the senior Indian officer of the 1st Bombay Light Cavalry, spoken soon after the outbreak at Nasirabad, are eloquent testimony to this. They were recorded, albeit two years later, by a sympathetic British officer.

Letter written by Captain E.A. Hardy⁵ to Captain W. Loch⁶, London 13th June 1859⁷

The Subedar Major of my Regiment⁸, a Hindoo from Oude, a Sirdar Bahadoor and entitled to full pension, a short time after the mutiny at Nusseerabad but long before Delhi fell,⁹ said after a long talk on regimental matters,

‘Sahib, I think you know me well enough not to misunderstand me, but I want to say something to you and am half afraid to.’

¹ The full title of the regiment from 1842 to 1861 was ‘1st Bombay Light Cavalry (Lancers)’.

² The 2nd Company, 7th Battalion Bengal Artillery was a ‘native’ company. It was ‘in battery’ with No.6 Field Battery. The British personnel consisted of no more than six European officers and NCOs.

³ Purbias [Poorbeahs] was a generic term used for sepoys recruited from Oudh Province (mostly), the Benares Division, and Behar.

⁴ In 1852 these two classes provided 34% (numbering 8,850) of the Bombay Army’s infantry establishment (total 25,930 officers and men).

⁵ Captain Edmund Armitage Hardy, 1st Bombay Light Cavalry (season of appointment 1841) took command of the regiment after the death of the ailing Lieut Colonel Penny en route to Beawar. He transferred to the 2nd Sind Horse in 1865.

⁶ Captain William Loch, 1st Bombay Light Cavalry and Hardy’s senior by three years, had been serving as Paymaster of the Bombay Army’s Southern Division since February 1846, and happened to be on furlough at the time of the Nasirabad affair. He left the regiment upon transfer to the Political Department in 1860. There appears to have been a connection between the regiment and the Loch family as three officers of this name were simultaneously serving with it. It seems that Hardy was anxious to tell the elder Loch what actually happened there.

⁷ *British Library, India Office Records*, shelf mark L/Mil/5/443, folios 373 (recto) to 379 (verso). This correspondence is bound into a large volume of papers catalogued as ‘original and copy correspondence and memoranda on the services of the 1st Bombay Cavalry during the Mutiny 1859.’

⁸ As with all regular H.E.I.C. light cavalry regiments, the term ‘subedar’ was used as opposed to ‘risaldar’. The latter was used by the irregular cavalry.

⁹ Mutiny broke out at Nusseerabad [Nasirabad] on 28 May 1857; Delhi was stormed on 14 Sep 1857 and fell six days later.

I said,

‘Chain Sing I do know you, and I think you know me, and you should not be afraid to say anything to me, especially at such a time as this.’

[The Subedar Major continued,]

‘Then Sahib you know I am not a Mutineer, but you know also I cannot break my caste. If I put cow’s fat to my lips I do break my caste. I am an outcaste forthwith. If then you order me to put cartridge smeared with cow’s fat to my lips, is it mutiny if I say “I have eaten the Sircar’s salt for 40 years, it is true, and I have tried to do them good and true for that time; they have made me Sirdar Bahadoor¹⁰ which gives me 60 Rupees a month; and I am entitled now to full pension; but as this order I cannot obey without breaking my caste, permit me to go adrift and forfeit all my advantages and claim to pension?” What, Sahib, am I to do?’

I answered as you may suppose without hesitation.

‘Chain Sing, if you know me as you say, why be afraid of getting such an order from me? You ask me what to do in such a case, I say wait till the case occurs. Trust me and trust your own loyalty, and the Officers and all the good men; and if you hear of any similar doubts or difficulties in the minds of others, bid them do the same. Only be true to yourself and to me; the Regiment has nothing to fear if it will only be true to itself; good is always a match and more than a match for bad, if bad there be. Only trust me, and fear nothing.’

The Regiment as you know has been almost continuously in the field since that time to this, under Generals Lawrence, Roberts, Sir H. Rose, Michell, Brigadier Honner lately, and the marching and work it has gone through would make a long and most creditable story. I did not attach much weight to my story of the Subedar myself as you seemed to do, because I think similar conversations and explanations must have taken place in other Corps. But in my regiment the feeling between European and Native Officers and men was certainly more than is usually the case, on the best footing.

