

The Chattri

Tom Donovan

The Chattri on the South Downs outside Brighton is a unique memorial which stands in memory of all Indian soldiers who died during the First World War, 1914-1918, but it is particularly associated with the fifty-three Hindu and Sikh soldiers who died in hospitals in Brighton during 1914-15 and whose remains were cremated at this spot. Twenty-one Muslims who died in Brighton were buried at the Shah Jehan mosque in Woking.

It is well known that Brighton's Royal Pavilion, which was a museum in 1914, was rapidly adapted as a hospital for Indian sick and wounded from France and Flanders. In fact, rather larger numbers of Indians were hospitalised at two other locations in the town: the Poor Law Institution (or Workhouse) in Elm Grove, and the York Place schools. Around 12,000 Indians convalesced in Brighton and seventy-four died in the town. This number may at first glance seem unfeasibly small, but all the men who arrived at Brighton had undergone treatment at clearing hospitals in France and endured journeys in ambulances, trains and hospital ships before they reached there. Of course, in some cases later complications with their wounds caused death; others died of sickness, but all in all the small number of dead speaks well for the care provided in the three Brighton hospitals.

The original idea for a memorial is attributed to Lieutenant Das Gupta of the Indian Medical Service, who approached the then mayor of Brighton, Mr J. (later Sir John) Otter in August 1915 for permission to erect a memorial on the site where cremations took place. The mayor embraced the idea with great enthusiasm and became the driving force behind it. From study of a bulky file preserved in the India Office Library the debt to Sir John Otter becomes increasingly apparent. After his death, a succession of reluctant town clerks wrangled over maintenance.

In 1916 Otter wrote that he envisaged 'a tablet with names and to contain one of the stone slabs on which cremation took place.' The three original cremation slabs (one can only presume that more deaths were expected than actually took place) are incorporated in the design of the memorial, but a tablet bearing the names of the dead was not put in place. However, see below for recent developments in this regard.

Independently, the King's Commissioner in charge of the welfare of Indian troops, Sir Walter Lawrence, thought that a memorial should be erected. In December 1915 he wrote to the India Office: 'I feel that it would be wise on political and historical grounds to spend a good deal of care and some money on preserving the memory of the Indians who have died in France and in England.'

On 16th February 1916 the Secretary of State for India, The Rt. Hon. Austen Chamberlain, concurred. He was 'in entire accord with Sir Walter Lawrence's recommendations.' These included: 'that where cremation has been resorted to, a simple monument of an oriental character should be erected on the site of the crematorium.' But there the matter rested until Alderman John Otter's proposals came to the attention of the India Office in June 1916.

Delay and Frustration, 1916-1920

Within days of Otter's proposal the India Office gave it favourable consideration. Initial progress was rapid. Negotiations to convey the land upon which the cremations took place (and the area immediately around it) to the County Borough of Brighton was soon under way, and the land (property of the Marquess of Abergavenny – 'a lunatic') was conveyed to Brighton by 31st July 1916.

Funding was quickly agreed. The India Office and Brighton Corporation would bear half each of the cost of construction, but Brighton alone would be responsible for ongoing care and maintenance. For the India Office this was a remarkably good deal. Brighton council remains responsible for care and maintenance of the memorial and grounds to this day, with no input from central government.

John Otter consulted the architect Colonel Sir Swinton Jacob (an old India Hand with responsibility for various public works in the subcontinent) about a suitable form for a memorial and he sketched out a *chattri*, a traditional Indian style of memorial, with an umbrella shaped roof symbolic of protection for those commemorated, recommending that 'Mr. Henriques, a young native architect just completing his studies in England' should be requested to undertake the design. Mr. E.C. Henriques agreed and the design was completed by December 1916.

The India Office allowed Brighton Council complete discretion as to design and choice of material. Considerable thought was given to implementation of the design, bearing in mind cost of materials, and the position on the Downs, 'exposed to the action of the weather, and to the ill treatment of mischievous boys.' Granite, sandstone and Sicilian marble were considered, and the latter material adopted on the advice of the Curator of the Geological Survey and Museum.

The centre of the memorial is the 'Chattri' itself, which stands on a square base within a walled area, with steps in front down to three granite slabs which cap the original concrete cremation blocks. The memorial bears the following inscription in Hindi and English:

To the memory of all the Indian soldiers who gave their lives for the King-Emperor in the Great War, this monument, erected on the site of the funeral pyre where the Hindus and Sikhs who died in hospital at Brighton, passed through the fire, is in grateful admiration and brotherly affection dedicated.

In January 1917 the General Purposes Committee of Brighton Council voted £750 to the scheme and this was matched by the India Office. The ex-mayor, now Sir John Otter, invited firms to tender for the work. Seven tenders were received, ranging in price from £2000 to £3200. The Town Clerk estimated that a satisfactory result could be obtained for an all inclusive price of £2500 and intimated that the town would increase its commitment to 50% of that sum. The India Office approved an increase in its commitment, 'not to exceed a maximum of £1,300.' Shortly thereafter, it having been decided to execute the work in Sicilian marble, the estimate was raised to £3000 and in August the India Office again agreed to increase its share.

William Kirkpatrick Ltd. of Manchester was engaged to carry out the work, but due to wartime conditions all building projects costing more than £500 required a licence from the Ministry of Munitions. The blow fell in a letter from the Ministry dated 4th August:

I am directed to express much regret that at the present time, when labour of all kinds is immediately required for very urgent National work, and there are great difficulties in connection with the transport of materials, it has been found impossible to grant the licence for which you have applied.

After further correspondence the Ministry agreed to stonework being worked in quarries, as long as preparatory work on site and actual shipment of stone be postponed until a licence could be granted. The contract with Kirkpatrick's was duly signed on 20th April 1918, the total cost being given as £2523. Setbacks continued to dog the project. In February 1919 Kirkpatrick reported that the Italian marble contractor was refusing to honour his contract owing to war conditions in Italy. The marble was ultimately received in May 1920.

Construction

In August 1920 Sir John Otter was finally able to report that the Chattri was under construction. The wording, as with so many facets of the project, seems to have been devised by Otter, as the Secretary of State for India, now the Rt. Hon. E.S. Montague, wrote to him: 'Your draft is in every way admirable,' suggesting just one change, the substitution of the words 'were cremated' for the original 'passed through the fire.' Happily this suggestion was ignored and the emotive original wording retained. By the end of 1920 the memorial had been built. It only remained to install protective fencing and the layout of the surrounding garden, which incorporated four miniature avenues of red and white thorn trees pointing north, south, west and east, the whole area turfed with 'true down turf which is the finest in the world.' The end cost of the entire scheme was £4964, the costs of materials and labour having risen rapidly during realisation of the project (including £1117 spent on a caretaker's cottage).

Unveiling Ceremony, 1st February 1921

As the Chattri neared completion thought was given to who might be suitable to unveil the memorial. Brighton Corporation approached the Duke of Connaught in July 1920. He was the seventh child of Queen Victoria and a professional soldier who had held several important commands in India; he had learnt Hindustani and regarded Indians with 'understanding and affection' [*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*]. Unfortunately the Duke was going abroad in mid-November. Sir W. Duke at the India Office then advised Sir John: 'I hardly think it would be any use trying to get HRH the Prince of Wales as I believe he is not making many public engagements at present...' Nothing daunted, Sir John approached the Prince of Wales who duly accepted and the date was set for 21st February 1921.

Uncertain Future

‘The Corporation of Brighton is the owner and
Guardian of the Chattri’ – Sir John Otter, 1923

During 1923 the matter of ongoing maintenance – and who was going to pay for it – was debated at length in correspondence between the India Office and the Corporation. The latter seems to have borne its responsibility lightly, although there is evidence of proper concern for the care of the Chattri in the decision to employ an on-site caretaker. The caretaker’s cottage was completed in 1923 and the first caretaker appointed. He was a former regimental sergeant-major and lived there with his wife. They were paid modestly and it was envisaged that they would be able to supplement their income by selling tea to visitors. Visitor numbers, however, did not allow for much tea-selling. The caretaker died after a few years and his wife struggled on for a few months but eventually gave up the cottage. An aspirant to the post, enquiring in 1934 whether there was a vacancy, was told that it was not proposed to appoint another caretaker as ‘the cottage has been dismantled.’ Apparently it had been impossible to keep the post filled owing to the remoteness of the location.

Years of Neglect

On 16th December 1924 the Imperial War Graves Commission [IWGC], as it was then known, wrote to the India Office (which everyone seemed to imagine was responsible for the Chattri): ‘There have been unfavourable references in the papers lately to the condition of the memorial on Patcham Downs near Brighton.’

In 1932 a walker reported on the sorry state in which he found the memorial: ‘It is now neglected. Overgrown with thistles and what I should call if I were on a tub in Hyde Park “a disgrace to the British nation.”’ This stirred the India Office, which wrote to the Town Clerk. He refuted the allegations of neglect, but presumably he was pressed into taking some action and a minute on the India Office file, while doubting his veracity, states: ‘The important thing is that he is doing something.’

Further complaints from walkers and visitors continued sporadically, and in 1939 the India Office suggested seeking the advice of the IWGC which undertook a thorough survey and drew up a plan for maintenance. At the same

time, possibly piqued into activity by the India Office initiative, the Brighton Parks and Gardens Department came up with its own plans for repair and renovation. The best course of action was debated and the IWGC plan was favoured, but as ever Brighton Corporation appeared unwilling to meet its original commitment and argued over responsibility for payment.

The Second World War

Nothing was done and further complaints were received at the India Office, but in any case the land was now requisitioned as part of the Downland Training Area, a 'battle training ground' within which there was live firing and any renovation work would have been impracticable. A retired Indian Army officer who visited the memorial in Armistice week 1945 wrote to Field Marshal Lord Birdwood that it was 'in a thoroughly dilapidated condition and has apparently been used as a target by troops during training as the memorial is now cracked and pitted by rifle bullets.' One cannot be too hard on the young Canadians training for D Day. The memorial still bears these 'honourable scars of war', as the Director General of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission [CWGC] recently referred to them, and when the land was derequisitioned in 1946 the War Office accepted the charge for repairs and agreed to restore the Chattri to its original condition.

Post-war

Commencing in 1951, the British Legion organised an annual memorial service on a Sunday in June. This took place until 1999 when (amid some fairly wild and wide of the mark accusations of racism in the columns of the *Guardian* newspaper) they decided that they could no longer maintain the ceremony, citing old age and declining numbers.

An Order of Service for the 1970 Chattri Pilgrimage, as it was known, survives: there was an Address by the Chaplain of the Patcham Branch of the British Legion (who was also the vicar of Patcham) followed by prayers, the wreath laying ceremony, the Last Post (sounded by the Patcham Church Band), the Legion Exhortation and the Reveille. Then an Address by the branch president, Reply by His Excellency the High Commissioner for India, and the Blessing. After the ceremony there was a parade around the memorial before refreshments were served by the Ladies of the Patcham Women's Section,

followed by a welcome to all the Indian Party from London in the Patcham Memorial Hall, Old London Road.

Hearing of the demise of the Chattri Pilgrimage, Davinder Dhillon, a local Sikh teacher, approached the British Legion with a view to resurrecting the event and under his stewardship it has continued to be held annually on the second Sunday in June since 2000.

With representatives of the Undivided Indian Ex-Service Association from various parts of the United Kingdom present, as well as the Brighton and Hove Hindu Elders Group, the Deputy Lieutenant of the county, the Mayor, members of the armed forces and police and many local people, a unique and fittingly dignified yet inclusive, warm and friendly memorial service is maintained.

Recent Developments at the Chattri

Four or five years ago the writer of this piece was invited to join the Editor for a day at the British Library's India Office Records. The latter, knowing of the interests of the former, had helpfully identified the original file of correspondence (L/MIL/7/19548) from which most of the above history has been compiled. As noted above, it had been the intention of Sir John Otter to erect a plaque bearing the names of the cremated soldiers; however, the establishments of the various Indian Hospitals – and their records – were in far off lands when the memorial came to be designed. No names were available and no plaque was erected. In the intervening years various figures have been quoted in published works, and none of them were correct. Even CWGC records were inaccurate.

However, the India Office file on the Brighton Memorial contained returns supplied in 1918, at the request of the Secretary of State for India, by the units involved. These give the regiment, regimental number, rank, name, date of death and place of cremation or burial of the Brighton dead.

