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A TERRITORIAL SOLDIER IN INDIA 1914-1917 (Part II)

Alan Harfield

The journal written by Sergeant B. Cooper of the 4th Battalion, The Wiltshire Regiment, continues with his description of the duties and training that were carried out whilst stationed at Kingsway Camp:

On Saturday we again did the long march out to Batarpur Camp. Again it was warmer and it paid us out. We left a single company at Kingsway to do the Vice-regal Guard and a double company of the 1/7 Hants [1st/7th Battalion, The Hampshire Regiment] came from Meerut to strengthen the garrison. On the Monday training commenced in earnest and we went out and did an attack over very rough sandy ground. Tuesday & Wednesday were spent in similar work and digging trenches. We were to have had night operations [on] Wednesday but we were spared that owing to a heavy storm. The rain lasted all night and many of our little tents were flooded out. Thursday & Friday were spent in field firing practices on the ranges and proved very interesting. On Saturday A & B Coys left the camp to come back to the Fort to allow C & F companies to go out and do a week's training. We were glad to get into barracks as the sun was getting very warm.

The companies that had returned to the Fort, and were not on duty, continued with the training programme and the problems that came with the warmer weather.

Physical drill, bayonet fighting & knotting & lashing as it was too hot to get outside and do much. Mosquitos [sic] were a bother to us we had to put up nets at night to keep them from biting us. The nights had become quite warm & to see the Fire flies darting about in the darkness was a pretty sight. At this time we heard that half the Battalion had to go to a hill station for a change, and all eagerly looked forward to see who were the selected ones, as near as possible the Officers tried to pick out all the old & very young hands and those who they thought were not strong enough to stand a summer on the plains. I had to stay on the plains. I was rather disappointed at the time but was glad of it afterwards. The Hill Station selected was Hailana

The personnel of the Battalion who had been selected to stay 'on the Plains' were required to move to the Imperial Secretariat as the troops that had been nominated to remain in the Delhi area were far in excess of the normal pre-1914 summer garrison. The journal continues with the events leading up to the move into the Secretariat accommodation building.

The time for moving from the Fort was drawing close and a great deal of work had to be done ... Just before the day [which was] during [the] Easter Holidays the new short rifle came for us and so we had to hand our old ones in. These came on the Saturday following Good Friday. All things were now settled up and Easter Monday was the day we had to part-company. Kits were packed and loaded onto carts and taken to the Secretariate [sic] for those who were staying behind. I was detailed with 25 men to go to the Secretariate [sic] and put up all the beds a matter of about 400 and being a large building I had a job to find the proper

rooms for Companies. I remember it was very hot because we had to throw buckets of water on the iron bedsteads before we could handle them. After a lot of grumbling from the men I managed to get them up and soon afterwards the troops marched in and prepared for a good night's rest

After a few days we got used to our new abode but every morning at 5am we had to 'fall in' and go to Kingsway to strike camp and take everything to Kingsway Station and then clean the camp, this took us almost a fortnight as we finished at 8am [as] it was too hot to work after that time.

Sergeant Cooper then described the accommodation and the duties that were performed at their new location at the Secretariat.

The Sergts had a private house opposite the Secretariate [sic] for a Mess and a splendid place it was, having two dining rooms, a billiard room with a splendid table, a sitting room, card room, and last but not least a bar. Outside the front we had a lawn & flower borders and at the back a badminton & a tennis court. Our Regimental Sergeant Major W.J. Liddiard stayed with us and he had everything done possible to make us comfortable and I am sure that we all appreciated it. We had Breakfast at 8am, Tiffin at 1pm & Dinner 8 pm. Although vegetables are very scarce on the plains we lived very well indeed. There were so many rooms allotted to each Coy and there were 6 to 8 men in a room and 2 or 3 fans in each room. Two Sergts to a room [and] I shared my room with Sergt A.C. Randall.

Our parades now were, a walk early morning, & a bit of muscle drill under the verandah after breakfast as we were not allowed out much between 10am and 4pm as it was too hot. We were in one continual sweat day & nights and put on 2 or 3 shirts every day. May and June were much the hottest time of the summer & we had 'tatties' made of grass put up at every opening [with water being thrown] on them all day long to keep it a bit cool, then we used to get a sand storm and the lot [were] blown down.

The Company continued to provide guards at the Fort on alternate weeks and many of those that had remained at Delhi were hospitalised as a result of tropical fevers. The journal continued.

I went down with fever and was packed off to hospital where I had plenty of milk and soda and quinine and black-strap. After I came out I put in for furlough and was granted 23 days [leave] to Simla.

Pte J. Ward & myself left Delhi station at 9.30pm for Simla, we arrived at Ambala about 2am & Kalka at 6.30am [Kalka is 162 miles by rail from Delhi] where we had to change on the narrow gauge railway [the distance from Kalka to Simla by rail is 60 miles], we also had our 'chota hazri' [little breakfast]. We continued our climb through the hills for 3 hours until we arrived at Barough, where the train waited for 25 minutes for 'hazri'. Then we continued our journey to Summer Hill station where we had to get out for Mrs Long's Bilaspur House, this we reached at about 12.30pm. Mrs Long was on the station to meet us & we only had about 30 yards to go before we were in home.

The journal recounts details of the various places that Sergeant Campbell visited and the families that he met and received hospitality from during his leave and noted two visits in particular.

On ... Sunday we went to Jetough [Jutogh] where there were two companies of Dorsets stationed there, guarding the wireless station. Early one morning Mr Long took us around

the Vice-regal Lodge, it was a lovely place – beautiful lawns & gardens one mass of flowers, we had a good look at the Howdah a part of which was blown off when Lord Hardinge was bombed in Chandi Chowk, Delhi; it has a tremendous lot of gilt and silver on it. We also saw the large silver chairs in which the King & Queen [King George V and Queen Mary] sat in at the Durbar [at] Delhi. Our time was now drawing on to get back and after saying goodbye to all our friends we left Summer Hill station at 6.30pm on 27th [July] and got to Delhi at 7am on the 28th, now our furlough was ended we were both very sorry as it was the best holiday I ever had. The day after I got back from Simla I had to go on guard duty at Lahore Gate, it was still very hot and found duty quite a change from Simla. Things went on much the same as usual for the time I was at the Secretariat.

