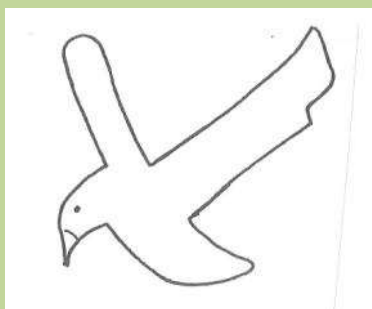


DURBAR Volume 12, No.4, Winter 1995

THE INDIAN INFANTRY DIVISIONS IN WORLD WAR II (continued)

Major General Chand Das

(The 4th Indian Division formation sign (Durbar, Vol. 12, No. 3, p4) worn in Italy was originally more like the sketch shown here and was affectionately known as the flying banana).



6th INDIAN DIVISION



The head of a Deccan tiger in black and yellow on a square black background.

The 6th Indian Division was raised in 1941. It was sent to Iraq and Persia to counter a possible enemy threat to the Middle East Base from the Caucasus and to garrison these countries against infiltration.

Initially there was political objection to the landing of the Indian forces at Basra, but the landing of Headquarters 10 Indian Division, 3 Field Regiment RA and 20 Indian Brigade was unopposed as the Government of Iraq decided to permit the landing. Disembarkation of the Brigade was completed on 19 April 1941. The convoy of transports carrying additional troops arrived in Basra on 29 April 1941. The British air base at Hattaniya was vital for the defence of Line of Communications in Iraq. When Iraqi forces occupied the feature overlooking the base they were bombed out of their position and Basra-Shuaiba area was occupied. The 21st Indian Brigade occupied Ashar.

20th and 21st Indian Brigades advanced to Baghdad, and Mosul was captured. Iraq became an operational base and the defence of the Persian Gulf was organised.

Operations against Iran were undertaken to secure Iran's oil and to ensure safety of Indian troops in the Middle East with the outbreak of the Russia-Germany war on 22 June 1941. On 25 August 1941 Russia invaded Iran from the north across the Caucasian border and the British and Indian troops from the South and West across the borders of Iraq.

The Abadan oil refineries, the Anglo-Iranian oil installation at Gach-Sara and areas Andimishk, Pa-Yi-Pul and Vaisiya were occupied. After a short stay at Sennah the Division moved to Baghdad and occupied Habaniya and Hamada. It then occupied Kasr-i-Shirin and Kifri with the primary role to maintain law and order which was, time and again, threatened by the troubles and unrest created by German agents. Their secondary but equally important task was to prevent interference by the enemy on the "Aid to Russia" route. In mid-December 1943 Khurra Shahr was occupied to guard the Russian and American installations.

7TH INDIAN DIVISION



A yellow arrow on a black square or circle.

7th Indian Division was formed in Attock (now in Pakistan) on 1 October 1941. The Division entered the Burma Theatre in August 1943, remaining there on active service until the Japanese surrender. The first action was in Arakan where, in February 1944 in the "Battle of the Boxes", it inflicted the first major defeat on the Japanese when they failed to capture the Administrative Box at Sinzweya. It was relieved on 24 February, the enemy having suffered 5000 dead. Both 5th and 7th Divisions then resumed their attack at Buthidarang and Razabil, both of which fell in March.

Shortly afterwards, Divisional Headquarters with 33 and 114 Brigades moved to take part in the successful defence of Kohima, whilst 88 Brigade moved by air to Imphal and destroyed an enemy force at Kanglatonghi.

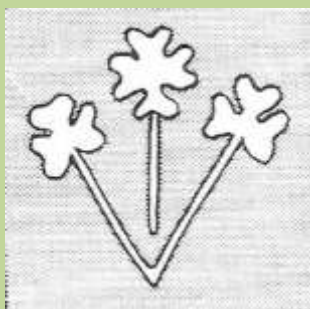
Advancing from Kohima in January 1945 to the River Irrawaddy, a bridgehead was established at Nyaungu during the night of 14/15 February, the river at this point being over 2000 yards wide, thus involving the Division in the longest river crossing met with in any theatre in World War II. The bridgehead held in spite of ferocious counter attacks, the Japanese withdrawing in some disorder with the Division in hot pursuit. June saw the Division mopping up Japanese re-armaments, vainly attempting to escape across the River Sittang. After a move east towards Pegu, the Division fought its final and successful action.

Four Victoria Crosses were awarded for acts of outstanding gallantry:

- Naik Nand Singh – 1/11 Sikh Regiment
- Naik Gian Singh - 4/15 Punjab Regiment
- Rifleman Lachman Gurung - 4/8 Gorkha Rifles
- Lieut. Karamjeet Singh Judge - 4/15 Punjab Regt.

The Division was disbanded in 1946.

8TH INDIAN DIVISION



Three yellow clover-shaped leaves on long stems on a dull red background

The Division was formed in Meerut on 25 October 1940 under the command of Major General C W Harvey, consisting of 17, 18 and 19 Brigades. The Division first went into action in August 1941 when 18 Brigade secured the oil pipe line and refinery at Abadan in South Persia.

In June 1942, 18 Brigade having been rushed over from Mosul, was over-run by Rommel's tanks near the Ruweisat Ridge in the Western Desert and was never re-formed. In January 1943 the Division, formed of 17, 19 and 21 Brigades, was concentrated near Baghdad when Major General D Russell DSO OBE MC (The Pasha) took over command.

On 24 September 1943, the Division landed at Torcanto and for 19 months was almost continuously in action advancing through mountainous country and crossing river after river: Biferna, Trigno, Sangro, Moro, Rapido, Arno, Sieve, Senio, Santerno and finally the Po and Adiga. The Gustav Line in Italy extended from Garigliano on the west coast to Sangro on the east, with the Cassino stronghold dominating the road. River San and its southern approaches were overlooked from Sangro ridge and its opposite bank. The river was in spate but it was crossed in falling rain and snow on 19 November 1948. 8th Indian Division captured the ridge after heavy fighting and held it against determined counter-attacks.

The Division crossed river Moro after having assembled the bridge on the enemy bank and then pushed back to the South bank. It captured Calders on 13/14 December. The Rapido crossing in May 1944, supported by Canadian tanks, pierced the Gustav Line causing the Germans to pull out of Cassino. Following up, the Division captured Rocco d'Arce and Ripa Ridge and advanced 240 miles in June. Sepoy Kamal Ram, the Indian Army's youngest Victoria Cross, won the award in his first action just after crossing the River Gari.

The 8th Indian Division captured Monte San Bartolo in operations from 11 to 14 November during which Rifleman Thaman Gurung was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously.

During the resumed offensive in April the river Senio was crossed against stiff opposition with both sides suffering heavy casualties. Sepoy Namdeo Jadhao, Maratha Light Infantry, earned the Victoria Cross.

