

African Odyssey The eventful life and death of Major Herbert Augustine Carter VC

Harry Fecitt MBE TD

British East Africa in January 1916

On 9th January 1916 the 40th Pathans disembarked at Mombasa, British East Africa (now Kenya). The Regiment had started the Great War as part of the Hong Kong garrison and then had served in France from April to December 1915. Immediately upon landing at Mombasa No. 1 Double Company under Major H.A. Carter VC, 101st Grenadiers attached to 40th Pathans, marched to the relief of a post to the south named Mwele Mdogo. The British unit The Arab Rifles had just been badly ambushed in the vicinity by enemy troops who had crossed the border from German East Africa (now Tanzania).



MEMORIAL AT ST. ERTH PARISH CHURCH

On the 13th January Major Carter was found dead and was first buried at Mwele Mdogo. Subsequently his remains were exhumed, placed in a coffin and shipped to England, arriving at the Great Western Docks, Plymouth on 5th May 1916. The coffin was escorted to the Military Hospital at Stoke Damerel by a guard of 250 all ranks found by one of the Plymouth Garrison battalions. It was later conveyed by train to the village of St Erth, Cornwall where it was re-buried.¹ A memorial, donated by his widow, was unveiled on 2nd August 1916 (see the

following page). The choice of the 14th Century Parish Church of St. Erth was made because Herbert Carter had spent most of his childhood in that Parish, his father having been vicar for many years.

As well as confirming the remains of Major H.A. Carter were interred in the graveyard of Saint Erth Church, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records add:

Died from the effects of exhaustion after effecting the relief of Mwele Mdogo, Kenya; while suffering from fever he made a forced march of two days under intense heat to reach the fort in time. Son of the late Rev. Conway R. D. Carter and Mrs. Conway Carter, of St. Erth; husband of Helen Lilian Wilmot Carter, of Mena House, St. Erth. Born at Exeter.

¹ The parish church is known as St. Erc (Ercus in Latin) after the Irish saint. According to cemetery records, Maj. Herbert Augustine Carter VC, aged 41, abode Connerly in E. Africa [sic], was interred at St. Erc on 9 May 1916 (Cornwall Family History Society, Burial Index 1911-1920).

In the North Aisle of Saint Petroc's Church, Bodmin, Cornwall, a memorial is inscribed:



MEMORIAL IN YORK MINISTER

In memory of Major H.A. Carter VC of 101st Grenadiers, Indian Army, and in honour of the comrades of the DCLI with whom he first saw service, this memorial is dedicated by his wife, Helen Carter. He successfully led a column of 40th Pathans in a forced march of two days in great heat to the relief of Mwele Nogo in British East Africa, sacrificing his life in his devotion to duty, Jan 13 1916.

A bronze memorial to Herbert Carter by the Australian sculptor Sir Bertram Mackennal RA was commissioned by Mrs Helen Carter and is displayed in York Minster. Mrs Carter was a daughter of a former Canon of the Minster. This memorial depicts the figure of a soldier in tropical uniform being led forward on his march by an angel, which, given the perceived circumstances of the death, implies the power of spiritual will over a physically exhausted body. The panel at the base bears the following inscription:

Major Herbert Augustine Carter V.C. The 101st Grenadiers, Indian Army. He successfully led a relief column of the 40th Pathans on a forced march of two days under great heat and difficulty to the relief of Mwele Mdogo, sacrificing his life in this glorious devotion to duty, January 13th 1916

The military career of Herbert Carter

Herbert was commissioned into the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry on 15th May 1897 and posted to the 1st Battalion in Rawalpindi. He earned the clasps 'PUNJAB FRONTIER 1897-98' and 'TIRAH 1897-98' to the India Medal. During the Tirah Campaign he had a horse shot under him at Barkai in March 1898. He transferred to the Indian Army that year and was gazetted to the 101st Grenadiers.

In 1903 Herbert was serving in Somaliland as an officer in No.6 Company Indian Mounted Infantry during the Fourth Expedition against the 'Mad Mullah' Muhammed bin Abdullah and his Dervish insurgents. On 19th December 1903, a British mounted force commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel P.A. Kenna, V.C., D.S.O., 21st Lancers, advanced to Jidballi. The force comprised:

British Mounted Infantry	93	<i>In support</i>	
Indian Mounted Infantry	97	1st Bn Hampshire Regiment	100
Bikaner Camel Corps	50	27th Punjabis	150
Somali Tribal Horse	200	One Maxim gun	

At Jidballi, Kenna came up against an encampment of around 2,000 Dervishes, mostly armed with rifles and including 200 horsemen. After three hours of desultory fighting, Kenna withdrew his men, but then a dramatic incident occurred when Herbert Carter rode back to rescue an Indian soldier. For this action Herbert received a Distinguished Service Order, but subsequently this was cancelled and a Victoria Cross was awarded with the following citation:

London Gazette, 9th December 1904

Herbert Augustine Carter, Lieut., I.A.. No.6 Company, Indian Mounted Infantry
During a reconnaissance near Jidballi, on the 19th December 1903, when two Sections of the Poona Mounted Infantry and the Tribal Horse were retiring before a force of Dervishes which outnumbered them by thirty to one, Lieutenant Carter rode back alone, a distance of four hundred yards, to the assistance of Private Jai Singh, who had lost his horse, and was closely pursued by a large number of the enemy, and, taking the sepoy up behind him, brought him safely away. When Lieutenant Carter reached Private Jai Singh, the Sections were several hundred yards off

Lieutenant-Colonel Kenna later described this incident as ‘the finest and most brilliant individual act of valour performed in the Somali campaign.’ Subadar Bhairo Gujar, attached to the Poona Mounted Infantry, was also decorated for a similar act of gallantry on the same occasion.

G.G.O. 748, 29th July 1904

Subadar Bhairo Gujar, 119th Infantry (The Mooltan Regiment)²

Admitted to the Order of Merit 3rd Class in recognition of his conspicuous gallantry at the action of Jidballi, Somaliland, on the 19th December 1903, when, seeing Private Dhana Gujar, No.6 Company (Poona) Mounted Infantry, dismounted and hard pressed, he returned alone to his aid and, under the fire of the enemy’s horsemen who were within fifty yards, mounted Private Dhana Gujar on his pony and carried him out of action.

Herbert clearly had Africa in his blood as he returned to Somaliland for the 1908-10 campaign where he served with the Indian Army contingent attached to the 6th King’s African Rifles, receiving a Mention in Despatches. He gained the clasp ‘SOMALILAND 1908-10’ to add to the clasps ‘SOMALILAND 1902-04’ and ‘JIDBALLI’ that he already possessed on his Africa General Service Medal.

In 1911 Herbert was in Sudan serving as a Bimbashi (Major) in the Egyptian Army but unfortunately no records survive to elaborate on this attachment. It appears that he was posted back to the 101st Grenadiers during 1913 and in May 1914 he was promoted to Major.

² A section of Mounted Infantry consisting of four naiks and eighteen privates under Subedar Bhairo Gujar proceeded on the 16th June 1903 for active service in Somaliland.

On the outbreak of the Great War Herbert was in England on leave and he was attached to the British Army, serving first in the 10th (Service) Battalion the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and then in the 16th (Service) Battalion The Durham Light Infantry. He obviously obtained his release from the Durham Light Infantry and an attachment to the 40th Pathans.

Last Post

One must return to Mwele Mdogo to conclude the story of this gallant and perhaps

disturbed officer. Major R.S. Waters OBE wrote in his regimental history of the 40th Pathans:

At Mwele Mdogo, shortly after arrival there, a tragedy took place. Major H.A. Carter, V.C. (101st Grenadiers attached to the Regiment), was found shot through the head outside his tent at dawn, clad in pyjamas and gumboots, by 2nd Lieut. Thornton, who, though he had heard some slight noise during the night, had sleepily put it down to some routine cause.

No further details were recorded, and it is not the purpose of this article to speculate upon the unusual circumstances of his death.

A sad footnote

The names of a few close relatives are inscribed on Herbert Carter's granite cross headstone in Saint Erth Church graveyard.

One of them is of another soldier,

No. 1549 Trooper Noel Conway Carter DCM, who also died in Africa during the Great War. Noel served in the 2nd South African Horse in German East Africa and the citation for his Distinguished Conduct Medal reads:

For conspicuous gallantry. He went out twice under heavy fire to take water to a wounded scout, and to try to remove him into safety from his exposed position.

The cause of Noel's death on 21st February 1917 is not known but he is buried in Johannesburg (Brixton) Cemetery, South Africa.



CAPTAIN H.A. CARTER VC PRIOR TO WW1

Sources

Commonwealth War Graves Commission records; Anon, *The 40th Pathans in the Great War*; Major R.S. Waters OBE, *History of the 5th Battalion (Pathans) 14th Punjab Regiment, formerly 40th Pathans*; Anon, *Historical Records, 119th Infantry* (Higginbotham & Co, Bangalore, 1908); Lt-Col. Charles Hordern (compiler), *Official History. Military Operations East Africa August 1914 – September 1916*; Anon, *Official History of the Operations in Somaliland 1901-04*, published by the General Staff, War Office; Henry Keown-Boyd, *Soldiers of the Nile., A Biographical History of the British Officers of the Egyptian Army 1882-1925*; Lt-Col. H. Moyses-Bartlett, *The King's African Rifles*; *Archives of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Museum*; *London Gazette*, 9 Dec 1904.

Acknowledgements

Herbert Carter's medals are held in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Museum, Bodmin, England. Gratitude is expressed to Museum Researcher Hugo White for the information that he contributed towards this article, and to the Curator, Major Trevor Stipling, for permitting a photograph of the miniature medals (below) to be reproduced. The photo of the York Minster memorial was taken by Tom Donovan and appears here with his kind permission.



MINIATURE MEDALS OF MAJOR H.A. CARTER V.C.

Editor's note

Upon the suggestion by the British Army, the National Committee for the Care of Soldiers Graves was appointed by the British government in January 1916, with Edward, Prince of Wales agreeing to serve as president. From the day of its creation, the Committee consistently refused to permit the repatriation of British and Dominion bodies. This decision, which applied to all casualties irrespective of rank, did not receive universal support, and it was still being disputed after hostilities ended. The following statement by Sir James Remnant, made in the House of Commons in May 1920, was recorded in Hansard: "Although one would like to see it done, it is extremely difficult to bring the bodies home. It has been done in some cases, and I am afraid that those few cases where it has been permitted have created a larger amount of the unrest in reference to this matter" (Hansard, Vol. 128, cc. 1929/72)

More Baluchis

Sean Weir

Last summer's issue of 'Durbar' reproduced an early image of a 2nd Baluch Regiment sepoy. The following photographs portray personnel from the 1st Baluchis.

The regiment was raised in 1861, resurrecting the title of 27th Bombay Native Infantry which had lain dormant since 1858, when the previous regiment had been disbanded. Also termed the 1st Baluch Battalion, the new regiment's antecedent harks back to the 1840's. Carman's account of its beginnings, including the colourful Baluchi uniform, is fascinating and merits quoting verbatim:

This... unit had its origins back in 1844 when in March of that year Sir Charles Lord Napier after the conquest of Scinde and that area announced that he was 'going to raise two battalions of Scindees and Beloochees as an experiment.' The first was raised in May at Karachi as the 'Baluch Battalion' or the 'Sind Baluchi Corps'. The men were to wear native dress – a Baluch angrikha or coat, pyjamas or loose trousers and the high Scindee hat. Their dress changed slightly and it was in 1851 that General Manson noted their 'peculiarity of dress', with a red Kilmarnock bonnet, dark green tunic with red collar and cuffs, the rest of the coat being quite plain, and scarlet pantaloons. Red and dark green were popular colours in Scinde being the state colours of Khairpur. Another comment is recorded in 1857 – 'the Beloochees too have come in, such strange wild-looking fellows, bright dark green laced with red, red caps with green turbans.'¹

The regiment has subsequently undergone more changes of title than there are Anglicized spellings of 'Baluch':²

1871: 27th Bombay (Light) Infantry or 1st Baluch Regiment;
 1888: 27th (1st Baluch Battalion) Bombay Light Infantry;
 1903: 127th Baluch Light Infantry;
 1909: 127th Princess of Wales's Own Baluch Light Infantry;
 1910: 127th Queen Mary's Own Baluch Light Infantry.

Following the post-WWI rationalisation of the Indian Army, in 1922 the 127th became the 3rd Battalion (Queen Mary's Own) 10th Baluch Regiment. In 1947 it was allocated to newly independent Pakistan, and its title today is 10th Battalion, The Baloch Regiment.³ This seeming decline in precedence within the regiment is due to the amalgamation of the Baluch Regiment with the 8th Punjab Regiment and the Bahawalpur Regiment in 1947, the 8th Punjab Regiment being the most senior of the three. The modern Baloch Regiment has more than fifty battalions.

The first image, from the 1870's and entitled 'Lieut Macbay. Adj. 1st Belooch Regt' (see facing page), is on its original album page. It shows the officer astride his horse, wearing the standard 'rifles' tunic with braid loops and a round 'pill box' forage cap, together with sword and plain leather sabretache.

¹ W.Y. Carman, *Indian Army Uniforms – Infantry* (Morgan-Grampion 1969); p.182

² Baloch, Baluch, Beloch, Belooch, Biluch, etc.

³ In 1981 the title, hitherto BALUCH Regiment, was changed to BALOCH Regiment.



LIEUTENANT W.G.W. MACBAY
ADJUTANT, 1ST BELOOCH REGIMENT

William George Wolfe Macbay was born in 1845 and started his career as an ensign with the 57th Foot in 1867. He joined the 27th Bombay Infantry, or 1st Belooch Regiment as adjutant on 23 December 1871 when the regiment was based at Kurrachee.⁴ He remained in post at least until 1877 by which time the regiment had moved to Hyderabad. He later served with the 10th Bombay N.I. In 1882, he was present at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir as part of the 2nd Belooch Regiment (mentioned in despatches, brevet of major, medal with clasp and Khedive's star). His last appointment, in the 1890's, was commandant of the 26th Bombay N.I. He left India with the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1896.

The second, much later, image (see facing page) is untitled and portrays Indian troops of the 1st Belooch Regiment wearing different orders of dress.

The clue to the regiment's identity lies in the ribbons worn by the jemadar and lance naik: the distinctive half yellow/half red of the East and Central Africa Medal 1897-99, awarded for military operations in the Uganda Protectorate. The regiment served in each of the three operations for which clasps were awarded (there was also an additional, general clasp.).

At first, the jemadar's pouch belt badge and scroll seemed incorrect for the 27th. The 1901 Dress Regulations⁵ describe only a plate: the usual Maltese cross design within a wreath, surmounted by an Imperial Crown and containing a central crescent inscribed 'Belooch' together with the regimental number. Battle honours featured on the arms of the cross were: Delhi, Abyssinia, Afghanistan and Burma. However, by the time of the 1913 Regulations, not one but two scrolls had appeared: the lower 'British East Africa 1897-1899' and the upper 'Queen Mary's Own.'

It seems reasonable to conclude that the lower scroll was introduced after the Dress Regulations but prior to the change in title, i.e. between 1901 and 1909. The only contender with a similar plate and scroll was the 30th Bombay Infantry but that regiment had remained in India during the campaign. Another Baluch regiment, the 29th, was known to have been in Africa⁶ but its pouch belt badges differed from the 27th. Perhaps conclusively, there is no mention of them amongst the list of recipients in *British Battles and Medals*.⁷ Only the 27th remains in contention after the reasoned elimination of these other regiments.