It has been argued that caste *per se* was less of an issue for the Bombay Army troops than it was for their Bengal counterparts. The respected historian Sir Patrick Cadell wrote that the resilience of the Bombay Army, in the face of a multiplicity of potential motivations to mutiny, was in part due to a less rigid application of caste barriers.

“The morale of [the Bengal] regiments had been shaken by a pandering to caste which affected alike the ranks and the Indian officers. The men were practically all of the same high castes, and promotion was almost by seniority, so that the Indian officers were too old and inefficient to exercise control. In the Bombay regiments, on the other hand, men of all castes, some high, others extremely low, stood and worked together. Promotion was by merit and selection, and men of low castes were constantly promoted to the commissioned ranks: while those of exceptionally intelligent, though numerically small, classes such as the Bene Israel, supplied a large number of officers, who had no caste ties.”¹¹

¹⁰ The honorary title *Sirdar Bahadoor* indicates that he was a member of the 1st Class Order of British India.

¹¹ Sir Patrick Cadell CSI CIE VD, *History of the Bombay Army* (London 1938), p. 201. Cadell provides a useful analysis of class composition (p. 200)

Another factor argued by Sir Patrick was that centralisation and interference from above had limited the initiative of Bengal Army commanding officers, whereas this malaise had not touched the Bombay Army to anything like the same extent. Generally speaking, the British officers were more in touch with their men, as they were in the Punjab Irregular Force, and the essential elements of discipline and *esprit de corps* were of a higher standard. Various narratives of events at Nasirabad suggest that Colonel Lawrence¹², the Governor General's Agent in Rajputana, placed a fair degree of reliance upon the Bombay Cavalry troopers. But was he wise to do so?

Following the news of the revolt at Meerut, precautions were taken to head off a similar outbreak at Nasirabad. They all hinged on the trusted Bombay cavalry, commanded by Colonel John Penny.¹³ Every night they provided a cavalry piquet in the artillery lines to guard the guns which were kept limbered up and loaded with grape. They regularly patrolled the cantonment roads. In addition, one troop or another was kept within the cavalry lines permanently accoutred in readiness for immediate action. Fearing that this was not enough, on 19th May Colonel Lawrence sent to Disa for a light field force of mainly European troops, but it did not arrive in time.¹⁴

Unaccountably, although reasonable precautions had been taken for the night hours they were relaxed during daytime. At around 4 p.m. on 28th May the report of a canon was heard, and it was then discovered that the guns had been seized by sepoys of the two infantry regiments carrying loaded muskets. They met with no resistance from the Indian gunners. Several officers who galloped down to the artillery lines in an attempt to talk them out of their revolt were spontaneously shot at and had to turn tail.

In the meantime the 1st Bombay Cavalry showed no signs of disaffection. Ultimately only one small group, just eleven men, went over to the rebel cause even though the regiment as a whole was under a great deal of pressure from the artillery and infantry mutineers in the station, many of whom came from the same districts as the cavalry troopers and indeed were in some instances relatives.

The Bombay troopers, now joined by the redundant European officers of artillery and infantry, were assembled to the rear of the artillery lines. All hopes now rested on the cavalry. The mutineers had drawn up their guns in the station racquet court. According to the official history, the cavalry was ordered to charge by squadron.¹⁵ 'As soon as they got within a few yards of the guns, they went threes about, the officers going on.'¹⁶ Other sources record that they refused to follow their officers¹⁷ and that they pretended to charge but faltered and broke ranks at the first discharge of grape.¹⁸ It seems to have been generally accepted that the Bombay Cavalry behaved badly at Nasirabad. Why therefore was the regiment so generously praised by the Government of Bombay? A resolution published on 1st July 1857 included *inter alia* the following marks of approval.

¹² Colonel George St. Patrick Lawrence, 2nd Bengal Light Cavalry; Hon. ADC to HE the Governor General

¹³ Colonel John Penny, 1st Bombay Light Cavalry; he was first commissioned in 1824 and joined the regiment one year later. He was probably not a fit man, and died during the retirement to Beawar following the action at Nasirabad.

¹⁴ Colonel G.B. Malleson CSI (ed.), *Kaye & Malleson's History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8* (six volumes, London 1888 - an expanded version of J.W. Kaye's earlier three volume work entitled *The Sepoy War in India*, London 1864-67); volume iii, pp. 166, 170. Disa, in the Bombay Presidency, was the closest station to Nasirabad held by European troops. The column called for by Lawrence did not arrive at Nasirabad until 12th June.

