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**THE RAISING OF THE  
NORTH WAZIRISTAN MILITIA  
Now called  
THE TOCHI SCOUTS**

**Lieutenant General Sir Charles Godwin KCB, CMG, DSO**

## LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR CHARLES ALEXANDER CAMPBELL GODWIN KCB, CMG, DSO

Our newly joined member, Lieutenant Colonel Tim Villiers, a descendant of Lieutenant General Sir Charles Godwin, passed the following personal account by the General to Field Marshal Sir John Chapple. According to the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives at King's College London, no papers have been traced for Godwin and none are referenced in Charles Chenevix-Trench's excellent study *"The Frontier Scouts"*. Indeed, Godwin is not mentioned in that book, though Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) A.F. Ferguson-Davie is listed in Appendix 2. But Chenevix-Trench covers the period described in this narrative in the first two short chapters, and they are more of a general scene setting than a detailed description of the North Waziristan Militia (NWM). There are further references to the NWM in *"Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Volume II, North-West Frontier Tribes between the Kabul and Guaml (Gomal) Rivers"* but Godwin is not mentioned by name. This may be, therefore, the only account of General Godwin's to have surfaced to date and we are delighted to be able to publish the document in Durbar. Though some of the actions described would now be viewed in quite a different light, and no doubt attract adverse media attention as well as possible legal debate, nevertheless this account reflects the reality of the time in what was then an undeveloped part of the North West Frontier. All footnotes have been added by me as part of the editing process in order to clarify points that General Godwin probably felt were either self evident or current knowledge at the time he wrote the account. I have also added the maps on pages 61-63. It should be noted that although I have included the Central Waziristan Road, this had not been built at the time of Godwin's service with the North Waziristan Militia. The photographs, except those of badges, are taken from General Godwin's own albums. Ed.

The son of Colonel C.H.Y. Godwin, Charlie Godwin was born on 28 October 1873 and was at the United Service College, Westward Ho before passing in to Sandhurst. He was gazetted in 1895 and was seconded to the Suffolk and Welsh Regiments<sup>1</sup> in Secunderabad before being posted to the 1st Madras Lancers<sup>2</sup> in 1896. At the beginning of 1898 he transferred to the 3rd Punjab Cavalry, later re-named the 23<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry (Punjab Frontier Force), and in 1900 assisted in raising the North Waziristan Militia, of which corps he was the first adjutant, becoming second in command in 1902. He took part in the Waziristan operations, 1901-02.

He returned to 23<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry and was Adjutant 1902-1907 before going to Staff College, (the Liddell Hart Centre refers to Quetta, his family records suggest he went to Camberley) from where he graduated in 1909 and got his first staff appointment in 1911 when he became the Brigade Major of the Meerut Cavalry Brigade. In 1913 he went to the Mhow Division as GSO 2. Four months after the outbreak of war in 1914 the Indian Cavalry Corps concentrated in France with Godwin as Brigade Major of the Mhow Cavalry Brigade. He was appointed GSO 1 of 1 Indian Cavalry Division and he was given a brevet early in 1916. In September of the following year he was sent to Egypt to assume command of 6 Yeomanry Brigade, Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

During the advance on Jerusalem, after the third battle of Gaza, he led his Brigade with conspicuous success, notably at El Mughar and at Abu Shusheh ridge. He won the DSO on the first occasion and a bar to the DSO on the second. He participated in the second raid across the Jordan in May 1918 and gained another brevet in June. In July he was appointed Brigadier General, General Staff (BGGs) of the Desert Mounted Corps and in this capacity he served during the battle of Megiddo and the cavalry pursuit to Damascus, Aleppo, and beyond which encompassed the final defeat of the Turks.

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<sup>1</sup> Godwin says Madras Infantry (see page 46)

<sup>2</sup> Godwin says Madras Cavalry (see page 46)

From August to November 1919<sup>3</sup> he was BGGGS 'North Force' Syria and in 1920 he began duty at the War Office as GSO 1 in the Military Operations Directorate. At the beginning of 1921, however, he returned to India to command 5 Indian Cavalry Brigade and Secunderabad Garrison and was appointed ADC to the King. On promotion to Major General in 1923 he went to Army Headquarters as technical adviser on cavalry duties and in 1927 he was selected to be Commandant of the Staff College in Quetta. Appointed GOC Peshawar District in December that year, he was promoted Lieutenant General in 1929 and left Peshawar at the end of 1930. He retired from the Army two years later.

He died in July 1951, aged 77.

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**Lieutenant General Sir Charles Godwin KCB, CMG, DSO**

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<sup>3</sup> His short biographical note in the Liddell Hart Centre archive says 1919-20.

## THE RAISING OF THE NORTH WAZIRISTAN MILITIA

### Now called THE TOCHI SCOUTS

Lieutenant General Sir Charles Godwin KCB, CMG, DSO

I joined the Indian Army in January 1895, and after three months with the Madras Infantry<sup>4</sup>, was posted to the Madras Cavalry. I had a happy time with them, and in January 1898, was transferred to the 3rd Punjab Cavalry. The Regiment was then stationed at Kohat and, although the Tirah Campaign was practically over, there were alarms and excursions round about the Frontier.

I was almost immediately sent up the Kurram Valley and was in Parachmar some three months, and came in for a little rumpus with the Chamkannis. This was successfully carried out. A counter raid was conducted by the 27th Punjabis and Kurram Militia under the direction of Captain Roos-Keppel (afterwards Chief Commissioner of the N.W.F. Province)<sup>5</sup>. An unfortunate incident was the roasting of a number of babies. These had been popped into bhoosa<sup>6</sup> stacks when the village was surrounded, the mothers with the other inhabitants having fled into the hills. The village was set on fire, as was customary, so the mothers came running back to rescue their children. It was very unfortunate, but the troops did not know of this Pathan custom and the orders were to destroy all the property, and bring away any cattle.

On return to Kohat, where the Regiment carried out garrison duty with other P.F.F. Regiments, I was on outpost duty in Hangu and the Miranzai Valley. We had a Squadron and another British Officer and I had to look after about 60 miles of country. We had a pleasant time, fishing a little, shooting partridges and snipe and chasing raiding gangs. We were not very successful at any of these pursuits, all three objectives proved very elusive, but we enjoyed [it] and thought ourselves very important.

In this way I got a fair knowledge of the Frontiers and the Tribes. I was learning Pushtu. I had the son of a Mullah from the Yusufzai country who came and talked with me and helped generally. He was only about 18 and not a proper teacher. In course of a conversation I said, "It must be very irksome to have to pray five times a day." He said, "Yes Sahib, but I never pray here, you see, nobody knows me."

We returned to Kohat in due course and that year was the P.F.F. polo tournament, which I confess at the time I thought much more important than Frontier wars and much more worthy of hard training. In fact parades, field days and occasional turning out to chase raiding gangs seemed a serious interruption in training ponies and playing polo.

In 1899 my Regiment was transferred to Dera Ghazi Khan and we marched down the Frontier - through Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan to our new Station. Here we came to a different part of the Frontier, and were amongst the Baluchis. The hills were far away, and the intervening country dry and waterless. The climate was very hot and damp in summer, owing to the Indus which was working its way towards the cantonment and gradually cutting it away.

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<sup>4</sup> Differs from other records of his service (see page 42 above)

<sup>5</sup> Sir George Roos-Keppel (1866-1921). Political Officer, Kurram, 1893-9; Political Agent, Khyber 1899-1908; Chief Commissioner North-West Frontier Province 1908-1919; Council of India 1919-21. KCIE 1908, GCIE 1917.

<sup>6</sup> Husks and straw of various kinds of corn, beaten into chaff, *erected to provide provender for the cattle in rainy seasons* (Hobson-Jobson quoting Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*). (Ed.)

I had passed the Higher Standard Pushtu and the Higher Standard Persian, and spent my leisure learning Baluchi in which I passed the Higher Standard also. Apart from the interest of the languages and the knowledge it brought of the people, the money rewards were very useful.

