DURBAR Volume 18, No.2, Summer 2001

CROSS REFERENCES TO INDIAN TITLE BADGES

Cliff Parrett

The late Major Robert Hamond was able to identify the journey of exploration which resulted in the award of the reduced size silver medal for 1917 to Sepoy Mian Afraz Gul Khan of the Khyber Rifles. [1] Major Hamond records that during 1912-16 he joined Sir Aurel Stein's expedition to Central Asia, and that he also accompanied Sir Aurel on a later expedition in 1926 to the Upper Swat, Hindu Kush and Pamirs.

Quite by chance, I came across a more extensive summary of Mian Afraz Gul's services when looking through files held in the National Archives of India containing recommendations for the grant of Indian Titles - in this case a series of Khan Bahadur titles awarded on the King's Birthday 1945. [2] The following details are taken from the standard form upon which recommendations were submitted for consideration.

KHAN SAHIB MIAN AFRAZ GUL KHAN

Tehsildar, Gilgit Sub-division, Kashmir

Title recommended: Khan Bahadur

> "Khan Sahib Mian Afraz Gul Khan began Government service as a sepoy in the Khyber Rifles in about 1912. [3] Later he was employed on survey work, notably with Sir Aurel Stein, with whom he was first associated in 1913-16 in an expedition to Central Asia, in connection with which he received the MacGregor Silver Medal.
>
> During the war of 1914-18, he was employed on survey and intelligence work along the Russo-Persian border, and for these services received the title of Khan Sahib in 1922. He subsequently served with Kenneth Mason and Dr. Visser in the Hindu Kush and Kakoram, and high tribute was paid to him in the publications of these expeditions. He again accompanied Sir Aurel Stein on another Central Asian tour, and his most valuable and devoted services are acknowledged in Stein's "Innermost Asia". [4]
>
> Khan Sahib [Mian] Afraz Gul Khan was selected for the post of Tehsildar of the Gilgit Sub-division eight years ago. In 1943 he was placed on special duty with the Chinese party who conducted a survey for a motor road from India to Sinkiang. He was due to retire in 1944 but was given a year's extension, and will retire this summer.
>
> It would I think be very fitting that the exceptional services rendered by this officer should be further recognised by his promotion to the title of Khan Bahadur, and I strongly recommend him for this award. I have ascertained that His Excellency the Governor of the North-West Frontier Province has no objection."

The recommendation was made by the British Resident in Kashmir, and supported by the Political Department and Foreign Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy. The award was approved by the Viceroy on 1st May 1945.

It is evident that both Indian Title awards granted to Mian Afraz Gul were in large part for specific survey work carried out under difficult circumstances.

SUBADAR MAJOR CHANAN SINGH, K.P.M., SARDAR SAHIB, SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE

BALASINOR STATE, GUJARAT STATES AGENCY

The King's Police Medal was awarded to this officer for gallantry when serving as Head Constable at Nowshera Kalan in the North-West Frontier Provinces in May 1932. It was one of eight such awards submitted by the Governor, NWFP, in a confidential Home Department letter dated 26th June 1933. [5] By this time, Chanan Singh had been promoted to Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police No.336, in which rank his award was recommended and subsequently gazetted. [6]

The KPM is named in engraved serif capitals to: CHANNAN SINGH, ASST. SUB INSPR N.W.F. POLICE. [7] Accompanying the KPM is a George VI issue Indian Title badge Sardar Sahib [8] which is named on the reverse in typical running script to: *Subadar Major Chanan Singh 14th June 1945*. This title was announced as part of the King's Birthday Honours in the " Gazette of India" [9], in which Chanan Singh is described as "Subadar Major Chanan Singh, Superintendent of Police, Balasinor State, Rajputana [10], and lately of the Crown Representative's Police, Neemuch".

To determine whether both KPM and Indian Title badge were awarded to one and the same man, the relevant files for each award were consulted. The answer was immediately clear from an extensive dossier of correspondence relating to the Sardar Sahib award, including the recommendation submitted for H.E. the Viceroy's consideration which referred *inter alia* to Chanan Singh's earlier services and the award of the KPM for gallantry. [11]

Subedar Major CHANAN SINGH
lately of the Crown Representative's Police Neemuch and now Superintendent of Police Balasinor State. [N.W.F.P. Police on foreign service in the Balasinor State]

Title recommended: SARDAR SAHIB

> "The first Indian Officer of the rank of Subedar to join the Crown Representative's Police on the raising of the force, he rendered valuable assistance in the early stages of its organisation and training.
>
> In April 1942 he proceeded on active service to Khairpur State, where the Crown Representative's Police formed part of the Upper Sind Force engaged in operations to supress the Hur rebellion. In September 1942 he was chosen to command a detachment of the Crown Representative's Police sent to Kotah State as a precautionary measure during the Congress rebellion, and from November 1943 until

his reversion to the N.W.F.P. Police he was in command of the detachment sent to Balasinor State to deal with armed dacoit gangs which were committing murders and dacoities throughout the State and in adjoining States and British India territory and within which the State Police had been totally unable to cope.

When the detachment arrived at Balasinor the State Police were demoralised and the local population overawed and terror-stricken. Subedar Major Chanan Singh set to work immediately. His organisation of protective measures and his tact and assurance in his dealing with the public rapidly restored confidence, and reliable information of the movement of the dacoits soon began to be forthcoming. He planned and carried out a series of well-timed raids in Balasinor and adjoining States and, with the assistance of the Bombay presidency police in neighbouring districts of the Bombay presidency, with excellent results. During his period of command altogether 64 arrests were made, 57 of those arrested being active dacoits. The discipline and conduct of the detachment has been throughout exemplary and two of its members have been awarded the Indian Police Medal for gallantry.

