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THE INDIA GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL 1908-35 TO THE R.A.F.

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In the world of medal collecting few medals present such a fascinating diversity and give such opportunities for research as the five issues of the India General Service Medal (IGS).

The first India General Service Medal was the 'Army of India' Medal, instituted on 21 March 1851, which covered the period 1799-1826 with 21 bars. It was only issued to survivors and the first bar issued was for 'ALLIGHUR' in 1803.

There followed the second IGS, the India General Service Medal 1854-95, which was instituted on 1 March 1854. This had 24 bars in its 41 year duration, including the rare Royal Mint variety bar of 'BURMA 1887-9', rather than the more normally seen Calcutta minted bar of 'BURMA 1887-89'. The period covered by this IGS is also somewhat of an anomaly as the first bar awarded, 'PEGU', was for the Second Burma War of 1852-53 and the first action for the bar 'NORTH WEST FRONTIER' was in 1849!

The third IGS in the series is again an anomaly as the Army Order dated 1 April 1896 approved the issue of the 'India Medal 1895'. The medal covered the period 1895-1902 with 7 bars issued. The last bar issued was 'WAZIRISTAN 1901-2'. Queen Victoria had died in January 1901 and a new medal with the head of King Edward VII on the obverse was produced for 'WAZIRISTAN 1901-2'. Though the reverse design was the same except for the omission of the date, the Edward VII medal was thinner than that of the Queen Victoria issue and is rare to European recipients.

The fourth IGS medal was instituted on 1 January 1909 and covered the period 1908-35, ceasing with the death of King George V in January 1936. There were 12 bars issued in its 27 year duration. For the first time, commencing with the bar 'AFGHANISTAN N.W.F. 1919', medals and bars for actions in India and Burma were issued to the R.A.F.

The fifth and last IGS medal was instituted on 3 August 1938, following the accession of King George VI in December 1936. There were only two bars issued. Though intended for long usage, the IGS was not awarded after the outbreak of the Second World War and the subsequent partition and independence of India and Pakistan rendered it obsolete in 1948.

The IGS medals awarded to the R.A.F., due to numbers issued, always command a premium over those awarded to British troops. In the IGS medal 1908-35, there were 9 actions between 1919 and 1935 for which the R.A.F. were awarded medals and bars, but surprisingly the R.A.F. did not earn the bar 'MALABAR 1921-22'. Every collector of the IGS medals naturally wants a medal bearing the bar 'WAZIRISTAN 1925' as, apart from two medals issued to an army officer and a civilian, they were only issued to the R.A.F. This was the first occasion in which the R.A.F. had been used as an independent force. Its rarity is compounded by the A.M.W.O. 643/26 of 2 December 1926 which stated that those personnel who had previously qualified for the 'WAZIRISTAN 1921-24' bar and who took part in the

1925 operations would be given the option of receiving either the 'WAZIRISTAN 1921-24' bar or the 'WAZIRISTAN 1925' bar. They would not be issued with both.

Though both glamorous and rare, in fact the 'WAZIRISTAN 1925' bar is not the rarest bar issued to the R.A.F. on the IGS 1908-25 medal. Details of medals and bars issued to the R.A.F. for this medal are as follows:

Campaign	Clasps Issued		
	Definite	Possible	Total
AFGHANISTAN NWF 1919	803	55	858
MAHSUD 1919-20	162	7	169
WAZIRISTAN 1919-21	483	109	592
WAZIRISTAN 1921-24	581	6	587
WAZIRISTAN 1925	280	61	341
NORTH WEST FRONTIER 1930-31	1,356	12	1,368
BURMA 1930-32	13	1	14
MOHMAND 1933	180	1	181
NORTH WEST FRONTIER 1935	930	1	931
clasps unidentified (majority probably AFGHANISTAN NWF 1919)			26
TOTAL			5,067

From the numbers issued, as can be seen, only 14 medals and bars were issued for the campaign 'BURMA 1930-32', but in fact this is not the rarest clasp.

With the recent publication of the IGS 1908-35 roll to the R.A.F., research can now be done into the numbers of medals and bars issued. One commonly held fallacy with the IGS 1908-35 medal, repeated in reputable medal price guides, is that the bars 'MAHSUD 1919-20' and 'WAZIRISTAN 1919-21' were only issued together. The main reason for this is that the territory of Mahsud is totally enclosed by that of Waziristan and therefore anyone qualifying for the 'MAHSUD 1919-20' bar must also have qualified for the 'WAZIRISTAN 1919-21' bar. However, this does not take cognisance of the fact that if R.A.F. aircrew merely overflew Waziristan then they would not qualify for the 'WAZIRISTAN 1919-21' bar. Only if they were involved in action over Waziristan would they qualify for the bar.

In fact, on studying the R.A.F. rolls there were 10 medals issued either with the 'MAHSUD 1919-20' bar as a single (4), or as two bar medals with the 'AFGHANISTAN NWF 1919' bar as the first bar (6). For the record there were 239 single bar medals definitely issued for 'WAZIRISTAN 1919-21' plus 85 possibles and 71 medals issued with two bars, 'MAHSUD 1919-20' and 'WAZIRISTAN 1919-21'. Quite often these are found as three bar medals, usually with 'AFGHANISTAN NWF 1919' as the first bar (68 issued) or 'WAZIRISTAN 1919-24' as the third bar (6 issued). 1 five bar medal and 7 four bar medals were issued to the R.A.F.

