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MAJOR ANTHONY SUDLOW TD, 1922-1997

Tony Sudlow, the first President of our Society, died on 23 December 1997 after a long illness bravely borne.

He was commissioned into the Royal Leicestershire Regiment in 1941 and joined 2nd/5th Battalion. He went to India in 1942 and, after attending language training at Dehra Dun, he joined 1/10 Gurkha Rifles in Burma (as "British Service Attached") where he saw service at Imphal and Kohima. His lifelong friendship with Subadar (later Major) Manbahadur Rai MC IDSM AC, forged in Burma, led to that gallant and distinguished officer being made an Honorary Member of this Society (about whom Tony wrote his first article for the Society in Newsletter No 2, April 1984). After the war Tony was posted to Germany with The Royal Leicestershire Regiment before being demobilised in 1946. He then started a long association with the Territorial Army (2nd/5th Royal Leicestershire Regiment), with whom he won the Territorial Decoration. During this time he moved to Lincolnshire where, for many years, he was President of the Boston & District branch of the Burma Star Association.

Tony started writing on medal matters in the 1970s and it was this which led to our founder members, Peter Monahan and Michael Johnson, inviting Tony to become our President, a post he held until 1991.

His funeral was held at Nettleham Church, near Lincoln, on 6 January. Amongst his many friends and colleagues was a large party of the Burma Star Association and a guard of honour formed by a Queen's Gurkha Officer and twelve NCOs and men of the Royal Gurkha Rifles. The Society made a donation in Tony's memory to the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

BRIGADIER E. D. "BIRDIE" SMITH CBE DSO - 1923-1998

Just as we were going to print we learnt of the death on 7 March of "Birdie" Smith, another former Gurkha officer and a member of our Society since 1994. Commissioned into 7 GR in October 1942, he had won his DSO as a company commander of 2/7 GR in Italy in September 1944 when he led his company in the taking of the village of Tavoleto. During the Malaya emergency he was appointed MBE but it was during the Borneo operations when, as second-in-command of 2/7 GR, that he was seriously injured in an helicopter crash, having his arm amputated at the wreckage site by an army doctor using only a sharpened clasp knife and no anaesthetic. "Birdie" Smith remained conscious throughout the operation. He subsequently went on to command 1/2 GR in Borneo until the end of confrontation in 1966. Following appointments in Hong Kong, Brunei and London he was appointed Brigadier commanding the Gurkha recruitment bases in Nepal before retiring from the army in 1978 with a CBE. In retirement he wrote extensively about the Gurkhas including *The Story of the Sirmoor Rifles, Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas, Johnny Gurkha, Even the Brave Falter* and *Wars bring Scars*. Books on particular battles or campaigns included *Battles for Cassino, Battle for Burma, Victory of a Sort: The British in Greece 1941-6* and *Malaya and Borneo: Counter-Insurgency Operations.* His latest book, *Valour: A History of the Gurkhas*, was produced by Spellmount Publishing towards the end of last year.

AN 18th CENTURY MILITARY TOMBSTONE AT BENCOOLEN, SUMATRA

Alan Harfield

Within the precincts of Fort Marlborough at Bencoolen (now known as Bengkulu) stands the tombstone of Captain James Cuney of the Honourable East India Company's army and the visitor may stop and ponder as to why this British officer is buried in this remote spot. Even today Bencoolen is not easy to reach and can only be visited by either flying into the small airport from Jakarta or reached by ferry from Java, crossing the Straits of Sunda and then by a long hot bus or car journey along the west coast of Sumatra. Alternatively it may be reached by flying into Padang, a former Dutch possession, or Medan but even these points of entry have to be followed by a long drive along the coast, in respect of Padang, or across the island from Medan.

The story behind the tombstone really commences in 1685 when the HEIC established a Factory[1] on the west coast of Sumatra and formed a small military garrison to defend the new settlement of traders, as much against attack from the other European nations as from any of

the local inhabitants who may prove hostile. In the 17th century spices were much in demand in Europe and there was fierce competition to establish trading posts in the 'Spice Islands' of the Far East for which it became necessary to provide some military protection. Not all the local Rajas were sympathetic to the British trading in the area and some openly supported the Dutch trading company, the VOC (Vereeigde Oost-Indische), who were the main opposition to the expanding HEIC

The original area of the settlement was adjacent to the Bencoolen River and was defended by a small fortification named York Fort. This location was bounded by the river and the sea, and to the south the area was nothing more than a mosquito ridden swamp. By 1714, with the very high casualty rate to both civilian and military alike, it was decided that the site was too unhealthy and a new settlement and fort was planned and built about two miles away. Deputy Governor Joseph Collet commenced building a new fort which he named after John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, who had become a national hero.

Despite having the protection of the newly built Fort Marlborough, the settlement and fort was abandoned in 1719 due to hostilities breaking out as a result of the deterioration of relations between the HEIC officials and the local Sultans and Rajas.

It was not until 1723 that the Company was able to negotiate a new trading agreement and return to Bencoolen and reoccupy what remained of Fort Marlborough. The military garrison was re-established at this time and in the following year the garrison is shown as being made up of two companies of infantry with a small detachment of artillery.

The two companies were established to have both European soldiers and topasses[2] and consisted of:

1st Company	3 officers
	2 Sergeants
	2 Corporals
	2 Drummers
	28 European Centinalls[3]
	16 Topazes
	1 Matroze Sergeant
	7 Sentinals Total - 57
2nd Company	2 officers
	3 Sergeants
	2 Corporals
	2 Drummers
	22 European Centinalls[3]
	18 Topazes
	1 Arab Corporal[4]
	11 Sentinals Total - 55

The total garrison amounted to 5 officers and 107 NCOs and men.