In April 1945 the campaign ended when 6 Lancers arranged the surrender of 11,000 men of their old enemy, the First German Paratroop Division.

9TH INDIAN DIVISION



A nine-pointed star, in royal blue, set on a black circle

The Division embarked for Singapore in 1940 and formed part of III Indian Corps. At the time of the Japanese invasion the Division of only two Brigades was located in the eastern coastal area of Malaya with 8 Brigade at Kota Bahru and 22 Brigade at Kuantan. The air fields and

beaches at Kota Bahru, in the north east of Malaya, saw action on the very first day of the Japanese landing on 8 December 1941. 8 Brigade, opposing the Japanese, became engaged in fierce fighting between the Kelanta River and the coast before withdrawing to Kuala Lipis. On the bloody beaches of Bachok is a memorial erected by the Japanese to commemorate the 3,000 casualties they suffered against this Brigade.

Jetra, on the north west of Malaya, saw fighting from 10 to 13 December when the Japanese, advancing overland from Thailand, crossed into Malaya. 22 Brigade was also heavily engaged in the State of Pahang on both sides of the River Kuantau. It was in Kuantau aerodrome that Lt Col A E Cumming, commanding 2 Battalion 12 Frontier Force Regiment, won the Victoria Cross for conspicuous gallantry.

The Division fought actions at Kampar, Slim River, The Muar and Nyur, but the Japanese deploying flanking movements forced the troops to withdraw. The fighting at Slim River, on 7 January 1942, was the last action in central Malaya before Kuala Lumpur fell. The Japanese tanks over-ran the position resulting in heavy losses. The action on River Muar, which was the last natural obstacle in Johore between the Japanese and Singapore, was fought from 16 to 23 January. On 25 January 1942 the engagement at Niyor was the last one fought on the Malayan Peninsula. Thereafter, the returning troops destroyed the causeway connecting the Peninsula to Singapore Island. Remnants of this Division linked up with II Indian Division for the final battle on Singapore Island. The Japanese, however, repaired the causeway and the Johore Strait on 8 February. The troops covering the defence of Singapore fought gallantly but due to shortage of water, food and ammunition surrender was made on 15 February 1942. (to be continued)



EALING'S HEIRS TO THE SIRKAR

Shamus O D Wade

Way back in 1983 when, in order to fill my rice bowl, I was producing a series of models called Oojah-cum-pivvy, I visited 1846 (Southall) Squadron of the Air Training Corps. At the time I made the following notes:

"Southall is another part of the historic Borough of Ealing (the previous model had been of the Chiswick Armed Association of 1788-1802).

In 1940, 24 Indian Air Force pilots came to England to take part in the defence of Britain in her hour of need. 8 were killed in action. In the same year, 1846 (Southall) Squadron of the Air Training Corps was formed. Today, about two thirds of the Southall Squadron have forebears who came from what is now India and Pakistan. About a third are of European descent, with a handful of West Indian descent. Interestingly they are armed with the same rifle (Lee Enfield No 4 Mk. I) that I carried, in a very lowly capacity, for the last King Emperor in 1946. They are extremely well trained in its use. One splendid 13 year old reactionary (ballistic not political) was extremely contemptuous of the present British Army rifle, which he had used on the range - "like an air gun."

The uniform of the Southall cadets was RAF grey beret (or turban) with silver badge, light blue shirt, RAF grey jersey with lighter coloured patches and insignia, lighter RAF grey trousers and black boots.

One young Sikh was wearing an absolutely splendid purple turban, but only because the authorities had run out of official coloured turban material.

It was twelve years before I saw the Southall Squadron again, at the VE Day Parade on Sunday May 7 this year. (Mr Wade provided a very full account of the parade which, I am afraid, space does not permit me to reproduce. Ed.)



LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP - THE SORRY TALE OF ONE WHO DIDN'T!

Elizabeth Talbot-Rice

.... His Excellency in Council feels constrained to request that you will suspend Mr Cowan until further orders...!.

What could have caused this instruction from the Government of India to the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, dispatched on 24 January 1872?¹

A telegram sent to the Home Secretary on 18 January was the reason:

'At Kotla on 17th instant, 49 of the men who had attacked Malodh were blown away from the guns by the Deputy Commissioner.'²

What had given rise to this extraordinary action?

A body of about 200 Kukas had attacked a fort at Malodh and then gone some nine miles further, with an increased force estimated at 500, to attack Maler Kotla. The Kuka sect had been established in 1847 by Balah Singh, on whose death the acknowledged leader became Rain Singh of Bhainee in the Ludhiana District. By now aged about 50, Ram Singh, a carpenter and mason by trade, had served in the army of Ranjit Singh from 1844 to 1846. The sect he led was open to Hindus of all casts, and even admitted Moslems although the District Superintendent of Police at Ludhiana knew of only two Moslem members, and noted that the converts were only from the poorer classes. One disciple, on trial for desecrating a tomb, summarized the beliefs of the Kukas thus:

"Our religion enjoins abstinence from meat and stimulants but we may take the latter medicinally, we are not to quarrel, steal, lie, fornicate or behave treacherously; we do

¹ IOL/P702, p.465, No. 122, para 3

² Ibid. p.229, No. 100, Secretary of Govt of Punjab to Home Secretary

not respect shrines or tombs of ordinary men, only of celebrated persons. We are commanded to worship God and the government whose revenues we pay."³

Some accounts affirm strict morality amongst members but others, including that of a Brahmin ex-convert, condemned the sect for gross sexual impropriety. Skimming through Indian Judicial Proceedings for the 1870s one finds several murders and assaults in the Punjab ascribed to members of the sect, but perhaps the most serious incident was that of the murder of a number of butchers in Amritsar to prevent the slaughter of cattle.

But to return to mid-January 1872. Maler Kotla was a semi-independent Moslem state, the authorities having full power to try and sentence criminals, although any condemned to capital punishment had to be sent up to the Commissioner for his approval. Rumours of marauding groups of Kukas had been circulating since early January. Hearing of the attack on Maler Kotla, Mr L Cowan, an Uncovenanted Punjab civil servant officiating as Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana, in the Umballa Division, accompanied by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Ludhiana, Lieutenant Colonel E N Perkins, hurried off, reaching Kotla at about 5pm on the 16th. At 7.30pm that evening Cowan reported that tranquillity had been restored.

On hearing of the disturbance Cowan had immediately asked the rulers of Nabha, Jheend (Jind) and Patiala for military assistance, a request to which they responded with alacrity, providing cavalry, infantry and artillery. It was presumably these troops who were sent out to round up escapees. They brought in 68 prisoners, including two women and 22 wounded, most slightly. The captives were described by Cowan as "defiant and unruly; they poured forth the most abusive language towards the Government and the Chiefs of Native States."⁴ Cowan informed Thomas Douglas Forsyth CB, Commissioner of the Umballa Division, that the two women, being residents of the Patiala State, were being handed over to the officer commanding that contingent for conveyance to Patiala.