Early in the month of September 1915 Sergeant Cooper was ordered to report to the Orderly Room and was instructed to report to the School of Musketry at Changlagali [a small military station north west of Murree] by 8 September. The individual movement order meant that he had to make his way to the school by rail and road which called for a good deal of initiative but this was the normal practice when moving from one unit to another in India if you were not part of a 'draft'. In fact the same procedure was still adopted as late as 1947 when NCOs were expected to be capable of moving, with all their kit and equipment, long distances when being transferred from one garrison to another. Cooper then describes, in his journal, the details of his journey:

I left Delhi by the mail train [this would have been the Frontier Mail travelling over the North-Western Railway line] at 9.30pm on the 5th and as C.S.M. [Company Sergeant Major] E. Hare was going on furlough to Mussoorie he came with me as far as Saharanpur a distance of about 102 miles [Newman's Indian Bradshaw gives the distance as 109 miles]. When Edgar left me I got down to it and had a sleep as I was travelling 2nd class which are very comfortable carriages with electric lights & fans & a lavatory. I arrived at Lahore at breakfast time next morning, after breakfast I continued my journey and arrived at Rawal-pindi [sic] about 4pm after travelling a distance of 529 miles [the Indian Bradshaw gives the distance as being 473 from Delhi station]. I found a soldiers home [this would probably have been Sandes Soldiers' Home which was located just inside the Cantonment area] and had some tea after which I booked my seat at the tonga office.

At 5 o'clock I started another part of my journey and paid 5 rps [Rupees] extra to travel by motor. All went well until we reached the foot of the Murree Hills when the track became very treacherous for a motor, turning round a sharp corner we drove into some cows but nothing was hurt, after threatening to shoot the driver we went on our journey and arrived at Sunnybank a rest camp about 8.30, I had a bother in finding it as it was pitch dark. After a bit of supper I went to bed, not having a mattress I found the bed irons uncomfortable [and] next morning I got a pony and continued my journey arriving at Changlagali about 11 o'clock. After reporting myself at the Orderly Room, I found my bungalow and then of course found the Sergeants Mess.

At first Cooper struggled with the musketry course but eventually settled down and took the final examination on which he commented 'it made me scratch a bit but however I passed alright'. He then commenced his return journey to Delhi:

On my return journey I had to wait at Sunnybank for two days and so I went into Murree and had a look around, it is a very pretty little place with a nice Church and plenty of people. I came down to Rawal-Pindi [sic] by mail motor. I went to the 'Yorks' Mess and had some food and left Pindi about 8.30 pm arriving at Delhi about 8pm the next night. I had to go to the Fort as A & B Coys were there. Next morning we moved up to Kingsway Camp.

The company remained at Kingsway Camp from 28 October 1915 until 31 January 1916 and during the period leading up to Christmas the normal training programme was adhered to. However, Sergeant Cooper makes the following comments on the Christmas festivities in his journal:

Everybody enjoyed themselves. The Sergts had the Ferozashah Ball as before and it was a great success. Rumours were always floating about as to our movements but we still remained at Kingsway. Just at this time German submarine activity was getting pretty brisk in the Mediterranean [sic] Sea and we were all shocked when we heard they had torpedoed and sunk the P&O liner Persia with our mails on board. Unfortunately I had a parcel of civilian clothes on board which of course never reached India. It was now time for us to leave Kingsway for the Fort and on Monday January 31st we all packed during the evening [when] a gale sprang up blowing down tents etc., next morning we moved to the Fort. We had sad news at this time. We were awfully sorry to hear of the death of our late Adjutant Captain [C.G.] Bond who had not been in the trenches but one day and was killed by sand bags falling on him caused by shells. We had a memorial service in the camp service tent at which all available attended to show their respect to one whom we all liked and respected as he was a soldier and a gentleman. We also had news of our men being wounded and some killed in the Persian Gulf. More batches of time expired men left us...

The company remained at Delhi Fort for one month, during which time they were required to produce an additional guard for two Indian Army prisoners who were awaiting court martial, but this duty was not without its problems as one of the prisoners had escaped but was soon recaptured:

The Coy entered the Fort on the determined side owing to the daring escape of a prisoner under the eyes of the sentry. Luckily he was caught after about 36 hrs. freedom – owing partly to a badly damaged heel as he fell on some stones as he scaled the Fort battlements. He was brought back and placed in the hospital cell - that meant that we had an unusual lot of guards to find – as we had another prisoner in the cells belonging to the same regiment as the other – 7th Rajputs [7th Duke of Connaught's Own Rajputs]. They were awaiting court martial as they were conspirators to aid in a mutiny in the regiment and were also conspirators in the Benares base.

The Company was relieved by D Company on 28 February and marched to Tughlakabad, where field firing practice was carried out for a week, before marching back to the Kingsway Camp, arriving there on 6 March. The battalion remained in the Delhi area until 2 April when it was relieved by a battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment. The journal continues:

The new Batt arrived about the 17th of March and our Band played them into their new home the Fort. The Batt was composed of men who had been to the front and were unfit for further active serviceThe long court martial of the two Rajputs now came out and a parade was ordered for all troops of the garrison to come to the Fort on Monday morning to hear it read out. The prisoners were brought in chains before the parade when Brigadier General, The Earl of Radnor read out the sentences as [confirmed] by the Commander-in-Chief. The Sergt was sentenced to be hanged and the Corpl to transportation for life to the Andaman Island [a prison had been established in the Andaman island group during the 19th century for civil prisoners who had received a life sentence]. Both were removed to the civil prison in gharries, where the former met his death next morning. Preparations were being made for the departure of the Viceroy [and] our Regt had to find a 'Guard of Honour'. I happened to be one of the four Sergts selected the other three were Sgts Jones, Huntley and Harvey. The Viceroy left on March 31st when he inspected our 'Guard of Honour', the rest of the Battalion

lined the Flagstaff Road. Everything passed off and we gave great satisfaction as was shown by the message of the Commander-in-Chief who said ""we did as well as any regular soldiers could have done". Our Guard was commanded by Capt, The Hon [George S.] Herbert.

As soon as this was over our Delhi ties were over & we prepared to move to the hills the right half were to leave on Sunday. About 5pm Saturday evening we decided to strike our tents & sleep in the open, no sooner had we done this then down came the rain but we managed to push in together. Next morning all kit etc. was taken to the station and all spare tents struck.