The conditions under which the military lived were far from satisfactory with poor accommodation, heat, humidity and poor food contributing to a high sickness and mortality rate so that, generally, only one third of the garrison was fit for duty at any one time.

Replacements for the European officers and soldiers were at this time mainly provided by the Company from London and therefore the time scale between a casualty and a replacement being taken on strength was frequently as much as a year.

In 1729 the garrison received some reinforcements and the records show that the garrison was then under the control of "...President and Council of Fort St George....".[5] The Factory Records report states "...We have received an Ensign, and twenty three soldiers by the *Cadogan*, the list was twenty four but one of them never came aboard. Mr James Cuney had a commission given him for Ensign...".[6] Cuney was at that time aged 28 and I have not found any record of previous service.

The report also recorded that the garrison had received two other officers, namely Lieutenants Nathaniel Ross and William Maskelyne (also spelt Maskelyn) for Nos. 1 and 2 Companies respectively. Unfortunately Maskelyne died soon after his arrival at Bencoolen and his post was taken by Richard Cartright who was promoted from Ensign.

James Cuney continued to serve in Fort Marlborough garrison until 1737. He had during the seven years been promoted from Ensign through Lieutenant to Captain, in each case taking the post after the incumbent had died. He died on 7 February 1737, whilst still serving, and was buried in the English Burial Ground at Bencoolen.

Due to the area being subjected to earthquakes his tomb was probably damaged at some time and his memorial stone was removed from the Burial Ground and taken to Fort Marlborough where it now stands inside the Ravelin. The inscription reads:

Here
Lyeth Interd The
Body of
CAP^{T} JAMES CUNEY
Who departed this
Life
February y^{e} 17th 1737
Aetatis 36

The Cuney memorial stone is the earliest military memorial that has so far been located at Bencoolen and, although there were many other officers and men of the garrison who died and were buried at the English Cemetery, none have a surviving memorial stone.

Fort Marlborough is now a protected historical building and is open daily to visitors and remains a dominating feature of old Bencoolen.

References

1. Factory - a trading establishment at a foreign port (Colonel H Yule and A C Burnell, "*Hobson Jobson*": London, 1903, p 346)
2. Topaz, Topass - a name used for dark-skinned or half-caste claimants of Portuguese descent who were, during the 17th and 18th centuries, employed as soldiers.
3. Centinell, Sentinal, Centinel - a private soldier recruited for the purposes of guard duties at a fort, factory or plantation.

4. A number of Arab Corporals and soldiers were recruited for service in Sumatra through the Bombay Establishment of the HEIC.
5. Sumatra Factory Records (G/35/8) Letter from Fort Marlborough to London dated 20 October 1729.
6. ibid.

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY MEDAL

John Tamplin

The reward for long service for ORs in the A.F.(I) in India from the 1930s was the Efficiency Medal (India). Awards were published in I.A.O., the first being published in I.A.O. 342 of 21 June 1933. This medal was also given to the Indian Territorial Forces - that is the 'Indian' element of the Reserve Forces. This continued until Independence in 1947. Over 10,000 medals were awarded.

Figure 1 shows an issue of King George V awarded to Gunner W G Ross, Bengal Artillery, A.F.I. in A.I.O. 696 of 22 December 1933. He subsequently gained a clasp in I.A.O. 128 of 29 March 1934.

Some years after Independence, the Government of India instituted a similar medal (Figure 2). It is similar in shape and bears a suspender bar; however, the inscription on this is 'TERRITORIAL' in place of 'INDIA'. A small point is that the lettering here is in a sans serif type. This particular example was awarded to 10356829 Hav. A T Thomas, TA.

The ribbon for the Indian issue is dark blue with a thin central stripe of orange, and two similar stripes on either side of the orange in white. It is also worth noting that the medal is named on the rim, continuing the former practice of the Imperial issue. The names of recipients "shall be notified in the Gazette of India".

The Indian medal was instituted on 1 February 1952, and in the Regulations it was effective from 15 August 1951. It is for 12 years' service, with clasps for each extra 6 years.

photos by R.J. Scarlett

Figure 1

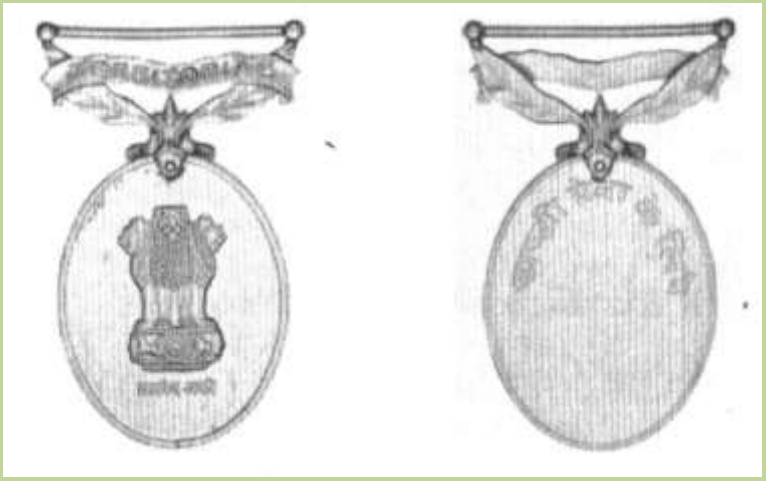

Figure 2

THE ARMED FORCES OF BURMA 1886-1945

Tony Mains

INTRODUCTION

The final conquest of Upper Burma had taken place almost within living memory of those living at the time of World War II. As a result the Burmans had never been completely won over to British rule and dacoity, for private or political ends, was endemic in many Districts. There had been an insurrection in 1931 in Central Burma sufficiently serious to merit a clasp to the IGSM. Further, the tribal people (Chins, Kachins and Karens) were often at enmity with their Burman neighbours. The climate and fertility of Burma allowed the Burman peasant to live off his land holding so that all menial and labouring tasks were performed by South Indian immigrants.