Subedar Major Chanan Singh has shown himself possessed of commendable tact, initiative and organising ability. His work with the C.R.P., especially while in command of the Balasinor detachment, has in my opinion and in those of the Commandant C.R.P. and my Police Advisor been outstanding and deserving of recognition. The Resident at Baroda whole-heartedly endorses the recommendation and adds it is fully justified by the work the Subedar did in suppressing dacoity in Balasinor State.

Subedar Chanan Singh's record of service has been uniformly good and he was awarded the King's Police Medal for conspicuous gallantry on 1st January 1934.

His Excellency the Governor of the N.W.F.P. has no objection to the proposal. His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab, in which province lie Subedar Major Chanan Singh's home and ancestral property, has also been consulted. He too has no objection"

This recommendation was made by the British Resident for Rajputana on 8th March 1945, supported by the Balasinor Durbar and by the Political Department. H.E. the Viceroy gave his approved on 1st May 1945. As with many KPM and IPM recommendations, to which it bears a close similarity, this recommendation demonstrates the extent to which initiatives, rapid and firmly taken, were an essential feature of efficient police work in isolated posts, under frequently hazardous circumstances, along and across British India's wilder frontiers.

CONCLUSIONS

It would be unwise to assume that research into Indian Title badges has little potential for students of military or police history. Such awards were frequently granted to men with outstanding service behind them, either as soldiers or policemen, or as civil servants holding down challenging jobs in difficult or dangerous circumstances. Their records of service, as recorded in recommendations for Indian Titles, can therefore be both interesting and informative.

Apart from researching the archives, there are some secondary sources which contain useful information on Indian Title holders. For example:

India & The War Illustrated 1914 -1918; The Imperial Publishing Co., Lahore 1924; 884 pages. This unwieldy volume is crammed full of pictures and biographical records of Indians at all levels, princes and commoners, politicians, civil servants, businessmen, the professions, retired soldiers and policemen, who in one way or another contributed to the war effort. Many of them were rewarded with Indian Titles.

The States, Estates, and Who's Who in India & Burma; The Imperial Publishing Co., Lahore 1942; xvi, 524 pages. Of similar purpose and scope to "India & The War Illustrated", there are hundreds of interesting records and photos of Indians at all levels in politics, business, civil service, the professions, serving and retired soldiers, etc.. Many Indian Title holders are included.

One tip for the collector is to take seriously any Title Badge which is named to a recipient with a military or police rank - whether active or retired. Chances are that the award of the Title may relate in some way to the recipient's professional services.

Notes

1. "*History of the MacGregor Memorial Medals 1889-1989*"; Major Robert Hamond. Lancer International, New Delhi, 1994. Page 61

2. National Archives of India: Office of the Private Secretary to H.E. The Viceroy [Honours Branch], File No. 58-H/45 "Grant of Lower India Titles, Birthday Honours 14 June 1945".

3. Hamond gives 1907 as the date of enrolment.

4. "*Innermost Asia*", Oxford 1928, 4 vols.

5. National Archives of India: Home Department [Police], File No. 25/III/33 p.100-102

6. "*The Gazette of India*", January 1st 1934, p.18

7. NAI Home Department p.131-134. Instructions issued for the details to be inscribed on medals specified omission of "Province" from the unit title - hence abbreviated NWF Police. The medal is the KPM GV issue [common reverse] with gallantry ribbon [author's collection].

8. The third class title Sardar Sahib was awarded exclusively to Sikhs. Equivalent classes were Khan Sahib to Moslems, and Rai Sahib or Rao Sahib to Hindus. The badge awarded to Chanan Singh is in silver with garter in dark blue enamel [author's collection].

9. "*Gazette of India Extraordinary*", June 14th 1945 p.495

10. Later officially corrected by replacing "Rajputana" with "Gujarat States Agency". The *sanad* or award bestowal certificate was also amended [NAI Home Department p.44-45]

11. NAI Home Department p.10-11

126th BALUCHISTAN INFANTRY

Lt Col N W Poulsom

(all photos in this section by R C Worts)

LINEAGE

1825-1826	2nd Extra Battalion: Bombay Native Infantry
1826-1885	26th Regiment Bombay Native Infantry
1885-1892	26th Regiment Bombay Infantry
1892-1901	26th (Baluchistan) Regiment Bombay Infantry
1901-1903	26th Baluchistan Infantry
1903-1922	126th Baluchistan Infantry

BATTLE HONOURS

1858	PERSIA, KOOSH-AB
1903 added	CHINA 1900

SECTION I ; POUCH

c.1891 Silver bugle [DR 1891]

c.1901 '26' in a laurel wreath [DR 1901]

c.1903-1922 '126' within a laurel wreath in gilt [DR 1913]

c.1850 Grenadier Company : Crown surmounted by Grenade over Garter inscribed ‘REGIMENT’, surrounded by wreath. ‘26’ in centre

c.1891 Silver Regimental plate [DR 1891]

c.1901 Gilt Maltese Cross with four lions rampant, surmounted by a crown, surrounded by a laurel wreath with scrolls ‘PERSIA’, ‘KHOOSH-AB’. In centre of cross ‘26th BALUCHISTAN REGIMENT’. [DR 1901]

c.1903-1922 Brass plate bearing the honorary distinction of the Regiment. [DR 1913]

SECTION III ; WAIST PLATE

c.1901 ‘26’ surmounted by Imperial crown surrounded by a circle inscribed ‘BALUCHISTAN REGIMENT’.

c.1903-1922 ‘126’ surmounted by a Tudor crown surrounded by a scroll inscribed ‘BALUCHISTAN INFANTRY’. [DR 1913]

SECTION IV : HEADDRESS

PART I : FORAGE CAP

c.1903-1922 Crossed Afghan knives with ‘126’ across the forte. [DR 1913]

PART II : FOR PEACE MANOEUVRES

c.1891 Silver bugle placed on a red cord boss. [DR 1891]

PART III : FIELD CAP

c.1901 Gilt, circular in shape, consisting of a Maltese Cross encircled by a laurel wreath, the wreath bearing the names of the campaigns authorised. Worn on a piece of red cloth. [DR 1901]

c.1903-1922 Crossed Afghan knives with '126' across the forte. [DR 1913]

PART IV : PAGRI

c.1903-1922 Outer circular band, in centre crossed Pathan knives with a crown over '126' in upper angle, 'INFANTRY' in lower angle, and 'BALUCHISTAN' in semi-circle over crossing.