Details of the IGS 1908-35 medal with the bar 'MAHSUD 1919-20', but not issued with the bar 'WAZIRISTAN 1919-21' are as follows:

Single bar 'MAHSUD 1919-20' (4)

250538 AC2 C.J. Clow
F/O W.R. Fairbairn
F/O G.T. Richardson
753 SM1 W.J. Southgate

With second bar 'AFGHANISTAN NWF 1919' (6)

11175 Sgt J.D. Allan
158844 AC1 F.E. Beardsall
F/O N. Fielden
148720 AM2 A.E. Hawkins
119053 AC2 J. Hays
16053 AM1 W. Scarfe

With only four medals having the single bar 'MAHSUD 1919-20' this makes it the rarest medal and bar combination issued under the IGS 1908-35 to the R.A.F. Naturally, two bar medals with 'AFGHANISTAN NWF 1919' as the first bar make these, at only 6 issued, the second rarest.

Bibliography

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INDIAN CAVALRY 1857-1861
Cliff Parrett

(Cliff Parrett started this series of fact sheets in 1989 (Vol. 6, No 1) with the aim of following the evolution of Indian cavalry regiments during the turmoil of the Indian Mutiny and its aftermath by producing for each appropriate unit a summary of Mutiny medal claims, and a brief history from the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857 to the reorganisation of May 1861).

15TH BENGAL IRREGULAR CAVALRY

15th Bengal Irregular Cavalry		IOL L/Mil/5 references
	Clasps	None traced
Total known claims	Nil - - - - -	

First raised in 1846 as 14Bgl IC, it became 15Bgl IC in 1847, had fought in the 2nd Sikh Wars and carried honours for "Punjaub". Having been stationed in Lahore since early 1853, it was brought down to Eastern Oude in 1857 upon the assumption that the presence of a trusted Irregular Cavalry unit would steady the regular Bengal troops and the recently formed Oude Irregular Force. This optimistic vision was soon shattered. The 15Bgl IC was headquartered at Sultanpore, and one squadron was posted to Fyzabad. The Rissaldar commanding the detached squadron was the prime instigator of the uprising which broke out at Fyzabad on 8 June 1857, and he commanded the mutineers in their persecution of the European population - many of whom were massacred whilst attempting to flee the city. There is no evidence that any British officers were present with the Fyzabad squadron. Lt Col Samuel Fisher (Commandant; HM 29 Foot) was at Sultanpore with his Headquarters. With him were Capt Arthur Gibbings (2nd-in-Command; 38Bgl NI) and Lieut Charlton Nassau Tucker (Adjutant; 8Bgl IC). It is not clear whether the regiment's doctor, Assistant Surgeon Frederick Corbyn, was present. The insurrection at Sultanpore commenced on 9 June when the 1st Oude Military Police rose in revolt. In attempting to bring them to order, Col Fisher rode down to their lines accompanied by his two British officers and some 15Bgl IC troopers, but was shot in the back by an Oude police sepoy. It was a mortal wound and he died soon afterwards in the arms of Lieut Tucker who, maybe because he was a popular officer, was allowed to escape. Capt Gibbings was caught and summarily shot by his own men. The 15Bgl IC, re-joined by its Fyzabad squadron, later moved off to Nawabgunj with the 8th Oude Irregular Infantry and the 1st Oude Military Police. Described as "bigoted Mohammedans and hard fighters" (by GHD Gimletter: *"A Postscript to the Records of the Indian Mutiny"*, Witherby, London, 1927) the 15Bgl IC took a prominent part in the siege of Lucknow, and in resistance to the two relief columns. It furnished several prominent rebel leaders. Rissaldar Barkut Ahmed commanded the mutineers at Chinhut. A brave native officer of the 15Bgl IC, at the head of a rebel force opposing Colin Campbell's 2nd Relief Force on 15 Nov 1857, he was killed in single combat by Lieut John Watson, 1st Punjab Irregular Cavalry, during the assault on the Martiniere. On 11 March, during the final stages of the assault on Lucknow, Outram surprised and captured the camp of the 15Bgl IC, taking two guns and several standards, and killing a large number of men. In view of the record of treachery and violence, the 15Bgl IC was never reconstituted. There is no evidence of any loyal remnants of native officers or troopers. No claims for Mutiny medals appear to have been made on any 15Bgl IC roll by surviving officers or by relatives of deceased officers. For Fisher and Gibbings, claims might have been submitted on 29th Foot and 38Bgl NI rolls respectively. Tucker subsequently performed an important role with Brig Gen T.H. Franks's Janpore Field Force during its advance on the right bank of the Ganges to Lucknow in February 1858. His light cavalry training made him the ideal officer to lead the small but strategically valuable 25-strong body of Mounted Infantry formed from 10th Foot volunteers. The January 1859 India Register records that he is with the Right Wing of the 2nd Bengal European Light Cavalry, and on furlough. He never returned to active service, and is not listed in the July 1860 India Register. No record of a Mutiny medal claim has as yet been traced. The July 1857 India Register shows Corbyn as in medical charge of the 15Bgl IC. If he was indeed with this regiment in June 1857, then he escaped the mutineers' attentions and quickly found new employment. He served with the Cashmere Levy at the siege of Delhi, and then with the 3rd Regt Sikh Irregular Cavalry at the capture of Lucknow and several subsequent actions. His two clasp Mutiny medal (Delhi/Lucknow) was claimed on a roll submitted by the 3rd Sikh Irregular Cavalry (L/MIL/5/96 f581/2).