The Indus had undercut the Station so much, it was decided to give up the place as a Cavalry Station, and we were ordered back to Kohat. We were all very pleased to go. Dera Ghazi Khan was very dull, the polo was bad, the climate was unpleasant. I had one of my chargers, a very fine steeple chaser, that I had brought from Madras, bitten by a snake in my compound, and it died within 20 minutes.

It was at this period early in 1900 I received a letter from Captain Ferguson-Davie, D.S.O., of the 3rd Sikhs, Punjab Frontier Force,<sup>7</sup> who informed me that two Frontier Militia Regiments were to be raised, one to be called the "Northern Waziristan Militia" for the Tochi Valley, and the other the "Southern Waziristan Militia" for the Gomal Valley. The letter went on to say that Lord Curzon, the Viceroy at that time, was determined to put an end to Frontier wars and expeditions, and his policy was as follows:

"Tribesmen should be responsible for the security of their own areas. The local tribes knew the conditions of the country in which they lived, and if trusted and recruited into troops of Militia or local troops they would have more interest in keeping the peace. This would give an outlet for the young bloods to earn a livelihood, and spend their energies on securing their own localities rather than harrying their neighbours and raiding into British Territory."

I think this was a sound and good policy and rather followed the principles of the Sandeman policy<sup>8</sup> than any other.

In accordance with this policy Captain Ferguson-Davie had been selected to raise the North Waziristan Militia, and he was asked to nominate officers to assist him. The advantages held out were - an adventurous life, allowances in addition to the ordinary pay of the Indian Army, also a very free hand and the promise of the status of political officers. The officers were to be seconded from the Army and receive their pay and allowances from the Civil Budget, and owe their allegiance to the Civil Authorities and not to the Military, i.e. they were not under Military control but Civilian.

The troops were to be enlisted from Wazir tribes, to give them full responsibility, and were not to include any classes of Pathans enlisted in the Regular Forces, who were really their natural foes and rivals. Each Regiment or Corps was to consist of 800 Infantry and 100 Sowars or Cavalry. Hence the *raison d'être* of my being approached.

I was a Cavalryman, brought up on Cavalry tactics and the art of training men and horses, and as such Captain Ferguson-Davie offered me the Adjutancy, with the special task of training the mounted branch. Thus it was I joined a Corps whose speciality was hill fighting, and for which ordinarily one would have expected an Infantryman to have been selected. Another reason was I was one of the few officers of the required age who had passed in frontier languages, and had a certain amount of experience in frontier fighting.

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<sup>7</sup> Arthur Francis Ferguson-Davie, born 11 July 1867. Commissioned 2/Lt Royal Scots 22.8.88. Lt Indian Staff Corps 12.10.91, Capt Indian Staff Corps 22.8.99. Nominated for the DSO 20.5.98. Ended his service as Lieutenant Colonel, 53<sup>rd</sup> Sikhs.

<sup>8</sup> But see "*Crisis on the Frontier. The Third Afghan War and the Campaign in Waziristan 1919-20*" by Brian Robson, Spellmount, 2004, p 212 and 213 (n.15). The Mahsud maliks carried little weight or responsibility, and their agreements did not automatically bind other Mahsuds. It was the main reason why the so-called 'Sandeman system' of working through the tribal representatives, which had proved so successful in Baluchistan, had failed when applied to Waziristan.

The other officer selected was Captain Finnis, 3rd Sikhs Punjab Frontier Force, who was appointed 2nd-in-Command.<sup>9</sup>

Prior to our joining, which was in June 1900, Captain Ferguson-Davie, the Commandant, had taken over command of the Tochi Levies. The Tochi Levies were what is now known as "Khassadars". They were local tribesmen armed with a 'Tower' musket and given a Khaki puggri (turban). They were under the control of the Political Agent, and arrested anyone he wanted, that is if they could, and usually they couldn't! They arrested persons they didn't like, and then made up a case against them. They interrupted raiding gangs if it suited them, or shut themselves up in their Towers and also shut their eyes. They really had quite an impossible role to carry out, and I don't blame them for what they left undone.

These "Levies" were in being for some time after the Militia was started and were gradually disbanded or absorbed as the latter were sufficiently trained to take over. There were a small body of mounted Levies, four or five in each post, and these escorted the Political Agent or the Tehsildars (Political Subordinates) in their turns round the countryside.

As I stated earlier, the Levies were armed with 'Tower' muskets - these were loaded with a paper cartridge of powder and a bullet pushed in on the top and fixed with a cap. Naturally having once loaded the musket it could not be unloaded except by firing. If the Levy could find no excuse to shoot off his musket, the charge was apt to deteriorate. Every pay day, therefore, we had musketry. A white stone was put up some 50 or 60 yards from the post. Each man, after receiving his pay, had a shot at it, and the result was not so bad as you might imagine.

Gradually this gallant corps disappeared and will not be mentioned again. If a search is made amongst some of the rubbish in the Political Agent's godown, I daresay some belts with "Tochi Levy" on a brass clasp may be found still.<sup>10</sup>



North Waziristan Levies



North Waziristan Khassadars

<sup>9</sup> Captain John Fortescue Finnis, born 14.2.70. Commissioned Manchester Regiment 21.12.89. Lt. Manchester Regiment 21.10.91, Indian Staff Corps 1.3.92, Captain 3<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Infantry 21.12.00 (the regiment became 53<sup>rd</sup> Sikhs (F.F.) in 1903.

<sup>10</sup> I have consulted a number of our badge collecting members but none has heard of such a belt plate. Ashok Nath reports that he recently found a rather battered Swat Levy Corps shoulder belt plate with Guelphic crown, probably dating from the early 1900s, so the existence of a Tochi Levy belt plate as described by Godwin is quite possible, though an example would be exceedingly rare.

## RECRUITING

Captain Finnis and I found Captain Ferguson-Davie established in a house in Bannu, which we made H.Q. He had already had preliminary conferences and tours with Mr. John Donald, the then Political Agent. The position of posts and strengths had been discussed and a start made by hiring a Serai<sup>11</sup> in Bannu, collecting the recruits there and starting off their training. No place was available in the valley, and if there had been, it was not the place to put raw Waziris, undisciplined and untrained.

Now the recruiting of the Militia was not an easy job. As I have said earlier, Lord Curzon's policy was that the local man should be responsible for the security of his own country, partly to encourage his individuality, to give him employment, to raise his status, and in every way make the Tribes more responsible and intelligent participators in the British Empire. This was a very laudable and theoretically sound policy. But the initial difficulty lay in discovering what actual Wazirs were, what you might call the natural protectors of the Tochi Valley.



**Probably Finnis      Ferguson-Davie      Godwin**

Some Wazirs lived in Kurram and only journeyed up in the hot weather through Spinwam, up the Tochi to the highlands of Shawal and thereabouts. Others lived in Waziristan proper, i.e. up the Shaktu, the Khaisara and Khaisora, etc. Again it was not known very clearly at that time who were Wazirs and who were Mahsuds; also, what were the delimitations between the recruiting grounds of the Southern Waziristan Militia and ourselves.

The only tribes who Tochi could lay real claim to were the "Daur," who lived roughly between Kajuri and Boya. This was the broadest and most fertile portion of the Valley. The Daur were the cultivators and were raided after harvest by Wazirs and Mahsuds. At that time their crops were few and scanty, but sufficient to attract their less fortunate neighbours; they were certainly well bullied and harried, so much so that it was at their invitation that Government took over the Tochi Valley, and so became the protectors of what were then a degenerate race. I don't know what they are like now, but

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<sup>11</sup> A building, consisting of an enclosed yard with chambers round it, usually used for the accommodation of travellers and their pack animals. *Hobson Jobson* (Ed.)

they were most vicious, treacherous, and had worse habits than any Mahsud or Wazir.<sup>12</sup> There were more murders and immoral cases owing to confirmed "charas"<sup>13</sup> taking place amongst them than any of their neighbours.