SECTION V : SHOULDER TITLE

c.1885-1892 Brass. 'BOMBAY' surmounted by '26'

c.1892-1903 In brass (and black metal). ‘BALUCHISTAN’ surmounted by ‘26’

c.1903-1922 In black metal. ‘BALUCHISTAN’ surmounted by ‘126’

c.1902-1922 In brass. ‘BALUCHISTAN’ surmounted by ‘126’

SECTION VI : BUTTONS

c.1826 Crown over ‘26’. Scalloped edge. Gilt.

c.1826-1885 Crown over Garter inscribed ‘BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY’. ‘26’ above ‘REGT’ in centre. Wreath. No rim. Gilt.

c.1885-1901 Crown over Garter inscribed ‘REGIMENT’. ‘26’in centre. Wreath. No rim. Gilt.

c.1901 ‘26’ surmounted by a crown, surrounded by a scroll inscribed ‘BALUCHISTAN INFANTRY’. [DR 1901]

c.1901-1903 Circlet inscribed ‘BALUCHISTAN REGIMENT’. Crown over ‘26’ centre. Rim. Gilt.

c.1903-1922 ‘126’ surmounted by a Tudor crown, surrounded by a scroll inscribed ‘BALUCHISTAN INFANTRY’. [DR 1913]

c.1903-1922 Circlet inscribed ‘BALUCHISTAN INFANTRY’. Crown over ‘126’ in centre. Rim. Gilt

c.1903-1922. CAP : Crossed Pathan knives

Footnote: I would be very interested to hear from any member who can add to the information contained in this article, be it in the form of a written description, photograph, photocopy or, indeed, to point out any errors (of which I am sure there are).

AN INDIAN CONNECTION

The Reverend R A McDowall CF(R)

A set of Exodus Hunt brass buttons (four large, six small) came to me last year, made by Firmin, London. Each is engraved with “CX” in the centre, “EXODUS HUNT” above, and an inscription in Arabic below, which phonetically sounds, I am told, like the English. The Hunt, later to have the Royal title bestowed by King Ghazi of Iraq, came into being after the Great War as a result of the efforts of the British Officers of 110 Company Indian Army Service Corps - hence “CX”, which gave rise to “Exodus”, formed from the phonetics of the Company’s number.

The Cairo Conference of 1920, called to consider among other things the reduction of British and Indian troops in Mesopotamia, many of the latter had not been home since the war ended, decided that the young Royal Air Force should be given responsibility for the defences of the British Mandated Territories and Protectorates of the Middle East; this allowed the large imperial garrison to be run down, presumably 110 Company included.

The policing of Iraq created a major headache with so many factions and interests, not to mention the unsettled Kurds, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The Iraq Levies (originally from the Arab Scouts of 1915) were intended to assist the RAF, which had aircraft aloft and armoured cars on the ground, until the Iraq Army was up and functioning. The Levies were controlled by the Colonial Office, and under Army orders, until 1928 when the transfer to RAF control began, and was completed by 1932. With that the Exodus Hunt too came within the orbit of the RAF, and that is where my father came to join the Hunt and wear those buttons. Many years later he would call my two brothers and me "long dogs", and it was well after he died that I discovered that "long dogs" were (to quote James Lunt) "a somewhat motley collection of foxhounds", trained to hunt the jackal.

It was to the Levies that Captain John Frost was seconded (1938) from his Regiment, The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). He became Master of the Hunt and on leaving, to return to his Regiment (10th Battalion for beach defence duties on the Suffolk Coast), he was presented with a copper hunting horn. That horn went with him from Iraq to East Anglia, and was used after joining Airborne Forces to rally his men on various dropping zones in France, North Africa, and above all, commanding 2 PARA at Arnhem; it even features in the film "A Bridge Too Far". He said of the horn, "This was to be one of the best presents I ever had".

So what happened to 110 Company IASC, who started it all? Its forming of the Exodus Hunt, as a diversion from desert duty, produced a fascinating by-water of historical interest.

Afternote: With the set of Hunt buttons came a set of RAF buttons (chrome), but in exactly the same form, also made by Firmin. Did the RAF wear them as Hunt buttons - or were they for a blazer - four large and six small?

The author acknowledges his debt for information to:

J G Browne : *The Iraq Levies 1915-1932* (1932)
James Lunt : *Imperial Sunset* (1981)
Cornelius Ryan : *A Bridge Too Far* (1974)
John Frost : *A Drop Too Many* (1980)

Enlarged **Actual Size**

SILVER WAR BADGE, INDIA

Elizabeth Talbot-Rice

The First World War Silver War Badge was issued under Army Order 316 of 1916 to service personnel discharged on account of old age, wounds or sickness, presumably to prevent white feathers being thrust at them. Colonial badges were endorsed with the initial of the country in question, those awarded to India personnel having the prefix 'I'.

Searches for medal rolls at the Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, failed to yield even the odd name or two. I then examined the lists of Indian soldiers hospitalised in Milford on Sea. These give the dates the patient was returned to his unit or invalided to India (OIOC/L/Mil/5/812-824). Somewhat to my surprise fewer than 100 men out of some four thousand seem to have been repatriated for medical reasons. Others went on to Lady Hardinge's Hospital, to Burton Court or to Brighton but the majority were returned to unit, passed fit. Searches of possible depositories near Milford on Sea did not discover the rolls and enquiries to the Royal Pavilion at Brighton were equally fruitless. It seemed that, if the rolls survived, they must be in India. Alas, various letters to Delhi remained unanswered.