Until the Great War there were no regular Burmese Army units; the defence of Burma rested with British and Indian units of the Army in India. The only local armed force was the para military Burma Military Police (BMP).

THE BURMA ARMY

REGULAR FORCES

A start was made during the Great War when five battalions were raised on the Indian establishment:-

- 70th Burma Rifles (of four battalions) enlisting Burmans and Karens with some Arakanese and Shans.
- 85th Burman Rifles (single battalion) enlisting Burmans, Kachins, Karens, Sikhs, Punjabi Mussulmen and Gurkhas.

These five battalions were disbanded as such in 1922 and reformed as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th (disbanded 1931) and 10th (training battalion), 20th Burma Rifles. Enlistment was now

confined to the tribals, Chins, Kachins and Karens, with a few Gurkhas. Burmans were considered too politically minded and indolent to make good soldiers. Until the separation of Burma from India in 1937 these units were an integral part of the Indian Army controlled by the Burma (Independent) District and all supporting arms and services were provided by the Army in India.

HQ Burma Army took over from the Independent District at the separation, and from then until 1942 efforts were made to create a Burma Army by the expansion of the Burma Rifles and the creation of supporting arms and services. The 4th Battalion was re-raised and new 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions raised; when the invasion was imminent the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th (Territorial Force) Battalions were embodied for Line of Communication duties. This massive expansion meant a large enlistment of Burmans - the 7th (Police) Battalion formed from the BMP and Civil Police consisted of Burmans, Karens, Kumaonis and Gurkhas and the 8th (Frontier Force) Battalion of PMs and Sikhs from the Burma Frontier Force.

As might be expected, due to the "milking" of the older units to provide leaders for the new and massive injection of Burmans, many of doubtful loyalty, the performance of the Burma Rifles in battle was patchy. The 2nd Battalion performed magnificently and was the only Burma unit to reach India intact; the 8th (FF) Battalion also did very well, but the 7th (Police) Battalion was a disaster. One or two Burmese Engineer and Signal units figure in the 1942 Order of Battle but, in general, the Burma Army was dependent up to the final debacle on Indian units for supporting arms and services.

THE BURMA AUXILIARY FORCE - (Part time European/Anglo Burmese Units)

The first volunteer unit was raised in 1877 for Rangoon Port Defence and was followed, up to 1889, by a further eight units. In the reorganisation in 1921 of volunteer units into the Auxiliary Force (India) these units became:

- Rangoon Field Brigade RA (AFI), including a Fortress Company RE (AFI)
- Rangoon Battalion
- Burma Railways Battalion
- Tenasserim Battalion
- Upper Burma Battalion

On the separation of Burma from India these units were renamed the Burma Auxiliary Force (BAF). A sixth unit, No 1 Heavy AA Battery, was formed in 1941 for the defence of Rangoon Port but did not receive its guns until after the Japanese invasion.

All the BAF units, except the Rangoon Battalion, figure in the Order of Battle; the men of the Rangoon Battalion were probably of more use as civilians working the docks and keeping essential services running than as a military unit. The Order of Battle quoted in the Official History lists a Mandalay Battalion BAF, but there was no such Battalion; it is thought to be a misprint for Mandalay Battalion BMP. The behaviour of these units during the retreat was exemplary.

PARA MILITARY UNITS

THE BURMA MILITARY POLICE

In March 1886, two levies were raised in Upper Burma, each of 561 men. They recruited Punjabis, Hindustanis and Gurkhas. In the next two years many more military police were raised for service in the frontier and tribal areas and as armed police in settled Districts and came to be known as the Burma Military Police. Recruitment right up to the final debacle was basically PMs, Sikhs and Gurkhas, although in the later years tribals - Karens, Kachins and Chins - were enlisted. Control and administration rested with the civil Government of Burma but the officers were seconded from the Indian Army.

Between 1886 and 1937 no less than 53 units of the BMP were raised, although probably less than twenty were in existence at any one time. There were continual disbandments, raisings, re-raisings and hiving off of part of a unit to form another, as the tribal and internal security situation dictated.

In 1937 the BMP was tidied up and split into the Burma Frontier Force (BFF) for policing the tribal areas and BMP for the settled Districts. The BFF consisted of the following Battalions:

- Southern Shan States
- Northern Shan States
- Myitkyina
- Bhamo
- Chin Hills
- Reserve
- Kokine (raised in Rangoon in October 1940)

All the above, except the Southern Shan States Battalion, figure in the Order of Battle with the addition of a Mounted Infantry Detachment and six independent columns designed to operate behind enemy lines (Columns F1 to F6)

The BMP consisted of:

- 1st Rangoon Battalion
- 2nd Rangoon Battalion
- Mandalay Battalion

The Order of Battle lists the Rangoon Battalion (no number), but it is possible that the Mandalay Battalion was also in action (see above under BAF).

The performance of the BFF and BMP in the face of the enemy was generally excellent.