However, to return to our Recruiting. It was decided whom we should enlist. Mahsuds we did not touch, or rather I think we did try a company and finally handed them over to the Southern W.M. Our principal sections were Madda Khel, Tori Khel, Momit Khel, Ida Khel, and Jani Khel, but no Afridis, Khattaks or Bangashes, etc.

Having determined on the Sections and proportions, it was necessary to interview the Maliks. This was not so easy. Every Malik had a guilty conscience, and was never certain what the Political Agent wanted to see him about, and it really took a long time to get conversations with them. There were no motors or wireless or telephone in those days - everybody rode or walked, and sent a vernacular chit which needed translating and answering. However, when the Maliks more or less understood the situation, the following difficulties occurred.

1. Jealousies over the quota furnished by each Section.
2. Would the men get the pay - of course the Malik wanted the whole lot paid to him.
3. Every recruit must have a "zaminat," i.e. a stamped paper giving security for 400 Rs. for each rifle.

This caused a lot of trouble.

These preliminaries were got over. We had drill instructors from Regular Regiments, principally the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, 3rd Sikhs, 2nd Sikhs, 2nd Punjab Infantry, 4th Punjab Infantry, etc. We had a serai and a parade ground. The recruits came tumbling in. But such recruits! They were lame, blind, diseased, and for the most part useless. The Maliks had all to be summoned again and asked why they were sending their halt, lame and blind. One and all said, "Do you suppose we are such fools as to send our 'tuggra jowans'? Who will protect the tribe with all the best young men away?" However to make a long story short, we gradually inspired confidence and got better men. By the time we had 800 men fit to take their place in the posts, we had recorded 2,000 recruits with anything from a week's training: to three months, according to the time it took to find out if they were possible.

Another difficulty with training recruits was language. Our instructors were mostly Khattaks, Bangashes, Yusufzais. They couldn't talk soft Waziri Pushtu. Nor were they educated enough to adapt their pronunciation to the Waziri dialect. Some of them used to go nearly mad on parade, and say these ignorant B.Fs., or words to that effect, don't know their own language. It was left to us British Officers, who then really did not know Pushtu at all well, to transpose the hard "Pukhtu" into soft "Pushtu," and teach our instructors so that they could pass it on to the recruits.

Whilst we were still in the embryo stage in our Serai at Bannu, the cantonment was very worried by thieves. They broke into the Commissariat godowns and stole anything left in compounds from a tent to a tennis net. Chokidars<sup>14</sup> were no good, and the Regular Patrols could not stop it.

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<sup>12</sup> Robson (op.cit.) offers quite a different picture of the four tribes inhabiting Waziristan. The Dauris gave little trouble and were not in the same league as fighting men as the other tribes; the Bhattanis (eastern fringes) known as 'Mahsud jackals' – unlikely to cause trouble on their own but not above joining in whatever profitable trouble there was; Waziris and, above all, Mahsuds formed the real problem. Waziris were more dispersed than Mahsuds and some were within range of troops at Bannu, so were marginally less formidable than Mahsuds, who were probably the most formidable fighting men on the Frontier. Described by McMunn as 'arrogant, pig-headed, faithless, three-cornered, attractive, jaunty, soldierly'.

<sup>13</sup> drug taking

<sup>14</sup> watchmen

One day a Militia Subedar came to me, I think he was a Momit Khel and had been in the Levies. He had done the Haj to Mecca amongst other things, and got stranded and served seven years in the Turkish army. He said he got no pay all the time. He asked if he could take out a Waziri patrol. The Military after many protests withdrew their patrols for a night or two, and this old man took out some of his men.

One night about 2 a.m., I was awakened by someone shaking me. I woke up and saw the old Subedar and he said "We have got a thief." I said, "I suppose you shot and he got away as usual," and he said "No, Sahib, here he is." I looked down and found a dead man lying beside my bed bleeding all over the floor. I congratulated him, but thought it rather uncalled for to place a bleeding corpse alongside my bed. This old Subedar came to a sticky end - he was murdered by a man in the room next to me at Idak, the result of a blood feud. A man was accused and arrested, but evidence was very confused. The late Subedar's son, who thought the case was going badly, jumped on the prisoner when he was being led from court, and stabbed him before he could be stopped, killed him on the spot.

Of course the son was arrested and he was condemned to death. We built him a scaffold at Miranshah with a P.W.D.<sup>15</sup> drop. When it came to hang him, the drop would not work. The boy was not at all worried, he asked for a cigarette and said perhaps it will be all right tomorrow. He ate well, slept well, and next day the drop functioned and he died quite happily.

#### TAKING OVER THE POSTS

During the formation of the Militia, and in fact since 1897, the Tochi Valley had been held by Regular troops. It may be remembered that the Frontier campaign had broken out at Maizar, which is situated beyond Sheranni at the head of the Valley.

In the summer of 1897, Mr Gee, the Political Agent,<sup>16</sup> was on a boundary commission or some political duty, I forget quite what.<sup>17</sup> The 1st Sikhs (or 2nd Sikhs) under command of Col. Bunny were his escort.<sup>18</sup> Mr Gee with the column arrived in the vicinity of Maizar, the principal village of the Madda Khel. The Maliks invited Gee and the officers of the Regiment into Maizar for a meal. There was a great deal of hesitation about accepting this invitation. However Gee was very keen about it, so as to inspire confidence. While the Officers were being entertained, fire was opened on them.<sup>19</sup> The Colonel and several Officers were shot and the Regiment was withdrawn with considerable difficulty. Gee escaped without a wound, strange to say.

This created a considerable stir, and naturally was looked on as a typical case of Pathan treachery. Heavy reprisals were taken. I personally believe, as I heard a good deal about the unfortunate occurrence afterwards, that the Maliks acted in good faith. The young bloods of the village had been all for fighting and the old men for peace and discussion. However the youngsters would not join in the entertainment, and had gone off to some high ground. A shot was fired, whether by design or by accident will never be known, and thinking they might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb, the whole village joined in and did their best to exterminate the Column.

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<sup>15</sup> Public Works Department

<sup>16</sup> Mr H A Gee, Political Officer for Tochi

<sup>17</sup> He was visiting Maizar to settle a dispute with the Madda Khel over non-payment of their share of a fine imposed for the murder of a Hindu clerk. See Michael Barthorp, *"The Frontier Ablaze"*. London: Windrow & Greene, 1996, p.32

<sup>18</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Sikhs, plus 100 of 1<sup>st</sup> Punjab Infantry (PFF), two guns of 6 (Bombay) Mountain Battery, and 12 sowars of 1<sup>st</sup> Punjab Cavalry (PFF). Barthorp, op.cit.

<sup>19</sup> Barthorp states that the troops came under fire while the pipers of 1<sup>st</sup> Sikhs were entertaining the villagers.

The Tochi expedition was started and was most disastrous to the health of the British troops. Regiments were over-marched in the hot weather, the men worn out, transport broke down, sanitary arrangements were bad, and the troops drank the Tochi water not knowing it was full of dead camels and mules in the upper reaches. Enteric of a violent form broke out, and the Tochi got the name for being the most unhealthy spot on the Frontier.

This is not the case. In my time it was a very beautiful and healthy valley, provided that ordinary precautions were taken in the hot weather. The lower posts were feverish in the hot weather, but in my time not abnormally so.

Since the Maizar incident, troops had remained in the valley; a Regiment at Datta Khel, one at Miranshah with detachments at Boya, one Regiment at Idak, and detachments in posts at Kajuri, Saidgi and Islam Chowki, a squadron at Miranshah with a troop, I think at Datta Khel. All were P.F.F. Regiments.

Within some two or three months of being raised, the H.Q. and depot of the Militia was removed from Bannu, and took over the Political Post at Idak; this was attached to the Military Post and the Militia were responsible for their own perimeter. There was always a bit of sniping going on at night, and rifle thieves were very audacious.

