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A NOTABLE BATTLE HONOUR – BENI BOO ALI

Tim Ash

This Battle Honour was awarded to the following infantry regiments of the East India Company's Bombay Army by a Bombay General Order of 11th February 1831.

- 1st Bombay European Regiment
- 1st/2nd, 2nd/2nd, 1st/3rd, 1st/4th, 1st/7th and 1st (Marine)/11th Regiments of Bombay Native Infantry

It ceased to exist as a Battle Honour on the Colours of a Crown Regiment in 1922 when the 2nd Battalion Royal Regiment of Dublin Fusiliers, the successor to the 1st Bombay European Regiment, was disbanded.

BENI BOO ALI was, however, perpetuated in the British Indian Army, up to partition in 1947, on the Colours of the following infantry regiments:

- 1/5 Mahratta Light Infantry (formerly 1/2 Bombay N.I.)
- 1/6 Rajputana Rifles (formerly 2/2 Bombay N.I.)
- 2/5 Mahratta Light Infantry (formerly 1/3 Bombay N.I.)
- 10/4 Bombay Grenadiers (formerly 1/7 Bombay N.I.)

All of these passed to the Army of the newly independent India, the successors of 1/4 and 1/11 Bombay Native Infantry having been disbanded in 1933. BENI BOO ALI may well still adorn the Colours of these four regiments, or their successors, in the Army of the Republic of India. I should be interested to know if this is so.

BENI BOO ALI is an unusual Battle Honour, the name referring to an Arab tribe rather than a geographical place. Also, most, but certainly not all, 19th century Battle Honours are commemorated with a campaign medal, or a clasp on such. BENI BOO ALI is not. It may, therefore, be considered of interest how an Arab tribe came to be recorded for posterity as a Battle Honour of the British Indian Armies, particularly as the first encounter with the tribe resulted in a resounding defeat for the Bombay troops involved, and the subsequent Court Martial of the officer commanding them.

From the last decade of the 18th century the maritime trade routes of the Persian Gulf, the South Arabian coast, and even as far as the Red Sea in the west, and the western coast of India in the east, were plagued by the depredations of Arab pirates headed by the tribe of the Quwasim, based on their port of Ras al Khaimah on the southern shore of the Persian Gulf. The Quwasim were followers and supporters of the fanatical Wahabi faction of central Arabia. The only other indigenous maritime power in the region was the Sultanate of Oman, in perpetual conflict with the Quwasim and the Wahabis, and therefore very much allied to the British cause against the Quwasim pirates.

During the first two decades of the 19th century a number of maritime expeditions were mounted from Bombay against the Quwasim in the Persian Gulf. But it was not until the expedition of 1819, commanded by Major General Sir William Grant Keir, late of the 22nd Light Dragoons, supported by the Sultan of Oman, when the port of Ras al Khaimah was attacked, their vessels destroyed and the town occupied, that the Quwasim were brought to account, together with the other tribes of that coast which followed them, and signed the General Treaty of Peace of 1820 with the Bombay Government.

The Interpreter appointed to General Keir for the negotiations with the Quwasim and other Sheikhs, and who was the author of the General Treaty of Peace, was a King's, not a Company's officer - Captain Thomas Perronet Thompson, 17th Light Dragoons. This officer commanded the garrison of the Bombay troops left at Ras al Khaimah in 1820 and subsequently at the island of Kishm, when the other troops were withdrawn.

On a visit to Muscat, Thompson was apprised by the Sultan of Oman that one of his tribes, the Beni Boo Ali, had fallen under the influence of the Wahabis and was indulging in piracy. The Sultan requested Thompson, and therefore the British, to assist him to coerce the tribe which occupied an area bordering on the Arabian Sea to the south. Thompson's orders in respect of action in suppression of piracy were two fold - there must be proof of acts of piracy, and military action taken against any pirates was to be confined to coastal areas only, with no military involvement in the interior of Arabia.

Thompson decided to assist the Sultan against the Beni Boo Ali, with the consent of the Bombay Government but in doing so contravened the orders he had been given. No acts of piracy were actually proved against the tribe - rather they were the rebellious subjects of the Sultan whom he wished to punish and restore to his control, though an emissary sent by Thompson to deal with the Sheikhs of the Beni Boo Ali had been murdered when he went ashore at Al Ashkhara in September 1820.

A military expedition was mounted from Muscat, the Sultan with about 2,000 Arabs, accompanied by Thompson with about 600 Bombay European and Native troops. The expedition proceeded by sea to the Omani port of Sur and from there marched inland towards the Belad Beni Boo Ali, some 40 odd miles distant. In so doing, Thompson acted in defiance of his instructions by being militarily involved in the interior.

On 9th November 1820 the expedition reached its objective. The Beni Boo Ali tribesmen, armed with fearsome double bladed swords, though outnumbered, suddenly appeared from concealment, charged down on the surprised troops and wrought death and destruction upon them. Both Thompson and the Sultan were lucky to escape with their lives. More than 300 of the Bombay troops were killed, including seven British officers. It was a defeat "in which British Arms sustained a disgrace which they never before experienced in Asia". For this, also, should the Beni Boo Ali be remembered!

Thompson was blamed for the debacle and was eventually recalled to Bombay under arrest where he faced a General Court Martial on four charges, only on one of which was he found guilty and sentenced to be publicly reprimanded.

However, prior to Thompson's recall and Court Martial the Bombay Government, smarting under this ignoble defeat, took appropriate measures to avenge their loss of prestige and despatched a strong force, numbering no less than 117 British Officers, 1,263 British rank

and file and 1,686 Native troops, under the command of Major General Lionel Smith, H.M. 65th Regiment of Foot, an old Indian and Persian Gulf campaigner and later to be the President of Thompson's Court Martial.

The force reached the port of Sur on 27th January 1821 and took up its quarters to await the assemblage of animal transport for the march into the interior. On the night of 11th February the lines of the Headquarters Staff and the Bombay European Regiment, some distance from the main camp, were surprised by a large attacking party of the Beni Boo Ali in which one British officer and 15 other ranks were killed, and three officers and upwards of twenty other ranks wounded. The Beni Boo Ali left 12 men dead. After this foretaste of the enemy's aggressive quality Smith moved his HQ to the safety of the main camp.