The battalion was to move from Delhi to Chaubattia, which involved a train journey to Kathgodam via Bareilly, followed by a five day march from Kathgodam to Chaubattia. The move is described in brief detail in the journal commencing with the departure from Kingsway.

The 'Fall in' sounded at 4.30pm for the right half of the Battalion and we were soon on parade. The Band played us out [of camp] and we said so long to Kingsway. The train moved off down the branch line to Delhi Main. Here the Drums of the 'Bedford's' played tunes and 'Auld lang Syne' as we steamed out of the station. [The train journey to Bareilly via Moradabad was a distance of 156 miles]. We got to Bareilly about 2am and there we had to unload everything and change over to the Metre gauge railway, this was a hard job of work but by 5am everything was packed and [we] started off again. It was now daylight but the country was uninteresting. About 9am we could see the hills towering before us and very soon we were in Kathgodam station [which was 66 miles from Bareilly]. Again we unloaded the baggage but the carts which were awaiting us were of a very poor class and we could see we should have trouble all the way up. It took the men up till 2pm before the last cart was sent away to the first rest camp. Very little food was obtainable for the men, luckily I discovered the refreshment room and had a good feed and rather too much to drink as I soon felt when I got on the march. At 3pm we marched off with the band playing. We had 13 miles to do before we got to the 'Brewery' rest camp. From the start we commenced going up hill and found we had a hard march in front of us. Very soon we caught up with the rear carts and could see that they would be in camp late. Halts were always welcomed as the equipment and the pull up hill made us short of breath. A good many fell out but hill ponies had been commandeered and were soon loaded. We got into camp in darkness but got our kits alright and after several drinks got down to it.

Brewery Rest Camp was a small way-side camp set on a level area with rows of tents, the whole camp area being designed as an overnight stopping off point. The second day of the five day march was from Brewery Rest Camp to Bhowali, a distance of 10 miles, and once again it was a small tented camp area on a level site adjacent to the up-hill track. The entry in the journal describes this march as follows:

We didn't start until 9am in order that everyone should get things straight and put the baggage in order, so it should go better. The march commenced with a hard uphill pull and then we had about 3 miles all down hill, then 3 miles uphill again. The rest camp now was not far off and about one and half miles brought us to Bhowali and a splendid little camp situated in an ideal spot by a small stream with the hills and pine trees in the back ground. Near this camp was a turpentine & resin factory. The baggage came along much better this day being an easier journey. Reveille sounded at 6am and we soon got ready for the next day march, having [had] breakfast which wasn't first class.

On 5 April the third day's march was from Bhowali to Ratighat, a distance of 9 miles, and Cooper comments in his journal that this was easier than the two previous days' marches:

We marched off at 9.30 and commenced a downhill march, the road was very dusty which made it rather unpleasant. The band played a good deal as it was a much easier march. The scenery was fine and the smell of the pines was lovely. We arrived at Ratighat quite early.

Fourth Day – Thursday April 6th – Ratighat to Bam-shon. Distance 10 miles.

The first part of the march again was very easy as we were coming down hill. The roads were still very dusty, and we had to get down to the level of the mountain stream. The scenery was not so good today. The last five miles was all up hill and very hard work. Everyone was glad to see the camp [at Bam-shon] which we reached about midday. In the evening the Officers came and we had a little open air concert, the band playing a few selections – everybody enjoyed it.

Next day was to be a long one for the baggage so Sergt W Bailey took on the baggage that night at 12 o'clock to do a distance of about 15 miles.

The fifth and final day of the five day march was on Friday 7 April from Bam-shon to Chaubattia, a distance of 7 miles, as, after a 2 mile march along the road, the troops then took to a mountain path thereby reducing the distance from fifteen miles to just seven. Chaubattia was to be home to the Battalion for nearly six months.

Reveille went early and we were glad it was the last lap. We started at 6am. We had about 2 miles on the road then went up the mountain path. This was very hard work and after we had got up to 3,000 ft. we could see some bungalows but still had a good distance to go. About 9am we reached Chaubattia. We marched to the parade ground and took off our equipment and 'fell out' whilst the bungalows were being allocated. The men were then allotted to their bungalows and were soon making ready for a rest.

Chaubattia is situated on top of a hill with an altitude of nearly 7,000 ft. The station can accommodate about 1,000 troops beside married quarters. There are three places of worship, the Garrison Church, St Nicholas & Roman Catholic and the Garrison Church is not consecrated so that it may be used by any denomination. There are some splendid institutes with a decent theatre. The Regimental bazaar was not a very large one but almost anything could be got there. The views all around are fine especially the snow hills which tower above 20,000 feet in front of us. One of the first things we had to do when we got our new home was to give the bungalow a good clean up. My bungalow was No 9 and we made it quite cosy with mantle cover, tablecloth and window curtains, also ferns etc., At about this time our Sgts Mess Caterer went home 'time expired' and so there was a job for someone. We had a meeting [and] I was elected for the job. I did it for 10 weeks but was glad when I had finished as it was very long hours.

The next thing that happened was I went to Naini Tal for my teeth, Bandmaster Box was my chum to go with, [and] we stayed at the YMCA and had a really good time. Our dentist was Mr Bulgin and [a] downright good man he was. We being the first of his for treatment from our regiment he was anxious to make a good job of it, and he did. While we were there we heard of the sad news of Lord Kitchener's death and attended the memorial service [at Naini Tal]. After a fortnight holiday we got ponies and came back to Chaubattia.

After his return from Naini Tal Sergeant Cooper returned to his Company to assist in the musketry training of the draft that had recently arrived from England. On 10 August 1916 he was appointed Sergeant Drummer and gives a brief comment on this new appointment:



Our Sergt Drummer was going home and I was approached and appointed Sergt Drummer I found that [it] was a very funny job to start off with as I could neither play the flute, bugle or side-drum but I had some good NCOs and men who helped me to get through. We did our route marches and general's inspections alright. When we beat 'Retreat' the first time I felt rather nervous but soon got over that. About a week before we left Chaubattia the Band & Drums held a farewell dinner. We invited Major [H.H.] Willis, Capt [Hon, G.S.] Herbert, Lieut & QM [A.A.] Taylor, RSM Liddiard & CSM Thorne. We had a very good dinner. Cpl Drury & a mess committee catered for us. After dinner we had the usual toasts, and then we had a concert during the evening. Colonel [A] Armstrong came bringing some ladies which added greatly to the success & good behaviour of the men. During the evening the Colonel made a speech and of course he praised all of us & thanked us all. We finished up about 12 mn [midnight] after a very enjoyable evening. We were not doing many parades now as everyone was packing and getting ready to go back down home [Delhi] again. And on Monday Oct 23 A Coy and part of B left Chaubattia on [the] 5 days march to Kathgodam.