Turning to the uniforms, the jemadar and havildar are both wearing review order. Successive dress regulations are more or less consistent in their descriptions although the identical trousers evolved from 'pegtops' (1891) to 'pyjamas' (1901), then to 'knickerbockers' (1913):

⁴ Throughout this article, the contemporary 'Hart's List' spelling of the regiment's title and stations has been retained.

⁵ *Army Regulations, India*, volume vii, Dress, 1891, 1901, 1913

⁶ *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, vol. vi, (Army Intelligence Branch, Simla 1907)

⁷ Hayward, Birch and Bishop, *British Battles and Medals* (7th ed., Spink 2006), pp.405-407



27TH (1ST BALUCH BATTALION) BOMBAY LIGHT INFANTRY

- Turban:* Regimental pattern: green with red kulla.
- Coat:* Rifle green cloth, facings scarlet; black Russia mohair braid along top of collar and round the edges of shoulder straps and cuffs, with crow's toe at top, eight and a half inches high; five white metal buttons down the front with a fly; one on each cloth shoulder strap together with bronze rank badges: subadar major, a crown; subadar, two stars; jemadar, one star. (The jemadar's 'Norfolk-style' coat does not feature in regulations).
- Trousers:* Scarlet serge without piping.
- Gaiters:* White canvas with cord loops.
- Pouch:* Brown leather with a silver bugle on the flap.
- Pouch belt:* Brown leather, three inches wide with silver plate, whistle and chain, the plate consisting of a laurel wreath surmounted by a crown, enclosing a Maltese cross, in the centre a crescent with a '3' (later a '130') inside.⁸ 'BALUCH REGIMENT' inscribed on the crescent, underneath a scroll with 'AFGHISTAN 1878-80'. At the appropriate juncture, 'CHINA 1900' was added to the top bar of the Maltese cross.

The jemadar's elaborate sword hilt is of the Rifle Officers' pattern, in accordance with the dress regulations for all the Baluch regiments, despite the fact that the designation of the 27th was light infantry. The havildar's chevrons (left) are surmounted by a crown, crossed swords and intertwined bugles. Could this be the rank badge of an armourer-sergeant or, more likely, a colour-sergeant in a rifle regiment?⁹ The lance-naik wears drill order of khaki turban and blouse. The rifles appear to be Lee-Metford Mk 1 or Mk 1* (*vide* rear sling swivel mounted in front of the magazine, narrowness of the magazine itself) which probably confines the date of the photo to before 1903. The piper is wearing the Prince Charles Edward version of the Royal Stewart tartan.¹⁰



For Baluch uniforms in their full colourful glory, refer to the 'British Empire' website (see f/n 8) which contains a reproduction of the well-known Richard Simkin lithograph of the 29th Bombay Infantry.

Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to David Harding for his assistance in identifying the regiment and the rifles in the group photograph, and to John Hart regarding the sword.

⁸ The regimental number is not discernible, but both badges are shown on the British Empire website <www.britishempire.co.uk>

⁹ In earlier years, the crown and crossed swords device was worn by a regiment's best swordsman.

¹⁰ Confirmed by Brian Wilton of the Scottish Tartans Authority <www.tartansauthority.com> (online database no. 1371).

A Flag of the Indian Mutiny A Revered and Recovered Sovereign's Colour

Mike Gadue

In this year, acknowledging the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the Canadian Black Watch Regiment (Royal Highland Regiment of Canada), the Canadian Black Watch and author Earl Chapman have published a work showcasing some forty-six items from the Regimental Museum, that each portrays the *Legacy of Gallantry & Service* of the Canadian Black Watch between 1862 and 2012.¹

With a brief description, and colour photographs by Montreal artist Peter Ferst, the work captures items of historical military interest and memorabilia associated with the Regiment, displayed at the Regiments' Bleury Street Headquarters, in Montreal, Canada. Though presenting rare and poignant artefacts, Chapman acknowledges that each, 'sometimes carry with them more questions than answers', despite their rich tapestry of military tradition.

One object, which is the subject of this article, is entitled 'Bengal Army² Queen's Colour, 1857,' and what is proposed here is to examine this Mutiny-related Colour with pointed reference to the historical record, to see what answers can be found to flesh out the many questions that might surround such a unique artefact.

Provenance:

Unlike some of the Regimental acquisitions, the Queen's Colour does have a fairly well defined provenance that gets us right into our story. Underneath the glassed and framed 'Jack' is a brass plaque that recounts its known history:

Presented to the Officers' Mess by the Commanding Officer Lieut.-Col. W.S.M. MacTier, MC, VD, November 1932, this Union Jack was the colour of one of the Sepoy regiments prior to the Indian Mutiny and the Sepoys continued to carry it after they had mutinied. During the Siege of Delhi in 1857 this particular Regiment suffered a reverse and left the Jack on the ground, where it was picked up by Surgeon-Major W.F. MacTier of the Indian Army.

If only the Jack could tell the tale. But left as we are to sift through the strands of history, what is there in the historical record that might add context and confirmation to this intriguing oral history of artefact? Can we confirm that this Colour is in fact a Regimental standard? Can we identify a Sepoy Regimental connection? What of the

¹ Earl John Chapman, *Canada's Black Watch, 1862-2012: Legacies of Gallantry and Service*, photographs by Lieutenant Commander Peter B. Ferst, Retd, (published by Royal Highlanders of Canada, 2012).

² It should be noted that nowhere in the provenance and attribution is there a clear statement that the sepoy-recovered colour was of a Bengal Native Infantry (B.N.I.) regiment. Yet, if it is a sepoy Regimental Colour, it is likely to have a Bengal association because sixty-three B.N.I. regiments either mutinied or were disbanded in the period 1857-1861, out of a total of seventy-four numbered line regiments that existed on 1 Jan 1857. The 19th B.N.I. was the first regiment to be disbanded for mutiny on 31 Mar 1857.

pathos of 1857 in the Siege before Delhi is actually reflected in the folds of cloth? There are so many questions, but with what answers? That is our story.

The People Connection

A starting place for the story is the remarkable India service record of then Assistant-Surgeon MacTier. William Fullerton MacTier was born in Calcutta, India on 1 Oct 1822. In 1843 he graduated from Edinburgh University, Scotland, with a medical doctor's degree, and was commissioned as Assistant Surgeon in the Bengal Medical Services of the British East India Company on 3 Dec 1844. Dr. MacTier participated in the First Sikh War, or Sutlej Campaign of 18 Dec 1845 to 22 Feb 1846, and was present with the 4th Bengal Native Infantry (4 BNI) at the battles of Moodkee³ (18 Dec 1845), Aliwal⁴ (28 Jan 1846) and Sobraon⁵ (10 Feb, 1846). He participated in the Second Sikh War, or Punjab Campaign, 7 Sept 1848 to 14 Mar 1849, was present for the battles of Ramnager, Saidullapur, and Chilianwala⁶ (13 Jan 1849). On 1 Jan 1853 he was transferred from the 9th Bengal Native Infantry (9 BNI) to Simla⁷, where he was in apparent medical charge, 1853-1855⁸. During the Indian Mutiny he was the personal Surgeon to two successive Commanders-in-Chief, Generals George Anson⁹ and Sir Henry Barnard¹⁰, and was

³ The 4th B.N.I. was not present at Moodkee, according to Major L.L. Gordon's *British Battles and Medals*, Fifth Edition revised by Edward C. Joslin (Spink & Son, London, 1979), p.149 (hereinafter 'Joslin'). This being so, MacTier may have served with another regiment.

⁴ The 4th B.N.I. was apparently not present at Aliwal, according to (Joslin, p.150), and so MacTier may have served with another regiment.

⁵ The 4th B.N.I. was present at Sobraon (Joslin, p.150).

⁶ Many medals are found with no bar for the Punjab Campaign, and the 4th B.N.I. received the medal 'but saw no fighting.' Neither the battles of Ramnager, nor Saidullapur merited a bar to the Punjab Campaign medal, and neither the 4th B.N.I. nor 9th B.N.I. were apparently present at Chilianwala (Joslin, pp.150-151).

⁷ Simla was one of several hill stations that were established for the purpose of providing an escape from the intense summer heat of the northern Indian plains and southern lowlands. Commencing every summer from 1863, the Viceroy and his Government moved from Calcutta to Simla, a journey of 1,170 miles, which became not only the temporary seat of government, but created a social scene in which access and contact with the Viceroy, and his staff, were the substance of political and military advancement.

⁸ On 1 Jan 1853 he was transferred from the 9th B.N.I. to/as jt. med. ch. Simla; later transferred from 9th B.N.I. to jt med. ch. Simla, 1 Jan 1853; transferred to ch. of civ. stat. med. and vacc. estab. Simla during absence of Dr. Cannon; med. ch. Simla to aff. aid to 3rd Coy, Sappers and Miners, 2 Apr 1855; Civ. Asst Surg of Simla, made over ch. of civ. med. and vacc. duties to Asst Surgeon Stokes, prep. to app. for furl. to Europe, Feb, 1856; to proc. as asst med. ch. of 26th BLI at Lahore, Mar 1856; to be surg. on the staff of the C-in-C, Mar 1856 (email Todd Mills to Earl Chapman, 2 Aug 2011; and *Allen's Indian Mail* as quoted in Google Books).

⁹ General The Hon'ble George Anson, CB (1797-1857), entered the British Army in 1814, serving as Ensign in the 3rd Guards (Scots-Fusiliers), and fought at Waterloo. Anson succeeded to the command of the Army of the Madras Presidency in India in 1854, and early in 1856 was named as Commander-in-Chief, India, despite having a pronounced prejudice against the Indian Army. He died at age 59, of cholera, on the march to Delhi, May 1857.

¹⁰ Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Barnard (1797-1857) died of cholera on the Ridge before Delhi on 5 Jul 1857.

present at the Siege of Delhi¹¹, for which he was mentioned in dispatches¹². In 1863-1864 Dr. MacTier served as Principal Medical Storekeeper in Calcutta, and was made Surgeon on 29 Mar 1858, after which he went on furlough and did not return to India. He became Surgeon-Major on 3 Dec 1864, and retired on 24 Sept 1866, after nearly 22 years of continuous service. He was awarded the Sutlej Campaign Medal with two clasps, Punjab Campaign Medal with clasp, and the Indian Mutiny Medal with clasp (Relief of Delhi), and mentioned in dispatches. He died at St. Andrews, Scotland, 15 Jun 1915, age 92.¹³

Surgeon-Major MacTier was the grandfather of Lieut.-Col. William Stewart Mackay MacTier¹⁴, who was Commanding Officer of the Canadian Black Watch Regiment from 6 Oct 1932 to 10 Oct 1934. The Sovereign's Colour was transferred from family ownership to the Black Watch Officers' Regimental Mess by Lieut.-Col. W.S.M. MacTier in November, 1932.

Besides the service record of then Assistant-Surgeon MacTier, is the fact that MacTier served throughout the Siege/ Relief of Delhi, receiving acknowledgment in at least two historical references that establish his *bona fides* through the whole of the battle.

On 25 Aug 1857, Brigadier Nicholson, who with Lieut.-Col. Richard Baird Smith, Chief Engineer, had succeeded to actual operational control of the Delhi Force, in the absence of effective command leadership by General Wilson, undertook to lead a

¹¹ The Siege of Delhi (8 Jun - 21 Sep 1857) was occasioned by Delhi's location, by its symbolic value to the mutineers, and by its strategic import as 'centre of balance' by British estimate. First, the mutiny was surprisingly limited geographically to the Bengal Presidency, but within Bengal, Delhi was central and a rallying point to which mutineers flocked. Secondly, Delhi was the seat of the aged Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shaw II, providing a symbolic and philosophical base for the uprising as a re-instatement of Mughal power, even though he was a reluctant political figurehead/ leader to the uprising, as the mutineers concentrated in the City. Thirdly, Delhi boasted the largest fortifications in India, including the Mughal Palace, known as the 'Red Fort', and so its capture by the mutineers required re-capture by the British as a demonstration of British military strength, and the shifting of fortunes against mutiny (hence its critical 'centre of balance'). One of the relatively strange things about the Siege of Delhi is that though it was truly a typical investiture and siege, Delhi was never completely cut off from the outside. This was a significant factor contributing to the large numbers of mutineers, and intact mutinying regiments, 'with Colours flying', that obtained access to the City.

¹² In Lieut.-General Sir Archdale Wilson's General Order of 5 Nov 1857, published in *the London Gazette* of 15 Dec 1857, it is stated: 'Amongst those medical officers whose unwearied zeal and superior ability have come prominently before me are... Assistant-Surgeon W.F. MacTier, M.D., on the personal staff of the late Commander-in-Chief' (*The British Medical Journal*, 'Public Health', 3 Jul 1915, p.38, available online).

¹³ The service biography is taken from *The British Medical Journal*, 'Public Health', 3 Jul 1915, p.38; available on-line, supplemented by the Todd Mills email (vide footnote 8 *supra*).

¹⁴ Colonel W.S.M. MacTier was Regimental Commander of The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada between 1932 and 1934, and he was the last of the Regimental pre-WWII officers to go from junior subaltern to Colonel-Commandant. (Paul P. Hutchison, *Canada's Black Watch: The First Hundred Years*, [The Black Watch (R.H.R.) of Canada, Bleury Street, Montreal, Armoury Association, 1962, 1987], p.168, Appendix C p.323). Additionally, W.S.M. MacTier had joined the Canadian Black Watch before WWI, and served with the 13th Battalion RHC; twice wounded, at Festubert 1915 at Vimy 1917; awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at Vimy, *London Gazette*, 26 Jul 1917 (email of Regimental Historian, Earl Chapman, 24 Jul 2011 to author).

moveable column of 1,600 infantry and 400 cavalry, plus sixteen Horse Artillery to attack a rebel force at Nujufghur, sixteen miles from Delhi. Nicholson wanted the assistance of William S.R. Hodson,¹⁵ most recently assigned with the Guides, but appointed as Assistant Quartermaster-General with intelligence responsibility, who having had just returned from Rohtuck, was then down with dysentery.

...Dr. MacTier was adamant. He pointed out how bad the weather was, roared with laughter, and said that Hodson's job was to nurse himself and not seek more trouble.¹⁶

Further, Dr. MacTier was present and apparently ministering to John Nicholson¹⁷ before Nicholson's death on 23 Sept 1857, arising out of the ultimately successful four-column British assault against Delhi on 14 Sep 1857:

Nicholson sank slowly towards his death. For a few days his condition seemed to improve, until on the afternoon of 22 September Dr. MacTier went to see Chamberlain and told him that there was no longer any hope for his friend.¹⁸

Because Dr. MacTier's presence is well documented through the end of the Siege and Capture of Delhi, the retrieval of the Colour by him could have occurred at any time (8 Jun - 21 Sep) that the mutineers were driven back by British forces.

Nevertheless, several things are clear from provenance. Dr. MacTier would have had opportunity and likely exposure, because of his duties, to the immediacy of the battlefield, and his taking the Colour into custody would not have inconvenienced him from the continuing discharge of duties – as it might other combatants. Secondly, once acquired, it is logical that the artefact would become an esteemed and treasured family heirloom, whose 'as found' provenance would be accurately communicated and passed on from generation to generation without alteration until presented, through his Officer grandson, to the Canadian Black Watch Mess in 1932. Simply put, oral provenance does not get much better than this!