FINALE

In April 1942 the armed forces of Burma, including the BFF and BMP, disintegrated and all who wished to leave were given an honourable discharge. The bulk of non-Burmese races, mostly PMs, Sikhs and Gurkhas, continued to retreat into India and it was decided to reform them into a “Burma Regiment”. In September details were announced - the regiment was to

consist of six battalions; the 1st Battalion would consist of PM s and Sikhs, the others would be mixed, with a 50% Gurkha content in the 4th. It is doubtful if all six were ever raised as in the following years only the 1st and 4th were in existence. The remaining men, including many Gurkhas, were transferred to the Burma Intelligence Corps (a body of Guides and interpreters) or attached to other forces.

The disposal of the men of the BAF varied. As they were classified as British troops they could not be drafted into the Burma Regiment. A large number would have been commissioned and posted to Indian regiments - some would have gone to the Burma Intelligence Corps. The railway men would have been discharged and taken on by the Indian Railways, as would others with special skills in industries vital to the war effort.

The 2nd Battalion of the Burma Rifles, having arrived intact in India, was retained in the Order of Battle. It took part in the first Chindit expedition but as a result of major casualties ceased to exist.

The Burma Regiment passed to the new Government of Burma on Independence in 1948, who promptly got rid of all non-Burmese and many of those who had served the British.

Note: The term "Burmese" refers to all the indigenous inhabitants of Burma viz Burmans, Kachins, Chins, Karens, Shans and Arakanese.

ENFIELD VERSUS TULWAR: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BRITISH WEAPONS IN THE INDIAN MUTINY

John Rumsby

INTRODUCTION

Although accounts of the history and development of these weapons have been published in a number of works, and these sometimes quote official reports on their effectiveness, there are surprisingly few contemporary descriptions of weapons by soldiers in the field. This was probably because, like the uniform they wore, such details were taken for granted, and only mentioned when new or exceptional equipment appeared. It is here that contemporary accounts of the fighting in the Mutiny are especially interesting, since the Enfield rifles just coming into use alongside their inferior predecessors provoked comment from all ranks. This article examines a small number, out of the scores published, of British memoirs of the Mutiny campaigns, in an attempt to assess the experience of fighting with these weapons, against enemies whose weapons were sometimes very similar, but more often contrasted greatly.

The Indian Mutiny is famously, if wrongly, reputed to have been "caused" by the greased cartridge issued with the new Pattern-1853 Enfield rifle. The incident is, however, indicative of the transitional state of weaponry in India at the time, as the troops stationed there, both British and Indian, gradually caught up with the latest patterns issued to the army at home. Most 'native' infantry regiments of the Honourable East India Company in 1857 were still

equipped with the Pattern- 1842 smoothbore percussion musket. Several British regiments which were permanently stationed in India or had been serving there for many years, such as the HEIC's 2nd Bengal European Fusiliers and the 32nd Light Infantry were also armed with the Pattern-1842 musket. The Minié rifle, which had performed useful service in the Crimea, was not issued to any troops in India, presumably because it was rapidly replaced by the Pattern-1853 Enfield rifle. At the time of the Mutiny, this rifle was just entering service with British troops in India, either in the longer "3-band" version, or the short "2-band" variety, the latter generally being issued to rifle regiments and sergeants of other infantry regiments.(The Pattern-1842 musket, Minié and both types of Enfield rifle are illustrated by Reynolds.) Thus the 3-band Enfield was used in the Mutiny by the 79th Highlanders, the 95th Regiment and the 1st Madras European Fusiliers. The 1st Battalion 60th Rifles, which in theory should have had 2-band Enfields, did not in fact receive them until 1858, using until then the longer rifle. (Barthorp and Anderson p.18)

In theory, by this time cavalry should have been carrying the Pattern-1853 sword (Robson pp. 28-32). However, it was some years before these were universally issued. Indeed, the 14th Light Dragoons were not given the previous pattern, the 1821 Light Cavalry sword (Robson pp.24-8), until 1840, and retained this pattern throughout their Mutiny service and until their return to England in 1860.

Officers of course were expected to provide themselves with sidearms. Judging from contemporary photographs, most British army officers contented themselves with the regulation pattern. For infantry this was the "Gothic" pattern of 1822/45 and for Highland regiments the "Claymore" or basket-hilted broadsword (Robson pp.156-164, 178-181). However, as will be seen, there were exceptions where officers followed their own preferences.

Pistols were also a private purchase for the officer, with no regulations to follow, and here there was a tremendous variety. Experience in the Crimea, especially with Colt revolvers, had shown the advantages of a multi-shot pistol, and most officers in the Mutiny seem to have carried a revolver. There was a wide choice available on the market (Miller pp.228-250 illustrates a selection of types), but the main rivals were Colt and Adams. Each was made in a number of variants, and each had its advantages and disadvantages. Colts, with an open frame, were less robust, but were normally 6-shot. Adams were only 5-shot, and the self-cocking mechanism was thought to be less safe, although this was improved with the double-action Beaumont-Adams of 1855-56. (Blackmore p.253; Rosa p.43; Scurfield) The accuracy was about the same; as will be seen below, reliability at close quarters and a rapid rate of fire were the most important qualities required.

