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Major Alan Harfield stepped into the breach to serve as Treasurer of this Society in 2005, and was due to take over the reins as editor of *Durbar* when ill health caused him to step aside. However, Alan's main contribution to the Society has been his regular scholarly articles. Not many editions have gone by in recent years without one of them appearing.

Alan was the epitome of the discriminating historian and researcher – digging out of the past the things that are new and useful to know, and setting them down on paper in a style that is eminently readable. He published *inter alia* a series of scholarly books on the Indian Army and the British presence to the East of Suez, most notably “*Bencoolen, A History of the Honourable East India Company's Garrison on the West Coast of Sumatra 1685-1825*”, “*The British & Indian Armies in the East Indies 1685-1935*”, and “*British & Indian Armies on the China Coast 1785-1985*”. He was a prolific contributor of meticulously prepared articles that have appeared regularly in a wide selection of historical journals.

Although he was an outstanding researcher, Alan was at the same time a modest man, honest to a fault, as straight as a die, and with the sort of integrity anyone would be honoured to boast. He was unfailingly generous and ready to share hard-found information and give good advice whenever asked. In the field of military research, his presence will be a great loss.

In recognition of his scholarship, Alan was granted a fellowship of the Royal Historical Society. However, he was not only a prolific writer, knowledgeable on many subjects and the acknowledged leading expert on a good number of them. He also served actively on the committees of several historical societies. He was editor of the journals of the Society for Army Historical Research and of the Military Historical Society. He was a member of BACSA from its very earliest days, serving on the Executive Committee and as Regional Representative for the Far East until very recently. Always accompanied by June, his wife and photographer, an inseparable pair, Alan had the historian's keen interest in the old British colonial cemeteries in the Far East and has recorded for posterity much of what remains of them. Not content to merely photograph and transcribe the memorials and markers in comprehensive detail, he published the definitive histories of the two most important of them at Fort Canning in Singapore and Malacca in Malaysia.

Major Alan Harfield had a distinguished military career with the Royal Signals which began during the 2nd World War, and led him to serve in many overseas locations including Palestine, Cyprus, India, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya, Brunei and Germany. Rising through the ranks to become a commissioned officer, he was awarded the British Empire Medal for his work with locally enlisted Chinese recruits in Hong Kong, and the Most Blessed Order of Setia Negara Brunei for his contribution to the development of Brunei's armed forces. One of his achievements when attached to the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment between 1975 and 1977 was to help found the regiment's museum and to write and publish its history. His full chest of eleven decorations and medals reflected this breadth of service and included campaign clasps for Palestine, Malaya and Northern Ireland. In retirement, he acted as Director of the Royal Signals Museum in Blandford Forum and later worked with the Army Museums Ogilby Trust.

Alan had some intriguing tales to tell about life in the armed forces – particularly his time in India between 1945 and 1948. He was one of a select number of British soldiers who stayed on in India after Partition. He was involved in the task of converting the telecommunication establishments of newly independent India and Pakistan into self-standing entities. This took him to remote places in the North West Frontier Provinces and Baluchistan. It must have been a major challenge under very trying circumstances.

But Alan's interests were not limited to military matters or colonial cemeteries. He was a keen follower of grand prix racing and an enthusiastic Ferrari fan. He was particularly fond of tales of 'derring-do' on board H.M.'s men 'o' war, and intrigued by detective stories set in nineteenth century London. He was frequently to be found buried in his large stamp collection when he felt like a break from studying military history.

Alan was not one to give up easily. He joked that what really got him down with all the medical palaver was that he couldn't enjoy his usual evening tippie of Plymouth gin and tonic. He continued to produce articles and was working on a book describing the disaster at Muntok in the Netherlands East Indies in February 1942 when many Australian and British nurses were massacred by Japanese troops. He had undertaken this at the request of one of the few survivors whom Alan knew well. His final book, written in collaboration with John

Tamplin, is the eagerly awaited history of the Indian Army's volunteer movement entitled "*The Auxiliary Force India and its Predecessors*" which is due to be published shortly. It will surely be the definitive work on the subject.

It is fitting that the last of Alan's articles for *Durbar* appears in this current edition. The Society, which he has supported until the very end, owes him a great deal and he will be sorely missed. He leaves behind his wife June and daughter Jane. The Society was represented at Alan's funeral by the General Secretary and the Editor.

THREE MEMORIAL STONES OF EAST INDIA COMPANY'S ARMY OFFICERS AT MACAO

Alan Harfield

Until 1999 Macao was a Portuguese settlement. It is located on the western side of the entrance to the Pearl River estuary. The settlement has two 18th and 19th century enclosed cemeteries which mainly contain memorials to Portuguese Catholics, and as they were consecrated by the Roman Catholic Church they were not available to other Europeans, who were mainly Protestant.¹

The Portuguese officials for a long time could not be persuaded to sell land to the Protestants for use as a recognised cemetery and it was not until 1821, on the death of Mrs Mary Morrison, that the Portuguese authorities eventually agreed to let the East India Company purchase some land near the Company's official residences for the purpose of an enclosed burial ground.² This particular burial ground later became known as 'The Old Protestant Cemetery'.

The date of the commencement of internment in the burial ground is somewhat confusing in that above the entrance gate of the 'Old Protestant Cemetery' in the Largo Camões (Camões Square) there is a small stone carrying the following inscription:

Protestant Church
and
Old Cemetery
(East India Company 1814)³

¹ Ride, Sir Lindsay, *The Old Protestant Cemetery in Macao*, (Hong Kong, 1963), p5

² Ride, *op cit*, p6; see also the publication *The Protestant Cemeteries of Macau* by Manuel Teixeira and translated into English by Mrs Justina Wells (Macao, date unknown). The author believes that the date of the cemetery being brought into use is subject to further research.