On the 17th Forsyth, at Ludhiana but planning to set out soon for Kotla, instructed Cowan to prepare the case against those prisoners who should be tried for capital offences, which he himself would hear on his arrival. Forsyth's official instructions were accompanied by a demi-official, or perhaps private letter, reading:

"... you have done admirably, but for heaven's sake don't let the whole thing fall short of perfect success by any hasty act. By dealing with the men now caught as culprits in the Kotla territory, they can be hanged legally without the delay of sending the case to the Chief Court, by attending to the form usual in all such cases i.e. sending up the proceedings to me; and to save time and trouble I am going out to Kotla as soon as I have disposed of Ram Singh. But if you hang (yourself) these men i.e. the men caught at Malodh, you will fall short of perfect success. A delay of 12 hours can produce harm, whereas illegal action may cause trouble....."⁵

By then Cowan had acted on his own initiative. He telegraphed Forsyth on the 17th (the exact time is not, given, but we know from Perkins' report that it was before 7 pm⁶) that "49 of the

³ IOR/P703, Memo dated 19 Jan 1867 entitled 'A Brief Account of the Kooka Sect' p.2445

⁴ IOR/P702, p.462, No 16, para 2, Cowan to Forsyth 17 Jan 1872

⁵ IOR/P703, p.1892, Forsyth to Cowan, 17 Jan 1872, personal letter

⁶ IOR/P702, p.459, Police Department Special Report of Crime 17 Jan 1872

rebels were blown away from the guns this afternoon on the parade ground of the Kotla Chief in the presence of troops of the Patiala, Nabha, Jheend and Kotla States".⁷

It would appear that the troops used were those of the native states for there is no indication of Government troops, either British or Native, being present. On news of the attack on Malodh, the 1st Gurkhas, a wing of the 72nd and a Mule Battery were ordered to Khanna, the nearest station to Kotla. They were accompanied by a troop of the 12th Bengal Cavalry. The latter are reported to have reached Kotla, escorting Forsyth, a little after 11 am on the 18th. Two companies of the 54th Foot were sent from Jullundur to reinforce Ludhiana, reaching there on the 16th- they were lodged in the fort.⁸ The Gurkhas were called on to escort Rain Singh and his leading lieutenants to Allahabad and the cavalry were sent out to search for other fugitives. On the other hand Cowan reports the rapid response to his SOS by the relevant rajas and that he was planning to dismiss 'the assembled troops' to their respective states the following morning, i.e. the 18th. Moreover, in a report of the incident, Cowan admits receiving Forsyth's order to delay any action until his arrival a little before sunset; I was on what is called the parade ground of the Kotla State between a line formed by the sepoys of the Native States and the guns. Forty two or forty three of the insurgents had been executed before this letter was delivered to me...."⁹ He goes on to argue that it would have been rash to abandon the executions of the remaining half dozen or so miscreants.

Cowan was not long left in doubt as to the dubious nature of his hasty action. On the 18th Forsyth instructed him to provide copies of all communications which had passed between them. The Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, the Hon. Robert Henry Davies, CSI, expressed a view, in a letter to the Government of India dated 19 January, that undue haste had occurred and that there was no excuse for Cowan's not awaiting the arrival of his superior to try the insurgents. Yet Davies hedged his bets, for he pointed out in mitigation of Cowan's conduct that "if he has erred on the side of precipitancy, it is not given to all officers of Government to be at the same time energetic and discreet." He pointed out that Cowan was in a difficult position, in a Native State, and that immediate action was necessary to restore confidence. Moreover, once the Commissioner (Forsyth) had arrived, he himself after a formal trial sentenced a further 16 men to death.¹⁰ By 7 February the Lieutenant Governor was more critical,

"....the defects of Mr Cowan's proceedings are patent. He recorded no evidence of witnesses of defence or the criminals although there appears to have been time to do so on the 16th. He hurried on the executions, although the prescribed reference to the Commissioner would not have caused twenty-four hours' delay. Above all he included, without selection of ringleaders and instigators, in one common capital sentence all the persons (excepting women and children) known to have been concerned in the attack."¹¹ Yet, Davies continued, Cowan "did no injustice".

The rioters were guilty, and would have received a capital sentence had they been sent to trial.

⁷ Ibid. p.462, Cowan to Forsyth, para 3, 17 Jan 1872

⁸ Ibid. p.456, Forsyth to Secy to Govt of Punjab, 17 Jan, para 7; p.452, para 6

⁹ IOR/P703, p.1893, para 1, Cowan to Off Sec to Govt of Punjab, 8 Apr 1872

¹⁰ IOR/P702, No 23, Secy to Govt of Punjab to Secy to Govt of India, p.455, para 4, 19 Jan 1872

¹¹ IOR/P703, Kuka Outbreak in the Punjab, Secy Govt of Punjab to Secy Govt of India, p.1821, para 11

The Government of India did not, however, share the hesitations of their Lieutenant Governor, who perhaps thought it incumbent on him to support his staff. As early as 1pm on 19 January the Viceroy telegraphed the Lieutenant Governor: "clear the line. Stop any summary executions of Kukas without our express orders."¹² On 24 January instructions were issued to suspend Cowan, whose explanation was awaited with anxiety, until further orders.¹³ On 9 February Cowan wrote to Forsyth that this degradation was:

"...most unexpected. If I have unfortunately failed to convince the Government that such severe measures were necessary, I will beg that 23 years of faithful service, during which time I have repeatedly received the thanks of the Government, may be weighed against this one irregular proceeding. I have never been accused of cruelty. I have never in my recollection raised a hand to strike a native."¹⁴

On 1 May the Viceroy telegraphed to the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab condemning the conduct of both Cowan and Forsyth: the former was to be removed from the Service; the latter to be transferred to a commissionership where he would not have to superintend judicial proceedings of any Native State.¹⁵

The British Government was informed of this decision a day later. Finally, on 18 July, the Secretary of State for India wired the Government of India, referring to 'this most painful case', confirming that the dismissal of Mr Cowan and the orders issued in respect of Mr Forsyth received their 'entire approval'. Nevertheless, authorisation was given, 'in consideration of his previous services', for payment to Cowan of a monthly pension of Rs 300.¹⁶

Opinion of the Indian press was divided. The Delhi Gazette admitted that the blowing away by guns was "revolting to humanity" but very probably that action prevented the "slaughter of hundreds, it may be thousands". The Indian Mirror left it to its readers to judge impartially the necessity of the deaths. The Friends of India spoke out strongly against the executions whereas the Darjeeling News and the 'local' paper. The Pioneer, were very supportive.