By the third week of February the force commenced its march to the Belad Beni Boo Ali and arrived on 2nd March where the skeletons of Thompson's casualties were still strewn around. The Beni Boo Ali warriors, about a thousand strong, poured out of their defences and fell sword in hand upon the right Brigade. After some stiff fighting and confusion the rush of the Beni Boo Ali was stemmed and their defeat was now inevitable. The village surrendered and the warriors laid down their swords. British casualties were 26 killed and 171 wounded while the Beni Boo Ali suffered around 250 fatalities and many more wounded.

About 150 of the Beni Boo Ali, including their principal Sheikhs, were taken prisoner and sent off to Bombay where they were imprisoned for a period of two years. They were then returned to their homes at Government expense and provided with funds to enable them to make a fresh start. BENI BOO ALI therefore commemorates not only a victory but also a disastrous defeat, as well as an insignificant Arab tribe whose name would hardly have been recorded in the annals of British Indian history had Captain T.P. Thompson not exceeded his orders.



A UNIQUE SAPPER REMEMBRANCE

Colonel J V P Braganza IA BE FIE FIED CENC MIEE

The following article by Colonel J V P Braganza was spotted by Phil Daybell in the Royal Engineers Journal for April 1992. He sought and obtained the approval of the Secretary, Institution of Royal Engineers, for the article to be reproduced here and we acknowledge with gratitude that approval.

"This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,

This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,

Fear'd by their breed, and famous by their birth,

Renowned for their deeds as far from home...

For Christian service and true chivalry..."

There are many such blessed plots scattered over the cardinal points of the subcontinent of India. One such is the small two and a half acre British cemetery at the District town of Satara, 110 km South of Pune (Poona). Enclosed by a conventional black stone wall, it attempts to preserve the remains of some thirty persons who died in the course of their administering this outpost of a once mighty Empire.

In the course of a hike through the Sahayadri hills sometime in 1964, a party of Bombay Sappers bivouacking at Satara, decided to explore the cemetery. They were astounded to stumble across the grave of one of their Colonels Commandant, Lieutenant General William West Goodfellow CB, who died there on 18 September 1901 at the age of 68 years. The stones of the grave had been displaced, and the cross at the head broken by stray animals that had entered the enclosure to graze. The inscription on the three rectangular marble blocks, which had formed the pedestal for the cross, was intact. Unfortunately the records of the Bombay Engineer Group and Centre at Kirkee could disclose little about the General. A reference was therefore made to the Secretary of the Institution of Royal Engineers, Chatham, who was able to provide at least the mentions of the Goodfellow family in the volumes of Colonel Sandes on *The Military Engineer in India*. From these a sketch of their lives was pieced together.

Lieutenant General William West Goodfellow was commissioned in 1850 as an ensign and posted to the Bombay Sappers and Miners. He went through the normal duties and experiences of a regimental engineer, except for the expedition to Abyssinia in 1867 under Lieutenant General Sir Robert Napier, himself a distinguished engineer officer. After making the initial reconnaissance of the port of Massawa and its hinterland, Captain W W Goodfellow, as he then was, was joined by the 3rd and 4th Field Companies of the Bombay Sappers, and allotted the arduous task of opening up the land communications to the well-nigh impregnable fortress of Magdala. The success of these efforts has been preserved in Alan Moorehead's classic *The White Nile*.

On return to India, Captain Goodfellow was seconded to the Public Works Department of the Bombay Government, first at Belgaum and later at Satara. Many of the roads, bridges and government buildings still standing in these Districts were planned and executed by him. Remarkable is the fact that both his father Lieutenant General William B Goodfellow, and his grandfather Lieutenant General C Goodfellow, not only served with the Bombay Sappers and Miners but also all three attained the rank of general and were appointed Colonels Commandant of their regiment. Even more notable, another member of this outstanding family, Lieutenant General C A Goodfellow VC was awarded his decoration for outstanding gallantry during the capture of the coastal fortress of Beyt in Kathiawar in 1859. Like the others, he also became a Colonel Commandant of the Bombay Sappers. Perhaps no other family that served the Indian Army can show a better record of service. The local vernacular newspaper, which carried an account of the short ceremony described below, pointed out the main lesson to be learnt from the family of Goodfellows: establishing a tradition of two or more generations serving a regiment; and expressed the hope that in this manner the fighting qualities of the Maratha peasantry would be upheld.

At a short but moving ceremony on Christmas Eve, 1991, the officiating Commandant of the Bombay Engineer Group and Centre, Colonel T G Shanker, laid a new tombstone on the old grave of General W W Goodfellow, after the local Anglican pastor had blessed it in the presence of a select group of Bombay Sappers. Floral tributes having been placed, two buglers sounded the Last Post, followed by the Rouse. As a final touch to enhance the dignity

and beauty of the site, two *gul mohur* (Flame of the Forest) trees were planted on each side of the grave head. An ex-Subedar of the Bombay Sappers, living close by, has volunteered to keep an eye on the grave so that it remains intact.

The plinth of the tomb is of black Cuddappah stone with an inclined marble slab on which the original inscription appears in black letters above a cross. Below the cross is the dedication recording that it was presented by the Bombay Sappers. Except for the slab and its inscription, the entire work of installing the tomb was done by Subedar Pal Singh and a working party from the Chief Instructor of Workshops. To at least one of those present, a well-nigh 30-year dream had been fulfilled.

And the original pedestal stones? Colonel Shanker agreed that they be taken and placed in the Group Museum at Kirkee. Along with 'Goodfellow Road', which now leads past the Bombay Sappers Headquarters, they remain a singular memento to an outstanding family that the Regimental History can preserve.