¹⁵ William Hodson (1821-1858), unusually for an Indian army officer, was a graduate of Cambridge University; initially posted to 2nd Bengal Grenadiers and served throughout 1st and 2nd Sikh Wars; appointed Adjutant and later CO of Corps of Guides, but embroiled in controversy over accounting records; carried out significant intelligence gathering function during Siege of Delhi but reputation besmirched by killing captured sons of Moghul Emperor Bahadur Shah II; ordered to raise and command irregular troop of horse which became Hodson's Horse; made epic journey covering more than 300 miles in 72 hours carrying dispatches for General Anson; k.i.a. at storming of Begum's Palace, Lucknow, March 1858.

¹⁶ James Leasor, *The Red Fort: An Account of the Siege of Delhi in 1857* (Werner Laurie, London, 1956), p. 234 (hereinafter 'Leasor').

¹⁷ John Nicholson (1822-1857) was commissioned Ensign in HEIC Army in February 1839, arriving in Calcutta in July 1939. He was posted to the 41st B.N.I. in December 1840; taken prisoner in the 1st Afghan War; participated in the 1st Anglo-Sikh War, and was selected by Henry Montgomery Lawrence for appointment as political officer, and subsequently District Commissioner. He is best known for his aggressive leadership in the planning and conduct of the storming of the Delhi Fort, September 1857, during which he was mortally wounded.

¹⁸ Leasor, p.353

Forensic Facts

As the author has learned by experience, details of Indian Army Colours before the Mutiny are not so readily available as one would hope.¹⁹ Bullock in his seminal, and possibly singular work, *Indian Infantry Colours*, states: “the subject is not only obscure, but also vast and unexplored.”²⁰ Additionally, it becomes clear that there are differences between Imperial British Regulations on the subject of Colours that may be at odds with applicable Bengal, Madras, or Bombay Infantry Regulations, or the actual practice of Indian Colours in the field, existing contemporaneously to Imperial British Regulation. The observable facts of the Black Watch Queen’s Colour are as follows:

The size is 183 cm (h) x 211 cm (w). The trailing edge is ragged suggestive of extensive use,²¹ with some loss of fabric such that a 212 cm width is not improbable. The colours are faded consistent with age and use but red and blue fields are evident, separated by the crosses of realm, encased within white borders. Interestingly, no border or edge seems to surround the flag, nor is there any indication that a fringe was attached. The methodology of flying/display is a cloth sleeve attached to the flag²² along the left height edge. No tassels, nor cords, are attached.

The construction of the flag appears to be of lengthy rectangular portions of fabric used to bracket the centre red cross with white panels and then of attachment of the four blue, nearly square fields, at each corner. Notable is the fact that for each blue panel, the necessary diagonal uses a rectangle of equal size for white and red, and these are then cut on a bias to join the centre cross. Even though the red and white portions of each diagonal are of equal width, a necessary but smaller white border is placed on the opposite side of the red, so that the red diagonal is faced by white on both sides. Note however that as one is facing the flag as if it were flying:

¹⁹ The same applies to the cavalry standards of the H.E.I.C. Army. An article discussing the few examples known to have survived was published in *Durbar* in two parts (Vol.28, No.4, Winter 2011 and Vol.29, No.1, Spring 2012).

²⁰ H. Bullock, *Indian Infantry Colours* (Times of India, Bombay 1931, reprinted by D.P.& G., Doncaster, 1996), p.2 (hereinafter ‘Bullock’).

²¹ The trailing edge of the Jack is interesting. It would appear, from the irregular and tattered wear *along the whole of the trailing edge* of the Jack, that a conclusion that it had exposure to fairly strong continuous wind is not unreasonable. If it were a Cavalry standard, such would seem entirely plausible. But for an Infantry standard, this outcome would be more difficult to achieve. Furthermore, if one thinks of the use of an Infantry Colour, it would most likely be positioned at or near the HQ in the field, and quite possibly cased in cantonment, suggesting that it would not have the kind of wind exposure that would give rise to what is evidenced by the state of the standard in the care of the Black Watch. Conversely, a British Sovereign flag or Jack flown from a building, a fort, or raised regularly on a flag-pole, would more likely acquire such characteristics.

²² Bullock is silent on methodologies of flying colours other than as affixed by ‘sleeve’ to a pike or staff. More modern flags have grommets which are circular holes in the staff-side, reinforced edge that allow a flag to be affixed to ropes and pulled aloft for flying on a pole. The standard in the care of the Black Watch appears to be most compatible with pike or staff display (carried by a Colour-bearing soldier). Such would mitigate against the kind of complete trailing edge tattered wear evident here, but is consistent with staff-affixed flying from a building or fort.



MONARCH'S COLOUR RECOVERED AT THE SIEGE OF DELHI 1857, PRESENTLY LOCATED IN THE OFFICER'S MESS, THE BLACK WATCH OF CANADA (ROYAL HIGHLAND REGIMENT).
[photograph by Lt-Cmdr (Ret'd) P.B. Ferst, CstJ, CD, and reproduced here with his permission]

the upper left blue panel has the wide white diagonal on top;
 the upper right blue panel has the wide white diagonal on the bottom;
 the lower left blue panel has the wide white diagonal on top;
 the lower right blue panel has the white diagonal on the bottom.

If one were to look along the whole of the diagonals created under the cross, they do not flow because one might expect to see broader white fabric continued on the other side, but in each case they are met by their opposites: broad meets narrow and narrow meets broad. However, this is consistent with a Queen's Colour shown for the 7th Infantry, Oudh Irregular Force, circa 1856.²³ Therefore, the Colour's construction is apparently consistent with the standard existing for India of pre-Mutiny Colours.

Another interesting observation of the Queen's Colour is that, aside from the trailing edge ragged fabric loss, there is remarkably little loss of fabric in the body of the Union Jack. And surprisingly for a battlefield flag that would likely have attracted marksmen once the Siege of Delhi began, there are not present what one might consider as round or jagged bullet holes. Rather, such holes appear to have squared edges, as if a pair of shears had been used to regularize the remaining fabric. Alternatively, the Jack certainly does have hole-sizes that, apart from a 'squared-up appearance,' are appropriate to bullet size. The author of this article wonders, if the fabric was silk, whether portions of the fabric might have torn along the weft, possibly giving bullet holes a more squared appearance.

Applicable Regulations

It should be noted, when discussing regimental colours, that there were two stands²⁴ of Colours or flags issued, the First Colour being the 'Great Union (Jack)²⁵ throughout,'²⁶ and the Second Colour²⁷ being the regimental colour, in the facing color of the regiment, adorned with the number of the regiment within a wreath, and later in the 19th Century, by the Union canton in upper left hand corner.

In 1781, the first regimental Colour design for the Indian forces was promulgated by the Military Consultations for Bengal. The size was set down as 'seven feet wide and six

²³ Bullock, Plate VI.

²⁴ At the time of the applicable Bengal Regulation(s) a stand of colours referred to one each of Sovereign Colour and Regimental Colour, whereas more modern parlance would define a 'stand' as a 'set of colours' (almost invariably a pair).

²⁵ Thus, a Great Union (Jack), or First Colour, may also be referred to as King's Colour, Queen's Colour, Sovereign's or Monarch's Colour. Additionally, a Union Jack is the national flag of sovereignty, but a First Colour is the consecrated and designated issued flag to accompany the Second or Regimental Colour presented to a regiment. Appearance-wise, both a First Colour and Sovereign's Colour may look the same. But because the First Colour is part of a 'stand' (pair), consistency in size becomes a significant criterion.

²⁶ Bullock, p.15

²⁷ It should be noted that Second Regimental Colours in India were reflective of East India Company regulation before the Crown took over in 1858. Thereafter, while colours were more subject to uniform regulation, there continued to be variations between Indian Army and British Army regiments. Furthermore, not all Second Colours contained a wreath encircling the regimental numeral, although by the 1870's most of them contained a canton of the Great Union in the upper left quadrant.

feet six inches deep on the pike.²⁸ As of 1855, the Bengal Army Regulations again provided that Colours were to be ‘six feet six inches flying, by six feet deep on the pike.’²⁹ Furthermore, the Royal or First Colour (commonly called the Queen’s Colour during Victoria’s Reign) was to be ‘a plain unadorned Great Union.’³⁰

Size thus becomes a significant variable. The Black Watch Jack is 183 cm (height) x 211 cm (width), and compares to Regulation as follows:

Black Watch Colour.....	183cm = 72 inches = 6 feet (height)
Bengal 1781/1855 Regulation.....	6 feet, 6 inches on the pike (height)
Black Watch Colour.....	211cm = 83.1 inches = 6.925 feet (width)
	(hypothesizing 212 cm= 6 feet, 11.46 inches [width])
Bengal 1781/1855 Regulation.....	7 feet (width)

As Bullock states, inadvertently adding confusion, Bengal Army Second Colours contained a Union Wreath which encircled the numeral of applicable Native Infantry regiments, and ‘sometimes these also appeared on the King’s Colours.’³¹ Though it is possible that Regimental numeral and Wreath may have been added in theatre to some Indian First Colours, most First Colours would have been plain, as the Black Watch example is, and as called for in applicable Regulations. Describing Bombay Presidency colours during the period, Bullock notes:

On all old Bombay Army Colours which have survived, there will be found a finely embroidered and elaborate Union wreath... The King’s Colour of this stand bears an identical Union wreath and crimson plaque with inscriptions, imposed upon the Union flag.³²

However, the size differential between applicable Bengal Regulation for Queen’s Colour and the subject Black Watch Colour is troubling. It is the author’s opinion that the variance from the Regulation size requirement, being short by six inches on height along the pike, is difficult to reconcile if the Black Watch Jack is to be thought an issued Bengal First Colour, especially in light of the fact that the size regulation would apply to both First and Second Colours, and the resulting anomaly would be especially noticeable, and nonconforming in a pair.

The Rich Panoply of Historical Context

In Chapter 10 of *Indian Infantry Colours*, Bullock collects the existing information on some thirty recovered Bengal Colours of Native Infantry regiments that mutinied, or were disbanded, between 1857 and 1861. Though most of the comments relate to the status and location of the Second Colours, a summary of selected First Colour references to recovered post-Mutiny B.N.I. Colours, includes the following:

²⁸ Bullock, p.15

²⁹ Bullock, p.20

³⁰ Bullock, p.21

³¹ Bullock, p.16. At the time Captain Bullock was writing, in 1931, George V was on the throne.

³² Bullock, p.18

1	13th B.N.I.: its Colours (1st and 2nd) were held by mutineers in the Lucknow Residency during the Siege, and came to light about 1906 in the former Bridgehead Defended Post at Cawnpore, which is the present (1931) Military Harness and Saddlery Factory 'where they still are (1931).' ³³
2	15th B.N.I., its Colours were recaptured by 2nd Regiment of Hodson's Horse at Koel-ka-Jangal in April 1859. ³⁴
3	24th B.N.I.: disarmed at Peshawar on 22 May, 1857. Its King's Colour is now in the armoury of Ferozepore arsenal. ³⁵
4	28th B.N.I., its Colours recaptured by 84th Foot and remained in their possession until 14 January 1897, when lost in the wreck of the <i>Warren Hastings</i> . 'The Queen's Colour is a plain Union flag.' ³⁶
5	30th B.N.I.: "tradition has it that the Queen's Colour was in the possession of an aged Indian woman who was determined to be buried in it." ³⁷
6	41st B.N.I.: new Colours were presented to the battalion at Delhi in 1848 or 1849 by the Indian C-in-C, Charles Napier, and the old Colours were placed in a church in Delhi that was ransacked by mutineers, but retaken during the assault on the Magazine in Delhi, 16 September, 1857. ³⁸
7	54th B.N.I.: mutinied at Delhi 11 May, 1857. On 24 November 1858, Private Bray of the 20th Foot swam across the Ganges in pursuit of a Sepoy carrying the Queen's Colour. Though severely wounded, Private Bray survived as did the Queen's Colour in the Officer's Mess of the 20th Foot. All that now remains (as of 1931) is the Colour staff. ³⁹
8	57th B.N.I.: its Queen's Colour is now in the armoury of the Ferozepore arsenal. ⁴⁰
9	60th B.N.I.: its Colours were recovered by Hodson at Delhi on 20 September 1857, together with the mess plate and drums. ⁴¹ This of course is William S. R. Hodson, treated by our now famous Assistant Surgeon MacTier, who picked up the Colour now in the possession of the Black Watch on the Delhi field of battle.

Regardless of whether the Colour recovered by MacTier could be a B.N.I. Colour or not, its rarity and condition arguably make it one of the best preserved, and heretofore largely unknown, relics of the Mutiny.

³³ Bullock, pp.93-94

³⁴ Bullock p.94; citing Lieut.-Colonel G.H.D. Gimlette's *A Postscript to the Records of the Indian Mutiny* (London, 1927), p.108

³⁵ Bullock, p.95

³⁶ Bullock, p.96

³⁷ Bullock, p.96

³⁸ Bullock, p.97

³⁹ Bullock, p.100

⁴⁰ Bullock, p.101

⁴¹ Bullock, p.102; citing Captain L.J. Trotter, *Hodson of Hodson's Horse* (Everyman's Ed.), p.200.

A Suggested Resolution

As previously indicated, there is no appreciable difference between the appearance of a Great Union flag or Jack and a Regimental First Colour, if strict conformance with size regulation is ignored, and assuming that regimental numbers and wreath were not incorporated on the Union consistent with regulation. Additionally, it can be assumed that present in Delhi in 1857 were Sovereign's Colours flown from Government buildings when British/H.E.I.C. officials or political officers were in residence on their frequent perambulations of duty, or even displayed by tradesmen at their shops as a symbol of sovereignty and allegiance, fearless and resolute even in the face of coming mutiny.

Daily at Delhi in 1857, the newly-mutinied regiments and miscellaneous personnel tried the strength of the British on the Delhi ridge by venturing out in sorties of some strength, but 'while few and faint but fearless still, the British held the ridge, and *their Union Jack waved from the Flagstaff Tower* (author's italics) as regularly as if in cantonments.'⁴² Barter then states,

About the same time we had the satisfaction of seeing *the Union Jack, which during the entire Siege had been regularly displayed from the Flagstaff Tower, hoisted on the Kashmir bastion* [this author's italics], announcing to all that the British Force had succeeded in the assault.⁴³

Therefore it is clear that there were other, non-regimental, Union Jacks present at the Siege of Delhi, and that though possibly not Sepoy First Colours, they all still hold a rare, important and venerated role in the Siege and Capture. Thus, 'our story' ends in a way that is especially proper and fitting.

As an original and possibly unique artefact of the conflict, it would seem to be likely that the MacTier 'Queen's Colour' is what it purports to be, a Colour captured at the Siege of Delhi. This conclusion is supported by the provenance and oral history related to the artefact that is especially strong and convincing. Alternatively, the Colour's size may be a disquieting fact in regard to a Sepoy Regimental connection. But this does not alter the fact that it was a British Colour undoubtedly picked up on the Delhi field of battle in 1857.

Thus, whether a Sepoy Regimental Colour, or a British Governmental Ensign, used to establish British sovereignty, or proudly displayed by a government tradesman, there is no question that it was taken by the mutineers in the Occupation of Delhi, and liberated in the British Capture of the city. As such, its historical significance remains unique. It is testimony to the foresight and care of Assistant-Surgeon MacTier, and it calls to mind a time when this Colour fluttered in the breeze, unsullied by airs of mutiny. The MacTier flag is a fitting legacy of gallantry and service, no less cherished and honoured now at its rightful home – The Canadian Black Watch Officer's Mess.