The writer began to cross-check these records with those available online from the CWGC. Due to misspelling of names this was not always straightforward, but nearly all could be reconciled with men commemorated on the Indian Memorial at Neuve Chapelle in France or on the Hollybrook Memorial at Southampton. Some of them included a note that they had been cremated at Patcham Down, but many did not (this has resulted in some of the misstated figures bandied about in various books). In due course findings were presented

to the CWGC and with the help of Derek Butler of the CWGC Records Section the last few names were pinned down (Derek had the ability to undertake more complex searches than are available to the general public using the CWGC website). The names have now been accepted by the CWGC as the definitive list of those fifty-three men cremated at Patcham and the records changed to reflect this.

It was the ambition of the writer to persuade the CWGC that it had a duty to erect a panel with these names at the Chattri site, but the initial response was that the Commission had fulfilled its obligation as the names were recorded on other memorials – albeit erroneously. There the matter stood until July 2008 when the Director General of the CWGC, Richard Kellaway CBE, together with the Commission's Indian representative, General Stanley Menezes, were greeted at the Chattri by members of the Chattri Memorial Group. The Group took the opportunity to press home their view that: (a) the current arrangements for commemorating the men cremated at the Chattri were at the very least misleading as the men were not 'missing'; (b) the Chattri, where they were cremated, was the proper place for them to be commemorated; (c) there were precedents for 'cremation memorials' as there are others in several countries where Indian soldiers had been thus treated. Within a few weeks we heard the splendid news that the DG agreed with us, and he was sending the Commission's Director of Technical Services, Brian Davidson MBE, and Architect, Barry Edwards, down to meet the Chattri Memorial Group. A survey of the memorial was undertaken and various ideas were discussed. It was decided that it would be inappropriate to alter or add to the original memorial, a listed structure and potentially a source of conflict over responsibility for maintenance. Instead it was agreed that the CWGC would build a new memorial within the Chattri compound, bearing the names, regiments and so forth together with suitable commemorative wording. The best position was agreed, bearing in mind accessibility for wreath-laying ceremonies and so forth (the site of the Chattri covers several acres and is on steeply rising ground), as well as the movement of the sun and how this might catch the engraved lettering in such a way that it would be legible for the longest part of daylight. Ideas for replanting and general maintenance of the wider site were also discussed.

The situation now (January 2009) is that the Chattri Memorial Group is waiting for the architectural plan to be completed and in due course for building to commence on the first CWGC 1914-1918 memorial to be erected since the 1920s.

The issue of ongoing care and maintenance of the site has also been discussed with the Chief Executive of Brighton council and other officials. The Chattri Memorial Group continues to lobby and the hope is that a contractual arrangement will eventually be reached whereby the CWGC carries out annual cleaning of the original memorial at the same time as it cleans the new memorial (which will be its responsibility from the outset) and that regular horticultural maintenance will also be undertaken.

A more detailed historical essay on the Chattri can be found on the Chattri Memorial Group website (www.chattri.com) including an account of one of the cremations held there, photographs of the memorial and so forth.

Should any IMHS member visit Brighton and wish to visit the Chattri please contact Tom Donovan, secretary of the Chattri Memorial Group (email tom@turnerdonovan.com) for directions. Other commitments permitting, members of the Chattri Memorial Group will gladly act as guides and point out various items of interest.

Appendix 1

Breakdown of Deaths of Indians in Brighton Hospitals

Kitchener Hospital (formerly the Poor Law Institution, Elm Grove)

Thirty-six deaths. Twenty-five Hindus/Sikhs cremated at Patcham; eleven Mohammedans buried at Woking.

Royal Pavilion

Eighteen deaths. Ten cremated at Patcham; eight buried at Woking.

York Place Hospital

Twenty deaths. Eighteen cremated at Patcham; two buried at Woking.

Total cremated on the Downs at Patcham 53

Total buried at Woking 21

Total deaths 74

Appendix 2

Complete list of casualties

Name	no. and rank	regiment or corps	Died
Anokh Lal	4292 Havildar	5th Ammunition Column, Indian Royal Artillery	27 Jul '15
Arora Ramratan	Bom/212 Follower (Dhobi)	Supply & Transport Cps att'd No. 1 Ind. General Hospital	22 Apr '15
Bagh Singh	3298 Sowar	34th Prince Albert Victor's Own Poona Horse	8 Jul '15
Bakhtawar Sing Negi	1740 Rifleman	2nd Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles	17 Mar '15
Bal Bahadur Gurung	765 Rifleman	Burma Mil. Police att'd 1st Bn. 1st Gurkha Rfls (Malaun Regt)	25 Jun '15
Bala	9202 Doolie Bearer	9th Coy, Army Bearer Cps, att'd 27th British F.C. Ambulance	6 Sep '15
Balwant Singh	1432 Rifleman	125th Napier's Rifles	24 Feb '15
Bara Singh	4835 Sepoy	59th Scinde Rifles (Frontier Force)	17 Nov '15
Bhag Singh	2931 Sepoy	52nd Sikhs (Frontier Force) att'd 59th Scinde Rifles (FF)	18 Mar '15
Bhartman Rai	1539 Rifleman	Burma Military Police attached 1st Bn. 4th Gurkha Rifles	4 Oct '15
Bhartu	27 Follower (Cook)	6th Jat Light Infantry	15 Mar '15
Chandarbhyan	2999 Sepoy	91st Punjabis attached 2nd Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles	21 Mar '15
Dadu Shinde	4313 Naik	107th Indian Pioneers	13 Jul '15
Dasarat	6180 Follower (Assistant Cook)	Army Hosp Cps att'd 2nd Clearing Hosp & 15th Brit. F.C. Amb.	8 Sep '15
Debibahadur Thapa	2032 Rifleman	1st Bn. 9th Gurkha Rifles	31 Jul '15
Dillu	2132 Sepoy	69th Punjabis	22 Oct '15

Name	no. and rank	regiment or corps	Died
Dirga Sing Thapa	3590 Rifleman	1st Bn. 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles	17 Mar '15
Gangu Burathoki	2798 Rifleman	1st Bn. 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regt)	31 Mar '15
Gathri Negi	2884 Rifleman	39th Garhwal Rifles	21 Apr '15
Gaur Sing Negi	1046 Naik	3rd Bn. 39th Garhwal rifles	13 Jan '15
Godar	3926 Sepoy	40th Pathans	24 Oct '15
Harnham Singh	3535 Sepoy	15th Ludhiana Sikhs	17 Feb '15
Hazara Singh	1425 Sepoy	47th Sikhs	22 Mar '15
Jahan Singh	Jemadar	29th Lancers (Deccan Horse)	8 Jul '15
Jai Singh	1125 Sepoy	41st Dogras	27 Oct '15
Jasdhoj Limbu	1872 Rifleman	Assam Military Police attached 1st Bn. 4th Gurkha Rifles	17 Dec '15
Jog Singh	4644 Sepoy	124th D of C's Own Baluchistan Infy, att'd 47th Sikhs	13 Nov '15
Kallu	738 Saddler	11th Mule Corps	24 Mar '15
Kharak Sing Butola	1575 Rifleman	2nd Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles	15 Apr '15
Kishn Chand	1299 2nd Cl. Sub-Asst Surgeon	Indian Medical Dept, attached 11th Indian Field Ambulance	5 May '15
Kishn Lal	3943 Sepoy	112th Indian Infantry attached 1st Bn. 6th Jat Light Infantry	22 Oct '15
Kure	Meerut 19/567 Follower	Army Hospital Corps att'd. Secunderabad General Hospital	30 Dec '15
Lachhman Rai	1749 Rifleman	Burma Military Police attached 1st Bn. 9th Gurkha Rifles	22 Oct '15
Lal Bahadur Ghale	4498 Rifleman	2nd Bn. 8th Gurkha Rifles	7 Feb '15
Makhli Sing Rawat	1544 Rifleman	2nd Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles	17 Mar '15
Mangal Singh	329 Drummer	19th Punjabis attached 15th Ludhiana Sikhs	26 Feb '15

Name	no. and rank	regiment or corps	Died
Manjit Gurung	3850 Rifleman	2nd King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles)	20 May '15
Mansing Gurung	4827 Rifleman	2nd Bn. 8th Gurkha Rifles	13 Nov '15
Manta Singh	Subadar	15th Ludhiana Sikhs	20 Mar '15
Mohiya Ram	281 Store-keeper	Supply & Transport Corps attached Z Indian Gen. Hospital	13 Oct '15
Phuman Singh	3702 Sepoy	58th Vaughan's Rifles (Fr. Force)	31 Dec '14
Pyare Singh	3336 Sepoy	54th Sikhs (Frontier Force) att'd 58th Vaughan's Rifles (F.F.)	11 Nov '15
Rabel Singh	3539 Sepoy	58th Vaughan's Rifles (Fr. Force)	21 Jul '15
Ramparshad Thapa	2623 Rifleman	1st Bn. 9th Gurkha Rifles	12 Jan '15
Ranbahadur Sahi	2233 Rifleman	1st Bn. 9th Gurkha Rifles	26 Mar '15
Rhagha Sing	3658 Sepoy	9th Bhopal infantry	5 Jan '15
Santa Sing	3946 Sepoy	58th Vaughan's Rifles (Fr. Force)	29 May '15
Sarupa	7417 Follower (Ward Servant)	Army Hospital Corps att'd 112 Ind. Corps Field Ambulance	13 Feb '15
Shankar Singh	679 Driver	7th Mountain Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery Indian Army	11 May '15
Sulakkhan Sing	3410 Sepoy	58th Vaughan's Rifles (Fr. Force)	7 Feb '15
Tilok Sing Danu	2290 Rifleman	1st Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles	29 Jul '15
Tulsiram Sarki	1800 Rifleman	2nd Bn. 2nd King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rfls)	26 Jul '15
Vithu Khawri	4296 Sepoy	107th Indian Pioneers	12 Feb '15

Moslems

Abdullah	Syce	32nd Signal Coy	16 Dec '15
Alla Ditta Khan	2262 Sowar	15th Lancers (Cureton's Multanis)	3 Feb '16
Bostan	1154 Driver	9th Mule Corps	19 Oct '15

Name	no. and rank	regiment or corps	Died
Fazal Khan	2858 Naik	93rd Burma Infantry attd. Meerut Divisional Signals	14 Nov '15
Garib Ala Did	2154 Driver	1st Mule Corps	6 Apr '15
Hansa	209 Cook	Army Hospital Corps, "Y" Indian General Hospital, Brighton	7 Dec '15
Inayat Khan	198 Driver	Indore Transport Corps	7 Jun '15
Inzar Gul	3217 Sepoy	57th (Wilde's) Rifles (Fr. Force)	19 Jan '15
Kala Khan	693 Driver	2nd Mountain Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, Indian Army	2 Feb '16
Lajbar	2196 Havr Major	57th (Wilde's) Rifles (Fr. Force)	6 May '15
Langar Khan	2344 Sowar	36th Jacob's Horse	24 Apr '15
Mahrup Shah	155 Sepoy	Burma Military Police attd. 129th Baluchis	16 Sep '15
Muhammad Sarwar	3591 Sowar	19th Lancers (Fane's Horse)	19 Jun '15
Rahim Dad Khan	1788 Sowar	34th Prince Albert Victor's Own Poona Horse	22 Feb '15
Sarmast	2962 Sepoy	57th (Wilde's) Rifles (Fr. Force)	22 Jul '15
Shaikh Abdul Wahab	2278 Sowar	29th Lancers (Deccan Horse)	16 Jul '15
Shaikh Mohiuddin	9562 Bearer	112th Field Ambulance	5 Jan '16
Sher Muhammad	48 Sepoy	59th Scinde Rifles (Frontier Force)	18 Mar '15
Sikandar Khan	2253 Sepoy	82nd Punjabis	25 Sep '15
Sultan	591 Driver	2nd Mule Corps	28 Apr '15
Zarif Khan	304 Sepoy	127th Baluch Light Infantry att'd 129th Baluchis	22 Jul '15

Taita Hills 1898

Harry Fecitt

During 1897 a serious rebellion developed in the Uganda Protectorate and the Government of India was requested to send troops to support British military activities in East Africa. In response the 27th Bombay Light Infantry¹ departed on 3rd December 1897 from Bombay aboard the transport *Nowshera*, arriving at Mombasa on 12th December. The battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel W.A. Broome. Fourteen British officers and 743 native ranks comprised the strength of the unit.

At that time the Uganda Railway was under construction from Mombasa to Lake Victoria and the railhead had reached Ndi, 109 miles from Mombasa. Just southwest of Ndi the Taita Hills tower up above the plain to a height of over 7,000 feet. These wooded hills were a prominent landmark for travelers but were relatively unexplored. Local tribesmen (who specialized in filing their front teeth into sharp points) lived on the hills in caves and villages, and in 1893 a missionary station had been opened there. Five years later the Imperial British East Africa (BEA) Company, a private chartered commercial organization that was developing trade in the region, made a treaty with the Taita chief in order to secure the land route that was being developed from Mombasa to Uganda.