The stones that stand,
The roads that rise,
The beasts that stalk,
The trees that fork,
The men that talk,
The shining sand,
The gates that lead to Paradise

Web site note: The original article reproduced three illustrations which, unfortunately, are not of sufficient quality to use here. They showed:

1. the new marble grave slab with the original inscription above - IN LOVING MEMORY OF GENERAL WILLIAM WEST GOODFELLOW, C.B. COLONEL COMMANDANT ROYAL (LATE BOMBAY) ENGINEERS DIED AT SATARA 18TH SEPTEMBER 1901 AGED 68 YEARS, then cross and, below that, the dedication by the Bombay Sappers - A TRIBUTE OF LOYALTY AND RESPECT FROM THE BOMBAY SAPPERS DECEMBER 1991 - R.I.P.
2. Bombay Sapper officers at the grave.
3. Buglers from the Regiment sounding the last post

CHURCHILL AND THE CHAH-WALLAHS

Shamus O.D. Wade

On Saturday, March 13, 1954, the following item appeared in the Daily Mail:

CHAH-WALLAH MUST GO, SAYS ARMY

From Daily Mail Correspondent KUALA LUMPUR, Friday.

"Four hundred men who bring British soldiers their tea in bed have been sacked. They are chah-wallahs, Pakistani professional tea-makers.

Most of them served with the Army in India and the Burma campaign before following the soldiers to Malaya.

Today petitions signed by more than 300 chah-wallahs were sent to General Templer, and to Britain's Minister of Defence and Secretary of State for War, pleading for their Jobs back.

Said Winzer Gul, organiser of the petitions: "We bring the soldiers tea in bed. The NAAFI cannot do that.

When the soldiers go to the Jungle at two o'clock in the morning we open and serve tea and sandwiches, but the NAAFI stays closed. Some chah-wallahs follow the soldiers into Jungle camps."

At 11.30 pm the same day, the following telegram was sent by Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister, from Chartwell.

PRIME MINISTER TO GENERAL TEMPLER

Private and Personal

Please have me fully informed about Chah-wallahs before any action is taken. Have informed departments. 13.3.54

By 16 March the Chah-wallahs' petition had reached the Minister of Defence and a copy was sent to Churchill. It read as follows:

Winzer Gul & 400 others (Chahwalas) 83, Batu Road Kuala Lumpur

12th March, 1954

To:-

- (1) H.E. The General Officer Commanding Headquarters, Malaya, Kuala Lumpur
- (2) H.E. The High Commissioner, Federation of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur
- (3) The Hon'ble Minister of Defence, 10, Downing Street, London, UK

Your Excellencies, The humble petition of Chahwalas serving in various Units of the Military Forces in the Federation of Malaya most respectfully showeth as follows:-

1. We are brought up in such a way that we have been trained as professionals in this profession - as Chahwala - by our forefathers who also indulged in the same profession but we have served in every place or country we have gone with the Military Units with the required efficiency, diligence and honesty that we feel the pride of having played our share in our duties with great satisfaction to our minds. We accompanied the fighting forces of the British Military Units to India, Malaya and Burma and we had to return to Malaya with the forces after the cessation of the hostilities of World War II. We are not highly educated and while serving in the forces we have had no chance to indulge into any other kind of business and we have now grown in age too late to start our lives in any other form of livelihood. This type of work has become our means of livelihood.
2. We have had worked with such feelings of loyalty that we have earned great appreciation and admiration of staff and high ranking officials and in evidence of this submission we can produce the testimonials and recommendations we have got from one and all and on the strength of these we have been able to secure jobs either in this Unit or the other. We have done the same work in peace-time and at all stages of warfare and we therefore say that our loyalty is unchallenged.
3. We have now come to understand that all of us are to be dispensed with and this (sic) rendered unemployed and that our work is to be entrusted to NAAFI. If this happens then we will starve to death. We have therefore submitted this petition to Your Excellencies for Your Excellencies indulgence in this vital matter affecting our livelihood and pray for justice.
4. We submit that after paying rates of rebates to the Military Units we have managed to earn our livelihood and bring up our families and our children and by our employment the units have benefitted a lot. We have been supplying food-stuffs to the Units after buying same from the NAAFI at the cost price and earned on the other stuffs purchased from outside. In such a capacity we submit we have not been profiteering and we have been economical thus giving things at cheap prices to the military personnel and thus served a useful purpose.
5. We pray to Your Excellencies to consider this petition from all angles and humanitarian (sic) point of view and allow us to earn our livelihood and not allow us to starve to death by depriving us from the type of work we have been doing so far and giving same to NAAFI.
6. For this gracious act we shall pray for the long life and prosperity of Your Excellencies. Your Excellencies Petitioners are all Pakistanis and pray for justice.

(signed by 17 Pakistani Chah-wallahs)

On 17 March Churchill received the following telegram from General Templer:

CONFIDENTIAL

To the Secretary of State for the Colonies

FROM FEDERATION OF MALAYA

(Gen. Sir G. Templer)

IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

No.199.

Addressed to S. of S. (please pass copies to Ministry of Defence and War Office).

Repeated to Commissioner General for the U.K. In South East Asia No. 56 (please pass copy to FARELF).

Following personal for Prime Minister from Templer. Your Personal No. 38 of 14th March refers.

1. No alteration in rules for employment of char wallahs has been made, nor is any contemplated.
2. Present rules are as follows:

"In camps and barracks where there are N.A.A.F.I. facilities, units contractors, hawkers, pedlars and others will not under any circumstances be permitted to sell any form of goods which are on sale through N.A.A.F.I. The only exception to this ruling is that unit char wallahs will be permitted to sell tea only at times when the N.A.A.F.I. canteen is shut".

3. Many char wallahs have for a long time continued to infringe these rules. In spite of repeated warnings, by selling such goods as toilet articles, soap, chocolate, boot polish, etc. in competition with N.A.A.F.I.
4. Effect of such competition is to reduce N.A.A.F.I. sales and consequently rebates which N.A.A.F.I. pay to the units for the benefit of the troops.
5. Action has therefore been taken to dismiss those char wallahs who infringe the rules. In all cases at least two warnings over period of two months have been given and final notice has in no case been less than one month and usually more.
6. Am having petition fully investigated and will then report fully.