HISTORY OF THE FARIDKOT ARMY

Richard Head

FARIDKOT STATE

Chaudri Kapura founded the Faridkot house in the middle of the sixteenth century. Sardar Hamir Singh became independent a century later having added considerably to the family possessions. Maharaja Ranjit Singh took possession of the State in 1809, but was later forced to relinquish it by the British Government. For services rendered during the First Sikh War the Faridkot Chief, Sardar Pahar Singh, obtained the title of Raja and a grant of territory. Raja Sir Harindar Singh, the last Raja of Faridkot, was invested with ruling powers in 1934. In 1933 he had undergone military training with the Royal Deccan Horse. He was attached to 1st Battalion, 11th Sikh Regiment, in Waziristan for a short period in August 1937. After Independence he became Honorary Colonel of the Sikh Light Infantry and the Bengal Group, Indian Engineers.¹ The State had an area of 643 square miles in the Punjab and a population of 199,183.

ARMY ORGANISATION AND STRENGTH

It is not known what form the military forces of the State took when it was founded in the seventeenth century. There is some evidence that the State had some organised units as the Body Guard and Riyasti Paltan (see Infantry Company) are referred to.

The Faridkot Imperial Service Contingent, on organisation in 1890, consisted of I.S. Lancers (50 strong) and I.S. Infantry (150 strong); but the difficulty of finding employment on service for units as small as these led, in 1901, to a change to a company of Sappers, the I.S. Sappers and Miners (188 strong). This new role was, in the future, to be justified as the Faridkot Sappers and Miners were to see much war service.

During the period leading up to the outbreak of the First World War the State Army consisted of:

I.S.T.

Sappers and Miners	1 company
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Local Forces

Cavalry	1 troop
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Infantry	1 company
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Artillery	20 men with serviceable guns
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¹ Colonel Sir Harinder Singh Brar, Bans Bahadur, KCSI, the last ruler of Faridkot, died on 16 October 1989, aged 74. We published an obituary in Vol. 7, No 2 (Summer 1990), page 17.

FIRST WORLD WAR 1914-1918

During the war the I.S. Sapper Company saw active service in East Africa where its strength was increased to 200. In 1918 a second company, 200 strong, was raised but was disbanded at the end of the war. The progressive build-up of the I.S. Sappers and Miners, based on caste returns, during the war was:

1915 - 200, 1916 - 270, 1917 - 314, 1918 - 459, 1919 - 841

During the war 2,368 recruits were raised for the Sappers and the Indian Army, plus 399 from outside the State. The recruitment, at 2,767, represented 12% of the eligible males.

PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS 1919-1939

In 1923 Faridkot joined the Indian States Forces Scheme. The Sapper unit was joined in the Scheme by the Body Guard, Infantry, Sappers Depot and the Band. This was the establishment of the State Forces during this period. The Infantry was disbanded in 1938. The overall strength was about 300.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-1945

The strength of the Faridkot State Forces on the outbreak of the war was:

Headquarters	6
Body Guard	31 (removed from the 1939 ISF Scheme early 1940 as it was below the new minimum strength)
Sappers and Miners	201
Band	45
Total	283

New units raised during the war were:

- Sappers and Miners Training and Maintenance Unit, ISF (alternative title 3rd Field Company)
- Infantry Company, ISF
- Garrison Company, ISF
- 94th (Faridkot) Field Company, I.A. (became 2nd Field Company, ISF)
- 43rd (Faridkot) Garrison Company, I.A.
- Faridkot Element, 71st (Nabha and Faridkot) Garrison Company, I.A.
- Depot, 43rd and 71st Garrison Companies
- 81st (Faridkot) Animal Transport Company, I.A.
- Camel Militia
- Militia Battalion
- Labour Battalion
- Faridkot Company, Punjab States Labour Unit

The strength of the Faridkot State Forces (excluding the Indian Army and Irregular units) was:-

1941 - 600, 1942 - 630, 1943 - 650, 1944 - 750, 1945 - 1,025, 1946 - 1,264

During the course of the war over 9,000 men were recruited for the Indian Army and the Faridkot State Forces which represented 4.5% of the State's population. The State's massive effort during the war was the direct result of His Highness the Raja's personal commitment to the success of the Allied cause.

POST SECOND WORLD WAR PERIOD

With the return of the two Field Companies, which were retained as permanent units, from the Eastern Front and the disbanding of the State recruited Indian Army units and some of the Irregular units, the Faridkot Army adopted a new peacetime establishment:

Indian States Forces (approximately 837 men)

1st and 2nd Field Companies, Sappers and Miners Infantry Company
Garrison Company
Band

Other Troops

3rd Field Company
His Highness' Body Guard (Mounted)
Artillery

This force was three times larger than before the war.