Colonel Broome moved his battalion by rail up to Ndi by 8th January 1898 and dispatched several companies on foot up the long trail to Kampala, 687 miles away. More Indian Army reinforcements were requested from Uganda and the 4th Bombay Infantry² arrived in Mombasa on 7th March. At Ndi transport

¹ The title in 1897 was '27th Regiment (1st Baluch Bn) of Bombay (Light) Infantry'.

² The title in 1898 was '4th Regiment (1st Bn Rifle Regiment) of Bombay Infantry'.

problems were developing because the Taitas did not want to be recruited as porters to carry loads up the trail. The Indian troops needed special diets and this resulted in massive tonnages of food being imported, all of which needed carrying from Ndi onwards. Even coastal porters from Mombasa did not want the work and in March, out of one group of 300 porters, 230 threw their loads down and vanished through the bush back to the coast. The porters did have valid concerns as, apart from the risk of stepping on snakes, thieves sometimes attacked them from the bush, and the railhead was approaching Tsavo where predatory lions hunted men as well as wilder animals. Eventually more porters and donkeys were brought up to carry loads, but this was a difficult time for the British authority.



HUT OF THE TAITA CHIEF MGOG

On 20th March Colonel Broome received a letter from Mr. Weaver, District Officer Ndi, who was at Bura in the Taita Hills (at this time all spare BEA Protectorate troops had been sent up to Uganda). Weaver requested the help of Indian troops as the Magangi people in the hills had rejected peace terms offered by the BEA Protectorate authorities who had taken over the administration of the territory from the Imperial BEA Company. The Magangis could produce around 1,000 bowmen firing poisoned arrows and carrying short swords. Broome marched at dawn the next day with three British and two Indian officers and 78 Indian sepoy. Each man carried 70

rounds of ammunition while closely-escorted porters carried rations to last for 10 days. Twenty eight hours later the British column reached the Magangi's valley, 23 miles from Ndi and 5,000 feet above sea level.

Mr. Weaver reported that the Magangi chief had attempted to murder him two days previously, but the chief had been shot in the attempt. Colonel Broome was requested to take steps to make the local people acknowledge the authority of the Government of the Protectorate. A reconnaissance patrol entered the Magangi area where the District Officer pointed out about 200 huts in four villages that were the centre of resistance. At 04.30 hours the following morning Colonel Broome's main body blocked exits from the villages whilst Lieutenant H. Hulseberg and an assault party of 35 men rushed the huts. Very few men were found in the huts as the warriors had withdrawn during the night. The British column now split into two groups and advanced up both sides of the valley where they contacted the tribesmen, killing 40 or 50 of them and capturing 60 head of cattle for the loss of one Indian officer slightly wounded.



TAITA HILLS FROM THE SOUTH CROP

The villagers now submitted to the District Officer's authority and by 25th March the Colonel and his column were back at Ndi. This had been a typical colonial punitive expedition (exactly how many natives had been killed didn't really matter – a lesson had been delivered and learned) and it had been a stroke of luck for the BEA administration that Colonel Broome and his troops were camped only a few miles away. The tribesmen could not compete against the firepower of the sepoys and once the column showed that it was prepared to enter and fight in the hills then the tribesmen knew that they could not win. On 4th April Colonel Broome was ordered to proceed to Uganda to assume

command in that Protectorate and he started marching; however because of the transport difficulties already mentioned, it took his column four months to complete the journey to Kampala.

The 27th Bombay Light Infantry fought in several engagements in Uganda over the next eight months. This period of campaigning resulted in the award of the East and Central Africa Medal with the clasps 'Uganda 1897-98' and 'Lubwas' to all ranks involved in operations. Service with Colonel Broome's short expedition into the Taita Hills also qualified for the former clasp, despite the fact that the Taita Hills were located in British East Africa – many weary miles away from Uganda.

THE MEDALS OF BREVET COLONEL CHARLES UPVALE PRICE, CMG
130TH KING GEORGE'S OWN BALUCHIS (JACOB'S RIFLES)



East & Central Africa Medal with clasp 1897-98, China Medal 1900, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, British Victory Medal with Mentioned in Despatches oak leaf emblem, Delhi Durbar Medal 1903, Delhi Durbar Medal 1911, Russian Order of St. Anne 3rd Class with swords. Absent from the group is an Order of St. Michael & St. George.

Lieutenant C.V. Price, 30th Bombay Light Infantry, was attached to the 27th Bombay Light Infantry in Uganda. During the Great War Lieutenant Price returned to the Taita area as a Lieutenant Colonel commanding the 130th Baluchis. His battalion was in action securing a military railway line that was constructed westwards from Voi, a station ten miles south of Ndi, to and across the German East African border at Taveta just south of Kilimanjaro Mountain.

During these operations the Taita Hills were a vital source of water both for the military railway line and for the thousands of Allied troops that camped alongside it, and many Taita tribesmen served as Intelligence Scouts or in other capacities for the British forces. The hills themselves provided healthy locations for sanatoriums for white and Indian troops recovering from fevers contracted on the plains below.

Sources and further reading

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The Man-eaters of Tsavo, Lieutenant Colonel J.H. Patterson, DSO

British Battles and Medals (Spink)

The memoir of Major-General E.J. Wild, Bengal Army during the Mutiny of 1857-1858

Part 4: The advance to the Lucknow Residency – September 1857

Our move on leaving Bunnee¹ was for the Alambagh, and at 2 p.m. we came upon the enemy, with Sir James [Outram] leading the Volunteer Cavalry.² The mutineers had placed a gun behind some earthwork they had thrown up in a field, and from which they could fire down the road. As we advanced they fired a round shot at us, but it went over our heads, and unfortunately killed the adjutant of the 5th Fusiliers in our rear.³ We moved, and our artillery came into

¹ Also rendered in contemporary narratives as ‘Buni’, ‘Bani’, or ‘Banni’

² The advance from Bunnee commenced at 8 a.m. on the 23rd September, with Barrow’s Volunteer Cavalry reconnoitring ahead.

³ Lieut. E.J. Haig, 1st Bn 5th Foot (Northumberland Fusiliers); killed in action at Lucknow on 23 Sep 1857 (I.T. Tavender, *Casualty Roll for the Indian Mutiny 1857-59*, J.B. Hayward & Sons, Polstead, Suffolk 1983)

action at once.⁴ The gun in front fired shrapnel, and wounded or killed twenty or so of our force, but we soon silenced it, and they withdrew it. Our horizon was very limited as we were surrounded by topes. Our infantry advanced in skirmishing order 'till we came in sight of the Alambagh, a royal garden enclosed all round with a high wall of 12 or 14 feet high, and a quarter-mile square.⁵ The wall facing our advance had embrasures for 3 guns, and, in addition, was loop-holed for musketry fire.

As soon as we were seen the enemy opened fire on us at once, but our artillery soon came into position and stopped their fire, and knocked great breaches in the wall, and as the enemy began bolting we advanced and took possession of the Alambagh. As we advanced a pagoda came into sight on our left front, from which they opened fire on us with a couple of guns strongly entrenched, and as our artillery could not silence them, the cavalry were ordered to cut off their retreat. Besides the Volunteer Cavalry, we had 25 native cavalry⁶ who had remained faithful at Cawnpore, and these, instead of following us, took a straight course for the pagoda as they wanted to have the honour of capturing the guns. The Volunteer Cavalry made a circuit to circumvent the pagoda which had, besides the guns, 500 or 600 Sepoys. These opened fire on the native cavalry and cleared a number of their saddles, and the remainder bolted back.⁷ The occupants of the pagoda, seeing that we wanted to cut off their

⁴ The artillery brigade (Brigadier G.L. Cooper RA) consisted of: 3 Coy 8 Bn Royal Artillery (Maude's); 2 Coy 3 Bn Bengal Artillery (Olphert's); 1 Coy 5 Bn Bengal Artillery (Eyre's)

⁵ The Alambagh, 'the Garden of the World', lay two miles outside the city limits. It had been the pleasure garden of the Begums of Oudh. In the centre was a substantial double-storied house built of masonry. The rebels had strengthened the garden walls and the house by adding earthen ramps and bastions.

⁶ Known briefly as 'Johnson's Irregulars', this body of mostly Afghan sowars was a loyal remnant of the 12th Bengal Irregular Cavalry, serving under Lieut. William Thomas Johnson, 6th Bombay NI. Johnson had been 2-i-c of the 1st Cavy Oudh Irregular Force from 11 Feb 1856. The HQ of the 1st Oudh Cavalry mutinied at Secroa on 9 Jun 1857 and killed its British officers. Johnson was unwell at the time, languishing at Benares, and this undoubtedly saved his life. According to a nominal roll of the 12th IC dated Bareilly 2 Jul 1860, fifty-nine Indian officers and other ranks of the regiment served in Havelock's relief column between July and November 1857 (*India Office Records*, L/Mil/5/98, folio 218).

⁷ This account does not marry with the more positive recollection of other observers. 'One of [the rebel] guns, planted on the road, and admirably served by the well-trained artillerymen of the Oude Force, still continued to send destruction among our troops, when Lieutenant Johnson, by an act of gallantry not surpassed in any action during this

retreat, thought it advisable to withdraw, and we took possession. A party of our infantry was sent to hold it, and the Volunteer Cavalry returned to the Alambagh.

About a mile beyond the Alambagh on the road to Lucknow was a breastwork across the road with a gun, and on its left was another garden with a strong wall round it, and inside the garden was a large house where the enemy had also a gun, and it annoyed us at first, 'till our artillery silenced it. The Volunteer Cavalry with a party of infantry were sent forward to hold the breastwork, but were not allowed to advance further. On reaching it we were exposed to a heavy fire of musketry, and were losing men. We therefore asked permission either to be allowed to advance or retire out of fire, and the order came to retire. Afterwards, we pitched our camp for the night – the main force were in the fields, and a detachment held the Alambagh. The next day was a very busy one putting our spare ammunition and stores into the Alambagh. We were to leave everything there in charge of a strong detachment, and earthworks had to be thrown up to fortify the garden, and we had to make room for the cattle and all that we were leaving behind, as everything not actually wanted for the advance on Lucknow was to be left behind and placed in this Noah's Ark kind of entrenchment.

On the morning of the 25th⁸ at about 10am we heard firing in our rear, and the Volunteer Cavalry were ordered to mount at once and proceed immediately for the protection of the rearguard, and a battery was ordered to follow at once. When we reached the rearguard we found that it had suddenly been attacked by a small body of cavalry that had mutinied at Cawnpore, and these had come on very leisurely up the road, and were taken to be the native cavalry that was in our camp, and these rebels had formed part of the same regiment, and were

campaign, without waiting for orders, charged it with twenty troopers of his Irregular Cavalry, sabred the gunners, and silenced the gun. Finding himself unsupported a thousand yards in advance of the Force, and the enemy keeping up a galling fire from neighbouring cover, he was compelled to abandon it and retire; but the dread inspired by this dashing charge deterred the enemy from serving it again, and the troops were free from its molestation during their further advance' (J.C. Marshman, *Memoirs of Major-General Sir Henry Havelock KCB*, London 1860; p. 404).

⁸ This date is inaccurate. The attack on Havelock's rear occurred on the 24th, one day prior to the final advance into Lucknow itself. It developed into a full scale action that lasted for at least three hours before the rebel force was driven off.

dressed alike.⁹ When this party had arrived to about 30 yards from the rearguard they suddenly made a rush on them, and cut down 2 officers and 12 men. The guard then fell in and opened fire on the rebels, and knocked over 20 of them, and this was the firing we had heard. By the time we had reached our rearguard we saw two dense bodies of cavalry in the distance, advancing to attack us. The rearguard, in skirmishing order, advanced to meet them, and cleared a number of saddles - on which the enemy retired and broke into three divisions to attack us from both flanks and in the centre.

Just at that time Captain Alpert [Olpherts], known by the nickname of 'Hellfire Jack', dashed up and fired a couple of rounds of grape from each gun into them, and they soon dispersed.¹⁰ Those on the right flank advanced, but our guns forced them to retire, and in the course of half an hour not a soul of the mutineers' brave cavalry was to be seen. We then returned to our camp in front of the column, ready for any emergency.

We afterwards received orders to send all our baggage into the Alambagh. Each regiment had a spot allocated to them, and a few men were told off to remain as a guard for its protection. We were told to take nothing with us, not even a servant, as it was announced that we should return on the third day. However, I took my bhistie (water-carrier) who turned out to be most useful – not to myself only but to a great number of others, both on the advance into the Residency and during the siege. I gave my hairbrushes, comb and toothbrush in his charge, which was the amount of my luggage, wrapped in a towel. It would have been better if I had left them behind as I never saw them again. He said he

⁹ The only native cavalry known to have been with Havelock were Johnson's Irregulars, mostly 12th Bengal IC with a handful of 3rd Bengal IC sowars. The cavalry with the rebel forces would have been overwhelming from the Bengal Light Cavalry (mostly the 2nd and 7th) – easily distinguishable from the irregulars.