³ The date engraved on the stone is incorrect and should be 1821 – see Ride, Lindsay and May (ed. Bernard Mellor), *An East India Company Cemetery, Protestant Burials in Macao*, (Hong Kong, 1996), p65.



OLD PROTESTANT CEMETERY, MACAO – THE BOUNDARY WALL

The name ‘Old Cemetery’ came into use after 1858 when the Portuguese authorities ruled that no further burials would take place within the city limits. From that date another cemetery was brought into use outside the city limits.⁴ Before the cemetery was brought into use in 1821 all Protestants were buried outside the city limits in an area known as Meesenburg Hill.⁵ During 1939 Sir Lindsay Ride organised a search of the hill and had thirteen legible gravestones brought into the Protestant Cemetery.⁶ In 1971 Lindsay and May Ride completed their work on the transfer of the tombstones to the Old Protestant Cemetery and had them bricked into the boundary walls. These were in respect of English, Danish, Dutch, French, German and American traders and their families. One of the tombstones brought into the ‘Old Protestant Cemetery’ was that of Ensign John Jordan of the Bombay army.⁷

In order to understand the reason for Ensign Jordan serving at Macao it is necessary to give a brief historical background of the East India Company trade venture with China.

After many years of futile negotiations with the Chinese authorities it was not until August 1699 that the East India Company was able to establish a trading post in the area. During that month the East Indiaman *Macclesfield* arrived at Macao⁸ which had been established as a

⁴ Ride, *The Old Protestant Cemetery in Macao*, *op cit*, p6

⁵ The hill was named after Wilhelm Meesenburg of the Dutch East India Company [strictly speaking the Company name used here is incorrect, the precise translation of ‘Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie’ being ‘United East Indies Company’]. Meesenburg died on 6 January 1767 and was buried outside the walled city on the hill which was later given his name.

⁶ Teixeira, *The Protestant Cemeteries of Macau*, *op cit*, p3

⁷ Ensign John Jordan is not listed in the publication *Alphabetical List of Officers of the Indian Army* compiled by Dodswell and Miles, (London, 1838).

⁸ Macao (Macau) – the name applied by the Portuguese to the small peninsula and city built near the mouth of the Pearl River. The place was called Ngao-man (ngao = bay or inlet, man = gate) by the Chinese. The Portuguese name is believed to be derived from A-ma-ngao, ‘the Bay of Ama’ (i.e. of the Mother, the so-called Queen of Heaven, a patroness of seamen), sometimes expressed as ‘Amacao’. *Hobson-Jobson*, Yule, Colonel H., and Burnell, A.C., (London, 1903), pp526-527

Portuguese settlement as early as 1556-1557, as a reward for the assistance given to the local Chinese authorities for the suppression of piracy in the area. Macao was important to the Chinese as it was strategically situated to guard the mouth of the Pearl River and also acted as a guard post for the great city of Canton.⁹

The East India Company established a factory¹⁰ at Canton with the Manchus organising a unique trading system the control of which came under the rule of the Emperor's personal merchant, who held the title of 'Hi Kwan Pu'. The holder of this appointment was not a trader but a Chinese noble who in turn licensed a number of Chinese trading firms to carry out the everyday trading business with the Company and with the supercargoes¹¹ European countries.

The system of trading with the Chinese was not at all simple as vessels were required to anchor south of Whampoa to await permission to proceed up river. The supercargoes were required to travel to Canton and commence negotiations and arrange for the hire of a hong¹² for storage of in-bound cargo. When negotiations had been completed and harbour fees paid, the ship was permitted to proceed up-river and to moor at Whampoa where it could commence unloading into the hong's that were built on the dockside at the port. The normal trade was in cloth, iron and lead but an illegal trade in opium was also carried out.

The actual trading season at Canton was short and it was customary for the merchants to establish a home at Macao which was ninety miles downriver from Canton. Foreign merchants were permitted to go to Canton but were not permitted to reside there and therefore had to set up their factories at Whampoa, some thirteen miles downriver from Canton.¹³ The Chinese imposed further restrictions in that, although the merchants were permitted to reside at Whampoa during the trading season, they would not permit European women to reside at the factory location. Trading took place between the monsoon seasons, that is from September to March, therefore family homes were established at Macao. Once the trading season had finished, all the staff, writers, factors, supercargoes and the small military guard were moved down river to Macao and married members were reunited with their families. There is no mention of Canton or Macao in Sir Patrick Cadell's *History of the Bombay Army* (published in London, 1938).

Sir Lindsay Ride, who was an authority on European tombstones and burial places, wrote:

Up river, disposal of the dead (both civilian and military) was one of the easiest of all local business transactions: the Chinese had no such things as enclosed cemeteries, and neither had the foreigners; burials involved no legal or civil procedures, one merely negotiated with a Chinese landowner for a hillside plot and hired a few labourers. On Danes Island, French Island, at Whampoa, Lintin, Capsingmoon and Cumsingmoon there lie, buried thus, hundreds of foreigners

⁹ Coates, Austen, *A Macao Narrative*, (Hong Kong, 1978), p21

¹⁰ Factory – a house or district inhabited by traders. *Barclays Universal English Dictionary*, (London, 1815), p365

¹¹ Supercargo – the representative of the ship's owner aboard a merchant ship

¹² Hong – a Chinese warehouse

¹³ Woodcock, George, *The British in the Far East*, (London, 1969), p15

whose frail memorials, if they ever existed, have long since disappeared. In westernised Macao however, the situation was different.¹⁴

The first burial in the (Old) Protestant Cemetery was Mrs Mary Morrison, the wife of Robert Morrison, who died of cholera on 10 June 1821.¹⁵ This was confirmed in the newspaper *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner* published by the English Mission Press at Malacca in October 1821 stating that Mary Morrison ‘was the first to be laid away in the new Burial plot’.

