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THE SILLADAR CAVALRY

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The word Silladar is perhaps a Maharashtrian adaptation of the Persian word Aslabardar or a soldier bearing arms. The silladar provided his own horse, accoutrements, stabling attendants, forage, camp equipment, clothing and weapons. The correct designation for this volunteer was Khudaspa or horse owner. The silladar system of the cavalry in India was unique among contemporary armies and is said to be somewhat like the Cossacks of Russia who also followed this method of raising armies. A look into history tells us that most communities in the past have produced equestrian orders, which were usually identifiable with the farmer class. In India too such classes existed, whose daily life centred on agriculture; silladars came from these classes.

The silladar system was very old and some historians have traced the system or the like of it being used by Taimur and Attila. Various armies in India used the word silladar long before the British arrived in India. The irregular cavalry that existed in the various armies in India was essentially a body of free lances that sold its swords and loyalty to the highest bidder. The silladar cavalry was very different from the regular cavalry (Paigah cavalry) where the leader sold the services of his body of men to whoever paid him most handsomely. Essentially, the body of men followed their leader and only his personal advancement was what really mattered, in fact these men were quite similar to the 'Free Companions' in medieval Europe. The length of service of these men depended entirely on the health of their personal finances.

When the East India Company began to exercise political and military power in India, it realised that it was imperative to own large forces of cavalry to be able to enforce its dictates and protect its interests. The indigenous system of the silladar cavalry was seen to be the best and most cost effective means of achieving these objectives. Taking advantage of this prevailing system in India they (the HEIC) were soon in contact with local leaders who provided them with bodies of irregular cavalry as was required from time to time. In August 1765, Lord Clive re-organised the army dividing it into three brigades of similar strength and composition, namely, one company of artillery, one regiment of European infantry (for which the Bengal European Regiment was re-organised into three distinct regiments or battalions), one rissala of native cavalry and seven sepoy battalions. Each rissala consisted of 1 British officer, 1 British sergeant major, 4 British sergeants, 4 native officers, 2 trumpeters, 6 daffadars, and 100 sowars.

The early British officers of the irregular cavalry were as irregular as their men. Very few of them held the King's commission, and seemingly, they too were freelance adventurers who sold their services to the highest bidder. After a few years of service in the Company's infantry officers were seconded to silladar regiments. Perhaps this is the reason that infantry officers founded most of the silladar regiments.

The three rissalas of Clive's army of 1765 were not as good as had been expected of them and were, in fact, a rather inefficient force that was criticised by all. General Smith, the Commander in Chief wrote:

“The black cavalry are at present of no further use than to attend the Commander-in-Chief and Colonels of Brigades, and are too inconsiderable to be in service in times of war; for I know by experience it is impossible, from the viciousness of the horses, to discipline cavalry here to any tolerable degree of perfection and castrating their horses ruins their spirit..... On the commencement of war, the best cavalry in Indostan may be procured within six weeks, Durannees, Tartars, Persians, or Mahrattas..... Subalterns at present command the three troops and enjoy the emoluments of them, which, together with the clothing, is said to amount to little less than Rs. 20,000 a year.”

As a consequence of the strictures passed in 1776, the Nawab Wazir of Oudh agreed to keep a mixed force of all arms, which would be disciplined by British officers. Among others, this force was to contain six regiments of cavalry. A year later, this force was still not in place as the numbers agreed upon were yet to be achieved and the troops were only partially trained. Consequently, Minutes of Council dated 4th. August 1777, ordered that this entire force including the only two cavalry regiments raised by then be transferred to the Company. The force in question consisted of two regiments of cavalry, three companies of Golandez or native artillery (their first employment by the British) and nine battalions of infantry. These infantry battalions were brought down to the strength of the battalions in the Company's service. The two cavalry regiments were reduced to a strength of 400 men each while a third regiment was raised forming a brigade under Colonel Stibbert. The new regiment raised was a silladar regiment, with the men furnishing their own horses.

The re-organisation of the army, vide Minutes of Council dated 22nd. March 1786, saw the only two rissalas of cavalry being reduced to troops of 80 each of all ranks with one each being stationed at Cawnpore and Fatehgarh. During this time, one Indian officer and 53 men augmented each troop. However, this order did not last long and was replaced by a new order vide, Minutes of Council dated 2nd. July and GOCC of 21st. October 1787. Once this new order came into effect each corps was formed into a regiment consisting of three troops, each troop consisting of one British officer, two Indian officers and 55 other ranks.

On 31st. July 1803, orders were given to Major Frith to raise a corps of irregular cavalry, which was to be called the Hindoostany Independent Regiment. It is probable that this regiment embodied several rissalas and bodies of irregular horse which, in previous years, had been in the employment of the Government working at various places and of which very little or nothing is known. Besides the Kandahar Horse, remnants of the irregular cavalry received from Oudh in 1777 were also included in this new corps. The corps was further strengthened with the addition of 600 men. General de Boigne, who for many years was the principal leader of Scindia's army, offered the Company a trained body of 600 cavaliers (mostly Persian), well-armed, equipped, mounted and attended by 100 camel riders and 4 field pieces. This force, initially offered to Scindia who was unwilling to pay the price being demanded, was now offered to the Company. Lord Cornwallis, then for the East India Company, ultimately bought the force for Rs. 350,000. In later years, this force came to be known as the Independent Regiment of Indian Cavalry. This regiment consisted of 10 rissalas each of 1 Risaldar, 2 Jemadars, 10 daffadars, 1 trumpeter and 90 sowars. Their uniform consisted of a light blue or grey angarkha edged with red, a crimson turban worn in Moghul fashion, a crimson cummerbund, white pantaloons, and boots. They were armed with a talwar and either a carbine or a lance eight or nine feet long; the number of those carrying carbines was 10 per troop.

As with any system, once in place and working, defects begin to surface and the silladar system was no exception. The men were usually untrained, undisciplined and often deserted when needed most. The Company then decided to do away with this system and consequently raised a few regular regiments on the Paigah system in the Bengal and Madras Presidencies. However, recruitment of men

for the cavalry proved very difficult. Getting men from the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, who had different loyalties at different times, into a regular regiment was, indeed, a formidable task.

The armies of the East India Company were mainly employed in protective roles more akin to police duties and the need to release the army from police duties created the demand for light horsemen. To fulfil this demand, Skinner, in 1803, and Gardner, in 1809, were ordered to raise for the Company irregular corps of cavalry on the silladar or khudaspas system. These irregular corps were mainly to be used for revenue collection and police duties in and around Agra in the newly acquired areas between the rivers Ganga and Jamuna. Establishing his headquarters at Chaonni (cantonment), Kasgunj, on the land allotted to him by the Government, Gardner on 12th May 1809 raised his corps - Gardner's Kasgunj Irregular Cavalry. The various corps raised by these gentlemen later became the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Bengal Irregular Cavalry and it was the formation of these three regiments that really laid the foundations of the Silladar Cavalry in the Indian Army.

Over a period, the Moghul standards of courtly splendour, valour, ritual, dress, decorum, and etiquette, had become the norm that defined rank and social status in north India. In fact Skinner, when he raised his rissalas, replicated the systems that were practised by the Mughal mansabdars¹. Amongst others, he also adopted the Moghul system of the techniques of warfare, etiquette, splendour, authority and words of command. He restored the criteria of rank and status that was not only determined by the clan-leadership but also by the number of silladars and horses brought by the recruit. The rank of Risaldar was given to anyone who came with 100 horses and Naib Risaldar to the ones who brought sixty horses. Jemadars and Daffadars brought thirty and twenty horses respectively. He allotted to each silladar upon discharge 100 bighas of land. Based on these jagirs awarded by Skinner the social status of the Jats and Gujars (the classes of his corps) rose tremendously, and Skinner's farms became healthy recruitment bases for his rissalas. Besides the rissalas making a great social and economic impact, Skinner's success in establishing in the society this new breed of peasants turned gentlemen-soldiers greatly contributed to the political dominance and supremacy of the HEIC in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces. By about 1824, 2,300 former silladars from Skinner's rissalas were settled in Haryana and the Bhati country from where most of his rank and file came. With 100 bighas to each former silladar the total land distributed to them by 1825 was 2,30,000 bighas.

Vide Proclamation GGO of 29th May 1809 Skinner's Horse was augmented to strength of eight rissalas with galloper guns attached. The strength and the rate of pay for each rissala were fixed as follows:

➤ Risaldar	80	
➤ Naib-Risaldar	50	
➤ Jemedar	45	
➤ Kote-Daffadars	35	(Troop Sergeants)
➤ Daffadars, 5, each @	28	
➤ Nishanbardar	28	(Standard Bearer)
➤ Nagarchi	25	(Kettle Drummer)
➤ Sowars, 100, each @	20	
➤ Vakil	20	(Clerk)
➤ Bhistis, 2, each @	5	(Water Carriers)

(All figures in Rupees)

In 1815, (GOCC of 29th July) the composition of Skinner's Horse was augmented to three corps of 1,000 sowars, each with the following establishment:

¹ A rank derived from personal status and military responsibility.

➤ Captain	1	
➤ Lieutenants	5	
➤ Cornets	5	
➤ Risaldars	10	
➤ Naib-Risaldars	10	
➤ Jemadars	10	
➤ Kote-Daffadars	10	(Troop Sergeants)
➤ Daffadars	80	
➤ Nishanchis	10	(Standard Bearers)
➤ Nagarchis	10	(Kettle Drummers)
➤ Vakils	10	(Clerks)
➤ Bhistis	100	(Water Carriers)
➤ Havildar	1	(To work on galloper guns)
➤ Naik	1	.....do.....
➤ Sepoys	41	.....do.....

By about 1823, it was felt necessary that there should be some uniformity amongst the various corps of irregular horse. GOCC dated 6th May 1823 ordered that all local horse and provincial battalions of infantry be placed on a fixed scale in terms of the number of officers, non-commissioned officers and men, while at the same time a detailed list was given of all these corps, showing their composition, strengths, and duties. The silladar corps at this time in the service of the Company were:

- I. 1st. (Skinner's) Local Horse
- II. 2nd. (Gardner's) Local Horse
- III. 3rd. (Blair's) Local Horse
- IV. 4th. (Baddeley's) Local Horse
- V. 5th. (Gough's) Local Horse

The silladar regiments, hitherto know as Local Horse, were ordered to be called Irregular Cavalry by GGO No. 276 of 1840. It was also decreed that, since the local horse were neither armed nor equipped by the State, they were to rank after the infantry.