The troubled state of the sub-continent and the proximity of Faridkot to the new border between Pakistan and India led to a substantial increase in the State Forces available for duties in connection with public disorders, refugee problems, etc. The following units, non-ISF, were raised during 1947-1948:

Field Park Company
Field Engineer Regimental Headquarters
Training Battalion
Signal Company
3rd Camel Corps**
1st and 2nd Battalions, Police Rifles**

(**Militia Corps consisting of part time soldiers)

The overall forces available represented an enormous effort for a State with a population of only 200,000. The total armed forces available to the State at this time were:

Indian States Forces (officially recognised units)

1st and 2nd Field Companies
Infantry Company
Garrison Company
Band

Indian States Forces (not officially recognised)

3rd Field Company

Field Park Company
Field Engineer Regimental Headquarters
State Units
Training Battalion
Signal Company
His Highness' Body Guard
Artillery
Militia Units
3rd Camel Corps
1st and 2nd Battalions, Police Rifles

PATIALA AND EAST PUNJAB STATES UNION (PEPSU)

On 20 August 1948 Faridkot ceased to exist and was integrated with Patiala, Jind, Kapurthala and Nabha into a new State, the Patiala and East Punjab States Union. The military forces of the former Princely States were combined into a force known as the P.E.P.S.U. Army and as a result of this the Faridkot Army was disbanded, its units re-organised as follows:

Raised by the Maharaja of Faridkot as a personally financed unit:-

His Highness' Body Guard
Band

Absorbed into P.E.P.S.U. Army

1st, 2nd and 3rd Field Companies
Headquarters State Forces/Headquarters Field Engineer Regiment
Signal Company

Disbanded

Field Park Company
Infantry
Garrison Company
Training Battalion
3rd Camel Corps
1st and 2nd Battalions, Police Rifles
Artillery

The Faridkot Field Engineer Regiment was constituted at this time with:

Headquarters (formed from ex-Faridkot State Forces Headquarters
2nd and 3rd Field Companies, Faridkot Sappers and Miners
Malerkotla Sappers and Miners

(The 1st Faridkot Field Company was on active service in Kashmir)

INTEGRATION WITH THE INDIAN ARMY, 1951

In 1951, along with all other Indian States Forces units, the P.E.P.S.U. units were absorbed into the Indian Army and the 1st Field Company became 368th Field Company, Bengal Engineer Group. The Patiala Field Battery (with its Faridkot 2nd Field Company element) became 85th (Patiala) Field Battery. Both these units still exist. In 1965 at the special request of the Raja of Faridkot, Honorary Colonel of the Bengal Engineer Group, one of the new raisings within the Group was the 94th Field Company as a re-raising of the 2nd

Faridkot Field Company (originally 94th (Faridkot) Field Company, Indian Army). The old Faridkot Army is thus well represented in the modern Indian Army.

WAR SERVICES

First Afghan War 1841-1842. When the British passed through the State territory, Sardar Pahar Singh supported them by helping the troops with supplies and transport.

First Sikh War 1845. When war broke out in 1845, Pahar Singh again helped by collecting carriage and supplies for the army. In recognition of these services he received the title of Raja and a grant of territory; his ancestral estate of Kotkapura was also restored to him.

Second Sikh War 1848. Raja Wazir Singh, who succeeded in 1849, followed the example of his father and assisted Government during the Second Sikh War with supplies and transport.

Mutiny 1857. In 1857, when the Mutiny in Oude was affecting the army in the Punjab, Wazir Singh placed himself under the orders of the Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepore and assisted in guarding the Sutlej ferries against the passage of the rebel troops. He also sent a detachment to Sirsa and with a body of horse and two guns he personally attacked a notorious rebel, Sham Das, and destroyed his stronghold.

Second Afghan War 1878-1880. During the Second Afghan War Raja Bikram Singh furnished a contingent of 250 horse and foot, which was employed in keeping open the line of communications in the Kurram Valley.

South African War 1900-1901. The State provided 20 horses to the British Government for use in South Africa.

First World War 1914-1918. At the outbreak of war there were 199 men of this State in the I.S. Sappers and 192 in the Indian Army. A Company of Sappers, 130 strong, departed to East Africa in October 1914 and served there for more than three years. The strength of the Company was subsequently raised to 200. A second company of the same strength was raised in 1918. In 1916 the Durbar supplied 405 camels, men and muleteers at a few days' notice. 45 men lost their lives, representing a proportion of the men enrolled considerably higher than the Punjab average.

Third Afghan War 1919. In June 1919 the Sappers and Miners moved to the Khyber Pass and served there until December.