Reaction to Cowan's dismissal were similarly varied. The Madras Athenaeum found this 'remarkable' since his action had been prompt and bold and wondered whether he would have been treated differently had he been Covenanted rather than Uncovenanted. The Mofussilite and The Englishman were more outspoken in Cowan's defence. The former wrote that "there is not a European, official or unofficial, who would not condemn in strong terms the policy of the Home Government"; the latter wrote "It is beyond doubt that... every native of the country is convinced that Mr Cowan did the very best thing he could have done. The consequence is that the dismissal of Mr Cowan will be regarded by the whole country as an act, not of justice, but of supreme folly." Others, however, differed. The Indian Mirror praised the Government for its stern sense of justice and The Times of India congratulated it for proving worthy of itself and of the British name. Private correspondents to The Pioneer similarly took sides. R praised Cowan's bravery:

¹² IOR/P702, p.229, No 14, Secy to Govt of India to Secy Govt of Punjab, 24 Jan 1872

¹³ Ibid. p.465, No 122, para 3

¹⁴ IOR/P703, p.1851, para 2, Cowan to Forsyth, 9 Feb 1872

¹⁵ Ibid. p.1895, Viceroy to Lieutenant Governor Lahore

¹⁶ Ibid. p.1901, Secy to Govt of India to Secy Govt of Punjab, 2 May 1872

"Let Mr Cowan behave ever so illegally he carried himself from first to last through the terrible scenes with fine pluck".

T thought the Government had no alternative - Cowan put in his pocket a positive order to stay the executions. T also wondered why Forsyth had got away so lightly for he had shown himself weak and unreliable.

And what of Ram Singh, deemed instigator of the uprisings? He was exiled to Burma where he remained until his death in 1885.

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THE DEMISE OF THE 7th BENGAL LIGHT CAVALRY 1857 - AND OTHER TRAGEDIES

Tim Ash

There is always an element of mystery when you start to investigate the life and service of a soldier whose name appears on a medal - you never quite know how the story will unfold - or end. Quarter Master Sergeant James Eldridge of the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry received two campaign medals for his service in India, a medal for CABUL in 1842 and a MAHARAJPOOR STAR in the following year. This is the sad story of his fate, that of his friend, their families, and of the Regiment in which they served side by side.

James Eldridge was a native of Tonbridge, Kent. He enlisted for HM's 11th Light Dragoons, then in India, on 20 September 1829, aged about fifteen years. In little over a year he joined the Regiment in India. By 1837 he had reached the rank of Corporal when he took his

discharge and transferred to the East India Company's service, on 1 September, and was placed on the Town Major's List. He was promoted to Quarter Master Sergeant, a young man of 23, and posted to the 10th Regiment Bengal Light Cavalry, then at Muttra. Early the next year he married Ann Corser, aged 21. During their marriage they were blessed with four children, 3 girls and finally a boy who was born at Peshawar in October 1851.

In December 1850 Eldridge was promoted to Riding Master and transferred to the 7th Regiment Bengal Light Cavalry, then stationed at Peshawar. Earlier that same year the post of Quarter Master Sergeant of the 7th Cavalry became vacant and this was filled from the Bengal Artillery in the person of Sergeant M. Keogh of the 3rd Troop, 3rd Brigade of Horse Artillery, transferred to the Town Major's List and promoted to be Quarter Master Sergeant of the 7th Cavalry.

Michael Keogh was born at Maynooth, 13 miles west of Dublin. He enlisted in the East India Company's Artillery at Liverpool in September 1841, then aged 20. He arrived in India in March 1842 and served in 3rd Troop, 3rd Brigade Horse Artillery until his transfer to the 7th Cavalry. He had married Jane Bridger, then only 14, at Lahore in 1847 and over the succeeding years she bore him 5 children.

James Eldridge and Michael Keogh, therefore, served together from early 1851 and evidently became close friends. In October 1853 Keogh was promoted to Sergeant Major of the 7th Cavalry, the second senior European non-commissioned rank in the Regiment after Riding Master James Eldridge.

In December 1856 the Regiment moved from Jullundur to Lucknow, the capital of the newly annexed Kingdom of Oude. With Eldridge was his wife and two of their children, Maria Matilda aged 13, a "half witt", and Walter Benjamin, the six year old son. The eldest daughter, Lidya, born in 1838, was by this time married and living in Jullundur. With her was her young sister Isabella, then aged 11. The family of Keogh was complete with 5 children, the eldest a daughter of 8 years. The two families no doubt were living in the Cantonments at Mariaon, whilst the Regiment itself was quartered at Moodkeepore, a mile or so distant beyond the Race Course.

Towards the end of March 1857 Sir Henry Lawrence became the Chief Commissioner for Oude. Lucknow at this time was not a happy place; during the month of April there were continuous reports of disaffection amongst the Native Regiments of the Bengal Army. The threat of possible mutiny hung in the air and Sir Henry was keenly aware of the situation. He was determined to take swift action to crush any mutiny that might occur as well as taking precautions for the safety of the Europeans at Lucknow, outnumbered by nearly 10 to 1, there being 7,000 Native Indian troops.

The first sign of open mutiny occurred on the night of 3 May, just a week before the mutiny at Meerut. Sir Henry Lawrence took immediate action and the offending regiment, the 7th Oude Irregular Infantry, was disarmed and disbanded the following day.

As May continued so did the reports of impending mutiny. Several acts of incendiarism took place in the lines of the Native Regiments but no culprits were discovered. 13 May brought the news of the mutiny at Meerut and the following day the news of the fall of Delhi. Sir Henry Lawrence continued his preparations for defence and on 25 May the women and children from Cantonments were moved into the city Residency. Towards the end of the

month there were daily reports that a mutiny was intended; these reports became fact on the evening of 30th when the Native Regiments in Cantonments broke out into violent mutiny - plundering and burning the officers' bungalows, Regimental Mess House, and murdering any European they met.

Sir Henry Lawrence at the head of the European troops, and those elements of the Native Regiments that remained faithful, sealed off the road from Cantonments to the city and, during the night, the mutineers were driven from Cantonments towards the countryside. Captain C.W. Radcliffe of the 7th Cavalry describes the events as they affected that Regiment:

"On the evening of the 30th May, about 9 o'clock, shots were heard at Moodkeepore (the Cavalry station), in the direction of the Infantry Lines Lucknow. The 7th Cavalry consisting about 150 sabres, immediately were turned out by their officers, and placed in three Troops. On wheeling into line, about 30 men rushed out of the ranks, and rode furiously towards Cantonments; they were not seen again."