The remains of tombstones of many of the early settlers who had been buried on Meesenburg Hill were retrieved and ‘some twenty grave stones were recovered’¹⁶ by Sir Lindsay Ride and eventually bricked into the boundary walls of the (Old) Protestant Cemetery during 1971.

BURIED ON MEESENBURG HILL, MACAO - TOMBSTONES LATER MOVED TO THE OLD PROTESTANT CEMETERY

Memorial Number 175

Ensign John Jordan, Bombay Army

To
The Memory of
Ensign John Jordan
of the Bombay Establishment
who died
at Macao the 28th of
August 1786
Aged 20 Years



¹⁴ Ride, *The Old Protestant Cemetery in Macao*, op cit, p5

¹⁵ Ride, Lindsay and May, abridged and edited by Mellor, Bernard, *An East India Company Cemetery, Protestant Burials in Macao*, (Hong Kong 1996), p61

¹⁶ Braga, J.M., *Tombstones in the English Cemetery at Macao*, (Macao, 1940)

John Jordan was a native of Kent and born in December 1765. Nothing is known of his early life. He sailed to India on 5 May 1782 on the vessel *Brilliant*. His brother David was a ship's officer on this vessel. John Jordan did not serve as a cadet but entered the Company's service on the Bombay establishment. He was commissioned as an Ensign on 21 November 1782 and in the following year he joined the troops that took part in the capture of Mangalore and Bednore. Unfortunately Tipu Sultan recaptured Bednore and a number of the company's Bombay Army officers and men were taken prisoner including Ensign John Jordan who, at that time, was serving with the 15th Bombay Sepoys. At the end of the conflict in 1784 Tipu Sultan negotiated a peace with the Company and Jordan was released from captivity in March of that year. Personnel of the 15th Bombay Sepoys were drafted to the 1st Bombay Sepoys later in 1784 and in September 1785 Jordan was transferred to the 3rd Bombay Sepoys. The Company's trading posts at Whampoa and Macao were provided with a small guard unit but it is not known when Ensign John Jordan joined the 'guard' at Macao. He died there on 28 November 1786 although there is no record as to the cause of his death. He was buried on Meesenburg Hill as was the custom for Protestants.¹⁷

PROTESTANT CEMETERY (1821-1858) LATER KNOWN AS THE OLD PROTESTANT CEMETERY

Grave number 138 - Captain Daniel Duff, 37th Regiment, Madras Native Infantry

A chest-tomb of fine-grained polished grey granite. The inscription in two parts is deeply cut and with lower case lettering which is not easy to read.

North side:

In Memory of
CAPTAIN DANIEL DUFF
37th Regiment Madras Native Infantry
who departed this life
at Macao
7th July 1841
Aged 39 years.

South side:

This tomb was erected
By his Brother Officers 37th Regt M.N.I.
In token of their respect and esteem.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ride, *An East India Company Cemetery – Protestant Burials in Macao, op cit*, p267

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp225-226



CHEST-TOMB OF CAPTAIN DANIEL DUFF, 37TH MADRAS NATIVE INFANTRY

Captain Daniel Duff was transferred to the 37th Regiment, Madras Native Infantry and promoted to the rank of Captain on 10 September 1830. Prior to moving with his regiment he was employed as Paymaster at Masulipatam. Captain Duff reached China in command of his regiment which played a leading part in the military and naval action to reduce the Chinese defences around the Bogue in January 1841 and resulted in the capture of the islands of north and south Wantung. The fighting which took place on the heights to the north of Canton during hot and sultry May weather brought about a number of casualties and when the force was withdrawn to Hong Kong Duff was in very poor health and had not recovered when he sailed to Macao to attend the funeral of Sir Humphrey Senhouse. On his way back from the cemetery he was given a letter telling him that his wife had died on 22 April at Vizagapatam,

India. The shock of this news together with the fever he had contracted brought about his death whilst still at Macau. He was buried next day with full military honours.¹⁹

Grave number 22 - Major Mark Beale Cooper, 12th Regiment, Madras Native Infantry

A large chest-tomb of pink coarse-grained granite. The inscription is on a marble tablet conforming to the shape of the panel 30 cm high, 36cm wide at its top and 30cm at its bottom. Carved in Calcutta, the inscription is finely executed on the marble tablet, but in such small letters that they were deciphered only with the aid of a rubbing.²⁰

Sacred to the Memory
of
MAJOR MARK BEALE COOPER
12th Regiment
Madras Native Infantry
Who died at Macao 26th July 1857.
Erected as a token of respect by his
Brother Officers.²¹

Major Cooper was serving for a short time in command of an advance detachment at Hong Kong in what is now Stanley village which was where he probably contracted malaria. He was given leave 'on a sick certificate' to recover at Macao. He was staying at Shaw's (later Wade's) Hotel, on the Rau do Campo, when he died on 26 July 1857.²²

When the writer of this article visited the cemetery, it was found to be well maintained, with the grass cut and the stones cleaned. The cemetery had flowering trees and is probably one of the most tranquil cemeteries in the Far East.

Editor's note:

The four photographs in this article were taken by Mrs June Harfield

¹⁹ Details of his birth, education and early service and promotions are recorded on his card in the *National Army Museum Hodson Index of Biographical Data of Officers of the East India Company and India Armies*.