The real difference between the silladar corps raised by Skinner and Gardner, and the khudaspa corps employed before Skinner and Gardner, was the establishment of the 'Assami' and the 'Chanda' Funds. Assami was the total value of the property which a sowar was expected to maintain so as to be in top order, and consisted of the following:

- I. Full value of the horse.
- II. Value of a half share in a transport pony, which carried the equipment and kit of two sowars.
- III. Full value of the arms, equipment and uniforms of the sowar.
- IV. Value of a half share of a tent, which accommodated two sowars. These pairs of sowars were called a Jori (pair).
- V. Value of one and half month's pay, which every silladar had to deposit with the regiment as working capital.

In the beginning, the men were provided with the animals and all articles that were needed for soldiering, which were valued by the regiment and credited to the man's account. However, as the system developed further, this was done away with and the men were given cash in lieu, which was

called 'Prices'. The Chanda Fund was basically set up as insurance for the horse/s, which the silladar used during the course of his service in the regiment. Subscriptions to this fund were through:

- I. A monthly subscription from each silladar.
- II. Compensation paid by the HEIC every time a horse died or was killed.
- III. By way of sale of casters. (Horses unfit for service in the regiment - cast away)
- IV. By way of initial capital deposited by the silladars who brought in cash instead of a horse.

The setting up of this fund became necessary after it had been noticed that, fearing their loss, the khudasparas were very reluctant to risk the lives of their mounts in battle. This would be a personal loss for them and would also result in them being dismounted. In 1872, Skinner's Horse started the Horse Chanda Fund and the monthly deduction for each horse was about Rs. 3 from each subscriber.

Once the Chanda Fund was in place, horses bought by the silladars were valued for the purpose of their insurance. On being discharged, the silladar had the choice of either taking back the horse he bought with him when he enlisted, or taking cash in lieu of the animal. The amount payable in cash was the value of the horse as assessed when the silladar was first enlisted. As the system continued further standardisations took place. Silladars were now obliged to bring horses of at least a certain value, failing which they had to pay cash into the Chanda Fund equivalent to the shortfall in value of their mount. This practice ensured that regiments maintained horses of a minimum standard and quality in their stables.

Setting up the Regimental Fund came next. This was considered to be a very important fund since it served as a 'reserve fund' for the regiment from which all unplanned expenditure was met. Some typical expenses paid for from this fund included:

- I. New uniform made for ceremonial detachments for Parades, Coronations, or Durbars.
- II. Expenses attributed to sending regimental teams to compete in various events such as, polo, assault-at-arms, hockey, football etc.
- III. It was customary to invite all pensioners to witness the regimental sports day. Presence of the pensioners on the sports day also turned the event into a regimental reunion. Railway fares for all the pensioners who attended were paid from the regimental fund.

According to the earliest rules on the subject of horses (Minutes of Council, 8th. April 1793), horses for the cavalry remounts were bought by a commissariat agent. These horses were passed into the ranks after a committee of cavalry officers approved them. The standards laid down at that time were:

- I. Age (in peace): Not under 3 and not over 8 years.
- II. Age (in war): Not under 4 and not over 9 years.
- III. Height: Not under 14½ hands.

On 2nd October 1801, the rule pertaining to the height of the horses was modified. With the new rule, horses of 14½ hands, even if under 3 and over 8 years, were now acceptable. In such cases, a committee would satisfy itself that the horse met all other parameters. Even though the Government Stud establishments were started in the early part of the century, the demand for good-sized horses far exceeded their supply. As a result of this, on 18th. September 1816, the standard height of the horses was reduced to 14 hands. Horses from the Government Studs were allotted to the regiments by lots.

As time went by the practice of each man getting his own horse began to die out. The silladars would now either bring their horse with them, or be loaned by the regiment a fixed amount of money needed to buy a horse. This money was paid back upon discharge. The result of this practice was that the Chanda Fund became the de-facto owner of all the horses in the regiment. The manner in which

regiments mounted themselves was perhaps the best indicator of the regiments' financial health. Good, careful and honest management of funds ensured that, in 1914, both the regiments of the Central India Horse and Skinner's Horse were entirely mounted on imported Australian horses called Walers (i.e. originally from New South Wales). Every year both these regiments sent out selected officers to Calcutta and Bombay who bought batches of these horses for their regiments. The Central India Horse paid a top price of Rs. 400 per horse, which was later fine-tuned to Rs. 380 each. Not all regiments were able to afford such luxuries and some, the not so well managed, paid as little as Rs. 280 per horse. Poona Horse was entirely mounted on Arab horses until their prices became unaffordable and they too moved on to the Walers. The regiment paid for a horse missing in action only if the owner was wounded in the same action.

In about 1898, the Government gave large grants of land to various regiments for use as horse breeding farms in the various Punjab Canal Colonies where settlements were being built. These colonies being established along the newly built irrigation canals were extremely fertile and, to this day, command the highest prices. Some of these farms were located in Layallpur (17th. Lancers), Probynabad (Probyn's Horse) and Okara (Hodson's Horse) in the Montgomery district. The experiment to allot land for stud farms was designed to help meet the shortfall of good quality 3½ to 4½ year old remounts needed by the cavalry regiments at a price the Chanda funds could afford to pay.

These stud farms, when run properly, were of great assistance to the regiments. The farms were usually entrusted to retired senior Indian officers of the regiment who ran them very efficiently. In 1899, when more grants of land for the stud farms were given, this time in the Chenab Canal Colony, a few more regiments of Bengal Cavalry took up the offer, namely 12th. Bengal Cavalry, 13th. Bengal Lancers, 17th. Bengal Cavalry and 18th. Bengal Lancers. For some reason, the 13th. Bengal Lancers did not take up the land allotted to them and that land was subsequently allotted to the 15th. Bengal Lancers. The four regiments which received land grants here were:

No.	At	Town	Area in acres	Regiment
Mauza 221	Rakh Branch	Kot Pollard	1,554	15 th . Lancers (Cureton's Multanis)
Mauza 231	Rakh Branch	Muirabad	1,718	17 th . Cavalry
Mauza 292	Gugera Branch	Moneypur	2,070	18 th . Lancers (Tiwana Lancers)
Mauza 295	Rakh Branch	Goughpur	1,487	12 th . Cavalry
Mauza 329	Jhang Branch	(?)	1,060	18 th . Lancers (Tiwana Lancers)

Farms belonging to the 12th. Cavalry, 15th. Lancers and 17th. Lancers were on the Tolwala Distributary close to Layallpur and that of the 18th. Lancers near Toba Tek Singh. The Commandant of the Tiwana Lancers was offered (which he accepted) an additional 1,060 acres at Mauza 329, Jhang Branch, a piece of land hitherto considered non-irrigable. The malikana² and cess that was to be paid by the occupiers (the cavalry) was waived for eleven years instead of the regular ten, and a special water-rate of Rs. 1-4 per acre for each crop was sanctioned for the cavalry stud farms grass paddocks up to August 1904. All these farms had excellent buildings, stables and paddocks and the results they produced amply justified the experiment. By 1900, when the construction on most farms was complete, some mares were sent out from the regiments to start the breeding. A part of the farm was always used for farming a crop as well as grass for the horses. Constant thought and effort was put into these farms

² Land revenue/owner's rate

so that they would become the very best possible. The better managed farms were breeding horses of such good bloodline that they found buyers in far off England and America.

When the silladar system ended, the Government took back the land given to the regiments for running their stud farms, the sole exception being the land given to Probyn's Horse at Probynabad. The Government also took back the funds associated with the running of the stud farms (the Horse Run Funds) as well as the Chanda Funds, which resulted in the regiments losing a lot of money to the State. Hodson's Horse, for example, surrendered Rs. 2,31,551 from these two funds!

Almost up to the start of the Great War there was no set standard at the regimental level related to forage and fodder for the horses. Each silladar was at liberty to feed his horse (or horses) with whatever, and in as much quantity, as he desired. The Squadron Commanders could only suggest what they considered might be appropriate forage and fodder for the horses in a particular season but they had no powers to enforce it. As the silladars were paying for the feed from their pockets, they would study the animals in order to get the most economical combination of the feed. However, there was one condition related to the feeding of the horses; the animals had, at all times, to be up to the standards desired by the Squadron Commanders. In the unlikely event of horse management skills, the horse was taken into the custody of the Squadron Commander and kept in his stables until the animal was considered properly conditioned. The food bills in such cases were obviously footed by the silladar who owned the horse.

The silladar system mandated that each Jori (pair) owned one baggage pony for their own use, whereas the Indian officer had to have his own personal pony. These were always country ponies. The success of the Chanda Funds now saw the setting up of Pony Chandas to maintain these animals for baggage and grass. This fund was also very successful and resulted in the country pony being replaced by the more expensive and steadier mule. To help the regiments organize their mule transport, the Government lent each regiment 89 Government mules that thus remained as a Government transport reserve and were being maintained at no cost to the exchequer.

Each mule had an attendant (syce) who was the personal servant of the owner (or owners) of that mule. The mule attendant daily cut grass for his master or masters' horses and mules and did any other work that was assigned to him. Other than this he was required to work on the Rukh (grass farms) allotted to the regiment for the provision of grass for the horses and mules. During marches the mules carried baggage, and when in cantonments they carried the grass from the Rukh Lines. During the marches, the syces followed the regiment on the baggage ponies (later mules) at not less than 8 kilometres an hour. Upon arrival at camp, they unloaded the baggage and went off to cut grass for fodder.

One important feature that contributed to the efficiency of a cavalry regiment was the health and shoeing of their horses. This, coupled with the fact that men often refused to work in occupations which were considered to be beneath their caste, made the farriers much sought after. Cavalry regiments had eight farriers on their strength but since this was inadequate for the entire regiment, they additionally trained one man per troop to shoe horses.