Copies sent to:

- Private Secretary, 10, Downing Street.
- Private Secretary, Ministry of Defence.
- Private Secretary, War Office.

On the corner of General Templer's actual telegram, which still exists, is written in Churchill's hand, "They have been faithful to us for a long time, which is more than a lot of people have."

On the same day the following telegram was sent off:

CONFIDENTIAL

Outward telegram

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

To: FEDERATION OF MALAYA

(Gen. Sir. G. Templer)

IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

PERSONAL NO.40

Following personal from Prime Minister for Templer.

Begins.

Your telegram No.199

They have been faithful to us for a long time, which is more than a lot of people have.

Ends.

Copies sent to:

- Private Secretary, 10, Downing Street.
- Private Secretary, Ministry of Defence.
- Private Secretary, War Office.

Churchill, of course, was quite right. The heirs to the Chah-wallahs are still serving in Northern Ireland where NAAFI does not go. A soldier, who had served in Northern Ireland, told me how, if you came in from a patrol in the small hours of the morning, one of them would always turn out to make you something hot to eat. In recent years, one of their number was murdered by the IRA.

Note. The Commonwealth Forces History Trust has copies of this and further correspondence between Churchill and General Templer about the Chah-wallahs.

INDIAN ARMY UNIT ABBREVIATIONS AS FOUND ON BRITISH MEDALS

Malcolm Jesson

Further to the request carried in Vol. 10, No. 1, I collect IGS Medals 1908-35 and the following abbreviations which appear on those medals are additional to the list published so far:

MILY.ACCT.DEPT. Military Account Department (on Afghanistan 1919)

EDUCIN DEPT Education Department North West Frontier Province (on
NWFP Afghanistan 1919)

INTGCE.CPS.NWF	Intelligence Corps North West Frontier (on Afghanistan 1919)
I.M.D.	Indian Medical Department (on Waziristan 21/24)
N.M. BTN	Nilgari Malabar Battalion (on Malabar 21/22)
POL. DEPT	Political Department (on N.W.F. 30/31)
A.T. COY	Animal Transport Company (on N.W.F. 30/31)
I.H.C.	Indian Hospital Corps (on N.W.F. 30/31)

INDIAN SIGNAL CORPS - DRESS

Alan Harfield

Although the Indian Army Order published in April 1920 ruled that all Signal units of the Sappers and Miners would become a Corps, and the title designated was the Indian Corps of Signals, it was some years before the new Corps received an authorised cap badge and buttons. The recommended design of the new cap badge and buttons was discussed in detail by the units that were serving in India, but it was the British War Office and Royal Signals Corps Committee that finally approved and authorised the badge and button design for the Indian Corps of Signals.

At the 20th meeting of the Royal Corps of Signals Corps Committee, held on 6 December, 1933, the minutes noted that India had been informed by the War Office that approval had been given for the following dress and embellishments to be worn by the India Signal Corps:

- "...Cap and collar badges. The figure of Mercury, mounted on a globe, enclosed in an oval band having thereon the words "Indian Signal Corps" the whole surmounted by a five pointed star.
- Buttons. Similar to R. Signals buttons, but having the words "Indian Signal Corps" in place of "Royal Corps of Signals".
- Mess Kit. The jacket to be scarlet with scarlet facings with Indian Signal Corps badges and buttons.
- The Waistcoat. To be white with Indian Signal Corps buttons.
- Overalls. Wellington boots and spurs. As for officers R. Signals
- Cap. Forage. I.P. to be blue with gold edging with two small Indian Signal Corps buttons at the front and the Indian Signal Corps badge on the near side.
- The Sword to be similar to that for R. Signals, substituting the Indian Signal Corps badge for the Royal Cypher and R. Signals badge ..."

The War Office dress decision was also approved by the Royal Signals Corps Committee at their 20th meeting.



Detail sketch of the badge



Note: The annotation below the large button reads "It is suggested as an alternative, that the figure of Mercury be represented as standing on a map of India instead of the World"

Acknowledgement The above information, and sketches, are published by courtesy of the Royal Signals Museum.

THE REGIMENTAL COLOURS OF THE JAIPUR STATE FORCES

Tony McClenaghan

BACKGROUND

Located in the Rajputana area of northwest India, the former Indian Princely State of Jaipur covered an area of 16,000 square miles. Legend traces the history of the State to Rama, one of whose sons, Kush, emigrated to Rohtas. In time his descendants, the Kachhawa clan,

crossed into Rajputana where Kakildeva (1036-1039 A.D.) took the city of Amber from the Meenas and established it as his capital. There were 21 rulers between Kakildeva and the arrival of Man Singh I who gained fame as one of Akbar's best generals, responsible with his Kachhawas for expanding Akbar's area of rule into Kabul, the Hindu Kush and Bengal. During this period of Mughal rule the highest military rank conferred by the Emperors was *Panch Hazari*, Commander of 5,000 troops. But Akbar conferred on Man Singh the special rank of *Sapta Hazari*, Commander of 7,000 troops.

Akbar's descendant, Shah Jahan, was similarly served by Man Singh's descendant, Jai Singh I, who was created *Panch Hazari* in 1635 and given the title *Mirza Raja* by Shah Jahan in April 1639. Following the death in 1707 of Shah Jahan's successor, Aurangzeb, the Rajput chiefs began to see in the slowly crumbling Mughal Empire the roots of their own independent states. Maharaja Jai Singh II (1699-1744), the great warrior-astronomer, decided in 1728 that it was time to move down from the mountain-top fort at Amber (earlier re-named Jaigarh Fort) to establish his new capital, Jaipur, on the plains.

The Jaipur Army counted a total of thirty six battle honours won between 1568 and 1787 but trouble from neighbouring rulers began to make life somewhat difficult and Jagat Singh II (1803-1818 A.D.) signed a Treaty of amity and friendship with the British on 12 December 1803.

