

DURBAR Volume 20, No.4, Winter 2003

61ST CAVALRY

Cliff Parrett and Tony McClenaghan were recently in India for a "research holiday". Fortuitously the timing coincided with the Golden Jubilee parade of the founding of 61st Cavalry, the last fully horsed unit anywhere in the world. With India-based members Rana Chhina and Sushil Talwar, and Sweden-based Ashok Nath who was already in India on other business, the five of us were fortunate enough to attend and witness a magnificent spectacle, with 239 horses and riders on parade. Other regimental jubilees were going on at the same time - the bi-centenary of both Skinner's Horse and Bengal Sappers and Miners, and a reunion of 5th Gorkhas (FF). Nevertheless, the 61st Cavalry parade was a special event and to mark it this edition of DURBAR is a single subject issue drawing largely on the parade brochure to which a number of us contributed - Rana Chhina, Tony McClenaghan, Cliff Parrett, Sushil Talwar, Ashok Nath, Major S S Rathore, Brigadier H.H. Bhawani Singh MVC, Richard Head. (Ed.)

THE HORSED WARRIOR

Since time immemorial the horse has occupied a central place in the annals of warfare and for centuries, on battlefields around the globe, the horse has brought fame, power and glory to those that have used it well. Now, with the changing face of war, the horse has fallen from its exalted position and is today demoted to the status of a dumb animal used in remote and impenetrable areas of the world where the machines of war cannot go. Yet this lowly rank should not reflect badly upon the proud position once held by the military horse on the field of conflict in the past.

Tales connected with the noble behaviour of the horse in battle abound in various cultures on all continents. Yet, while the knight and his charger ruled the battlefields of Europe in the Middle Ages, it was Asia that gave birth to the two most devastating leaders of horse that the world has ever known: the great Changhez Khan and Taimur Lang. In a strange quirk of fate, the last battle fought by Taimur against the Tughlak Sultan of Delhi took place in 1398 A.D. on the spot where the Jaipur Polo Ground and Safdarjung Airport stand today.

In India, the armies of the medieval Kings and Mughal Emperors were essentially armies of horsemen. Mughal nobility was ranked by royal decree according to the number of horses that each *mansabdar* could muster for the service of the emperor; thus the ranks *Dus Hazari*, *Tees Hazari*, etc., denoted a commander of 10 and 30 Thousand Horse, respectively.

All Indians are familiar with the story of how the mortally wounded Chetak carried his master, the valiant Maharana Pratap, to safety from the doomed field of Haldi-ghati, where the flower of Rajput chivalry had stained the ground red for all time to come. An altar was raised, and still marks the spot where the noble Chetak died. The tale curiously mirrors that of Alexander's horse Bucephalus, who, mortally wounded and surrounded by attackers in the battle of Hydaspes (Jhelum) between Alexander and Porus, carried his master to safety against all odds before succumbing to his wounds. Alexander later named a city, Bucephalia (Jalalabad in present day Pakistan), in his horse's honour.

The nascent Sikh and Maratha nations also challenged the might of the increasingly cruel, oppressive and intolerant Mughal empire in the north and the south of India, respectively, using the horse for

delivering surprise raids upon the lumbering Mughal host. Mounted on swift hardy ponies, Chhatrapati Shivaji's doughty Maratha warriors would emerge from their mountain fastness to fall on their prey and be gone before the enemy had a chance to react. The brilliant guerrilla tactics of these "mountain rats" bled the Mughal empire dry in the Deccan and laid the foundation of the central influence of the Marathas in the affairs of the subcontinent.

Likewise, the followers of Guru Gobind Singh in the Punjab, banded together in the military fraternity of the *Khalsa*, used similar hit-and-run tactics to harass the Mughals and the string of Afghan and Persian invaders that periodically made their way through their land. For a while the Sikhs literally became a nation of horsemen, living in the saddle in the jungles and foothills of the Punjab, and issuing forth to gain death or victory in swift mounted attacks on their foes. Later, under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh *Ghorchurras* watered their horses from the Indus to the Jamuna, and extracted a terrible toll from the British in some of the most hotly contested battles for their empire.

During the Imperial period under the British, the Indian cavalry was gradually reorganised and trained along European lines, although traces of the Mughal, Rajput, Maratha and Sikh systems of old still lingered in the *Silladar* cavalry regiments, up until the end of the Great War.

Jangi Sowar

THE INDIAN CAVALRY

All Indian military powers gave pride of place to their cavalry. However, it was under the British that the cavalry entered the popular psyche. The very name of the Bengal Lancers and the exploits of the Guides Cavalry captivated the imagination and conjured up images of distant campaigns on some remote and exotic frontier. During the high noon of the British Raj, Indian contingents visited England on a number of Imperial occasions; the conclusion of Wolseley's campaign in Egypt in 1882, the 1887 and 1897 Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria and the Coronations of Edward VII and George V in 1901 and 1911, respectively. The colourful uniforms and martial bearing of the Indian cavaliers captured the imagination of the Empire, giving latter day Raj nostalgics like MM Kaye a fertile field for literary exploitation.

The Indian cavalry under the Raj was, like many other British-Indian institutions, a happy amalgamation of Eastern and Western systems and values. Like the infantry, the cavalry regiments had their origins in the erstwhile separate armies of the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, amalgamated and brought into a single line following Lord Kitchener's reforms in 1903.

In the Indian Army prior to the war of 1914-20 there were - excluding the household troops of the Viceroy and the three Presidency Governors, - thirty-nine cavalry regiments. An extra six were raised for the war. All save three - the old Madras Cavalry - were on the "silladar" basis. The post-war economies decreed a reduction to twenty-one, together with a fifty per cent cut in the pre-war establishment totals of personnel. To effect this, amalgamation rather than disbandment became the policy, and the thirty-six paired regiments were required to produce one regiment each to be based on an establishment and organization much akin to that of British cavalry. Three regiments, the two oldest in the service and the only descendants extant of the cavalry of Eyre Coote and Wellesley, the 7th and 16th (now in India), as well as the Cavalry of the Corps of Guides (now in Pakistan) were left undisturbed as separate entities, but nevertheless to conform to the new system. The new regiments were to be numbered from 1 to 21. When the Indian Army was divided at partition, the cavalry was divided on a 1:3 ratio.

In 1938, the first two Indian cavalry regiments that were selected for mechanisation were the 13th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers and the 14th Prince of Wales' Own Scinde Horse. The regiments held their last mounted parades in April 1938 amidst much sadness at parting with their horses. The loss of horses, which were such a help to officers to keep themselves fit during the long and trying Indian summer, was very generously dealt with by the Defence Department. Each officer was allowed one charger, and the unit an additional fifty per cent, for the number of officers on the peace establishment. Special rates were also laid down for the purchase of horses from the Remount Department.

For many years the 31st Lancers were the only Indian cavalry to enlist Marathas, a full squadron of which existed from 1862 right up to the amalgamation. Marathas were held to be very much attached to their homes and did not readily enlist in the army unless obliged to do so by lack of funds. The "silladar" system did not thus suit their characteristics since they obviously could not produce the capital sum required to purchase a horse and a share in the regimental funds. Consequently they usually joined the infantry. The 31st, however, continued to enlist them when other regiments ceased to do so by means of a Maratha Fund, which produced the necessary capital on loan. By January 1939, Marathas no longer formed a part of the Indian cavalry organization and thus the inclusion of a Maratha squadron in the 61st Cavalry with the amalgamation of the Mysore Lancers into the Indian Army in 1953 has prevented the extinction of the last traces of the old famous Maratha Horse.

THE STATES FORCES SAGA

Before independence, many of the 565 Indian Princely States maintained armed forces of their own. The size and composition of these forces varied immensely, and was regulated by treaty rights with the paramount power. In times of emergency, the States often put their resources at the disposal of the central government. State units had served with forces of the Crown in numerous campaigns, such as Laswarrie 1803, First Afghan War 1839, First Sikh War 1846, Second Sikh War 1849, Sepoy Mutiny 1857, Second Afghan War 1879-80, Black Mountain expedition 1888, Hunza Nagar campaign 1891, Chitral 1895, North-West Frontier of India and Tirah 1897-8, China 1900-01, Somaliland 1903-4 and both World Wars. At the time of partition the strength of the Indian States Forces, maintained by 44 States, was 75,311.

However, even during their heyday, the States Forces were somewhat of an anachronism, and their essential character remained deeply feudal and harkened back to an earlier age. As late as the Delhi Durbar in 1911, in some State units the words of command were still given in French, a reminder of the days when they were officered by European mercenaries. Units carried titles that would not have been unfamiliar to officers of the Mughal Army, such as 'The Regiment of the Sun', 'The Regiment of Victory', 'The Lightning Regiment'. Despite their reorganisation, renaming and training under the British-supervised ISF Scheme, their way of life up to the outbreak of the Second World War remained largely medieval, and still for them 'Who comes there?' was *Hookumdarr*.