Being self-contained in transport, this system gave great mobility to the silladar regiments. They could move from any location in India within a few hours' notice. In 1832 Major-General Sleigh, CB, wrote of the Hyderabad Contingent (cavalry):

“... .. The great advantage these corps possess over the Regular cavalry is they move without delay and never require aid or assistance from the commissariat. They have everything within themselves that the most efficient commissariat could give a King's regiment and could, on emergency, get twenty-four hours' start of any of them.”

An incident that occurred just before the second Afghan war aptly demonstrates the efficient mobility of these regiments. The 3rd. Cavalry of the Hyderabad Contingent was ordered to move to Karachi en route to participate in the second Afghan War. The regiment was then garrisoned at Mominabad, a cantonment station eighty-two miles from the nearest rail-head, linked only by a cart track which, because of the monsoons, was in a boggy condition. Within fourteen hours of receiving the orders the entire regiment was out of the cantonment. By the fourth day it had entrained 450 men and horses and 300 baggage animals complete with followers and baggage, and by the sixth day they had embarked in five transport ships at Bombay.

In later years, in some regiments, the Chanda system was also applied to the provision and maintenance of tents, saddles, arms and equipment of all descriptions. There came a time when in some regiments the only thing owned by the silladar was his uniform! The sole exception to this was the supply and maintenance of pistols and some technical equipment, provided and maintained by the Ordnance Department. Eventually there were the Horse Chanda, Mule Chanda, Equipment Chanda, Forge Fund, School Fund, Horse Shoes Fund and many more. In the Hyderabad Contingent, the men contributed to an Amanat (surety) Fund, which was forfeited if the subscriber deserted.

The Supply & Transport Corps independently did the rationing of the men, horses and mules. The regimental banias also did the rationing, and very efficiently. The regimental Bania was a personage that owed his origins to the silladar system. This too was an Indian tradition, which was adopted by the British. With the introduction of capitalised assamis and deductions made by the men, regiments came to have large sums of money at their disposal. Some of it was invested in government securities and some of it was loaned back to the men at an interest of 6¼ per cent per annum. Soon various regimental committees themselves began buying rations, equipment, fodder etc. and this resulted in some regiments dispensing with the bania. Other regiments, however, continued with them. The vagaries of the Indian monsoons ensured that the bania was an important man in his domain. He was responsible for arranging (at the lowest prices) and stocking rations, accoutrements and other items of daily requirement of the regiment in his shop at the regimental bazaar. The bania also kept in safe custody small savings of the men at an interest and more importantly acted as a moneylender to the troops. During the early days of the system, each troop had its own bania and he stocked at least three days of grain at all times. The commanding officer kept a register with the names of all the banias in his regiment. Each bania who was permitted to do business in the regimental bazaar paid a fee to the regiment. An Indian officer was appointed the Regimental Kotwal whose job it was to ensure that the bania supplied proper quality and quantity of grain and that no one, unless authorised, did any business in the regimental bazaar. Upon his release a silladar could not get his dues from the regiment unless he in turn had cleared any dues owing to the regimental bania. Some regiments actually had orders to this effect in their regimental standing orders. Traditionally, banias as a class have had a bad reputation, perhaps not without reason, but at the other extreme was Mata Din, the bania of the 1st. Central India Horse whose father had served with Mayne. He is said to have always worn the red trousers as prescribed for the profession in the Dress Regulations and was also reputed to have spent a devoted lifetime in taking good care of the regimental funds. Though the bania saved a lot of money for the regiment and also reduced the workload of its officers, dispensing with them made the regiments richer and the Indian officers more self-reliant and resourceful as they were now doing all the purchases themselves. The 10th. DCO Lancers (Hodson's Horse) did away with the regimental bania in 1912 and was, perhaps, the first of the silladar regiments to have done so. They also started a regimental co-operative savings bank for the men in the same year, the aim being to inculcate habits of thrift and independence of moneylenders and, incidentally, also to assist in liquidation of debts owed to the regimental banias. The initial resistance to the venture was quickly overcome and soon the bank had 260 members holding an aggregate of 1506 shares of Rs. 10 each. This bank was affiliated to the

Punjab Co-operative Village Banks and was audited every year by qualified auditors. To this day, the bank continues to function successfully and is *possibly* the only one of its kind in the Indian army.

The silladar system functioned like a Co-operative and in its later years each regiment was actually a Co-operative Society. Every member of the regiment was a shareholder with the commandant as their Managing Director. In the very early days of the silladar system each 'Company' (regiment) contracted with the Government to supply 625 cavalymen, fully mounted, provisioned and equipped, for a consideration of 30,000 pounds per annum. In those days, each silladars subscription was anything between 3 and 45 pounds.

In 1861, the Bengal Army was once again re-organised and GGO No. 494 of 31st May 1861 dealt with the cavalry element. In 1860, there existed seventeen native cavalry regiments under the Government of India and twenty-nine under the Commander-in-Chief. Of the former the Nagpur Cavalry was disbanded, Meade's Horse was incorporated into the Central Indian Horse; the remainder, including the Guides and the five Punjab regiments, remained unchanged. Of the latter twenty-nine, ten were disbanded – namely, 3rd, 9th, 12th and 16th Irregular Cavalry, Alexander's Horse, Benares Horse, 1st Mahratta Horse, 3rd Sikh Irregular Cavalry, Ramgarh Irregular Cavalry and Lind's Pathan Horse. The balance was re-numbered from 1 to 19 with each regiment consisting of 420 sowars in six troops with monthly emoluments as follows:

- 3 Risaldars, one each at Rs. 300, 250 and 200 a month, respectively.
- 3 Ressaiddars, one each at Rs. 150, 135 and 120.
- 1 Woordi Major, on Rs. 130.
- 6 Jemadars, 2 each at Rs. 80, 70 and 60.
- 6 Kote-Daffadars, on Rs. 47.
- 48 Daffadars, on Rs. 38.
- 6 Nishanbardars, on Rs. 38.
- 6 Trumpeters, on Rs. 34.
- 420 Sowars, on Rs. 27.

A sowar in the last days of the silladar system earned approximately Rs. 34 per mensem (though some sources put this figure at Rs. 40), a reasonable sum in those days. The large amounts of funds held by the silladar regiments suggest that profit was definitely a motive insofar as it was used for the betterment of the regiment. A look into the accounts of any of these regiments proves beyond doubt that they had in their ranks highly trained and very capable accountants. Everything in the regiment was considered private property and, upon retirement or release, the silladar would sell his property back to the regiment thus acquiring a cash asset in addition to which he also received a pension. The rules governing the pensions were flexible and, by about 1860, family pensions were introduced. Kaushik Roy in his essay *Benefits for the Soldiers* quotes an example where the mother of one Risaldar Wachan Singh was paid Rs. 1,000 after his death (in 1860) as a special grant after he died fighting gallantly. It was probably a combination of the pension and the capital that they received that attracted men to these regiments. The famous Indian saying 'Nanga aata, nanga jata' (came naked, returned naked) did not apply to the silladar regiments. These men were well looked after compared to those in the regular regiments and this saying was actually attributed to men from regular regiments. In fact, Gardner is said to have paid a sowar of exceptional skill as a swordsman a sum of Rs. 150 per month - and this was in 1809!

It is extremely interesting that even in the early part of the nineteenth century this system was so well developed (and refined) that cash incentives were being given to the troops of the silladar regiments and, for maximum effect, the system was kept flexible. Regimental standing orders, some of which are listed in the pages that follow, amply illustrate this fact (see the Horse Fund and Mounted Sports –

pages). Naib Risaldar HM Khan of the Poona Horse retired in 1861 after serving for some forty-three years and was entitled to a pension of Rs. 20 per mensem. In view of his excellent performance at the assault of Asirgarh in 1818, he was granted an extraordinary pension of Rs. 50 per mensem. In another case, Maula Bux of an Irregular Cavalry was granted a full pension after having served only thirty-six years and two months, against the mandatory forty years. The GGO No. 83 dated 17th. April 1837 introduced various rewards for good conduct and instituted of the Order of British India and the Indian Order of Merit. The grants for each class of these two awards were to be as follows:

Order of British India 1st. Class:

- I. One rupee a month after sixteen years.
- II. Two rupees a month after twenty years.
- III. The recipient to be admitted to this order should not have been convicted, court marshalled, or have had his name entered twice in the defaulters book.
- IV. To be awarded to Indian officers for long and honourable service.
- V. One hundred members to this class at any given time, with half of them from the Bengal Army.
- VI. Extra pay and pension of two rupees per day.

Order of British India 2nd. Class:

- I. One rupee a month after sixteen years.
- II. Two rupees a month after twenty years.
- III. The recipient to be admitted to this order should not have been convicted, court marshalled, or have had his name entered twice in the defaulters book.
- IV. To be awarded to Indian officers for long and honourable service.
- V. One hundred members to this class at any given time, with half of them from the Bengal Army.
- VI. Extra pay and pension of one rupee per day.

The Indian Order of Merit, to be awarded for conspicuous gallantry in action, was divided into three classes:

- I. 1st. Class: Entitled the holder to get double pay and pension.
- II. 2nd. Class: Entitled the holder to get an extra half of his full pay and pension.
- III. 3rd. Class: Entitled the holder to get an extra third of his full pay and pension.

To be able to retain the medals (campaign, gallantry, or good conduct) the men had to behave well, as they were liable to lose their medals for misconduct or if they faced court martial. Besides gallantry, good conduct was also made a criterion for promotion. Trooper Mohammad Afzul of the 1st. Punjab Cavalry had personally attacked the rebels in Kanauj on 23rd. October 1857, but due to his bad conduct, he was not promoted to NCO rank.

In the GGO of 21st. June 1837 commissions were granted for the first time to Indian officers of the irregular cavalry. GGO No. 120 of 13th. August 1838 announced the pensions for wounds received in action; these in cases of permanent disability or being maimed were on the following scale:

- I. Risaldar or Woordi Major/Subedar: Rs. 25.
- II. Ressaidar: Rs. 18.
- III. Naib Risaldar/Jemadar: Rs. 12.
- IV. Jemadar of Local Horse: Rs. 7.