⁴² Richard Barter, *The Siege of Delhi: Mutiny Memories of An Old Soldier, late of the 75th Gordon Highlanders and the 15th Ludhiana Sikhs*, (London Folio Soc., 1984), p. 32 (hereinafter 'Barter').

⁴³ Barter, p.56

Postscript

After this article was completed and submitted, the Coordinator of the Regimental Museum and Archives of The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada contacted the author and indicated that his attempt to verify and confirm the actual size of the Sovereign's Colour, in the Black Watch Officers' Mess, might create some small variation from the size as reflected in the acquisition records, detailed on page 15 of this article, contrasted with his measurements. Nevertheless, the variations noted do not bring the Sovereign's Colour within the dimensions of strict conformity to the requirements of Bengal Regulations of 1781/1855, and as such still support the conclusion that in appearance there is not a difference between a civilian or governmental Sovereign's Colour and a Regimental First Colour, but that the variation in size from mandated Regimental Colour suggests that this artefact is, more likely than not, not a Regimental, consecrated First Colour.

Two other comments may also be relevant. Because the MacTier Colour is under glass, it really is not possible to verify whether it is a 'silk colour' as mandated by Regulation, but such a test, though minimally destructive, if establishing non-silk composition would go far to establishing that it is not a Regimental First Colour. Additionally, the author's description of the composition of the flag, though cumbersome, illustrates the point made by Sir George Robertson in *Chitral: The Story of a Minor Siege*, where he notes that the beleaguered garrison's attempt to make a Sovereign's Colour was done incorrectly, 'in that certain narrow white stripes were all made the same width, so that it could never have been flown upside down as a signal of distress.'⁴⁴

The point stands: whether it is a Sovereign's Colour or a Regimental First Colour does not affect its revered and historic, unique provenance.

CORRIGENDUM

Peter Duckers has written to point out an error in the Winter 2012 edition of *Durbar*. The infantry officer identified as No. 21 in the 1902 Coronation group on page 167 has been incorrectly described in the list of names on page 173. He is in fact Subadar Zarghun Shah, 1st Punjab Infantry and not Subadar Balaji Mule, who is listed twice – as No. 19 correctly, and as No. 21 incorrectly. The fault is due to an error in transcription, which the Editor is entirely responsible for and greatly regrets. However, there is a positive outcome, insofar as Mr. Duckers has contributed an article describing the military services of Zarghun Shah which can be found on the following five pages of this journal.

⁴⁴ Sir George S. Robertson, K.S.C.I., *Chitral: The Story of A Minor Siege* (Methuen & Co., London, 1905); p.286

**Hon. Captain and Subadar-Major Zarghun Shah, *Sardar Bahadur*, OBI, IDSM
Coke's Rifles, 1882-1909**

Peter Duckers

The recent appearance in *Durbar* of an illustrated article on the 1902 Indian Coronation Contingent reminded me of the career and medal group of one of the Indian officers who was there – Subadar (as he was then) Zarghun Shah of the 55th (Coke's) Rifles. Zarghun Shah was present with a representative party of twenty-five members of Coke's Rifles, then designated '1st Punjab Infantry, Punjab Frontier Force,' and according to one account 'commanded the Afridi contingent' in the UK.



SUBADAR ZARGHAN SHAH (FAR LEFT) WITH THE AFRIDI CONTINGENT FROM COKE'S RIFLES

Zarghun Shah's service is well-recorded and his medal group stands as a testimony to an interesting and distinguished service life in one of the famous regiments of the Punjab Frontier Force. A Kambar Khel Afridi, he was born in 1865 in Butan in the Tirah District and enlisted into 1st Punjab Infantry at the age of 17 in 1882. His promotions seem to have been fairly rapid – he was appointed Jemadar in 1894, Subadar in 1897 and Subadar Major in October 1903 following the death of S/M Hari Singh. He retired in October 1909, and was gazetted that year with the honorary rank of Captain, in accordance with the standard procedure for holders of the OBI 1st Class.

During his twenty-seven years on the active list he saw considerable field service, and this is amply reflected in his group of medals:

- Indian Distinguished Service Medal (IDSM), Edward VII obverse (Subadar-Major, 55th [Coke's] Rifles).
- 1854 India General Service Medal (IGS) with clasp '*Samana 1891*' for the 2nd Miranzai campaign on the Samana Ridge (Naik, 1st P.I.)
- 1895 IGS with clasp '*Punjab Frontier 1897-98*' for the Tochi Valley operations following the Maizar incident, and clasp '*Waziristan 1901-02*' for service during the Waziristan blockade (Subadar, 1st P.I.)
- IGS 1908 with clasp '*North West Frontier 1908*' for service in Mohmand territory during the second of the two 1908 campaigns (Subadar-Major, 55th Rifles)

No.12/26
 Depot 1.F.F.Rif.,
 Abbottabad....Dated...1-5-41.

To:-

Major R.M.Adams,
 Northern Command,
Hawalpindi.

SUBJECT:- R E C O R D S.

Reference your D.O. dated 2 March 1941.

1- The following is a summary of the services of and medals awarded to Subedar Major Zargun Shah of 1st BN(Coke's) 13th F.F.Rifles:-

Father's Name.....Duran.
 Caste.....Afridi Kambar Khel.
 Age.....17 Years.
 Hight.....5' - 7½".
 Village.....Butan.
 Tehsil.....Maidan.
 District.....Tirah.

Date of enlistment.....4th Sept: 1882.
 Naik1-10-1890
 Havildar9- 2-1892
 Jemadar9-10-1894
 Subedar22-7-1897
 Sub: Major12-10-03.
 Pensioned30-10-09.
 CharacterExemplary.
 Granted Hony.Rank Capt. G of I.A.D. No1011/09.

- 2-Commanded Coronation Contingent of Afridis London 1902.
- 3-Indian Distinguished service Medal.
- 4-1st Class order of British India.
- 5-N.W.Frontier of India 2nd Miransai 1891.
- 6-Tochi Medal & Clasp N.W.Frontier of India 1901-2
- 7-Medal & Clasp N.W.Frontier of India 1897-8.
- 8-Wariristan-Clasp N.W.Frontier of India 1908.
- 9-Mohmand-Medal & Clasp-I.D.S.M. O of B.I. 1st Class.

*1 DSm Sgt I 1/108
 for O.S.I with little service in Mohmand
 operation Sgt I 20/10/08*

*For
 J. M. J. J.*

(M.S).

For O.C. Depot 1.F.F.Rif. Captain,



SUBADAR ZARGHUN SHAH IN LONDON

In addition to these, he held the 1902 Coronation Medal and the 1911 Delhi Durbar Medal. It may have been partly to do with his service with the Coronation Contingent that he was appointed to 2nd Class of the Order of British India (OBI) in Jan. 1903. He was promoted to the 1st Class of the Order in June 1908 for services with Coke's Rifles in the Mohmand campaign, during which he was slightly wounded and Mentioned in Dispatches for gallant conduct. His complete group of decorations and medals is illustrated on the opposite page.

At the Durbar of 1911, he was the senior of four regimental Pensioners who joined twelve serving members of the 55th Rifles at the ceremonies and received the medal.

Zarghun Shah's exploits are recorded quite well in the two standard histories of Coke's Rifles covering his time in the regiment.¹ Perhaps most interesting is the reference to his actions in the Waziristan campaign of 1901-02 – nowadays a nearly-forgotten series of operations on the Frontier. Both histories recount that during extensive 'punitive' operations in December 1901, the 1st Punjab Infantry moved from the front-line base at Jandola to take part in the third series of 'sweeps' in Wazir country. It was engaged in action in the Dwe Shinkai on 22nd December and suffered slight casualties as it advanced across the hills towards the Wacha Khwana nullah, destroying five villages en route over the next few days. Both histories record that during these actions, the company under Captain Houston and Subadar Zarghun Shah 'distinguished themselves in the way they rushed a position on a hill occupied by the enemy' (Wylly, p.109).

¹ *The History of the 55th Coke's Rifles Frontier Force formerly known as the 1st Panjab Infantry, Panjab Frontier Force*, collated by Capt. J.P. Villiers-Stuart, (published privately, Waterford 1908); *The History of Coke's Rifles*, Col. H.C. Wylly, C.B. (Gale & Polden, Aldershot 1930).

Anyone simply looking at Zarghun Shah's medal group, with its Edward VII IDSM, and reading that he was wounded and MID for gallantry during the 1908 Mohmand operations would probably draw the conclusion that the award was made for that campaign – as one of the first of the newly-instituted IDSMs. However, it was actually gazetted on 1st Jan. 1908, before the two 1908 campaigns had taken place. It was in fact a retrospective award for the 1901-02 Waziristan operations, as is confirmed in Villiers-Stuart's account: 'for their gallantry on this occasion, Subadar Zarghun Shah and Havildar Shah Gul were afterwards awarded the Indian Distinguished Service Medal.'



DECORATION AND MEDALS ISSUED TO SUBADAR-MAJOR ZARGHUN SHAH, COKE'S RIFLES

What makes Zarghun Shah's fine medal group all the more interesting is that there is with it an account of just how the medals were bought (and thereby preserved as individual items and as a complete group) in Peshawar in November 1940. Their original purchaser was Major (later Colonel) Ralph M. Adams, Royal Signals, then serving as a Signals Officer in Northern Command, India. He related to a subsequent owner of the group in 1964:

'In Nov. 1940 I was in Peshawar on duty and one evening I visited the "thieves bazaar" here the Kabaris had their shops. In one I found a Guides drum (Rs 10). This I bought and returned to the regiment. Then I moved to the Sunyars (goldsmiths) area and tried around several shops for medals. The shopkeepers as you know were always rather shifty about medals. There was an idea that trading in them for the purpose of melting them down was

illegal. However, one chap produced a biscuit tin full of BWMs [British War Medals], IGS 1908 etc and to my amazement the IDSM, King Ed. VII, of which only 130 were minted. Either I had to buy the whole tin and be faced with reselling the junk or I had to play it cunningly. The sunyar was asking the earth for single pieces... In the end I bought only the Coronation Medal for Rs 3...

'The next afternoon I arrived at 14.00 hrs and there I remained until 20.00 hrs. I was given bottles of fizzy lemonade at intervals... I sorted out Zarghun Shah's medals and during the six hours bought them one by one. I was generous, giving Rs 5 per medal, but the last one, the IDSM, I beat down to Rs 4.

'The sunyar was delighted. Then I had to write to O-i-C Records for details [see page 23 above] and as a result I made a special journey to Peshawar in January 1942 to persuade the sunyar to look for the OBI. He had had it the whole time, the old fox, and wanted Rs 50 for it. There was a war on and I couldn't waste time on a long bargaining period, so I paid him what he asked.

'I bought all my medals in the cities of Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Gujerat, Ludhiana, Ambala and Patiala. Other than that OBI, I never gave more than Rs 5 except for IOMs which were worth Rs 10. They weighed heavily and that was what guided the silversmith. The great difficulty was getting bronze medals since they were no use for melting down.'

Since Adams was also an official examiner in Punjabi, he was able to talk fluently to the dealers and "sit on the floor and chat about everything except medals, of course, to the goldsmiths."

We can perhaps agree with Lieut.-Colonel J.E. Barton, one-time editor of the *Piffer* (Journal of the Punjab Frontier Force) who wrote in 1965 to the medal group's custodian:

'Adams' persistence and patience are quite remarkable. All who served in the old Indian Army (and the British Army for that matter) owe him and people like him a great debt for their keenness in obtaining medals which can now be handed down to posterity.'

The Hodson's Horse Memorial Bell

In 1936, Hodson's Horse (4th Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers) was posted to Loralai, where it faced a bitter winter. The photograph at the top of the opposite page, another copy of which was used for a regimental 'season's greetings' card, features the regiment's quarter-guard. It was taken to record the unpleasant winter conditions, and to illustrate the issue of *poshteens*, the warm sheepskin coat, as worn here by the two sentries at the quarter guard.

The bell that accompanied the regiment to Loralai in 1936 is a permanent and essential possession of Hodson's Horse, and to this day it can be found hanging outside the regiment's quarter-guard. It is a feature that is unique in the Indian Army, and acts as the regiment's war memorial. It was intended for the men who fell in WW1, but since then names have been added for the regiment's campaigns up to present day, filling the nineteen plaques on all four sides of the memorial, both top and bottom. For each casualty the detail of rank and name, and date and place of death, is given. The front face of the pedestal bears the simple inscription 'IN PROUD MEMORY OF ALL RANKS OF HODSON'S HORSE 1914-1920' which is repeated in Hindi on the reverse: 'HODSON'S HORSE KE TUMAM RANK KI FAKHRIA YAD MEN 1914-1920.'



HODSON'S HORSE QUARTER-GUARD AT LORALAI IN 1936

The bell was made in Birmingham, and the original casting and the composition of the metal are such that it produces a most distinct sound. However, it was never intended that the memorial bell should be used for any purely mundane purpose. As with other Indian

Army regiments, the Hodson's Horse quarter-guard is equipped with a flat circular brass plate about eighteen inches in diameter that hangs from a tripod. It is rung every half and full hour, and would be sounded when necessary to raise the alarm.



THE HODSON'S HORSE MEMORIAL BELL AS IT IS NOW

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Sean Weir for the photo of the quarter-guard at Loralai, and to Sushil Talwar for the recent image of the bell and his helpful comments.



SURGEON H.C. LUDLOW, MADRAS ARMY

Surgeon Henry Christopher Ludlow, Madras Army

The handsome portrait on the opposite page, testimony to the skill and craftsmanship of the hand-colourers of Victorian photographs, has been in the possession of IMHS member Peter Chapman for fifty years, and remains undisturbed in its original oval oak frame on his study wall. The subject is wearing the splendid, heavily laced uniform of the Madras Army. On the reverse of the frame, 'Dr Ludlow' has been written in pencil, although the precise identity of this whiskered officer has only been recently established.

There have been several officers of the H.E.I.C. Army named Ludlow, but Crawford's Roll¹ contains only two surgeons thus named – and only one of them served in the cavalry.² It was something of a revelation to discover that this officer, Henry Christopher Ludlow, M.D. (Edinburgh) joined the Madras Army as early as 1827, as an Assistant Surgeon on the medical establishment.

Various editions of the East India Register record that he was in civil employment at Nagpore Residency for several years in the 1830s, was advanced to Surgeon in 1840, and posted to the 2nd Madras Light Cavalry in 1844 as the regiment's medical officer – remaining thus until his January 1850 retirement. The 2nd Cavalry saw no field service during this period, and so Henry Ludlow did not receive any campaign medals.

In due course he returned to England where he passed away on 21st April 1862 in his fifty-eighth year. In the probate to his will (available on www.Ancestry.co.uk), he is described *inter al* as 'formerly of the Madras Cavalry' – and one imagines that this is how he preferred to be remembered.

He is seen wearing a uniform which pre-dates the 1846 Dress Regulations (see the contemporary Ackermann print on page xx), yet portrait photography did not become established in India until towards the end of the decade. Outdated insignia certainly appear in images of Indian Army officers and occasionally whole uniforms. Carman³ refers to another Madras cavalry officer's portrait photo circa 1865 featuring full dress, despite its demise during the Mutiny period and replacement by the hussar style tunic. If the photograph were taken during Surgeon Ludlow's active career, it would be one of the earliest known images of a Madras Cavalry officer. However, the fact that he is wearing a full dress jacket and overalls but holding an undress cap could indicate an informal, post-retirement pose, taken during the early 1850's.