Second World War 1939-1945. The original plan to assist the Empire's war effort was to raise two additional field companies, 2nd and 3rd, but soon after raising and organisation began the Indian Army suggested that a State-raised Indian Army field company should be raised. Selected men from the two companies were transferred into the new unit, 94th (Faridkot) Field Company. The remaining men were organised into the 3rd Field Company, later to be known as the Sappers and Miners Training Maintenance Unit. With the move of the 1st Field Company and 94th (Faridkot) Field Company out of the State the need for garrison and internal security duties led to the formation of the Infantry and Garrison Companies, both of which belonged to the Indian States Forces Scheme. As the war news worsened in 1941 an unusual, but most successful, scheme was formulated; the raising of the Camel Militia and Militia Battalion. These two units were composed of men who continued with their usual civilian occupations but were available for training and actual duties as and when required. Later in the war, at the request of the Government of India, the 81st (Faridkot) Animal Transport Company was raised and two labour corps - Faridkot Labour Battalion and Faridkot Company, Punjab States Labour Unit - were also organised for service on the Eastern Front.

Jammu and Kashmir 1947-1948. The 1st Field Company moved to Kashmir in 1947 where it was employed at Ujh and building and maintaining ferries over the Ravi River.

THE REGIMENTS AND CORPS OF THE FARIDKOT ARMY

The Faridkot Army units consisted mainly of Sikhs with a small element of Muslims. The Sikh proportion was progressively increased and by the 1940s was over 80% of the total, mostly State subjects.

INDIAN STATE FORCE UNITS

HIS HIGHNESS' BODY GUARD

Raised after 1857 as the Lancers, re-organised in 1890 as Imperial Service Troops and re-designated I.S. Lancers. On 26 February 1900 ceased to be I.S.T. Re-organised as I.S.F. in 1923 and remained as such until 1940 when it was excluded from the Scheme and became an irregular unit. In 1948 it ceased to be a part of the military and became the personal guard to the Ruler. A squadron of about 150 on raising, as I.S.T. it had 1 troop and this establishment remained until 1940.

1ST FIELD COMPANY, SAPPERS AND MINERS

History. Raised April 1901 as an I.S.T. unit by conversion of the Imperial Service Cavalry and Infantry. Re-organised as I.S.F. in 1923. In 1951 it was re-designated 368th (Faridkot) Field Company, Bengal Engineer Group, Indian Army. During its existence the following titles were used: 1901-1922 Sappers and Miners; 1923 Army Troops Company, Sappers and Miners; 1923-1926 Sappers; 1926-1944 Sappers and Miners; 1944 onwards 1st Field Company, Sappers and Miners

Organisation. Raised as a company with 2 sections. In 1938 increased to a full company with 3 sections, the additional men coming from the Infantry which was disbanded.

War Services - First World War 1914-1918. Between November 1914 and February 1918 the Company served in East Africa. During 1914 and 1915 it was engaged on road making and bridging in Kenya. 1916 saw detachments attached to active service columns which captured Moshi, after which it was again employed on roadworks, bridging and repairing railways. It served with British, South African and Belgian troops during its period of service. In February 1918 the Company returned to India.

War Services - Third Afghan War 1919. Served on the Khyber, on line of communications, from June to December 1919.

War Services - Second World War 1939-1945. Left the State 25 September 1939 for Roorkee where it underwent intensive training. On 1 September 1940 it moved to Razmak on the North West Frontier, moving to Peshawar in the middle of 1942. In May 1943 it moved to Assam as 4th Corps Troops working on building new airfields where it was so engaged for 18 months. In August 1944 the Company re-equipped back to its proper role as a field company and it moved to Dinapur, Imphal, Palel and Tamu, carrying out the normal duties of such a company in the war zone - clearing minefields, bomb disposal, bridge building etc. The Company returned to Faridkot from Rangoon on 16 August 1946 after almost seven years' service ex-State.

War Services - Jammu and Kashmir 1947-1948. The Company moved to Kashmir in 1947 to help with bridging works etc. at Ujh and with building and maintaining ferries over the Ravi River.

Honours and Rewards

1911

OBI Second Class	1
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First World War

MC	1
DSO	1
OBI First Class	1
OBI Second Class	3
IOM	1
IDSM	7
IMSM	13
Mentioned in despatches	15
Foreign decorations	1

Second World War

MBE	1
Mentioned in Despatches	1

Jammu and Kashmir 1947

Mentioned in despatches	1
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Battle Honours. Kilimanjaro, Behobeho, East Africa 1914-1918, Afghanistan, Burma 1943-1945, Jammu and Kashmir 1947-1948

2ND COMPANY, FARIDKOT IMPERIAL SERVICE SAPPERS AND MINERS

Raised in 1918, assumed to have been disbanded after the First World War. 200 strong

SAPPERS AND MINERS TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE UNIT (3RD FIELD COMPANY)

A Depot was in existence during the 1920s and this Reserve Section became the 3rd Field Company after the War began. On 1 April 1943 the unit moved to Roorkee to form part of the I.S. Sappers and Miners Training Battalion as the Faridkot Sappers and Miners Training Maintenance Unit where it remained until 1946. From a section it was increased to a company. Disbanded 1946/47.

3RD FIELD COMPANY

Raised in 1946. Disbanded in 1948.