At its peak, on the 1st January 1932, the Indian States Forces Cavalry had a total strength of 9,191 composed of: -

Alwar Mangal Lancers	312
Alwar Body Guard	112
Bahawalpur Body Guard Lancers	69
Baria Cavalry	23
Benares 2nd Cavalry Troop	34
Benares 3rd Camel Despatch Riders	20

Bharatpur Body Guard	29
Bhavnagar Lancers	268
Bhopal (Victoria) Lancers	141
Bikanir Dungar Lancers	334
Chamba Body Guard	16
Dhar Light Horse	63
Dhrangadhra Body Guard	45
Faridkot Body Guard	27
Gwalior 1st Jayaji Lancers	519
Gwalior 2nd Alijah Lancers	523
Gwalior 3rd Lancers	552
Hyderabad 1st Lancers	520
Hyderabad 2nd Lancers	522
Hyderabad 3rd Golconda Lancers	407
Hyderabad Cavalry Training Squadron	363
Indore Mounted Escort	132
Jaipur Lancers	534
Jind Body Guard	71
Jodhpur Sardar Risala	672
Junagadh Lancers	173
Kapurthala Body Guard	25
Kashmir Body Guard	472
Kutch Body Guard	34
Malerkotla Lancers	28
Mandi Lancers	11
Mysore Lancers	477
Mysore Horse	131
Nawanagar Lancers	322
Palanpur Body Guard	45
Patiala 1st Lancers	523
Patiala 2nd Lancers	132
Porbandar Body Guard	31
Rajpipla Body Guard	24
Rampur Lancers	280
Sirmur Body Guard	22
Sachin Cavalry	24
Udaipur Lancers	129

BIRTH OF A NEW REGIMENT

With the merger of the Princely States into the Indian Union after independence, the future of the numerous States Forces hung in the balance. In 1949 the Government of India took over all the military forces of the former Princely States and selected elements became a part of the Indian Army in April 1951. The cavalry element was reorganised and restructured at this point into the following five distinct units:

- **Gwalior Lancers** comprising 1st Gwalior Lancers, 2nd Gwalior Lancers and elements of 3rd Gwalior Lancers.

- **Jodhpur / Kachhawa Horse** comprising Jodhpur Lancers, Jaipur Kachhawa Horse, Bikaner Dungar Lancers, Alwar Mangal Lancers, Mewar Lancers, and Bharatpur Brijendra Lancers.¹
- **Mysore Lancers**
- **'B' Squadron 2 Patiala Lancers**
- **Saurashtra Horsed Cavalry Squadron** raised from the Nawanagar Shri Huzur Body Guard.

It was the initial intent of government to maintain three separate horsed cavalry units but the gaunt spectre of economic considerations loomed large once again and, for a while, it seemed that the future of the horse in the Army of India was indeed grim. However, the fates again intervened in the form of the then Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. It is believed that it was his personal directive that decided the issue in favour of retention of a horsed cavalry regiment in the army. Accordingly, in May 1953, Army Headquarters decided to amalgamate all the existing mounted units listed above and to raise in their stead a single horsed cavalry unit titled the **NEW HORSED CAVALRY REGIMENT**. A conference of the Commandants of Jodhpur / Kachhawa Horse, Gwalior Lancers and Mysore Lancers was held at Army HQ on 16-17 June 1953 to work out the modalities of the amalgamation.

The conference agreed that a composite Horsed Cavalry Regiment be raised and established at Gwalior commencing 1 August 1953.

Officers for the New Horsed Cavalry Regiment were posted as ordered by the MS Branch at Army HQ. As regards the JCOs, ORs, NCsE and Recruits, each major unit provided one complete squadron and the remaining personnel as agreed by unit commanders.

The conference made it absolutely clear that only personnel of a high standard, on regular engagement and possessing the stipulated qualifications were to be selected. Horses, stores, vehicles, funds and property were also to be provided as decided in the conference.

Subsequently, however, Army HQ altered both the place and the date of raising of the New Horsed Cavalry Regiment, to be at Jaipur and from 1 October 1953, respectively. Other decisions remained unaltered. The unit was raised at the Haldighati Lines of the old Kachhawa Horse, a location it has occupied ever since.

The three Cavalry Training Troops, which formed a part of the three major regiments of horsed cavalry, were also disbanded and instead one Cavalry Training Troop was included to be part of the RVFC² Centre and School, Meerut. The instructors for this Troop were to be provided by the New Horsed Cavalry Regiment on ERE.

The actual assembly of all personnel and animals commenced on 20 October 1953 and was completed on 18 November 1953, when the last batch arrived to join the regiment. The Commandant appointed by Army HQ, Lieutenant-Colonel Phulel Singh ex J&K Body Guard³, actually assumed duties as such on 19 November 1953, from which date the regiment commenced functioning as a full-fledged Horsed Cavalry Regiment, the only one of its kind in the Indian Army today.

¹ For a number of years it was believed that the Patiala Rajendra Lancers had formed a part of Jodhpur/Kachhawa Horse. It is now known that this reference was mistakenly inserted for Bharatpur Brijendra Lancers. The Jodhpur Durga Horse and Jaipur Rajendra Hazari Guards also form a part of the regimental lineage, having been absorbed into the Kachhawa Horse in January 1951, prior to its amalgamation as Jodhpur/Kachhawa Horse in April.

² Remount, Veterinary and Farms Corps. In August 1947 the Military Farms Department (MFD) amalgamated with the Indian Remount and Veterinary Corps (IRVC) to form the RVFC. They were again separated in May 1960 to form the current MFD and RVC.

³ Lt Col Phulel Singh's son, Colonel K V S Jamwal, who later also commanded the Regiment, told us that his father had brought with him three other J&K Body Guard officers, and the regimental cobbler.

Thus, the remnants of the grand old State regiments of horsed cavalry were merged into one pool to form the 'New Horsed Cavalry Regiment'. In January 1954 the regiment discarded its rather uninspired and somewhat cumbersome title to become 61st Cavalry. The Sanskrit motto adopted by the unit '*Ashwa Shakti Yashobal*' translates as 'Horse Power is Supreme Power'.

The new 61st Cavalry regimental flag was first raised by Lieutenant-Colonel Dhonkal Singh at the Regimental Quarter Guard in front of the assembled ranks of the regiment at 1145 hours on 18 April 1956.

The regiment was composed of three Sabre Squadrons with a full complement of an MMG and Signal Troop in the HQ Squadron. Apart from the Sabre Squadrons the regiment also had the unique privilege of possessing the only mounted military band in the Indian Army. The **GWALIOR MOUNTED BAND** formed an integral part of the regiment from 9 May 1954 until January 1975, when it was finally disbanded. The band had an authorised strength of one JCO, 33 musician sowars and 34 horses. Even in the old days of horsed cavalry this was a unique institution and the band of the 13th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers was the only one of three such bands of the Indian cavalry to survive the Great War. This band also disappeared from the scene with the mechanisation of the 13th Lancers in 1938.

Over the years reductions have left the regiment with less than 50% of its original composition. The first reductions were effected in September 1970 and March 1974. Subsequently, January 1975 brought about the reduction of the MMG and Signal Troop, one Sabre Squadron and the Mounted Band, amounting to 4 officers, 6 JCOs, 211 ORs, 239 horses and 83 NCs. 1977 saw a final reduction of 19 personnel and 19 horses from the strength. The regiment now has two Sabre Squadrons and one HQ Squadron; out of which the RHQ, HQ Squadron and one Sabre Squadron are at Jaipur and one Sabre Squadron is permanently located at Delhi for ceremonial duties.

The regiment is presently authorized 222 horses (additional horses were brought in for the parade to make the total of 239). The Remount and Veterinary Directorate, Army HQ, provides the required horses from the Remount Training School and Depots of the RVC located at Saharanpur and Hempur. The horses are bred by the RVC at stud farms located at Babugarh and Hissar. The RVC also provides the regiment with a Veterinary officer of the rank of Captain.

The class composition of the regiment is 33% each of Rajputs from Rajasthan, UP and MP, Marathas and Kaimkhanis; the latter including the Mehrat, Kathat and Cheetah sub-classes recruited from the Nagaur (Marwar) and Shekhawati areas of Rajasthan.

The regiment has a designated operational role. During the 1965 Indo-Pak conflict the regiment was deployed on the border in the Ganga Nagar sector as part of 67 Infantry Brigade. As the war clouds again gathered over the subcontinent in the autumn of 1971, the regiment moved to Delhi in September, where it was employed on guard duties at Rashtrapati Bhawan and at the Red Fort before returning to Jaipur in April 1972.

In January 1989, it was decided that the regiment would provide selected drafts for dismounted operational service with an infantry battalion in Op Pawan in Sri Lanka. Training of selected personnel commenced on 2 January 1989, 19 Bn The Madras Regiment having provided an instructor. On 23 July 1989 a draft of 1 JCO and 10 ORs led by Major YK Singh was inducted for operations in Sri Lanka. They were attached to 4 Bn The Jat Regiment and underwent a month's acclimatisation at the Div Battle School. After successfully completing their training with 4 Jat the contingent was inducted into Sri Lanka on attachment with 11 Bn The Rajputana Rifles. The draft did not have to wait long for its baptism of fire. It saw its first action on 27 August 1989 on its way to Nedunkeni and

Oddusudan in the Vani jungles of the Tanduan Reserve Forest. The firefight lasted for 45 minutes. The regiment suffered no casualties. The draft returned to Delhi on 3rd November 1989, being replaced by another draft of 1 JCO and 10 ORs led by Major RS Kalha. In April 1990 the regiment was deployed on Op Rakshak. It was de-inducted and returned to its peace station in August.

The regiment also has an external ceremonial role. One Troop of the regiment, consisting of Major PZ Kothavala, Jemadar Prabhu Singh and 32 ORs, participated with distinction in the Edinburgh Tattoo in 1962. A contingent of 1 JCO (Naib-Risaldar Madhukar Jare) and 14 ORs formed the mounted escort of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman in the parade held at Dhaka on 12 March 1972 to mark the departure of Indian troops from Bangladesh after the liberation of that country in December 1971.

In August 2002 the regiment again participated in the Edinburgh Tattoo after a gap of 40 years. The contingent consisted of Major SS Rathore, Major Shailendra Singh, Risaldar Mazid Khan, Daffadars Taj Mohd and Shaitan Singh, RDM RA Barbole and Sowar Ram Singh.

Regimental Day

HAIFA 1918

In 61st Cavalry, 23 September is annually observed as 'Haifa Day' in commemoration of the capture of that city following a dashing cavalry action by the 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade during the First World War. This Brigade, consisting of three famous State Forces cavalry regiments, the Hyderabad I. S. Lancers, Mysore I. S. Lancers and the Jodhpur I. S. Lancers, formed a part of the 5th Cavalry Division of the reconstituted Desert Mounted Corps. Components of the Alwar and Kashmir Imperial Service Lancers were attached to the Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers, respectively. In the autumn of 1918, the Brigade was a part of the Allied forces sweeping northwards through Palestine under Allenby, rolling up the remnants of the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies and their German allies in the last great cavalry campaign in history. On 23 September 1918 the Brigade, less the Hyderabad Lancers, was ordered to advance and capture Haifa.