The Drums & C Coy and the remainder of B marched away from Chaubattia on the morning of Oct 27th. Major Willis was in charge. It was all down hill the first day and we got to Bam-shon easily by mid-day. Next morning we were on the move early, it was very cold night and mornings also dark when we loaded our baggage in the morning. We used to have a good few tunes on the march, sometimes one or two bugle marches, which didn't half echo over the hills. We got into camp early everyday as we started in the morning according to the distance we had to march. On the 5th day we started off early for the last march to Kathgodam arriving there about midday. We had to load all the baggage which was done in reliefs and was done quickly, had some dinner and then got into the train. I was glad I was in a 2nd class compartment, as we had the caterer with us and of course had plenty of liquid refreshment. We arrived at Bareilly about 6pm where we had to change & have a cup of tea; rations were very short on the train journey. About 2 hours after we were on the move again & early in the morning we were passing familiar places and arrived at Kingsway about 7.30am [on 1 November 1916].

The journal continues for the period 2 November 1916 until 29 March 1917 in which the author describes the life in Kingsway Camp which, during the battalions' absence, had been enlarged to cater for 1,000 troops. A Brigade training camp was held from 19 November to 15 December at which all the units serving in the 43rd Brigade came together, which included the 1/4th Wiltshire Regiment, 1/5th Somerset Light Infantry, 2/2nd King's Own Gurkha Rifles, the Mahandra-Dal Regiment of Nepalese troops as well as sections of the Signal Unit & Mule Corps. The final three days of the training period were taken up with a three-day manoeuvre and at the end, on 15 December:

A light breakfast was prepared for us. Then the final attack commenced which drove the enemy back to the ruins of Old Delhi then the bugles sounded what every man had been waiting to hear for a month – the final 'Dismiss'. The instruments of the Band & Drums were sent to meet us, and our men put their rifles and equipment in a cart & played back into Kingsway. Everybody was pleased that the long looked for & hated manoeuvres were over. Our Brigade chums entrained at Delhi for the different stations. Things were very quiet in Camp, only doing ordinary parades with an occasional route march. We heard several rumours as to where we were going but didn't take much notice of them until we had it in Batt orders that we were going overseas. I am sorry to say that at this time we had two deaths in the Batt, Pte Sainsbury & Pte Barnard of C & D Coys. The Regiment gave a Military Tattoo in the presence of The Viceroy & H.E. the Commander-in-Chief and a large crowd of spectators.

It was now getting close on time to move and everybody was glad when all was packed in the train, everybody slept in the train ready to move off early. Next morning I was up early to have 'Reveille' sounded, we had breakfast and got back to the station to await the signal for our departure.



The rail journey from Delhi to Poona took three days with the battalion being split and being transported in two trains. The account of the journey is reasonably brief and reads:

The first troop train left punctually at 6.15am with C & D Coys. The second left an hour later with A & B Coys. We steamed out of Delhi with the good wishes from the Chief Commissioner and others. I was very hot travelling although once again I was lucky and travelled 2nd class with a nice fan etc. We got to Muttra about 1pm [The Indian Bradshaw shows the distance from Delhi Main to Muttra as being 90 miles] and had our midday meal. We caught up the first train here as we both had 3 hours stop but they continued their journey before us. We passed through Agra [32 miles from Muttra] and then on a long run to Gwalior [73 miles from Agra Cantonment station] where we had tea. Each man was entitled to 5

bottles of soda water & 5 lbs. of ice but as usual didn't get it. About midnight we got to Jhansi [61 miles from Gwalior]. Those who were lucky did get a few sodas and a little ice. Next morning we got to Bhopal [181 miles from Jhansi] where we had tea for breakfast. We had our midday meal at Itarsi [56 miles from Bhopal] & got in a good stock of eatables from the refreshment room. Next we found ourselves at Khandwa [111 miles from Itarsi] and had tea. Next morning we got to Manmad Junction from here we could see the start of the Ghats and gradually the line went on an upward gradient. We went through Ahmadnagar and Dhond [Dhond being 146 miles from Manmad Junction] and then about 2 hrs. brought us to Gopri siding [at Poona where] we unloaded and marched up to Poona Race Course rest camp, the tents were already and we soon made a home.

The last entry in the journal covers the period from 1 April to 15 June 1917 when the battalion was based at Poona and Kirkee. The two and half month period is covered by just a few notes:

On the morning of April 1st we found ourselves camped in a circle surrounded by the circular race course belonging to the Western-India Turf Club. The climate was very damp quite different from the dry air of Delhi. Most of the parades were done before breakfast and we used to practice in the Empress Gardens just over the road [from the race course]. For the first time we came alongside our sister regiment the 2/4th Wilts who were stationed at Kirkee. We had a few jolly evenings together and several football matches, but the stay together was short as they had to go to Allahabad. There were many rumours as to leaving the country and the 1/5th Somerset Light Infantry left but still we remained. We had another death in the Batt from enteric fever – Pte Salridge of C Coy [and] at this time there was a great deal of sickness in the Batt. We were told we were leaving the country and everybody was pleased to think we were going to see a bit of service. On the Tuesday previous to our departure an order was received stating that the move was cancelled for an indefinite period. Nobody knew why it was so & the Regt was completely dumbfounded. Soon orders were received to move over to Kirkee about 5 miles away. The Batt moved over by Coys. I left with the last Coy – B Coy – on Friday June 15th and went to live with A Coy Sergeants.

With this entry the journal finishes. The battalion moved to Kirkee and later embarked for service in the Middle East. These extracts have been reproduced as they give a picture of the life of a Senior NCO in India during the First World War and, although by no means well written, it does give a good insight into the various means of moving parties, and individuals, from one station in India to another.

Sergeant Campbell survived the war and returned to his home in England having served overseas as a Territorial Army soldier.