²⁰ Ride, *An East India Company Cemetery – Protestant Burials in Macao*, *op cit*, p100

²¹ *Ibid*, p100

²² Details of his birth, education, service and promotions are recorded on his card in the *National Army Museum Hodson Index of Biographical Data of Officers of the East India Company and Indian Armies*.

G.E. LEACHMAN (1880 – 1920) AND THE MACGREGOR MEMORIAL MEDAL: REVALUATION OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF AN 'ARABIAN PALADIN'

Sarkees Najmuddin and Omer Tarin Parti

Gerard Evelyn Leachman received the MacGregor Memorial Medal in 1911, for his extraordinary travels and reconnaissance work in Northern and North-Eastern Arabia and Kurdistan, between January and October 1910. A 'soldier's soldier', an adventurer *par excellence*, a highly competent administrator, a rather tough disciplinarian - and something of a controversial figure - he seems to have suffered a considerable degree of neglect at the hands of military historians in recent times.

In his hey-day, Leachman enjoyed almost as big a reputation as some of the other famous 'Arabian Paladins', possible even a bigger one vis-a-vis the likes of Capt. W. Shakespear and T.E. Lawrence. His achievements were spread out over a fairly larger theatre of operations and were, in many respects, as 'important' or significant in the broader political and military contexts of the time as far as British policy and/or interests were concerned.

Yet, today, how many people seem to know of, or recognize Leachman and his extraordinary accomplishments? Very, very few indeed, even within the small coterie of military historians, scholars, medal collectors and enthusiasts, not to say of the public at large. Most laymen, who would at least 'know' or have heard of 'Lawrence of Arabia' (that glamorous, egotistical and intensely dramatic figure immortalized in the popular imagination) would be at a loss to identify Leachman (also of 'Arabia' and other places, besides). He remains, at best, a shadowy sort of figure, recognized by an exclusive circle of 'Arabists', rather obscure. This seems a sad neglect of a man whose life and work are highly colourful and well worth looking into, 'warts and all'.

This brief revaluation of G.E. Leachman's life and work is intended to be a modest effort to rectify this imbalance; an attempt to highlight some of his unique adventures and achievements, for a general readership, in the hope that it might spur further detailed research and revaluation of not only Leachman himself but a whole chunk of Middle Eastern history at a particular time. This essay focuses largely on Leachman's work leading to the award of the MacGregor Memorial Medal (and the Gill Memorial Medal, by the RGS too, in 1910) but also takes up some of his earlier and later exploits, in as much as they relate to, or reflect the conditions that make one 'eligible' for, the award of a MacGregor Medal: outstanding reconnaissance work, producing new information 'of value', evincing unusual courage and intrepidity under harsh, even extremely hazardous conditions, and so on. Several sources have been consulted, as referred to in the footnotes, but we have certainly drawn rather more heavily on the two 'standard' biographies of Leachman: Maj. N.N.E. Bray's *A Paladin of Arabia* (1936) and H.V.F. Winstone's *Leachman: OC Desert* (1982) and would recommend these to anyone interested in delving deeper into the subject.

BEGINNINGS

Leachman was born on 27th July 1880, at Petersfield, Hampshire, to the country doctor Albert Warren Leachman, MD, and his wife Louise Caroline Blandford Leachman (nee Singer). They were a stolidly English, rural middle class family albeit with some pretensions

to gentility.¹ He was the only surviving son of the family, two others having died in infancy, brought up in a conventional home among three older sisters. Thus, 'Gerard was protected from danger and discouraged from making any show of independence'² with the consequence that as he grew up, Gerard became a rather withdrawn, secretive child, somewhat cynical and angry towards adults, given to 'bursts of temper and the recourse to sarcastic onslaughts on mother and sisters which marked the veiled cry for identity and escape.'³

In September 1893 young Gerard did manage to find an escape of sorts, being sent up to the famous Charterhouse School, not far from the Leachman home. The school, while in no way academically outstanding, went in for cricket and other 'manly' Victorian sports in a big way, probably with a conducive effect on Gerard Leachman, who began to make friends and open up somewhat into a typically boisterous school-boy. As Winstone tells us:

... England in Leachman's school years was a place of many-sided activity and mighty achievement for those who could afford leisure and a good education. [It was] .. an age of great men, of artistic, scientific and political debate and disputation which saw the publication of Dickens's and Thackeray's novels, of the *Origin of the Species* and *Das Kapital*, witnessed the noisy emergence of the pre-Raphaelites in art [and] the gladiatorial conflicts of Disraeli and Bismarck...⁴

It was also the age of Empire, with British colonial administrators, soldiers, adventurers, missionaries and merchants leading the way. While young Leachman was not too ambitious in either sports or academics, he did seem to have one particular hero - 'one God in an otherwise empty firmament, ... Sir Charles James Napier, who destroyed [the] -Amirs of Sind and who arrived home in England in 1847 to a tumultuous welcome.'⁵ This strange, eccentric, fiery and much-lauded idol was a strange, even prophetically ominous choice and in due course, led him to thoughts of adventure and hazard in far, wild and lonely places, and a possible career in soldiering. In 1898, he made it as a cadet to the RMC Sandhurst.