Lying due north of Jerusalem on the southern shore of the Bay of Acre on the Mediterranean coast, the road and railway leading into the town is dominated by the steep wooded slopes of Mount Carmel to the south and bounded by the swift and swampy *Nahr el Muqatta* or River Kishon to the north. The approach into the town therefore had to be made through the narrow defile between mountain and river, and was well covered by Turkish machine gun emplacements and artillery.

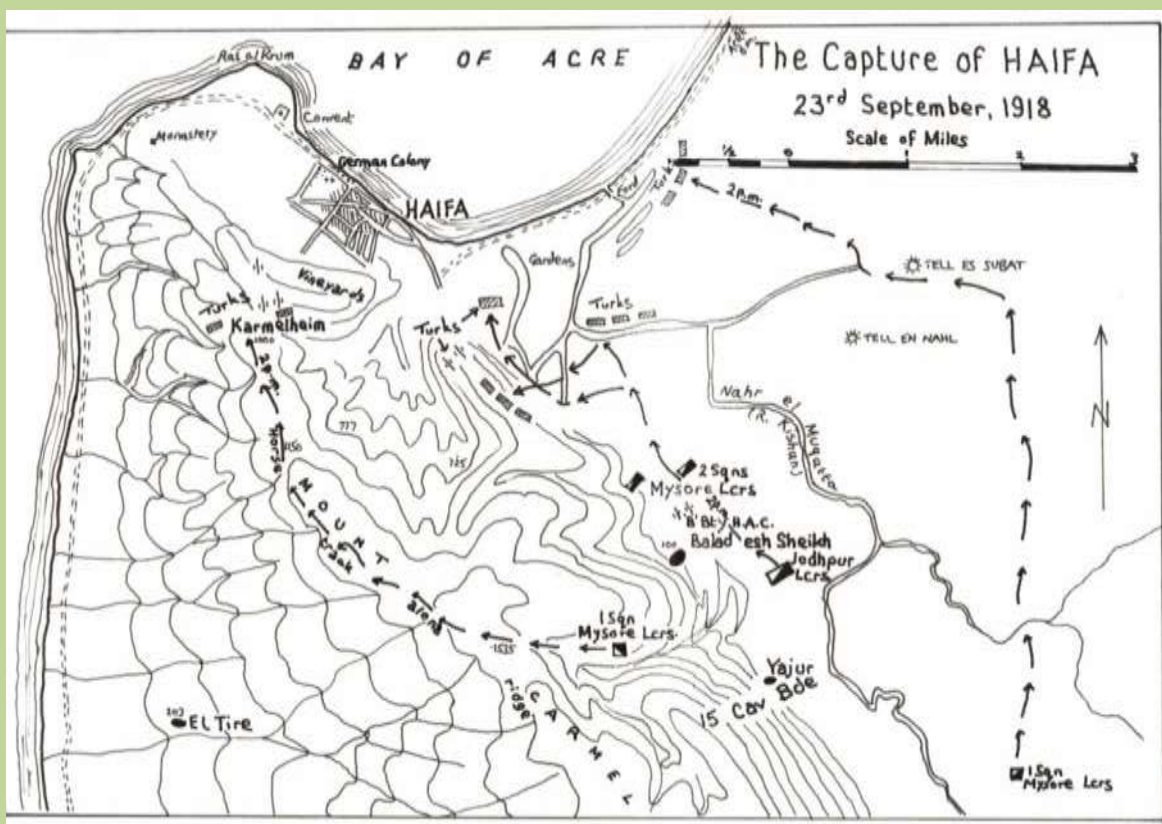
To avoid this dangerous defile, it was decided to cross the Kishon and attack the town from the north-east. A squadron of the Mysore Lancers was despatched up the road to a point 4 ½ miles east of Haifa for this purpose while another squadron, with two machine guns, was ordered to climb up Mount Carmel to deal with the enemy guns located along its crest. A number of patrols were also sent out to reconnoitre the ground and bring back information regarding the enemy dispositions. 1029 Daffadar Jor Singh of the Jodhpur Lancers twice conducted patrols with great coolness under heavy fire from guns, machine guns and rifles, each time bringing back reliable information. He accurately spotted gun flashes and reconnoitred the Wadi. For this and subsequent gallant conduct on that day he was admitted to the Indian Order of Merit.

At 2 p.m. the Jodhpur Lancers trotted forward in column of squadrons in line of troop column. 'B' Battery, Honourable Artillery Company (H.A.C.) and the remaining two squadrons of the Mysore

Lancers covered their advance. As the Jodhpurs rode past the railway line, the Turkish fire increased. The regiment never faltered but increased its pace, riding straight for the Kishon. A previous reconnaissance of the proposed crossing point had been prevented by heavy enemy fire. Now, approaching the river, it was found that the bank leading down to the water was very steep; even worse, as the two ground scouts in front forced their horses down the steep embankment to the water's edge they were swallowed up in quicksand. It was obvious that no crossing was possible.

By now the regiment was out in the open with no cover, and was being raked by fire from front and flank, and horses were falling fast. Lieutenant-Colonel HN Holden, the Senior Special Service officer, now ordered the Commandant, Major Thakur Dalpat Singh, MC, to swing the regiment to the left and charge the machine guns on the lower slopes of Mount Carmel. As the squadrons reversed direction, the indomitable Dalpat Singh was hit in the spine by a machine gun bullet. Even though severely wounded the Shekhawat continued to exhort his men to press forward for the greater glory of their race. It was a critical moment, but the leading squadron under Captain Aman Singh, *Bahadur*, swiftly rallied and turned, and galloped straight at the enemy. Getting among the machine guns, they speared the detachments capturing 2 machine guns, 2 camel guns and killing over 30 of the enemy. The mouth of the narrow defile, through which ran the road to Haifa, was now open.

Without hesitation, the second squadron led by Captain Thakur Anop Singh, *Bahadur*, IOM, now galloped up the road, wheeled half right and charged two machine guns on a mount east of the road, capturing both. Passions inflamed at the loss of their gallant commander, the remaining two squadrons now dipped their lances to the 'Charge' and thundered down the road straight into the town. So unexpected and rapid was the charge that the enemy did not have enough time to react to it, several Turks being ridden down in the streets.



Risaldar Kesri Singh, I.D.S.M., Alwar Imperial Service Lancers, attached Jodhpur Lancers, was admitted to the Indian Order of Merit for conspicuous gallantry on this occasion. After forcing the entrance to the town, in which his troop took part, he was sent to capture guns firing from a higher position. After putting two field guns out of action he pursued large numbers of the enemy. Although

only in command of a troop he captured 12 Turkish officers and 193 other ranks besides the Turkish Military Headquarters, on which he left a guard.

Meanwhile, the two Mysore squadrons that had provided covering support mounted as soon as the Jodhpurs masked their fire and followed them into Haifa.

Almost at the same instant as the main attack, the left detached squadron of Mysore Lancers charged the enemy guns on the heights of Mount Carmel. During the difficult climb up the steep slopes there had been a number of casualties and after the supporting machine gun sections had been deployed, it was found that only about 15 men were left for the actual attack. Nevertheless, the resolute charge of this small band was enough for the enemy gunners, who broke and ran.

To the north-east, the right squadron of Mysore that had been held up by enemy fire, also mounted and advanced as soon as the Jodhpur attack was seen. A strong body of Turks near the mouth of the *Nahr el Muqatta* was charged and dispersed. Jemadar Mir Turab Ali, Mysore Lancers, attached 15th Cavalry Brigade Machine Gun Squadron, also gained the Indian Order of Merit for gallantry and initiative on this occasion. He brought his machine gun sub-section across the open under heavy fire, and galloped up stony ground to a position that the enemy was just evacuating. He, himself, was on ahead with his range-taker and killed a Turkish officer with his sword on the way to the position.

In all, a total of 25 officers, 664 other ranks, 16 guns and 10 machine guns were captured at Haifa. Indian casualties were 3 killed and 34 wounded, though the loss in horses was fairly heavy – 60 killed and 83 wounded. This loss was partially made up from some unexpectedly good horses captured.

Of this battle, the official history of the war in Egypt and Palestine, noted:

“No more remarkable cavalry action of its scale was fought in the whole course of the campaign. The position was naturally formidable, with a precipitous hill and an impassable river on either side of a defile; it was held by a well-armed force about a thousand strong which had not yet been engaged, though doubtless in some degree affected by news of the general rout; it was taken in a few hours by a cavalry brigade of two weak regiments and a single 13-pdr. battery. Undoubtedly only the boldness and dash of the cavalry, combined with the skilful flanking movements, made success possible, and there is little likelihood that a dismounted attack by a force of this strength would have had equal fortune. The check on the river bank, which might well have been disastrous, was nullified by the speed and good order in which the leading squadron of the Jodhpur Lancers changed direction and charged the enemy on the slopes of Carmel. Machine-gun bullets over and over again failed to stop the galloping horses, even though many of these succumbed afterwards to their injuries.”

The capture of the fortified town of Haifa was perhaps the most extraordinary feat of cavalry in the Great War. Probably no regiment other than the “Jo Hukum’s” would have been crazy enough to try it. Sadly, the gallant Dalpat Singh, mortally wounded in the charge, did not live to savour the moment of glory. He died the following day and was laid to rest in the shade of an olive grove on Mount Carmel.