I then came across Indian Army Order No 50 of 1017 which reads in part:

> "The issue of the badge in the case of British officers of the Indian Army, Indian officers, soldiers of the Indian Army, warrant and non-commissioned officers of the Indian Unattached List, members of Queen Alexandra's Nursing Service to India, public and private followers and civilians recruited from India will be undertaken by the Government of India.....Commanding officers or officers commanding depots of units on field service, will prepare nominal rolls, in duplicate, of those entitled to the badge .....and submit them through the Headquarters of Divisions, Divisional Areas or Independent Brigades, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Army Department."

Armed with this information and with an extract from The Broad Arrow (2 December 1916, p.131) which stated that those eligible for the award who were residing in India were to apply to the Secretary to the Government of India, I decided to write again to the National Archives of India. Less than a couple of months later, after sending their very modest search fee, back came an answer confirming that they do indeed have the rolls which are 'in the files of Army Deptt.'

(We published a request for information about such rolls in Vol. 12, No 3, Autumn 1995, pp113-114 which included a picture of the Badge. Ed.)

THE REGIMENTAL TITLES OF INDIAN INFANTRY REGIMENTS IN 1885

Field Marshal Sir John Chapple

Changes of Regimental title were usually recorded in Governor General's Orders or Governor In Council Orders, and latterly in Indian Army Orders and comparable documents.

Almost all changes can thus be given a quotable authority, and can be looked up in the relevant archive.

One major change seems to have no traceable authority. This is the dropping of the word "Native" from infantry unit titles. It was effective from 1 January 1885 and is reflected in all Regimental Histories, as well as Indian Army Lists. In all subsequent lineage lists the date of change is recorded as 1 January 1885 - but in no case is an authority given.

Various members of our Society have looked into this with no success so far. It is assumed that some letter ordering the change was issued during 1884 but it seems to have been outside the normal procedure for promulgating such changes.

The change was very quickly reflected. Badges, buckles, buttons all dropped the word "Native" pretty quickly so the designers and manufacturers must have been alert to the change. Drawings exist in the pattern books in the National Army Museum which reflect this swift change of title. There are very few examples of insignia in which the old title Native Infantry continued in use.

I do not know if the same changes took place on named campaign medals after 1885. Perhaps members may care to comment on this and if possible produce the authority for the change?

"HARD LUCK"

THE ALBERT MEDAL TO A KHOND IN 1926

Kimberley John Lindsay

I recently acquired a second-hand copy of the long out of print "*Tigers of the Raj*" (Allen Sutton, 1987). The subtitle to this fascinating and well-made book is "*The Shikar Diaries of Colonel Burton, 1894 to 1949*". The book was extremely well edited by Jacqueline Toovey (Burton's daughter Phyliss married Captain Dick Toovey MC, 82 Punjabis, on 14 March 1923).

This was in fact the same Richard Watkins Burton (1868-1963), Hyderabad Infantry, whose citation for the award of the Royal Humane Society Bronze Medal in 1900 was one of those selected by Bill Fevyer in the Summer 2000 DURBAR (Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 46-7).

Burton - soldier, sportsman and conservationist - was obliged to quit military service due to several injuries, but managed to secure further employment as a Cantonment Magistrate, retiring at Bareilly in 1922. Thereafter, he was able to spend much of his time travelling in India:

> "I think of the interest and unending enjoyment there is in the mere living of the jungle life, and it is this, more than the shikar, which forms the main attraction to those who like myself retain a desire to journey in wild places until advancing years inexorably call a halt. R.W.B."

As an instance of his travels, Lieutenant Colonel Burton noted in his Diary for 1925:

"15th June. Betul to Itarsi. Travelled with Archdeacon Martin of Kamptu. He told me details of the narrow escape of [Mr] George, District Forrestry Officer Chanda, from a man eating tigress. It seized him by the back of the neck and teeth actually went into the vertebrae of the neck. The khond [Khonds/Gonds: descended from barbarous inhabitants of the Eastern Vindhyan Mountains] with him, carrying his gun, did not know how to work the safety catch so was unable to shoot the beast. He drove it off however, by hitting it with the gun and made it let go as it was dragging George away. George says that when he was in the tigress' grip he said to himself, 'this is hard luck and I am quite young'. He recovered consciousness and then, helped by the khond, managed to make the two miles to camp; followed all the way by the tigress which the khond had to frighten as much as he could. The Commissioner Central Provinces gave the man a silver bangle for his arm engraved with name and reason for the award, also a bullock cart and a pair of bullocks and a piece of land. The King has awarded the Albert Medal to him, and well he deserves all this: a brave man."

[We tend to ignore the role wives played in India and the difficulties they faced while their husbands were on military service. I am delighted, therefore, that Lieutenant Colonel Duggie Gray has offered a number of stories penned by his late wife Joan. This is the first; I will publish others in future journals. Ed.]

THE FLOOD - INDIA 1942

Joan Gray

The Staff College Term finished about the end of July and Douglas had to leave before me as the officer he was replacing was wanted elsewhere in a hurry. I stayed behind to pack up house and follow later when he had found a house in Delhi.

The rains started early that year and were very heavy, so heavy in fact that the rivers began to rise and were soon in flood, washing away roads and rails, and creating a serious situation. I suddenly heard a rumour that the rail was down between Rhuri and Sukka in many places and the train leaving Quetta that evening might be the last to get through - it was going by Hyderabad Sind because of the floods, but no one knew how long that line might stay open as the waters were rising fast.