Leachman remained at Sandhurst from early 1898 to the autumn of 1899, obtaining a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Sussex Regiment in January 1900.⁶ With this regiment, [he then] served in the Boer War...in operations in the Orange Free State...Then operations in Transvaal, May-June 1900, including actions near Johannesburg, Pretoria and Diamond Hill...⁷ It was a real fiery baptism in arms for the young man straight out of rural England, wisening and toughening him up in a matter of months. On 23rd July 1900, he was wounded at Retief's Nek and, for a short time, even presumed dead. However he was soon located in a hospital and, recovering with the usual resilience and vitality of his tough constitution, was up and about in almost no time.⁸ He now came to be noticed by his military

¹ H.F.V. Winstone, *Leachman: OC Desert* (Quartet Books, 1982), pp5-11 and photographic plate #1. Apparently, the family had a coat-of-arms bearing the motto 'Non Nobis Solum', and some connections with the minor Hampshire squirearchy. At least one of Leachman's sisters was married to a 'gentleman farmer' of the hunting, shooting and fishing type.

² H.F.V. Winstone, *Leachman: OC Desert*, op cit, p6

³ *Ibid*, p7

⁴ *Ibid*, p9

⁵ *Ibid*, p9

⁶ Dix Noonan & Webb, catalogue dated 13th December 2007, lot number 579 [available on www.dnw.co.uk]

⁷ *Ibid*, lot 579

⁸ N.N.E. Bray, *A Paladin of Arabia* (Unicorn Press, 1936), p28; the earliest published biography of G.E. Leachman, by one of his closest and most admiring disciples, this volume is quite detailed and lengthy. In Winstone's estimation it is certainly a devoted testament to Bray's admiration, although quite often lacking

superiors as a courageous, hardy and at times temperamental officer and obtained several mentions in dispatches (for example, the London Gazette, 29th July 1902) and, in due course, was 'awarded the Queen's Medal with four clasps and King's Medal with two.'⁹ He was also recommended for the DSO but 'was deemed too young for it.'¹⁰ He was, in addition to these honours, made a full Lieutenant in 1902. With such brilliant beginnings in a military career that promised already to be almost every bit as brilliant as that of his idol Charles Napier, or that of some of the other great Empire-building soldiers, Leachman soon came to the conclusion that this - the world of military action - was his natural medium, his special penchant. India, with its associations with Napier, its huge frontiers and promise of excitement and challenging environment, beckoned. He was determined to get there as soon as he could and try out his luck, like the many other exceptional, hard men who had risen to lofty heights there. He decided not to take long overdue home leave but to head out, straight for Sitapur in Bengal where his regiment was being posted - but was thwarted by his colonel who insisted on sending him home for a short spell.¹¹ After some time there, he got what he had longed for, for so long, and journeyed out to India, joining the 1st Battalion of his regiment at Sitapur in January 1903. He seemed immediately quite enthusiastic about this.¹²

INDIAN INTERLUDE

India, at the height of the British Raj, held manifold delights and attractions for the young Gerard Leachman. Regimental duties do not seem to have been too tedious, and lots of time to spare for polo, leisurely sight-seeing and socializing. Here, if anywhere at all, this tough, brooding and occasionally volatile personality came close to flowering and blossoming into something akin to youthfulness. A new vitality, an exuberance and near-light heartedness seems to have touched him.

From March to October 1903, Leachman remained involved in all these pleasant activities with the regiment, which was moved up from Sitapur to Ranikhet, in the Himalayan foothills. It seems that during this time he became highly enthusiastic about taking his first, maiden plunge into the world of solitary adventuring - '...already he was planning a journey that was strictly forbidden.... a journey into Tibet.'¹³ This dream almost came to nothing, when the regiment was posted down to Lucknow in the plains, in October; but Leachman somehow managed to pull some strings and get himself posted to the beautiful hill station of Naini Tal instead.

objectivity and meticulous care in research. Bray even gets Leachman's first name wrong i.e. 'Gerald' instead of 'Gerard.' However, for those who are seriously interested in studying Leachman and his deeds, it is worth at least one reading.

⁹ Dix Noonan & Webb, *op cit*, lot 579

¹⁰ Winstone, *Leachman: OC Desert, op cit*, p30

¹¹ *Ibid*, p31

¹² Bray, *A Paladin of Arabia, op cit*, pp67-68

¹³ Winstone, *Leachman: OC Desert, op cit*, p37

Between 10th June and 16th July 1905, Leachman accompanied by his friend Lieutenant Greenwood, some yak-men, porters and a guide, made his first excursion into the wilds, to Tibet. Travelling from Naini Tal to Ranikhet, the party took the Ranikhet - Chaukhutia - Lohba - Karnaprayag - Satopanth route and tried to cross over from India into Tibet via the Niti Pass. This proved to be almost impossible, so they turned slightly southwards to the Darma Pass and managed to cross over after undergoing an extremely gruelling time.¹⁴ At last, here he was, 'the initiative and skills learnt on the battlefield and the training camp...[put to] the test...[perhaps causing] the QMG's Department to sit up and take notice.'¹⁵ After wandering around in the Tibetan border areas between Kyunglang, Dongpu and Gyungo for some days, Leachman and company now managed to head down and cross back into India via the Niti Pass. His arrival was reported to the District Commissioner at Rampur, although he seems to have escaped any serious reprimands from authority, rejoining his duties at Naini Tal almost immediately.

No doubt, Leachman's successful venture into Tibet, however brief, added to his own confidence in his abilities for such kind of work and probably also impressed his superiors with his potential in this line. It seemed to be a generally exhilarating time for him, as it appears he had also fallen seriously, deeply in love for the first and last time in his short life.