Thakur Dalpat Singh was the son of the renowned polo player Colonel Hari Singh Shekhawat, popularly known as ‘Harji’. Harji was a favourite of Sir Pertap Singh and served with the Jodhpur Lancers in the Black Mountain expedition and the Boxer Rebellion. Thakur Dalpat Singh was born in 1892 in Jodhpur. He was educated at Eastbourne College in England along with Sir Pertap’s son Kunwar Narpal Singh. Commissioned on 18 October 1913, he was first appointed to the regiment on 25 October 1914. He initially served as the Scout Officer in France before being appointed Squadron Commander.

The Jodhpur Sardar Risala under command of His Highness Maharaja Sir Pratap Singh arrived at Marseilles on 29 August 1914. After serving in France for 3 ½ years the regiment was sent to Egypt in May 1918 where it formed a part of 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade. In July, along with the rest of 15 Brigade, it was sent to Palestine as part of the Desert Mounted Corps.

On 14 July 1918, during the action at El Hinu in the Jordan Valley, accompanied only by his trumpeter, No. 1189 Trumpet-Major Sher Singh, Dalpat Singh galloped a post containing an entrenched machine gun, killing and scattering the crew and capturing the gun. He also captured the commandant of the 11th Turkish Regt. and another officer during the action. Captain Thakur Dalpat Singh was awarded the Military Cross for his conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty on this occasion, while Sher Singh was similarly admitted to the Indian Order of Merit.

Dalpat Singh was only 26 years old when he fell in battle at the head of his regiment. The C.O. Colonel Harvey said of him "He had complete power over his men, who would follow and obey him anywhere and in anything, and also he was completely in with and saw eye to eye with us. The combinations of these two qualities is very rare and I have never seen it so developed, in any other Indian, as it was in Dalpat. His death is a loss not only to Sir Pratap who adored him, and to all the Jodhpurs, but to India, and the whole of the British Empire."

Following the fall of Haifa, General Allenby sent the following telegram to Sir Pratap at Alexandria: "Congratulate you on the brilliant exploit of your regiment, the Jodhpur Lancers, who on the 23 September took town of Haifa at a gallop killing many Turks with the lance in the streets of the town and capturing seven hundred prisoners. Their gallant commanding officer Dalpat Singh, fell gloriously at the head of his regiment." Sir Pratap Singh responded in a cabled reply "Dalpat Singh's great day has arrived".

Ten days later General Allenby inspected the regiment and said "I wish to record how much I appreciate the splendid work of the Jodhpur Lancers during the summer and during the advance on Aleppo. I consider their record both in the Jordan valley and in the capture of Haifa as second to none. This I believe is the first time in history that a fortified town has ever been captured by cavalry at the gallop. I was very sorry to hear of the valuable lives that you have lost but this must be expected in war."

In a letter to his nephew H.H. Maharaja Sumer Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, Sir Pratap wrote: "I am glad to inform you that the Jodhpur Lancers played their part remarkably well in the Palestine campaign when the Turkish line was first broken. I was with my cavalry for three days and nights on our horses, but in the subsequent charge which has brightened the pages of our history I am sorry to say that fever prevented me from taking part in it. The dashing charge of our cavalry was splendid and worthy of the Rathores. Thakur Hari Singh's son, Major Thakur Dalpat Singh was in the thickest fight and fell gallantly at the head of his cavalry in this memorable charge. To me it was highly gratifying and no less elating."

For this action, the units involved were awarded the Battle Honour "Megiddo" by the Government of India.

On **Haifa Day** 1977 the regiment was presented with its Guidon by Shri BD Jatti, Acting President of India. To mark the occasion, the first ever regimental re-union was held, which was attended by retired personnel from all the former States Forces cavalry regiments that were amalgamated to form 61st Cavalry. Captain Ranbanka Beer Singh, who had fought at the battle of Haifa, was the senior cavalryman present.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HAIFA BATTLE - MEMORIES OF ANOTHER WAR

“I am very happy here, and am doing my master’s work continually with heart and soul just as my ancestors have always done. We hope that our Government will be victorious, and for this we are praying. Besides, it is the special duty of a Kshatriya to give his life for his King on the battlefield, just as his forefathers did.”⁴

Most historians bemoan the fact that there are almost no accounts written by Indian soldiers of their experience in battle, particularly in the period before independence. The few brief reminiscences that exist are therefore rendered all the more unique and valuable by virtue of their rarity. The following



account of the Jodhpur Sardar Risala in the Great War was originally written in Hindi by Captain Ranbanka Beer Singhji (pictured left) and has been passed down through the generations to his great-nephew, Major Sukhdev Singh Rathore, 61st Cavalry.

Captain Ranbanka Beer Singhji belonged to Gunawati near Makrana in the former Jodhpur State. His father, Jemadar Hanuman Singhji, had also served in the Jodhpur Lancers and was present with the regiment in China. A younger brother, Captain Dr Ram Singhji, was a medical officer with the Jodhpur State Forces, while the youngest, Colonel Chhotu Singhji, served with the 8th Cavalry. Captain Beer Singh first entered service on 1 September 1914, being appointed Jemadar on 1 June 1917 (qualified signaller and musketry course). He was first commissioned as a Lieutenant on 16 December 1925 and seconded as Brigade Signals Officer from that date.

“A major attack that we participated in was at Saint Quentin in France. Here Brigadier General Gage⁵ remarked that the *Jawans* of the Jodhpur Lancers while attacking through a hail of shells and bullets, behaved as calmly as if they were on a parade ground instead of the battlefield.”⁶

The second attack took place in Palestine near the Dead Sea in the Jordan Valley against the Turks in which a hand-to-hand fight took place. In this, Major-General Macenroe⁷ with his own hands took the lances smeared with the enemy’s blood from the hands of our *Jawans* and inspected them. Here, Jemadar Assu Singh and Jemadar Khangar Singh, along with their respective troops, embraced death upon the field of battle. Upon this Major-General Macenroe remarked that the *Jawans* of the Jodhpur Lancers were so full of the spirit of valour that they fell upon the enemy in the same manner as a hungry lion falls upon his prey.⁸

⁴ Letter written in Hindi from France on 14 September 1917 by Balwant Singh (Rajput) of the Jodhpur Lancers to Doti Singh, Jaipur State, Rajputana. David Omissi. “*Indian Voices of the Great War – Soldiers’ Letters 1914-1918*”. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd. 1999. P.319

⁵ Lt Col MF Gage, GSO 1, British 3rd Cavalry Division in 1914.

⁶ The attack referred to was the Allied push at Cambrai in 1917. Cambrai saw tanks being used in action for the first time and was the last battle for the Indian cavalry in France before they were withdrawn to Palestine in March 1918. The Indians were billeted in the area between St. Quentin and Peronne in the summer of 1917, before the advance to the Hindenburg line in November of that year.

⁷ Major-General H.J. MacAndrew, CB, DSO, GOC 5th Cavalry Division

⁸ This description refers to the splendid action of the Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade at the El Hinu ford in the Jordan Valley on 14 July 1918. The official history states – “The dash displayed by his Indian cavalry in this encounter was indeed reassuring to the Commander-in-Chief. Particularly gratifying was the offensive spirit of the junior Indian officers, typically exhibited by Risaldar Shaitan Singh, Jodhpore Lancers, who outpaced his troop and galloped alone into a troop of the enemy, shooting two with his revolver and unhorsing three with a loaded stick before his men came up with him.” Jemadars Assu Singh and Khang Singh with their respective troops had successfully charged and taken two heavily defended enemy positions when, seeing a force of the enemy trying to escape,

World famous victory of well fortified Haifa! In this campaign, after breaking the entrenched line of the enemy near Jaffa, our mounted troops advanced. At this time I have seen *Maharaja Dhiraj* Sir Pertap Singhji offering wounded enemy soldiers water to drink from his own water kettle. Then, when and why he was sent with his staff to Cairo, I can not rightly say. But perhaps shrapnel from an enemy shell wounded him. Be as it may, he was not present with the regiment during the Haifa attack. Hence the telegram informing him of the world-famous Haifa victory was sent to him at Cairo.⁹

The attack on Haifa took place at high noon. [The town's] situation was such that on one side was the Carmel Mountain upon which the enemy artillery was located and on the other side lay the sea. A single road running along the side of Mount Carmel led into Haifa. Along the road and up to the sea ran a canal full of water that the horses could not cross. Approximately 20 machine-guns were sited along the approaches to the town. Ships from the sea also fired upon us with rifles and machine guns and bullets rained down upon us from the houses as well. I moved up along the left side of the road with the Vickers gun to give fire support. Senior Special Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Holden¹⁰ gave the order to charge on Haifa. The horses could not cross the canal and Lieutenant-Colonel Thakur Dalpat Singh Ji and his orderly Mool Singh here fell to machine gun fire at the head of the Jodhpur Lancers. Lieutenant-Colonel Holden ordered us to 'retire', so we retired. I can not say if it was an *Aakash vani*¹¹ or the inner voice of the warrior spirit; "*Arre bhagar kathey javo? Kalo mundho ho jyahi!*" ("Where do you flee to? Thy faces shall ever be blackened"). Upon hearing this, the brave jawans reined in their mounts and turning the horses' heads towards the road to Haifa, charged into the city. The orders to attack, to retire, followed by the charge and entry into Haifa, all happened so swiftly that I was not even able to bring my machine-guns into action. Seeing our comrades gallop into Haifa we machine gunners drew our revolvers and swords, and mounted, joined up with them. Then, amidst a hail of bullets, we sliced through Haifa drawing rein only when we reached the other side. There, in an open *maidan* (field) we planted the Jodhpur Lancers' saffron standard emblazoned with the *cheel* (eagle) of Marwar. After a while, what do we see, but large numbers of enemy prisoners were being brought and concentrated at that ground. The *maidan* was soon packed with 1200 prisoners.

The following day we performed the last rites of Lieutenant-Colonel Thakur Dalpat Singh Ji and his orderly. I was one of the four men who acted as pall-bearers for Dalpat Singh Ji's bier. We took them to Mount Carmel where they were buried in the earth.