By about 1904, grants of land were being given on a regular basis to Indian soldiers of the army and especially to those from the silladar regiments for long and faithful services rendered. The larger grants were usually for the Indian officers and the smaller ones for the NCOs, though numerous sowars had also received land grants. Initially, the Financial Commissioner on the recommendation of the Military Department made all the grants. Later, at the time of the allotment of the Gugera Branch an area was marked and placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief who divided it amongst all the native regiments that recruited from Punjab. Consequently, each commanding officer obtained a fixed number of grants, which he could distribute as he liked. The rules that applied to these grants were that the recipient should be a native of Punjab or from its dependent states, be of agricultural status, and should have served not less than nineteen years (seventeen in the case of the Madras and Bombay Armies). All grantees were bound to retire as soon as they qualified for pension on completing 21 years' service, though numerous exceptions were made from time to time to allow the Indian officers with long service to complete their time for a second pension. Accordingly, on the Jhang and Gugera Branches (in the Layallpur district), pensioners were usually given land in separate villages to their own and were grouped together with due reference to the regiments as well as their tribe, religion and district. There were some homogeneous peasant pensioner villages in this area with the estates belonging to the silladar regiments being named after their founding fathers e.g. Hodsonabad (Hodson's Horse), Probynabad (Probyn's Horse), and Fanespur (Fane's Horse). (Subsequently, there were Rattrayabad (45th Sikhs) and Kot Brasyer (14th Sikhs) and, it was in these two Branches where the dependents of the twenty-one who fell at Saragarhi received their land grants.)

Another interesting invention of the silladar system, or rather of its 'Co-operative' nature, is the origin of the institution known as Durbar, a practice subsequently adopted by all regiments of the Indian army (to this day all units of the Indian army adhere to this practice). Since everyone enrolled in a regiment was a member of the 'Co-operative Society' (regiment) therefore by right, they could at any time inspect the books of accounts. This inspection necessitated a periodic meeting of all the members' - officers and men, i.e. the 'shareholders' and the 'Managing Director'. The accounts were placed before all for scrutiny and thus the durbar came into being. Broadly speaking the durbar was a 'Board Meeting' of sorts.

Some historians have argued that, with a view of benefiting from the Mughal symbols of legitimacy, Skinner re-created this Mughal ritual of the durbar at his estate in Hansi. The only difference between the two was that Skinner's durbar retained the Moghul spectacle but changed its character to suit the requirements of his masters, the HEIC. In order to maintain friendly and lasting ties with the rank and file and keep the pipelines of potential recruits open, a relaxed approach was adopted by him.

No important decision that would affect the interests of the regiment could be taken without consulting the stockholders (men) who were represented by the British and Indian officers assembled at the weekly durbar. British and Indian officers could give their opinion on any matter but there were no voting rights for anyone. All other ranks were free to attend and listen to the proceedings but were obliged to maintain silence at all times.

Durbars were usually held under a convenient tree near the lines. Under the tree, the Commandant's table and chair would be set. On one side of the Commandant's table would be a line of chairs for the Adjutant and other British officers. Benches for the Indian officers were set out in a line opposite to the chairs for the British officers. On the fourth side of the square sat the men, thus all faced the Commandant and each other. The attendance at the durbars was usually high and the men took great interest in hearing the affairs of the regiment being discussed. An item on the agenda that was always greatly looked forward to by the men was witnessing justice dealt out to the offenders.

Once assembled the Mir Munshi (chief accountant) would open the proceeding by reading aloud the minutes of the last meeting, which were then signed by the Commandant. Next came the report of each of the 8 Kote Daffadars of the regiment on how many men, horses, followers, rifles etc. were present and each ending his piece with the two very famous words still in use – ‘baqui khariyat’ (everything else is all right). Lt. Col. John Masters DSO, in his book *Bugles and a Tiger - My Life in the Gurkhas* most eloquently describes this ritual:

“... .. He might have reported that five barracks had been burned down, two women had been murdered, the treasure chest robbed, and all the recruits run away, but he would certainly have wound up with the confident statement that everything else was all right.”

The Mir Munshi now came forward, took his place by the side of the Kote Daffadars, and would report the amount of cash in the regimental treasure chest. After the end of this routine each half squadron commander would stand up and in turn bring up the business of his half squadron – sowars on leave, syces names to be deleted, horses to be seen, articles of equipment to be inspected, prisoners, recruits etc. One by one, the recruits (some of them future Indian officers!) would be led up to the Commandant’s table and be seen by all assembled. Characteristics peculiar to the race and class of each recruit would be very evident by their appearance and body language. Enquiries would then be made on their relations, their sponsors and the assami they were prepared to invest in the regiment.

Once the recruits had been dealt with it was the turn of the offenders. Dressed in the stable grey or white they would stand close behind their Indian officers. Each Indian officer would then narrate the offence of the man under his charge and, after hearing the offender’s side of the story, punishments as appropriate were immediately pronounced.

The Commandant then made various announcements after which the senior Indian officers present would discuss the price of grain. This would be followed by other business related to grass farms, forge, engine, ‘lines’ building, grain godowns, horse hospital, Quarter Masters stores etc.; essentially anything that merited a discussion or being reported at the durbar was taken up.

It was not unusual that all this took so long that the lunchtime was passed and the Commandant and others had to be at polo in the same hour. It was expected of a good Adjutant to plan a diversion if the durbar was being too stretched. He would possibly send a messenger from the office with an urgent telegram warranting the prompt attention of the Commandant. This would obviously end the durbar and any pending items would be carried forward to the next week’s durbar.

A Commandant’s reputation depended in his ability to answer impromptu and often awkward questions that might be addressed to him at the durbar. Upwards of 350 pensioners were present at an anniversary Durbar of the 10th Bengal Lancers (Hodson’s Horse) in December 1907. One aged Muslim pensioner rose and showed the Commandant a piece of paper that allowed him to travel at half price in the railways from his native village to Jullundar for the anniversary celebrations. He now wanted to go on a Haj to Mecca and queried if the Colonel Sahib would kindly arrange similar facilities with the authorities? Colonel Mitland Cowper (later Major General and Colonel of the regiment), then the Commandant of the regiment, rose to the occasion. “Assuredly, I will give you a certificate if you so wish, but you must bear in mind that if you achieve your Haj at half price you must expect to receive only half the benefit” he said with impeccable logic, which most effectively ended the matter.

The Commandants of the silladar corps exercised almost unlimited powers as was explained by the Adjutant General to Captain Skinner in a letter in 1809:

“For misconduct, daffadars and privates may be discharged upon their being pronounced unworthy or unfit by five native officers of the corps, whose opinion in all such cases is to be recorded, and if any native officers misbehave in a manner to render themselves unworthy of the service, their conduct is to be reported to the Commander-in-Chief.”

With regard to dress, each commanding officer in the Bengal cavalry had a good deal of independence, the result of which was that the uniforms of the men in silladar regiments were rather elaborate, splendid and picturesque, each with their own unique style, distinctive colour, lace and headgear. Skinner’s wore red turbans and cummerbunds with canary yellow jackets; Gardner’s had emerald green alkalaks with silver lace, crimson cummerbunds, red pyjamas and a Persian Kizil-bash headdress. The 6th Irregular Cavalry wore red alkalaks with yellow lace, blue collar and cuffs, a yellow turban, and the 1st. Hodson’s Horse dressed in flamingo red - the list carries on. Gardner’s regiment must have appeared as some medieval army with the sowars dressed up in embroidered silver emerald green coats and red pyjamas and armed with matchlocks, talwars, lances and shields.

Dress Regulations were published for the irregular cavalry in 1863 according to which Indian officers would wear an alkalak or loose frock, pyjamas the same as British officers’ pantaloons, and a native sword. In summer the men wore a white alkalak instead of serge and used a native saddle. In 1868, gilt was substituted for bronze in the helmet ornaments and Multani-matti dasuti (colour) was ordered for the pyjamas of the Indian officers and men. Jackboots with knee tops were ordered for the men instead of the Hessians. In 1862, steps were taken to standardise the saddles. Consequently ‘Nolan’ saddles with high brass-bound cantles were issued to all ranks and steel spurs were substituted for the previously used brass spurs.

Orders were issued on 3rd. November 1818 (General Orders, Calcutta) regarding the standards of the Bengal Cavalry; henceforth one standard per squadron was permitted.

- I. 1st. Standard: Dark-blue, with the Royal Arms in the centre and the Union in the upper corner.
- II. 2nd. Standard: Crimson in colour with the Company’s arms.
- III. 3rd. Standard: In the colour of the regimental facings with the number of the regiment in the centre.
- IV. Flags to be made of “strong satin or silk doubled, trimmed all round with silver fringe, And devices to be worked on both sides..... in rich gold embroidery and to be completed with a double cord of gold and crimson having tassels of the same description.....”
- V. The dimension prescribed was 1 ft. 10½ in. high by 3 ft. 2 in. long from the staff to the tip of the shallow tail, and the staff was 9 ft. long including a gilt spear-bar and an iron rest for supporting it on the stirrup.
- VI. The cost of each standard can be estimated by the amount sanctioned vide Proceedings of the President in Council, of 28th. November 1809 when an amount of rupees two hundred was sanctioned for each standard of the 8th. Bengal Native Cavalry.

The standards fell in two classes, the first being ‘Squadron Standards’ and the second ‘Honorary Standards’. The former were so called as each squadron carried them and the latter was a method of rewarding military gallantry greatly favoured by the HEIC. The grant of an Honorary Standard meant grant of an additional officer on the establishment of the regiment to carry the standard. While the designs of the standards for the regular cavalry were subject to very precise regulations, the designs for the irregular cavalry were seemingly not governed by any stringent rules. The 4th Hyderabad

Contingent also had 'Undress Standards' for each squadron, which were reportedly lost during their move from Mominabad to Bolarum in 1889.

In 1864, standards were abolished for all regiments including those of the irregular cavalry. Regiments in possession of the standards were for some reason permitted to retain them but they could not carry them on parade. Henceforth no Standards were issued to regiments which did not possess them. Consequently, the appointment of the Nishanbardar also ceased to exist and almost all were absorbed and treated as lance-daffadars. In 1930, only the following cavalry regiments were authorised to carry standards:

- I. The Bodyguard of the Governor of Madras. (Presented in March 1924).
- II. 2nd. Lancers (Gardner's Horse).
- III. The Scinde Horse (14th. Prince of Wales Own Cavalry).
- IV. 16th. Light Cavalry.
- V. The Poona Horse (17th. Queen Victoria's Own Cavalry).