¹⁰ Captain William Olpherts, in command of the 2nd Coy 3rd Bn Bengal Artillery, was assigned to rearguard duties. 'His battery was a sort of military curiosity in every way. His gun-carriages were old, and always on the verge of absolute dissolution; and as for his harness, it seemed to be tied together with pieces of string. First came dear old Billy himself [as he was known to his friends and fellow officers], clad in garments he had used in the Crimea War, a fez cap and a Turkish *grego*, the latter tied round his waist with a piece of rope. About fifty yards behind him came his well-known battery sergeant-major, in a sort of shooting coat made from the green baize of a billiard table; then a gun, every driver flogging as hard as he could; then another a long distance in the rear Some of the spokes had gone; they all rattled' (Lieut. Colonel, later Lord, Garnett Joseph Wolseley, *The Story of a Soldier's Life* (London 1903).

put them on the well, and, whilst drawing water, someone took them away. I sent my lame horse, luggage and servants into the enclosure.

There was a rumour amongst the natives that Delhi had been captured by us, but how they knew it no-one knew, and we did not believe it, although afterwards we found it must have been true as we captured it on the 21st of the month. In the evening notice was given to us to turn out at a moment's warning as we should most likely be attacked that night. In the middle of the night two Sowars came tearing through our camp and how they got clear of the tent-ropes is a wonder. Everyone in camp turned out, but as nothing further happened we lay down again till dawn, then we knocked down our tents and sent them into store to the Alambagh, and had a good breakfast as we did not expect anything till night, and were then ready for an advance directly the order should be given. In one of my holsters I put a flask of brandy and as many biscuits as I was able to, thinking my supply would last me till we returned - with careful management. The other holster I filled with grain for my horse.

The order for the cavalry to proceed to the Residency turned out to be a very foolish one as we should have been more useful at the Alambagh. However, the order was given and had to be obeyed. General Havelock was still in supreme command and he decided to force his way through the city to the Residency, little calculating the resistance he would have to encounter with the small force at his disposal. If he could have advanced in three columns it would have been different. From the entrance of the city to the Residency was between 3 and 4 miles; skirting the city was about 10 miles and it was a great fallacy to suppose that the enemy would withdraw on our attempting to enter the city – and so it turned out. The people in Oudh were a fighting nation and understood street fighting. The houses were either built with bricks or mud, with flat roofs, and the walls were loop-holed, and their guns were also judiciously placed to command the streets, so that our loss on the first onslaught was terrible. Before we had advanced a quarter of a mile there was a report that we had lost a sixth of our force in the attempt. We had to retire, followed by our foes, and went our route round the city, blowing up the bridge over the Goomtee just at the entrance to the city so as to prevent them following us. This retrograde movement encouraged the enemy, and as they could not cross the river they followed us on the other side, and from every available spot they fired on us. The Volunteer Cavalry were halted at the bridge to know what we were to do, and it was deplorable to see the numbers of dead and wounded being carried back to the Alambagh, and as soon as the dhoolies had deposited their freight at the hospital they returned to fetch others.

Whilst coming from the Alambagh we had to pass alongside of a wall. The infantry could pass without being seen, but the cavalry were seen, and, whilst passing, shots were fired at us from a house inside the enclosure. I was on the left of the threes and if one shot had been fired a second sooner, it would have hit me, whereas it hit a young fellow of the name of Erskine on my right who was the centre man of the threes, and entered his lungs, but did not kill him at once, for he lived for nearly two months. He was put into a dhoolie, and, instead of being sent back like the others, he was taken on to the Residency. He implored us not to leave him, or to let him fall into the enemy's hands, but to shoot him dead.¹¹

General Outram was the only one of our force who knew Lucknow, and knew of the road round by the ice-pits and Motee Mahal, and he became guide to General Havelock, who advanced with the artillery and infantry round that way as he could not go through the city. The Volunteer Cavalry and a strong body of infantry were left behind to bring up the rear and bring in the dhoolies with the wounded or else the dhoolie-bearers would have bolted and left the wounded to the tender mercies of the mutineers. On abandoning the city route, there seemed to be no proper system for our advance. The force seemed to split up into three or four parties, and none of them knew the road taken by the others. It seemed to be a rush to see who would be first into the Residency, leaving the other parties to take care of themselves. I had got as far as the ice-pits when I saw young Havelock¹² sitting down with his arm in a sling, so I went back and got the first empty dhoolie I could find for him, but he refused to get in and said that others might be worse wounded than he was, and so he would walk in.

No guns had been left behind with the rearguard¹³ and I was sent on to ask the General to send back two or three as the enemy had brought a couple of guns from the centre of the city and were annoying us, but I could not find him. I then returned, and joined my party of six Volunteer Cavalry, and a hundred of the 78th Highlanders who acted as an escort to a large batch of dhoolies with

¹¹ J. Erskin [sic] was one of 33 civilians who rode with Barrow's Volunteer Cavalry. He died on 14 Nov 1857. He had served in all the actions fought by the Volunteer Cavalry from Futtehpore on 12th July until he was mortally wounded on 25th September (*India Office Records*, L/Mil/5/77, folios 51-56).

¹² Lieut. Henry Marshman Havelock, HM's 10th Foot, son of Sir Henry.

¹³ By this time, the guns of Olpherts' 2-3 Bengal Artillery had been brought up from the rear to join the main assault.

the wounded, and at one of the turns of the road we saw a party of the enemy's cavalry ready to make a dash on us, but a few telling shots from the Highlanders made them think better of it, and they, not knowing our weakness, left us alone. The dhoolie-bearers had begun to drop their dhoolies one-by-one and, as they did so, it was piteous to hear the wounded imploring us not to leave them. I had not the heart to do so, so I pulled out my revolver and told the bearers that if they did not pick up their dhoolies I would have no mercy on them, but would shoot them. Besides, I told them that they were under the protection of the guard who would remain in their rear. I was glad to see that it had a good effect, as they took up their dhoolies and trotted off quicker than they had done before.

We advanced through a part of the suburbs of the city, then got into open ground, and, some distance ahead we saw the Motee Mahal, a palace and garden enclosed with a high wall, belonging to the King of Oudh, and we made for it as we saw some of our forces in possession. On arriving we found a strong force there, including artillery, and this force had been left there to keep up communication with the rearguards as they arrived - but they gave us no material assistance. The palace garden was full of troops and dhoolies - as many as it could hold, and there were rows of dhoolies outside with dead and wounded. There were also a number of troops outside who had piled arms, and were waiting for orders to advance. Pierson¹⁴ [sic] and self of the volunteer cavalry remained there, mounted, and we were looking at a couple of guns firing from the city at some of our force [who were] on their way to the Residency. I was patting my horse on the shoulder when one of these guns was fired, and I saw the round shot hit the ground about 400 yards in front of us.

I do not know why, but I withdrew my hand and sat upright on my horse, and at the same moment the round shot I had seen hitting the ground then hit the horse on the shoulder at the very spot my hand had been on and went clean through the animal, which suddenly collapsed and rolled over on my left leg, throwing me on the ground so that I could not withdraw my leg, and I had to call some of the privates to help me, and with their assistance I got my leg clear. The shot, having gone through the horse, killed a man who was in a dhoolie some distance in the rear. It was a curious sensation to feel the horse give way and drop without any movement - as if a spring had been touched and every joint gave way. The shot must have ricocheted at almost a right

¹⁴ Ensign John Richardson Pearson, 27th Bengal NI, first commissioned on 20 Feb 1857. His regiment had been disarmed at Peshawar on 22nd May 1857.

angle to hit the horse. Several horses were running about loose and unsaddled, and with the help of some of the men, I caught one and transferred my saddle and bridle, etc. to the new animal which, afterwards, I found out belonged to the Government, and had been taken away when the native artillery in Cawnpore mutinied, and so I could not claim it as my own.

When Pierson, who was next to me when my horse was shot, saw the horse and myself fall, he left the spot and, after a short time, returned to see what had become of me, and was told that the round shot had gone through my stomach, and that I was in the dhoolie behind - but he did not go to see if it was really myself or not, and rode off to the Residency. I was, of course, catching the new horse at this time. When he got to the Residency and rejoined the Volunteer Cavalry that evening, enquiries were being made about absent ones, and he then said he was next me when a round shot went through me. He was asked by several officials if he was certain that I had been killed, or would it be better to return me as missing as I might turn up, and then it would not look well to have entered my name as one of the killed. He, however, persisted that he saw a round shot knock me and my horse over, and I was, therefore, returned amongst the killed. Hurried dispatches were made up that night of the relief of Lucknow - that it was an accomplished fact - and sent off to the Alambagh to be forwarded to Calcutta, and for two months, no further communication could be sent.

I remained that night at the Motee Mahal, and had nothing to eat, and only water to drink as I had given all my brandy and biscuits to the wounded. Next morning, there were no signs of a move, as we were waiting for orders, so I remained with our party, and went looking all over the place to see if I could pick up anything to eat as I had had nothing for 24 hours and felt hungry. As luck would have it, I went inside a small mud hut and saw some chapattis the enemy had left when we advanced and took the Motee Mahal and disturbed them just before they could enjoy their meal. There were about a dozen chapattis and I took two for myself and gave the rest to some soldiers who were very thankful to get them, and enquiries were made if there were any more to be had. I said I did not know, as I had not been into all the huts.

After waiting all the morning, a large party of the 5th Fusiliers arrived to show us the way, and to protect the dhoolies in transit. During the night we had been surrounded by the rebels and could not move without assistance. There were several casualties during the morning in the gardens - the most painful was the

death of a young doctor.¹⁵ A musket ball hit the palace and, glancing off, entered his head whilst he was attending a wounded man, and killed him on the spot. The doctor had been stationed at Seetapore¹⁶ with his wife when the mutiny broke out, and somehow they got separated. She went into Lucknow with one party, and he went to Allahabad with the other. They were both looking forward to being reunited, so it was a sad blow to her - only seeing his dead body in the dhoolie.

About 4 p.m. I started for the Residency with others, and the last of the dhoolies, to protect them. After leaving the Motee Mahal we had to cross some low-lying ground which was enfiladed from the other side of the Goomtee, and had to run the gauntlet, and then along a wall for nearly half a mile till we got through a big gate into some shelter in a succession of courtyards through which we threaded our way till we came out into open ground dividing these courts from the Bailey Guard gate (the main entrance to the Residency), and we all got safe in without any casualties. When I got to the Residency building which was a kind of general mess-house for the 32nd Foot¹⁷, the Volunteer Cavalry, the Artillery and the 78th Highlanders had each got rooms allocated to them for mess-rooms in this building.¹⁸

On reaching it I was recognised and congratulated, as they had all considered that I was dead and they all wanted to know where I had spent the night, and how I had come to life again as I was reported amongst those killed – and the

¹⁵ Asst Surgeon Robert Henry Bartrum, Bengal Medical Establishment; posted to 3rd Infy Oudh Irregular Force at Gonda w.e.f. 26 Jun 1856. Bartrum was killed at Lucknow 26 Sep 1857 (*East India Register*, May 1857 & Jan 1858; Dr TA Heathcote *Mutiny & Insurgency in India 1857-58*; p.154).

¹⁶ Seetapore was administrative headquarters of the northwest division of Oudh province. It is not certain that Wild is correct in citing Seetapore, as Bartrum's regiment, the 3rd Oudh Infy, was stationed at Gonda, also in Oudh but about 100 miles to the east.

¹⁷ HM's 32nd (The Cornwall) Regt of Foot; later a component of the Light Infantry. This regiment was the backbone of the original garrison of the Residency.

¹⁸ It was not until the morning of 27th September that the last elements of the rearguard were finally escorted into the Residency compound. In spite of all the efforts made to protect and bring in the casualties, a long string of *dhoolies* carrying wounded had lost its way and fallen into the hands of the rebels. The unfortunate occupants were all put to death. According to a return prepared at Lucknow by the AG's office on 30th September 1857, total casualties suffered during the critical two days of 25th and 26th September amounted to 535 killed, wounded and missing. The rearguard suffered almost as heavily in relative terms as the vanguard.

report had been dispatched the previous night to Calcutta. I had been in the habit of writing regularly every month to my dear mother since I had arrived in India, and my last letter was posted before leaving Cawnpore, and during the two months that we were shut up in Lucknow I could not write. My family had seen my name amongst the killed in the newspapers and weekly they made enquiries at the India House to know if the report was really true that I had been killed, and always got the same answer – viz : they had received no fresh news from Lucknow, and were told that the authorities would never have entered my name amongst the killed unless it was true, and so my mother believed it at last to be certain, and, not hearing for two months from me, gave up all hopes, and the whole family went into mourning. So it turned out a bad plan that I had in the past written so regularly.