Another treaty, by which Jaipur was declared a Protectorate, was signed on 2 April 1818. As a result Jaipur was required to pay an annual monetary tribute of £40,000 but was not required to maintain either Subsidiary or Contingent forces. Nevertheless, the State did maintain an army which, in 1873, numbered 174 guns, 768 gunners, 630 regular and 3,000 irregular cavalry, 2,000 regular and 8,700 irregular infantry. With the exception of 6,000 Nagas, irregulars of a quasi-religious military order, the troops were considered by the British to be of inferior quality.

Maharaja Madho Singh II (1880-1922) was responsible for bringing the first Jaipur troops into the Imperial Service Troops scheme under a Treaty, signed on 28 January 1899, although at the request of the British this was limited to a Transport Corps only. No front line troops were brought into the scheme at this stage.

Madho Singh had no heir and so adopted his nephew, Mormukat Singh, second son of Raja Sawai Singh, the Chief of Isarda. On adoption Mormukat Singh was given the new name of Man Singh and 18 months later, on 7 September 1922, when only 11 years old, Man Singh became Maharaja. During his minority the State was ruled by a Council of Regency. Man Singh II was educated at Mayo College and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. On 14 March 1931 he was invested with full powers by the Viceroy, Lord Irwin.

One of his first acts, on 29 September 1931, was to combine certain elements of the Jaipur State Forces into a Corps entitled 'The Jaipur Corps', with himself as Chief Commandant and Colonel Thakur Amar Singh as Commander. Numbers of regulars were reduced while the training and efficiency of the remainder were improved. Old feudal contingents were disbanded as were the Nagas. It is interesting to note that, whereas in 1873 the Nagas had been considered the best of the army, by 1932 they had become virtually worthless as soldiers. Jaipur's new Corps now numbered 3,500, two thirds of whom were front line troops and the remainder intended for internal security duties.

Elements of the old State Army had already been added to the re-vamped Imperial Service Troops scheme, now re-named the Indian State Forces scheme, in 1922 and 1923 to supplement the Transport Corps already there. Gradually other elements of the new Corps were also transferred into the ISF scheme.

THE COLOURS



Fig. 1.1

Photo ANM

The *Pachrang* (five coloured) Flag of Amber (the Jaipur State flag) (figure 1.1) was rectangular, divided into five equal horizontal stripes of red, yellow, green, white and dark blue. According to one note (author not known) it commemorated a battle in Samvat 1630 (1573 A.D.) when Maharaja Man Singh defeated five Pathan chiefs and took the five separate colours of their flags to make one flag for himself. I have been unable to identify this battle.

Web site note: Since identified as an occasion when Maharaja Man Singh was sent by Emperor Akbar to fight the King of Turan who, supported by the five Pathan chiefs, was intending to invade Kabul.

KACHHAWA HORSE

Initially one squadron of the State Army was reorganised on 1 December 1923, accepted as an ISF unit on 13 December and designated the Jaipur Lancers. It was later expanded and, on 1 September 1939, was re designated Kachhawa Horse. It spent the war years in the State on anti-dacoit duties although "A" Squadron also served in Sind against the Hurs, returning to the State in October 1943.

One squadron of the Jaipur Lancers/Kachhawa Horse, Bhoop Squadron, formed a mounted ceremonial Body Guard to the Maharaja. On 20 October 1939 it was presented with the *Togh*, or Royal Standard. On 1st April 1940 Bhoop Squadron was separated from the remainder of the Kachhawa Horse and, on 24 September 1940, was re-designated the Rajendra Hazari

Guards. The *Togh* went to the new unit whose title was taken from the Sanskrit word "*Rajendra* "(Maharaja) and the Moghul title *Panch Hazari* which, as mentioned previously, referred to the number of troops a commander could maintain.



Fig. 1.2

Photo ANM

A *Togh* (the word is Persian and means flag) had originally been presented by Aurangzeb to Jaipur's rulers. During this period the Royal Insignia was known as the *Mahi Muratab*. Carried on a gold or silver pole, the fish device was paraded at all functions attended by the Emperor. The new version of the *Togh* (figure 1.2) was re-designed by Man Singh II and consisted of a red square flag with, in the centre, instead of Mahi Muratab, a golden yellow *Tirsool*, or ornamental squid, with trident tail pointing upwards, as used on the top of temples. In the four corners, golden ribbons with battle honours (in the Devnagri language with dates in the Vikram Samvat calendar) as follows:

Hoist (left) side.

Top

(1) NIMI Samvat 1686. (The year equates to 1630 A.D. and the honour commemorates a battle in the Deccan when 12,000 Afghan rebels were defeated by Imperialists, including a Kachhawa contingent. Several of Man Singh's relatives were killed).

(2) BALKH & BADAKHSHAN Samvat 1703. (The date equates to June 1647 A.D. and commemorates an expedition under Aurangzeb to quell the Uzbeka in the area of the Oxus River. During the return to Kabul the Kachhawa defended the rear against Hazara hillmen).

Bottom

(1) PURANDAR Samvat 1716. (The date equates to June 1659 A.D. and commemorates the capture of the fort at Purandar from the Mahrattas under Shivaji by Imperialists under Mirza Raja (Jai Singh I)

(2) MAONDA Samvat 1824. (Commemorates the defeat of Jats under Jat Raja Jawahir Singh by a Kachhawa army under Dalel Singh on 14 December 1767 A.D.).

Fly (right) side

Top

(1) KABUL-KANDAHAR Samvat 1695. (It was on this occasion, on 19 April 1639 A.D., that Jai Singh I was given the title *Mirza Raja*. He and his Kachhawas were to participate in several other expeditions to Kandahar over the next fourteen years).

(2) BAHADURPUR Samvat 1714. (*Mirza Raja* defeated Shuja's army near Benares on 14 February 1658 A.D.)

Bottom

(1) RAJMAHAL Samvat 1805. (Jaipur forces under Har Govind Natani on one front and Maharaja Ishwari Singh on another defeated the forces of Khande Rao Holkar (of Indore), who was assisted by contingents from Mewar (Udaipur) and Kotah).