English words of command were introduced in 1835 prior to which Persian words of command were used.

Commanding Officers of the silladar regiments did not usually need advice or suggestions from their Squadron and/or Indian officers regarding the qualifications of men being considered either for promotion or as recruits. They usually knew not only their fathers, but in most cases also their grandfathers. It was often the case that retired Indian officers, NCOs, and other ranks would visit their old regiment accompanied by a son or grandson seeking enrolment. Friends and relatives already in the regiment brought in very young recruits. The regiment being a small family, the Indian Officers, the Adjutant, and the Medical Officer vetted every recruit for suitability. If, as was usual, there was no vacancy, his name would be added to the Umedwar (hopeful) Register and he would be called when his turn came up. As the silladar regiments had no training depots, the training of the recruits was the responsibility of the Adjutant, the Woordi Major or the Jemadar Adjutant of the regiment. The Indian officers of the irregular cavalry were Sirdars in the true sense of the word. They were influential landowners who commanded bodies of men raised from their part of the country. As it was often difficult to find khudaspa sowars, these officers often provided them with the requisite horses and equipment. In fact, there was always a long list of umedwars and therefore there was never any need to send out recruiting parties. The umedwars, usually themselves from good stock, joined these regiments for the izzat (honour) associated with service in silladar regiments. In the early days, because the umedwar lists were invariably long, men waiting to be called up equipped themselves with a Barbardari (a transport animal), usually a country pony, and attached himself to a Jori of silladars until he was called up. He became their personal servant and was responsible for feeding himself, his syce and his animals. It is unclear how and when this system of barbardari ended.

Rajahs and princes in India kept armed mounted retainers who were called Bag-girs or rein-holders because the horse and equipment were provided by the chieftain. This term was corrupted to Baghir. In addition to silladars, many irregular regiments also contained men called baghirs. This meant that others owned their assamis. Indian officers often owned one or more baghirs. The actual difference of pay between the mounted and dismounted rate was paid to the actual owners of the baghirs. This meant that a baghir was left with a reasonable return on his investment after paying for the horses' feed. James Skinner is said to have owned 300 assamis while his brother held one hundred. On 23rd. September 1820, the system of baghirs in the silladar cavalry was abolished. This order created much dissatisfaction and was subsequently revised two months later. Years later (as per order (No. 236 of 1840) Indian officers of the first class were allowed to keep a maximum of three baghirs. Indian officers of the second class were allowed two and all others one baghir. Dissatisfaction still prevailed

and after a few years the original system of numerous baghirs was reverted to. The numbers now fixed were five for Risaldars and Ressaidars, two for naib-risaldars and one for daffadars. In 1860 orders were issued that only enlisted men could hold assamis and during the 1861 re-organisation the system of baghirs was finally abolished. In 1875, even unit personnel who still owned baghirs were debarred from owning additional assamis and every man had to be a khudaspa and assami holder.

A man was entitled to seven months of furlough and would take his horse, pony, and syce with him when he went on leave. With the coming of railways, regiments made arrangements for the transportation of the horse and pony to central locations from where the man would make his way home on his horse.

The rank of Risaldar-Major was given to the senior Risaldar of the irregular cavalry regiments vide GO No. 245 of 1886 and they were to enjoy the same benefits as the Subedar-Majors in the infantry regiments.

Polo was a sport that was closely associated with the silladar cavalry. Station polo took place twice a week whereas regimental polo took place once a week. Indian officers and anyone else who could raise a pony, including the Mir Munshi, took part in the game. The better regiments sent out officers to Bombay to buy good polo ponies. Each regiment took the polo tournaments and seasons at various places very seriously. Remounts that passed into the regiment, which looked like potential polo ponies, were sent to the Polo Troop for training by specialists to be good polo ponies. All other equestrian events were also taken seriously and participation was encouraged across the board in all such events.

The 1861 re-organisation of the Indian Army, the first after the Mutiny, mandated that in view of the superior loyalty shown by the silladar regiments no more regular regiments were to be raised. It was also decided that numbers that fell vacant due to the disbanding of regiments during the Mutiny be filled with new silladar regiments. The Madras Army was not affected by the Mutiny; hence, the three cavalry regiments of the Madras Army were the only three regular cavalry regiments remaining in the entire Indian Army. This also explains why the Madras cavalry regiments remained largely unaffected during the re-organisation of the Indian Army after the Great War. The three regular regiments of the Bombay Light Cavalry that existed prior to the Mutiny were converted to the silladar system in 1861, and thus survived the re-organisation of the Bombay Army.

In the GOCC, dated 3rd. May 1864, it was notified that henceforth the 10th, 11th, 13th, and 14th. Regiments of the Bengal Cavalry would be known as 'Lancers' and the daffadars and sowars of these regiments would be armed with lance, sword and pistol. The 19th Regiment of the Bengal Cavalry followed suit a few months later. At the same time orders were given to all other corps that they would all be armed with the standard 'cavalry carbine' which would be given free to all those who gave a firearm in exchange, and at half price to those who did not. Carbines were to be slung across the back on the left shoulder. Lancers were to be of bamboo, bayonet shaped head, not less than 10 feet long, nor more than 11½ feet; and the weight not more than 4 lbs.

The General Order published on 20th. January 1883, for the first time laid down rules as to the classes whose enlistment was permitted in the Bengal Army. Subsequently the addition of another squadron to every cavalry regiment necessitated minor changes in the composition of the various silladar regiments. The composition as was permitted on 2nd. January 1889 stood as follows:

Corps	Class Regt. or Class Troops	Hindustani Muslims	Punjabi Muslims	Trans Frontier Tribes	Trans Indus Tribe	Sikhs	Dogras	Rajputs	Jats	Other Hindus	Remarks
1 st . Bengal Cavalry	C.R.	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
2 nd . Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	2	...	...	...	2	...	2	2	...	...
3 rd . Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	3	...	...	...	2	...	1	2	...	...
4 th . Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	4	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...
5 th . Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	2	...	...	...	1	...	1	4	...	...
6 th . Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	2	...	...	...	3	...	1	1	1	...
7 th . Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	2	...	...	...	3	...	1	1	1 (a)	(a) Brahmins
8 th . Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	3	1	...	...	1	...	1	1	1	...
9 th . Bengal Lancers	C.T.	...	3	...	1	3	1	...	...	...	...
10 th . Bengal Lancers	C.T.	...	2	...	1	3	2	...	...	...	...
11 th . Bengal Lancers	C.T.	...	1	...	1 (b)	4	2	...	...	...	(b) ½ Afridis allowed
12 th . Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	...	3	...	...	4	1	...	...	...	...
13 th . Bengal Lancers	C.T.	...	2	...	1	3	2	...	...	...	...
14 th . Bengal	C.R.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	...	...

Lancers											
15 th Bengal Cavalry	C.R.	...	3	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
16 th Bengal Cavalry	C.T.	...	...	...	...	4	2	...	2	...	...
17 th Bengal Cavalry	C.R.	...	4	2 (c)	2	...	...	...	...	...	(c) Such as Afridis, Afghans, Baluchis
18 th Bengal Lancers	C.T.	...	5	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...
19 th Bengal Lancers	C.T.	...	2	1 (d)	3	1	...	...	...	...	(d) Afridis allowed
Guides Cavalry	C.T.	...	1	...	2	3	...	...	...	...	...
1 st Punjab Cavalry	C.T.	2	...	...	2	2	2 (e)	...	...	...	(e) May include Punjabi Hindus
2 nd Punjab Cavalry	C.T.	1	1 ½	...	1 ½	3	...	...	1	...	...
3 rd Punjab Cavalry	C.T.	2	1	...	1	3	1 (e)	...	...	...	...
5 th Punjab Cavalry	C.T.	1	1	...	1	3	1 (e)	...	1	...	...

Lines and stables, which accommodated the men and horses, were usually made of mud bricks where each Jori had a separate room. The stables were built between the barracks. Most of the lines and stables were built under regimental arrangements and originally paid for either from the Regimental Funds or by the silladars themselves. In the case of 17th Cavalry the money for the construction of the lines in Ferozepore came entirely from the silladars. The mule attendants usually did most of the building work and also maintained the lines. Upon transfer of a regiment, the relieving regiment satisfied itself that the lines were in a habitable condition. Evidently, the Chanda and Price system was applied for the maintenance of the lines. The fact that in 1922, when converted to a regular regiment, such a system was in place in the Central India Horse validates this claim.

In 1890, a Combine called the Bengal-Punjab Cavalry Lines Combine was formed, and another called the Bombay Cavalry Lines Combine was formed in 1901. To these Combines passed the ownership of all the lines constructed under the silladar cavalry with the sole exception of the lines housing the Central India Horse. The Bengal-Punjab Combine owned 18 sets of old and 5 sets of new lines, while the Bombay Combine owned 5 sets of old and 2 sets of new lines. The Military Works Fund owned 3 sets of old lines and 1 set of new lines constructed where the silladar cavalry had never built any, possibly because in these stations were garrisoned the Madras cavalry regiments. In 1912, the Government assumed the responsibility to build and maintain any new lines that may be needed. By 1919, the Combines were abolished and with this, the provision and maintenance of all lines became

the Government's responsibility. With the passing of the ownership of the lines to the Government of India, the regiments claimed compensation from them. Surprisingly, it was paid and all the money thus received was put into the Regimental Funds. In the particular case of the Central India Horse, the only regiment other than the Guides which had permanent stations, their lines in Goonah and Agar were bought by the Gwalior Durbar.

Until 1912, when the Government assumed responsibility for the lines, each regiment of the silladar cavalry recovered a sum of Rs. 175 per mensem from the men, which was paid into the local repair fund that was used for the up-keep of the lines in the particular station. Upon being relieved the balance and accounts of this fund were handed over to the relieving regiment. In addition to the Rs. 175, the regiments of the Bengal-Punjab Combine paid a sum of Rs. 240 per mensem to the President of the Combine. This was in joint liquidation of the loan of Rs. 1.89 million granted by the Government to the Combine for building new lines. Subscriptions to be made to the Lines Fund by every rank were laid down in the Army Regulations, India, and shortfalls if any had to be made good from the regimental funds. After 1912, Rs. 415 (175 + 240) was recovered from each silladar cavalry regiment except for those on field service in which whatever the men contributed was accepted.