2ND FIELD COMPANY, SAPPERS AND MINERS

Raised in 1941 as the 94th (Faridkot) Field Company, Indian Engineers. Moved for further training to Secunderabad in September 1941 and then to Kohat in February 1942. In April 1942 it moved to Dinapur in Assam and was engaged on the Dinapur to Imphal road erecting bridges and repairing landslides. Moving from Kohima to Shenam it was engaged on road construction, airfield construction and bridging. When the 1944 Japanese offensive took place the Company moved to Shenam and took up an infantry role and was actively engaged in patrolling and defending localities. On relief of those duties it laid mines in front of Japanese positions. In June 1944 it returned to its normal engineering duties. The Company moved back to Mongher in India for training, including operating rafts over the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy Rivers, and in bridging techniques, after which it was given a month's leave. Returning to Burma it was involved in ferrying duties over the Irrawaddy. It moved to Meiktila carrying out normal engineering duties there and at Pegu. On 1 October 1945 it was converted into an ISF unit and was re-designated 2nd Field Company, Sappers and Miners. It returned to the State in 1946.

In 1948 the Jat Sikhs of the unit, together with similar men from Patiala State Forces, combined to form the Patiala Field Battery. In 1951 this Battery became 85th (Patiala) Field Battery, Indian Artillery.

Honours and Rewards **Second World War**

MM	1
Mentioned in Despatches	1

FIELD PARK COMPANY

Raised in 1946. Disbanded 1948.

FIELD ENGINEER REGIMENT

Began to form in 1947 and consisted of:

1st, 2nd and 3rd Field Companies

Field Park Company

After merging of the State the Regiment had:

1st Field Company (serving in Kashmir)

2nd and 3rd Field Companies

Malerkotla Field Company

The Field Park Company was disbanded in 1948 and the Regiment was disbanded in March 1951.

INFANTRY

An infantry unit known as Riyasti Paltan had been in existence for some time. Re-organised in 1890 as I.S.T. and designated I.S. Infantry. Ceased to be I.S.T. on 26 February 1900, the men being transferred to the I.S. Sappers and Miners. Re-organised as ISF in 1922. Disbanded in 1938 so that the Sappers and Miners could be increased to a full Field

Company. The unit was re-raised in 1940 and again disbanded in 1948. As I.S.T. it was 150 strong. On becoming an irregular unit, and later as ISF unit, it was a company with 2 platoons. On re-raising in 1940 it was a full company.

GARRISON COMPANY

Raised in 1940 as an ISF unit when the Sappers and Miners Depot left the State for Roorkee. Still in existence on 15 August 1947.

DEPOT, 411TH AND 611TH GARRISON COMPANIES

Raised during the Second World War to provide reinforcements to the two Indian Army garrison companies raised by the State.

BAND

An I.S.F. unit originally attached to the Infantry, became an independent unit when the Infantry was disbanded in 1937. Continued to exist after integration of the Faridkot Army into the Indian Army but was subsequently disbanded. Organised as a platoon of about 46 musicians. Served in Persia and Iraq Command 2 December 1944 to 31 December 1945.

IRREGULAR UNITS

HIS HIGHNESS' BODY GUARD

Raised in 1948 from volunteers of the State Forces. The Unit was paid for from the personal budget of His Highness. A pipe band was also formed. Continued to exist into the 1980s, 100 strong and originally armed with .303 rifles. In 1972 the unit was disarmed.

ARTILLERY

After 1857 the State was allowed to maintain a battery of 4 muzzle loaders. The Artillery was used for firing salutes. In 1911 - 6 serviceable guns, 20 men. 1937 - a rifled 9 pounder gun was obtained.

TRAINING BATTALION

Raised 1947. Disbanded soon after 1947. 2 companies of 3 platoons with 56 officers and men.

SIGNAL COMPANY

Raised in 1945 by pooling together all existing wireless sets. The Company was absorbed into the Patiala Signals when Faridkot State Forces were integrated into the P.E.P.S.U. States Forces. 2 Sections. The men were volunteers who were paid a retainer whilst in their villages and received army pay when called to duty.

CAMEL CORPS

Raised in 1941 as an irregular militia unit. Disbanded 1945. Organised as a squadron of 3 troops totalling about 168 men. Armed with muzzle loaders. Each troop was raised in a separate village.

MILITIA BATTALION

Raised in 1941 as an irregular militia unit. Began disbanding in 1944 and completed in February 1945. 1 Battalion strong, recruited throughout the State. Usually a platoon was recruited in each village. The supervising staff were pensioners and the sepoys were villagers who trained for one hour a day. Armed with muzzle loading guns.

Honours and Rewards - Second World War

BEM

1

3RD CAMEL CORPS

Raised in 1946 as an irregular militia unit. 1 squadron camel mounted and 1 cycle mounted squadron. As with the previously raised camel corps each of the 3 troops of camels was raised in a separate village. The two troops mounted on cycles were located in two other villages. Raised for railway protection duties.

1ST BATTALION, POLICE RIFLES

Raised 1946 to supplement the State Forces. Disbanded after August 1948.

2ND BATTALION, POLICE RIFLES

Raised 1946 to supplement the State Forces. Disbanded after August 1948. The Mahbi and Ramdassia Sikhs of the unit volunteered as a company and joined the Jind Infantry (13th Battalion, Punjab Regiment), though it later moved to 5th Battalion, Sikh Light Infantry.

LABOUR BATTALION

Raised during the Second World War. 12 platoons of 50 men and a total strength of 630. Engaged on the Ledo Road head works building railway sidings and other earthworks.