The painted colour of the uniform is deceptive, in part attributable to age. The jacket was French grey and trousers sky blue, tones that can appear identical in a monochrome photograph.⁴ The quality of the work suggests a portrait painter was employed who simply interpreted the image or was working to a loose description. Nevertheless, the silver lace, buff facings and gold and crimson girdle are correctly represented.

The writer is not aware of the extent to which a medical officer wore the uniform of the regiment to which he was attached. It would seem to be an unreasonable financial burden unless the attachment was for a number of years (as in Ludlow's case).

¹ D.G. Crawford, *Roll of the Indian Medical Service 1615-1930* (Thacker, London 1903); M.832

² The other surgeon, John Ludlow, retired from the Bengal Army in 1841 (Crawford's Roll, B.552).

³ W.Y. Carman, *Indian Army Uniforms Under the British – Cavalry* (Leonard Hill, London 1961)

⁴ It is worth noting that there can be confusion between Madras and Bombay Cavalry uniforms, as the latter wore blue jackets and blue trousers. Differences between these two items of apparel may thus be significant.



R. ACKERMANN'S COSTUMES OF THE INDIAN ARMY. NO.3
MADRAS LIGHT CAVALRY – OFFICER IN REVIEW ORDER, 1ST REGIMENT

Rudolph Ackermann's series of Indian Army uniforms was first published between 1840 and 1855. The officer depicted in this original print (photographed under glass) is wearing the pre-1846 pattern of full dress uniform. The distinction between the officer's jacket and trousers is evident although accuracy of the colouring may be questionable.

A superb example of the 1846 pattern Madras uniform, attributed to Lt. J.R. Fairlie of the 6th Light Cavalry, can be seen on 'The Military Gentleman' website. It was sold in Christie's rooms in 1997, along with Lt. Fairlie's Mutiny medal with Central India clasp.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Peter Chapman for permission to reproduce the Ludlow portrait and to Sean Weir for his help with the text. The Ackermann print is from the private collection of an IMHS member.

Indian Platoons with British Battalions

Peter Duckers

Following references in previous issues of *Durbar* to the Indian Platoons which served with British battalions in India during the interwar years, readers may be interested in the following extract from the *Journal* of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry. It occurs in Volume 13 for October 1938, shortly before the 1st Battalion left India (in December) after a long tour which had commenced in 1921 and included active service on the North West Frontier in 1930-31.

Disbandment of Indian Platoon

“The disbandment of the Indian Platoon, on the 15th September 1938, marked the close of a brief but interesting page in the annals of the 1st Battalion.

“For a great many years, probably ever since the first arrival of the 1st Battalion, 53rd Foot, in India in the year 1805, it has been the custom for Indian ‘followers’ to be attached to the foreign service battalion while in the country. But, as far as the writer is aware, the period since the Great War is the only occasion when Indian sepoy have actually served in the ranks of the Regiment.

“It was early in 1922, shortly after the reintroduction of Vickers Machine Guns into Infantry Battalions in India, that Army Headquarters announced an experimental scheme to provide Indian Detachments in all British infantry battalions, as mule leaders for the machine gun pack mules.

“Soon afterwards our first Indian Platoon was formed. This consisted of two Indian officers and some twenty Indian other ranks, transferred from various Indian units. By caste they were Sikhs. The Sikh, though a fine fighting soldier, is not always an easy individual to handle in times of peace; and so it turned out, the Sikhs being gradually replaced after a short stay in the Regiment of hardly a year.¹

“The next class of Indian soldier sent to us were Ahirs from the United Provinces. These proved to be good hard-working men, but the Ahir is of an agricultural, rather than of a soldier, class and is not normally enlisted into the Indian Army.

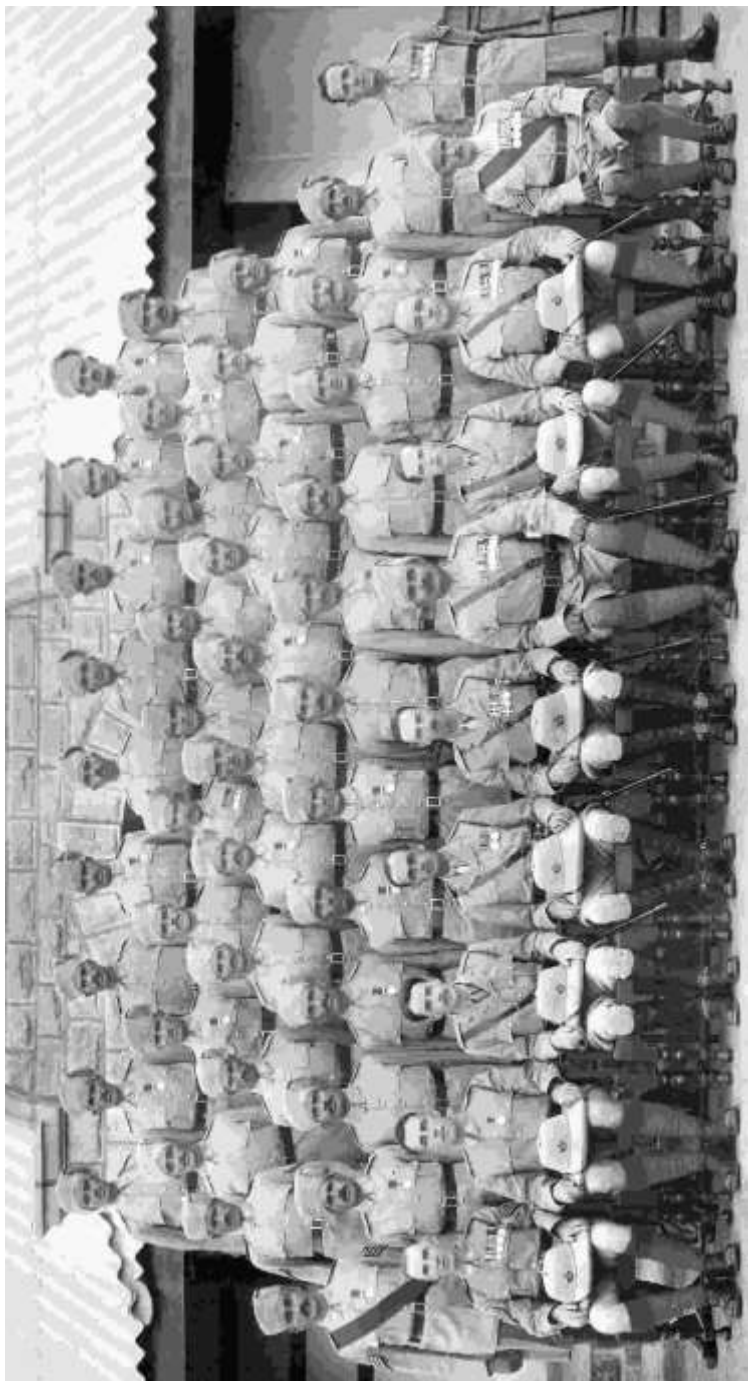
“With the Ahirs, however, came to us Subedar Naubat Singh, himself a Hindu Jat, and from that date (1923) began an association which has only now been terminated.

“It was not long (1925) before the Ahirs began to be replaced by Hindu Jats who have formed the personnel of our Indian Platoon ever since. The Jat comes of sterling yeoman farmer stock, and, in the case of our Indian Platoon, from the district around Rohtak and Delhi.

“Few who have had the privilege of serving with them will deny their qualities as stalwart, willing and hardworking soldiers, with considerable powers of endurance. They have proved themselves very adaptable and have become an integral part of the Support Company, for whom they have acted as mule leaders for a period of (sixteen) years, both during training and on active service at Razmak and on the Khajuri Plain.

“Their disbandment will be regretted by all ranks of the Battalion with whom they have been associated. So far as the 1st Battalion is concerned, that Army Headquarters experiment has been an unqualified success.

¹ Generalizations of this sort, and remarks on the perceived qualities of different classes, which might now be considered to be offensive, were typical for the period and not intended to be so.



INDIAN MACHINE GUN PLATOON, 1ST BATTALION, KING'S SHROPSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY – KARACHI 1938

The commanding officer of 1-KSLI, Lt.-Col. J.M.L. Grover MC is seated in the centre, with Subedar-Major Nautbat Singh on his left. Some members of the Platoon can be seen wearing the India General Service medal with the 'North West Frontier 1930-31' clasp.



“...It would not be fitting to conclude this brief article on the Indian Platoon without a special word on the Subedar-Major, who has been its outstanding figure for so long. Starting his Army career in 1907, in the 29th Lancers (now the 9th Royal Deccan Horse), Naubat Singh had risen to the rank of Dafadar (Sergeant) by the beginning of the Great War. He served continuously with his regiment in France from October 1914 until March 1918, when he accompanied the 29th Lancers to Palestine, where he was wounded in action. He remained in Palestine until 1921.

“Meanwhile, in 1918, he had been promoted to the rank of Indian Officer (Jemadar). He was promoted to Subedar in 1921, and from that year until 1923 he saw further active service in Waziristan with the 1st Bn. The Royal Welch Fusiliers.

“In 1923 he joined the 1st Bn. K.S.L.I. with the rank of Subedar, being promoted to Subedar-Major in 1936. He was with the 1st Battalion in Razmak, in 1928-29, and saw further active service with the 1st Battalion on the Khajuri Plain in 1930-31.

“He is now retiring on a well-earned pension. The best wishes of all in the 1st Battalion go to him, and to his Platoon.”

In this photograph of Subedar-Major Naubat Singh, taken in Karachi in 1938, he wears the 1914 Star Trio, the 1908-35 India General Service Medal with two clasps, presumably ‘Waziristan 1921-24’ and ‘North West Frontier 1930-31’, and medals commemorating the 1935 Jubilee and the 1937 Coronation.

Editor’s note

The author of this article is curator at the KSLI Museum, Shrewsbury Castle. The Museum does not have an example of the IGS medal with ‘North West Frontier 1930-31’ clasp named to a member of the regiment’s Indian MG Platoon, and would be most interested to see or hear of an example.



'D' COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, KING'S SHROPSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY, ASSEMBLED AT KARACHI IN 1938.

Some members of the Indian Platoon, with their mules, are visible in the background.

South Persia Rifles and Burma Mounted Rifles – 1917-1920 Recommendations and Consequent Awards for Gallantry

Recommendations for gallantry awards, in many cases with supporting citations, and some associated correspondence appertaining to the fighting in South Persia between 1917 and 1920, surfaced unexpectedly at The National Archives in Kew during an indirectly-related research project.¹ The recommendations largely concern British and Indian personnel of Indian Army and Burma Police units, and British and Persian personnel of the South Persia Rifles (SPR).² The purpose of this article is to throw some light on the decorations recommended for the SPR, and for a relatively obscure Indian Army unit – the Burma Mounted Rifles (BMR). Many of the recommendations appear to have resulted either in an alternative award at a lower level, for example an Indian Distinguished Service Medal rather than an Indian Order of Merit, or in no award at all. It is unlikely that many of the SPR or BMR citations have ever been published, and for this reason the original recommendations are listed in this article in all available detail.³

The South Persia Rifles

During WW1, the Foreign Office in London jealously guarded the direction of overall strategy in Persia through the British Minister in Teheran. As a fundamental part of the objective to restore and maintain order in South Persia, it was determined that an entirely new British-controlled Persian military police force should be raised. It was to be funded by the Government of India, which retained a significant degree of control over its activities.

Brigadier-General Sir Percy Molesworth Sykes, reporting directly to GHQ Simla, was appointed to the command of the so-called ‘military mission’ in South Persia in January 1916.⁴ He disembarked at Bandar Abbas on the south coast of Persia on 16th March 1916, and began the process of recruiting the force which materialized into the South Persia Rifles (SPR).

Although the SPR was not directly linked to the Indian Army, Sykes relied heavily on British officers of the Indian Army and British NCO’s seconded from British Army regiments, as well as British NCO’s of the Indian Unattached List who appear to have been mostly involved in support services such as supply, transport, and administration. A number of Indian officers and other ranks of the Indian Army were also seconded.⁵

¹ Collections held by The National Archives at Kew containing material relating to South Persia 1916-1920 are: WO/32, WO/106, FO/248. The latter collection contains the bulk of the material.

² Recommendations submitted for British Army personnel include awards of the DSO, MC, DCM and MSM.

³ This article does not claim to have identified all gallantry awards to British and Indian personnel of the SPR and BMR for South Persia, and the Editor would be pleased to publish details of any such awards that have not been included.

⁴ In the British tradition, an inspector general is usually a senior military officer responsible for the inspection of military units to ensure that they meet appropriate standards of training and efficiency.

⁵ No rolls of British officers attached to the SPR have been examined, but it seems that almost all of them were seconded from the India Army establishment.

The SPR was essentially a locally recruited militia, and yet in terms of scale and organization it grew into the equivalent to a fully integrated and self-supporting division of all arms. At its peak in April 1918, its strength was a little over eight thousand troops, excluding followers:

	Officers	Other ranks	Total	Followers
British	88	104	192	-
Indian	17	172	189	582
Persian	232	7469	7701	1000
Total	337	7745	8082	1582

The SPR operated in the provinces of Fars and Kerman from 1916 to 1921. Its two independent brigades each contained cavalry, artillery, engineers, signals, machine gun squadrons, infantry, and corps support including ordnance, transport, medical and veterinary elements. The SPR was backed by a separate Indian Army force of all arms totaling over 3,000 officers and other ranks, with close to the same number of followers.

No pitched battles were fought in South Persia, but there were numerous hard-fought actions. Mobile columns scoured the country seeking out dissident tribal forces and German or Turkish infiltrators. There were defenses and sieges, ambushes and pursuits. All of these are recounted in the official history *Operations in Persia*, although a good deal of information is also available in the reports published in the *Gazette of India*,⁶ *London Gazette*, and The National Archives at Kew undoubtedly hold much more.

Returning to the first objective of this article, the letter below, addressed to the British Consul at Shiraz in October 1920, was intended to draw the attention of this notable to a number of outstanding recommendations for gallantry and meritorious service for exclusively Persian personnel of the South Persia Rifles – the principle decoration being the so-called Persian Medal for Gallantry illustrated on page 38 below.⁷

To H.M. Consul, Shiraz, from Major A.N.I. Lilly, Inspector-General, South Persia Rifles, dated Headquarters South Persia Rifles, Shiraz 6th October 1920

‘In accordance with your verbal request I have the honour to forward herewith lists in duplicate of recommendations for awards of medals to Persian Officers and other ranks of the South Persia Rifles for acts of gallantry and meritorious service performed by them in the following actions:

1. near Duliki on April 25th 1920 against a band of robbers;
2. near Chahkutah on July 22nd 1920 against Sheikh Hussein of Chahkutah.

‘I also attach lists in duplicate of recommendations submitted by Colonel E.F. Orton to H.B.M.’s Minister, Teheran in September 1919. As far as I know, none of the awards recommended by Colonel Orton have yet been made and I shall be much obliged if you will address H.B.M.’s Minister on the subject.

‘There is undoubtedly a feeling among the Persia ranks of the S.P.R. that this force is being entirely ignored by the Persian Government and I need hardly say that any awards made by the Persian Government to those now recommended and to those recommended by Colonel Orton will go a long way towards doing away with this undesirable feeling.

‘They will moreover be a source of great encouragement to all ranks of the South Persia Rifles.’

⁶ See GGO 721/1918 for a summary of ops provided in despatch of Gen. Sir C.C. Monro, C-in-C India.