One night at our end the Subedar Major, an old red bearded Khattak from the 2nd Sikhs, came into my room and said, "There are rifle thieves digging through the "burj" - a flanking tower." So I said, take out two parties, one from each side and round them up, and I went myself, but before we started I said, "Are the men still there," and he said, "Yes, the sentry can hear them." So two parties sallied forth, one led by the Subedar Major with a revolver. Reaching the supposed spot, there were forms in the dark, and the old man crept on and I too, in an awful funk really.

Suddenly he gave a shout and said, "don't shoot" as the forms moved off. I cursed him for frightening them, and he said "Sahib, those are donkeys scratching themselves on the wall, thank God we didn't shoot a donkey or we should have been always known as the "Gadda Fauj".<sup>20</sup>

We were now equipped with Snider Rifles; the Regulars in those days had Martinis. The Snider is a .577 and the Martini .45, both jolly good weapons to stop a man and don't lead to so much wild shooting as the .305 with a magazine. We were equipped much the same as the Regular Sepoy, though no boots, but chapplis<sup>21</sup> instead. Even the Sowars rode in them. This impressed Lord Kitchener when he came round. The only remark he made about the men was, "How strange to see men riding in sandals." I should think he had seen stranger sights in the Sudan.

Naturally we only raised the men by degrees, and it was a proud day when we handed over to one company 100 Khaki suits and puggris with a coloured fringe. We ordered a parade for the next day, and when I went for a preliminary inspection before the C.O. arrived I nearly fainted. All the new coats were a dirty black and covered in smears, especially round the neck and shoulders. Even the Instructors were aghast, and the Waziri Subedar came up grinning with pride and said the men had spent the whole night rubbing dumba<sup>22</sup> fat into the new Khaki to make it weatherproof. There was nothing to be said - but we had to stand a lot of chaff from the Military who were interested in our first uniform parade.

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<sup>20</sup> Donkey Regiment

<sup>21</sup> sandals

<sup>22</sup> fat-tailed sheep

All this time we were busy building new posts. One of the first we finished and took over was "Isha", half way between Idak and Miranshah. The name of the place is not Isha, but when it was being built a surveyor came along, did not know the name and asked. He did not know the language, and as there was an awful smell at the place the Pathan thought he meant that and said "Isha" (Camel) meaning the dead camel, so the name went down as such on the map and remained.

We had to have a permanent garrison there for a long time. The water was impregnated with sulphur. This sulphur had a very medicinal effect on the men's interior economy. It took several days to get accustomed to it. Afterwards, when relieved, it took the men some time to get used to normal water. Therefore until we arranged a new water supply, the same N.C.O.'s and men, about 25, lived there for months.

#### RE-ORGANISATION OF RECRUITING

It must have been about the middle of 1900 when the classes for recruitment were re-organised. The powers-that-were became very worried because the Militia was not up to strength.

It was quite useless explaining that the Maliks were not whole-hearted about the matter and that we could have filled the Militia up three times over had we accepted all the duds that were sent up for enlistment. Further, we had to eliminate about 50%, even after accepting them as physically fit, because they were found [to be] too stupid to be taught anything.

We prayed and besought the Authorities to be patient, that is, if Lord Curzon wished to make the local people responsible for their own security, and also provide an occupation. The Maliks were gradually coming round, and at any rate the summer months, with all the men in the hills, was the worst time to recruit. However it was of no avail. I do not know if Lord Curzon weakened on his own policy or whether he was advised, and whether the Chief Commissioner of the Province did not trust a 100% Wazir corps. At any rate we were ordered to enlist 50% of tribes other than Wazirs. We decided on Adam Khel Afridis, Bangi Khel Khattaks, Niazis from Isa Khel, and Murwats for Sowars. Also I think half a company of Bannuchis.

I am not prepared to say this affected the efficiency of the Militia, but it entirely broke down the spirit of a Waziri Corps. The Wazir Maliks were infuriated, and said we had broken faith with them, that we did not trust them, and had brought in their hereditary enemies, viz. Afridis and Khattaks to keep watch on them, take away their livelihood, and bully their people in the valley.

However, orders were orders, and we started the new enlistment. I must say the Afridis from the Pass, though really Trans-border men and not Cis-border, were very good and so were the Khattaks, cleaner, more intelligent, and easier to train.

We were composed of:

- 50% Wazirs, including some Daur for the Daur posts.
- 50% Afridis, Khattaks, Niazis and Murwats.

The Niazis were strange men, very black, very stupid, and no use on the hillside. They were bred on the banks of the Indus, and used to breeding camels, and had flat feet that used to expand like camels. They were gradually eliminated. Their Pushtu also was queer and they could not pronounce sh - for instance they said "nista" instead of "nishta." The Murwats were not a bad lot and were enlisted as Sowars. They brought some very useful horses and were of the Tiwana type.

We had enough Wazirs now, as their enlistment was cut down, so they were sent into the posts, partly to get them out of the way of the Afridis and Khattaks, and partly to make room for the latter recruits at headquarters Idak.

## ACTIVE SERVICE

John Donald, our first Political Officer, was now Deputy Commissioner at Bannu. Capt. Down<sup>23</sup> had succeeded him in the Tochi. The latter was a very fine man and Political Agent, with a wonderful gift for Pushtu; he had a natural pronunciation. It is one thing to know the language well and speak it correctly, but quite another to get these jungly people with all sorts of dialects and patois to understand one. Down had this latter gift. He was the greatest friend to us, and when he was killed later in an expedition, he was the greatest loss, and deeply regretted by ourselves and the Wazirs.

At this time, about July or August, 1900, the Madda Khel in Maizar were very "yagi," i.e. truculent; they had not paid up their fine for 1897 and had committed a lot of raids. It was decided therefore to punish them. A force was collected at Datta Khel; I think 2 Infantry Battalions, a Mountain Battery, and a Squadron or two of Punjab Cavalry. To this was attached a Company or two of Militia. Thus within a few months of being raised they (the Militia) were sent to fight their own people.<sup>24</sup> I must say they showed no reluctance, and behaved very well. I was sent on with them as an Advance Guard. We were profoundly distrusted by the troops we were covering. Capt. Down was with us, and we pushed into a ridge overlooking Maizar. The main body crawled along taking many precautions.

I am afraid Down and I got impatient, so we took some Militia Sowars and rode into the village and found it practically evacuated except for a few snipers. These the Militia cleared out. The Troops came in, pitched a camp, and there we sat for about a fortnight.

Capt. Sheppard, R.E., now General Sheppard retired,<sup>25</sup> was with us. We spent the time blowing up towers, cutting crops and generally making ourselves beastly. The Militia went out daily on pickets and behaved very well. It was a very simple show and there were very few casualties, but we were of course interested to see how the Wazirs, only a few months old (as) soldiers, would behave, and I must say we had nothing to complain about.

I found the local Shilcari's hut in the village with over 200 Urial<sup>26</sup> heads, one about 38½" as far as I can remember. It had about ¾" or more off each horn, burnt off, or would have been a record; also another head of 37" and several of 36". The big one and some others were mounted in the Militia Mess. I do not know if they are there now. The local inhabitants used to get them by driving them into snow-drifts in the winter and then clubbing them.

There are very large Urial and Markhor<sup>27</sup> in the Waziri hills. We used to shoot a few small ones but the bigger ones were too far afield, and in those days one had to have an escort. Stalking is difficult with an escort; besides, being sniped by locals disturbs both the prey and the stalker.