I am grateful to the late Mr and Mrs Reg Pride, of Child Okeford, Dorset, who kindly made Sergeant Cooper's journal available



MISCELLANEOUS PHOTOGRAPHS

Stephen Matthews has provided the following three photographs, all of which were purchased in the 1970s from a junk shop in south west London. They were contained in a battered album which consisted mostly of pictures from India. Beyond that, their provenance remains something of a mystery, as does the identity of the officer (photograph 1) and the apparent photographer of the other two – “Arabia Felix”.



Photograph 1.



Photograph 2. The caption reads “Instantaneous. Sepoys of 23rd Bo. Rifles, Aden 1903” and, in the top corner, “Arabia Felix O.A.”



Photograph 3. The caption reads “Amir Lal, my Sword Orderly, 23rd Bo. Rifles, Balas Camp, Arabia July ‘03” and in the top corner “Arabia Felix O.A.”

BALOCH REGIMENT

The following photographs were provided by Lieutenant Colonel Neville Poulson following a visit to his old regiment.



Lieutenant Colonel Neville Poulson with a Jemadar (now called a Naib Subadar)



Pipe Band of 10 Baloch Regiment



Corps of Drums, Khyber Rifles Regimental Centre



Frontier Force Regiment,
Regimental Centre – Sentry



Frontier Force Regiment,
Regimental Centre - Traffic
Control NCO

MILITARY, FRONTIER MILITIA, BORDER POLICE AND THE BORDER MILITARY POLICE IN THE DERA GHAZI KHAN DISTRICT DURING 1893-98

Sushil Talwar

Founded in the 15th Century, Dera (settlement) Ghazi Khan (DG Khan) is a town in Punjab located in the flood plains of the Indus River. Haji Khan, a Baluch chieftain who held this area for his masters the Sultans of Multan, declared himself independent and Dera Ghazi Khan is named after his son, Ghazi Khan. DG Khan and two other towns, Dera Ismail Khan (DI Khan) and Dera Fateh Khan, got their names from the area that was historically and locally known as Dera Jat. These areas were secured by the British after the Sikh War in 1849, soon after which it was divided into two districts, DG Khan and DI Khan. Later, it was from the district of DG Khan that the district of Rajanpur was carved out.

The district of DG Khan is a narrow strip of land with gradual hills on the west and the river Indus in the east. The country is generally arid, dry and, at times, sandy as rainfall is scanty. The various tribes along the DG Khan border include the Kasranis, Bozdars, Khosas, Legharis, Khetvans, Gurchanis, Mazaris, Mariris and Bugtis.

The main military station in the district was the cantonment in DG Khan which was near the civil lines and the city. In December 1895, the cantonment at Rajanpur, which consisted of one regiment of native cavalry, was abandoned. However, the garrison at DG Khan continued and consisted of two native regiments, one each of cavalry and infantry.

The cantonment and the outposts in the district were under the control of the General Officer Commanding of the Punjab Frontier Force based at Abbottabad. The strength of the garrison and the outposts as per the Quarter-Master General's Distribution List of 1st December 1897 (including those who were sick or absent) was as under:

Station	British Officers	Native Officers	Native Cavalry	Native Infantry	Total
Dera Ghazi Khan	29	32	561	849	1471

The military outposts at Mangrota, Khaar and Harrand were manned by troops from the garrison at DG Khan. Types of troops at each post were as under:

Outpost	Sabres	Bayonets	Total
Mangrota	17	21	38
Khaar	...nil...	20	20
Harrand	25	...nil...	25
Total	42	41	83

Administratively, military authorities controlled the Frontier Militia. Officers commanding various posts authorised enlisting of the rank and file on the recommendation of the Baluch tribal Chiefs, but with the final approval of the Deputy Commissioner. In 1890, the force consisted of 160 men of all ranks, of whom 130 were mounted. Types of troops at each post in 1890 were as listed:

Posts	Sabres	Bayonets	Total
Jhok Bodho	8	...nil...	8
Mangrota	3	...nil...	3
Mahoi	13	4	17
Mamdani	9	2	11
HQs at Rajanpur	2	...nil...	2
Harrand	3	...nil...	3
Drigri	10	2	12
Kot Rum	10	6	16
Muhammadpura	7	1	8
Kot Sabzal	23	6	29
Toiani	10	2	12
Dilbar	10	2	12
Bhandowali	11	5	16
Sheikhwali	11	...nil...	11
Total	130	30	160

The Border Police was directly under the control of the Deputy Commissioner of the district, and all the officers and men of this force were enlisted upon the recommendation of the Baluch tribal Chiefs. The strength of the Border Police was 65 men, of whom 29 were mounted. The following is a list of the posts manned by the Border Police (*I have been unable to get the make-up and number of the type of troops manning each of these posts*):

Posts
Mandrani
Batil
Vidor
Ganehar
Choti
Lal Goshi
Pishin Road Post

In June 1890, the Frontier Militia was brought under civil control and consequently the Frontier Militia and the Border Police were amalgamated into one composite force called the Border Military Police.

For over a year after the amalgamation, this new force continued functioning as two different units. The part in the Rajanpur Sub-Division functioned under the Assistant Commissioner of Rajanpur while the balance operated directly under the Deputy Commissioner of the district. In August 1891, the Government of India sanctioned a post of Assistant District Superintendent of Police to take charge of the force and also to act as the Political Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner (with 2nd-Class Magisterial Powers). In November 1891, Mr Davis took up this appointment.

Duties of the Border Military Police, amongst others, also included watching the border, preventing movement of stolen property within their jurisdiction, recovering stolen property, making enquiries into cases occurring in the hills across the border; in short - they performed normal Police duties but outside the jurisdiction of the Police of the district. In 1896, Powers were conferred on the officers and men of the Border Military Police under Chapter V of Act X of 1882 vide the Punjab Government Notification No. 1070 dated 21st August 1896.