INDIAN STATE FORCES COMPOSITE UNITS

INDIAN STATES FORCES SAPPERS AND MINERS TRAINING BATTALION

Raised 1 April 1943 at Roorkee in British India, the State transferred its Sapper & Miner Training unit to it. Disbanded 1946 and the Faridkot men returned to their State.

PUNJAB STATES CIVILIAN LABOUR UNIT

The State provided 1 company of 200 men for this unit.

INDIAN ARMY UNITS

411TH (FARIDKOT) GARRISON COMPANY, SIKH REGIMENT

Raised on 24 February 1942 as 43rd (Faridkot) Garrison Company, the personnel were recruited from the State. In 1945 it was re-designated as above. Disbanded 30 June 1946. Served in India between 1942 and 1946 in a garrison role.

611TH (NABHA AND FARIDKOT) GARRISON COMPANY, SIKH REGIMENT

Raised on 1 November 1942 as 71st (Nabha and Faridkot) Garrison Company. It was raised by the two States and maintained by them. In August 1945 it was re-designated as above. During the course of the war a Kapurthala platoon was incorporated. Disbanded 31 May 1946. Served in India in a garrison role.

81ST (FARIDKOT) ANIMAL TRANSPORT COMPANY, ROYAL INDIAN ARMY SERVICE CORPS

Raised in 1942 from State personnel. Disbanded 15 January 1946. Equipped as a mule company. During the latter part of 1945 the unit was dismounted. Served in India.

BADGES

Most units would only have worn a shoulder title, although three variations of a badge are known but it has not been possible to determine which units wore them. Figure 1 shows the shoulder title for Faridkot Lancers (note the spelling FAREEDKOTE) - brass. Figure 2 shows the title for Imperial Service Sappers Faridkot - brass. Another version is known, also in brass, with ISS FAREEDKOTE. Subsequently the Field Companies wore either a woven title with SM FARIDKOT or a curved shoulder title (brass), FARIDKOT, but without coloured backing. Other units wore the same curved shoulder title, FARIDKOT, but on different coloured backing strips: - HQ State Forces - horizontally divided into gold and green; Infantry - red; Band - dark blue. The badge at figure 3 is in silver and dates from the Second World War. The badge at figure 4 is in chrome with the centre and part of the coat of arms in red enamel. This example is 71mm high but another example is known 118mm high. It is possible that these last two were worn by the Body Guard and/or the pipe band after they were privately funded by the Raja, i.e. post 1948.

All units wore the same button - the State coat of arms (a shield with three rings, a chevron between them, with antelope supporters and a crest of a semi lion rampant guardant. Below, the motto in Hindi BHALA CHIRA PHARI and above, FARIDKOT STATE)





A COUPLE OF MEDAL POINTS.....

First, a recent ruling by the Supreme Court of India has paved the way for the country's premier civil awards, BHARAT RATNA and the PADMA series (PADMA VIBHUSHAN, PADMA BHUSHAN and PADMA SHRI) to be awarded again after a four year break. The BHARAT RATNA was established in 1955 to recognise exceptional work in the advancement of art, literature and science, and in recognition of public service of the highest order. The PADMA series of awards was also established in 1955 and recognised, respectively, "*exceptional and distinguished service* in any field, including service rendered by government servants" (PADMA VIBHUSHAN), "*distinguished service of a high order....*" (PADMA BHUSHAN) and "*distinguished service....*" (PADMA SHRI).

On 13 July 1977 the then newly elected Janata Government decided that the use of titles by the recipients of awards was against Article 18 of the Indian Constitution and no new awards were made. Existing holders were allowed to retain their decorations but were not allowed to use the associated titles.

With a new Congress government back in power the awards were revived on 25 January 1980 and continued to be awarded until January 1992 when their constitutional validity was again challenged, this time in the Madhya Pradesh High Court. The case was transferred to the Supreme Court but the Government decided not to make any new awards until the Court had made its ruling. It has now ruled that such awards are valid under the Constitution and we can expect to see them conferred again in the future.

Secondly, the photograph below is of a pair of medals in the collection of the Sheesh Mahal Museum, Patiala, Punjab. They show the India Medal 1895 with clasp "Defence of Chitral 1895" and the Maharaja of Kashmir's Jummoo Medal. Nothing too surprising in this, one might think, until noticing that they are named to Sepoy Sujan Singh, 14th Bengal Infantry.

When I first saw them I thought they must be fakes (there are other fakes in the collection) since I had always believed that the Maharaja's medal was awarded to his own troops only. This is certainly implied in the various reference books that I have consulted. On looking at the reference books again, however, and particularly the various editions of "Battles and Medals", one finds the following. "In addition to the above, four Syces present received a bronze medal: Sepoy Sujen Singh, Bhisti Ami Chand, Bhisti Khim Singh, Bhisti Ala Vaux". Since the preceding sentence had referred to camp followers receiving the India Medal in bronze I had assumed this was the case for the four Syces as well. In light of the exhibit in the Sheesh Mahal Museum, however, it would seem that it was the Maharaja of Kashmir's Jummoo Medal which was given to them in addition to the India Medal.