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<sup>23</sup> Captain C P Down. Official Army List, January 1902, p.2268

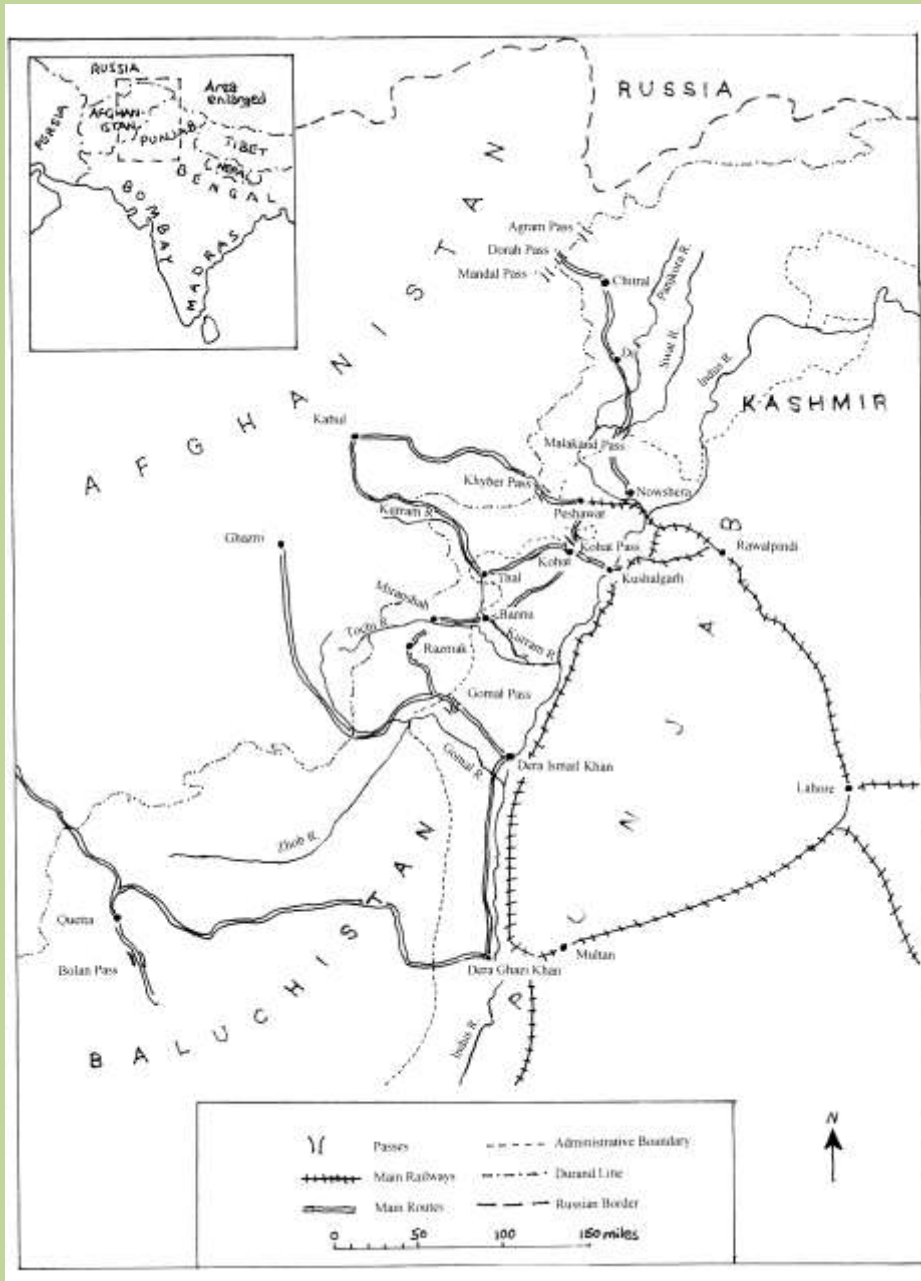
<sup>24</sup> Not mentioned in "Frontier & Overseas Expeditions"

<sup>25</sup> Major General Seymour Hulbert Sheppard CB, CMG, DSO, RE. DSO and Mentioned in Despatches for this operation (LG 8.8.02). Born 24.12.69, commissioned 14.2.90, Major General 1.1.19, retired 1.12.22.

<sup>26</sup> wild goat

<sup>27</sup> wild goat

The Mahsuds had for some time been behaving badly. Lord Curzon said punitive expeditions were a thing of the past. Any punishments were to be of a peaceful nature, and so we were to carry out a peace blockade. This went on for 18 months - the Mahsuds did not mind because the "Bannias" in Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan subsidised them with money, tobacco, salt, etc., to encourage them to hold out and not come to terms, because the longer a large force of troops were in Tochi and the Gomal, the more the "Bannias" scored in supplying the Commissariat. These peaceful measures were very expensive and quite futile, and had to end in a rather bloody finish.



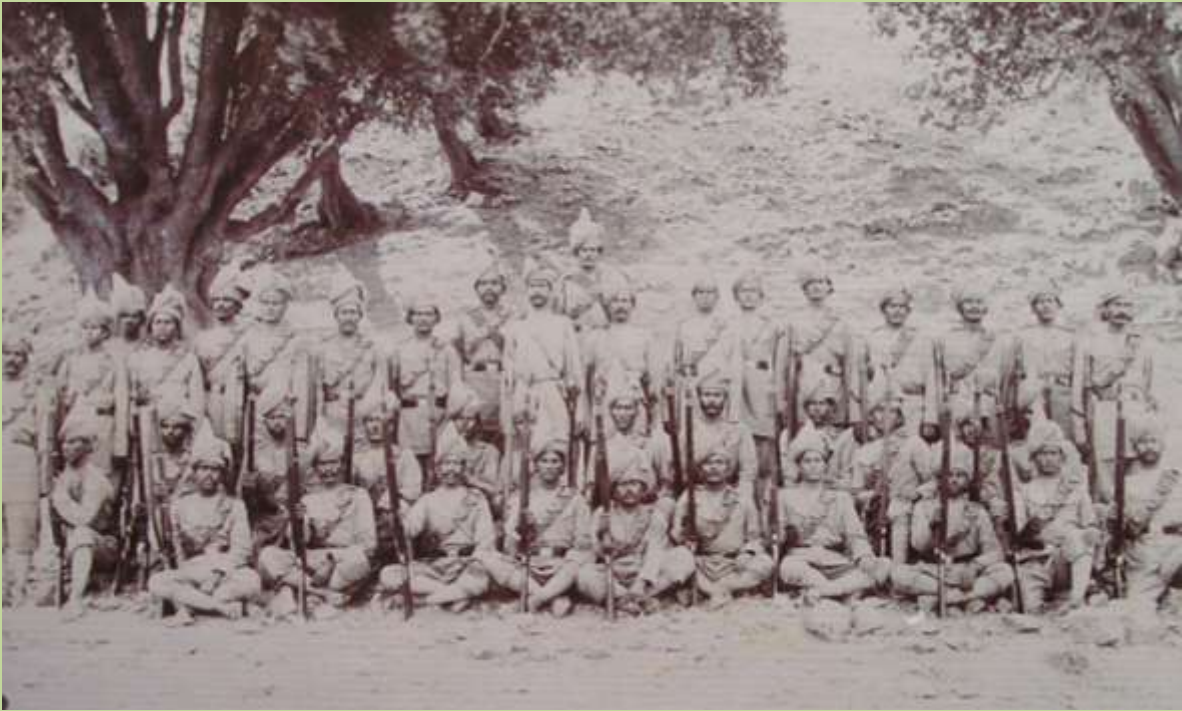
The general area of the North West Frontier in which Godwin served.



**The raw material – North Waziristan Militia**



**The finished article – Madda Khel Company, NWM**



### **The finished article – Datta Khel Company, NWM**

To return to the Militia's share in this blockade. I should explain all approaches from the Tochi into Mahsud land were to be watched and guarded. Ditto from the Gomal.

The Military, with Frontier Constabulary and other Police reinforcements, took on from Bannu to D.I. Khan. A long and most vulnerable section ran from Datta Khel through Shawal along the Afghan Border down to Wana, and this was in the hands of tribal pickets. As Shawal was the home of all the British outlaws, and the Mortimer Durand line only exists on British maps and the local people heed it not, the Mahsuds, Wazirs and Afghans had the time of their lives.

These picquets drew allowances from Government, and were given rifles to prevent the Mahsuds getting supplies from Afghanistan. This made the welkin shriek with laughter, but what did that matter, this was a peaceful blockade and not a punitive expedition. However, I am digressing.