THE ENFIELD RIFLE

As has been stated, in 1857 British infantry regiments in India were in the early stages of being re-equipped with the Pattern-1853 Enfield. Often this was a piecemeal affair, Captain Richard Barter of the 75th Gordon Highlanders, whose regiment was presumably armed with the Pattern-1842 musket, described the arrival of the new weapons during the siege of Delhi:

> "Lieutenants Brocas and Morris joined with a batch of recruits from the depot; all arrived with and fully instructed in the use of the Enfield rifle. With these recruits came an old soldier from the depot, Corporal O'Flaherty; he got a certificate as an Assistant Musketry Instructor at Hythe and I put his shooting powers to the test soon

> after his arrival. We were covering the brigade at one of the attacks, and in skirmishing order lined an abatis. I noticed one of the enemy some distance off, evidently a man in authority, standing surrounded by a crowd of others quite out of range as he fancied. I pointed him out to O'Flaherty and promised him a glass of grog if he knocked him over. He tried him at nine hundred yards first but the ball went high, though in good direction as we could see by the ducking of the crowd. The next was at eight hundred yards with a good rest formed by a forked branch. I was watching with my telescope and saw my friend tumble over, the crowd dispersing sharp." (Barter p.113)

Barter was obviously impressed by their range, and especially by the fact that the much greater carrying power repeatedly caught the mutinous sepoys by surprise:

> "Picked marksmen of the 60th Rifles kept up a rattle of musketry, and rather astonished Pandy with the Enfield rifles with which they were armed, and which were used here for the first time in India. Two of the enemy's buglers thinking themselves perfectly safe had perched themselves one on each pier of an old gateway and from their elevated position commenced the concert we had heard. After a lot of looking through telescopes the musicians were twigged and two of the 60th Rifles proceeded to stalk them, in which they were completely successful, for each dropped his man at the same moment." (Barter p. 39)

Thomas Seaton, an experienced Indian army officer, also reported the confusion of rebel cavalry under long range fire:

> "…the enemy's cavalry moved forward on both flanks, and as soon as they got within 700 yards, I made the 60th and the 82nd try the power of their Enfield rifles on them. As soon as the cavalry got clear of some intervening trees, the light company of the 82nd began to fire on them. The effect of this fire was curious. The impetuous horsemen suddenly pulled up and looked about astonished and alarmed at the storm of bullets raining upon them, they knew not whence, and hitting them with such force. The noise, confusion and jumble in their ranks, horses rearing and stumbling, and men falling, presented such a scene as is rarely witnessed, and in almost as short time as I have taken to describe it, the whole mass turned and fled." (Seaton p.417)

The theoretical range of the Enfield was tested by a number of soldiers with a fine disregard for the fact that their targets were human:

> "The whole regiment [1st Madras European Fusiliers] is now armed with the Enfield rifle. I knocked a man over with one of the rifles, upwards of 900 yards from me; the men that were with me saw him fall. The old musket only carries 200 yards." (Hargood p.199)

> "We opened fire on them and, our Enfields being well elevated, we made them move at a distance of 1200 yards." (Wickens, 90th Light Infantry, p.104)

> Atherley, selecting two men whom he knew to be excellent shots told them to pick off the gunners of these guns, which were annoying the troops from the bridges over the canal [at Lucknow]; and he desired some of their comrades to load for them, and to hand them up rifles as fast as they could. Thus aided, these riflemen, creeping up near the bridges, picked off the gunners, and effectually silenced the guns. As another

> instance of their excellent shooting, I may add that Atherley, in the course of this day's fight, asked one of his men, named Robertson, how far he estimated the distance to the brick-kiln to be. The rifleman replied that he did not know, but calling Atherley's attention to a man standing on the top of the kiln, he put up his sight to 600 yards, fired, and the man fell. His body was examined the next day and the ball was found to have hit him in the stomach. (Cope pp. 354-5)

As with any new weapon, knowing its limitations as well as its virtues was vital to its effective deployment. Captain Jones of the Royal Navy, serving with the 53rd Regiment, remarked scornfully: "The quantity of distant popping that goes on, from the belief in the accuracy and long range of the arm, is also very absurd." (Jones p.84). Learning how to maintain the new rifle properly obviously took some time:

> "Great things were expected of the men armed with the Enfields, but not knowing the use of the weapon, having had very little instruction, and the metal shell then used in the bullet causing the barrels to lead terribly after a few rounds, the men, with few exceptions, contrived to get rid of their rifles and in their place picked up the old weapons of their dead comrades." (Barter pp.10-11)

> For some time the armourers of the 53rd were employed in drawing the bullets out of many of their Enfield rifles, which, with the long firing at the Kala Nuddee, where some men had fired seventy or eighty shots, had got so foul that they could not be loaded. Many bullets were stuck so fast that, after the breech had been taken out, they could not even be forced back through the muzzle, and were obliged to be bored out, and it is evident that long before they got so foul as to be utterly impossible to load, it had become a matter of time and great exertion to force the bullet home. (Jones p. 84)

> "Our rifles had in fact got so foul with four days of heavy work [at the capture of Lucknow] that it was almost impossible to load them, and the recoil had become so great that the shoulders of many of the men were perfectly black with bruises." (Forbes-Mitchell p.95)

> One of the serious inconveniences of the muzzle-loading rifle was that, owing to the difficulty of drawing the charge, the loaded rifles of the men who in turn acted as armed escort to each detachment had to be handed from the men going off to those going on duty, and always kept loaded, whence several accidents happened during the journey of the Regiment up to Allahabad. (Gordon-Alexander p.32)

Although the British troops were generally well drilled and often battle-experienced, there may have been problems with repeat loading, as happened on a large scale in the American Civil War. Of the 27,000 rifles recovered from the battlefield of Gettysburg (1863), two thirds contained two or more charges, and one had 23 charges stuffed down its barrel! Presumably in the heat of battle men forgot to prime their weapon with a percussion cap, did not notice that it failed to fire, and reloaded. (Davis p.52) Many of the Gettysburg weapons would have been Enfields, since nearly 900,000 were purchased from Britain by both sides, and were generally regarded as excellent, reliable weapons. (Lord p. 162)