(2) TUNGA Samvat 1843. (The Jaipur army and others fought the Mahrattas under Scindia on 28 July 1787 A.D. Though the battle was indecisive, Scindia was compelled to retreat the following day, sacrificing much of his baggage and war material. He subsequently left Rajputana altogether).

Between the ribbons on the hoist side, a sun in splendour and on the fly a star and crescent. Underneath the *Tirsool* an inscription. The Rajendra Hazari Guards were divided into four Troops and each Troop was also presented with a Standard (figure 2):

- Rajawat Troop (charging warrior in centre)
- Shekhawai Troop (castle in centre)
- Duni Troop (boar's head in centre)
- Khas Chowki Troop (flaming crescent with fish supporters in centre)

Each Standard has a red ground; battle honours in black on golden yellow ribbons edged with white; central motifs white except boar's head (gold); gold fringes.



Photo ANM

SAWAI MAN GUARDS

A Body Guard unit had existed since the 16th Century but it was not until 1931, in line with other changes to the State Army, that preparations began to bring this unit up to date. Selected officers and men from both regular and irregular units were transferred to form the new Body Guard, comprised of two companies of Rajputs. The title Sawai Man Guards was adopted on 1 September 1932 when the unit was expanded to Battalion strength, and the unit came into the ISF scheme on 4 January 1934. The Sawai Man Guards carried three Colours; Regimental, State and a special Colour called the *Rajender Vaiyajanti*.

The unpublished diaries of General Amar Singh of Kanota record that, early in 1934, when the presentation of Colours was first being considered, Maharaja Man Singh II determined to break with tradition and so asked the General to devise a presentation ceremony reflecting Hindu, or Vedic Rules, rather than Muslim rites. Accordingly it was decided that the new Colours would first be worshipped at the temple of the goddess Shila Mataji of Amber. (The unit was the only one throughout the whole of the Indian Army which, on Mess Dinner Nights, drank the health of a goddess rather than the King or Maharaja. The toast was "*Mateswari - Shila - Debi*"). The General's diary continues, "The Colours had been worshipped..... at the Temple of Shila Mataji this morning. The Pandits brought these Colours and handed them over to the Maharaja who handed them over to the unit". I have to admit to some confusion for this entry for it is dated March 1934, yet it was not until 1st September 1934 that the Regimental and State Colours were presented in a ceremony at Amber Fort.

The Regimental Colour now languishes in a sealed store in Jaipur and it has not been possible to obtain an accurate description of it. I believe it may have been red with the five horizontal

stripes of the State Flag in the upper hoist quadrant, and the monogram SMG in at least one corner.

The State Colour (figure 1.3) was a rectangular flag of five equal horizontal stripes as in the State Flag. In the centre the Royal coat of arms and, on either side, two columns of ten battle honours with a separate one beneath each of the two columns, and one beneath the coat of arms, making a total of 43 battle honours. In the red segment of the flag a golden sun in splendour and in the dark blue segment, in gold lettering, SMG.



Photo ANM

The senior company of the Sawai Man Guards, selected from the best officers and men, was called Rajender Company. They carried a special Colour, the *Rajender Vaiyajanti* (figure 1.4) which, as Senior Colour of the Guards, was lowered for the Maharaja only. It was presented on 2 October 1938 and consisted of a red flag with, in the centre, a sun in splendour (pink face, white eyes with black pupils, red lips and red religious mark on the forehead) with silver rays. In each of the two top corners a blue *Chawar* (fly whisk); in each of the bottom two corners a *Morchal* (peacock feather whisk). These four symbols of royalty were carried behind the ruler whenever he attended Durbar (court) or religious functions.