The Militia's first duty was to supplement this blockade line. We had in prospect a post at Tutnarai, about 5 miles from Datta Khel on the way to Makin. I was ordered to take a party and establish a post there as soon as possible. We got tents and struggled up there in a snowstorm. It was terribly cold and on arrival we built a stone wall perimeter for a Sangar and pitched tents, first digging down to get cover and more room. My servant that night provided me with a charcoal brazier and without my knowledge laced me in my bell tent. After awful dreams and nightmares I forced myself awake and guessed the charcoal fumes had nearly asphyxiated me, and I just managed to get my head through the opening and suck in some air. The next morning we were almost entirely under snow, and some of the men were rather bad, however better weather came and all was well.

In the summer we built a very fine post at this place. The men were always out patrolling, etc. On one of my tours of inspection I found the post more or less empty except for the compulsory garrison. At night they came in with the Subadar. They had been after raiders and got the cattle back and as usual claimed a lot of casualties on the enemy. I said "the same old story, lots of blood and. nothing

to show for it." The Subadar said, "We knew you would say that, so here you are," and pulled two heads out of a haversack.



#### **NWM Post TUTNERAI looking towards Datta Khel**

I ordered them to be buried, but without my knowledge they put them on poles and stuck them on the breastwork. Considerable trouble ensued, as the clans to whom these heads belonged came and besieged the post to try and get them back. However we bagged a few more but it caused a certain amount of unpleasantness for a time.

The last time I visited this post before I left the Militia, I paid out the men and went on to Datta Khel. About a quarter of a mile away I heard a shot, but did not think much of it. When I arrived at Datta Khel a runner came in and said my Pay-Havildar had been shot in the Post by another Sepoy. This man had originally been "Mohairir"<sup>28</sup> there and had had a boy friend who, when the former left, transferred his favours to another man. This led to a quarrel on his return and his murder.

Unfortunately we had quite a lot of this kind of thing, and it was a source of trouble very hard to get to the bottom of. Many breaches of discipline and occurrences were due to this unfortunate Pathan penchant.

We have now come to 1902. Throughout the hot weather there was a continuous round of raiding and counter raiding. The first time we took out the Afridi company was from Idak. Capts. Ferguson-Davie and Finnis were away on tour. A message came in that raiders had carried off a lot of donkeys from a road repairing gang. They had gone up into hills on the right of the road opposite Isha.

The Regulars from Miranshah were sending out a party from their side, and we arranged to start off at once from our side and try to catch them in between. It was a grilling hot day, and with the greatest difficulty we got up the hill. There was no water and two young Afridis got heat stroke. On arriving on one of the summits we were greeted with a shower of bullets. We saw a party below us, both sides took cover and a fire fight ensued. However, as we worked closer I thought the enemy were behaving

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<sup>28</sup> store clerk

queerly for raiders. To make a long story short, we found they were the Regulars from Miranshah who had mistaken us for raiders. It was rather unpleasant stopping the action, but we succeeded in breaking it off. There was much indignation; however the Regulars had fired on us first. They had one casualty and we had two heat strokes. It was the most trying day I remember. The heat was awful and we did not get back till evening, our throats were so swollen and tongues so dry, we could not get water down even when we got it.

We heard afterwards the raiding gang had been hidden in a cave somewhere between us, and. enjoyed the spectacle very much.

During the summer, Capt. Down, who had always been very anxious to visit Shamal, took advantage of the Tribal picquets who were posted there to visit their place. He took me, six Militia Sowars and a Madda Khel escort.

We started from Datta Khel at day-break and arrived in the evening at Drei-Nashta. This is where the Tochi River rises on the one side and the Dana River on the other; the latter flows into Wana and is only a mountain stream. Here we were met by crowds of outlaws from Birmal. They were all very polite and pleased to see us. Some were our outlaws and some Afghan. After a kind of firgah<sup>29</sup> they went off. We were bivouacking in some pine wood. Down and I went to the River to wash but directly we got our shirts off we were shot at from the other side. We skipped back and our Madda Khel escort, just tribesman, turned out and a lot of firing went on. This continued all night.

The Malik came to us and was very apologetic, and said a rival Madda Khel section were trying to bag us, not through any particular animosity, but to blacken the face of our Malik. There had been a certain amount of rivalry as to who should escort us, and the man who had not been chosen thought that if we were shot while under protection of the other Malik, he would get into trouble and be completely discredited.

We could not go back the way we came, so determined to go on into Wana. This we did, with an outlaw escort part of the way, till we touched Wana border of control, then they went back. The Madda Khel would not go further than the watershed, as it was not their country.

The Southern Waziristan people at Wana were very astonished to see us come out of the blue, and we had to march down to Tank and then by Tonga back to Tochi. We were away a week instead of one day. We had been reported missing. Down had never said where he was going, and we were both reprimanded.

It turned out a sad story for the Madda Khel. It brought on a blood feud between the Maliks of the two sections, and resulted in one family being completely wiped out and only one man out of the other family left. However we had learnt a lot of unknown country, and found out that the tribal picquets for blockade purposes were quite useless. The Madda Khel section, which shot us up, had to come down in the autumn to their winter grazing grounds. We "berumta-ed" them en route and took a fine of rifles and sheep.

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<sup>29</sup> not sure what this means

## ACTIVE BLOCKADE

The passive Blockade having been found quite useless, Government decided to take some active measures. Troops were collected in Bannu and in the Gomal, and columns went in from both directions to destroy villages and punish the tribes generally.

The N.W. Militia raised about 400, the remainder being in posts. We joined the Bannu column and went in by Jani Khel. The Column was about Brigade strength with Mountain Artillery and Cavalry. We were to leave the Regulars at Jani Khel, work on their left flank and meet the South Waziristan somewhere up the Shaktu, and then work to Datta Khel.

The first night's bivouac at Jani Khel, I went and asked for our camping place, thinking of course that we should have a bit of the perimeter. Not a bit of it. The Troops were more frightened of us than all the Wazirs and Mahsuds outside. We eventually went into a perimeter camp of our own about a quarter of a mile further up the Nullah than the Regular Camp. We thought it most unpleasant. In addition to injured feelings, we knew if there was any sniping the troops would retaliate and we should get all their bullets. Happily it was a quiet night. Next morning we slipped off on our own, as we were very mobile, no baggage beyond a few ammunition mules, no rations or water.

I was told off as Right flank guard with half a Company, i.e. about 50 Rifles. I went over a hill called "Baba Ziarat" which was absolutely alive with wood pigeons and chukor amongst the ilex trees. They were as tame as chickens.

However my ridge was the high ground between the Regular Column and the Militia, so I was really Right flank guard to the Militia, and Left flank guard to the Regulars. This the latter did not know, and so directly I got astride this ridge I was shot at by their Artillery and chased by their Gurkhas. We were too high for the latter to do us any harm, and the Mountain Battery didn't hurt us, but frightened us a bit. Gradually the Column edged off to the right as the Nullah ran in that direction, and they left us alone.

Our own Militia Column was pushing on up their Nullah, and I could not keep pace with them, especially as some Wazirs or Mahsuds in front of us had to be cleared out. When night fell I was up on my ridge and the Militia somewhere below. The trouble was, I had never seen any orders. I don't know if Ferguson Davie had any, except to try and find the Southern Waziristan Militia, and make ourselves as unpleasant as possible. However I located some camp fires later on, and sent down to tell Ferguson Davie where I was, and say I intended to stay out to form a night picquet for him and prevent the Camp being sniped. Unfortunately my messengers never arrived and he thought we were all lost.

It was very cold and we all slept in a heap, no blankets or greatcoats. The ground swarmed with voles which ran all over us, and in the morning we found rifle slings and belts had been nibbled all round and most of my back hair had been eaten. We shot two Wazirs in the night who came smelling round. Next morning I joined the Militia Column, and instead of being complimented on my heroic and unselfish conduct in staying out and doing picquet all night, Ferguson Davie was distinctly annoyed with me, but I could never find out why.