Bray, at least, has been quite coy and mysterious about Leachman's 'American' girl, the love of his life:

She was the only girl he ever loved and he lost her - not through any fault of his own, nor because their union would have been unsuitable in any way, but on account of one of those family misunderstandings which arise in spite of the good intentions of all concerned. It will ill serve the memory of Leachman to go deeper into the subject... perhaps if Leachman had been less reticent in the days of his childhood, or more demonstrative, the bitter hurt would never have been inflicted.¹⁶

Whatever the case, Leachman could not marry her and settle down into wedded bliss. It would be useless to speculate in psychological terms how far this romance went towards

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p48; quoting Bray

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.48. Winstone also notes at the end of his book that, in 1905, Indian Army Intelligence was under the control of the Quarter-Master General, as it had been for a considerable time. In this same year, however, it was reorganized in accordance with War Office Establishment/Reforms of 1904. From this time onward, the Near East (including the Ottoman Empire) come under 'MO2(b)' while India, Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia came under the control of section 'MO2(h)'. In 1906, under further new arrangements, a line was drawn across Arabia from Akaba to Basra, and the peninsula south of this (excluding the Red Sea areas of Hijaz, Asir and Yemen) became the responsibility of DMO Simla (p.206). It is interesting to reflect how effective Leachman's little excursions at this time were in drawing him to the attention of the military intelligence apparatus in India.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p44. We now know, for sure, thanks to this biographer, that the vivacious and attractive American girl in Naini Tal, who won Leachman's heart, was Frederica 'Freddie' Rothwell, a niece of Lady Julia Digges La Touche, who was the wife of the Hon. Sir James Digges La Touche, then Lieutenant-Governor of U.P. Miss Rothwell was the daughter of Lady Julia's brother Harry Rothwell, who had emigrated to America in the 1880s. In fact, the possibility of a match between Leachman and Miss Rothwell was not at all disliked by the La Touches. It seems the 'disapproval' stemmed entirely from Leachman's own rather strait-laced, conventional middle class English family. It is not entirely clear but, as a small tribute to Leachman's memory, Miss Rothwell never married either.

further hardening and embittering G.E. Leachman; which is just as well, since he might never have achieved what he did, had he settled down to marital life and a staid, regular military career in India. There are catalysts at work, that shape men into what they are, what they became.

At all events, by April 1906 Leachman seemed to have been ordered to Changla Gali, in the Hazara Hill Tract of the North-West Frontier, some 50 miles beyond Rawalpindi where his regiment now was. He was supposed to be on a musketry course there but, again, adventure - the call of lonely places - enthralled him. 'He was enticingly close to Kashmir at Changla Gali', says Winstone,¹⁷ so he joined up with a Captain Butler to explore the legendary vale, via Murree and the Kohala¹⁸ route. They spent two or three happy months exploring the Kashmir ranges, turning up in Sri Nagar in mid-August and returning back to India at the end of the month. After five months in Ambala, on regimental duty, he departed for England on furlough, from Karachi, on 30th January 1907. Along the way, he stopped off in Muscat (Oman), Bushire, Basra, Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut and Constantinople (Istanbul) - his first real 'contact' with the Near and Middle East. He finally arrived in England on 18th April. The Indian interlude, with its romance as well as apprenticeship into the world of exploration, was over.

It is worth noting that in his time in India, he never got anywhere really close to the scenes of derring-do on the North-West Frontier, for which most young soldiers yearned. In that sense (except for his very brief sojourn into Tibet and Kashmir) he was never a part of the 'Great Game'; not one of those Englishmen who were enamoured of the Afghan frontier and Central Asia. At the same time, it was in India that he came to the notice of the military intelligence talent-spotters in Simla and it is beyond question that he was there 'recruited' to his life's work. He made his extended stop-over in the Near East as someone already being groomed for a role there, and there is no doubt that these lands and regions immediately attracted him in a way that India never did. 'Lijman' was now on the verge of his true career, his Arabian vocation.

LEACHMAN IN ARABIA, 1910

By the time Leachman returned to join his regiment in India, November 1907, his future course had been already mapped out. 'Hardly had he got there than he was summoned to Simla on special duty', says Bray, who goes on to inform us that '... it would appear to have been [duty] of a confidential nature, and to have been closely connected with the Middle East.'¹⁹ The Middle East - Mesopotamia and the Arabian desert, more specifically - was where he was headed for, which exerted, after his recent trip to some of the important cities thereabouts, a steady fascination upon him. As already mentioned,²⁰ the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, east of the Red Sea, now fell under the purview of the D.M.O. Simla, excluding

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p54

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 54-55. Winstone seems to be a little confused about place-names and geography. Changla Gali is in Hazara, NWFP, whereas Murree is the Rawalpindi district of Punjab, although the whole range is a continuation of the Hazara Hill Tract or Galiyat. Also, it is the Kohala route that Leachman took from Murree to Kashmir, not the Kohla route.

¹⁹ Bray, *A Paladin of Arabia*, *op cit*, p127

²⁰ See f/n 15 above

only the Hijaz, Asir and Yemen. This left, in addition to a considerable chunk of Mesopotamia and the desert regions around it, almost the whole of the Arabian desert proper (the old *Arabia Deserta* of the Romans) to be explored, reced and surveyed.