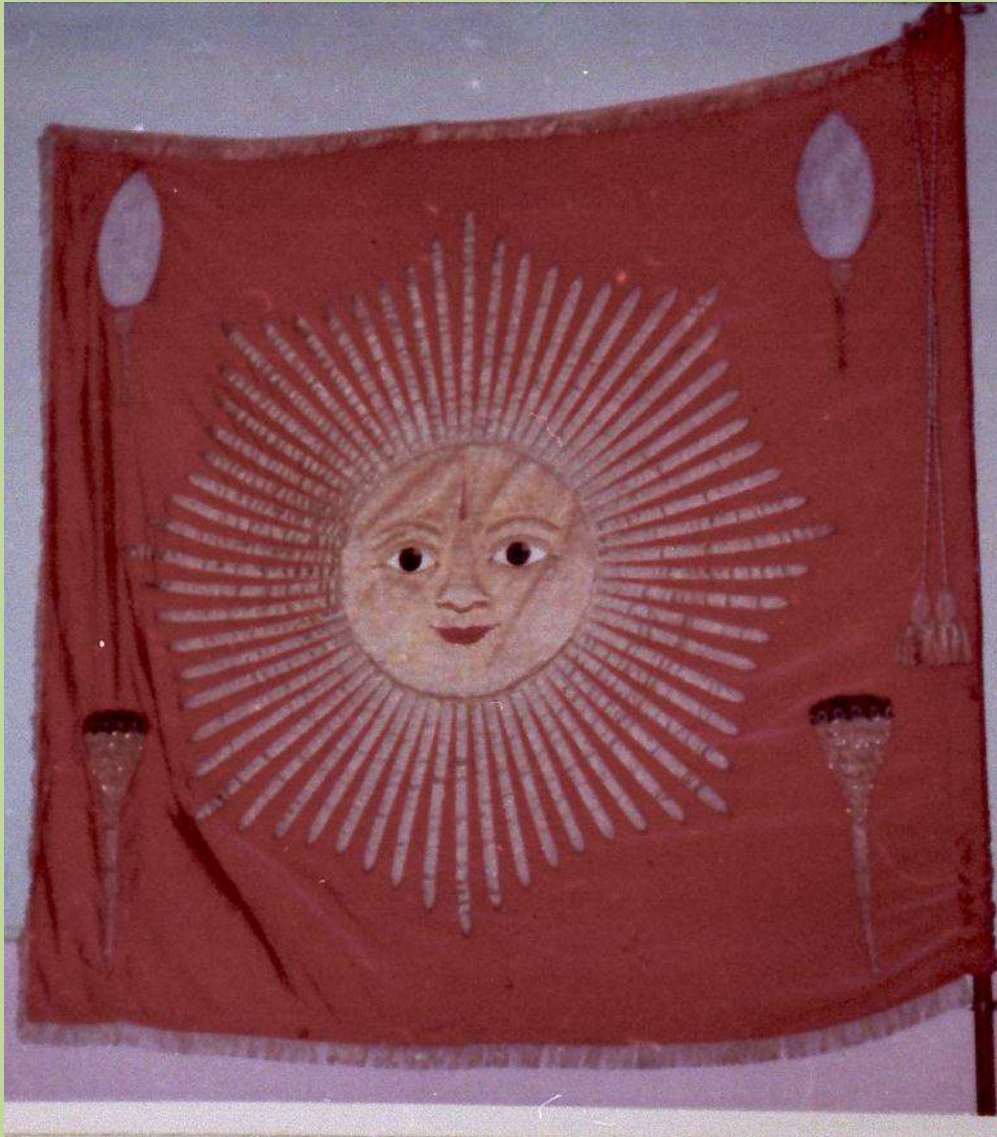


Fig 1.4

Photo ANM

During the Second World War the unit served in Eritrea, Egypt, Palestine and finally Italy, where it originally formed part of a Beach Group before being allotted to garrison duties. In August 1945 the unit returned to Jaipur but in November of that year was sent to Hong Kong, where it formed part of 150 Indian Infantry Brigade, whose total infantry complement was drawn from State Forces. In recognition of its turn-out, behaviour and discipline, the unit was presented, in 1946, with a Japanese sword by Lord Mountbatten and, in recognition of rescue work of a Japanese steamer, with a similar sword by Admiral Fraser.

Man Singh II who, as previously stated, had been trained at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, modelled the Sawai Man Guards on the British Brigade of Guards and had Guards instructors brought out from England. With the exception of the headdress, Safa (turban), the Jaipur uniform was identical to that of the British Guards.

1st JAIPUR INFANTRY

Raised on 1st December 1923 under the ISF Scheme, it was first commanded by Captain Bhim Singh Thapa, MC IOM, a former Subadar Major of 2/3 Q.A.O. Gurkhas. The Regimental Colour (figure 1.5) was a square flag, orange/red in colour with, in the centre on a maroon ground, the regimental badge consisting of a silver crescent out of which is erupting a flame. Between the points of the crescent the figure "I". The maroon ground is edged in gold, with another gold ring around the regimental badge. In between these rings, in gold lettering, JAIPUR INFANTRY. Below the central device, on a white scroll in black lettering, WORLD WAR II - 1939-45. In the four corners, in maroon lettering, the monogram SMS (Sawai Man Singh).



Fig. 1.5

Photo ANM

On 3 August 1940 the unit was transferred to British India and by March 1941 was serving in the Middle East. In 1944 it joined 8th Indian Infantry Division as part of 8th Army in Italy. Later it was transferred to the Dodecanese Islands for training and was still there when the war ended. It returned to Jaipur on 1st November 1945 having suffered a total of 28 killed, 154 wounded and 4 missing.

2nd JAIPUR INFANTRY

Raised on 1st September 1932, it was reorganised as ISF on 4 January 1934 and again reorganised in 1940. It spent the war years in the State. I have not found an illustration of its Colour but I believe it carried the elephant's head as used in the cap badge (Fig 1.6).



Fig. 1.6

Photo ANM

These units were not the only ones maintained by Jaipur within the Imperial Service Troops/Indian State Forces schemes, but they are the only ones whose Colours I have been able to identify.

I am indebted to Major Sumer Singh of Naila, Jaipur, for his help in compiling this article and especially for allowing me access to his photographs of the Colours, and for the extracts from General Amar Singh's diary.



BOOK REVIEWS

● "*TRUE TALES OF BRITISH INDIA*" compiled by Michael Wise. Brighton: Inprint Publishing Ltd, 9 Beaufort Terrace, Brighton BN2 2SU. ISBN 1 873047 06 1. Softback £11.95

For anyone without a personal knowledge of life in British India this book provides an insight into what it really must have been like. It contains seventy-four reminiscences dating from The Mutiny to independence, from a spectrum of pens by the famous to a British corporal. The book covers all manner of events, civil and military, from the Durbar of 1911 to the Indian rope trick. It depicts life "under the Raj" in all its aspects and gives an insight into the relationships between the British and their subjects; not the material that would be used in producing a holiday brochure.

Each entry is not more than three pages long so it is a book that can readily be 'taken up and put down'. The book concludes with two most useful annexes, a glossary of Anglo-Indian terms and an index of major background events.

I found it a most illuminating book and I would recommend it to anyone with an interest in British India.

W.M. Thornton

● *ORDER OF BATTLE OF DIVISIONS, Part 5B - INDIAN ARMY DIVISIONS*. F W Perry. 1993: Newport: Ray Westlake Military Books, 53 Claremont, Malpas, Newport, Gwent NP9 6PL, Wales. ISBN 1 871167 23 X. 180 pages, casebound. £25 plus p&p.

Those familiar with the official Order of Battle volumes for the First World War, compiled by Major A F Becke and produced between 1935 and 1938, will be aware that the onset of the Second World War interrupted an apparent plan to produce further volumes covering the forces of the Dominions and India.

Colonel Terry Cave and Peter T Scott produced an article some years ago for "STAND TO", the journal of the Western Front Association, on the Indian Army Corps in France, compiled in the format of Major Becke's earlier works, but they conceded that "to date it has proved impossible to compile a tolerably accurate list of units attached to the [Indian] Divisions". That gap has now been filled by Mr Perry with Volume 5B, the result of twenty years of research, and presented in the same format as Major Becke's earlier volumes.