There was not much of a difference between the silladars from the era of the Mutiny and those of Skinner's and Gardner's era. However, they were very different to those from the Great War era, the basic difference being that the former brought his own horse, or cash in lieu of his horse, while the latter brought only a part of his assami in cash and the balance was obtained as a loan from the regiment. The amount paid towards the assami was different in each regiment. The 10th DCO Lancers (Hodson's Horse) stipulated a minimum amount of Rs. 50, Skinner's Rs. 100, Rs. 500 in the Central India Horse as against Rs. 800 in the Scinde Horse. For many years before the Great War many regiments preferred those men as silladars who could not bring their full assami in cash. The amounts in cash varied according to the wealth of the various communities enlisted by the regiment. In case of the frontier tribes, it was at times reduced to as low as Rs. 50. After the outbreak of the Great War, it became necessary to accept recruits who could not even bring the modified amounts in cash for deposits, which were otherwise standardised by the regiment for their race/class. By the middle of the war, asking for deposits was totally dispensed with.

This really made no difference to the functioning of the regiments as the recruits were now given a full loan at an interest of 6 per cent per annum, and a small amount was deducted each month from their salaries as an instalment towards the repayment of the loan. Regiments which fell short of funds to give out as loans were advanced the shortfall by the Government with interest.

The outbreak of the Great War brought to the surface the inadequacies of the silladar cavalry. The silladar cavalry was not raised for any serious external warfare but more for internal security duties in specified areas. Though being in existence for so many years, the first regular cavalry charge undertaken by the irregular cavalry had been at the Battle of Meeanee on 17th February 1843, when, during the Scinde campaign, they were brigaded with regular troops. This system of the cavalry worked wonderfully well in India; for operations on the Indian Frontier or beyond it was tolerable but it was certainly not geared for the needs of a winter campaign in Europe. It was also realised that, with improvements in the military machine and regular manoeuvres, the wear and tear of equipment increased considerably which kept pushing up the costs and prices of the assamis. Financial interests of the regiments began to clash with the requirements of the service. As the irregular regiments were a fighting machine and a commercial company rolled into one, too much time was being devoted by them for their own administrative duties and financial management. The regiments were buying, training, breeding horses and mules, buying grains in wholesale, farming on a large scale, acquiring equipment needed for soldering, and doing much more. At the outbreak of the Great War, on 9th August 1914, the silladar regiments were in no position to procure at short notice warm clothing from

the open market in India, or afford to pay for them. As a consequence, most of the irregular cavalry regiments went to France in their tropical uniforms and lightweight boots with the addition of flannel shirt and jersey, which was the best that regimental funds could manage. There was just no time to make up the deficiencies of clothing and equipment and the men were definitely not trained for the kind of warfare they witnessed in Europe. Within two weeks of their arrival in France, the Poona Horse was sent into action in front line trenches as Dismounted Infantry. The Government, realising that it was impossible for silladars to pay for this kind of wear and tear from their own pockets, decided to meet all their requirements on the lines of the British cavalry. They now received from the Government free rations, equipment, horses etc. just as the British cavalry, and this was, perhaps, the only moment that the Indian cavalry had it both ways.

The Great War also threw out of gear the finances of the silladar regiments serving at the various fronts. All of a sudden, there was a dire need of cash to pay the estates of the men killed in action or those invalidated from service due to wounds or sickness, which forced regiments to apply to the Government for loans. David Omissi in his book *Indian Voices of the Great War, Soldiers' Letters, 1914-18* quotes letters from the men, which suggest that this was a larger problem than has been acknowledged. Sowar Mashuq Ali (8th. Cavalry) wrote to his Officer Commanding regarding non-payment of his dues:

“Kitcheners Indian Hospital, Brighton, 24th. November 1915. With respect, I beg to represent that I have received a letter from home to the effect that my salary has not been paid since July last – I mean the allotment of Rs. 20 a month, which I made before leaving for the maintenance of my family. My mother states that she has already made a representation to you about this matter. It is probable that you have acted upon it, because you will doubtless bear in mind that when we, here at war, receive good news from home, we work cheerfully, but when we receive news that makes us anxious, our hearts are no longer in our work, and we are constantly worried with anxiety. The government have accepted responsibility for the welfare of those men who have gone to the war, to the extent that they have promised that if a claim is made against any of those men, no action at law can be taken till they return from the war.”

In another letter, Lance Daffadar Ghulam Mohomed Hayal Khan wrote to Mirza Mahomed Hayal:

“19th. Lancers, France, 11th. April 1916. What is the reason that the pay I allotted you for the family has never reached you? I have sent in two petitions already and am sending off a third. I hope you will get the pay with arrears. The same is the case with all the men who have come from one cavalry regiment to another in reinforcements. They are all having difficulties with their pay and family allotments. It is a strange thing that some of the men who came with me to join this regiment got their allowances paid to their families ten months after they joined, and, after that, one month their families would get it and another month not. The state of things about the pay is extremely bad and the families are writing and complaining. We are all utterly disgusted.”

Another very serious drawback of the system that came to the fore was the constant movement of drafts from one regiment to another, which created a feeling of resentment amongst the men. Wherever depots were created, the high rates of casualties being sustained were not catered for hence they too became relatively ineffective. Captain Roly Grimshaw in his book *Indian Cavalry Officer 1914-15* wrote:

“The silladar system was not calculated to meet the requirements of the Clausewitz-Von der Goltz conception of war. It wobbles at a 5 per cent casualty list and comes crashing down at the twenties. It might still survive on the North-West Frontier with the petty foraying

expeditions peculiar to those parts, but is financially too anaemic to weather the buffering of a great and prolonged war”.

Two letters reproduced by David Omissi in his book adequately highlight the high casualty rates and also feeling of resentment created by constant transferring of men from one regiment to another. Zafaryab Khan of the 34th. Poona Horse in his letter to Risaldar Wajid Ali Khan of 32nd. Lancers wrote:

“Eighteen men of my regiment and Jemadar Zafaryab Khan have been transferred to the 20th. Deccan Horse, and I am still with the 34th. Major GM Molloy and Lieut. WSC Hamley are with the 20th. and we know them, and I have no grievance against our men’s transfer if only it had taken place at an earlier or later date. But, as it is, we in the Poona Horse feel the transfer because we have no officer or NCO left in the regiment who cares about us and can appreciate us.”

Lance Daffadar Jawani Singh of 22nd. Cavalry wrote to Har Narain Singh of 22nd. Cavalry attached 2nd. Lancers stating:

“22nd. Cavalry, Bolarum, Deccan, 17th. August 1916. Our regiment numbering 505 men is going to Iran shortly to relieve the 17th. Lancers. We will take their horses, and they will take ours. Practically all the men in the regiment are recruits; there are only one or two old men in each troop. This matter causes us great concern, for these men can neither ride nor shoot. Men of only two months’ service are being sent to the front.”

Regardless of the merits and de-merits of the silladar system or what the men went through, the fact is that against all odds these regiments performed magnificently during the Great War. The gallantry awards and the battle and theatre honours earned by these regiments are a testimony of their professionalism in the profession of arms and of their loyalty to their regiments. The silladar regiments collectively earned the following honours and awards³:

➤ Victoria Cross	1
➤ Companions of the Order of the Indian Empire	2
➤ Military Cross	13
➤ Order of British India	72
➤ Indian Order of Merit	137
➤ Indian Distinguished Service Medal	491
➤ Indian Army Meritorious Service Medal	718
➤ Various foreign awards	52

They earned a total of approximately 142⁴ battle and theatre honours, but sadly, the honours were awarded to the ‘new’ regiments of the post 1921 reorganisation. The 21 cavalry regiments of the post 1921 army shared all the honours earned by the 39 pre-war regiments. It is very difficult if not impossible to attribute each honour correctly to the constituent regiment that earned it.

In 1920 it was decided in Simla that the Chanda Funds were Public Funds and were therefore taken over by the Government upon conversion of the regiment. This policy proved very questionable as subscriptions to these funds were different in each regiment and there were no Government rules concerning this procedure save those in the various regimental standing orders, which again varied from regiment to regiment. These funds were organised voluntarily by each regiment in the best interest of their efficiency.

³ These figures only represent the Indian recipients of the silladar regiments.

⁴ Including honours awarded to the 26th Cavalry and Gordon’s Horse

The re-organisation of the cavalry in 1921 envisaged the reduction of the cavalry units from the pre-war 39 to 21, which was to be achieved by amalgamating pairs of regiments. The Guides were made into a single composite regiment, two of the Madras cavalry regiments were left untouched but the 26th Light Cavalry was amalgamated with a silladar regiment – 30th Lancers (Gordon's Horse). To protect their old silladar identities the new regiments were numbered as 2nd/4th Cavalry, 5th/8th Cavalry, 6th/7th Cavalry, 9th/10th Cavalry (Hodsons Horse) and so on, but these numbers were short lived and were soon changed once again. This change saw the names of many fine old regiments being relegated to history - 3rd Skinner's, 4th Cavalry and Gordon's Horse were some titles that ceased to exist.

With the re-organisation of the regiments, their structure was also changed. The fourth sabre squadron was abolished and each sabre squadron now had three lance troops and a Hotchkiss troop of three machine gunners. Shutar sowars (camel riders) authorised as despatch riders were also removed. Each regiment had eight of these except for the Central India Horse, which had sixteen. However, Hodson's Horse purchased four camels from their private funds for such duties before the re-organisation.