Not wanting to be out of touch with my husband for an indefinite period, and having packed all the boxes, I decided to catch the evening train, but there was one big drawback as no horses could go, because horse boxes would have made the train too long and heavy. I quickly made arrangements for them to remain in Quetta with friends until the railway was open again which we hoped would be in a few weeks. With the dogs Chaser and Loo and the luggage I got into a coupe. The Indian trains were quite unlike those in England as there are no corridors and first class travel consists of a coupe for two with upper and lower bunks and

w.c. Quetta is high and does not get very hot but once down in the Plains the July heat is intense.

By next day we were surrounded by mile after mile of water with only the top of a tree or a telephone showing, with the floods still rising and almost up to the top of the railway embankment. I was not surprised to hear that the line behind us had broken and that I was on the last train. From Hyderabad the journey was across the Sind desert which at the best of times is dusty, but that day it was boiling, and as the sun rose the heat became unbearable in the slow moving train. To crown matters the electricity failed and all the fans stopped. Foolishly, I opened the window hoping for a breeze, only to be engulfed in clouds of dust, sand and filth from the desert carried on a searing wind like the blast from a furnace.

By this time the two dogs were in a very distressed state, especially Chaser. I kept a cool pad on his head and he almost lay on top of a block of ice I had managed to bring into the coupe and which was slowly melting. With the sun setting at last, and the train still crawling at snail's pace, we drew into Lahore Station where we got out and stayed the night. Never have I been so glad of a bath and a welcome cooling fan - also enjoyed by the dogs. We continued on to Delhi next day where I joined Douglas - it was now early August.

As the weeks past we waited daily for news of the horses, but by October they were still in Quetta as no train had been able to get through the floods. Quetta is very cut off from the rest of India and by now the food for the horses was running short and the cold was setting in, and with only one rug apiece for the horses and none for Cocktail we were anxious to get them down as quickly as possible. We were told that it was unlikely that any train would get through before Christmas, but there was a twice daily service from Quetta to Sukka, and from there passengers continued by bus or lorry, and boat and lorry, to Rhuri - about 27 miles.

Douglas, now a Staff Officer at Army HQ at Delhi, was working hard and couldn't get leave but was eventually persuaded to let me go and see if I could get the horses down. We wired our friends in Quetta and asked them to put the horses with as much food as possible into a horse box and send them to Sukka where I would meet them in a week's time, i.e. the last week in October.

People laughed at me and said that I was mad to try as it would mean getting the animals in boats or swimming them, and it was stupid for a girl to go alone, but with Douglas's consent I went. I think I had become such a nuisance to live with, worrying daily about the horses, that he was glad to get rid of me! However, he insisted on my carrying a pistol (can't think what I should have used it for). A horsebox was ordered to be at Rhuri Station to take them on to Delhi, and having made all the arrangements possible, I took my bearer and the pistol and we set off.

The journey to Rhuri was uneventful - I sat in the train for 36 hours! At Rhuri I got into a military lorry with half a dozen other people and we were taken to a Rest Camp to spend the night. The place was full up and I was given a bed on a verandah. To reach it I had to walk through two rooms full of women and there was only one bathroom between us. I never found out how many of us were in the "Ladies' House". I shall always remember with horror the flies. Meals were served on a verandah and flies were everywhere - all over the food, on the table, in the air, and they settled on every mouthful of food just as one was about to eat. I could not touch anything and had to leave the table, it was so awful. Luckily I had brought

some tinned food and I was able to eat it on my bed under the mosquito net which was the only place free of flies.

Next morning about a dozen of us went on to Sukka, the first stage being a lorry drive of 17 miles. The surrounding country had been flooded and was covered with a dirty black mud left by the subsiding water which gave off a peculiarly nasty smell. The road had been under water and had been mended in many places. There had been a total of thirteen breaks and repairs had started from either end as the water went down, now leaving only three breaks still to be done. For about ten miles the water was high and above the road.

At the 17 mile stone we left the lorry and found boats large and small, and at once I realised they could not possibly be used for transporting horses. I shared a small craft with another lady and her ten year old daughter and we were punted along. My bearer with suitcase, picnic basket and a bicycle followed in a luggage boat. There was a lot of traffic both ways - people and food going up to Quetta and boxes coming down - and we sometimes got stuck on top of trees, which was a strange experience. After about half an hour we changed again into a lorry to travel the last nine miles to Sukka. The Rest House there was a great improvement - quite clean and, thank goodness, no flies. The train from Quetta was not due until the next evening and I took the chance of having a good sleep on a bed under a fan.

The train was late and when at last it arrived it was so long that the horse box on the end was off the platform so could not be unloaded. After an hour's delay the train moved sufficiently to enable the horses to be taken off. There were five of them - our three and two belonging to friends - a small child's pony and a polo pony mare. Cocktail, who was unclipped, resembled a large ball of grey angora wool as his coat was so long and he was very fat. They were walked to the rest camp, picketed, bedded down, and fed.

Meanwhile, the kit was unloaded and stacked ready for the journey next day. Before going to bed I went out to see them and they all looked happy under the stars and were eating contentedly. The Syces were nearby cooking their evening meal round a small fire. Having come down from the cold of Quetta sleeping out was no hardship for the men. There was a Syce to each pony, a bicycle and myself to go by road, and the bearer was to bring all the kit and horse food for the journey by lorry and boat. We arranged to meet him at Rhuri as soon as we got through.

We left camp next morning at 6.30. I rode Tense - our little Australian thoroughbred. He was a delightful pony and winner of well over a dozen races. He was feeling on top of the world and bucked as only he knew how for the first five minutes. He was so sensitive that he could feel the slightest movement of even a little finger. The only way to have a pleasant ride was to sit absolutely still and avoid sudden movement. The simple act of blowing one's nose had to be done with the greatest care so as not to set him off. The other four followed behind according to size. As it was barely light we started off at a walk, followed by a short trot, and then settled down to a steady walk and arrived at the first break just after 8 a.m. The country was lovely and fresh at that hour.