The upper storey of the Residency was all riddled with shot, and quite uninhabitable. Large portions of the walls were broken down, and in one of the rooms most exposed the far-famed and renowned Sir Henry Lawrence [had] expired. The mutineers in Lucknow knew that he used to inhabit that room and the day he died a shell came into this room whilst he was there and burst, and mortally wounded him, the hero of Lucknow.

After having received the congratulations of my friends on my escape and safety, I was asked if I wanted anything to eat, and I said, 'Rather! - for I have not had anything to eat since leaving the Alambagh but two chapattis, and nothing stronger than water to drink.' So they told me to go to into the 32nd's mess-room as the regiment offered hospitality to all and did not think twice about it, [and I] got a good dinner with a bottle of beer. For two days beer was served out to all the garrison as it was the intention of the Generals that we should leave on the third day, but insurmountable difficulties presented themselves, as we had no means of taking all of the sick, wounded, women and children out, and they could not be left to the tender mercies of the mutineers, so it was decided that we should hold the Residency till a sufficient force had assembled at the Alambagh to make it safe for us to leave. If we had had carriage enough, we might have got back to the Alambagh on the third day, as the mutineers had deserted the city, but, seeing we made no move – not even following them up – they returned at once and surrounded us again.

Major General Wild's memoirs will be continued in future editions of Durbar.

Major (later Lieut. Colonel) Henry Hay, 1st Bombay Lancers

Sean Weir collection

The cabinet card of the facing page, dating from circa 1890, is the work of P. Vuccino & Co. of Bombay. This photographic studio had won a prize medal at the 1879 Bombay Art Exhibition and claimed, possibly spuriously, a royal appointment.

Henry Hay was first commissioned in September 1868. He was appointed to the Bombay Staff Corps as a lieutenant in April 1871 and posted to the Poona Horse as 2nd Squadron subaltern. In January 1878 he transferred to the 1st Bombay Light Cavalry (Lancers) and immediately took up the appointment of Adjutant. Amongst his other attributes was a qualification in the Russian language that must have been highly valued at the time.

Hay was destined to spend his next sixteen years with the 1st Bombay Lancers (the regiment's title from 1880). During this period he served in the minor Zhob Valley Expedition of 1884 including the affair of Dowlutzai, for which no medals were awarded, and in military operations in Burma between 1885 and 1889 for which he received the Indian General Service medal with two clasps (*Indian Army List*, April 1892 edition).

He was appointed 2nd-in-command of the 1st Bombay Lancers in December 1889 and was advanced to Lieutenant Colonel in September 1894. Three months later he left the regiment and was transferred to general duties, with a job in the Military Accounts Department as Officiating Pension Paymaster, Southern Konkan. He continued to be thus listed in the Indian Army List until at least the January 1898 edition, but was not listed in the April 1900 edition – nor does he appear in the listings of retired officers in post 1901 army lists. It seems probable that by then he had either died in service, or had retired due to ill health and since passed away. His wife Louisa Hay described as the 'widow of Lieutenant Colonel Henry Hay, 1st Bombay Lancers' died in March 1936 (*The Times*, obituary 9th March 1936).

When first raised in 1817, the Review Order uniform of the 1st Bombay Light Cavalry was scarlet. This changed to French grey in 1818, dark green in 1883, and dark blue in 1903. Facings (cuffs, plastron and piping) were white changing to dark blue in 1875 and scarlet in 1883. Lace was in gold, in a zig-zag pattern. The pouch belt seen in this photo has the characteristic Bombay Cavalry chain with whistle, rather than the pricklers worn by the cavalry of other presidencies. The silver elephant on the chain is peculiar to the regiment. It was worn from 1880 and continued in use after 1903 when the regiment's title had changed to 31st Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers.



Silver elephant, with chains for prickers, worn on 1st Bombay Lancers pouch belt - 1880 to 1903, as seen above on Lt Col Hay's pouch belt.
[Ashok Nath, *Izzat*, page 215; ref: C1.35.16]

Heralding the Independence of India on the 15th August 1947

A memoir written by Colonel Harwant Singh, MC

This previously unpublished memoir is reproduced by kind permission of the author. It was written in 2007 ahead of celebrations marking the 60th Anniversary of Independence. Additional biographical details, together with the MC citation, have been provided by Sushil Talwar.

On 15th August this year, the Indian Nation will be celebrating the 60th Year of Independence with great enthusiasm. Apart from the many other official functions marking the occasion, the main event as per normal practice will be held at the Red Fort with the Prime Minister unfurling the National Flag on the Ramparts of the Fort followed by his address to the Nation. Ask any school or college-going students when and where the first National Flag of Independence was formally hoisted, and the answer will invariably be that it was on the 15th August 1947 at the Red Fort. The correct answer is quite different.

The process of heralding the Independence of India started with the Prime Minister *Shri* Jawahar Lal Nehru's famous 14th/15th August 1947 midnight 'Tryst with Destiny' speech in Parliament House followed by the Inauguration of the Dominion of India, with the formal Flag Hoisting Ceremony by the Prime Minister at 6.00 pm on 15th August at the Princes Park near India Gate and at the Red Fort on the morning of 16th August. As opposed to the present day practice of the Prime Minister unfurling the National Flag on the Ramparts of the Red Fort on the morning of 15th August, the first National Flag was hoisted atop the Kashmiri Gate from where the Union Jack of the British Empire had been ceremoniously lowered at Retreat on the evening of the 14th August under arrangements of Brigadier A.W.D. Vaughan, DSO, MC, last British Commander of Delhi District. Both ceremonies on the 15th and 16th August 1947 were witnessed by lakhs of people from Delhi and surrounding areas. The enthusiasm and joy displayed by the people on these two historic occasions were indeed unprecedented.

After the programme for Independence Day was finalized, Armed Forces contingents which were to provide six Honour Guards each of company strength were assembled at Delhi during the last week of July and the first week of August 1947. The contingents comprised four Honour Guards from 1st Battalion the Sikh Regiment (now 4th Bn Mechanised Infantry), and one each from the Royal Indian Air Force and Royal Indian Artillery which were also moved to Delhi, the latter for firing Gun Salutes. All such troops on arrival at

Delhi were placed under the command of the newly formed HQ Delhi and Eastern Punjab Area headed by Major General (later General and Chief of Army Staff) *Maharaj Shri* Rajendra Sinhji, DSO. The General was appointed Parade Commander also for the main Ceremonial Parade on 15th August, and the task of rehearsals was given to the 1st Bn the Sikh Regiment [1st Sikhs]. While HQ Delhi and Eastern Punjab Area made all arrangements for the Ceremonial Parade, the Civil Administration was responsible for the seating of guests and the setting up of barricaded enclosures for the general public.

After the end of World War II, the 1st Sikhs celebrated their Centenary in the first week of May 1946 at Kuala Lumpur in Malaya before returning to India in mid November 1946. After a brief stay at Delhi, the Battalion was moved to Clement Town, Dehra Dun, as a Demonstration Battalion for the Tactical & Administration School at Clement Town and for the Indian Military Academy. Although the Battalion was committed at both training institutions, yet it was also chosen by Army HQ for providing Honour Guards for the Flag Hoisting Ceremonies. It was a great honour for the Battalion to be thus selected. The Battalion was moved to Delhi during the last week of July and the first week of August 1947 and located in Anand Parbat Lines. The 1st Sikhs had two Muslim officers: Captain Mohammad Iqbal, and Lieutenant Khurshid Zafar Chowdhary who had his family with him in Clement Town. As both officers hailed from West Punjab, they had opted for transfer to the newly created Pakistan Army. However, they continued to serve with the Battalion and participated in all ceremonies until 10th October 1947 when they were safely evacuated to Ambala Cantonment and from there to Lahore. Captain Mohammad Iqbal was one of the Guard Commanders also on the Ceremonial Parade on 15th August. Both officers left the 1st Sikhs with heavy hearts.

In August 1947, I was serving with the Battalion as a senior Company Commander and had the opportunity of being fully associated with the two Flag Hoisting ceremonies. Our British Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel G.C. Wilson was present with the Battalion in Delhi during August 1947, but considering the significance of the occasion, and for sentimental reasons, he felt that for the Ceremonial Parade in which the whole Battalion was taking part, the unit should be commanded by an Indian Officer. Being the most senior Indian Officer present in the Battalion at that time, I was given the opportunity of commanding the Ceremonial Parade for the Flag Hoisting ceremony at the Princes Park on the 15th August 1947. As Officiating CO 1st Sikhs for the Parade, I also acted as Deputy Parade Commander for the overall ceremony. Our Parade Commander as mentioned earlier was Major General

Maharaj Shri Rajendra Sinhji, DSO, General Officer Commanding of the newly created Delhi and Eastern Punjab Area (later Delhi Area).

Immediately after the arrival of all armed forces contingents in Delhi, rehearsals were initiated for the National Flag Hoisting ceremony to take place at the open lawns of Princes Park on the 15th August evening and at the Red Fort on the following morning. The sequence of events was laid down and practised at the venue of the Ceremonial Parade at Princes Park. The Parade was to be formed in two hollow squares. The inner square consisted of three Rifle Companies of 1st Sikhs, and the outer square was formed by contingents from the Royal Indian Air Force and Royal Indian Navy together with the fourth Rifle Company of 1st Sikhs. On arrival of the Governor of the newly inaugurated Dominion of India, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, accompanied by the Prime Minister *Shri* Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Parade was to come to attention and present arms. After that, the Prime Minister was to hoist the National Flag and the Parade was to give a General Salute and Present Arms followed by a 31 Gun Salute by a Battery of Royal Indian Artillery. After the Gun Salute, the Prime Minister was to address the public and thereafter the six contingents of the Army, Navy, and Air Force were to march past the saluting base and reform into hollow squares again on the parade ground. Having carried out ceremonial parades for the Centenary Celebrations of 1st Sikhs in Kuala Lumpur in May 1946, the Victory Parade in June 1946 and the Medal Presentation Parade in April 1947 at Dehra Dun, all ranks of the Battalion were fully conversant with the drill procedure. The four-company contingent of 1st Sikhs, dressed in red turbans with steel chakkars, white spats and black web belts, looked very colourful. Air Force and Naval contingents in their colourful ceremonial dresses looked very impressive indeed. To make the ceremonial function flawless, plenty of practice in arms drill and marching was carried out daily.

As large crowds were expected to witness the national Flag Hoisting ceremony at 18.00 hrs, lots of barricades with wooden logs and steel pipes were constructed to prevent the spectators from spilling over into the parade ground. Seating arrangements for over fifteen thousand officially invited guests were made on either side of the saluting base. All such guests were issued with numbered invitation cards and were requested to be seated by 17.45 hrs. When planning for the Ceremonial Parade was being carried out, some senior political leaders were very keen that the particular National Flag to be used for the ceremony should be fabricated from Khadi cloth. When they were told that a flag made of such material would be rather bulky and might refuse to flutter

proudly atop the flag mast in a typical mild August breeze, they relented and agreed to allow the Army authorities to provide a flag made of proper silk bunting material. The three Guards forming the inner hollow square were commanded by Major Ajaib Singh, Captain Joginder Singh and Captain Mohammad Iqbal; and the fourth 1st Sikhs Guard was commanded by Captain Balwant Singh. Air Force and Naval contingents were commanded by their own officers. With constant practice, a clockwork precision of drill movements had been achieved and all ranks looked forward to the memorable event.

Flag Hoisting Ceremony – 15th August 1947

At 17.15 hrs, the six armed forces contingents forming the Honour Guard marched onto the Princes Park Parade Ground with the 1st Sikhs Pipes and Drums and Brass Band playing, and formed into the inner and outer hollow squares. Taking over charge of the Parade, I checked that everything was in order. As there was sufficient time, a few arms drill practices were carried out.

On that momentous evening, the Princes Park and India Gate area had become a sea of humanity and it appeared as if the entire population of Delhi had come there to witness the events that were about to unfold. Officially invited guests occupied their seats in the reserved enclosures on their side of the saluting base. The general public settled down in their barricaded enclosures and keenly awaited the Flag Hoisting ceremony to commence at 18.00 hrs. At 17.30 hrs the Parade Commander was due to arrive and I had to hand over the parade to him. Everything seemed to be under control and going according to plan.