For the remainder of that night the 7th Cavalry carried out patrols around the Cantonments and towards the city Residency until they finally took up a position on the Cantonments parade ground with the rest of the force sent against the mutineers. The next morning Captain Radcliffe continues:

"The 7th were directed to move towards Moodkeepore, which place was reported to have fallen into the hands of the mutineers. The Corps advanced at a canter, and on reaching the plain close to the Race Course, a large body of armed Infantry, amounting to some 1,000 men, were seen advancing in skirmishing order towards the Cavalry. The report was, as regarded to Moodkeepore, too true, for the Standard Guard was looted, public and private property destroyed, and the 2nd Squadron Standard was actually seized from the hands of the Jemadar in charge, and dashed to pieces. Lieutenant Raleigh, who had lately joined the Corps, was brutally murdered at 5 a.m. in front of the First Troop lines. This officer was sick, and unable to join the Regiment the night before when ordered out.

The Officer Commanding ordered his men to form line to the front, which was done rather sullenly. But on his ordering the line to take ground to the right, a number of men broke out from the ranks; they rode away towards the mutineers, having been beckoned to come over by a leader riding a horse and bearing a standard. Some thirty-five or forty men left their Officers. At this time an officer was sent back towards Cantonments to request Sir Henry Lawrence to send up some guns, as the small body of Cavalry that were left alone in front of the insurgents were in danger of being driven back.

The guns soon afterwards came up, and after a few rounds dispersed the enemy. The 7th Cavalry, in concert with the Irregulars, followed up the retreating mutineers, killed one or two, and sent in some ten or twelve prisoners. The Corps returned to Moodkeepore about 10 o'clock, and marched into Cantonments in the evening and took up position on the right of the line."

Lieutenant J.H.T. Farquhar of the 7th Cavalry wrote the following, which describes the final demise of this Regiment as a fighting force:

"When we got to Cantonments, we were ordered to go to the Artillery parade ground, where a camp was going to be formed. Here we went, and here we remained for a fortnight, encamped with the eighty men that remained of our Regiment, being informed almost daily, by means of spies, that during the night these eighty swells intended to cut our throats. The consequence was that the Officers of each Regiment had to remain awake, taking two hours at a watch, to watch their own men. We kept these strictly; and, I believe, by that means saved our throats. I used to sleep every night (every Officer has slept in his clothes since the mutiny began) with my revolver under my pillow, a drawn sword on my bed, and a loaded double-barrelled gun just under the bed. We remained in this jolly state for a fortnight; and I can tell you I was not sorry when an order came down from Sir Henry Lawrence that we were to pay up our men and send them home on leave till the 15th October, and then come down to the Residency."

So it was that on Friday 12 June the horses, arms and equipment of the 7th Bengal Light Cavalry, a Regiment no more, were taken down from the Cantonments to the Residency and Riding Master Eldridge and Sergeant Major Keogh were able to re-join their wives and children, probably then in quarters at the Begum Kothi.

The psychological pressures on the British community at Lucknow must have been very great; what news there was was bad and the future was grim with foreboding and uncertainty. Added to these were the physically uncomfortable, cramped and overcrowded living conditions, the threat of disease, poor diet and the extreme heat. All these factors may well have played a part in the events of 15 June as recorded by Mrs Katherine Harris, the wife of the Senior Chaplain:

Tuesday 16th June 1857.

"Such an awful thing happened here yesterday! Because there are not murders enough done by the heathen, two Christian English gentlemen quarrelled, and, in the heat of passion, one of them seized a pistol and shot the other through the body. James buried the murdered man this morning. He was the Riding Master of the 7th Cavalry; so respectable a man that he was to have had a Commission given to him. His murderer, the Sergeant-Major of the same Regiment, also bore the highest character, and was liked and respected by everyone who knew him, and the two were bosom friends. It seems the quarrel began with the wives disputing about the drawing up of a curtain; this trivial matter led to words between the two husbands, and in an instant the dreadful deed was done. The poor women are perfectly distracted. The poor wretch who killed his friend is a Roman Catholic. James was going to see him this evening, but found the Roman Catholic priest with him. He was told that the poor fellow had lain all day hiding his face, and would not speak a word. The Officers of the 7th Cavalry all went to the funeral this morning. They are dreadfully grieved about it - both men were such favourites, and thought so very highly of by all it is very shocking."

Friday 19th June 1857.

"I went yesterday evening with James to the Begum's House to see the poor women who came in from Seetapore. After our visit to them, James took me with him to see poor Mrs Eldridge, the widow of the Riding Master who was murdered three days ago by his comrade. I don't know when I have seen such a nice well-spoken respectable woman; she spoke most kindly and charitably of the wretched murderer, and seemed to pity him very much. I hear that the poor wretch has never spoken a word since he committed the deed, and will have nothing to say to the Roman Catholic priest who visits him. His wife, a most violent woman, who excited him to the fatal pitch of fury, is perfectly distracted and wild. Mrs Eldridge has two children, a poor girl of thirteen who is half witted, and a fine little boy of six years old. She told me she had two daughters comfortably married at Jullundur, and that if she could get to them she would never want a home. All her things were burnt in cantonments the night of the outbreak.

Though Sergeant Major Keogh was placed in confinement he was not kept there long, for on Tuesday 30 June Sir Henry Lawrence and his troops were badly mauled at the battle of Chinhut, just outside Lucknow, where the force had gone against the mutineers. The next day the close investment of the Residency began and every man was required for the defence, and Keogh, late an artilleryman, was released on parole to help man the guns.

Tragedy followed tragedy for both the Eldridge and Keogh families. On Wednesday 8 July Dr William Brydon (of the retreat from Cabul fame) was visiting his patients in the Begum Kothi when a son of Michael Keogh was killed by a chance ball which struck him in the face; another of the Keogh children had died there earlier from sickness. Just over a month later, on Tuesday 11 August, the poor idiot girl, Maria Matilda Eldridge, died in great agony after having a leg taken off by a round shot.

On Friday September 25th it seemed that the day of redemption had come when Major Generals Havelock and Outram fought their way in with a relieving force, but evacuation of the Residency was impossible. The strength of the total force was not enough to breach the iron grip the mutineers held on Lucknow, particularly with the great number of women, children and wounded that would have to be evacuated. Though in effect the relief was but a reinforcement the boost to the morale of the besieged was beyond measure.

Just two weeks later Sergeant Major Keogh, on duty at the Redan Battery, was struck in the thigh by a round shot, his leg was amputated but he died, as most amputees did. Mr L.E. Rutz Rees, a civilian, commented, "a Power higher than any human tribunal did not allow him to go unpunished."

Finally, in mid-November, Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief, effected the relief and evacuation of the Residency at Lucknow. On Thursday 19 November the ladies and children left the entrenchment; Mrs Keogh, without husband and only two of her five children left to her; and poor Mrs Eldridge with just her six year old son as a hope for the future.