¹⁵ In other words, the entire squadron should charge simultaneously, rather than troop by troop.

¹⁶ Anon, *The Revolt in Central India 1857-59, compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Chief of the Staff, Army Headquarters India* (Simla 1908); p. 53

¹⁷ Colonel J.R.J. Jocelyn, *History of the Royal and Indian Artillery in the Mutiny of 1857* (London 1915); p. 33

¹⁸ *Kaye & Malleson*, volume iii, p. 168.

The Right Honourable the Governor-in-Council will direct the immediate promotion to higher grades of rank of such of the Native Officers and men as His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief may be pleased to name as having most distinguished themselves on this occasion and thereby earned this special reward.; and the Government will take care that liberal compensation is awarded for the loss of property abandoned in the Cantonment and subsequently destroyed, when the Lancers, in obedience to orders, marched out to protect the families of their European Officers, leaving their own [property] unguarded in Cantonments.¹⁹

In his lengthy correspondence with fellow officer William Loch, who was not present with the regiment at Nasirabad on 28th May 1857, Captain Hardy, who was badly wounded in his regiment's charge, describes the action in some detail. It is an interesting account that puts matters into perspective, and suggests that the 1st Bombay Cavalry had nothing to be ashamed of.²⁰

I consider our men behaved on the 28th of May last as well as any men could be expected to do under the circumstances. I know perfectly well, my dear Loch, that we ought to have taken those guns from the Bengalees, but you must bear in mind the circumstances. The guns were knowingly enough placed half moon fashion flanked and backed by the racquet court, the flank of which sloping down, the guns were run out far enough to fire round the corner without the possibility of being charged in flank.²¹ Between the guns and in the rear of them were some 50 or 60 infantry fellows firing away like winking, and all of course fighting to desperation.

The gunners got under the guns when we got in amongst them, poking at us with swords and rammers etc from behind the wheels; the Infantry chaps putting their muskets close together, and firing with shouts of 'māro, māro'.²² That any of those who got in amongst them ever came out again was God's providence, nothing else.

To take the guns the charge should have been made with a smallish front, supports close up, and all hands well cautioned beforehand and determined that, after getting into the battery, they were not to come out till all the gunners were cut down, and the guns spiked. But it was all hurry and confusion. We were hurried off from the lines helter skelter. I tried hard to stop this, and did keep my own Troop back until I had them formed and properly told off. Off we went and suddenly were ordered to halt – Troops of course getting all higgledy piggedly under cover of some cook rooms. The 6th Troop I saw go off 'half right' in first class order under Captain Spottiswoode²³ straight at the guns, nothing could be better than the style he started in. But I was so occupied and anxious about my own Troop that I saw nothing more until I saw my front clear. The 5th Troop under Frank Loch²⁴ I believe went well and close after the 6th, also the 4th under poor Newberry²⁵, the 3rd and 2nd I really do not know about,

¹⁹ Colonel G.F. Newport-Tinley CB, *A Brief Historical Sketch of His Majesty's 31st Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers Indian Army* (Bombay, 1910), p. 20; reproducing Govt of Bombay Resolution, Bombay Castle, 1 Jul 1857.

²⁰ *British Library, India Office Records*, shelf mark L/Mil/5/443, folios 373 (recto) to 379 (verso).

²¹ Most contemporary accounts of the rebel artillery record that it was well served. In the most important of the artillery duels fought during the Mutiny campaigns, the counter-battery fire of the defenders at Delhi was remarkably efficient. The Bengal Artillery gunners were well trained and highly motivated.

²² The Hindoustani word 'māro' means to strike, hit or kill; in this context undoubtedly the latter.

²³ Captain Hugh Spottiswoode, 1st Bombay Light Cavalry; killed in action at Nasirabad

²⁴ Lieutenant Francis Adam Ellis Loch, 1st Bombay Light Cavalry; severely wounded at Nasirabad.

²⁵ Cornet Richard Nicholas Newberry, 1st Bombay Light Cavalry; killed in action at Nasirabad

for as I tell you, I had only just got my Troop all in order, when I saw my front open, and at it we went. We got through the storm all right, and Mayne²⁶ ran the first fellow through with his sword, which unfortunately broke off short, and he had to spur for it. I went amuck through the battery, from one end to the other, with some of our men, and we came out on the other side. How we escaped God only knows, I had fellows all round me firing and poking at me at a yard distance and had to cut and slash on each side of my horse, and spur hard as one would when pounded in a bush.