Since this whole area was, nominally at least, under the suzerainty of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, various 'interested' European powers such as Britain, France and Germany had to exercise considerable guile and subterfuge to penetrate into this remote fastness inhabited by warring Bedouin tribes directly out of the Middle Ages. It was rather easier for the Germans, allies of the Turks (for the seeds of the First World War had already been sown); but even then, remarkably little real, contemporary knowledge and information existed about these boundless wastelands. There were almost no up-to-date maps, for one thing, the 'latest' dating to the 1870's; nor was there much first hand information about the local people beyond what could be picked up from bazaar gossip, reports by native agents and/or informers and the occasional wandering Bedouins who turned up in Baghdad, Basra or Najaf. It was generally known that there were two great tribal confederations, at feud with one another, in these parts - the Shammar, headed by the 'Ibn Rashid Sheikhs of Hail', who were in a loose sort of way the 'local representatives' or 'nominees' of the Ottoman Caliphate; and the Anaizah, mortal enemies of the Shammar, headed by the 'Ibn Saud family of Riyadh', right in the very heartland of the extremely fundamental, fanatical Wahabi movement. The Turks, obviously, were the only ones who had any inkling of how things really stood and, also quite obviously, had serious objections to the curiosity in the region displayed by other powers. Thus, the whole zone was 'out of bounds' for everyone. Hence the need to place various specially selected men of a certain type, resourceful, discreet, hardy and self-contained and, of course, brave, within the region. We know that British intelligence-gathering agencies placed a number of such men, mostly regular soldiers from the Indian or colonial armies, into the field in the whole area around this time. Two of these who were to attain special success and exceptional reputations for their achievements here, and were almost exact contemporaries, were G.E. Leachman and Captain Will Shakespear.²¹ More shall be said about them and their friendly rivalry later, in comparison with the usual Leachman - [T.E.] Lawrence 'rivalry' that is so controversial.

This was, in fact, a really critical time in world history. Winstone puts it very well:

.... the year[s] of war plans and talk of actual conflict, [it was the time] of disputes in Sinai, North Africa, Persia and the Balkans; of upheaval in Arabia and the Persian Gulf.... [and] in the fastness of central Arabia, cut off from the world by its great heat in summer and by its almost impenetrable deserts, the young Amir of Riyadh, Ibn Saud, had inflicted a great defeat on the protege of the Turks, the brave warrior prince Abdal Aziz Ibn Rashid.²²

And, at this time, 'The Indian Government recognized an ascendant star in Ibn Saud and recommended to London that contact should be established.'²³ This was the stage against which Leachman and Capt. Shakespear were to play out their lives, in an 'unsuspected rivalry'

²¹ Winstone, Leachman: OC Desert, *op cit*, pp67-69

²² *Ibid*, p70

²³ *Ibid*, p70

of sorts, battling their arch-nemesis, the German agent Preusser, also out to woo the Bedouin in the same desert.

Meanwhile, Leachman studied German and Arabic in Simla and pored over all the files and documents he could get his hands on, on this inscrutable region. In April 1909, after considerable diligence, he went down to Calcutta and managed to pass a tough Arabic examination, 'well pleased' with his effort.²⁴ The time was at hand when Leachman would test all his skills and endurance, as he got ready to set out on a journey of exploration into central Arabia. 'Just a line to say I am off today on my travels,' he wrote laconically to his mother on the very day of his departure, 11th November 1909.²⁵ This was to be the last communication any of his family would receive from him for five months.

To be continued....

The second and final part will appear in the Winter 2008 edition of *Durbar*

Editor's note

Sarkees Najmuddin lives in Islamabad, Pakistan, where he is the Head Administrator of the Joan MacDonald School (Est. 1933). He is a member of the IMHS and a student and collector of South Asian military medals and memorabilia. His collection includes a remarkable seven examples of the prestigious MacGregor Memorial Medal, among which is the medal awarded to Colonel G. E. Leachman. Omer Tarin is a poet, academic and research scholar. He has a particular interest in the colonial history of South and Central Asia, Afghanistan, Persia and the Middle East. He resides in Abbottabad, Pakistan.



THE LAST OF THE EUROPEAN SUBADARS

Mike Shaw

About a quarter century ago, while reading Sir George Dunbar's book '*Frontiers*', I came across a startling piece of information. As a fairly new collector of Indian Army medals, I knew about the rank structure in the Indian Army, and the position that the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers filled therein. Dunbar's book concerned, among other things, his participation in the campaign against the Abors in 1911-12 in North Eastern India. It was while reading about this campaign that I came across the following paragraph:

²⁴ Bray, *A Paladin of Arabia*, *op cit*, p131

²⁵ *Ibid*, p132

For my first inspection I took the Quartermaster, Subadar Dorward, with me. He was a Forfarshire man, and how a pensioned gunner N.C.O. got a Viceroy's commission as a subadar I never fathomed. Dorward was getting on in years, but his chubby, cheerful appearance in shorts had earned him the name of the Boy Scout. He knew the country well, and anything to do with the Battalion even better. My own contribution to any conversation with the people we would meet was limited to what I could do in Urdu, Punjabi, Pushtu, and Persian, and none too much of some of them. This was hardly more useful than Gaelic or French, so Dorward's fluent Assamese and Khas¹ were an additional asset.²

Now there, I thought, would be a medal to have - an India General Service Medal with the clasp for Abor 1911-12 to a European Subadar, and the naming of the medal was so unlikely that should it show up on a dealer's list it would likely be 'not fancied'. For some twenty years I kept my eyes open, but it never came on the market, at least as far as I knew, and as will be seen in fact it did not, remaining in the family until 2001.



WILLIAM DORWARD'S GROUP OF MEDALS

India General Service 1895-1902, 2 clasps: Relief of Chitral 1895, Punjab Frontier 1897-98 (66994 Bombardier W. Dorward, No. 3 Mtn Bty R.A.); *India General Service 1908-1935*, 4 clasps: Abor 1911-12, Afghanistan NWF 1919, Mahsud 1919-20, Waziristan 1919-21 (Subdr Major W. Dorward, Lakhimpur Bn, Mily Police); *British War Medal/Victory Medal* (Lieut. W. Dorward); *General Service 1918*, 1 clasp: Iraq (Capt. W. Dorward); *Delhi Durbar 1911* (Subadar Major Mr. W. Dorward); *Volunteer Force Long Service*, George V, (Sjt. W. Dorward, 6/Assam Valley Lt. Horse, I.D.F.)