Here the story might end, but in attempting to trace the future marriage and thereby profession of young Walter Benjamin Eldridge, I found that the poor little lad died of typhoid fever at Sanawur, on 22 October 1860, less than a week short of his ninth birthday. His

mother at this time held the post of Matron at the Lawrence Military Asylum and his cousin, Sarah, was an Infant School Mistress there. But by 1864 the Eldridge ladies had faded away until in the Burial Registers of Dehra Dun in 1900 it is recorded that Ann Eldridge, aged 83 years, "Widow of Riding Master James Eldridge" died of old age on 20 February. The end of a tragic tale.

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FRONTIER COLUMNS

Lieutenant Colonel A A Mains, late 9th Gurkha Rifles

INTRODUCTION

This article is a sequel to the three part article "Frontier Tours" which appeared in DURBAR in 1992 (Vol. 9 No 2, Vol.9 No.3 and Vol.9 No.4). It is inspired by the plan of the camp at Wana at page 20 of the Spring 1995 number, which was unlike any that I saw on "column" during my service and appears not to have been defended by a wall (page 8 mentions the building of a wall AFTER the attack).

A "Frontier Column", as it was known in the period 1922 to 1947, was the movement of a body of troops through Tribal territory away from a motor road. This might be part of a punitive mission or merely to show the flag.

The column, usually of a Brigade (of three battalion strength) with supporting arms was of very considerable length as everything - baggage, rations, forage, ammunition etc. had to be carried on mules, except in Baluchistan where the camels of the two Silladar Camel Transport Companies might be employed. I did four columns, three in 1939-40 from Landi Kotal, and one in 1944 from Fort Sandeman. On my first column I was Quartermaster of the 2/9th Gurkhas, the second and third found me attached to Brigade HQ as Brigade Orderly Officer (assistant to the Staff Captain and responsible for the administration of Brigade HQ), and as second in command of the 5/9th Gurkhas on the last. The only difference in the make-up of the columns was that the last had regimental 3 inch mortars and there had been a limited issue of "walkie-talkies", otherwise the supporting arms were regimental MMGs and mountain artillery, and the signalling equipment was flag, lamp and helio.

In spite of the territory being well mapped, a column's progress was very slow and a day's march was not much above 5 or 6 miles, or less if opposition was encountered. This was conditioned by the length of the column, the necessity of picqueting all overlooking heights and of arriving at the camp site in time to build a perimeter wall before dark.

THE MARCH - PICQUETING

Picqueting had become a science, handed down from unit to unit and, in the case of Gurkha regiments, with their frontier tour every fifth year, assiduously practised during their "home" service. In every case the "Picqueting Officer" was the C.O. of the battalion providing the advance guard; Brigade HQ would be in the centre with the reserve. There were two schools of thought over the duration of the Picqueting Officer's tour of duty - one was that the original Picqueting Officer and advance guard remained for the whole of the march, using men of other battalions as picquets when his own were used up; the other was that when the Picqueting Officer's battalion was used up the advance guard and Picqueting Officer was found by the next battalion in rotation.

The Picqueting Officer's "O" Group would consist of himself, his Adjutant and Signal Officer, with representatives of supporting arms, together with the platoon and section commanders of the first company to be used. On arrival at the area to be picqueted the

column would halt and the Picqueting Officer, having decided which peaks were to be picqueted, would order "No I LEFT one section" (odd number picquets to the left, even to the right) indicating the position to the picquet commander with his pointer staff - the gunner, machine gunner and mortar commander then had the picquet position pointed out to them. Meanwhile the Adjutant was making out the picqueting slips - these came in booklets with two detachable portions and a counterfoil recorded the picquet number, strength and unit finding it. One portion was given to the picquet commander and the second was sent back to the rear guard commander. After the route had been picqueted for some distance the column would move on, and the procedure would be repeated at the next halt.

It was usual for each picquet to include a signaller with flag, and the commander himself would have an identifying flag and white air identification strips. The former would be displayed in view of the column, the latter in the form of a cross to identify the picquet from the air and, in the event of an attack, to change to a "T" the long piece pointing towards the enemy.

The rear guard commander's "O" Group was similar to the picquet commander's, with the addition of a large red flag carried by an orderly. In order that no-one was left behind, everyone other than the rear guard had to be in front of this flag. The rear guard commander was responsible for calling down the picquets when their task was finished. This was done either by flag, Morse or semaphore, or sometimes by using the red flag itself, giving the "wash out signal" followed by indicating the picquet number by waves of the flag. The supporting arms would be ready to fire onto the picquet's position as soon as all the men were off it - the picquet commander coming off last waving his flag. On arrival back at the column he would report his picquet "all accounted for" and would give up his picqueting slip which would be compared with the rear guard commander's slip to ensure no picquet was overlooked.

The advance guard and rear guard performed the usual functions of any operation - the advance guard in extended order sweeping the valley ahead of the column and the rear guard ready to halt and turn about to repel any attack from the rear.

THE CAMP (see sketches "A" and "B")

Note: the layout of the camp could vary according to the ideas of the Brigade/Column Commander. I have described the camps and battalions which I was in - 2/9 GR Landi Kotal and 5/9 GR Fort Sandeman.

As soon as the camp site was reached the column, still protected by the last picquets put up during the march, would halt and the Staff Captain with his camp party would go forward and site the camp, using flags and pegs (sketch "A"). There were only two rules - one was to place the infantry around the perimeter and the other to make each gate the responsibility of one unit. When this was done he would call in the unit QMs with their camp parties and indicate their respective areas. They in turn would lay out their unit areas. (Sketch "B"). In my regiment the QM had a mule, laden with flags, pegs and coloured rope - the company areas were ringed with ropes of the company colours. Finally, guides were sent to bring in the battalions.

On arrival arms were grounded and equipment taken off, with sentries posted - to rest their feet the men removed their boots and put on the gym shoes which they were carrying in their

packs. Then everyone who could be spared got down to finding boulders to make a breast high wall. Officers' orderlies relieved their officers of their equipment except for their revolvers. Most officers had their issue leather holsters attached to a web bandolier with spaces for the bullets; this could be worn over the shoulder in lieu of their equipment.