Sharp at 17.30 hrs, the General Officer Commanding arrived, the bands played the General Salute, and the armed forces contingents presented arms, and I handed over the parade to the General. However, as soon as the General Salute was sounded and the troops presented arms, people in the barricaded enclosures sitting in the rear wanted to see what was happening in the front. There was some commotion on one side and crowds from all sides stood up and surged forward. Jumping over the barricades, the crowds mobbed the parade ground and people rushed towards the guest enclosures. Within minutes all empty chairs in the whole Parade Ground were full of cheering crowds. The hollow square was no more hollow. The crowds carrying wooden boards with slogans written on them mingled with our troops. Watching the strange phenomenon, the General called me to request the crowds to go back or push them out of the Parade Ground. The cheering crowd was in no mood to accede to our requests. Pushing so many people out of the Parade Ground was

impossible. Therefore, we gave up the effort and the Guards reformed in their original places, as it was time for the Governor General and the Prime Minister to arrive.



This rare photograph, taken at the Princes Park near India Gate in New Delhi on the evening of 15th August 1947, shows the 1st Battalion the Sikh Regiment in white spats leading the Parade Column. The Deputy Parade Commander, Major Harwant Singh MC, is followed on his right flank by Captain Balwant Singh (one of the Guard Commanders) and on his left flank by Subedar Major Gurbachan Singh *Bahadur*, OBI, MC, IDSM.

As the milling crowds had spread all over the place, the approach route of the Governor General and the Prime Minister, who were to drive in state in a horsed carriage, was blocked. Their arrival was delayed for some time. However, they eventually managed to reach the saluting base and the National Flag was hoisted by the Prime Minister. The Parade gave a General Salute with the bands playing. The Artillery fired the salute of 31 guns. As soon as the National Flag was hoisted, there was thunderous applause from over a million

spectators. As the Parade Ground was completely mobbed by the enthusiastic crowds, no March Past or other ceremonial drills could be carried out.

After waiting at the saluting base for some time, the Governor General and the Prime Minister left the Parade Ground in their horsed carriage and gradually made their way through the thick crowds, shaking hands with the happy spectators. With their departure, the Ceremonial Parade came to an end.

However it then became a problem for the troops to get out of the Parade Ground. With Pipes and Drums and the Brass Band leading and playing the Regimental March Past, the Battalion along with detachments of the Royal Indian Air Force and Royal Indian Navy finally managed to make their way through the milling crowds and reach their lines safely. The Nation's first and formal Flag Hoisting ceremony at the Princes Park at 18.00 hrs on 15th August was a rare spectacle indeed.

Flag Hoisting Ceremony at the Red Fort – 16th August 1947

Independent India's first Flag Hoisting ceremony at the Red Fort on the morning of 16th August was performed by the Prime Minister. Unlike the present day practice of holding the Flag Unfurling ceremony on the ramparts of the Red Fort in front of Kashmiri Gate facing Chandni Chowk, the first National Flag was hoisted atop the Kashmiri Gate from where the Union Jack, the symbol of the British Empire, was ceremoniously lowered with the sounding of Retreat by buglers under arrangements of Delhi District then under Brig. A.W.D. Vaughan, DSO, MC.

To occupy vantage points, the residents of Delhi and surrounding areas had started converging in front of the Red Fort facing Chandni Chowk. The whole area in front of the Fort, stretching into Chandni Chowk and on, as far as the eye could see, was one mass of humanity. The eyes of well over a million anxious spectators were focused on the Kashmiri Gate. At the appointed time, the Prime Minister *Shri* Jawahar Lal Nehru entered the Red Fort through the Lahori Gate. He inspected an Inter Services Guard of Honour commanded by a 1st Sikhs officer, Captain Balwant Singh, inside and close to the Kashmiri Gate. The top of the Kashmiri Gate complex comprises seven medium sized domes with two tall minarets, one on either side, flanked by two large sized domes (chhatris) to the North and South of the main gate. As the Prime Minister was not expected to walk up to the top of the gate to hoist the National Flag (from where he could not have been seen by the public), a makeshift

signalling system was devised. An electric bell was installed at the base of the flagstaff atop the Kashmiri Gate connected to a button fixed to the lectern on the dais at the ramparts of the Fort which the Prime Minister had to press at the appointed time. On hearing the bell, the officer standing at the base of the flagstaff, with the National Flag properly tied up and ready, was to act immediately and start hoisting the flag gradually. After that, Royal Indian Air Force planes were to carry out a Fly Past. To coordinate the Flag Hoisting ceremony and the Fly Past, an Air Force Contact Team (ACT) of the Royal Indian Air Force was established in the southern dome atop the Kashmiri Gate complex. Another Army Observation Team (AOT) under my command was set up in the northern dome. The task allotted to me was to keep in visual touch with the officer detailed for hoisting the National Flag at the base of the flagstaff and another officer standing close to the Prime Minister at the dais. With a pair of binoculars, I kept a careful watch on both places. In case of electricity failure or anything going wrong with the bell, the officer standing close to the Prime Minister was to give me a hand signal for hoisting the flag and I had to then convey that message with my own hand signal to the officer hoisting the flag. I also had to convey that message by hand signal to the officer at the flag staff base. However, there was no need to put the Stand-By plan into action as the first plan worked perfectly well when the time arrived.

After inspecting the Inter Services Guard of Honour inside the Fort close to the Kashmiri Gate, the Prime Minister walked up to the ramparts of the Fort. After a brief talk with some of the guests, he continued on to the dais and, as planned, activated the bell switch fixed on the lecture stand. The bell at the base of the flagstaff sounded loud and clear, and the National Flag was hoisted. As an Honour Guard or escort party for the National Flag atop the Kashmiri Gate, seven selected officers from units in Delhi and one each from the Royal Indian Air Force and Royal Indian Navy stood guard under the seven medium sized domes atop Kashmiri Gate nearly 60 ft from ground level. Dressed in ceremonial outfit, they had to stand to attention for nearly an hour. It was a dangerous perch upon which to balance for so long and, to avoid mishaps, iron railings were fixed on both sides of the domes. The 1st Sikhs was represented by a very tall Sikh officer, Lieutenant Tirlochan Singh, who stood in the middle dome and could clearly be spotted with his red turban and white spats, being the tallest of the lot.

The Flag Hoisting ceremony at the Red Fort went according to plan and there was thunderous applause from the multitudes who witnessed it. Immediately afterwards, Royal Indian Air Force fighters made a Fly Past followed by a few

Dakotas showering flower petals over the joyous crowds. The Prime Minister then addressed the Nation. It was a clear sunny day and the National Flag fluttered proudly and beautifully in the gentle August breeze.

The performance of the Inter Services Guard of Honour under Captain Balwant Singh, and other arrangements made by 1st Sikhs for the Red Fort ceremony, were highly praised by Civil and Military authorities. On the completion of the Independence Day celebrations, Major General *Maharaj Shri* Rajendra Sinhji sent me the following D.O. No. 3501101A dated 16th August 1947 as Deputy Parade Commander for the National Flag Hoisting ceremony at the Princes Park.

My dear Harwant Singh,

General Lockhart has asked me to thank you for all the hard work you and the troops under your command carried out in connection with the Parade held on 15th August. I would like to add my own thanks.

I am sorry that we were not able to crown our efforts by having the March Past as originally arranged but circumstances were beyond our control. Will you please convey the above to all ranks who took part in the Parade.

Your Sincerely (signed)

Maharaj Shri Rajendra Sinhji

It was indeed a very momentous occasion for the 1st Sikhs and the contingents from the Royal Indian Air Force, Royal Indian Navy and Royal Indian Artillery to have been given the opportunity to take part in the Flag Hoisting ceremonies at Delhi. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity for the troops to have been witness to such a rare and historical event.

British Commanding Officer's Goodwill Gesture

On the eve of Independence Day on the 14th August, a special function was arranged in the Officers Mess of 1st Sikhs in Anand Parbat Lines where the Viceroy Commissioned Officers (VCOs) were invited for drinks. Later a formal dinner was arranged for the officers and the party continued until well past midnight. About 15 to 12 minutes before midnight, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel G.C. Wilson, asked the officers to finish their drinks and to follow him to the Battalion Quarter Guard which was about one hundred yards from the Officers Mess. We were wondering what the Commanding Officer was up to by asking the officers to move to the Quarter Guard at such an odd time. The Guard Commander was also surprised to see the Commanding Officer and so many other officers dressed in their summer

Mess Kit converging on the Quarter Guard. However, as per normal practice, the guard 'Stood To' and the Guard Commander reported to the Commanding Officer that '*Sabh theek hai Sahib*' (all's well Sir). The Guard was then ordered to 'Stand Down' and the Commanding Officer briefed the Guard Commander as to what to do at the stroke of midnight.

Exactly at midnight, the Quarter Guard gong struck twelve. At that hour when the PM was making his 'Tryst with Destiny' speech in the Parliament House, the 1st Sikhs Quarter Guard 'Turned Out' and gave a General Salute and the Commanding Officer and all other officers stood to attention and saluted. After that, the Quarter Guard was ordered to 'Stand Down' and the officers returned to the Officers Mess. The Commanding Officer's decision to go to the Battalion Quarter Guard and perform the General Salute ceremony there was probably an impromptu one but this gesture on the part of a British Officer was significant. It heralded the start of a new and unique custom for the Battalion on the anniversary of this historic occasion.

As the Quarter Guard bugler sounded the General Salute, the rather unnatural silence of midnight was suddenly broken by a distant thunder of drumbeats and loud signing. We soon realized what it was all about. As soon as the clock had struck midnight, the civilian population of various localities came out on the streets and with the beat of drums had started dancing and singing. One slogan which could be heard clearly in Anand Parbat Lines with the rhythmical beat of drums was '*Gai Ghulami – Aai Azadi*' - a very appropriate slogan indeed.¹

On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of India's Independence, it is proposed that the exact site of the Saluting Base and Flag Staff, erected for the historical ceremony at the Princes Park, be located and clearly identified. That hallowed spot should be marked with a stone obelisk of a suitable size and all essential details of the historical event inscribed on it. Such an obelisk or pillar would remind our people in the future that the National Flag, which heralded the Independence of India, was first hoisted there by the Prime Minister on 15th August 1947 and not at the Red Fort, where the same ceremony was repeated on the following morning.

¹ The literal translation of these words is: 'Slavery has gone, Independence has come'.

Summary of the services of Colonel Harwant Singh, MC

Harwant Singh was born on 15th September 1920 and educated at the King George's Royal Indian Military School, Jalandhar, from 1929-1936, after which he joined the Sikh Regiment as an 'OR-Y' Cadet at their Training Centre, Nowshera, NWFP. In 1937 on completion of training he joined the 5th Bn at Aurangabad. After a 2 year mandatory period as 'OR-Y' Cadet he was recommended and selected for a course at Kitchener College, Nowgong. In March 1940 he was selected by the Army HQ Services Selection Board for the regular 18 month course at the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun. The course commenced on 1st June 1940 and comprised 43 Gentlemen Cadets (GCs), consisting of 30 Army/Civil cadets, 10 from Indian State Forces, 2 from Malaya, one from Burma. Harwant was GC-648. Due to the outbreak of war, the duration of the course was reduced by two months. Harwant was commissioned on 1st Oct. 1941 in the 2nd Royal Bn, 11th Sikh Regiment.

From April 1942 to May 1945, Harwant served with 2nd Sikh in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Cyprus, Palestine and Italy. He took part in numerous battles and operations including the Western Desert at Halfaya Pass, Mersa Matruh, El-Alamein, and in Italy at the Gothic Line, north of Urbino on the Adriatic Sea and Poggio San Giovanni. For the latter action, when he was thrice wounded, he was awarded the MC for gallantry, skill and courageous determination.

IEC-875 Lieutenant & Temporary Captain Harwant Singh,
2nd Battalion 11th Sikh Regiment

The Military Cross, '*London Gazette*' – 8th March 1945 (page no. 45/1299)
'For gallant and distinguished services in Italy' (citation dated 5th September 1944)

On 4th September 1944, Captain Harwant Singh was commanding a company, which was leading the two-company attack on the village of Poggio San Giovanni (R-8472). The village is situated on the flank of Monte Giovanni, which is intersected by several gullies and steep sided nullahs, making ideal defensive country for the enemy who was able to retire from the ridge to ridge, on each of which he had prepared positions. The attack was pressed home across these ridges by 'A' Company with great determination, although they sustained casualties from several Self Propelled Guns which were firing over open sights from the ridge on both sides of the village.