We had a short halt and watered the ponies while I went to see what lay ahead. It was a large break of nearly 15 yards across, but the bank had a decent slope on the take-off side and the far bank looked good also. Those on foot could cross by walking on planks over what had been the road, with a rope rail for support at one side. There were a lot of labourers, wearing

only a loin cloth, working in and out of the water, repairing structures and mending the road and bank.

In the absence of anyone to consult I had to make the decision on what course to take and do it quickly. Being the smallest of our three I decided that Cocktail should go first and test the depth of water. We took off his tack leaving him with only a halter, to which was attached a long lungeing rein. I sent one Syce over to the far bank, one to the middle of the plank foot bridge, and a third stayed on the take-off side, holding the end of the rein. I led Cocktail to the edge of the water but all he wanted to do was play with it and refused to go in, so I called to one of the labourers offering him money if he would lead the pony out into deep water. Cocktail followed the man into the river and when the water reached his belly I asked him to let go and the Syce at my end of the bridge took over by pulling the rein. Cocktail struck out and swam for the opposite bank, the Syce going as fast as he could on the narrow plank to keep in front and guide him. The second Syce then took the rope and almost ran to the other side where both men helped the pony out. He had done very well and was quite unperturbed by the swim. My spirits rose as it seemed that the crossing was going to be less hazardous than I had feared, though I had noticed that it was important to keep the ponies as far away from the wooden structure as possible as they swam - Cocktail had tended to be drawn towards it.

The child's pony was the next one to go and following the same procedure was soon safely over. Then came Kim - a roan Indian-bred - who was very strong, powerful and self-willed. As he was restive I decided to keep the snaffle bridle on in addition to the head-collar, and we started to lead him to the bank. However, he had other ideas and refused to go anywhere near the water. He reared, threw himself about, and behaved in a completely mulish and stubborn manner, eventually sticking his toes in and refusing to budge. I put a Syce on either side and a labourer in front with a long rope, and with a warning to the men I picked up two large handfuls of dirty muddy stones and sand and threw them at Kim's rear end. The effect was magic - he plunged into the water and started swimming at a fast rate for the other side, just missing knocking over the labourer in front of him who managed to let go the rope. Without further assistance Kim dashed up the far bank to join Cocktail and the pony. We all heaved a sigh of relief.

Next it was the turn of Tense who had been watching the proceedings with great interest but no enthusiasm. It took some time to get him down the bank and he stuck at the water's edge. I tried the mudslinging again but with no result except to make him kick violently, and I did not pursue this method for fear of getting him too upset. Suddenly I had the bright idea of sending Syce over with nosebags for the three ponies already across. All being very greedy, they made much noise at the prospect of food and this was too much for Tense who walked quietly in and swam across with no trouble. The last pony made no fuss at all and swam over like a lamb. They were all given a small feed and dried down ready for saddling. It was pleasing to think that the first crossing was over without accident.

The next break was three miles ahead, and on inspection I could see it would be more of a problem than the first. It was wider, the take-off was bad, the water much faster, and the landing side steeper and covered with rubble, rocks, washed up girders and planks. The only small path they could walk up was at the extreme end right away from the plank bridge, and the only way one could hope to guide a horse was to throw the reins from the bridge to a Syce at the end of the bank and hope he caught it in time to pull the horse out by the right path.

We kept to the same order and Cocktail and the pony crossed without incident. By now Kim was even wilder than before. The bank on the take-off side was not sloping but in shelves and instead of walking down slowly he jumped straight into the river - almost a dive - but luckily landed in deep water and was not hurt. He did another fast swim and miraculously landed at the right spot on the other side and climbed up the path.

After a little hesitation Tense went into the river and was swimming strongly when tragedy struck. The Syce running along the plank slipped and fell and the rope landed in the water instead of being caught by the Syce on the other side. I shall never forget the feeling of utter dismay as I stood there helpless and watched Tense trying to get out up the steep rubble strewn bank. He had three attempts to land and fell back each time, and although both Syces were now near him they could not reach the rope to help pull him out. Finally, when I feared he might drown, he somehow managed to scramble up the bank and on feeling dry land under his feet started to scramble desperately up over the girders, planks and rocks. I could have cried and had visions of our valuable pony being cut to ribbons. At last he reached the top but was on three legs and a swinger and even at that distance I could see the blood dripping from his near hind which he held in the air. I dashed over, nearly falling in myself, and found him in a bad mess. The near hock was skinned on the inside and bleeding badly, and all I could do was put a tail bandage on tightly above the hock to try and stop the flow of blood. At this stage I realised that the first aid box had gone ahead with the bearer and all I had were tail bandages and salt from the picnic basket on the bicycle.

I felt the wound must be cleaned so had to dress it with salt which I am sure was very painful. He had numerous other cuts and bruises and for some time I thought the leg was broken as he would not put it down. It was a great worry as we still had so far to go and another river crossing. The remaining pony was brought over safely.

It was not far to the next break, but it was hot now with the sun beating down and the small thorn trees gave little shade. I left one Syce with Tense and Kim and some hay to keep them quiet, and went on with the other three. When we reached the third break I was concerned to see that it was going to be the worst of the lot. The banks were very bad, there was no foot bridge, and although narrow the river was faster. Here again labourers were working - not many in the water - but numerous women and children carrying small baskets of mud, stones and soil on their heads and throwing it down, thus building out a small path to reach our side which would enable foot people to walk over. Progress was slow and it must have taken many days to get as far as they had, which was about 20 feet from the far bank.

It was not midday and Rhuri still seventeen miles away so there was no time to lose. I got the help of two labourers who were in the water and put one on each side of Cocktail, and sent a Syce over in a small boat to pull him out on the other side. The water was not so deep but very fast, and the landing on the far side was difficult with a steep bank up onto a narrow path. For the first time Cocktail was hesitant and plunged about as waters swirled around him. The two labourers were surprisingly good and managed to calm him down and land him safely. The small pony could offer very little resistance and was more or less carried the 20 yards.