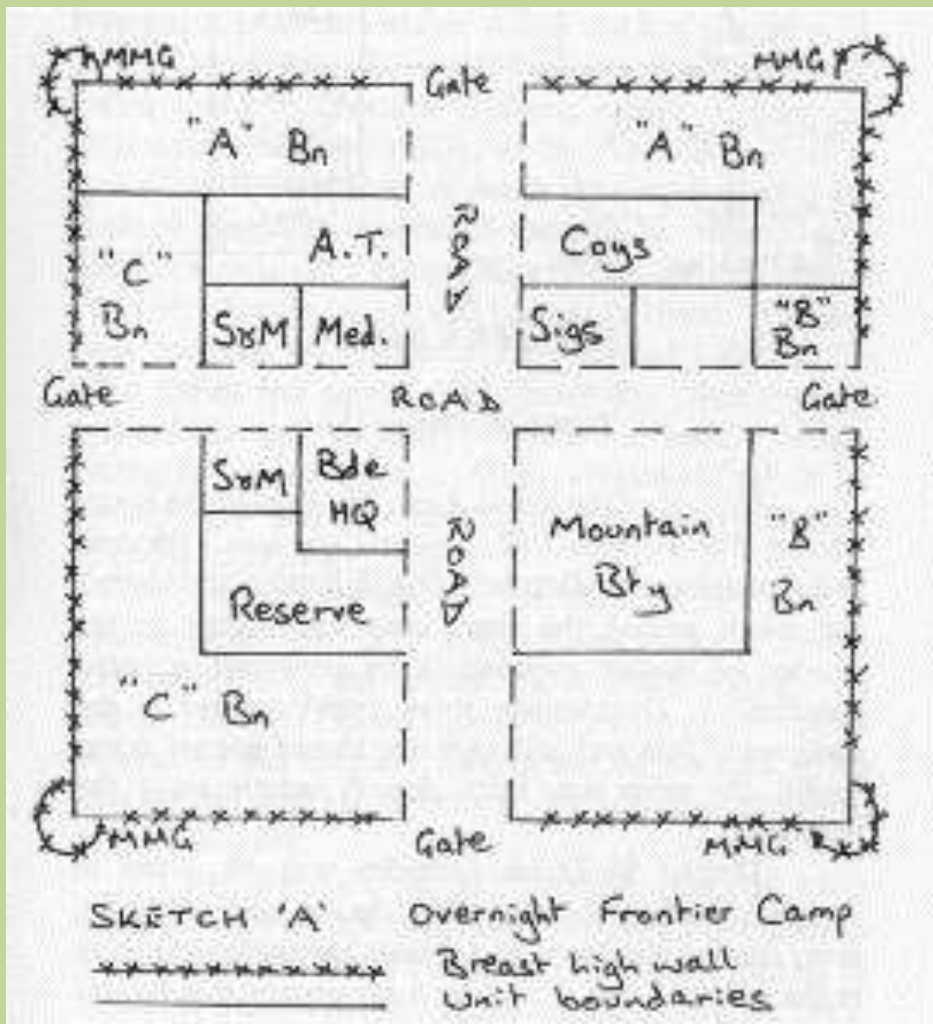
The transport animals would now come in and dump their loads - greatcoats, blankets, rations, ammunition and water, going out again to feed and water and staying put until dusk. With them came the followers, cooks, water carriers and sweepers as well as the mess servants and the mess mule. Sometime later the column commander would call a conference to review the day's events and to give orders for the night routine and for striking camp the next morning. It is not possible to recount all the various activities going on - building the wall, laying out night lines for the supporting arms, relieving the day picquets with the night ones, and so on - a hive of activity until "stand to" at dusk when everyone, fully equipped and armed, would take up his night emergency position. During the night officers and men slept with their arms by them, the men's rifles being chained to them. The reserve, known as the "inlying picquet" slept fully equipped and armed, and of course sentries were on watch at intervals around the wall. The troops bivouacked with their greatcoats, blankets and groundsheets. In most Indian regiments the officers had light weight shelter tents. If there was a possibility of hostile snipers the tents were dug down.

SPECIALISED EQUIPMENT

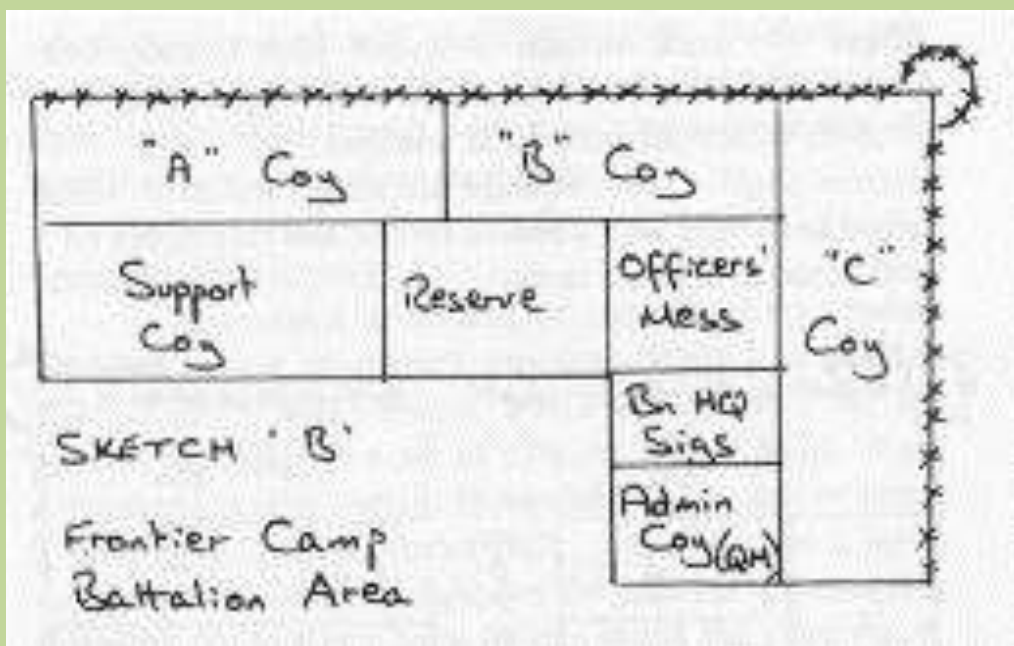
There was a great deal of specialised equipment provided at unit or officers' expense. When I joined the 2/9th from my attachment to a British regiment I had to provide myself with a set of officer's pattern Mills Web Equipment, a light weight Hounsfeld bed, a shelter tent, a sleeping bag and a pointer staff. The Mess had a light weight tent and special light weight yakdans - these had straps on the top, one for a primus stove, the other for a kettle so that the Mess butler, who went with it, could brew up before the arrival of the rest of the transport. Regimental equipment consisted of the flags, pegs and coloured rope for marking out the camp area.

Glossary

- Note: - a mule load was 1 maund (80 pounds) each side.
- *Yakdan* - a leather container
- *Pakhal*- a felt-covered water container (designed to fit on one side of a pack saddle)
- *Chaghal* - a canvas water container (about 2 pints) either carried or hung on a pack saddle, the canvas being porous allowed evaporation which kept the water cool.
- *Khajawah* - a stretcher designed to fit on one side of a pack saddle
- *Sangar* – a small circular defended post (usually one Section) defended by a breast high wall. Night camp picquets would normally build a sangar.
- *Pointer staff* - two straight pieces of wood or metal joined in parallel with a handle on one and rifle sights on both, used to indicate targets.