The attack on Aleppo. Not finding a proper field of fire on top of the mountain, we fixed our machine guns on the slope and opened fire. Brigadier-General Harbord¹² was watching. I heard him telling the commander of our Brigade machine guns, Captain Falconer, that till such as time as they do not see the enemy, these troops appear very different, but as the enemy appears before them the spirit of valour consumes them.¹³

they charged them without hesitation and tried to cut them off. This force turned out to be about two Turkish squadrons and some Germans and the whole of Jemadar Assu Singh's troop were killed fighting to the last except two men who escaped – both wounded. Both the Jemadars were killed fighting. They accounted for a number of the enemy and were both posthumously admitted to the Indian Order of Merit for their gallant conduct in this action in which the regiment earned a large number of decorations.

⁹ The indomitable Lieutenant-General Sir Pertap Singh, then 72 years old, had accompanied the regiment in the field but, much to his disgust, was suffering from a bad bout of fever, and was convalescing in a hospital in Alexandria at the time. His medals were sold at auction in London in November 2003.

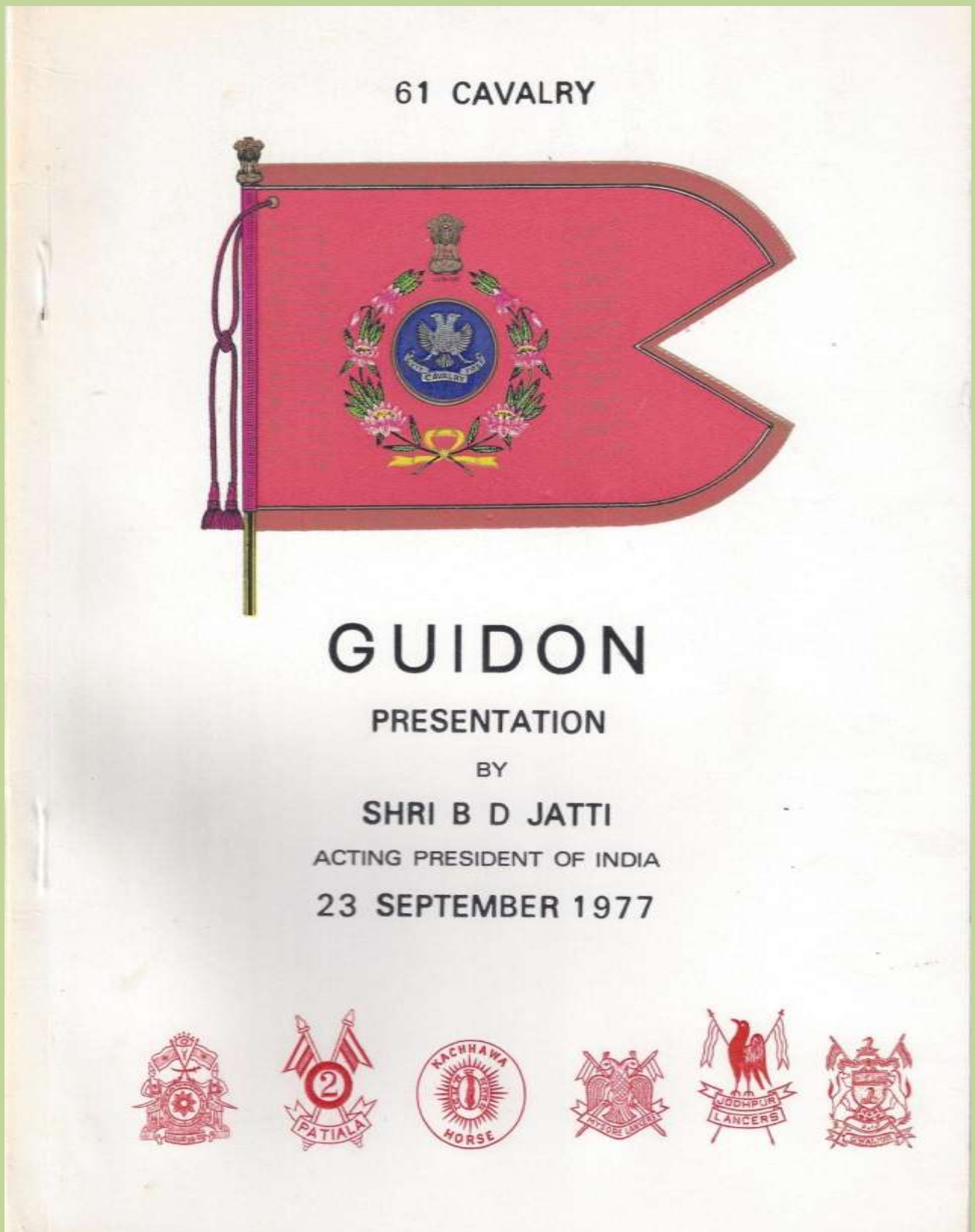
¹⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel Hyla N. Holden, 5th Cavalry, was with the Jodhpurs as SSO in all its engagements in France and Palestine. He was killed exactly one month later while leading the regiment at Haritan, during the battle for Aleppo on 23 Oct 1918.

¹¹ Astral voice; lit. 'voice from the sky'

¹² Brigadier-General CR Harbord, DSO, Commander 15 (I.S.) Cavalry Brigade

¹³ During the advance to Aleppo on 26 October 1918, the Mysore Lancers were ordered to attack the enemy supported by two squadrons of the Jodhpur Lancers. The 15th Machine-Gun Squadron provided fire-support for the attack, which took place overlooking a place

Then ended the war”



called Haritan, 8 miles north-west of Aleppo. This machine-gun squadron was on a special establishment. All the other MG squadrons consisted of British personnel but this was made up of Imperial Service personnel from the three States represented in the brigade. The Mysore and Hyderabad Lancers had always had machine-gun subsections, and a third had also been formed from the Jodhpur Lancers by permission of the C-in-C in India at General Sir Edmund Allenby's request. The Jodhpur subsection, which did good work on this occasion, had not previously been in action.



Colonel J S Virk, VSM, and his Trumpeter lead the parade.



Winter Ceremonial



Summer Ceremonial



**Barrack Dress
(Commandant's Orderly)**



Collar badge, shoulder chains and title



pouch belt plate



March Past

In 1931 the Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade war memorial was formally inaugurated opposite the house of the C-in-C in India (now the Nehru Memorial), on South Avenue in New Delhi. The memorial consists of three sowars with lances, representing the three regiments, the Hyderabad, Mysore and Jodhpur Lancers that made up the original brigade. This memorial has since been designated as the Indian Cavalry memorial and an impressive ceremony of remembrance is annually held here on the first day of May, the designated 'Armoured Corps Day' as well as on the 'Cavalry weekend', which is observed every year on the first weekend in November. The latter ceremony is organised under the auspices of the Cavalry Officers Association.



TEEN MURTI MEMORIAL

Each of the three sides has a plaque headed respectively HYDERABAD LANCERS, MYSORE LANCERS, JODHPUR LANCERS with the inscription **THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE – TEEN MURTI.**

Two sides of the base have an inscription in English, the third in Urdu.



IN MEMORY OF THE OFFICERS, VICEROY'S COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 15TH IMPERIAL SERVICE CAVALRY BRIGADE COMPOSED OF CAVALRY REGIMENTS FROM THE INDIAN STATES OF HYDERABAD, MYSORE AND JODHPUR AND WITH DETACHMENTS FROM BHAVNAGAR, KASHMIR AND KATHIAWAR WHO

GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR OF 1914 – 19 IN SINAI, PALESTINE AND SYRIA. SUEZ CANAL, GAZA, JERUSALEM, JORDAN VALLEY, HAIFA, DAMASCUS, ALEPPO

The origins of the main badge of the Regiment, the double headed bird, lie very much in the myths and history of the Gandabherunda of Mysore. The Gandabherunda is a mythological double-headed eagle of exceedingly great prowess and is a part of ancient South Indian folklore – in Tamilnadu it is called Annapakshi. In the *Purānas*, Vishnu is said to have assumed this form to vanquish Sarabha (which in turn was the form assumed by Śiva to vanquish the Narasimha form of Vishnu, when all the Gods were terrorized by it). The bird is said to be mentioned in the *Rig-Veda* as the golden winged bird (suparna). A representation of this bird also occurs in the Mohenjjo-daro finds. The bird was the emblem of several royal dynasties in South India, especially in Karnataka from about the eleventh century A.D. Ancient pillars with the Gandabherunda motif are to be found in the south. The symbol is also noted amongst the coins of King Achuthadevaraya (1530-1542), one of the Vijayanagar kings. Among the sculptural representations of Gandabherunda, the most important is the one at Balligamve in Shikarpur taluk, Karnataka. The Bherundeśvara pillar was carved and erected in 1047 A.D. by Chāvunda-rāya, the governor of Banavase under the Western Chālukyan emperor. Another representation can be found in the ceiling of the Virabhadra temple at Keladi (Ikkeri), also in Karnataka.

In modern times, the Gandabherunda forms a part of the State emblem of Karnataka, as well as the badge of the 61st Cavalry of the Indian Army. Both derive the symbolism from the crest of the former princely state of Mysore.