The Border Military Police followed the same system of enrolment as the Frontier Militia, i.e. nominees of the tribal Chiefs were enrolled with the permission of the Deputy Commissioner. In the beginning of 1896 the strength of the Border Military Police in the district was as follows:

Ranks	Sabres	Bayonets	Total
Jemadar	6	...nil...	6
Daffadars	19	...nil...	19
Sowars	142	...nil...	142
Total	167	...nil...	...nil...
Havildars	...nil...	2	2
Naiks	...nil...	2	2
Sepoys	...nil...	63	63
Total	...nil...	67	234

Jemadar Ghulam Muhammad Khan, a man of considerable experience, was appointed Ressaldar in May 1896, after sanction was obtained from the Government of India to convert two Jemadarships into one Ressaldarship. Further changes took place in August 1897, when the strength of the Bewatta post on the Pishin Road was increased by 3 mounted men and the post at Mandrani received 3 sepoy; four new posts were also established. Types of troops at each of these posts were as under:

Posts	Sabres	Bayonets	Writer	Total
Fazal Kach in Bozdar Hills	4	4	1	9
Hinglum Kach in Bozdar Hills	4	2	1	7
Chacha in Gurchrani Hills	4	2	1	7
Kalchas in Gurchrani Hills	5	4	1	10
Total	17	12	4	33

The strength of the Border Military Police on 1st January 1898:

Ranks	Sabres	Bayonets	Total
Ressaldar	1	...nil...	1
Jemadar	7	...nil...	7
Daffadars	21	...nil...	21
Sowars	155	...nil...	155
Total	184	...nil...	...nil...
Havildars	...nil...	4	2
Naiks	...nil...	2	2
Sepoys	...nil...	76	63
Total	...nil...	82	266

The Border Military Police manned 32 posts (list appended at end of article). The post at Sori Sham was never built resulting in the troops sanctioned for it being distributed amongst the posts on Pishin Road between Sakhi Sarwar and Bewatta. Twelve posts (Nos. 21 to 32 in the list) were in the wild; at quite a distance from the nearest village and therefore were provided with a bania for their daily needs. The bania kept a shop at such posts which provided necessities to the troops. Some posts had just no provision for water supply (potable or otherwise) and had to be provided with water carted by camels in a pakhal from water points which were sometimes at great distance from the posts.

A sowar was paid Rs. 20/- per month from which he paid Rs. 3/- per month to his Chief as sillidari. The sole exceptions to this were the men posted at the four new posts which were located in hills, where living was very difficult, expensive and the men could just about take care of themselves and their horses. It was for the same reason that the sepoy at these four posts were paid Rs. 10/- per month as against Rs. 7/- per month that was paid throughout the district. The other exception were those who were from the Mazari tuman whose Chief took only Rs. 1/- as sillidari. Sowars and piyadas (foot soldiers) employed outside their tumans (tribal domains) were granted an allowance of 3 annas and 1 anna per pay respectively. The banias drew pay at a rate between Rs. 15/- to Rs. 20/- per month.

The system of frontier-administration of this border had one basic difference from that in Sind. In DG Khan the frontier was mainly held by the Baluchis themselves, whereas in Sind it was held by the Sind Frontier Force, the Baluchis being disarmed.

At the advent of British rule in this district, i.e. in the areas in the plains, the same rules applied as prevailed in the rest of the Province. However, in 1872 it was felt that the border areas needed special laws which resulted in the government enacting a special regulation for the governing of Frontier districts. The Punjab Frontier Regulation No.1 of 1872 was, in 1887, superseded by 'The Frontier Crimes Regulation, 1887'. Captain CP Thompson wrote:

“The full power of this Regulation was not extended to this district until 1892. By this Regulation the Deputy Commissioner with the sanction of the Commissioner is empowered to:-

1. Blockade hostile tribes.
2. Check the construction of villages and forts within 5 miles of the frontier.

3. Fine village communities for colluding with or harbouring offenders or escaped prisoners; and, for suppressing evidence.
4. Banish any person who has blood feud in the district or any portion of it.

The Regulation authorises the appointment of an additional District Magistrate, who has the powers specified in Schedule-III to the Code of Criminal Procedure, entitled “V – ordinary powers of a District Magistrate,” and may be invested by the Local Government to try as a Magistrate all offences not punishable with death, and by the District Magistrate, by order in writing, with all or any of the powers which may be exercised by the Deputy Commissioner under this Regulation.

The Deputy Commissioner can refer criminal or civil cases to a council of elders (locally called Jirga) for a finding.

On a jirga finding in a criminal case, the Deputy Commissioner can award the sentence provided for the offence in the Indian Penal Code up to 7 years.

The Regulation also authorises all Criminal Courts in the district to pass sentences, in certain cases, of whipping upon any person against whom the Regulation may be put in force in addition to any other punishment to which he may be liable.

It also authorises the tender of pardon in all cases by those Magistrates who are empowered to tender pardons under Section-337 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Under this Regulation the women may be punished for adultery as well as the man.

Individuals and whole families can be put on security to keep the peace for a period of 3 years.

On a jirga finding in a civil case the Deputy Commissioner can pass a decree in accordance with the jirga finding, and such a decree can be enforced in the same way as the decree of a civil court.”

The regulation as it stood worked most effectively. The cause of almost every murder committed in the district was a woman. Though there would usually be circumstantial evidence against the accused, direct evidence was almost always missing. This necessitated the jirga to go into the case and, based on their findings, the Deputy Commissioner would enforce measures as authorised by the Regulation, to prevent the matter growing into a blood feud. Under the Regulations the Deputy Commissioner had almost sweeping powers to impose fines and, in cases relating to women, the whole or part of the fines were generally awarded to the aggrieved party.

A large part of the civil cases referred to the jirga related to damages being sought on account of elopement of unmarried girls or widows, and of abduction. In the Baluchi tribes this was much resented and the jirgas dealing with such cases would try and get the defendant to give the plaintiff, in exchange, a woman in marriage failing which cash damages were awarded. It has been recorded that most of the cases were related to the Khosa tribe where rape, adultery and abduction were frequent occurrence and, more often than not, only the Deputy Commissioner could settle the issue, whereas in most other tribes, cases such as these were usually settled by the village elders themselves.

Cases of crime against members of the same tribes were tried by a jirga of the elders of the village. Cases which involved two different tribes necessitated a composition of the jirga consisting of elders of both the tribes with one or more Chiefs to assist them. Jirgas dealing with cases between two tribes

resident in the district was held at Fort Munro (in DG Khan) after March once the Horse Fair was over. For some reason this fort was the most favoured venue for this purpose.