The Company continued its advance until held up by several enemy Machine Guns in concealed positions. Captain Harwant Singh could be seen at this time moving about in the open with his forward platoon encouraging his men, locating the enemy MGs and coolly making plans to silence them. His

Company HQ was continuously under fire from both the enemy guns and MGs and it was a burst from one of these latter, which wounded Captain Harwant Singh in the chest, and killed or wounded the remainder of his Company HQ.

Having made his plans and having got information back to his Battalion HQ he then went forward with his right leading platoon while the left hand platoon moved higher up the ridge, turned the enemy right flank and silenced the enemy MGs capturing one of them and killing the gunners. During this phase of the attack, he was wounded again in the arm by shellfire.

Later in the evening although wounded a third time on this occasion in the leg, he continued to command his Company with complete disregard of his own personal safety for a period of 4½ hours after he was hit. It was only when the position was firmly established at night and on receipt of a direct order from his commanding officer that he consented to be moved to the Regimental Aid Post.

Captain Harwant Singh's skill in the handling of his Company combined with his personal gallantry in the face of heavy enemy small arms and artillery fire were largely responsible for the success of the attack and for the courageous determination with which it was carried out.

From May to November 1946 he served with 1st Bn 11th Sikh Regt in Malaya. He took part in the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947-48, at Jammu & Kashmir in the battles of Baramula, Pattan, Shalateng, Uri, Handwara, and Tithwal. In April 1964, he was posted as Staff Officer, Laos, Cambodia but this was cancelled. In May 1967 he was ordered to take over the UN Contingent (Indian) at Gaza but the posting was cancelled due to the Egypt-Israel war when the UN role was terminated. In the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 he was present in the battles of Chamb-Jaurain and Akhnoor. For subsequent services with the Border Security Force he received the Special Police Duty Medal with clasp 'Jammu & Kashmir'. Numerous postings between 1948 and 1975 included:

- Station Commander, Srinagar, November to December 1948;
- commanded 4th Bn the Sikh Regiment, December 1948 to November 1951;
- raised and commanded the 18th Bn 6th Rajputana Rifles (Saurashtra), now 11th Bn Mechanized Infantry, December 1951 to November 1953;
- raised & commanded 109th Infantry Battalion TA (Rural), Dec '53 to Dec '54;
- commanded 6th Bn Rajputana Rifles from December 1954 to November 1962;
- commanded Rajputana Rifles Regimental Centre, June 1964 to October 1967;
- President & Commandant, Selection Centre (East), Oct 1967 to April 1968;
- commanded Corps of Mil. Police Centre & School, April 1968 to July 1969;
- commanded 57th Bn Border Security Force, October 1970 to January 1971;
- commanded Border Security Force Centre (Jammu), May 1972 to Sept 1975.

After a long and distinguished career, Harwant Singh retired as a full Colonel and settled at Patiala in the Punjab.

Barasat Cadet College ¹

Brian Stevens

Although not well known, the Cadet Establishment at Barasat is mentioned in Major Hodson's 'Officers of the Bengal Army.'² It is also referred to in Dr. Barat's 'The Bengal Native Infantry.'³

The College opened towards the end of 1802 but was closed the next year on the outbreak of the Second Mahratta War. It reopened in 1806 and was finally closed on 1st September 1811. During the second phase of its existence some six hundred and twenty Cadets received instruction there.

The Establishment and the Pay and Allowances for the Cadet Company were published in a G.O.G.G. dated the 12th June 1806. This is shown in Appendix 1. An Estimate of the likely monthly cost had been submitted by the Military Auditor General in March of the same year.

To encourage the Cadets the following Resolution by the Governor General was promulgated in a G.O.G.G. dated the 4th September 1806.

The Governor General in Council was pleased, on the 4th September 1806, to resolve that as an incitement to emulation and zeal among the Cadets in the study of the Language, and in the attainment of their professional qualifications, every Cadet who shall be reported by a Board of Officers and Examiners qualified to join a Corps within eight months, from his first admission on the Establishment shall receive the sum of Sonat Rupees Twelve Hundred and a Regimental Sword, Cadets so qualified within Twelve Months to receive Sonat Rupees 1000, and those reported to be qualified within Sixteen Months, to receive Sonat Rupees 500. The Grant of these Sums will not only operate as a stimulus to the Gentlemen attached to the Institution, but will enable them to

¹ An article by Tim Ash entitled 'The East India Company's Cadet Establishment at Barasett, Bengal' was published in the Autumn 2008 edition of *Durbar*, based on a anonymous book ascribed to a fictitious character described as 'Major Worthington'. Tim repeated Worthington's version 'Barasett' for the College's name, which is occasionally seen in early records. However, 'Barasat' had more currency and this also happens to be the modern spelling used for this township in the suburbs of Calcutta.

² Major V.C.P. Hodson, *Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834* (London 1927-47), vol.1, p. xxv; chapter entitled 'Cadets', subheading 'Education'

³ Dr. Amiya Barat, *The Bengal Native Infantry, Its Organisation and Discipline, 1796-1852* (Calcutta 1962), pp. 74-79; chapter entitled 'The European Officers'

join their Corps with a comfortable Equipment and (what must be deemed a consideration of the first importance) free from debt.

This General Order was amplified by another dated the 5th February 1807 and a Letter from the 'Secretary to Government in the Military Department' dated 7th May 1807.

A list of Cadets who had recently graduated from the College as at July 1807 is shown in Appendix II. This list has been extracted from the Minutes of Council of the 2nd July 1807, Paper No.21. It shows the regiment/battalion to which the Cadets had been posted. It also indicates those Cadets who had received a Sword under the Provisions of the Governor General's Resolution of the 4th September 1806. To this I have added the year of birth and death, the cause of the latter if known, and the highest rank obtained.

The first Headmaster from 1802 to 1805 was Major, subsequently Lieutenant Colonel, David Thomas Richardson, 17th Bengal Native Infantry. Thereafter he was appointed Military Secretary to the Governor General, Sir George Barlow, from the 17th October 1805 to July 1807. He was a Member of the Asiatic Society and published an account of certain tribes of Indian Gypsies in the 7th Volume of the Researches of the Society. He retired on the 29th September 1808 and together with his wife, Violet, was lost in the wreck of the 'Lord Nelson' in a storm near Mauritius on the 22nd November 1808.

The third and final Headmaster and Commandant was Captain, subsequently Major, Charles Stuart, 3rd Bengal Native Cavalry who was Commandant from August 1809 until it closed on the 1st September 1811. At the same time he was 'Superintending the Studies of the Cadets in the Languages of the Country'. I have no information as to who filled the appointment between Richardson and Stuart.

After the closure of the College, on the 10th December 1811 Stuart was appointed Assistant Adjutant General and Acting Deputy Adjutant General and, from the 10th March 1817 until 1820, he was the Deputy Adjutant General. He went on leave to the Cape of Good Hope in 1820, whence he went on Sick Certificate in 1822. He retired to England on the 16th July 1823, where he died on the 29th August 1854 aged 77.

The Adjutant and Quartermaster, also a Professor at the College, from 1807 until closure was Lieutenant, subsequently Major, Archibald Oliver, 4th Bengal

NI, subsequently 23rd Bengal NI. For the remainder of his career he served in the Financial and Audit branches of the Army until his retirement in 1826. He died in 1841 aged 57. Unfortunately, once again, I have no information on the other officers on the Staff of the college during its existence.

While Worthington's account of the Cadets behaviour is accurate, unfortunately, as was the custom at the time, he mentions no names.⁴ Nevertheless, some Cadets whose behaviour was particularly obnoxious are known by name and the following account amply illustrates the indiscipline of which he complains.

In January 1808, Cadet John Grant obtained great notoriety by being one of the several cadets who played mischievous tricks on Indians. He was tried by the Supreme Court at Calcutta on a charge of wilfully and maliciously setting fire to a hut belonging to Keano, Bearer, on the 24th October 1807. He was found guilty and sentenced to death which penalty was commuted to transportation to New South Wales as a felon.

Amongst the iniquities alleged against the Cadets was the smashing up of the College furniture and insolence to the authorities. The two most notorious cases of the latter were those of Cadets James Kerns and Charles Ellison. Each of them was suspended on the 14th May 1807 as the result of being charged as follows: 'Whilst a Cadet at Barasat, addressed to the Officer Commanding the Cadet Company a letter intimating his determination not to study the native languages'.

This act of insubordination earned for both of them the displeasure of the Government which ordered that 'they be suspended from the service of the Honorable Company until the pleasure of the Honorable the Court of Directors be known and that these Gentlemen be ordered to prepare to embark for Europe by the earliest opportunity'.⁵

Ellison, who was born in 1786, had arrived in India on the 13th December 1806. He was reinstated on the 8th September 1807 and was posted to the 22nd Bengal NI in 1808, his Commission as Ensign being backdated to 20th

⁴ *The Old Field Officer, or The Military and Sporting Adventures of Major Worthington*; edited by J.H. Stocqueler (Adam & Charles Black, Edinburgh 1853). As mentioned earlier, 'Major Worthington' was a fictitious character.

⁵ General Order dated 14 May 1807

December 1806. He was promoted to Lieutenant from 30th May 1809, and saw service with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Bengal NI in the war in Nepal in 1816 and possibly also in the two preceding years. His battalion was in the 3rd Brigade of the Centre Column. He died unmarried at Calcutta on the 28th December 1818, his battalion being then stationed at Barrackpore.

Ellison came from the family of Ellison-Macartney of Mountjoy Grange in Ireland. It would seem that he was therefore from that class of Irish minor gentry known collectively as Irish Squireens, owning estates of less than 3000 acres. The propensity of members of this class for issuing challenges on the most flimsy of excuses and for fighting duels brought down the wrath of the Duke of Wellington on them during the Peninsula War. Wellington published a General Order pointing out that the duty of officers was to fight the French and not each other.

James Kerns, co-defendant of Ellis, was born in 1789 and was by birth an Irishman who had arrived in India slightly earlier than Ellison - 13th November 1806 - and like him was reinstated, in his case on the 28th September 1807. He was posted to the 3rd Bengal NI in 1807, his commission as an Ensign being dated 9th January 1807. Sometime during 1810 he was promoted Lieutenant. However his military career came to an end the following year when, on the 19th March 1811, he was dismissed the service. His subsequent career is unknown.

In another case, four Cadets were tried by the Civil Magistrate for an assault on William Turner, the Garrison Sergeant Major of Fort William, which resulted in them being sentenced to six months imprisonment.

The Magistrate of the '24 Parganas'⁶ reported that the Indians were much exposed to the oppression of the Cadets and that even the Police Sergeant stated he could not live there in safety.

The Cadets seemed to have formed their own Code of Behaviour based on the Laws of Duelling, which resulted in a General Order prohibiting the practice. Contravention exposed both Principals and Seconds alike to the death penalty.

⁶ A Pargana (Pergunnah) was a subdivision of an administrative District. The so-called '24 Parganas' of Bengal were located in the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta region.

The Bengal Government was obviously concerned over the conduct of the Cadets, as a string of complaints from the Governor General in Council contained in Military Letters from Bengal to the Court of Directors, bear witness. Particularly so are those dated 27th March 1807, 20th April 1809, 4th and 19th August 1809 and 17th October 1809, which may be seen in the 'India Office Records' section of the British Library's Asia, Pacific & Africa Collection (formerly known as the Oriental & India Office Collection).

The main problem so far as the Government was concerned was that the only remedy instantly available to it was Suspension until the pleasure of the Court of Directors was known. As this took at least a year and sometimes longer to obtain, the immediate object of punishment was lost. Simple expulsion allowed the offender to rejoin his regiment; it meant that the Cadets could easily consider it, to quote from the Military Letter of the 19th August 1809, 'as the full attainment of their wishes and as a triumph over their commanding officers and the Government.' In fact expulsion might encourage other cadets to use this avenue of escape from their studies.

Only twice in its short history did the authorities use the extreme punishment of transportation, one being the case of Cadet Grant mentioned above. The other case was Cadet John Charles Hatchett, born in 1788 in London. He arrived in India on the 1st August 1807. A source quoted by Dr. Barat records: 'He conducted himself with great irregularity, disregarded all military rules, was guilty of many crimes and was eventually tried for forgery.'⁷

However, it would appear from his entry in Hodson⁸ that Hatchett was not actually transported but was suspended and sent to Europe from 19th October 1807. He seems to have been restored to the army as he was posted as an Ensign, commission dated 23rd August 1807, to the 20th (Marine) Regiment of Bengal NI but never joined. He resigned and was struck off in England in 1810. His further career is unknown.

Hatchett's posting to the 20th (Marine) Regiment is interesting. Despite the title, the 20th was especially raised for service in the Eastern Settlements, i.e. Penang and Province Wellesley [on the Malaysian mainland opposite Penanag], and Bencoolén [Benkulen] in Sumatra. One of its two battalions did a two year tour at these places whilst the other was stationed at Barrackpore.