One problem with the Enfield (although it probably also applied to other longarms of the period) was recorded in the Crimea by Captain Robert Hawley, but may well have affected weapons during the humid conditions of the rainy season in India:

> "Oh such pelting rain! The middle of it, the Russians came out against the 68th in the advanced trenches. By their outlying sentries they had notice of the attack and were prepared for it and gave them a hard reception. The wet, unfortunately, had so swollen the wooden pipe the ramrod runs into in a new arm they have (Enfield '54), they could not load again." (Hawley p.45)

The long Enfield was fitted with a socket bayonet with a 17 inch triangular blade. The shorter Enfield had a sword bayonet with a 22 ¾ inch blade. Although in most wars bayonets were rarely actually used, one side usually giving way in a charge before blades actually crossed, in the Mutiny hand-to-hand fighting appears to have been fairly common, especially between cavalry, and where the rebel sepoys were cornered, in which case they often fought to the death. At the storming of the Secunderabagh during the second relief of Lucknow in November 1857, the 93rd Highlanders had been trained in a bayonet drill. This proved very effective against their opponents, who included both sepoys similarly armed, and their allies armed with curved swords (tulwars) and shields:

> "Sir Colin Campbell addressed the man, telling us that there was heavy work before us, and that we must hold well together, and as much as possible keep in threes, and that as we stormed a position we were to use the bayonet. The centre man of each group of three was to make the attack and the other two to come to his assistance with their bayonets right and left. To use the bayonet with effect we were ordered, as I say, to group in threes and mutually assist each other, for by such action we would soon bayonet the enemy down although they might be ten to one; which as a matter of fact they were. It was by strictly following this advice and keeping cool and mutually assisting each other that the bayonet was used with such terrible effect inside the Secunderabagh. When the enemy had fired their muskets, they hurled them amongst us like javelins, bayonets first." (Forbes-Mitchell pp. 42-4)

The 93rd were accompanied in this assault by the 4th Punjab Rifles, armed with Brunswick rifles fitted with sword bayonets, although evidently their native officers at least were armed with tulwars. Burgoyne, using eyewitness sources describes the result of this attack:

> "At the close of the day the Secunderabagh formed one mighty charnel house, for upwards of two thousand sepoys, dressed in their old uniforms, lay piled in heaps upon one another, and on most were apparent either the small but deadly bayonet wound, or the deep gash of the Sikh tulwar." (Burgoyne p. 186)

It is possible that the sword bayonet used on the shorter Enfield may have been less handy in a melee, and perhaps was more difficult to withdraw when thrust home. This is suggested by an incident that happened to a man of the 3rd Battalion Rifle Brigade in June 1858, whilst fighting 'native' troops (as opposed to mutinous sepoys):

> "Forming up his company in line, Atherley fixed swords [the Rifles term for bayonets] and charged the regiment in his front. The riflemen engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict, killing many with their swords. It is said that 150 were thus disposed of. One rifleman having driven his sword fixed on his rifle through the shield of his opponent, was unable to draw it back, and the man making a cut at his hands, he was compelled to let it go, and it was never recovered." (Cope, p. 388)

The slender triangular bayonet was, however, vulnerable to bending. Reginald Wilberforce of the 52nd Light Infantry witnessed "a sepoy pierced through with a bayonet, and borne to the ground, the bayonet going into the ground and twisting, so that it could not be withdrawn." (p. 60). The triangular bayonet had a locking ring on the socket to prevent it being detached either accidentally or by an enemy, but this could obviously be a disadvantage at times. The bayonets could also become blunted:

> "[After a charge of Ghazees (religious fanatics) at the Battle of Bareilly, one Ghazee was seen to be shamming death] Sir Colin called to one of the 42nd "Bayonet that man!". But the Ghazee was enveloped in a thick quilted tunic of green silk, through which the blunt Enfield bayonet would not pass, and the Highlander was in danger of being cut down, when a Sikh sirdar of the Fourth Punjabis rushed to his assistance, and took the Ghazee's head off with one sweep of his keen tulwar." (Forbes-Mitchell p. 255)

To sum up, the new Enfield rifles conferred a considerable advantage of range and accuracy on those regiments equipped with them, as long as their capabilities and limitations were recognised and, as with all weapons, they were properly maintained. The same favourable impression cannot be maintained for British regulation swords.

CAVALRY AND INFANTRY SWORDS

As has been discussed, most of the British cavalry regiments were probably still armed with the Pattern-1821 Light Cavalry sword, although the 2nd and 6th Dragoon Guards presumably carried the very similar Pattern-1821 Heavy Cavalry sword. Although looking very workmanlike, the Pattern-1821 suffered, like most British designs up until 1908, from trying to combine qualities of cutting and thrusting. Like most compromises, it did neither job very efficiently. The steel scabbard was light and fragile (many surviving specimens display dents and other damage), and the movement of the sword in the scabbard blunted the edges. Surgeon Sylvester of the 14th Light Dragoons recorded seeing the blunt sword of a dragoon bounding off the skull of a sepoy, and in another case a dragoon cutting a man across the face with force that should have been sufficient to cut off the top of his head, yet scarcely cutting the cheekbone (Sylvester pp. 134-5). During the Second Sikh War, one of the 14th Light Dragoons had had an even more nightmarish experience during the Battle of Chillianwalla:

> "One of our troop-sergeant-majors seeing a ghorchurra [Sikh horseman] conveniently in front of him gave him a prod in the back, where the point of the sword became so firmly fixed that the exertions of neither party, pulling different ways, could separate them until the dragoon's sword-knot broke, and the Sikh rode off with the sword sticking in his back, apparently little the worse." (Hamilton p. 577)

Sergeant Forbes-Mitchell of the 93rd Highlanders had evidently made a study of sword effectiveness, and had a number of interesting remarks to make on the subject:

> "I consider that the swords supplied to our officers, cavalry and artillery, are far inferior as weapons of offence to a really good Oriental tulwar. In the first place, for cutting our regulation swords are too straight; the Eastern curved blade is far more effective as a cutting weapon. Secondly, our English swords are far too blunt, whereas the native swords are as keen as a well-stropped razor. Our steel scabbards again are a mistake for carrying sharp blades. I remember reading of a regiment of British cavalry

> charging a regiment of Sikh cavalry. The latter wore voluminous thick puggries round their heads, which our blunt swords were powerless to cut through, and each horseman had also a buffalo-hide shield slung on his back. They evidently knew the British swords were blunt and useless, so they kept their horses still and met the British charge by lying flat on their horses' necks, with their heads protected by the thick turbans and their backs by the shields; and immediately the British soldiers passed through their ranks the Sikhs swooped round on them and struck them back-handed with their sharp, curved swords, in several cases cutting our cavalrymen in two." (Forbes-Mitchell pp. 286-7)

The native tulwar was designed purely as a slashing weapon, and fulfilled this function with horrifying effect. Forbes-Mitchell records an instance of a British officer being hewn by a back-handed stroke which cut right through an ammunition pouch full of pistol bullets, severed the officer's backbone and cut his heart in two. A number of memoirists recorded at Lucknow the case of Cornet Banks of the 7th Hussars, who in a charge on a band of Ghazees had one leg cut off above the knee, the right arm also cut off, and the left thigh and left arm cut to the bone. Forbes-Mitchell (p.286) supplies another example of the effect of the tulwar in hand-to-hand infantry fighting:

> "There were three brothers of the name of Ready in the 93rd called David, James and John. Well, the assault took place, and in the inner courts of the Palace there was one division held by a regiment of dismounted cavalry, armed with swords as keen as razors, and circular shields. On entering James Ready was attacked by a sowar armed with sword and shield. Ready's feather bonnet was knocked off, and the sowar got one cut at him, which severed his skull clean in two, the sword cutting right through his neck and half-way down through the breast-bone. John Ready sprang to the assistance of his brother, but too late; and although his bayonet reached the side of his opponent and was driven home with a fatal thrust, in doing so he came within the reach of that same terrible sword, wielded by the powerful arm of a tall man, and he also was cut right through the left shoulder diagonally across the chest, and his head and right arm were cleanly severed from the body. When the fight was over I examined the sword. It was of ordinary weight, well-balanced, curved about a quarter-circle, as sharp as the sharpest razor, and the blade as rigid as cast-iron."

The officers of the 93rd were armed with the basket-hilted claymore, normally with a straight 32 inch blade which theoretically was not well-adapted to cutting. However, Lieutenant Cooper was able to use his sword with affect at Lucknow:

> "A very tall rebel, followed by others, came at me with a shield in his left hand and a tulwar in his right; he dropped his shield a moment, we both cut at each other at the same instant (my sword was six inches longer than regulation). I caught him fair on his head, he cut through my feather bonnet and deep into my head and forehead before he died." (Burgoyne p.206)

Burgoyne also quotes the case of Lieutenant Grimston, who

> "On entering one of the small outbuildings was attacked by one of the enemy who made a cut at his head with a tulwar – he put up his claymore to guard himself and received a blow on the hilt, which was cut through, as well as its leather lining,

> inflicting a bad wound on the thumb. Lieut. Grimston then struck his opponent with all his might, killing him on the spot, and took possession of his sword."

The Pattern-1845 sword used by the non-Highland infantry officers was far less effective, being light and not very stiff in the blade. For Wilberforce and a fellow officer the result of relying on these swords would have been farcical if it had not been so dangerous:

> "[At the storming of Delhi] Later that day a brother Ensign and I had an opportunity of testing our swords. We attacked a man, not both together but one at a time. I had the first try, and my sword bent almost double against the man's chest without inflicting any wound. My companion fared but little better, for his sword glanced along a rib, inflicting a long, shallow skin wound, and had not the revolver been handy, it might have been very awkward for one or both of us." (Wilberforce p. 159)

One of the most awkward swords issued to the British army must surely have been the Pioneers' Pattern-1856, with a straight spear-pointed 22½ inch blade, saw-backed along its back edge. (Robson pp. 260-1) Surprisingly, there is one record of its being used successfully in combat, when the 3rd Battalion Rifle Brigade cornered a Ghazee at the Battle of Nawabgunge in June 1858:

> "Some shots were taken at [the Ghazee], which he tried to avoid by dodging round the tree, but he was wounded and made more desperate. At last a Pioneer, Samuel Shaw, rushed at him and closed with him. The Ghazee wounded him on the head with his tulwar, but Shaw, drawing his Pioneer's sword, sawed at him with the serrated back and despatched him. Shaw rose from the ground covered in blood, but his opponent was slain." (Cope, p. 391)

Shaw was awarded the Victoria Cross for this deed. One cannot help thinking that in other circumstances the Ghazee would also have received a similar award.