Sno.	Name of Post	Ressaldar	Jemedar	Duffadar	Sowar	Total	Havildar	Naik	Footmen	Total	Remarks
1.	Jhok Bodo, Kasranis	...	...	1	5	6	...	...	...	...
2.	Mangrotha, Bozdars, Khosas and Nutkanis	...	...	...	4	4	...	...	...	...
3.	Mandrani, Bozdars	...	...	1	8	9	...	...	3	3	
4.	Mahosi, Bazdars, Lunds, Khosas	...	...	1	6	7	...	...	2	2	
5.	Mamdani, Bozdars, Lunds	...	...	1	7	8	...	...	2	2	
6.	Batil, Khosas	...	...	1	3	4	...	...	...	...
7.	Dera Ghazi Khan	1	...	...	2	3	...	...	...	...
8.	Vidor, Lohari	...	...	1	3	4	...	...	2	2	
9.	Sakhi Sarwar, Leghari	...	1	...	4	5	...	...	...	...
10.	Rakhi Muah, Leghari	...	...	1	2	3	...	...	3	3	
11.	Rakhi Gorge, Leghari	...	...	...	2	2	...	...	3	3	
12.	Girdo, Leghari	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	5	6	
13.	Khar, Leghari	...	...	1	4	5	...	...	2	2	
14.	Bewatta, Leghari	...	...	1	4	5	...	...	6	6	
15.	Sori Sham, Leghari	...	...	1	3	4	...	...	6	6	Distributed on Pishin Road Posts
16.	Anchor, Gurkha, Leghari	...	...	1	4	5	...	...	...	...
17.	Harrand, Tibbi Lund, Gurchani	...	1	...	4	5	...	...	...	...

18.	Drigri, Tibbi Lund, Gurchani	...	...	1	9	10	...	...	2	2	
19.	Kot Rum, Tibbi Lund, Drishak	...	...	1	9	10	...	1	5	6	Also one Bania
20.	Muhammadpur, Drishak	...	...	1	3	4	...	...	...	...	...do...
21.	Rajanpur, Drishak	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
22.	Kot Sabzal	...	1	1	10	12	...	1	3	4	Also one Bania
23.	Tozhiani, Mazari	...	...	1	9	10	...	...	2	2	...do...
24.	Lal Goshi	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	13	14	
25.	Dilbar	...	...	1	9	10	...	...	2	2	Also one Bania
26.	Bandowala, Mazari	...	1	1	9	11	...	...	5	5	...do...
27.	Sheikhwala, Mazari	...	...	1	9	10	...	...	...	...	...do...
28.	Bara, Mazari	...	...	1	9	10	...	...	...	...	...do...
29.	Fazla Kach, Bozdars, Kasranis	...	1	...	4	5	1	...	3	4	Also one Bania and one Writer
30.	Hinglun Kach, Bozdar	...	1	...	3	4	1	...	1	2	...do...
31.	Chacha, Gurchani	...	...	1	2	3	...	...	2	2	...do...
32.	Khalchas, Gurchani	...	1	...	4	5	...	...	4	4	...do...
	Total	1	7	21	155	184	4	2	76	82	
	Grand Total					184				82	266

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF A VISIT TO INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Ernest Gardner

In March 1995 I joined a tour of India and Pakistan led by the late John Gaylor and by Ashok Nath. Starting our tour in Delhi we first visited some of the more important places associated with the Mutiny, one such being Flagstaff House, a refuge for the women and children. A memorial had been erected on the Ridge to commemorate the Britons killed during the fighting. Modern feelings being what they are, it had been defaced by the Hindi inscription 'Praise to the Freedom Fighters'. As a further gesture, I suspect, Christian squatters, with the obvious connivance of the authorities, have taken over the cemetery where our dead are buried. The entrance is still marked by the original arch. To describe them as squatters would be misleading as they are a well-established community with their own church. During our tour we were met by a formidable but charming woman who seemed to be their leader. We were invited to her house and entertained to tea.

Next we drove to Meerut, visiting another cemetery where there seemed to be neglect rather than any deliberate sacrilege. The memorial chapel was overgrown and crumbling and the graves of some of the most illustrious names in our Indian history are neglected, not least among them being Sir Rollo Gillespie. Our guide, Ashok Nath, reminded us that he was described by no less an authority than Sir John Fortescue as 'the bravest man who ever wore a red coat'. One of the more remarkable feats in a distinguished career occurred when, as Adjutant General in San Dominigo, he was attacked by eight assassins, only two of whom survived to tell the tale. Another neglected grave was that of Sir David Ochterlony who made his mark as the conqueror of Nepal. To add insult to injury, marijuana is allowed to grow freely.

On, then, to the Garrison Church where the British soldiers, unarmed, were at worship when the Mutiny started. When law and order was restored the British went to church with their arms, as was illustrated by the slots in the pews.

The highlight of the Indian part of the tour was the visit to the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the centre of the Sikh religion. It dates from 1766 and stands in a sacred lake. It houses Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs. We had to cover our heads and it then seemed obligatory to be photographed with a watchman. A bonus was a free lunch served in a large hall, one sitting at a time. The food was cooked in an adjoining kitchen. We sat on the floor, cross-legged, and I seem to recall that it was important our feet did not point at the folk opposite.

The Temple was in the midst of an imposing complex with a promenade. From time to time a group would come along led by two or three who carried something on their shoulders. We were told that it was part of a Sikh wedding ceremony. On the surrounding walls were many memorials to fallen Sikh soldiers. None went back very far and, as they were accompanied by a sum of money, I decided that they were kept there for as long as the money lasted. As our own tribute to Sikh courage we paid a visit to a temple which is dedicated to the Sikhs of Saragarhi. The memorial plaque speaks for itself.

The Government of India have caused this memorial to be erected to the memory of twenty one non-commissioned officers and men of the 36th Sikhs whose names are engraved below as a perpetual record of the heroism shewn by those gallant soldiers who died at their posts in the defence of the frontier fort of Sarachari (*sic*) on the 12th September 1897 fighting against overwhelming numbers thus proving their loyalty and devotion to their Sovereign, the Queen

Empress of India, and gloriously maintaining the reputation of the Sikhs for unflinching courage on the field of battle.

All that may seem long-winded and even pompous to modern eyes but I doubt if many Sikhs would find it so.