Sketch A



Sketch B

LUMSDEN'S HORSE

Peter Chapman

No unit of the Indian Army took part in the South African War of 1899-1902 ... no unit save one. You will find it mentioned in Gordon's *British Battles and Medals*, alone among the many units surrounding it, the number of medals awarded to its personnel is noted specifically. Occasionally these medals appear in the auctioneers' lists and, although one should not say it too loudly, the price they fetch doesn't exactly make the headlines.

Dugald McTavish Lumsden was 48 and in Australia - when the 'Boer War' broke out. Although many bearing his illustrious surname had made their mark in the Indian Army, it was as a tea planter that he had first gone to Assam in 1873 and to the Borelli estate in the Tezpur district. The eldest son of James Lumsden of Peterhead, he joined the Durrung Mounted Rifles on its formation in 1887 and, when this and other units were merged to form the Assam Valley Light Horse he, with the rank of major, commanded F Squadron winning a reputation as an enthusiastic shikari and first class shot.

From Australia in 1899 he conceived the notion of a unit of volunteer civilians, ideally a corps of European mounted infantry, to be recruited in India to assist the British Army in South Africa. Soliciting the help of Sir Patrick Playfair in Calcutta, he offered half a lakh of rupees (£3,333) and his personal services to raise the unit which he would call Lumsden's Horse. The idea was accepted and by the time he reached Calcutta, the War Office had agreed wholeheartedly. Subscriptions poured in and totalled £15,000 for tents, clothes, chargers and provisions. Many volunteers had to be turned away and the regiment, 250 strong, sailed from Calcutta in February 1900.

They came under fire first on April 30, 1900, at Ospruit when the 2i/c, Major Eden Showers, former Commandant of the Surma Valley Light Horse, was killed. Lumsden himself rode to the rescue of a wounded trooper on this occasion, placing him on the back of his charger and walking him out of action across 200 yards under heavy fire.

The unit took part in 29 actions, marched 1,500 miles and only lost six men killed, two dead from sickness and a further 24 minor casualties. Only half returned to India, the other half receiving commissions in other units.

Lumsden was rewarded with the CB and given an honorary lieutenant colonelcy in the British Army. But his concern was with members of his now disbanded regiment all of whom had given up lucrative employment to soldier. None failed to find further work; one, David Fraser, famously becoming the Peking correspondent of The Times.

In 1914 Lumsden, now in London, joined forces with his old friend Sir Bindon Blood in recruiting 'special corps' in the West End of London where he died, in 1915. He was 64.

LETTERS AND QUERIES

● Chris Kempton writes:

In connection with a register of HEIC and Indian Army units which I am preparing I am trying to draw up a set of maps to show the geographical locations of static units. As the period involved is 1666 to 1947 this is quite a job and I have had the usual problems with spelling variations and changes in location names, both pre and post '47.

I have managed to locate, reasonably accurately, some 520 but the following have so far eluded me:

BHIMTAL, DIVNARI, PILKHIM (IAOC Ammunition Depot), RAIRANGPUR SEVOICE (Jungle Warfare School) and GUARA HILLS (Leave Centre)

If any member can locate these places I would be most grateful for their advice. An approximate location, i.e. "50 miles SW of Delhi" would be quite sufficient.

● Cyril Walters writes:

I would be grateful for any details members can provide on the following:

- The Musketry Course at PACHMARHI - any background information I have two excellent photographs from the 4th musketry course in 1917. One photo has only British servicemen, the lowest rank being Sergeant. I note that amongst the Regiments represented are Prince Albert's (Somerset Light Infantry), The Lincolnshire Regiment and Royal Sussex. The second photograph, unlike the first, has both British and Indian servicemen. British regiments include The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment. I am unable to determine the units of the Indian component other than Sikhs, Gurkhas, Punjabis etc. (from their head-dress).
- Any details on the 1927 medical arrangements for "The Shanghai Defence Force". The Indian component accompanying the Indian troops included a Field Ambulance, a General Hospital and a half Sanitary Section. (I have details of the British force).

● Colonel Graham Edwards writes:

I still have some copies of "*The Army of India 1799-1826 Medal Roll of European Recipients*" which I compiled and published privately in 1964. It is foolscap size, bound in stiff card and contains the details of 32 British Regiments, 50 Regiments of the Bengal Army and the Bengal European Regiment; 13 Regiments of the Bombay Army and the Bombay European Regiment; 50 Regiments of the Madras Army and the Madras European Regiment; Staff, Artillery, Medical Services; Miscellaneous awards and also Royal and Indian Navy recipients, listed by ship.

The book includes details of names, ranks and the bars awarded. It also shows a summary of bars for each regiment. I must stress that these are the European recipients and although there are a large number of regiments included, some only list one or two names. The cost to members of the Society is £10 (plus p&p of £1). I should be grateful if orders could include the appropriate cheque. Available numbers of this edition, signed by the author, are limited so it will have to be first come first served.

I am also re-editing further medal rolls I compiled in the past and would be pleased to learn if any members are interested. They are:

- The original defenders of the Residency at Lucknow (Europeans only) May - September 1857;
- HM's 22nd Regiment of Foot in the Scinde Campaign, 1843
- HM's 16th Lancers in the First Sikh War (Aliwal etc.)
- HM's 24th Regiment of Foot in the Second Sikh War - the regiment was virtually destroyed at Chillianwalla.

The cost will be £7 for Lucknow and £5 for the others, plus p&p.

● A non-member, Bill Stone, writes:

I am in need of information on the Indian 38th Infantry Brigade in World War II.

What I Already Know.

The 38th was apparently formed in Egypt in December 1941 as a temporary expedient from three unbrigaded Indian battalions of unknown identity. According to one uncorroborated source, it served at Tobruk at the beginning of 1942 and its relief by South African troops was planned for mid-March of that year.

What I Need to Know:

- Did this brigade actually exist?
- On what date was the brigade headquarters formed, and where was it located at that time?
- What were the identities of its battalions, on what date did each battalion come under command, and where was each located at that time?
- What battalions, if any, were posted to and from the brigade after its formation, and on what dates?
- At exactly which locations did the brigade serve, and when did it serve in those locations, what were its activities at those locations, and what were the dates of movement between locations?
- When were the brigade's battalions posted away? Where and on what date was the brigade disbanded?

Sources - I need to document this data, so I'd like to get specific details (author, title, publisher, date, page numbers, etc.) of references I can cross-check if possible.

In Exchange - If someone can provide me with the information I need on the 38th, I'll gladly present to him a copy of my WWII OB software package ("Armies of the Second World War, volume I").