The 61st Cavalry badge, approved by the President in February 1955, was initially struck by Bartons of Bangalore. The beret badge worn by officers is smaller and in silver, size 2 cms while JCO / ORs wear a bigger white-metal version, size 3.5 cms. No badges are worn on the Pagree. However, officers wear the large size 3.5 cms badge on the pith hat and peaked cap. **Shoulder titles** consist of the brass letters- **61 C**. Officers wear a shoulder title of width/height 2 cms/1.3 cms; JCO / OR width/height 4 cms/1.3 cms; for ceremonial dress with shoulder chains the size is width 4.5 cms height 2 cms. **Cloth Titles** are worn only by officers and JCOs; they are in black blazer cloth with golden Ashokas and stars. However, all ranks wear on certain forms of dress, in addition to the brass shoulder title, an embroidered sleeve title with the words “Horsed Cavalry” in gold zari on a red cloth. The **Pouch Belt** worn by the officers is of black patent leather with the Battle Honours in silver on it. The pouch bears the regimental badge of size 3.5 cms. **Zari Pouch belt** is worn by the officers with ceremonial dress and White and Blue Patrol. They also wear a **sabretache** when in full ceremonial uniform – scarlet edged with gold zari, with the regimental badge in gold zari in the centre. The JCOs wear a plain black patent leather pouch belt, but a Zari pouch belt on ceremonial dress. The men wear white patent leather pouch belts. The **Waist Belt** is either black or white patent leather with either a brass beltplate (on black belt) or white metal beltplate (on white belt) bearing the Ganda Bherunda.

The regiment has numerous battle honours awarded by the respective Durbars of the former States Forces units. However, the official battle honours authorised by the Government of India are: *China 1900, Cambrai 1917, North West Frontier India 1917, France and Flanders 1914-18, Suez Canal, Egypt 1915-17, Gaza, Megiddo, Sharon, Damascus, Palestine 1917-18, Afghanistan 1919.*

A number of the badges and devices of the former Indian States Forces, which went into the creation of 61st Cavalry, owe their creation to a British form of heraldic art. On 28th April, 1876, Queen Victoria assumed the title of "Empress of India". To commemorate this event the then Viceroy, Lord Lytton, summoned an Imperial Assemblage at Delhi on 1st January 1877. Banners were presented to the principal Ruling Chiefs entitled to a gun salute, whether they attended the Assemblage or not, each emblazoned with the armorial bearings of the ruling family. Many of these had been designed

specifically for this occasion and, whilst not under the supervision of the College of Arms in London, a record of them is held there. The influence of the European designer of these armorial bearings is apparent in the use of, for example, European knights' helmets, as well as in supporters such as the lion. These armorial bearings were later to have an influence on the design of Indian States Forces badges.

GWALIOR LANCERS. The badge illustrated here is believed to that of the combined Gwalior Lancers and is based on the badges of 1st and 2nd Gwalior Lancers. These two units amalgamated prior to their incorporation into 61st Cavalry, and their badges, which were remarkably similar, were based on the 1877 armorial bearings. Crossed lances and pennons behind a shield divided vertically, the top section having a circular wreath between two towers, the lower section a cobra. The original badges had, above, a helmet with ornaments crested by a cobra entwined, and below the figure '1' or '2'. The supporters are two white horses. The whole rests on a scroll. For the 1st Lancers badge the inscription is in Urdu script. For 2nd Lancers the inscription is in English and reads GWALIOR IMPERIAL SERVICE LANCERS. In this example the helmet crest has been replaced by a cobra and the figures '1' and '2' have been removed. Other badges are known for 1st Lancers which may date from the period when, as Indian States Forces, the regiment was known as 1st Gwalior Jayaji Lancers. One shows crossed lances and pennons with, at the point of intersection, the letter G surmounted by the figure 1. Cobra snake supporters with their tails resting on a scroll inscribed LANCERS complete the badge. The other consists of crossed lances with a coiled cobra between the pennons, the figure "1" at the point of intersection and a scroll with GWALIOR underneath. No similar badges are known for 2nd Lancers.



JODHPUR/KACHHAWA HORSE (formed prior to incorporation into 61st Cavalry of the Jodhpur Lancers, Jaipur Kachhawa Horse, Bikaner Dungar Lancers, Alwar Mangal Lancers and Udaipur Mewar Lancers).

JODHPUR LANCERS. The Baz, or kite, of Jodhpur formed the basis of its badges. The Baz is considered by Rathor Rajputs to be the reincarnation of the Goddess Durga and tradition has it that she appeared to one of the ruling Rathor chiefs in the form of a Baz. It is for this reason that the kites circling Jodhpur fort are regarded as sacred. As Imperial Service Lancers all ranks of the Sardar Rissala wore, on the upper right arm of the ceremonial white *kurta*, a magnificent badge some 2½ inches high



of the Baz resting on a scroll with the inscription MARWAR. The Baz also featured in a shoulder title (eagle with J and L on either side) and a cap badge – crossed lances and pennons with an eagle at the point of intersection standing on two scrolls reading JODHPUR LANCERS.

JAIPUR KACHHAWA HORSE. The badge of this unit, later remodelled and taken into use by the Rajasthan Polo Club, was an eight-pointed elongated star. Within a central oval, the heads of seven horses superimposed upon one another and around, in a broad band, the inscription in Hindi, *Sattam*



BIKANER DUNGAR LANCERS. No specific badge has been identified for this unit, though the Colours of the regiment were laid up at a parade held at Rambagh Palace, Jaipur, on 14th February 1951, and from these it may be deduced that the unit wore a badge based on the 1877 armorial bearings – a shield divided into seven stripes with three falcons, two standing on the top of the second stripe and one standing on the sixth. Above, a knight's helmet with floral ornaments, the whole topped by a crest of a tree, probably the Ber Tree, resting on a wreath. On either side tiger supporters and underneath a scroll with inscription. The unit wore a shoulder title, in two curved lines, DUNGAR LANCERS.



ALWAR MANGAL LANCERS. The badge believed to have been worn by the Mangal Lancers was based on the 1877 armorial bearings. Within a round shield an upright *katar* between four bezants (gold discs). Around the centre two borders, the inner of raised dots, the outer of a flowing scroll. Above crossed lances and pennons with a *mukhat* (crown) between the lances. Supporters: on the left as seen by the observer, though actually on the right of the shield and therefore in the dexter, a bullock; on the right as seen by the observer, though actually on the left of the shield and therefore in the sinister, a tiger. The whole resting on a scroll with an inscription in Hindi. The unit also wore a shoulder title, on three lines, MANGAL ALWAR LANCERS and another with the letters UL (Ulwar Lancers). The Colours of the regiment were laid up at a parade held at Rambagh Palace, Jaipur, on 14th February 1951.



UDAIPUR MEWAR LANCERS. The unit's badge consisted of crossed lances superimposed with a sun in splendour and a scroll below with MEWAR LANCERS. The unit also wore a shoulder title of a sun in splendour resting on a curved MEWAR LANCERS.



MYSORE LANCERS. The mythological double-headed bird of Mysore, the Gandabherunda, featured in all badges of the Mysore State Forces. The Mysore Lancers wore a badge of crossed lances and pennons with the Gandabherunda above a scroll with MYSORE LANCERS on it. As Imperial Service Lancers the Gandabherunda had the intertwined letters ISL superimposed upon it.



In March 1953 the regiment applied for permission to retain the existing badge, but with an additional motto incorporated on it. The motto *Satyamevodayam* (We uphold Truth alone) was approved, but it does not appear to have been used on any unit badges before amalgamation in the following year.

B SQUADRON, 2ND PATIALA LANCERS. The only badge traced to this unit is a shoulder title consisting of crossed lances with, on three lines, SECOND PATIALA LANCERS.



SAURASHTRA HORSED CAVALRY SQUADRON.

Nawanagar Shri Huzur Body Guard. No badges have been identified for this unit. The 1947 ISF Annual referred to a formation sign being created for Nawanagar State Forces depicting the mounted statue of Jam Shri Ravalji, the founder of the ruling house of Nawanagar. Although such a formation sign is known to exist – a silver grey statue against a scarlet background – it is not known if it was ever actually worn. The trumpets now used by 61st Cavalry do, however, bear the coat of arms of Nawanagar State.



CAPTAINS AND KINGS

The 61st Cavalry has the unique distinction of being the only wholly mounted cavalry regiment in the Indian Army, or indeed, anywhere in the world. (The President's Body Guard has a parachute role; the British Household Cavalry has an armoured role). It is therefore not surprising that its personnel have a tradition of excellence in equestrian sports. This tradition predates the formation of the regiment in 1953 and goes back several generations, to the days of its Imperial Service predecessors. The regiment's claim to equestrian glory is no idle boast, but is backed by an unmatched record of excellent performance in equestrian displays and on the polo field.

Not many people are aware that the sport of Polo was the Indian Army's gift to the world. It was an Indian Army subaltern who delivered the game from its remote mountain fastness of the north-eastern state of Manipur into the foothills of Assam, from where it spread to Calcutta and the rest of the globe!

Recognising the potential of the sport in promoting the qualities essential in the making of a good soldier, Army Headquarters has traditionally extended full official support to its development at all stages of military life.

Apart from the patronage of the Indian Army, another major factor in the development of the game was the advent of the Indian princes upon the polo field. Armed with their hereditary equestrian skills and with the enormous resources at their disposal, the Maharajas took the polo world by storm. Not surprisingly, some of the best players of the game had served in the ranks of the regimental predecessors of the 61st Cavalry.

Jodhpur, Jaipur, Alwar and Patiala fielded some of the finest polo teams the world has ever seen. Indeed, the Alwar team is credited by polo historians with changing the face of the game by the introduction of a system of intensive pace and eye-training into the sport.

Among the polo legends can be counted General Chanda Singh Dhillon, *Sardar Bahadur*, OBE, OBI. He started his military career in the 16th Bengal Cavalry in 1882 before being commissioned in the 2nd Patiala Lancers. An excellent horseman, he initially made his mark on the regimental polo team.

In 1891 His Highness Maharaja Rajinder Singh of Patiala introduced polo into his state for the first time. He was on the lookout for suitable talent for his team when Chanda Singh caught his eye and was inducted into the Patiala team. In a very short span, Patiala became a force to reckon with in Indian polo. They won the Beresford Cup at Simla for three years running in 1896-97-98 and created a sensation by defeating the formidable Jodhpur team at Ambala in 1895. In 1909 Colonel Chanda Singh went to Europe to play on the team of Comte Jean de Madre. The King of Spain was so impressed with his game that he specially requested him to come to Spain and play for his team. After the war he played in the Indian Polo Championship of 1920, 1921 and 1922. In these contests the Patiala team defeated Jodhpur twice but lost the third tournament. In 1924 Patiala won the Beresford Cup and the Viceroy's Staff Handicap Cup at Simla for the last time. After 1924 the Patiala polo team ceased to exist, and with it, the extraordinary polo-playing career of General Chanda Singh came to an end.