It was unusual, though not entirely unknown, for the Government of India to agree to the award of State medals to British Indian subjects - and their sanction would certainly have been needed for the four to receive and wear this medal. It would be interesting to know why these four, of the 228 non-Kashmiri members of the garrison at Chitral, were singled out for this honour.



.....AND A COUPLE OF UNIFORM QUERIES

The first of the accompanying two photographs is taken from an album dating from around 1869. It was uncaptioned but there seem to be two possibilities, given that the uniform pre-dates 1869 as far as the regular Indian Army is concerned.

- members of one of the State armies wearing cast-offs from the regular army, or
- some sort of theatrical or commemorative depiction of the Regular Sikh Army wearing the uniforms from the time of the Sikh Wars, but many years later.

I have had a look at the photograph of Colonel Gardiner, Commandant of the Maharaja of Kashmir's troops taken in about 1898 ("*The Spectacle of Empire*" by Jan Morris, published by Faber and Faber in 1982, page 164) but his tartan is much more pronounced than the example shown here. Indeed, the more I look at this photograph the more I think the trousers are merely checked rather than tartan. The belt plate is illegible but seems to be of the regular army style, i.e. a star with numerals in the centre. The bayonets are of an unusual design. Does anyone have any ideas?



The second illustration is from a photograph taken at a signalling course at Multan in 1899. The other regiments present are 3rd Punjab Cavalry, 45th Rattray's Sikhs and 3rd Sikhs PFF so logically these figures ought to come from one of the Princely States of the Punjab. Although they wear curved metal shoulder titles, even under a strong glass they are illegible - possibly seven letters and ending in A (certainly the 1st Rajindra Lancers of Patiala wore a curved metal shoulder title - RAJINDRA - at one stage). The frogging is very distinctive, as is the broad dark stripe on the breeches. Again, any ideas would be gratefully received.

Ed.



MAUSER RIFLES

Peter Chapman

January 31, 1901

South Africa

From the correspondent of the Birmingham Post

The Mauser Rifles we have captured from the Boers are to be put to a practical use and be shipped to India and distributed among the Militia and other fighting corps on the North West Frontier.

It has been a rather pitiable fact that within the last few years these gallant fellows, the Khyber Rifles, the Waziristan Militia and the Zhob Levies have been worse armed than the tribesmen.

They have had the almost exclusive handling of out of date Sniders while the tribesmen have secured thousands of Martinis and hundreds of Lee Metfords.

It is hoped that by sending up the ammunition in limited quantities they will rob the Mauser of the value to a thief who will not be able to secure enough cartridges for effective damage.

LETTERS AND QUERIES

● Christopher Peterson has some postal covers with Indian Army Postal Service markings, all from officers in Iraq, addressed to F.C.M.A. Poona, India. Does anyone know what F.C.M.A. stands for?

● M A Kerr has written with further information concerning the date of raising of 14th Indian Division (see Vol. 13, No 1, p22 and Mr Kerr's previous letter in Vol. 13, No 2, p80 and my editor's note attached). He has now forwarded an extract from "*History of the First Punjab Regiment 1759-1956*" by Major Mohammed Ibrahim Quereshi, published by Gale & Polden, Aldershot, 1958. At p314 Quereshi states:

"Orders for mobilization came in February 1942, and after a hectic month of re-equipping and training, the Battalion, as part of the 47th Brigade, left Secunderabad with 13 officers, 19 viceroy's commissioned officers and 727 other ranks for Fenny (located forty miles south-east of Commila), where it joined the 14th Indian Division on April 5th."

● David A. Harris writes:

I am seeking help in researching the following group of medals: 1939-45 Star, Burma Star, War Medal 1939-45, India Service Medal 1939-45, Efficiency

Medal bar "India". All are identically named to R.Q.M.S. W. Perton Maymyo Forest Guards. The naming is neatly impressed and by appearance of the letters it was impressed on all the medals at the same time using the same stamps.

I would like to hear from anyone who has information about the "Maymyo Forest Guards", who were presumably based just outside Mandalay, or can assist with research into Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant Perton.

● A non-member, R.S. Harris, is seeking help with an MA dissertation that he is preparing for September 1997. Rockets as used by the Moguls against the East India Company were perhaps the only example of European troops adopting a weapon produced by non-European troops. Mr Harris is looking for any sources of information concerning the use of Asian rockets (in particular) during the period of the collapse of the Mogul Empire and the domination by the East India Company - roughly the Carnatic/Mysore/ Maratha Wars. A more sophisticated system was developed by Congreve and used by a Troop of the Bengal Horse Artillery, and employed in the Burma Wars - quite successfully.

● G N Farina is seeking to purchase an example of the Indian 9 and 10 Para Commando Battalions' beret badge (winged dagger with the motto 'Sacrifice' in Hindi) as worn between the mid-1960s and mid- 1970s.

[I believe this unique badge, based on the British SAS badge, was introduced by Colonel Megh Singh VrC who formed 9 Battalion from the nucleus of his earlier Meghdoot Force. On the same topic, I have read somewhere recently, though I cannot immediately recall where, an article about the SAS badge stating that it is not a winged dagger, as commonly referred to, but a flaming dagger. If I can find the reference I will include it in a future edition of DURBAR. Ed.]