The authorised strength of a regiment in 1921 was 14 British officers, 8 Risaldars, 10 Jemadars, 504 non-commissioned officers and sowars. There were 527 horses and 30 pack-horses. The headquarter squadron had a machine gun troop with two sections and a total of four Vickers machine guns, a signal troop and an administrative troop. A committee presided over by General Sir Eric Geddes was set up to recommend the yardstick for mustering out surplus Indian officers. The 'Geddes axe' fell hard and it created much unhappiness. Consequently, surplus officers and men in very large numbers were sent home. Hodson's Horse, for example, mustered out 31 Indian officers and 963 other ranks. Some regiments took in new classes of men and received whole squadrons from the regiments which had discarded those classes. Some very well trained and experienced men were lost in the process. 1st Skinner's Horse, an entirely Mussalman regiment, amalgamated with the 3rd Skinner's Horse. This amalgamation, coupled with the reduction of one sabre squadron, brought a significant change in the class composition. The 3rd was composed of Jats, Ranghars, Sikhs and Rajputs and the 'new' regiment was to consist of only Rajputs, Ranghars and Jats, which meant that the Sikh squadron of the 3rd, which had formed a part of that regiment for 72 years, was to be disbanded. Efforts made to transfer them en-bloc to the 28th Light Cavalry did not succeed due to the dilatoriness of their Commanding Officer. When he realised the need for their services he sent in an urgent request for 60 men but arrangements could only be made for 45 men and one Indian officer. The amalgamation that began in 1921 was completed in September 1923 when the constituent regiments of the 13th DCO Lancers amalgamated.

Lances, which had been used as a weapon by the cavalry for over a century, disappeared when the silladar system was abolished. The 'new' regiments were armed with the British cavalry type straight swords except that the Indian version had smaller grips and guards.

Another matter of importance, which was triggered by the amalgamation of the regiments, was the question of surplus mess silver. Committees were established to survey the mess property and recommend disposal of the surplus. The surplus property including unwanted and duplicate trophies were evaluated and sold, officers being allowed to purchase any they wanted. The Scinde Horse credited the proceeds to a fund, which was used to make mementoes of the Great War. These were silver statuettes of sowars in field service marching order as worn in France and the Middle East.

Unarguably, it is true that to run a silladar regiment efficiently, every commandant had to be a shrewd businessperson. The various account heads detailed in the balance sheet of a silladar regiment give us a

very clear picture of how well structured their accounting systems were. As an illustration, listed below are a few such heads from the balance sheet that was prepared by a regiment during its conversion:

Horse Price Account	Horse Chanda Fund
Mule Price Account	Mule Chanda Fund
Equipment Price Account	Equipment Chanda Fund
Horse Hospital Account (Forge Fund)	Horse Shoe Account (Forge Fund)
Treasure Chest Account (in bank)	Horse Stud Farm Account
Assami Kit Account	Syces' Pay Account
Horse Hospital Clipping Account	School Fund
Line Account	Lead and Cartridge Fund
Assami Loss Account	Tailor's Account
Mochi Shop Account	Arms Repair Fund
Payment Ration Account	Bayonet Fighting Fund
Gram Purchase Account	Engine Fund
Family Allotment Fund	Unpaid Assami Account (Assamis of seconded men)
Grain Account	Government Advance for Conversion Account
Committee Disallowances Account	

During the existence of the system, the silladar regiments were the cheapest cavalry regiments maintained anywhere in the world. They not only provided regimentally the horses, transport and equipment but also, within limits, defrayed the cost of feeding themselves, their horses and transport animals. The men were extremely loyal to their regiment as they considered themselves partners in the enterprise. They had a financial stake in the regiment and its honour they guarded zealously. Crime was almost non-existent in the silladar regiments as it brought a bad name to a man's regiment, race/class and family. With the end of the Great War began the end of the silladar system in the Indian cavalry and by September 1923 it had become history. During the days of the old silladar cavalry, the per capita cost including that of the British officers was Rs. 54 per mensem and post Great War it had risen to Rs. 125, and that with no mules for the baggage. The pay of a sowar from Rs. 34 per mensem was now reduced to only Rs. 18 per mensem (some sources claim this figure to be Rs. 16), but of course the previous deductions were not made and, he now received his kit, rations and chargers free.

Evidently, silladar regiments of the Bombay army had their own establishment of non-combatant ranks, which were specific to their requirements and did not match the establishment of the Bengal cavalry regiments. Poona Horse, for example, had on their strength 5 Jasoos (spies), 1 Persian writer, 1 Mahratta writer, 1 English writer, 5 Harkarrahs (messengers/postmen) and 2 Karkums (?), while a contemporary regimental record of Hodson's Horse lists 2 native doctors, 1 Nakeeb (a herald, a person who announces), 1 Munshi (a secretary, reader, writer), 1 Chowdry (the head bania), 1 Mutsaddi (an accountant), 3 Flag or weighmen, 2 Lascars (tent-pitchers) and 6 Bhisties (water carriers) as being employed in their Bazaar and Menial Establishment. Regimental standing orders and the charter of duties of various ranks in a silladar regiment give us a very good insight not only into the functioning of these regiments but also into the way of life and habits of the men who served in them. Listed below are some orders and duties as laid down in the Standing Orders of the 10th DCO Lancers (Hodson's Horse) 1890, revised 1913:

Farrier Major:

- I. He will ensure that the regimental orders on shoeing are strictly carried out.

- II. The Farrier Major would in addition to his doing his own half squadron work shoe the horses of the Commanding officer, Adjutant and Medical officer. The Farriers of their own Squadron will shoe the horses of the Squadron commanders and Squadron officers.
- III. He would detail, according to roster, Farriers to shoe horses and ponies of officers not belonging to the regiment and will inspect such animals after they are shod, he will submit a list monthly to the quarter-master's clerk of horses so shod and will see that the money allowed for this, viz:
 - New shoeing 4 annas
 - Removing shoes 3 annas
 - Hoofs rasped 2 annas
 is distributed amongst the whole of the Farriers.
- IV. He is responsible that the Farrier's tools are complete and in proper order.
- V. He will attend durbar.

Duties of the Farriers:

- I. Farriers will groom their own ponies at stables, and will take them to exercise at the appointed hour.
- II. They will attend at morning reports to show the last shod horses to the squadron commanders.
- III. They are responsible that the feet of the baggage animals of their half-squadrons are kept in proper order.
- IV. The Farriers' shoeing tools are supplied by the forge fund. Squadron commanders will inspect them twice a month.

Section Commanders:

- I. Each half-squadron will be divided into four sections; transfer from one section of a troop to the other should be avoided.
- II. Sections will consist of:
 - 1 or 2 Daffadars
 - 1 Lance Daffadar
 - 16 or 17 Acting Lance Daffadars and Sowars
- III. Section commanders will take care of all horses, arms, and accoutrements, of all men absent belonging to their sections are properly cleaned and taken care of by the sick man's comrade (Joridar) or Syce.

Squadron Darogas:

- I. A sowar was appointed a Daroga.
- II. He will ensure that the syces of a half-squadron were employed at all times on any work either in bringing grass or on fatigue.
- III. He is responsible in ensuring they comply with the orders and also for the cleanliness of their quarters.
- IV. He will accompany the syces of his half squadron and will ensure discipline and pay particular attention to the loading of the mules.
- V. He is also responsible for the correctness of the issue and division of the fodder rations in his half squadron.

Recruiting and Enlistment:

- I. The maximum height is fixed at 5' 8'' and the minimum at 5' 5''.
- II. No man will be enlisted who cannot deposit Rs. 50 towards his Assami. The remainder be obtained from the Government Recruiting Loan.
- III. Troop Commanders are held personally responsible that men of unauthorised castes are not brought up for enlistment.

Regimental Bazaar:

- I. An Indian Officer will be told off monthly for the general supervision of the Bazaar.
- II. No house in the Regimental Bazaar can under any circumstances become private property.
- III. Five gharaas (earthen containers) filled with water will be kept outside every house and a chowdry is to report every occupant of the house who does not comply.
- IV. Charpoys (cots) are permitted in the street of the regimental bazaar only between sunset and sunrise.
- V. A pensioner of good character will be appointed bazaar chowdry. His duties will be as follows:
 - He will be responsible for the sanitary condition of the bazaar and that supplies of the first quality only are brought in and issued to the troops.
 - He will at once report any case of infectious disease in the bazaar.
 - He will not allow anyone to settle in the bazaar without the sanction of the commandant.
 - He will report on or about the 8th of each month, in Durbar, that the rents have been recovered.
 - He will be present in Durbar.

Arms and Ammunition:

- I. The Quarter Guard Sentry will allow no unauthorised person within 20 yards of the rifles and bandoliers.
- II. Rifles should be folded in the blanket upon which each man sleeps. The bandolier containing ammunition being buckled through the trigger guard.
- III. The weight of the lance should not exceed 3lbs 10ozs.
 - Length of the lance: 8ft. 5 ½ ins.
 - Length of the sling: 1ft. 2 ins.
- IV. Pennon width 9 inches, length to centre 8 inches, length to point 27 inches, slings to be attached to the lance shaft by a binding of copper wire 2 inches in width, finished off with one frapping turn. The sling should be so fitted that the bottom of it comes 2 inches nearer the butt than the point of balance.

School:

- I. In addition to the two school masters paid by the Government and obtained through the Punjab Educational Department whose officers shall regulate and inspect the school from time to time, two assistant school masters will be appointed by the Commanding Officer to instruct men in Gurmukhi and Nagri – (Punjabi and Hindi).
- II. The regimental tests whether in Urdu, Gurmukhi or Nagri will be as follows:
 - 4th class: To be passed by all recruits.
 - a) Ability to read ordinary print and manuscript in their own vernacular.
 - b) Writing dictation.

- 3rd. class Certificate (qualifies for promotion to Acting Lance Daffadar).
 - a) Reading, print and ordinary.
 - b) Writing from dictation and ability to keep target registers.
 - c) Arithmetic: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division; also ability to calculate pay, and eligibility for GC Pay.
- 2nd. class Certificate (qualifies for promotion to Daffadar or Lance Daffadar).
 - a) Reading, writing, arithmetic of somewhat higher standard than required for the third class certificate.
 - b) Ability to read and write vernacular sentences written in plain roman characters i.e. block printing in capitals.
- 1st. class Certificate (qualifies for promotion to Kote Daffadar, and Indian Officer and Urdu only, for appointment as pay sowar).
 - a) Reading and writing as for the lower classes but of a higher standard.
 - b) Simple arithmetic as for lower classes, but of a higher standard; also ability to calculate averages and percentages on range registers.
 - c) Ability to make out half squadron books and returns in relation to pay, including broken periods.
 - d) Ability to read and write short reports in the vernacular, written in plain roman characters.