As the mare had been so good and quiet I decided to risk her next. At this stage I had not seen a white face except for the little Indian foreman in a large topee who had wished me luck. The crossing by the ponies had created quite a stir and somewhat hindered the advancement of the path - partly because it gave them something new to watch, and partly

because there was not much room for ponies and labourers on the small path at the same time.

Once again the mare, being led by two labourers, walked in quietly and started to swim across with no fuss, but for some reason when she reached the middle of the stream and felt the strong current she lost her nerve, and instead of going forward the last few yards, she suddenly plunged, reared up, and fell over backwards into the deep angry waters. I was horrified to watch her being swept away and in such a panic as she bobbed about, at times with her head under water, and then struggling to the surface. I just prayed that she might not take long to drown because I gave up hope for her as she was being carried helplessly away from us and no labourer could get to her.

Then the first miracle happened. She was washed into a backwater where the current was less strong and, regaining her nerve, started to swim heading for the small path but lower down. The second miracle now occurred in the shape of a young Englishman standing on the far bank ready to help rescue her. Incredibly he caught the rope and tried to pull the pony out, but the bank was steep and she was tired after her exertions, could not get up and fell back into the water. The man managed to hang onto the rope and get her turned round and heading again for the bank. I was spellbound and felt I was watching the scene from a film with the hero rescuing the half drowned pony. With a final effort, aided by the strong pull on her rope, the mare managed to gain the bank but as she did so the strain slackened suddenly throwing the poor boy on his back in the path of the struggling pony who scrambled all over him.
I got into a boat and crossed as quickly as possible by which time he had regained his feet and, apart from bruises, seemed none the worse. No words could express my deep gratitude as he had, without doubt, saved the pony's life at the risk of his own. He wanted to know what I was doing with these horses all alone. I think his name was Baird, and he was a young Sapper in charge of the rebuilding of the road and hoped to get the path joining the break finished by the evening. Not wishing to risk another such incident, and because of Tense's injured leg, I decided to wait for the repairs to be completed before bringing over the other two. After lunch which Baird shared with me, I sent the three ponies with their Syces on to Rhuri.

Meanwhile, the path building continued. It was a slow job and as the gap narrowed the water became deeper and faster and threatened to flood the new repair. Oil drums were then used to take the water away as they built up over the drums. Gradually the path lengthened and dusk was falling as the last labourer dropped the final basket of soil to complete the repair. Baird returned to inspect it. I was very tired by now and poor Tense was still on three legs. However, after a few minutes slow walking he became less stiff and was able to negotiate the newly finished path and reach the other side. Kim was very worked up and excited and in his headlong rush to join Tense almost knocked the Syce off his feet into the water. But at last they were all over.

This left me and the bicycle and when Baird met me on the other side and offered to drive me back to Rhuri I was too tired to refuse. I left the two Syces to walk on slowly and accepted the welcome lift back in a lorry. I never saw Baird again and owe him a big debt of thanks, as without his timely help would almost certainly have lost the mare.

On arriving at Rhuri we found the three ponies had been cleaned, bedded down, and fed, and all was ready for Tense and Kim. I waited up to see them in at 10.30 p.m. and dressed

Tense's hock as best I could. After thanking the Syces for a good day's work I retired to bed. Had I realised beforehand what was entailed in crossing the breaks with ponies, it is unlikely I would have attempted the journey.

"IT'S TUESDAY"

Peter Chapman

Vernon Harold Starr was, until he was murdered in Peshawar in 1918, a medical missionary. His widow, whose Christian name I do not know, a Mrs L A Starr, shared her husband's zeal and continued in his footsteps after his death.

In the early '20s, she wrote a 4s 6d book, "*Frontier Folk of the Afghan Border - and Beyond*", which was published by the Church Missionary Society and illustrated with photographs taken by Captain L B Cane of the Royal Army Medical Corps. I have never seen a copy of this book and know of it only because it was reviewed in the Boy's Own Paper in 1921. I came across the review by coincidence recently.

The Starrs were, obviously, very worthy people and Mrs Starr's book was clearly of a noble nature. It was written for Christians with an Empire to prove their superiority, and everyone else who was not Christian was either curious or pagan or fascinating and generally in need of assistance. However, in this book Mrs Starr makes a claim which I find mildly odd.

In her ruminations about the Khyber Pass she maintains that "the Khyber Rifles or Frontier Militia, guard the Pass on Tuesdays and Fridays and, on other days of the week, may themselves be robbers..." As Mrs Starr explains that there was a mission hospital at the foot of the Khyber Pass - and presuming that she had first-hand knowledge of it - who am I to doubt her words, bless her heart.

But the Tuesdays and Fridays rota seems a mite unlikely. One wonders if her young readers of 1921, having attained maturity and found themselves on the Frontier later in life, might have rued the day they read "*Frontier Folk of the Afghan Border - and Beyond*".

"Keep your head down Robinson."

"It's all right sir. It's Tuesday."

CARNATIC CORPS OF ARTIFICERS

Christopher Hawes

The rapid growth in the numbers of British soldiers stationed in India in the later eighteenth century, up from a few hundred in mid-century to 18,000 by 1790, was followed inevitably by a growth in the population of military children, the majority of whom were of mixed race. This new social phenomenon led to the foundation of orphanages for their care, and a search

for suitable employment in adult life. Girls, with a sketchy education and training in needlework, were principally destined for marriage, often to soldiers. Boys, if they were the sons of officers, entered government service as clerks. Many of the sons of NCOs and privates went back to the army as drummers and bandsmen or were trained in useful civil employments such as surveying or as medical assistants. The Carnatic Corps of Artificers, raised at Madras by Sir Thomas Munro in 1821, provided another job opportunity for boys from the military orphanage.