⁷ Dr. Amiya Barat, op. cit.; quoting from *Europeans in India 1766 – 1824*, Vol. 25

⁸ Hodson, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 405

The Eastern Settlements, especially the last mentioned, were unhealthy places and one suspects that the Commander in Chief and the Adjutant General might have thought Hatchett's dissipated life style, combined with the climate, would soon rid the Company of a troublesome individual.

One final problem was that, whilst the Court of Directors approved the Government's action, it often appealed for a pardon for the offender. As the appointment of Cadets and civilian Writers was in the gift of individual Directors one might easily suspect that the parents or guardians of the individual in question pressurised the Court to be lenient. This of course undermined the Government's resolve, but as events later proved, had the Court been more strict the cadets might have been better behaved.

Eventually 'pained and disappointed at the numerous instances of misconduct' by the Cadets, the Board realised that their hope of earning the gratitude and obedience of the cadets 'for the care taken by the Government to make these young men useful and creditable members of their honourable profession' would not be fulfilled and they closed the Cadet Institution.⁹

The closure led to the opening of the Seminary at Addiscombe situated about a mile from Croydon in Surrey. However, the Directors retained the age limit of between 15 to 22 years for admission. Although originally intended for the Scientific branches of the service, i.e. Artillery and Engineers, it could accommodate considerably more Cadets than were required for those branches, and those in excess were sent to the Cavalry and Infantry.

Those intended for the artillery and engineers went on to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich for a further period of instruction whilst the others, on reaching India, were posted to regiments in the rank of Cornet or Ensign.

Although the Bengal Military Statements for the Years 1806-07, 1808-09, 1809-10 & 1810-11 have not been checked, they should contain an entry devoted to the College, together with the names of the Officers appointed to it, with their Pay and Allowances and perhaps a list of the Cadets present together with their emoluments. The Military Statement for the year 1807-08 does not exist either in the India Office Records¹⁰ in London or in the National Archives of India in Delhi.

⁹ Despatch from the Board to the Governor General in Council dated 27 Feb 1811

¹⁰ The extant volumes can be found at shelf marks L/Mil/8/17-21

Appendix 1

Table of the Establishment, Pay and Allowances of the Cadet Company¹¹**Officer Commanding**

An allowance for superintending the studies of the Cadets in the Hindustani language, with the Pay and Allowances of his regimental rank and the full Batta¹² of the next superior rank R.800 [a]

Cadets (fifty)	30 days pay	48.12 (<i>31 days – 50.6</i>)	
	Gratuity	12	
	half Batta	45	
	Total	105.12 x 50	R.5300

Staff

Assistant Teacher of Hindustani and Persian, together with the Pay, full Batta, Gratuity, and full Tent Allowance of his regimental rank	R.350 [b]
Adjutant and Assistant Teacher, together with the Pay and Allowances of his regimental rank	R.397 [c]
Cart (one) added to the Adjutant's Establishment	R.30 [c1]
Cart (one) added to the Adjutant's Establishment	R.30 [c2]
Acting Assistant Adjutant and Teacher, together with the Pay and Allowances of his regimental rank	R.397 [c]
Assistant Surgeon	R.237 [d]

Sergeant Major	half Batta	10	R.51.5.2
	Pay	21.5.2	
	Estab. Allowances	20	
Qr Master Sgt	half Batta	10	R.45.5.2
	Pay	21.5.2	
	Estab. Allowances	14	
Drill Sergeant	half Batta	10	R.43.4.8
	Pay	19.4.8	
	Estab. Allowances	14	

¹¹ G.O.G.G., 12 Jun 1806. Financial numbers are shown in Sonat Rupees unless otherwise stated. Prior to the unification of the Anglo-Indian currency in 1833, the term 'Sonat Rupee' was generally applied to several different official Rupee coinages circulating in the Bengal Presidency (including the Sicca Rupee). The Rupee broke down into Annas and Pice (in different proportions depending upon the type of Rupee).

¹² Extra allowance paid during field service or on other grounds (*i.e.* attachments, *etc.*)

	half Batta	10	
Drill Corporal	Pay	19.4.8	R.36.4.8
	Estab. Allowances	7	
Head Munshi ¹³			R.50
Head Munshis (two) @ R.40 each			R.80
Munshis – one to every two Cadets, or 20 for 50 Cadets, @ R.20 each ...			R.400

Allowances

Rent of a Barrack for accommodation of 132 Cadets at R.9 per month, total Sicca R.1188, equivalent to	R.1241.8.3 [e]
Rent of a House for accommodation of Cadets at Sicca R.400, equiv. to ..	R.418.0.3 [f]
Rent of Houses (2) for Commanding Officer, Adjutant & Assistant Surgeon at Sicca R.250 (total for both) , equivalent to	R.261.4.2 [f]
Charcoal to be charged monthly on a Contingent Bill	[g]

Quarter Master's Establishment ¹⁴

Mistri Carpenter (one)	R.13 [h]	Mate Carpenter (one)	R.9 [h]
Mistri Smith (one)	R.8.8 [h]	Fireman (one)	R.6 [h]
Hammerman (one)	R.4 [h]	Chuckler (one)	R.5.8 [h]
Lascars (ten) @ R.5.12	R.57.8[h,i]	Coolies (ten) @ R.4	R.40 [h]
1 Pakhali to every 10 Cadets	R.12 each [h]	Gurreymen (four) @ R.5	R.20 [i]
1 Sweeper to every 4 Cadets	R.4 each [h]	Sircar (one)	R.20

Medical Department

Head Compounder (one)	R.20 [k]	2nd Compounder (one)	R.8 [k]
Dresser (one)	R.8 [k]	Bhisti (one) ¹⁵	R.5 [k]
Sweeper (one)	R.4 [k]		

Medicine Allowance for each European @ R.2.8 per month [j]

Medicine Allowance for Native Troops on duty at Barasat @ R.22.8 per 100 men [k]

¹³ The relatively higher pay suggests seniority over the other *Head Munshis*.

¹⁴ *Mistri*: foreman; *Chuckler*: cobbler; *Fireman* and *Hammerman*: grades of blacksmith; *Lascar*: strictly a tent-pitcher but in this context more probably an odd job man (it is unlikely that the Cadets ever went under canvas); *Coolie*: porter; *Pakhali*: responsible for water contained in large circa 20 gallon skins or *pakhals* carried in pairs by oxen; *Gurreyman*: looked after the Gong for striking the time (may also refer to the attendant responsible for a clepsydra or water instrument for measuring time); *Sircar*: clerk.

¹⁵ The *Bhisti* carried water in a *mussuck* which was much smaller than a *pakhal*.

Not mentioned in the foregoing tables

Allowance for the Repair of Arms = R.20

Authorities¹⁶

- A Letter dated 31 Jul 1806 & G.O.G.G. of 4 Sep 1806
- B G.O.G.G. of 1 Jan 1807
- C Staff Allowance for Adjnt of a Regt of European Infy = R.197 (letter dated 19 May 1803); Salary as an Assistant Teacher = R.200 (letter dated 31 Jul 1806)
- C1 Cart (one) added to the Adjutant's Establishment - G.O.G.G. of 5 Feb 1807
- C2 Cart (one) allowed for keeping clean the ground round the Barracks at Barasat
- D Pay 62; Additional Allowance 31; full Batta 120; gratuity 24; total R.237 (letter dated 13 Nov 1806)
- E Authorised to be engaged from Mr. Birch for seven years from 19 May '08 (see 'Letter from Military Board' dated 16 Jan 1807)
- F Letter dated 13 Nov 1806
- G G.O.G.G. of 4 Sep 1806
- H Authorised by G.O.G.G. of 4 Sep 1806
- I G.O.G.G. of 6 Nov 1806
- J Letter dated 3 Oct 1808. Not admissible in respect of European Commissioned officers. This allowance is also to provide for Natives attached to the Institution (letter dated 19 Oct 1807).
- K Letter dated 8 Sep 1803

Appendix II

List of Cadets Commissioned from the Barasat Cadet Company¹⁷

<i>Full Name with Year of Birth and Death</i>	<i>Bengal NI Bn & Regt</i>	<i>Highest Rank</i>	<i>Other Details of Service etc</i>
Thomas Auldjo, 1790-1808	1st-18th	Ensign	killed by Dacoits
St George Ashe, 1789-1810	2nd-3rd	Ensign	died in India (Sword)
Henry Clapton Barnard, 1786-1858	2nd-26th	Lt Col.	retired 1845, Hon. Col. Nov 1854, died in England

¹⁶ 'Letter' indicates 'Letter from the Secretary to Government in the Military Dept.'.

¹⁷ Sources: *Military Consultations*, 2 Jul 1807, No.21; Major V.C.P. Hodson *Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834* (London 1927-47); *Bengal Army List* (various editions)

Robert Blackall, 1787-1863	2nd-25th	Lt Gen.	furlough from 1851 until his death (location unknown)
William Bowe, 1790-1829	1st-10th	Capt.	died at St.Helena on the way home (Sword)
Edward Bowerbank, 1788-1811	2nd-21st	Lieut.	died in England while on sick leave (Sword)
William Rigby Bradshaw, 1784/5-1842	1st-22nd	Ensign	resigned 1808, died in England (Sword)
Francis Crossley, 1786-1846	European Regiment	Capt.	Retired 1836, died in England (Sword)
James Charter, 1789-1847	1st-2nd	Lt Col.	Retired 1838, died England
Thomas Dolman Lloyd-Davies, 1790-1828	2nd-20th	Major	died at Titalia
James Patrick Fagan, 1788-1863	1st-8th	Major	retired March 1835, Hon. Lt Col. Nov 1854, died in France (Sword)
Charles Godby, 1790-1867	1st-18th	Lt Gen.	ADC to Queen Victoria, died in England
John Holbrow, 1790-1847	1st-1st	Colonel	died in England
Arthur Aston Homer, 1790 - ?	1st-27th	Lieut.	furlough from 1816, retired 1820 (IA list until July '66)
James William Jones, 1786-1833	1st-11th	Major	died at the mouth of the Ganges while on leave
George Kingston, 1789 - 1844	1st-26th	Lt Col.	died on furlough at Calcutta
Edward Lawrence, 1787-1830	2nd-2nd	Major	Asst Sec. to Govt, Mil. Dept, died Calcutta
Alex. Francis Peter Macleod, 1787-1829	1st-2nd	Capt.	died Kaitha (Sword)
John Charles Mallett, 1791- 1825	2nd-18th	Lieut.	pensioned November 1813, died Serampore (Sword)
John Rich, 1786-1859	2nd-15th	Lieut.	resigned January 1813, took Holy Orders, died in England (Sword)
Robert Bateman Wilkins, 1788-1862	1st-21st	Capt.	invalided Oct 1824, i/c European Invalids at Chunar 1826-30, retired Nov 1831, Hon. Major Nov 1854, died England 1862

Correspondence from Members

From Tony McClenaghan

Sushil Talwar's fascinating article on the award of the Military Cross to



Indian recipients (*Durbar* Vol.26, No.1, p.28) mentions 2nd Lieut. Rana Jodha Jang Bahadur of the Tehri Garhwal Imperial Service Sappers, later Chief Commandant of Tripura State Forces, giving details of his service. As a Major in the Tripura State Forces he was part of the Indian State Forces contingent that attended the 1937 Coronation parade in London.

The photographs accompanying this note show him first in a formal pose, and then with Lieut. Shivnath Singh, second in command of Idar State's Sir Pratap Infantry, taking a break.

In the formal pose he is wearing, in addition to his MBE and MC, the 1914-15 Star, War Medal, Victory Medal with MID emblem, IGS 1908 with clasps AFGHANISTAN NWF 1919 and WAZIRISTAN 1921-24, what appear to be the 1911 Delhi Durbar Medal and 1935 Jubilee Medal (I have been unable to confirm entitlement to either), and 1937 Coronation Medal pinned above the group.

Unfortunately his role as Chief Commandant of the Tripura State Forces was not a great hit with the Military Adviser-in-Chief. The first mention of his appointment to the role is in the Annual Review for 1936-37 which erroneously described him as a retired King's Commissioned Gurkha

Officer, perhaps not surprisingly given his links to the Nepalese Royal Family.



By 1937-38, however, the Annual Report concluded that ‘he has not the ability to make them (the Tripura Infantry) really efficient’; and by 1938-39 the report concluded that ‘[he] has, I think, lost interest and should be replaced.’ Nevertheless, he was still listed in the 1946 ISF Army List as Chief Commandant, with the rank of Colonel in the Tripura State Forces. Whatever the views of the Military Adviser-in-Chief, a most distinguished officer.