Another polo legend in his own right was Thakur Heerji Singh of the Jodhpur Lancers, whose son, Major Thakur Dalpat Singh, MC, died at the head of his regiment during the Haifa charge. General de Lisle of the Durham Light Infantry placed Heerji Singh as one of the best polo players he had ever seen. Coming from one of the world's best polo players of his time, and one who changed the face of polo as a tactical game, this was high praise indeed. Heerji Singh played No 3 and could combine a rigid defence with the most brilliant attack possible. Being an extraordinary horseman, no player could get the advantage of him and very few could get on equal terms. Added to this was his very powerful hitting and the inborn skill which seems to form part of the inheritance of the Rajputs of Rajputana, all of which combined to form a magnificent polo player.

In the same team, the redoubtable Sir Pratap Singh, Regent of Jodhpur, played No. 2, and though age had already begun to leave its mark, his perfect knowledge of the game and the unselfish nature of his play made up for comparative want of execution.

The Golden age of Jaipur polo was epitomised by the glamour and verve of one man - His Highness Maharaja Sawai Man Singh, ruler of Jaipur and Honorary Colonel of 61st Cavalry until his death in 1973. He captained the legendary Jaipur team that in 1933 won every tournament on the English circuit - the Hurlingham Open, the Coronation Cup, the Indian Empire Shield, the Roehampton Open and the Ranelagh Open. The Jaipur team went on to make polo history over the next two decades. While he himself held a 9-goal handicap, the other members of the team were also names to reckon with, in their own right.

Amongst the other Jodhpur stalwarts who went on to become polo legends in India, the names of Colonel Maharaj Prem Singh and Rao Raja Hanut Singh stand apart. Maharaj Prem Singh was commissioned into the Jodhpur Lancers in 1937. His polo career spanned a period of over 45 years, from 1937 till 1981. During this period, he played at almost all the centres in India and abroad, and was part of the team that won the World Cup at Deauville in 1956. He attained his highest handicap of + 7 in 1961. Besides being an outstanding player, Colonel Maharaj Prem Singh was also deeply infused with his family tradition of fostering the game. His dedicated and tireless efforts were largely instrumental in re-establishing polo at three major centres, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. For over 15 years he coached the National and Army teams. In 1961 he was awarded the Arjuna Award.

Rao Raja Hanut Singh also served with the Jodhpur Lancers and was present with the regiment at Haifa, and took part in the famous charge. A 9 goal player, he retained the handicap for 26 years! Hanut was awarded the Arjuna Award in 1964, and the Padma Bhushan in 1958, the only polo player so far to receive the nation's third highest civilian award.

After independence, as the lustre of the old princely states teams faded, the 61st Cavalry carried the torch of Indian polo for an entire generation, till increasing public awareness and interest infused new life into the game. Billy Sodhi was the torchbearer of this new generation of polo players and was the first army player to be on a winning side in the Indian Polo Association Championship. An alumnus of the Lawrence Military School, Sanawar, he led a host of his school-mates into the game, thereby giving rise to a new fraternity that was to dominate Indian polo through the 1960's and 1970's.

In 1961 the Indian Army team consisting of Billy Sodhi, VP Singh and Pradeep Mehra won the IPA for the first time. Ever since, the Indian Army, with the 61st Cavalry in the van, has ruled the roost. There has not been a polo tournament of standing in the country that the Regiment has not won. The Regiment has often provided a majority, if not all, of the players to represent the country in all international matches. Among other polo players of repute produced by the regiment have been Lieutenant-Colonel Thakur Kishen Singh, Lieutenant-Colonel Raj Kalhan, Colonel Pickles Sodhi, Colonel RS Brar, Colonel Kuldeep Garcha, Colonel Bhawani Singh, Colonel JS Virk and the late Major Musty Sekhon.

Apart from its achievements on the polo field, the Regiment has distinguished itself in numerous Equestrian events in the country and abroad. SDM Nanjaraj Urs participated in the International Horse Show held at Lahore in 1954 and snatched away the coveted prize from the Shah of Iran. In the National Horse Show 1974 and the next in 1977, Lieutenant-Colonel HS Sodhi, the Commandant, was adjudged the best rider of the show. Daffadar Khan Mohd Khan was awarded the coveted Arjuna Award for riding in 1973, the first such award given in this field. Major VP Singh in 1977 received the same award for Polo, a distinction conferred only upon very few sports celebrities such as Rao Raja Hanut Singh, Colonel Maharaj Prem Singh and Lieutenant-Colonel Thakur Kishan Singh.

In 1980, Lieutenant JS Ahluwalia and Daffadars Khan Mohd Khan and Hussain Khan of the regiment were three of the five riders of the Equestrian team selected to represent India at the Moscow Olympics. Lieutenant-Colonel HS Sodhi, the Commandant, accompanied them as coach-cum-manager. During the IX Asian Games held at Delhi in November 1982 Daffadar Raghubir Singh won two gold medals in the Three-day event, while Major RS Brar won a gold medal in tent pegging. Raghubir Singh was awarded the Arjuna Award in 1982 and the Padma Shri by the President in 1983. During the Asian Games held at Seoul in September 1986 the Cavalry team consisting of Lieutenant JS Ahluwalia and Daffadar Raghubir Singh won a Bronze medal. In 1998, Lieutenant Rajesh Pattu won the Bronze medal at the XIII Asian Games at Bangkok. In the same year Daffadar Mohd Younus represented India at the International Tent Pegging competition in Cape Town and obtained results 1st, 3rd and 3rd, in the three categories in which he participated.

OUTSTANDING SPORTSPERSONS - 2003

EQUESTRIAN: - OLYMPIC/ASIAN GAMES REPRESENTATION AND PERFORMANCE:

GAME	NAME	EVENT	PLACING
1980 Olympics-Moscow	Dfr Khan Mohd Khan	Three Day Event Team	--
	Lt JS Ahluwalia	- do -	--
1982 Asian Games -	Maj RS Brar	Tent Pegging Individual	- Gold Medal

Delhi

	Dfr Raghbir Singh	Three Day Event Individual	Gold Medal
	Dfr Raghbir Singh	Three Day Event Team	Gold Medal
1986 Asian Games - Seoul	Maj JS Ahluwalia	Dressage Team	Bronze Medal
	Dfr Raghbir Singh	Dressage Team	Bronze Medal
	Dfr Raghbir Singh	Three Day Event Team	Bronze Medal
1989 Asian Show Jumping - Tokyo	Maj JS Ahluwalia	Show Jumping Individual	Gold Medal
	Maj JS Ahluwalia	Show Jumping Team	Bronze Medal
	Capt S Dewan	Show Jumping Team	Bronze Medal
1998 Asian Games Bangkok	Capt R Pattu, SJRP	Three Day Event Team	Bronze Medal
2002 Asian Games Busan	Capt R Pattu, SJRP	Three Day Event Team	Bronze Medal
	Lt Col S Shivdas	Dressage	
	Maj S Dewan	Dressage & Show Jumping	
	Capt NS Sandhu	Show Jumping	

POLO:

CHAMPIONSHIP	NAME	PLACING
1995 FIP Polo World Cup Finals	Maj Bhawani Singh	
	Maj JS Virk (Capt)	Fifth
	Maj Ajay Ahlawat	
1997, 6 Nations Independence International Polo	Maj Bhawani Singh (Capt)	
	Maj JS Virk, VSM	Winners
	Capt Tarun Sirohi	
	Capt NS Sandhu	
1998 FIP World Cup Polo Play - offs : Australia	Capt Tarun Sirohi	

2000 FIP World Cup Lt Col JS Virk, VSM
Zonal Play – offs :
Jaipur

Maj MK Dewan
Maj Ajay Ahlawat
Capt NS Sandhu

Winners

2001 FIP World Cup
Polo Finals : Australia
Col Bhawani Singh (Coach & Manager)
Lt Col JS Virk, VSM
Maj MK Dewan
Maj Ajay Ahlawat
Capt NS Sandhu

COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT 1953 - 2003

Lieutenant-General MS Wadalia

November 1959 - November 1970

Field Marshal SHFJ Manekshaw, MC

January 1971 - January 1973

General GG Bewoor, PVSM

April 1974 - June 1975

General TN Raina, MVC

July 1975 - May 1978

General OP Malhotra, PVSM

July 1978 - May 1981

General KV Krishna Rao, PVSM

June 1981 - July 1983

General AS Vaidya, PVSM, MVC*, AVSM, ADC

August 1983 - Jan 1986

General K Sundarji, PVSM, AVSM, ADC

February 1986 - April 1988

General VN Sharma, PVSM, AVSM, ADC

May 1988 - June 1990

General SF Rodrigues, PVSM, AVSM, ADC

July 1990 - June 1993

General BC Joshi, PVSM, AVSM, ADC

July 1993 - November 1994

General S Roychowdhary, PVSM, AVSM, ADC

November 1994 - September 1997

General VP Malik, PVSM, AVSM, ADC

October 1997 - September 2000

General S Padmanabhan, PVSM, AVSM, ADC

October 2000 -

General N.C. Vij

HONORARY COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

Honorary Lieutenant-General His Highness Raj Rajindra Sri Maharajadhiraja Sawai Sir Man Singhji Bahadur, GCSI, GCIE, Maharaja of Jaipur