Evelyn Wood of the 17th Lancers was one officer who used a non-regulation sword during the Mutiny. His sword was a strong weapon made by Wilkinsons, based on one used by an officer of the Scots Greys at Waterloo, and given him by Colonel William Morris, who had charged with the 16th Lancers at Aliwal (1846) and with the 17th Lancers at Balaclava. Wood (if his own account is to be believed) was a cool and "scientific" swordsman:

> "My man stood with his right foot placed on an antbear heap, awaiting me with fixed bayonet. I approached him at a smart canter, with elbows close to my sides to protect the lungs, and the point of my sword low down under the horse's forearm. I guided the horse so as to take the point of the bayonet on its chest, but the sepoy when he saw I was 'riding home' wavered, and attempted to club his musket. As he swung it, butt uppermost, over his head, the point of his bayonet caught in the cummerbund which he wore over his coatee. The delayed him for a second, and my sword entering under the left armpit went through him up to the hilt." (Wood p. 102)

Wood's description suggests that his sword was a straight one, suitable for thrusting. However it seems unlikely that it was very similar to the Pattern-1796 Heavy Cavalry sword used by the Scots Greys at Waterloo, which was generally considered to be a very clumsy weapon. Morris, the Champion Swordsman of the British army, would presumably have provided his friend with a superior design.

REVOLVERS

It has been seen how Ensign Wilberforce and his fellow officer retrieved the failure of their swords by the use of a revolver. There are many accounts of officers, racing ahead of their men in the attack, either mounted or on foot, becoming surrounded by more enemies than could be disposed of with a sword. On these occasions a reliable, fully loaded revolver was a lifesaver.

> "Five of the enemy surrounded Atherley; four of them were shot by Percival with his revolver; the other was trampled on and disposed of by the pony on which Atherley was mounted. Percival having fired all six barrels of his revolver [a Colt?] drew his sword, and resting it against his thigh, began to reload. At that instant, looking round, he saw a native aiming a lance at his side; he evaded it and the man was killed." (Cope, p. 388)

> "Lt. Col. Ewart, [of the 93rd Highlanders] after a sharp passage of arms with one who appeared to be a leader, whom he attacked with his sword, he was compelled to use his revolver, shooting this man and five others." (Burgoyne p. 187)

Percussion revolvers were not only slow to load (metallic cartridges containing bullet, primer and charge in one package did not come into use until the 1870s), but could also be unreliable, especially in a damp and dusty climate. Cope records that Captain Dillon of the Rifle Brigade entered a house where there were some sepoys: "his revolver missing fire, he was bayoneted in the chest". Wilberforce also recounts an incident of a type familiar to all armies in all wars:

> "That evening one of our poor fellows shot himself; he was cleaning one of the officer's revolvers, and in showing the mechanism to a brother soldier the pistol went off and killed him instantly." (Wilberforce p. 66)

CONCLUSION

It is ironic that the refusal of the mutinous sepoys and sowars to accept the Enfield rifle condemned them to fight against the British with greatly inferior weapons. The use of the Enfield must have been one of the chief factors that enabled British forces to defeat numerically vastly superior enemies again and again during the Mutiny campaigns. However, it should be remembered that the loyal 'native' regiments (Bombay, Madras, Punjab and some Bengal) who fought alongside the Europeans were chiefly armed with the same weapons as the mutineers. The bayonet carried with the Enfield made it an effective close-quarter weapon, but the regulation British swords were definitely inferior to their Indian counterparts.

That the British recognised the importance of superior firearms during the Mutiny is demonstrated by the policy of arming the Indian 'native' regiments after 1858 with inferior weapons, starting with the Pattern-1858 smoothbore Enfield, and continuing right up until the issue of the Magazine Lee-Enfield Mk.I* in the early years of the twentieth century (Baldwin p. 157). The tribesmen of the North West Frontier had raised to a high art the capture of weapons from their enemies and hence the Indian army regiments were often more poorly armed than their opponents, thanks to a legacy of distrust left in the minds of their Imperial rulers by the Mutiny of forty years before.

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LETTERS AND QUERIES

- Dr G Douds writes:

With reference to Lieutenant Colonel Daljit Singh’s article “D-Day: Why Did Indian Troops Not Take Part?” (DURBAR, Vol. 14, No. 2) the representation of Churchill’s positive view of the Indian Army has to be questioned. Much correspondence conveys an opposite impression and Wavell's Diaries are permeated by a mounting frustration amply represented in an entry for 24 June 1943. It alludes to Churchill’s obsessions that “the Indian Army was likely to rise at any moment; and he accused me of creating a Frankenstein by putting modern weapons in the hands of sepoys, spoke of 1857, and was really most childish about it”. The Prime Minister’s complexes together with related issues are discussed in ‘Matters of Honour: Indian Troops in the North African and Italian Theatres’ in Addison, P and Calder, A (eds) *Time to Kill: The Soldier’s Experience of War in the West 1939-45* (Pimlico, 1997).

- Pradeep Barua, Assistant Professor of history with the University of Nebraska, is seeking photographs of Indian officers e.g., graduation classes from either Sandhurst or IMA Dehra Dun, Indian officers in combat, receiving decorations, in social settings etc. for use in a forthcoming book examining the evolution of the Indian Army officer corps from colonial times through to the first decades of independence. If anyone has suitable photographs which they would be prepared to allow him to use on the cover of the book please write to Pradeep Barua, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Copeland Hall, Kearney, NE 68849-1285, USA or e-mail baruap@platte.unk.edu.