⁷ Little has been written about this decoration. It’s correct Persian designation is not known, but it is believed to be the Farsi equivalent of ‘The Medal of the Order of the Lion and the Sun.’ It has also been referred to as the Persian ‘Medaille Militaire’ – French being the preferred European language in Persia.

All but one of the forty-two recommendations referred to in this letter were made by British officers of the British or Indian Army serving with the SPR at the time, including:

Col. E.F. Orton, 37th Lancers (Baluch Horse)
 Lt-Col. H.R. Dyer, D.S.O., 35th Scinde Horse
 Lt-Col W.A.K. Fraser, M.C., 39th K.G.O. Central India Horse
 Lt-Col. C.H.G.H. Harvey-Kelly, D.S.O., 1-127th Q.M.O. Baluch Light Infantry
 Lt-Col. J.B. Hance, Indian Medical Service
 Lt-Col. F.F. Hunter, D.S.O., Indian Unattached List (Survey Dept.)
 Lt-Col. G.L. Farran, D.S.O., M.C., 4th Cavalry
 Lt-Col. J.B.D. Hunter, Indian Medical Service
 Major A.N.I. Lilly, M.C., 1- 7th D.C.O. Rajputs
 Major L.C. Wagstaffe, C.I.E., 1-2nd Q.V.O. Rajput Light Infantry
 Captain R.G. MacGregor, 34th P.A.V.O. Poona Horse
 Captain F.L.R. Munn, M.C., 46th Punjabis⁸
 Captain J. Masters, 16th Rajputs (The Lucknow Regiment)
 Captain D.N. Carr, M.C., Border Regiment⁹

The awards included thirty-nine for gallantry and three for meritorious service.¹⁰ All gallantry awards were for the Persian Medal for Gallantry, just one being a gold medal for an officer of the SPR already in possession of the silver medal.¹¹ This mirrors similar advancements from the 2nd to the 1st Class of the Indian Order of Merit, although Payne notes that the ‘Persian Medal for Military Valour’ was awarded ‘to Officers in gold and to Sergeants in silver.’¹² But this is not reflected in the actual distribution of the thirty-eight silver medals to SPR personnel under discussion here, as fifteen were to officers.

Little has been published regarding the Persian Medal for Gallantry which might also be described as ‘The Medal of the Order of the Lion and the Sun.’ Examples of the silver version have been recorded, but the gold medal appears to be of the highest rarity.¹³

The extent to which Persian awards for gallantry were granted to British or Indian personnel is not known, and no lead has been found in the index of the OMRS journal.¹⁴ There is anecdotal evidence that No.7817366 Sergeant Stewart received the ‘Persian Medal Militaire [sic] for conspicuous gallantry under fire in the North West of Persia during October 1918.’ In May 1921 the *Burnley Express* reported the award to Sergeant Lieversley, stating that an announcement to thus effect ‘appeared in the Regimental

⁸ Capt. Frederick Legh Richmond Munn was entitled to the MC and bar.

⁹ T/Capt. Donald Neville Carr, Border Regt, att’d S. Persia Rifles; MC, *London Gazette*, 22 Mar 1919. His award was for service with the SPR, but no recommendation or citation has been traced

¹⁰ The officers recommending the three awards for meritorious service were clearly not aware of the available rewards. Their recommendations were for ‘some suitable Persian decoration.’

¹¹ *Yavar Atta-ul-Saltaneh* (see the following page).

¹² A.A. Payne, *Handbook of British and Foreign Orders, War Medals & Decorations* (J.W. Northend for the author, Sheffield 1911), p.354; also, online catalogue of JK Militaria Canada.

¹³ The example illustrated on page 38 is a silver medal struck with the Islamic year of the Hegira 1310 (or possibly 1311), equivalent to AD 1892. It was listed by the London auctioneer Messrs Morton & Eden Ltd (www.mortonandeden.com) in a recent catalogue of British, Russian, Chinese and World Orders, Medals and Decorations. It was not illustrated in the catalogue, and Nicholas Mathioudakis arranged for it to be scanned especially for *Durbar*. It was a last minute request, on the eve of the sale, and Morton & Eden is to be highly commended for its readiness to comply

¹⁴ Orders & Medals Research Society, Index 1973-2010 .

Orders of the Tank Corps which is at present on service in Persia,' and providing additional biographical details.¹⁵



PERSIAN MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

Obverse: within a wreath, tied with a ribbon at the base, a Lion, statant gardant dexter, holding a drawn sword in his right paw; the Sun rising behind the Lion's back. *Reverse:* in the centre, within a double circle, in Persian characters, the name of the incumbent Shah,¹⁶ 'The victory of the Faith' and the year of the award, and encircling the outer perimeter 'Whoso with lion heart the Sovereign's foes withstands / This badge he takes at our refulgent grace's hands' around. *Diameter:* 35mm. *Suspension:* silver loop and ring, with a green watered ribbon.¹⁷

The forty-two recommendations for gallantry awards to Persian officers and other ranks, attached to Major Kelly's letter, have been preserved in the National Archives at Kew, and they all follow more or less the same pattern as the following four citations for the attack at Chahkutah¹⁸ on 22nd July 1920:

PERSIAN GOLD MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

*Yavar*¹⁹ *Atta-ul-Saltaneh, 1st Infantry, South Persia Rifles.*

The fact that sixty rifles marched sixty miles in thirty-three hours without a single man falling out, and were ready to march and fight after a very short rest, is largely due to the judgement and fine powers of leadership displayed by this officer. During the action at Chahkutah he showed conspicuous gallantry and led the final assault on the enemy position. Already awarded the Persian Silver Medal For Gallantry.

¹⁵ <www.burnleygallantry.co.uk> The *London Gazette* publishing the award was specified in the *Burnley Express* announcement as 'May 1920' but a search for this gazette has drawn a blank.

¹⁶ First introduced in 1837, the medal underwent several minor changes of specification during its lifetime. When the Qajar dynasty was overthrown by Colonel Reza Khan Pahlavi in 1925, it was replaced by the somewhat similar Homayaun Medal in three classes (gold, silver and bronze).

¹⁷ Payne, pp.354/355

¹⁸ Chahkutah lies to the east of Bushire - about twenty-five miles as the crow flies.

¹⁹ *Yavar* = 'major' (Anne K.S. Lampton, *Persian Vocabulary*, U.P., Cambridge 1961).

PERSIAN SILVER MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

*Aspirant*²⁰ 11 Mirza Nasrullah Khan, *Pars Field Ambulance, South Persia Rifles.*

Displayed the greatest gallantry during the attack at Chahkutah on the 22nd July 1920. In the opinion of all ranks his behaviour was magnificent. He tended the wounded under heavy fire and showed as complete a disregard for his personal safety as if he was on a practice parade. When fire became too heavy to remain standing, he rolled along the ground. His behaviour could not have been cooler or more gallant.

*No.475 Lance Sarijugi*²¹ *Hussain Bardai, 2nd Cavalry, South Persia Rifles.*

During the attack at Chahkutah on 22nd July 1920, displayed conspicuous gallantry in attacking and eventually capturing single handed with sword an enemy *tufangchi*²² who emptied his magazine at him at very close range wounding his horse.

Aspirant 11 Amanullah Khan, 1st Infantry, South Persia Rifles.

Acted as orderly officer to O.C. Column during the attack at Chahkutah on 22nd July 1920. When the attack looked like being held up, he was sent forward to pull the men together. He behaved in a very gallant manner and showed himself to be a good leader of men. His fearless example undoubtedly helped to save a critical situation.

The efficient services of British and Indian Army personnel attached to the SPR were brought to notice by numerous mentions in despatches. Furthermore, in the documentation upon which this article is based, there are specific recommendations for two awards of the Military Cross, four of the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and three of the Meritorious Service Medal.

2nd Lieut. (Local Captain) F. Hill, H.M.'s 21st (E-of-I) Lancers – Military Cross

Commanded detachments of South Persia Rifles cavalry in minor actions on 1st January and 18th January 1918, against robber bands near Tang-i-Kamin, and led his men well. His horse was shot under him. Co-operated with the Burma Mounted Rifles in the actions near Gumun on 24th and 27th January 1918.

Temporary Lieut. (Local Captain) W.E. Huxley, Special List, Indian Army – Military Cross

Has shown initiative in dealing with robber bands near Tarum, especially on 26th December 1917, when he led a detachment of South Persia Rifles and of local levies fifty miles in twenty-four hours, and successfully attacked a camp of robber Arabs.

No.4128 Sergeant D. May, 7th Hussars – Distinguished Conduct Medal

Has done good work throughout recent operations of the Kerman column.

No.1940 Lance-Corporal P. Batson, 21st (E-of-I) Lancers – Distinguished Conduct Medal

For gallantry under fire in action against raiders near Tang-i-Kamin on 18th January 1918. Lance Corporal Batson's horse was shot under him.

No.7823 Sergeant T. Foster, No.8 Mtn Battery, R.G.A. – Distinguished Conduct Medal

Has done good work throughout recent operations of the Kerman column.

²⁰ The term for 'aspirant' in Urdu/Persian is *ummedwar*, but its application in practice is not known. It is assumed that, in the French fashion, 'aspirant' has been used to describe a junior officer equivalent to ensign or cornet. Should this be the case, then this award to an aspirant conflicts with Payne's statement that the silver medal was reserved for sergeants. Indeed, the thirty-eight awards of the silver medal discussed in this article include ranks ranging from rifleman to major.

²¹ *Sarjuxe* = 'corporal' (Lampton, op. cit.). But might this also be a corruption of 'sergeant'?

²² *Tufangchi* = 'rifleman' (Lampton, op. cit.)

No.9551 Sergeant E. Battle, 1st South Lancashire Regiment – Distinguished Conduct Medal
 Showed good leadership of a party of South Persia Rifles in the fight against Beir Ahmadi raiders near Yadz-i-Khast on 24th February 1918. Sergeant Battle was slightly wounded.²³

No.2246 Sergeant Edward King, 21st (E-of-I) Lancers, att'd Fars Brigade, S.P.R. – Meritorious Service Medal

This N.C.O. acted as Transport officer to the Shiraz column S.P.R. May/August 1919, and was in sole charge of a transport column of 360 S.P.R. and their Persian muleteers. All transport arrangements worked with great efficiency and smoothness, and this contributed largely to the long marches which were carried out during these summer months. This N.C.O. has maintained a high standard of efficiency during two-and-a-half years of service with the S.P.R.

No.12055 Sergeant Arthur Taylor, Royal Garrison Artillery, att'd Fars Brigade, S.P.R. – Meritorious Service Medal

This N.C.O. did excellent work with the 1st battery S.P.R. during the operations of the Shiraz column May/August 1919, both in action and on the march. Did especially well during the action of Kadarjan 10th June. This N.C.O. has previously been mentioned for good work in action during 1918, and he has done excellent work during two-and-a-half years of service with the S.P.R.

No.9369 Sergeant George Petts, Royal Sussex Regiment, att'd Kirman Brigade, S.P.R. – Meritorious Service Medal

This N.C.O. accompanied the Kirman column S.P.R. in the operations May/August towards Nain and Isfahan. This column saw no fighting but did long marches in hot weather. This N.C.O. has maintained a high standard of efficiency during two-and-a-half years of service with the S.P.R.

Accountant Clerk Muhammad Hafiz, Accounts Department, att'd S.P.R. – Khan Sahib²⁴
 For excellent work done during 1917-1918 at Headquarters, S.P.R.

It is evident that these recommendations were supported by Sir Percy Sykes insofar as they bear his signature. However, he did not have the authority to approve them and, apart from the two MC awards,²⁵ none of the other recommendations mentioned above ever materialized into the granting of the specified award. However, one of the British NCOs listed above, Sergeant Edgar Battle, received a French decoration, the Croix de Guerre (*London Gazette*, 6th November 1918). Sadly, his award was published posthumously as he died on 4th July 1918 and was interred in the Teheran War Cemetery. He was probably a victim of the influenza epidemic which did not leave the South Persia Rifles untouched.

The only award that has been traced to Indian personnel of the Indian Army for service with the South Persia Rifles is the Indian Meritorious Service Medal to No.114 Naik (Acting Havildar) Aeron Jeremiah Solomon Phillips.²⁶

²³ Edgar Harry Battle, Croix de Guerre (France), *London Gazette*, 6th November 1918)

²⁴ 3rd Class Indian Title Badge 'Khan Sahib' – as awarded to Moslems.

²⁵ Both MC awards were published in the *London Gazette*, without citations, on 22 Mar 1919.

²⁶ *Honours and Awards, Indian Army, August 1914 – August 1921* (John Hayward, London, undated); p. 254. Originally published in 1931 as 'Roll of Honour Indian Army 1914-1921.'

The Burma Mounted Rifles²⁷

The origins of the Burma Mounted Rifles are obscure, although it appears to have been a 'war-raised' unit and it is likely that its cost was covered directly by the Government of India, although this was probably only a technicality. It would have been ultimately accountable, through the Governor of Burma (as part of the Burma Police establishment), to the Viceroy of India. With the exception of its British officers, all personnel were eligible for Government of India gallantry and meritorious service awards. It was recruited in the Punjab, as was a large proportion of the Burma Police, and at peak it had a 'class squadron' structure of two Sikh squadrons and a Punjabi Moslem squadron.

Very little has appeared in print about this short-lived unit, although its presence in South Persia is noted numerous times in the official history *Operations in Persia 1914-1919* and in Antony Wynn's *Persia in the Great Game*. It was first raised in May 1916, at which stage its full title was 'The Burma Military Police Mounted Infantry.'²⁸ It was re-designated 'Burma Mounted Rifles' on the 21st May 1918 at the same time as the establishment was increased from two to three squadrons with the help of drafts from India.²⁹ It served in South Persia as part of the Sykes' Mission from April 1917 to May 1919.³⁰

Not all of the recommendations for personnel of the BMR, listed below, resulted in approval of the specified gallantry award. A lower level of award is known to have been approved for some, and no award at all has been traced for several others. The awards are listed below in as much detail as available, and in accordance with the date and location of the relevant action, insofar as this has been established.

*Various actions at Kafta, Meshed-i-Murghabon and Khurrami - June and July 1917*³¹

Lieut. W.R.S. Morley, I.A.R.O., attached Burma Mounted Infantry³²

Military Cross

"This officer showed great gallantry, dash and leadership throughout. His successful surrounding of the main section of the large Bassari tribe, with very inferior numbers, suppressed that tribe and prevented it from joining the Kurshulis in force. When, in the attack on Kafta Fort, one troop on the right who had had the hardest time were dropping out with fatigue and could hardly proceed, this officer, by his fine example to this individual troop, spurred it on to such an extent that it arrived first. I witnessed this myself, being close to this officer at the time. Furthermore, this officer has already been highly commended for his conduct in the engagements of Meshed-i-Murghabon on 1st June 1917 and Khurrami on the 18/19th June 1917."

MBE (Military Division), London Gazette, 17 Jun 1921, '...in recognition of valuable services rendered in connection with minor Military Operations within the Indian Empire (or in territories adjacent thereto).'

²⁷ For convenience, the acronym BMR has been used in this article, albeit not exclusively,

²⁸ Brian D.N. Stevens, *Expansion of Indian Army during WWI* (J.S.A.H.R., Vol. 90, 1998), pp.34-42

²⁹ Brig.-Gen. F.B. Moberley, CB, CIE, DSO, *Operations in Persia 1914-1919* (History of the Great War Based on Official Documents); facsimile edition, H.M.S.O., 1987; p.312

³⁰ Chris Kempton, *Duty & Fidelity, The Indian Army August 1914-1922, Vol. III* (The Military Press, 2009), p.75

³¹ Awards recommended by Maj. V.P.B. Williams, cmdg Dehbid Punitive Column, 14 Jul 1917

³² Lieut. William Roy Stone Morley, I.A.R.O.