This is a monumental work, packed with detail and yet clearly presented. I can only claim to have looked at it so far from the perspective of my particular interest, the Imperial Service Troops, yet I have already found a number of surprises which have caused me to dig back into my own notes, only to find that I need to do more research. For instance, I was previously unaware of the existence of the Jodhpur Cavalry Field Ambulance (1st Indian Cavalry Division). Similarly, I had hitherto believed that Hyderabad had furnished a composite regiment of two squadrons from each of 1st and 2nd Imperial Service Lancers for service in Egypt. According to Mr Perry, 2nd Lancers arrived in Egypt much later than 1st Lancers and were subsequently absorbed into that regiment. There are other examples for me to work on and I am sure that those with interests in other areas of the Indian Army will find new facts to tease and excite them.

So far I have only found one mistake - 9 Skinners Horse as opposed to 3 Skinners Horse (2nd Indian Cavalry Division). This is excellent value for money and a must for anyone interested in this era of the Indian Army. Highly recommended.

A.N.M.

LETTERS AND QUERIES

● A PHOTOGRAPH OF MAJOR FRANCIS YEATS-BROWN, DFC, LATE BENGAL LANCERS

I recently secured a book called "*Bengal Lancer*", written by F. Yeats-Brown. This was published in 1930 by Gollancz. It is a modest account of the author's life as a soldier and, briefly, as an airman. The main detail is concerned with Polo and Pig sticking, but actually the bulk of the book concerns his 'conversion' to Yoga in India...

A Polo accident accelerated his retirement from the Indian Army. One learns that he was at one time Adjutant of his Regiment, but dates and details are rare. By referring to my January 1939 Supplement of the Indian Army List, I discovered Y-B on the Non Effective List, 'Retired Pay'. This shows that he was Major Francis Charles Clypon Yeats-Brown, DFC, born on 15 August 1886. He was commissioned on 5 August 1905 and his majority came through exactly fifteen years later. It is not clear to which British Regiment he went on probation, but, according to him, on New Year's Eve, 1905, he went north, to join the 17th Cavalry at Bannu, on the North-West Frontier.

Yeats-Brown saw service in France in 1914, but soon volunteered for pilot training with the RFC (despite being short-sighted; he carried a variety of monocles). The Army sent him back to India, but this was changed and he was - with no training - gazetted as an Observer of the RFC, and posted to the recently formed Mesopotamian Flight.

At this stage I was able to marry up Y-B's account with that of Australian Flying Corps (AFC) Capt Thomas Walter White, DFC, who wrote "*Guests of the Unspeakable*", an Australian airman's escape from Turkey in the First World War. White, born on 26 April 1888 at North Melbourne, was one of the first pilots of the AFC. After the war he married Vera, the daughter of Australia's second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin. Sir Thomas White was knighted in 1952, when Australia's High Commissioner in London. He died in 1957. Although 'Australia' White and Y-B did not usually fly together, they both volunteered to carry out a hazardous mission to destroy the telegraph lines that ran east and north of Baghdad. This entailed a round trip of two hundred miles in a Maurice Farman. On 13 November 1915 they took off. Unfortunately the aircraft was obliged to land near the road - Turks and Arabs being also uncomfortably near! The landing proved disastrous as a wing was smashed by one of the poles. Y-B managed to destroy two of these latter, but was soon under fire from Arabs. 'Australia' White returned fire with the machine-gun mounted on the aircraft, but they were quickly overpowered by hostile Arabs and beaten severely. Luckily for the two officers, they were taken prisoner by Turkish gendarmerie, who had to drag them away from the Arabs.

Both spent two hard years in Turkish prisons, eventually - at different times - escaping; returning to England when the war ended. Thomas White returned to Australia and entered politics. Francis Yeats-Brown re-joined his regiment in India and took part in a campaign on the Frontier. He retired on 6 August 1924. It seems probable that both officers received the DFC for their effort to cut the telegraph lines.

My copy of "*Bengal Lancer*" does not have a dust wrapper. It is possible that a picture of Francis Yeats-Brown was on this, as the book does not contain illustrations. Could one of our members supply me with a photocopy of a picture of Y-B? I could reciprocate with pictures of his Australian pilot, Captain White.

Kimberley John Lindsay

● Ron Platt writes:

You published a book review about the 1943 long range penetration into Burma ("*Across the Threshold of Battle*" - Vol. 10, No. 1) and I thought I would list for the benefit of members the books that I have on such operations for both 1943 and 1944. The list is not exhaustive.

1943

- *Beyond the Chindwin*" - Brigadier Fergusson
- *"With Wingate in Burma"* - D. Halley
- *"Fighting Mad"* - Brigadier Calvert
- *"Safer than a Known Way"* - I. MacHorton
- (The above are all personal accounts)
- *"Wingate's Raiders"* - C.J. Rollo
- *"Wingate's Phantom Army"* - W.R. Burchett
- *"Back to Mandalay"* - L. Thomas
- Journalists account from various sources.

1944

- *"The Wild Green Earth"* - Brigadier Fergusson
- *"Prisoner of Hope"* - Brigadier Calvert
- *"The Road Past Mandalay"* - Colonel J Masters
- *"Chindit"* - R.R. James
- *"Sunbeams Like Swords"* - W.F. Jeffery
- *"Chindit Story"* - J. Bagealey
- *"Chindit Col. 76"* - W.R. Wilcox
- *"Chindit Column"* - C. Carfare
- *"Special Force - A Chindit Story"* - J. Shaw
- *"A Chindit Chronicle"* - B. Towill
- (the above are all personal accounts)
- *"The Chindit War"* - Brigadier Shelford Bidwell
- *"Chindits"* - Brigadier Calvert
- *"Burma Victory - Imphal and the Chindits"* - D. Rooney
- *"The Marauders"* - Charton Ogburn (an account of American Special Forces with Stilwell)
- *"Wingate in Peace and War"* - Maj Gen Tullock
- *"Orde Wingate"* - C. Sykes
- *"Orde Wingate and the Historians"* - P. Mead
- *"Jingle Jungle Little Chindit"* - Musgrave and Wood (a satire on operations by two officers)

● Brian Russell seeks help in identifying the belt plate shown below. The belt itself is of Artillery lace. (*Editor's note: The badge looks distinctly Persian*).