They had met the Southern Waziristan Militia. We went off towards Razmak which, of course, was not in our possession then. We took two or three days working our way to Datta Khel - where we went I don't know. We killed some Wazirs and had a few casualties; we captured a lot of cattle and sheep which were an awful nuisance. Our men behaved extremely well, full of dash and enjoyed it. In one village they got a bit out of hand and started shooting camels and goats.

Ferguson Davie's orderly shot a woman; when remonstrated with he said, "Didn't you see she was in the family way," and when being told this made it worse, said "You wouldn't spare a snake because it had young in its belly."

We met the Regular Column when we got to Datta Khel and found the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sikhs had gone by themselves to Makin and burnt it. They started from Datta Khel, got to Makin in the night, burnt part of it, and got back with very few casualties. Col. Tonnochy who commanded the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sikhs got a reprimand for his temerity, which was followed by a C.B. Capt. Down, the Political Agent, unfortunately was killed. He was shot by a wounded man who remained in a Tower that Down had gone to investigate.<sup>30</sup>

The Regular Column went to Miranshah and camped there for the time.<sup>31</sup> The next affair in which the Militia co-operated with the Military was called:

"The coercion of the Tori Khel."<sup>32</sup>

The Mahsud Blockade was over. General Sir Charles Egerton ran this show. Four Columns went in:- One under Colonel Tonnochy from Bannu.

A second Column from Bahadur Khel or thereabouts.<sup>33</sup>

A third from Thal, Kurram

A fourth from Idak.

All four Columns were to meet at Spinwam at the mouth of the Kaitu Valley. Col. Tonnochy's Column got hung up at Gumatti where they stormed an outlaw's post. Col. Tonnochy and Capt. White were killed. The Bahadur Khel Column lost its way. The Thal Column and Idak met as planned. The Militia accompanied the Idak Column.

At Spinwam we went up the Kaitu, destroyed all the Towers and burnt the villages, and ran into Afghan troops on the Frontier. The Militia did quite well and the Regulars had got over their distrust of them. They gave a medal for this show I think,<sup>34</sup> anyhow I got one for something, and soon after I left the Militia and rejoined my Regiment, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Punjab Cavalry.

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<sup>30</sup> "On 6 January (1902) Colonel Tonnochy and Colonel McRae joined their columns at Matwan and the combined forces then moved up the Shaktu and destroyed thirteen Tutia Khel towers. It was during the destruction of one of these towers that Captain Down was mortally wounded, he having gone inside to look for a man who was hiding." *Frontier & Overseas Expeditions*" Vol II, p.444

<sup>31</sup> In describing this active blockade "*Frontier and Overseas Expeditions*" merely states (p.441), "Simultaneously with these operations both the Northern and Southern Waziristan Militia captured many prisoners and cattle."

<sup>32</sup> The Kabul Khel Expedition 1902. *ibid.* p 445

<sup>33</sup> Barganatu. *ibid.* p 446

<sup>34</sup> IGS 1895 clasp WAZIRISTAN 1901-2



**Probably Down            White            Ferguson-Davie  
Godwin (seated)**

#### PROGRESS IN TOCHI 1900-1903

I joined the Militia on 21st June, 1900, and left on 9th February, 1903. During the last year I was advanced to 2nd in Command vice Capt. Finnis, and Lt. C. J. White of the 3rd Sikhs came as Adjutant.<sup>35</sup>

After Capt. Down was killed, from whose loss I consider the Political Department in the Tochi never recovered, and the Militia consequently suffered, there was a succession of Political Agents. Mr. Lorrimer, I.S.C., came in temporary charge. This officer had been Political Agent for two years 1897-99. He knew the Wazirs well and wrote a very good Pushtu Grammar which ends with an Essay on Wazirs. His last sentence is: "If the reader quits the subject with relief, his feelings will only resemble those with which the writer relinquished political charge of the Tochi after two years' residence there, and the cause will probably be the same - involuntary abhorrence of human types which deviate in such an extreme degree from what Europeans are accustomed to consider the human standard."

I consider this description of the Wazirs is a hard one. True they did not put a high value on life, but they were always willing to risk their own. It was not abhorrent to them not to die a natural death, and they looked forward to being murdered not perhaps as the rule, but nothing to be unusually dreaded.

The Wazir had his own code of honour. Thieving was an honourable profession, sodomy was not unknown, adultery was severely punished. The man had his foot cut off and the woman her nose. When passing women, if they covered their faces with their sari, one sometimes heard one's orderly

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<sup>35</sup> Charles J White. Captain 5.9.05 (and still with NWM). Hart's Army List, 1906

with a coarse form of wit, say, "Pooza nishta," which means "Haven't you a nose." This instantly made the damsel lower her head covering and expose a face with all its features.

The Wazirs would defend anyone who sought their protection - note the action of the Madda Khel who defended Capt. Down and myself in our trip, already related, through Shawal. They fought one of their own sections in our protection, and brought on a blood feud which cost many lives.

A notable character was one "Jasim", a Levy Sowar in the Political Agent's entourage. He was a Wazir who found his way to Kabul where he became a professional murderer. It was his job and he murdered anyone for a consideration. Kabul became a bit hot for him so he returned to Tochi. He confessed his profession and became the Political Agent's "Hamsaya." He was his personal attendant and afterwards, when a married Political Agent came, he became his small boy's attendant and looked after this English child of three or four like a nurse. He was a most kind-hearted, jovial man, fond of a joke and always laughing, and never without a flower tucked behind his ear. He came to an unfortunate end - he courted and ran away with a Malik's daughter, meaning to marry her, but unfortunately the Father caught them up and shot Jasim. If he had only got away, in a short time the Father would have forgiven him and all would have been well. He would not steal from anyone or hurt anyone in Government employ, because having accepted protection it was against his code of honour.

On one occasion a Sikh at Miranshah ran amuck. He had failed in his Naick's promotion examination; brooding over it he took a sword and went to look for a Major Johnson of the 5th P.I. who, fortunately for himself, had gone to Boya. Of course he was half off his head with drugs, the sight of a Pathan boy praying in a Musjid so infuriated him, he killed him. Seeing red, he ran down the road and cut off the top of a little girl's head, like the top off an egg; he then stabbed an old man. By this time the village got after him. They ran him like a pack of hounds after a fox, over the fields and down the river. He ran to earth in Thal post on the Tochi. The garrison shut the gates and defended him against the villagers, who tried to tear the place down, but they would not give him up or hurt him though he had murdered fellow Pathans. They brought him with difficulty into Miranshah and handed him over to the Military guard. Subsequently he was hanged.

We used to climb all over the hills and often went up Shuidar and Vezda Sar with small Wazir escorts. We were talking once on the top of Vezda Sar about murder and rifle thieves, and I said to the lads with me - "Why don't you cut my throat and take my rifle, no one knows we are up here and you can easily hide my body." They thought this an awful joke, and said they didn't do dirty things like that.

There were a certain amount of Ghazis, but these nearly always had a religious origin. The Mullahs, who were afraid of losing their influence and were of course fanatical Mohammedans, used to get hold of some half-witted individual, fill him with "Charas"<sup>36</sup> and tell him to murder some Kafir. Of course, if they selected, a British officer it made more stir than when a Hindu got stabbed or shot.

Playing golf at Miranshah in a foursome, in which the Political Agent's wife was playing, a ghazi came along and had a shot at someone with a pistol. There was a game of hockey going on near so he was quickly laid out with hockey sticks, and I believe the Political Agent's wife was in at the death with a cleek.<sup>37</sup> However that man was a fool.

The above stories are meant to illustrate my point that the Wazir was not so bad as he was painted. In their own way I found them good, honourable and pleasant people, but one had to know them, know how and when to trust them, and when not to.

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<sup>36</sup> drug

<sup>37</sup> Iron-headed golf club with almost straight narrow face.