Jemadar Partab Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Order of Merit

“For good example, excellent and fearless leadership throughout. His position to the west of Kafta fort was a most delicate one, since any mistake on his part would have brought his whole troop and his led horses under fire of our own attacking force. His work in this position was invaluable. I have already recommended this Indian officer for his gallantry in the engagements of Meshed-i-Murghab and Khurrami on 1st and 19th June 1917.”

Award reduced to IDSM – GGO No. 9 of 1918³³

No.26 Dafadar Chanan Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles³⁴

Indian Order of Merit

“For conspicuous gallantry in recovering the dead body of a comrade under heavy fire from his front and right flank during the attack on Kafta fort. This not only prevented the enemy from getting the body, but also prevented him getting the arms, ammunition and accoutrements of the dead man, the acquisition of which is reckoned at an exceedingly high value by the inhabitants of this country. I personally witnessed this act.”

Award reduced to IDSM – GGO No. 9 of 1918

Actions at Kwaja Jamali, Sarchahan and Charrah, 26th September to 17th October 1917

Major V.P.B. Williams, 4th Cavalry, I.A.

Distinguished Service Order

“Commanded a squadron Burma Mounted Infantry, in the operations against the Lashanis, including the action of Khwaja Jamali 26th September, and against the Sarchahanis 8th October. Commanded the mounted troops, two squadrons Burma Mounted Infantry and one troop South Persia Rifles cavalry, in the action against the Charrahis 17th and 18th October.”

DSO granted – *London Gazette*, 22 Mar 1919 (citation not traced)

Risaldar Farman Ali, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Order of Merit

“For intrepid leadership during the attack against the Lashanis at Khwaja Jamali on 26th September, and for general good work and excellent example as senior Indian officer.”

Award reduced to IDSM – GGO No. 751 of 1918

Jemadar Partab Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Order of Merit

“For bold and intrepid leadership in the action of Khwaja Jamali on 26th September and Charrah on 17th October.”

No gallantry award for this action has been traced; M.i.D., *London Gazette*, 18 May 1918

³³ Later awarded a bar to the IDSM for further gallant service (see pp.45/46 below).

³⁴ Dafadar Chanan Singh later served with the Reserve Battalion, Burma Military Police, and for gallantry with this unit in Burma he was admitted to the 2nd Class Indian Order of Merit as ‘Subadar Channan [sic] Singh, I.D.S.M.’ with effect from 23rd April 1931 (G.G.O. No. 308 of 3rd June 1932). He was also mentioned in despatches published in the *London Gazette* of 20th December 1932 ‘for distinguished services rendered in connection with the operations in Burma during the period December 1930 to March 1932.’ During the same year he was awarded the Indian Police Medal (*London Gazette* of 18th June 1932). On 1st January 1936, he was appointed to the Order of British India (2nd Class) with the honorary title of *Bahadur*.

Jemadar Hazara Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

*Mentioned in despatches*³⁵

“For intrepid and good leadership in the action at Charrah on 17th October, and for gallantry in ousting the enemy at dawn from a sangared hill on 18th October.”

M.i.D., *London Gazette*, 18 May 1918

Operations against Meshedi Jani Khan Arabs near Gumun, 24th and 27th January 1918

Major H.R. Dyer, 35th Scinde Horse, commanding Burma Mounted Rifles

Distinguished Service Order

“Commanded a squadron of Burma Mounted Rifles and two troops of S.P.R. cavalry, in the two actions near Gumun, against Meshedi Jani Khan Arabs, 24th and 27th January 1918. Maj. H.R. Dyer showed initiative, handed his force well, and attacked boldly on both occasions against considerable odds. The Arabs lost heavily and were taught a severe lesson.”³⁶

DSO granted – *London Gazette*, 26 Jul 1918, ‘...for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. In the face of heavy fire he led his men in successful charges with great dash and ability. He twice had his horse shot under him. He proved himself a very able and gallant leader.’

Temporary Capt. W.L.H. Thacker. I.A.R.O., att’d Burma Mounted Rifles

Military Cross

“Led his squadron with skill and dash in the operations against Meshedi Jani Khan Arabs near Gumun, on 24th and 27th January 1918. Showed coolness and judgement in leading his men dismounted to attack the enemy in strong positions.”

MC granted – *London Gazette*, 22 Mar 1919, ‘...for Distinguished Service in connection with Military Operations in the Field, dated 1st January 1919.’

Risaldar Farman Ali Khan [sic], Burma Mounted Infantry

Indian Order of Merit

“On both days he led his troop with great dash, showing great initiative: on the first day in advance guard work, on the second day in appreciating the situation and helping to cut the enemy off the high hills, thus driving them across our front from which they suffered heavily from our fire. I consider him an officer of high ability and worthy of recognition.”

Award reduced to IDSM bar – GGO No. 1703 of 1918

Risaldar Gulzar Singh, Burma Mounted Infantry

Indian Order of Merit

“Has led his troop with great dash on both days, especially on the second day, leading his men to within twenty yards of the enemy – driving them off a strong position on a hill with heavy loss to them. During both days he showed great powers of leadership.”

Award reduced to IDSM – GGO No. 1703 of 1918³⁷

Jemadar Partab Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Order of Merit

“On the first day out with a patrol, he continually sent in information regarding the enemy which was highly valuable. On the second day leading his troop and driving enemy off three successive ridges and getting right round with his troop on high ridges and driving the

³⁵ A gallantry award may well have recommended but, if so, the detail has been omitted.

³⁶ This recommendation is more detailed than the citation published in the *London Gazette*.

³⁷ Gulzar Singh subsequently received the IOM for gallantry (see p.48 below).

enemy across our front where they suffered heavily from our fire, thus completely demoralizing the enemy. He has shown great ability and initiative as a troop leader.”

Award reduced to IDSM bar – GGO No. 1703 of 1918

No. 68 Sowar Uttam Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Victoria Cross

“On 27th January 1918, near Gumun, during an attack by the Burma Mounted Rifles against the Meshedi Jani Khan Arab tribe, displayed great personal gallantry. Sowar Uttam Singh was one of a pair of scouts on the outer flank of the attack, among some low ridges. The scouts were attacked by a body of Arabs who greatly outnumbered them and Sowar Bagh Singh was killed at short range. Sowar Uttam Singh picked up his comrade’s body and tried to carry it off under heavy fire, but was shot through the shoulder at a range of ten yards. Putting down his comrade’s body, he attacked his assailants with the bayonet, fought his way through and re-joined his troop. In spite of his wound, he continued to fight with his troop, and rode back with it fifteen miles to camp at the end of the day.”

Award reduced to 2nd Class Indian Order of Merit – GGO No. 158 of 1919³⁸

No. 16 Dafadar Saif Ali, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Order of Merit

“This N.C.O. with a patrol of six men on the first day did exceptionally fine work showing great ability and initiative. He was attacked by fifteen of the enemy while driving off 500 head of sheep. He told off two men to drive the sheep away while he and the remainder attacked the enemy and kept them at bay for six hours, inflicting loss on them and bringing the sheep into camp, a distance of 10 miles. On the second day he showed great dash in leading his section forward under heavy fire, which led to the complete defeat of the enemy.”

Award reduced to IDSM – GGO No. 1703 of 1918

No. 41 Acting Lance-Dafadar Wariam Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Order of Merit

“Has shown great dash and courage. On the first day during the retirement of the column to camp – whilst the enemy were following us up and attacking – he repeatedly went forward and shot down many of the enemy’s snipers, who were firing on the British officers. On the second day he showed great courage when volunteers were asked to go down and burn the enemy’s camp, which was then under fire. He at once came forward and went down and started firing the camp while under fire from the enemy.”

Award reduced to IDSM – GGO No. 1703 of 1918

No. 147 Sowar Saudagar Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Distinguished Service Medal

“Showed great courage and dash in going down to help to burn the enemy’s camp while under fire.”

IDSM granted – GGO No. 1703 of 1918

No. 80 Signaller Man Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Distinguished Service Medal

“This man has shown great courage during both days operations by keeping up signalling communication with different parts of the columns in exposed positions without fear whilst being heavily fired on during both days of the action. On being wounded the second day, early in the fight, he continued working courageously the whole time and rode back into

³⁸ Uttam Singh was later awarded the IDSM for further gallant service (see p.48 below).

camp with his troop, refusing to go back with the wounded before the column retired. His cheerfulness after being wounded and continuing working made a great impression on the other wounded men.”

IDSMS granted – GGO No. 1703 of 1918

Mentioned in despatches

Burma Mounted Rifles

No. 31 A/c L-Dafadar Karim Din

No. 104 A/c L-Dafadar Tara Singh

No. 159 A/c L-Dafadar Saidan Shah

No. 173 A/c L-Dafadar Sapuran Singh

No. 88 Sowar Tahkar Singh

No. 198 Sowar Tara Singh

No. 221 Sowar Hait Khan

“These Scouts of ‘B’ Squadron Burma Mounted Rifles did excellent work. During the operations on both days their work has been of a very high standard. I am unable to express in words the dash and courage they have shown when in contact with the enemy. The work they have done greatly facilitated the operations being carried out with rapidness and success. Though none of them has been wounded, they have been the first to come under fire and to remain to the last in it. Many of them have had their horses killed or wounded.”

Mentioned in despatches, *London Gazette* 18th May 1918, ‘for good services rendered in connection with the military operations ... in South Persia during the period 1st April 1917 to 31st May 1918.’

The Firuzabad Column, October 1918

Risaldar-Major Farman Ali, IDSMS and bar, Burma Mounted Rifles

Military Cross

‘Commanded a squadron BMR in the actions of Ismailabad on 23rd October, and Ibrahimabad and Deh Barm on 24th October 1918, on each occasion showing initiative and bold leadership. A first class Indian officer, who is thoroughly reliable.’

MC granted – GGO No. 3159 of 1919. His two IDSMS awards are detailed above.

Jemadar Kishen Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Order of Merit

‘In the action of Ismailabad on October 23rd 1918, two scouts of his troop of Burma Mounted Rifles were wounded about 300 yards from the enemy’s position. Jemadar Kishen Singh gallantry led his troop to their rescue and they were brought in. The Jemadar and two more men were severely wounded, and lay exposed to fire from 4.15 p.m. till dusk at 6 p.m., when it became possible to rescue and bring them in.’

IOM 2nd Class granted – GGO No. 2078 of 1919

No. 45 Acting Lance-Dafadar Hukam Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

No. 93 Sowar Abdulla Khan, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Distinguished Service Medal

“Intrepid and intelligent scouts, who obtained under fire and brought in accurate information of the enemy’s dispositions during the action of Ismailabad, October 23rd 1918, and played a dashing part in drawing the enemy under fire at Deh Barm, October 24th 1918, whereby the enemy suffered about 200 casualties.”

IDSMS granted – GGO No. 2078 of 1919

Other recommendations (details and location of action not given)

Signaller No. 17 Dafadar Gulab Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Signaller No. 160 L/Dafadar Ganda Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Distinguished Service Medal

These two I.D.S.M. recommendations were not approved, but both men were mentioned in despatches, *London Gazette*, 18th May 1920 ‘...for good services rendered in connection with the military operations ... in South Persia during the period 1st April 1917 to 31st May 1918.’

The gallantry awards granted to Indian officers and other ranks of the BMR amounted to one MC, three 2nd Class IOMs, and sixteen IDSMS (including two second-award bars). Of these totals, one IOM and four IDSMS are not referred to in the random papers that form the basis of this article, and the available details of these five awards are:

Risaldar Gulzar Singh, IDSM, Burma Mounted Rifles

Indian Order of Merit 2nd Class

“For gallantry on the 25th May 1918, when he extricated his squadron from a very difficult situation in excellent order, and, having done so, returned himself to the open to bring in the body of an officer, and wounded men, under heavy fire. He was conspicuous for his skilful leadership in every action in which engaged.”

GGOs 158 & 882 of 1919^{39 & 40}

No. 24 Dafadar Ralla Singh, BMR

No. 302 Dafadar Mohar Singh, BMR

No. 304 Dafadar Shaikh Sundar, BMR

No. 68 Sowar Uttam Singh, BMR

Indian Distinguished Service Medal

GGO No. 158 of 1919⁴¹

In addition to awards for gallantry, a considerable number of the regiment’s Indian personnel were mentioned in despatches for valuable and distinguished services in South Persia. The names were published in two editions of the *London Gazette* dated 14th May 1920 (twenty-one names for the period 1 Apr 1917 to 31 May 1918) and 20th July 1920 (forty names for the period 1 Jun 1918 to 30 Apr 1919).⁴²

Although the second objective of this article has been to record the recommended gallantry awards of the BMP, insofar as they are known, a detailed description of just one of the actions involving the regiment will give some idea of the nature of its services in South Persia. The action, for which several I.D.S.M. awards were approved, was deemed to be a significant success under difficult circumstances. It was recorded in some detail by Major O.A. Chaldecott, the officer commanding the detail of 124th Baluchis that participated in the action. The following narrative was incorporated in the regiment’s unit history, written eighteen years later by the same officer.⁴³

³⁹ P.P. Hypher, *Deeds of Valour performed by Indian Officers and Soldiers during the period from 1860 to 1925* (Army Department, Simla 1927); pp. 376/396.

⁴⁰ From the evidence of his future rank, Subadar-Major Gulzar Singh was no longer serving with a mounted unit of the Burma Military Police when, in 1923, he was awarded the 1st Grade Indian Title Badge, conferring on him the honorary title *Sardar Bahadur* (No.1643-H of 2 June 1923). His group of medals is illustrated on the opposite page (the Allied Victory Medal is absent).

⁴¹ Rana Chhina, *The Indian Distinguished Service Medal* (Invicta, New Delhi 2001); p.174

⁴² *L.G.*, 14 May 1920, No. 31903 p.5581, 3rd Supplement of 18 May 1920; *L.G.*, 20 Jul 1920, No. 31990 p.7757, 4th supplement of 23 Jul 1920 (available on *London Gazette* website).

⁴³ Oswald.Arthur Chaldecott, *1st Battalion Duchess of Connaught’s Own (Late 124th D.C.O. Baluchistan Infantry) and Tenth Battalion (Late 2/124th Baluchistan Infantry) The Tenth Baluch Regiment* (printed by Times of India Press Bombay and published by Baluch Regt, Karachi, 1935).



SUBADAR-MAJOR *SARDAR BAHADUR* GULZAR SINGH, I.O.M., I.D.S.M.

I.O.M. 2nd Cass; Indian Title Badge 1st Grade *Sardar Bahadur* (Subadar-Major Gulzar Singh, IOM, IDSM, 2nd June 1923); I.D.S.M. (Risaldar Gulzar Singh, Burma Mounted Rifles); British War Medal 1914-18 (77 Sub-Maj. Gulzar Singh, Burma Mtd. Rfls.).