On getting the Troop together again I found the regiment all in twos and threes, and I heard that our dear friend and comrade Spottiswoode was killed, that Frank Loch was mortally wounded²⁷, and two others were dismounted. I thought it was all moonshine expecting any good to come of what we were doing, and I hoped we were going to have a proper attack made by Squadron; but seeing it was no use talking and my Troop being in pretty good order under Mayne, where I had left them, I thought we would have another try²⁸. You know the business it is getting men out of cover into fire once snug and safe, and as a matter of course there was a little doubling round corners, and so forth. But when I called out to them as my troop, some of the old hands spurred up to the front and said, ‘Sahib, don’t stop to mind the Troop, we will follow wherever you lead.’

We started notwithstanding in very fair order at a trot, and as soon as we got out of cover, bang went the guns at us again. I said, ‘Now for it’ and really had a hope that we might have them all before they could load again. However I found myself at the same cut and run operation again, and thought we were lucky to get out all right on the other side. I got a grape shot through the calf of my leg, a bullet went through the pommel of my saddle, another through my sabretache, my overalls were cut through with a sword or something or other, and my horse’s lip cut open. Getting together again this second time I found the order had been given to draw off towards our own lines. As my Troop was in rear, I turned to have a look at what was going on behind us when I saw a Company of Infantry turn out of the huts of the 30th lines in skirmishing order. They had red coats over their dhotees, but were in such a good line that I thought at first there must be an officer with them, and went to see. Penny was galloping towards the Regiment and as he came up all these 30th chaps let drive at him. They missed him however, and he joined the Regiment in the lines, as I did with my Troop shortly after

Well, Bengal ladies as well as our own Officers and all being collected in our lines, we were ordered to retreat. We had barely time to collect the standards and tell off a party for the families in the lines, but had to move off as we stood. No thought for food or money, no valises, no head or heel ropes, no nothing. Anything but a jolly march we had of it as you can fancy, some 40 miles to Beawar, Colonel Dickson’s place. We were ordered to Ajmere first but afterwards turned across country onto the Beawar road. Colonel Penny started in his buggy with one of the ladies but became very ill after a few miles, and got into a cart after

²⁶ Lieutenant Ashton George Mayne, 1st Bombay Light Cavalry (not to be confused with Henry Otway Mayne of the Madras Army who raised Mayne’s Horse)

²⁷ This is incorrect; Francis [Frank] Loch survived a severe wound

²⁸ For reasons that are unclear, Hardy appeared to be commanding the regiment at this critical moment. Penny may well have been suffering from sickness or fatigue and had not yet turned up.

which he died and was brought on a corpse about half way. Poor young Newberry was killed in charging the guns.

The second day at Beawar, the Brigadier desired me to send a wing back to Nusseerabad to reconnoitre etc. I told him a wing would only be 150 men and that I was able and willing to take the Regiment back at once and would be responsible for the restoration of order. Accordingly we went back that night making one forced march of it, ladies of course left where they were. The scene of desolation and disorder was complete, the bungalows burnt, the whole place covered with destroyed property of every sort and kind, scoundrels from the villages looting in every direction etc. We set to work at once. A Troop under its Officers mounted each morning at daylight, taking a day's feed with them, and patrolled the country all day from village to village, searching and making them disgorge their plunder, which they brought in of an evening in a long line of coolies at their head. One entire Troop too mounted picquet at night, and patrolled every part of the Bazaar and Cantonment. Nothing can be more kind and pleasant than the way in which all set to work, the Officers all coming in to help me in writing, inspecting etc., and doing everything to back me up in my work, and the men doing all their fagging duty in the best temper possible.

I do not hesitate to say, though of course it is egotism doing so, that if we had been left alone, and the other troops ordered to Ajmere, we should have put and kept everything straight here, and the Regiment would have turned out as sound and true as a bell. However in a few days a 'reinforcement' arrives, to wit the Joudpore Legion ruffians; with the European reinforcements return too all the Bengal Officers, and a number of their brutes of Sepoys disarmed. Of course my arrangements were all liable to abuse, we must knock off all that frightening the poor villagers etc, and go through the thing ship shape, Field Officer and Subaltern of the day etc – and by way of specially encouraging your humble servant and in some way making up for the extra expenses of rewards to informers, help to robbed men etc, Captain Anderson²⁹ is sent up to take the command from me.