Horse Fund:

- I. The following are the duties of the Salutri (amongst many listed):-
 - a) He will invariably be present during the morning and evening stable hour.
 - b) He will always attend durbar with the hospital register of sick horses.
 - c) He will keep an account of all petty expenses incurred in the hospital, which he will submit monthly to the standing committee on vernacular accounts, and then to officer in charge.
 - d) Extra feed for horses in hospital will be prepared in his presence.
 - e) An assistant salutri will be appointed, who will be under the orders of the salutri and will assist him in the performance of his duties. He must be in possession of a Lahore Veterinary Certificate.
 - f) The whole fee for Dogs who are brought up for treatment will go to the salutri.
- II. When Regimental horses are sold between the prices of Rs. 450 and Rs. 650 the owner will receive a bonus of Rs. 25. If sold over Rs. 650 or any price above that sum, the owner will receive a bonus of Rs. 50.
- III. The following rates to be paid by the officers and others not belonging to the regiment employing sowars (rough-riders) to break in or ride their horses:
 - a) Thoroughly breaking in a young horse Rs. 16
 - b) Riding a horse for exercise, per month Rs. 5

Mule Fund:

- I. Mule Fund is a half-squadron fund. The rate of pony price is fixed at Rs. 120 for Risaldars, Ressaydars and Woordi Major and Rs. 60 for each Jemadar non-commissioned officer, trumpeter and sowar. Special provision will be made for the camel sowars on mobilisation, when they will be provided with ponies by the fund and will become liable to the sowars' rate of donation and subscription.

- II. The monthly rate of subscription is fixed at 8 annas per mule; men in Jori will pay 4 annas each. Should the credit in the Mule Fund of a half squadron fall below Rs. 1500 these subscriptions will be doubled.

Mounted Sports:

- I. There will be voluntary tent pegging every Thursday under an Indian Officer.
- II. No man will be allowed more than three runs. An anna will be given for every peg taken clean away. The peg to be shown on the lance to the Indian officer superintending.
- III. Annual tent-pegging Competition for the half-squadron and regimental prizes presented by the British officers of the regiment will take place at the close of the drill season. The regimental prizes are:
 - a) 1st. prize Rs. 3 per mensem
 - b) 2nd. prize Rs. 2 per mensem
 - c) 3rd. prize Rs. 1 per mensem

The half-squadron prizes are Rs. 1 per mensem for each half-squadron; for this prize every NCO, trumpeter, and sowar who has joined the ranks is, unless sick or absent, to compete in his own half-squadron, and six men per troops are to be placed in order of merit.

Pay Sowars:

- I. They are to be most particular in always spelling the men's names correctly in accordance with Lyall's "Transliteration of Hindu and Muhammadan names," and must always write them in full.

Accounts:

- I. To free men in debt to the regiment:

Rank	Men taking their horses	Men not taking their horses
Kote- Daffadars	Rs. 135	Rs. 78
Daffadars	Rs. 105	Rs. 65
Trumpeters	Rs. 105	Rs. 57
Sowars	Nil	Rs. 40

- II. A permanent advance of Rs. 25,000 has been obtained from the Government at 4% to assist sowars in the purchase of their Assami, which will be distributed at the discretion of squadron commanders.
- III. When men indebted to the regiment are unable to pay their monthly instalments, they will be restricted to the following daily ration, when ordered by Commanding Officer.
 - a) Fighting men: 1 seer⁵ flour, 2 chittacks⁶ dal, 1 chittack ghee and 1 anna in cash.
 - b) Families of men: ½ seer of flour per person.
- IV. The following allowances are to be paid from different funds to the men actually performing the duties or on privilege leave, except those marked with an asterisk, which comes under special rules.

Miscellaneous Fund	Rs.	Forge Fund	Rs.
Regimental tailor	20	Mochi	10

⁵ Measure of weight

⁶ ditto

Mir Munshi	14	Salutri	10
Clerk for writing ledger	5	4 squadron salutris @ Rs. 1-8	6
Cash keeper	8	2 Horse hospital sweepers	12
Lascar	6	Sikligar	8
*Chuprassie	2	Mistris	40
Drill instructor	7.50	School Fund	Rs.
1 Asst. Drill instructor @ Rs. 4	4	1 st . School master	12
2 Asst. Drill instructor @ Rs. 3	6	2 nd . School master	10
3 Asst. Drill instructor @ Rs. 2/50	4.50	3 rd . School master	5
1 Carpenter	7	Nagri school master	3
2 Beldars @ Rs. 6	12	Gurmukhi school master	3
		*Bhisti	1
		*Sweeper	1
Office Fund	Rs.	Lead and Cartridge Fund	Rs.
Adjutant's clerk	39	Musketry instructor	5
Assistant clerk	20	2 Breakers	10
Quartermaster's clerk	25	Syce	7
Assistant clerk	10		
4 squadron writers @ Rs. 6	24		
Officer chowkidar	2		
Mistri	30		
Asst. Mistri	1		
Sweeper	2	(* From Miscellaneous Fund)	

V. As men on enlistment are usually supplied with part, worn effects of men who have become non-effective and as from time to time, changes of equipment and charges become necessary and the cost of the Assami is variable. The following is a table as a guide:

Rank	Fixed Subscriptions					Maximum Charges					Total Rs.
	Horse Price Rs.	Mule Price Rs.	Regt. Fund Rs.	Donation to cover loss on Stores. Rs.	Donation to cover loss on stores of Bagir. Rs.	Uniform Rs.	Uniform of Bagir. Rs.	Horse of Mule Gear. Rs.	Horse & Mule of Bagir. Rs.	Tentage Rs.	
Ris. Major	900	240	450	60	24	594.50	88	20.50	35.50	45	2509.50
Risaldar	900	240	375	60	24	590	88	20.50	35.50	45	2430
Ressaidar	900	240	225	60	24	590	88	20.50	35.50	45	2280
Jemadar	600	120	120	40	12	572	44	20.50	17.50	35	1607
Kote-Dffdr.	300	60	71	25	nil	152	nil	20.50	nil	9	637.50
Daffadar	300	60	63	25	nil	148	nil	20.50	nil	9	630.50
Trumpeter	300	60	62	25	nil	127	nil	18	nil	9	601
Sowars	300	60	51	25	nil	127	nil	18	nil	9	590
Farriers	125	60	46	25	nil	119	nil	18	nil	9	402
Bagir	nil	nil	14	13	nil	83	nil	nil	nil	9	119

When the silladar system ended, some of the better-managed regiments had very large sums of money at their disposal and this was after paying off the assamis of all the silladars in full. One regiment had 35,000 pounds after paying off the assami and they were not the richest of the silladar regiments!

Keeping in view their old relationships and being morally responsible to the men and followers who served in them, many regiments set up Trusts so as to be able to pay grants and pensions. The disposable income derived from the capital was used as the corpus of the fund. These funds brought relief to widows, free education for children and medical aid where needed. Since these residual funds were also being used for welfare, not much could be paid as pensions. In the Central India Horse, the pension for the followers was fixed at Rs. 5 for male and Rs. 3 per mensem for female followers. It was ordained that the young and able be provided employment in the post silladar era but reportedly most were found to be too 'old'. Not surprisingly, twenty-eight years later not one of these 'old' pensioners of the Central India Horse had died!

The regulars never thought much of the irregular cavalry at first. However, their value lay in the immense resource and initiative demonstrated in the wars in Afghanistan and the Punjab, which forced them to change their views. During its existence, the silladar system was responsible for much of the legend, glamour and élan associated with the Indian cavalry. During their heyday towards the end of the 19th. Century, regiments of the Bengal Lancers with their colourful uniforms, gallant traditions and service in strange and far flung areas of the Orient and beyond, came to represent all that was romantic and chivalrous in the British Indian Army.

Sadly, the silladar system passed out unsung and un-mourned and with no representations on record against its abolition. After all, it is too much to expect those aspiring to be Sowars in this day and age to bring their own tanks as a part of their assami!



A Durbar in progress (15th Lancers, circa 1903)

LETTERS AND QUERIES

● Mike Taylor writes:

In the autumn 2005 edition of DURBAR the Editor kindly published a query of mine concerning a 17th Indian Division sign of a black cat on a white background, rather than the khaki ground used in WW2 from end 1942. Brigadier John Randle has offered one possible solution. He confirms he never saw a white background throughout his service with the Division in WW2. He reminds me, however, that “17th Division was reconstituted after the War, largely composed of British Gurkha regiments, to serve in Malaya during and after the emergency. White tropical uniform for ceremonial purposes was introduced into the British Army post-war. I do just wonder – and this is pure conjecture – whether the black cat sign on a white square was introduced then. A black cat on khaki sign would have been a bit odd.” This may be “pure conjecture” but it will do for me pending something definitive and I thank Brigadier Randle for taking the trouble to contact me.

BOOK NOTES

A few mentions rather than reviews on this occasion, though I hope to carry reviews in the next issue.

● *HISTORY OF THE AZAD KASHMIR REGIMENT, VOLUME 1 (1947-1949)*. Produced by the Regimental History Cell from a first draft by Honorary Captain Muhammad Hussain (Retired). Cased, 496 pages, illustrations, maps. Copies of this book are available from IMHS member Mr E A Hussain, House Number 11, Street Number 41, Sector G-7/4, Islamabad, Pakistan; email ehjaz@fsmail.net. The cost is £10 inclusive of worldwide surface mail postage costs and payment can be made

● *THE SIKHS AND THE SIKH WARS – THE RISE, CONQUEST AND ANNEXATION OF THE PUNJAB STATE*. Charles Gough and Arthur D. Innes. Originally published in 1897, this book will need to introduction to many of our members. It is, however, a 2005 reprint by Kaveri Books, New Delhi in association with M.K. Book Services, Huntingdon, England and it is this last part that brought this book to my attention since Huntingdon is close to my home. Melvyn R King of MK Book Services has confirmed to me that he is able to supply almost all in-print Indian publications. Orders are consolidated and delivery can therefore take from between about 3-4 weeks by airfreight, to six weeks or more in quiet times or if the books have to be sent to Delhi first for onward transmission. Invoices are in Sterling but credit cards, cheques and postal orders are accepted. Postage varies depending on the value of the boo order. There is no catalogue as such, but members interested in chasing such books can contact Melvyn King at 7 East Street, Hartford Road, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE29 1WZ; telephone +44 (0)1480 353710, fax)44 (0)1480 431703; email mkbooks@tiscali.co.uk