18 November 1953 – 23 June 1970

Field Marshal SHFJ Manekshaw, MC

16 January 1973 – 03 April 1976

COMMANDANT 1953 - 2003

Sr No	Rank & Name	Period of Command
1.	Lieutenant-Colonel Phulel Singh	19.11.53 – 08.02.56
2.	Lieutenant-Colonel Dhokal Singh	09.02.56 – 18.08.58
3.	Lieutenant-Colonel Bhopal Singh	29.08.58 – 27.12.61
4.	Lieutenant-Colonel Th Govind Singh	28.12.61 – 27.10.66
5.	Lieutenant-Colonel SK Pudumjee	28.10.66 – 18.06.69
6.	Lieutenant-Colonel Rajendra Singh	29.06.69 – 08.09.71
7.	Lieutenant-Colonel Surat Singh	09.09.71 – 08.03.74
8.	Lieutenant-Colonel Govind Singh, VrC	09.03.74 – 14.12.76
9.	Lieutenant-Colonel HS Sodhi, VSM	15.12.76 – 30.08.80
10.	Lieutenant-Colonel RKS Kalaan	31.08.80 – 25.02.83
11.	Lieutenant-Colonel VP Singh	26.02.83 – 21.10.86
12.	Colonel R S Sodhi	22.10.86 – 01.01.90
13.	Colonel R S Brar	02.10.90 – 02.01.92
14.	Colonel KVS Jamwal	02.04.92 – 16.04.94
15.	Colonel KS Garcha	16.06.94 – 16.07.96
16.	Colonel K Ram Singh	17.07.96 – 27.10.98
17.	Colonel Narender Singh	28.10.98 – 03.10.2000
18.	Colonel Bhawani Singh	04.10.2000 – 01.07.02
19.	Colonel JS Virk, VSM	02.07.02 – till date

RISALDAR MAJOR 1953 - 2003

Sr No	Rank & Name	Tenure
1.	Ris Maj H S Ghorpade	28.05.53 – 28.08.58
2.	Ris Maj Randhir Singh	29.08.58 – 29.08.63
3.	Ris Maj Kishan Singh	30.09.83 – 23.02.68
4.	Ris Maj / Hony Lt B R Sitole	24.02.68 – 30.05.70
5.	Ris Maj / Hony Capt Roop Singh	31.05.70 – 15.02.73
6.	Ris Maj / Hony Capt Ast Ali Khan	16.02.73 – 01.10.77
7.	Ris Maj/Hony Capt Fateh Mohd Khan, VSM	02.10.77 – 31.10.82
8.	Ris Maj / Hony Lt Kasam Khan	01.11.82 – 31.10.86
9.	Ris Maj / Hony Lt Laxman Singh	10.11.86 – 31.10.90
10.	Ris Maj / Hony Capt Umed Singh	01.11.91 – 31.10.94
11.	Ris Maj / Hony Lt Vijay Singh	01.11.94 – 31.10.98
12.	Ris Maj / Hony Lt Bakhtawar Singh	01.11.98 – 30.11.02
13.	Ris Maj / Hony Lt Majid Khan	01.12.02 – till date

HONOURS AND AWARDS 1953 - 2003

PADMA SHRI

Daffadar Raghbir Singh – 1983.

SARVOTTAM JEEVAN RAKSHA PADAK

Captain Rajesh Pattu – 2000.

ARJUNA AWARD

Rank & Name	Discipline	Year
Lieutenant-Colonel Th Kishen Singh	Polo	1963
Daffadar Khan Mohd Khan	Equestrian	1973
Brigadier VP Singh	Polo	1975
Colonel HS Sodhi. VSM	Equestrian	1976
Colonel RS Brar	Equestrian	1982
Daffadar Raghbir Singh	Equestrian	1982
Colonel RS Sodhi	Polo	1983
Major JS Ahluwalia	Equestrian	1987
Colonel KS Garcha	Polo	1987

VISHISHT SEVA MEDAL

Colonel HS Sodhi.
Risaldar Major and Honorary Captain Fateh Mohd Khan.
Colonel JS Virk.

COAS COMMENDATION

Major JS Ahluwalia
Lieutenant-Colonel Bhawani Singh
Major JS Virk, VSM
Major S Shivdas
Captain MS Bhinder
Lance-Daffadar AH Phadtare

ARMY COMMANDER'S COMMENDATION

Captain A Ahlawat
Captain NS Sandhu
Daffadar Sanjay Shinde
Lance-Daffadar AH Phadtare

Captain Rajesh Pattu, SJRP
Daffadar Younus Ali
Lance-Daffadar AS Jagtap

61ST CAVALRY – PASSING THE TORCH

Soldiering in the Indian Army has always been more than just a profession; for many, it is a way of life. The following nominal roll of sons who have followed in their fathers' footsteps in the regiment is living proof that the spirit of the old Indian Army still thrives, and the traditions of honour, valour and chivalry are being passed on in unbroken line, from one generation to the next!

There are many other second and third generation soldiers serving in the regiment, but only the names of those presently serving whose parental claim is directly linked to the regiment have been listed here.

Four generations

Name	Father	Grandfather	Great-Grandfather
Maj SS Rathore	Col US Rathore RVC	Capt Dr Ram Singh Gunawati Jodhpur State Forces. Capt Bir Singh Gunawati (Grand-uncle) Jodhpur Lancers IC 183 Lt Col Chottu Singh Rathore (Grand- uncle) 7 Cav, 8 Cav, Worcestershires	Jem Hanuman Singh Jodhpur Lancers; 28 th Cavalry
Dfr Sabir Khan	Swr Inayat Khan 61 Cav	Dfr Fajju Khan 61 Cav	Dfr Karim Khan Gwalior Lancers
Swr Anwar Khan	Ris Mukarab Khan 61 Cav	Ali Khan 61 Cav	Mohamdu Khan 61 Cav

Three generations

Name	Father	Grandfather
Dfr Taj Khan	Nb Ris Phool Khan 61 Cav	G/F Ali Khan Jodhpur Lancers
Swr Mohd Hanif Khan	Nb Ris Phool Mohd 61 Cav	G/F Ali Khan Jodhpur Lancers
ALD Murad Ali	Swr Safi Mohd Khan 61 Cav	Ris Maj Ast Ali Khan 61 Cav
Swr Gopal Singh	Dfr Prithavi Singh 61 Cav	LD Fateh Singh 61 Cav
Ris Mukarab Khan	Ali Khan 61 Cav	Mohadhu Khan 61 Cav
Swr Sabir Ali	LD Taj Mohd 61 Cav	Swr Mabu Khan 61 Cav

Two generations

Name	Father
Col KVS Jamwal	Col Phulel Singh J&K SF; 61 Cav

Nb Ris Bhawani Singh	Swr Jalam Singh 61 Cav
Dfr Sharwan Singh	Swr Mool Singh 61 Cav
LD Mehmood Ali	Dfr Hakem Singh 61 Cav
LD Jagdish Singh	H/ Capt Hari Singh 61 Cav
LD Jangsher Ali	Dfr Masud Khan 61 Cav
ALD Iqbal Khan	Swr Mumtaj Khan 61 Cav
Swr Mohd Hanif	Ris Maj Mazid Khan 61 Cav
Swr Ashok Singh	Ris Hanuman Singh 61 Cav
Swr Rajender Singh	Dfr Parthavi Singh 61 Cav
Swr Nand Kumar Jadhav	LD Hanumant Jadhav 61 Cav
Swr Rijwan Khan	Dfr Mazid Khan 61 Cav
Swr Mohd Abrar	Dfr Mustak Khan 61 Cav
Swr Sharad Gadhave	Ris Bhimaji Gadhave 61 Cav
Swr Hari Singh	NCU Datar Singh 61 Cav
Ris Dayal Singh	Dfr Daulat Singh 61 Cav
Ris Inayat Khan	
Dfr Gaffar Khan	Dfr Asgar Khan 61 Cav
Dfr Swalck Mohd	Dfr Mainuddin Khan 61 Cav
LD Devi Singh	Dfr Mohan Singh 61 Cav
LD Shokat Ali	Dfr Khanju Khan 61 Cav
LD Liyakhat Ali	Dfr Tak Mohd Khan 61 Cav
LD Mohd Israr	Ris Maj Mohd Sadik Khan 61 Cav
LD Imran Khan	Dfr Liyakhat Khan 61 Cav
LD Shamasher Khan	Dfr Mangu Khan 61 Cav
ALD Liyakhat Ali	Dfr Bhanwaru Khan 61 Cav
Swr NM Kadam	Dfr Maruti B Kadam 61 Cav
Swr Pushpender Singh	Dfr Mahender Singh 61 Cav
Swr Ajit Pratap Singh	LD Gore Lal Singh 61 Cav
Swr Abid Hussain	SDM Kasam Khan 61 Cav
Swr Abbas Ali	Ris Hidayat Khan 61 Cav
Swr Ayoub Khan	LD Murad Ali 61 Cav
Swr Naeem Khan	Dfr Mohd Salim Khan 61 Cav
Swr MM Mashke	Dfr NM Mashke 61 Cav
Swr Sandeep Ghorpade	Dfr Dashrat Ghorpade 61 Cav
Swr Sunil Kadam	LD Maruti B Kadam 61 Cav
Swr Tofik Khan	Dfr Yasin Khan 61 Cav
Swr Yogesh Patil	LD BS Patil 61 Cav
Ris Kasam Khan	Ibrahim Khan 61 Cav
Dfr Bhanwar Singh	Bhim Singh 61 Cav
Dfr Sultan Singh	Ris Prahlad Singh 61 Cav
LD Surender Singh	H/Lt Laxman Singh 61 Cav
Swr Jangsher	Ris Mazid Khan 61 Cav

Ahmed	
Swr Bhanwar Singh	NCU Ugam Singh 61 Cav
Swr Satar Ali	Nb Ris (Hony) Fariyad Ali Khan 61 Cav
Swr Saddik Mohd	Dfr Kadar Khan 61 Cav
Swr Bhagwan Singh	Dfr Mohan Singh 61 Cav

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