Since then, owing of course much to the delay in taking Delhi among other things, we have been in a state of perpetual fright at this place. Always to be attacked, our Regiment always to rise in mutiny, those Lancers it was known they were only waiting their opportunity, a house was to be set on fire as a signal, and then a rush to kill their Officers etc. So that despite the European troops, the Bazaar has never had the confidence or quiet it had when we were alone. To our Regiment's remaining true that day, the Brigadier, the Bengal Officers and their wives, as well as ours, under God, owe their preservations. But since then all kinds of discreditable reports have been spread about

About our lines being saved you are not fair I think. They were the farthest off from the Sudder Bazaar which of course was the grand scene of plunder and occupied the mutineers pretty well for one night. Our loss was only one man but we had six or seven horses badly wounded, and the mutineers notoriously tried to avoid killing the men and aimed as entirely

²⁹ Captain F.H. Jackson, *A History of H.H. The Gaekwar's Contingent of Horse 1817-1877*, Calcutta 1882; pages 96-98. Captain William Warden Anderson, 1st Bombay Light Cavalry, two years senior to Hardy in the regiment, had been appointed Commandant of H.H. the Gaekwar's Contingent of Horse in 1856. Recalled to his regiment on 4th July 1857, he handed temporary command of the Contingent to Lieut. George Malcolm Shaw of the 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry.

as they could at the Officers. They had lots of bhackunds³⁰ too among the mutineers, who had not been able to seduce them, they knew they were all alone in the struggle, the Officers with the leading Troops knocked over at the commencement etc etc, and I think, despite absurd panegyrics at first, and biting sneers and a few budmashes at last³¹, you need not be ashamed of the old Regiment.

I have only just returned from a two month's tour with two squadrons from Awah, we could not take the place and were made to eat dirt.³² Our men however did all their work willingly and well and behaved well under fire. You must know we are destitute, nothing was left us but the clothes we had on; books, clothes, tents, all my wife's kit and jewels, and all the children's kits reduced to ashes. The other day too at Awah my pet charger, a clipper, was shot under me.... The men we left behind buried Spottiswoode and Newberry in one grave and we have put a slab over them.

Apart from what appears to be unjustified criticism of its performance at Nasirabad, the 1st Bombay Light Cavalry received nothing but praise and accolades for its performance during the Mutiny campaign. As already mentioned, only eleven men are known to have gone over to the rebel cause. This was an insignificant defection, especially as the regiment was under a great deal of pressure at Nasirabad from the large body of artillery and infantry mutineers in the station. The regiment served extensively throughout Central India until December 1859, for which it received the theatre honour. It was present at numerous actions and sieges including Awah (1st and 2nd), Kotah, Kota-ka-Serai, Gwalior, Pouree, Kotarea Sindwaho, Korye and Koosana, and several smaller affairs.

It seems that Captain Hardy had reasonable grounds for feeling sore about the criticism of his regiment at Nasirabad although, as he admits himself, he was naturally biased in his judgement of events. Bearing in mind that the man he was writing to, William Loch, was a Paymaster of the Bombay Army, his correspondence might well have been motivated at least in part by a wish to provide some positive bias to an eventual claim for compensation for looted property.

³⁰ The meaning of this word has not been found. It is probably Marathi as the regiment was from Bombay Presidency and the single largest proportion of its personnel were Marathas.

³¹ The Hindoustani word 'budmash' means 'rogue' or 'villain', and in this context must refer to the eleven men of Hardy's regiment who mutinied.

³² On 18th July 1857 Sir George Lawrence sent a small column of all arms to capture the rebel fort at Awah. It was too strongly defended and, after spending three days being shot at by the enthusiastic defenders, the column retired ignominiously to Nasirabad.



Shako Badge of the 1st Bombay Light Cavalry circa 1845-1860³³



³³ The 'Maltese Cross' was also adopted by the light cavalry of other Presidencies. This illustration, reproduced by kind permission of Captain Ashok Nath, will appear in his forthcoming book entitled: *IZZAT, Historical Records and Iconography of India Cavalry Regiments 1750-2007*. **(Web site note – now published)**