Indian Title Badge, George V, 1st type, 1st grade. *Sardar Bahadur*, 2nd June 1923
Subadar-Major Gulzar Singh, I.O.M., I.D.S.M., Burma Military Police, Burma

“Subadar-Major Gulzar Singh has rendered 32 years service in the Burma Military Police and volunteered for and served in the Great War. He was awarded both the I.O.M. and the I.D.S.M. for gallantry in action. He is a splendid type of Sikh officer, a very good disciplinarian and thoroughly loyal and reliable. He is highly respected by all ranks of the Burma Military Police. Subadar-Major Gulzar Singh is not a member of the Order of British India but he is a first class officer and were it not for the fact that no vacancies existed in the Establishment of the Order of British India, this deserving officer might have been recommended. Subadar-Major Gulzar Singh is 50 years of age and a native of the Punjab.”⁴⁴

Action at Fort Kafta, June 1917

‘In June [1917] the B.M.R. and the Right Wing 124th were sent to Dehbid for the dual purpose of summering in a more healthy climate than Shiraz and keeping order in that district, where raids were continually being made on caravans travelling between Ispahan and Shiraz. Major Williams, B.M.R.,⁴⁵ commanded the Column.

‘At this time the Kurshuli tribe under the leadership of one Atta Khan was camped in a village some 30 miles S.W. of Dehbi. They had been responsible for much of the raiding, and it was decided to punish them. On the 4th July a force consisting of one squadron B.M.R. and one company 124th left Dehbid for this purpose. There were supposed to be

⁴⁴ *Foreign & Political*, No. 621-H/1923

⁴⁵ Major Vivian Perciles Barrow Williams, 4th Cavalry, I.A.; att’d Burma Military Police Mounted Infantry as Adjutant and Q.M.G. (*Indian Army List*, July 1917).

some 300 tents of the Kurshulis themselves stretched along two miles of valley. A friendly tribe was camped a mile to the N.W. of them.

‘The plan was to make a circuitous afternoon and night march to a point three miles from the encampments under the protection of the B.M.R. From here two flanking detachments were to drive the Kurshulis from their encampments and then, in conjunction with the main body, to make a concentric attack on the Fort of Kafta, which was reported to be in a tumbled down state.

‘As it turned out the march was considerably longer than anticipated. Starting at 3 p.m. in the broiling heat, and with regulation halts and an extra half hour at midnight, it was 4 a.m. before the position of assembly was reached. Thirty-five miles was covered and the men were utterly tired out, they had started a week before to keep the Roza and only broke it a couple of days before the march started. This was the only occasion on all their long marches, when it was really difficult to keep them going.

‘From the position of assembly Major O.A. Chaldecott, with half the Baluchis, was sent to attack the encampments to the S.W. He was later to join the O.C. Column in a converging attack on the Fort of Kafta, attacking from the South. Captain Morley,⁴⁶ with a squadron B.M.R., was despatched to the N.W. to get round the Kurshuli encampments on that side and attack the fort from the West. He was, however, delayed by his inability to distinguish between friendly and hostile encampments and so had to ride round them all. In consequence he was too late to be able to cut off the retreat of the Kurshulis. This was particularly unfortunate, as Atta Khan was supposed to be in the encampment attacked by the left party and his capture was most desirable. Major Williams, with some of the B.M.R. and a half company of the 124th, was to await the return of the left flanking party before commencing the attack on Kafta.

‘By the time the left party reached a position overlooking the encampments it was broad daylight and surprise was impossible. Moreover it was discovered later that the Kurshulis had been warned beforehand by a spy, and had even called in the assistance of other sections of the Kashgai tribe to help them.

‘Immediately Major Chaldecott’s party appeared in the valley every man, woman and child, except a few of the very aged, left to report events, fled to the hills beyond driving all the flocks they could collect before them. Immediately afterwards a line of skirmishers was dropped to cover their retirement. The Baluchis cleared the encampments and pursued the tribesmen into the hills, but they were unable to overtake many of them, as they had a long start. They were joined by a troop of the B.M.R., under Jemadar Pertab Singh, which had been sent by Major Williams to clear an encampment South of the fort and to cut off retreat from the fort in that direction.

‘These two parties then returned to re-join Major Williams, whose party had taken up a position in readiness to attack the fort and had been for a considerable time waiting under long range fire.

‘In the meanwhile a reconnaissance of the fort had been made and it was decided to attack at once, the B.M.R. dismounted on the right, the 124th on the left, sufficient space being left in the centre for the M.G.’s, which were to support with fire. The M.G.’s could not be put on the flanks, which were both open to enemy attacks.

‘The fort, of thick mud walls, was situated on the top of a low isolated hill. Round the base of the hill were the walls of a deserted village. On every side of the position stretched, for more than a mile, sun-baked mud flats utterly devoid of cover and on which the spurt of every bullet could be noted. A bold defence, and the fort was untakeable without guns.

⁴⁶ Lieut. William Roy Stone Morley, Indian Army Reserve of Officers; attributed with professional army qualification ‘Has served with Mounted Infantry in the field’ (*Indian Army List*, July 1917).

‘As troops got into position for the attack a party of the enemy, who had evacuated the encampment, returned and made an attack on the left flank and rear of the 124th. They were driven off and the attack on the fort commenced. The fire from the seventy or eighty occupants of the fort was very accurate at the long ranges, but the covering fire of the M.G.’s undoubtedly upset their aim as the advance progressed. The cover of the village was reached with the loss of five men and the enemy declined to wait for the final assault. A mounted party of the B.M.R., and the fire of the attackers who got good targets at the retreating enemy, did considerable execution, some twenty-five of them being accounted for.

‘It was extraordinary to see how very weary men forgot entirely their fatigue as soon as the attack started. The men showed great dash in the attack, though their shooting was a bit wild.

‘The possession of the fort ensured a quiet night, for it was an enormously strong position and overlooked from nowhere. It was as well it was so. Had the attack failed and the force had to camp in the plain, masses of tribesmen would undoubtedly have gathered and made matters difficult for the small tired force.

‘The force returned to Dehbid two days later by a different route without incident. It was evident the tribe had been impressed by the loss of their stronghold. Sir Percy Sykes in his *History of Persia* writes: ‘This feat of arms, which brought much credit to Lt.-Colonel Williams and his officers and men, produced a much greater moral effect, inasmuch as the distance marched, the small size of the column and the strong position of the Kurshulis, who were expecting an attack and had received help from neighbouring tribes, were all known.’⁴⁷

Some references for further reading about South Persia and the Sykes Mission

Brig.-Gen. F.B. Moberly, CB, CIE, DSO, *Operations in Persia 1914-1919* (History of the Great War Based on Official Documents); facsimile edition, H.M.S.O., 1987.

Official, *Report by Colonel G.F. Orton (Inspector-General South Persia Rifles) on the operations of the South Persia Rifles, June to October 1919* (Superintendent, Government Printing, Delhi 1919).

Floreeda Safiri, *South Persia Rifles* (published on ‘Encyclopaedia Iranica’ website, 2008). This account of the SPR history is particularly valuable as it draws upon both British and Iranian sources.

Antony Wynn, *Persia in the Great Game: Sir Percy Sykes, Explorer, Consul, Soldier, Spy* (John Murray, London, 2003). A well researched and readable book which includes one hundred pages on Persia, much of this describing the establishment of the SPR and its operations from 1916 to 1921.

Denis Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians* (Heinemann, London 1977).

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Derek Oldershaw who started the ball rolling, to Paul Baillie for providing correspondence from The National Archives at Kew, to Ed Haynes for the photograph and details of Gulzar Singh’s medals and Title Badge citation, to Harry Fecitt for wise counsel, and to Rana Chhina for correcting the draft.

⁴⁷ O.A. Chaldecott, op. cit., pp.103-105

CORRESPONDENCE

Further to Brian Stevens' article on Boer Prisoners of War in India (Durbar, Spring 2011, Volume 28, No.1, page 3), Professor Omer S.K. Tarin and Sue Farrington have written...

...to confirm the existence of the Boer Prisoner of War cemetery at Kakul, to the east of the Pakistan Military Academy just outside Abbottabad. Indeed Professor Tarin's grandfather lived thereabouts and the Professor remembered hearing of how some 300 or so Boer POWs had been held in a camp at the base of Kakul hill (the village was higher up in the hills). He also recalled stories that some POWs had died during their incarceration and that some sort of memorial was believed to have been erected there to their memory, a story also repeated by the late Chowkidar at the Old Christian Cemetery, Abbottabad.

When the Boer POW camp was finally disbanded in 1902-03, the site became the Army mountaineering & PT school; and, later still, a part of it was converted into the local offices/HQ of the RIASC (Royal Indian Army Supply Corps). After independence/partition in 1947, the site was selected as the new Pakistan Military Academy (PMA).

In spite of access to the area being restricted following the capture of Osama Bin Laden nearby, a Pakistani researcher, Syed Saquib of Abbottabad, was able to visit and photograph the site in March 2012. This confirms Sue Farrington's visits thirty years earlier when she was able to record what survived. Approximately 30 x 20 yards in size, the little walled cemetery contained the outlines of forty-four graves. Two belong to British soldiers, guards at the camp from the 2nd Battn King's Royal Rifle Corps (Sergeant Arthur J. Parrington and Corporal Henry James Taylor), but of special interest was a square white marble stone which research has revealed to be the base of what was once a tall monument (see illustration on the opposite page). The English inscription was replicated on the other side of the monument in Dutch/Afrikaans, with a slight difference in the date:

Sacred to the memory of the Boer Prisoners of War whose names are here recorded who died at Kakul between the years 1901-1903 and who are buried close to this stone.

Heilig ter gedachtenis van de Boeren Krygsgevangenen wier namen hieronder gegeven worden die gestorven te Kakool gedurende het jaar 1902 en die in de nabylheid van dezen steen begraven zyn.

It is believed that up to 4,000 prisoners of war arrived from South Africa in the Spring of 1902, of which around 1,000 went to Pakistan, twenty-three of whom are listed on the monument. Three more are buried in Sialkot, the site of another camp, with further camps on the Indian side of the border at Ahmednagar, Amballa, Bellary, Chennai, Jhansi, Kaity, Mumbai, Nainithal, Shahjahanpur, Solan, Trichi and Wellington. It is good news indeed that those who died so far from home remain safely where they lie in this isolated nullah in north west Pakistan.



THE BOER CEMETERY AT KAKUL NULLAH – PHOTOGRAPHED IN MARCH 2012
Reproduced with the kind permission of Syed Saqib of Abbottabad

BOOK REVIEW

Alan Jeffrey, Patrick Rose (editors), *The Indian Army 1939-1947 – Experience and Development*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012; hardbound; 244 pages, £65.00, ISBN 978-1-4094-3553-2 <www.ashgate.com>

In May 2009 the Imperial War Museum and King's College London jointly organised a one day conference at the IWM to consider the Indian Army in the era of the Second World War and the ensuing period of Partition. The conference was opened by our President, Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, and attracted a number of accomplished and knowledgeable speakers. Several members of the Society were present at this well attended event and enjoyed a wide ranging presentation of subjects. As with all such conferences, however, the detail of the presentations tended to be lost by the end of a fascinating and informative day. Now, thanks to Alan Jeffrey and Patrick Rose, we can not only re-live some of that occasion but, in this excellent book, explore in greater depth than was even possible at the conference the thoughts and ideas of the presenters, with the added advantage that we have their footnotes to study in greater detail.

The opening chapter, by Professor Ashley Jackson of King's College London, explores the place of the Indian Army in the wider context of British colonial and Commonwealth forces covering not only the fighting units but also the volunteers, labour corps and non-combatants. He examines the rapid expansion of the Army and the impact on training and, therefore, the Army's effectiveness in the early years of the war.

Patrick Rose examines the Indian Army command culture, fostered in the pre-war years by the campaigns on the North West Frontier and by the demands of internal security operations and shows that, despite some early set-backs against the Japanese, the flexibility allowed by this culture enabled subsequent successes in the later years of the war.

Professor Raymond Callahan's discussion of Churchill's ambivalence towards the Indian Army highlights a serious weakness in the war time Prime Minister's overview of operations, a subject that has more recently been explored again in another conference held at Oxford University in 2012.

Our member Alan Jeffreys, a co-editor of this book, explores how the Indian Army's pre-war training focus on frontier defence and internal security needed to be rapidly adapted and developed in order that it could more effectively fight against a modern fighting army in both the Far East and Europe. Its ability to produce effective training instructions and publications, he argues, was more successful than in the British Army, due in no small part to the influence of officers such as Francis 'Gertie' Tucker and David 'Punch' Cowan of the Directorate of Military Training, both subsequently to serve in senior command roles.

Tucker again comes under the spotlight in Chris Mann's admirable study of the Battle of Wadi Akarit in April 1943 and the place of 4th Indian Division in the 8th Army in North Africa (Tucker assumed command of the Division in December 1941).

Society members Tim Moreman and Graham Dunlop then take the study onto Burma, with Tim looking at the Indian Army development of bunker-busting and Graham looking at the campaign in Burma from Mandalay and Meiktila to the re-capture of Rangoon in 1945.

The immediate post-war deployment of 20th Indian Division to French Indo-China is covered by Daniel Marston before IMHS member Ashok Nath and David Omissi of Hull University look at the impact of Partition on the Indian Armoured Corps and the Gurkha regiments respectively, again the last subject having been pursued at a more recent 2012 Oxford conference.

Finally, Robert Johnson of Oxford University looks at Small Wars and Internal Security: The Army in India, 1936-1946.

It is, perhaps, surprising that this period of Indian Army history is not well-covered by modern scholarship and is not that well understood but as Sir John Chapple noted in his Foreword, it is a period “about which much historical research continues and continues to be needed”. This book is a very readable outcome of an inspiring conference and lays the groundwork for further research. It should be read by anyone with a serious interest in the role of the Indian Army in the Second World War. Highly recommended.

ANMcC

Tom Donovan (editor), *They Gave Us Each A Medal – The Collected Works of Captain Tim Ash, MBE*, Tom Donovan Editions, 2012; hardbound with slip case; 406 pages including both colour and black and white plates with a large coloured folding military map of India in 1858 in end pocket; £75 plus postage, ISBN 978-1-905968-05-3 <www.tomdonovaneditions.com>

In the obituary of former Society Vice President Tim Ash (*Durbar*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Autumn 2012) it was mentioned that earlier in 2012 Tim had decided to have his collected works published in one volume. He did not live to see the result but his widow Ruth bravely continued with the project aided by Tom Donovan and other friends of Tim. This beautifully produced book is the result of that effort.

Over a period of some thirty years Tim produced sixty-six articles, twenty of which were first published in *Durbar*. Eighteen were published in Medal News, twenty two in the *Journal* of the Orders and Medals Research Society and one in the Royal Signals regimental magazine *The Wire*. The overwhelming concentration of Tim’s research was on the Indian Mutiny period of 1857 and 1858, though he was also interested in the H.E.I.C.’s educational establishments, with the China Wars of 1840-42 and 1857-60, and in events further afield.

These collected works have been laid out by Tom Donovan in seven main parts: Part One – Arabia; Part Two – The Indian Mutiny; Part Three – India, The Frontier and Elsewhere; Part Four – Educational Establishments of the East India Company; Part Five – China; Part Six – Research Guides; and Part Seven – Miscellaneous.

Tim’s writing style and the depth of his research needs no introduction to members of this Society – his articles were always well crafted and well received. As Cliff Parrett has noted in the Introduction “The joy of these articles is that they take a good measure of primary research and weave it into stories that are both interesting and easy to read.”

We should be thankful that Tim devoted so much time and effort to producing such articles, that he decided to collect them together into one volume, and that Ruth and Tom Donovan saw the project through following Tim’s death. Even if you have read the articles before in their original journals it is well worth investing in this marvellous book.

ANMcC