On, then, to the frontier, where I spotted the kind of milestone which I had once seen in Ireland – ‘Vagha Border 0’. Going on into the Tribal Territories we were able to visit Fort Handyside. The fort was named after the local policeman who, as a tablet informed us, had ‘been killed in action with terrorists.’ I was intrigued by the comparison with the memorials outside Delhi which had been despoiled. Captain Handyside had been killed honourably and his memory was still held with respect. Likewise, the fort named in his honour was still so called. Although we had been warned to keep a low profile to avoid giving any offence, once the garrison realised who we were they asked us into the fort and gave us a tour, pointing out how well it had been designed (by us!) and illustrating how well it controlled the area it covered. They could not have been more friendly and invited us to share their refreshments. One even tried to teach me one of their local dances, not knowing that I am cursed with two left feet!

Our next port of call was to Darra Adamkhel, the local ‘gun factory’ which was set up in 1897 in the hope, not fulfilled in practice, that it would deter the locals from stealing our Lee Enfields from us. That hope was not realised since, while the locals made rifles that looked the part, the barrels were ‘soft’ and did not last long. The main street was lined with gun shops and in the back streets were the so-called gunsmiths. In this part of the tour we were given an escort.

In Peshawar we visited Bala Hissar, HQ of the Khyber Scouts. The Quarter Guard turned out for us, led by a Naik. Then they changed into the more formal headgear which was worn when an officer was on parade. The next morning we reported to the fort to join the escort deemed to be necessary for visitors going up the Khyber Pass. This consisted of an officer, a Havildar and half a dozen men in two trucks which included a heavy machine gun. At the time I felt this was over-doing it a bit but shortly after our safe return four tourists to those parts were taken hostage and never heard of again. I also noticed that, as we went on our way, we were never out of sight of other armed men. It varied from a lone sentry to a machine gun post. At one stop we were intrigued by a tablet recording the British part in local history. It gave in some detail the impact our arrival had on the area. It recorded the fact that the tribesmen fought us from the day we arrived until the day we left. The final sentence said it all – “At the end two great peoples parted as friends.”

Our journey into and up the Khyber Pass was marked by various forts, including Fort Jamnu and Fort Alaimjad, home of the Khyber Rifles, as well as some impressive scenery. One highlight was the spur where various regiments, mainly Pakistani, have left their mark. Our ultimate destination was Michni Fort, which was as far as the tourist was allowed to go. Our mentor was the senior officer who indicated the outposts on the Afghan side. As he put it, “they sit and watch us and we sit and watch them.” We were then driven to the Officers’ Mess where we were entertained by their pipe band. A recent visitor had been Princess Di and I was intrigued by the cryptic comment, “No longer shy Di”, made by one of the officers. Unfortunately I did not get the chance to follow it up.

On, then, to Mardan where we paid our respects to the memory of Sir Louis Cavagnari, and even more to the memory of the Guides whose epic deed of heroism is here commemorated. I can do no better than to quote it in full.

This memorial has been erected to perpetuate the remembrance of the conspicuous gallantry of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Queen’s Own Corps of Guides who

when escort to Major Sir Louis Cavagnari KCSI¹ fell in the defence of the Residency at Cabul on Sept 3rd 1879.

The Commission of Enquiry, of which Colonel C.M. MacGregor was President, recorded as follows.

“They do not give their opinion hastily but they believe that the annals of no army and no regiment can shew a brighter record of devoted bravery than has been achieved by this small band of Guides. By their deeds they have conferred undying honour not only to the Regiment to which they belong but to the whole British Army.”

So far as I recall, Sir Louis was sent by us to install a pro-British ruler in Cabul. The appointment was resented by the native population who reacted accordingly. Sir Louis, with the other British officers, was invited to a meeting at which they were treacherously murdered. Their Guides escort was given the chance to return to India, which they refused. If they could not go back with their officer, they were not going back. With that defiant message they defended the Residency to the last man.²

Mardan, which was once the home of the Guides, now serves the Punjab Regiment in that capacity. Here we were entertained to lunch before going on to visit the Guides Cemetery and Chapel.

Up, then, to the Heights of Dargai where Piper Findlater won his V.C. on 20 October 1897. During the attack he was shot through both feet but propped himself against a boulder and played the regimental march to encourage the advance.

Perhaps our most memorable visit was to the Frontier Force Regiment, the ‘Piffers’, at Abbottabad. As usual we were given a warm welcome in the Officers’ Mess. We were soon joined by an ordinary sort of chap who looked a lot less ordinary when he was introduced to us as Ali Haidar V.C. He was quite voluble and reminded us that all holders of the VC are invited to the UK as guests of the Crown. He had either just been on such a visit, or was about to go on one. Either way it was a pleasure to share his joy.

To break into my narrative, it seems as good a time as any to give an account of the action that led to his award.

On 9th April 1945 near Fusignano, Italy, during the crossing of the Senio River, only Sepoy Ali Haidar and the two other men of his section managed to get across under heavy machine-gun fire. Then, while the other two covered him, the sepoy attacked the nearest strong point and in spite of being wounded, put it out of action. In attacking a second strong point he was again severely wounded but managed to crawl close, throw a grenade and charge the post; two of the enemy were wounded, the remaining two surrendered. The rest of the company were then able to cross the river and establish a bridgehead.

The Register of the Victoria Cross

There are VCs and VCs but few, I think, can match that.

¹ Should be KCB, CSI (Ed.)

² The Afghan ruler, Shere Ali, had refused to receive a British Mission in Kabul and adopted a pro-Russian stance. The British issued an ultimatum before crossing into Afghanistan in November 1878. Ali Musjid and Peiwar Kotal were taken and Shere Ali fled Afghanistan, leaving his son Yakub Khan to conclude a peace accord with the British by which a Resident was accepted at Kabul. Sir Louis Cavagnari, who had conducted the negotiations at Gandamak, arrived on 24 July 1879. His arrival was not popular with the Afghans. Within 24 hours of the withdrawal of British troops from the country he and his escort were murdered, on 3 September, by a mob of disaffected Afghan soldiers attacking the Residency. (Ed.)

Our final call was to Rawalpindi where, in the Garrison Church, one of our number was able to photograph his wife's baptismal entry. Here we were reminded of an abiding mystery. Everywhere we went we saw stalls piled high with oranges. Yet it was only here that we saw an orange tree.