The aim was to produce reliable mechanics for use in the field (Indians were thought unreliable and likely to desert). Although a non-combatant corps, the artificers were subject to military law and paid on a British, not Indian scale. By 1823, 156 artificers were supervised by fourteen British sergeants. Ten years later the Corps was reorganised into detachments, replacing Indian artificers at each of the Madras Presidency Arsenals, with one of their number appointed foreman at an additional Rs 5 a month. A training unit was sited at the Gun Carriage Manufactory, Madras, where 30 young pupils were instructed by two Army sergeants.

By the late 1830s discipline, morale and productivity within the Corps clearly had plummeted. The new Superintendent of the Gun Carriage Manufactory, Captain Maitland, reported a gloomy picture. Few of the men could read or write. 'The best men were gloomy and hopeless', and many were 'reckless reprobates'. Even those in charge of the Military Orphanage were unwilling to offer their boys to the Corps. Maitland set about a brisk programme of education, starting at daybreak before work began, to improve the skills of his men. His recommendations for better pay and promotion prospects in 1841 were accepted. The men became entitled to batta when in the field and three ranks of foreman were introduced, with the most senior paid an extra Rs 20 a month. Men received an annual clothing supply including a blue forage cap and working aprons, and pension after 22 years' service.

By 1850 Maitland was able to report that 'vacancies are now most eagerly sought after by Europeans and East Indians of respectability'. From being 'notoriously drunken and profligate', the men now were 'remarkable as the most orderly and well behaved members of the community', associating with and marrying a 'better class' of person. He attributed this not only to his educational programme, but also to the 'moral' influence of regular scripture readings and hymn singing.

Sadly, the improvement was not maintained. A problem was pay, from Rs 12 to Rs 25 a month dependent on service for an artificer. Once railway employment became available, the best men bought themselves out of the Corps 'and Government thus kept only the average workmen'. One such was George Starkenburgh who was discharged in 1874 for stealing 21 unserviceable pistols and selling them to Indians. Starkenburgh had 17 years' service during which his charge sheet included disrespectful language, feigning sick, drunk and disorderly, torn tunic on parade and dodging church parades, and punishments ranging from cautions to confinement to barracks.

By 1895 the continual erosion of the best pupils from the Corps and their replacement by those of 'lower social status and inferior skills', together with a study which indicated that Indian labour could do the job just as well and far less expensively, led to a decision to disband the Corps even though the Military Department took into account the need of employment opportunities for Eurasians of the time. A few of the very best men were kept

on at the Gun and Shell factory at Cossipore. All other men over 21 years' service were pensioned off, and the remainder were given a free discharge as the Corps disbanded.

At the end of its seventy chequered years of existence this unique non-combatant unit under military discipline was thought to 'have been a useful body of artificers', despite the difficulties in retaining the best men and the presence in its ranks of reprobates like Starkenburgh. But the attempt to marry the specialised military need for reliable technical skills to the task of finding useful employment for the mixed race sons of soldiers was at best a qualified success. The end product was an artisan of whom it would be said that 'He is neither a disciplined soldier nor a skilled mechanic'. Furthermore Indians were willing and able to do the same job at half the cost. Here, as in other fields, the mixed race population at the end of the nineteenth century found itself progressively priced out of government employment.

Sources:

H Sharp (ed.), *Selections from Educational Records*, Calcutta, 1920, II, pp.345-8.

Military Collections, No 83, L/MIL/7/7905, OIOC

Selections from the Records of the Madras Government, V/23/140, OIOC.

RIASC AND THE DUNKIRK EVACUATION

The Editor

Shortly after publishing Shamus Wade's article on the use of RIASC mules on Steep Holm (Vol. 17, No 4, p122) I received a copy of the 27 November 200 issue of 'India Today International'. This included an interview with The Rt Hon Sir Paddy Ashdown KBE MP and the thrust of the article was a claim that, during the retreat to Dunkirk, Sir Paddy's father, an officer with RIASC, received an order to "cut loose your Indians and your mules". He refused to obey the order and was court martialled. The article suggested that the order came from the very top and reflected British policy. With a shortage of transport, the article suggested, there was a fear that British troops should not be left at the mercy of the Nazis. The article has now been interpreted by some as indicating a racist attitude at high level command during the Second World War.

Before deciding to repeat the story I wrote to Sir Paddy Ashdown and asked for confirmation that he had been correctly quoted. He had not been, and the article in 'India Today International' is misleading. Sir Paddy was quick to point out that he had no official records to confirm his version of events, which is based on discussions with family members, but he had no reason to disbelieve it. Although true that, while leading his Company of RIASC towards Dunkirk, Captain John Ashdown was sent an order to turn loose his mules and abandon his Indian soldiers, Sir Paddy believes the order originated from a junior Staff Officers, doubtless in the panic of retreat. Captain Ashdown refused to obey the order and successfully led his men to Dunkirk, and to evacuation, without loss. On arrival in Britain Captain Ashdown was court martialled for refusing to obey an order but, as Sir Paddy

understands the position, the court martial was dismissed and the person who gave the order was himself disciplined.

I am grateful to Sir Paddy Ashdown (now Lord Ashdown) for his help in clarifying the story and putting the record straight.

LETTERS AND QUERIES

Brian Stevens has raised two queries:

1. The Bengal Army List corrected to 4th October 1856 includes in the Establishment of the Hazara Mountain Train Battery two elephants together with two Mahouts and two Chirkuttahs. What were Chirkuttahs? When the Bengal Artillery included an Elephant Light Field Battery each elephant had a Mahout and a Coolie. Is a Chirkuttah another name for a Coolie?

2. Up to the end of British rule in India the British Minister in Kathmandu was provided with an Escort. This had been raised in 1816 and was an independent unit of the strength of a weak company and included a mounted section. What was the date of disbandment or was it taken over by the Government of Independent India for their own representative?