As before stated, after Capt. Down's death, Mr. Lorrimer officiated for a while, but not longer than he could help. He was succeeded by other Political Agents, young and inexperienced. This led to a lot of trouble and unpleasantness.

The Militia had never been popular with the Political Tehsildars, i.e. the Political Agent's subordinates. They preferred the old system of Levies whom they treated as their private servants, and who carried out their orders; often to the Tehsildar's own private advantage.

Under the old regime troubles between the tribes were settled out of Court. The Maliks, of course, had to bribe to get cases settled in their favour. We Militia officers, in our dealings with Maliks over recruiting, had got to know them very well. They were always turning up to us with their grievances, which were sometimes very real. This put us and the young Political Agents in very awkward positions - the latter naturally had to back their own subordinates and pay attention to their side of the question. The Tehsildars had their own axe to grind, and often made trouble by trying to stir up differences between Militia Wazir officers, Afridis and Khattaks etc. I daresay the Militia Native Officers did the same between Maliks and Tehsildars. However, by using all the tact possible and with the Political Officers' help and co-operation, we were able to unite into a co-operative body and work for the general good of the Valley.

During the 2½ years I was in the Tochi we were very busy building posts. New posts were built at Saidgi, Kajuri, Thal, Isha, Tutnarai, Datta Khel and Spina Khaisora. The old post at Idak was still Headquarters when I left. A Militia post at Miranshah, though planned, had not been begun.

Regulars remained at Datta Khel and Miranshah - they had an uninteresting time. They were confined to their posts, drilling and training in the vicinities. The Militia did all patrolling, picquetting and pursuing of raiding parties, though naturally the Regulars co-operated when possible.

We found the best way to stop raiding was to counter raid. If we heard raiders were out, it was no use chasing them, but go from where we knew they had originated and raid a village, bringing back hostages and cattle. This meant crossing the border, but for some time we did not know there was a border or where it was. Gradually this became more regularised and borderlines were instituted, and we were forbidden to cross them. This had a deteriorating effect on the security of the valley. We found an offensive-defensive was much cheaper and less wearying than the mere defensive attitude of chasing people we seldom caught.

The building of the Posts was done by native contract, and took a good deal of supervising. On the whole they were satisfactory.

When building Thal post, when the outer walls were complete, the contractor stored all his blasting powder in the magazine that was to be. The coolies took to sleeping in this unfinished magazine on the top of sacks of powder. Naturally they smoked hookahs. One evening there was an awful roar, the powder went off. Luckily there was no door and the powder was not tamped. The masonry room acted like a mortar and they were all blown out, two or three were killed and several badly burnt, but the post was not much damaged. In spite of this, in our inspections we often found bags of blasting powder and attar<sup>38</sup> all mixed up and the workmen living amongst it all.

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<sup>38</sup> flour

## LIFE, AMUSEMENTS AND SPORTS

We were very lucky during our time in constructing the Militia. Until it was complete and proved trustworthy, and until posts were built, Regular troops remained in the valley. At first, therefore, we lived in Regimental Messes, and on tour there was always a Mess, i.e. at Miranshah and Datta Khel; in other posts there was a room set apart for inspecting officers.

At Idak and Miranshah we laid out golf courses. I think it completely spoilt one's golf as one could never touch the hard ground with one's club. We played "sticky" at Miranshah and quoits, and there was football and hockey for the men. The only trouble was having to have escorts and picquets all round. We played "sticky" instead of tennis, as it was within four walls and one could not get sniped.

Playing golf one had to have armed men round with one, but they were useful as fore-caddies. This made shooting a bit of a business, one could not get the men - nor had they the time to be continually picqueting. However we used to get a bit of quail shooting amongst the crops, and I fished a good deal between Thal post and Kajuri, under the protection of certain picquets that had to go out daily from the posts. In 1900 and 1901 the fishing was not bad. I only had a light trout rod and got Mahseer up to 5 lbs. Later, as the prosperity of the valley increased and people were able to put more ground under cultivation, as life and property was more secure, the Daurs took all the water out of the river for irrigation purposes and the river below Thal became almost dry.

Just across the river from Idak, the Si-si shooting was quite good. Round Thal one day I got a few Chukor, went down to the river and caught a fish or two. When doing so a man shot at me and missed. Stupidly, instead of lying doggo, he started running up the hill. My escort had several shots at him, and a lucky shot brought him tumbling down the hill like a shot ibex. He was identified as an outlaw, so that day was not a bad mixed bag.

There are very big Urial and Markhor on Shimdar and around there. We got a few small ones, but one could not stay out long enough to find out good heads, as it was not fair on one's escort, nor is it possible to stalk with men scouting about in front. However the more one shot and went about, the more used the people got to seeing one, and the more one's men got to know the country.

There were leopard in the Tochi, on a chukor shoot from there one Christmas day we shot one with a shot gun, and finished it off with a snider. Round Idak there were leopards. I sat up on the wall of a little post, whose name I forget, towards the Khaisora as the sentry swore to having seen a panther. I sat up for several nights and was rewarded by a Hyena. I was disappointed and more so because on returning to the post one morning I found a dead panther lying at the Tehsildar's entrance. I enquired about it and the Tehsildar told me the following almost incredible story. He said:

Early this morning I went on business to Idak village, coming back I saw two tigers, as he called them, lying on a rock in the sun. I went back to the village, called the Malik, and said there are two tiger outside the village and Government does not like these animals, you must go and shoot them.

The Malik said, "I am no shikari and I am afraid of tigers." The Tehsildar said, "If you don't, I will arrest you and you will be punished." The wretched Malik got hold of an old gas-pipe village gun, loaded with country powder and a bullet and started off followed by half the village. No finesse or stalking, he found the two panthers still sitting in the sun. He was pushed on ahead and he actually did shoot one of them and they brought it in.

Why these two confiding animals remained and allowed themselves to be rounded up by a village "chigga" is difficult to explain. The only explanation is, they were used to villagers and had never been interfered with, and treated the villagers with confidence. However they scored off me, who had for days tried every way of getting a shot at one. The Tochi leopard is very light in colour, almost lemon-coloured.

As I have said before, I was 2½ years in the Tochi. I never slept more than a week at headquarters or any post, and spent the rest of my time on tour, paying the men, inspecting and training them. I never had an idle moment, and looking back on it, enjoyed every moment. I daresay I grumbled at times, but looking back on it I consider it the happiest time of my life. It is a curious thing that happiness is more retrospective than the sensation of the moment.



**Godwin and Militia at Miranshah 1902.**

Look carefully at the Subedar and see if you can spot his own interpretation of dress regulations! (Answer on the next page)



## NORTH WAZIRISTAN MILITIA



Given its size this is obviously a shoulder belt plate, though not the one worn by the Subedar in the picture on the previous – he would appear to be wearing an old Indian Army device with crown – and his upside down bugle horn! Nor does Godwin appear to wear this device in any of his photographs so perhaps it post-dates his time with the Militia, i.e. after February 1903. Even so, it would seem to be extremely scarce and only two examples are known in private collections. The inscription on the scroll reads NORTHERN WAZIRISTAN MILITIA.



Two examples of the shoulder title.

As Charles Chenevix Trench points out in his excellent study *“The Frontier Scouts”*, the various Militias did not do well during the Third Afghan War of 1919. “They had been based on a fallacy:<sup>39</sup> that good officers can make reliable soldiers of trans-Frontier Pathans serving in their own districts and often fighting against their kith-and-kin....So from the loyal elements of the North and South Waziristan Militias and the Mohmand Militia were raised the Tochi Scouts and the South Waziristan Scouts...”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Godwin would almost certainly have disagreed – see page 48

<sup>40</sup> Charles Chenevix Trench. *“The Frontier Scouts”*, Oxford, OUP, 1986, p. 50-51.

## TOCHI SCOUTS



Introduced in the early 1920s, these badges have remained unchanged since then and are still worn today.