I had been in correspondence with Cliff Parrett for a number of years, and in 2001 he mentioned that he had just purchased a group at a small U.K. country auction to a European Subadar Major. A subsequent e-mail confirmed that the group was to William Dorward. It is

¹ A Tibeto-Burmese language from the Northeast Frontier area of India and Nepal

² Dunbar, Sir George, *Frontiers*, (Ivor Nicholson & Watson, London, 1932), p78

an extensive group covering much more than the Abor campaign, as can be seen on the previous page.



DORWARD (LEFT) WEARING HIS INDIA GENERAL SERVICE 1895 MEDAL, WITH TWO OTHER ROYAL ARTILLERY NCO'S SHORTLY AFTER RETURNING FROM CHITRAL. HE HAS EVIDENTLY BEEN PROMOTED TO CORPORAL. HIS RANK DURING THE 'RELIEF' OPERATIONS WAS BOMBARDIER.

I had been looking for the Abor medal to Dorward for quite some time, not knowing about his other medals, and I forwarded to Cliff what little (and it was very little) I knew about Dorward and his participation in the Abor campaign. I also asked to be advised if the group was ever put up for sale. A few years later I was given first refusal on it, and I am very happy to say that it now resides in my collection. Most of the research for this article was done by Cliff, during the course of which he was able to make contact with Dorward's great niece who kindly provided some additional personal details and photographs.

We do not know when William Dorward was born, or much about his enlisted career in the Royal Artillery, other than that from his medal one can see that he served in the 1895 Chitral campaign and the subsequent campaign on the Northwest Frontier in 1897-98. Sir George Dunbar mentions that he was a 'pensioned gunner' and as will be seen he became Subadar Major of the Lakhimpur Military Police Battalion in 1905, so it seems likely that he was born within a couple of years of 1865.

L.W. Shakespear, in his *'History of the Assam Rifles'*, when referring to the Lakhimpur MP Battalion in the year 1883, states:

During this year Mr. Hughes, of the Civil Police, was appointed European Subadar Major to the Battalion, an absurd title obtaining for similar billets in the Naga Hills and Surma Valley M.P. units, and which continued up to 1904.³

Referring to the same Battalion in the year 1905, he writes: 'Mr. Hughes retired this year, his place in the Battalion being filled by Sergeant Dorward, R.A.'⁴

So in 1905, William Dorward became Subadar Major of the Lakhimpur Military Police Battalion. The Military Police Battalions of Eastern India were mainly raised in the nineteenth century in order to protect the 'settled districts' from the unsettled hill tribes, who were left on their own as long as they did not interfere with those under British protection. The Lakhimpur Military Police Battalion, which was later to become the 2nd Battalion Assam Rifles, was originally raised in 1864 as the Lakhimpur Armed Police Battalion. Later known as the Lakhimpur Frontier Police Battalion, in 1883 it became the Lakhimpur MP Battalion, under which title it remained until 1917.

On 3rd March 1906, William Dorward married Emily Jane Pascall at Dibrugarh, where they were both resident at the time. The document recording marriages solemnized at 'Dibrugarh and Outstations' was signed by the Reverend Walter Lambert, Minister and Chaplain of Dibrugarh, and describes Dorward's rank or profession as Subadar, Lakhimpur Police. The ages of the bride and groom are given as 'full'.

Dorward clearly became a valuable asset to his unit, as evidenced by the following letter written by Major A. J. Strange, Commandant, Lakhimpur Battalion, on 7th September 1909:

My dear Bonham-Carter,

Before vacating command of this Battalion, I am very anxious to do something for two men who have been of the utmost assistance to me. The first is Dorward. I wrote to you sometime ago, before I went on furlough last year, and you replied that it was too early yet to improve his position. So I am not writing officially though I shall be very glad to do so if you wish.

Dorward has been in his present grade (the highest he can reach under existing rules) for nearly five years. He is, as you know, the last of the European Subadars; this native rank applied to a European has always seemed to me anomalous. The work that he does, as in the case of his predecessors, is that of an Assistant Commandant and he does it so excellently that I should like to see his status improved, and his pay with it. Now that the Assistant Commandants with this Battalion [are] to be increased, I should very much like to see Dorward made one of them. There may not be an actual precedent for this, but at any rate P.R. Hughes, Dorward's

³ L.W. Shakespear, *History of the Assam Rifles*, (Macmillan, London 1929), p116

⁴ *Ibid*, p123

predecessor here, has become a gazetted officer, and his present billet is superior to that of Assistant Commandant. Dorward's knowledge of every branch of the Battalion work, his keenness and his great ability make him invaluable to his Commandant; he gets on very well with the men, and this is not an ordinary trait with the British N.C.O's.

M.P. Battalions are different from regular N.I. Regiments where as a rule a man does not get command until he has a certain amount of service with the regiment, and therefore knows something of what has gone before. A new Commandant has a good deal to learn, but with a man like Dorward at his right hand, he should not go far wrong. That is why I would rather see Dorward promoted in the battalion than given a billet outside. He is a married man and finds it hard to live on his pay.

You said, when I wrote before, that it was too soon to consider the question of raising his status. But the increase in the number of Asst Commandants in the Battn leads me to think that it may be a favorable opportunity to bring the matter up. Failing that it would be possible for him to get a personal allowance. I believe one was given to Sub. O'Callaghan who was in the Naga Hills Bn some 16 years ago.⁵



SUBEDAR MAJOR WILLIAM DORWARD, LAKHIMPUR MILITARY POLICE BATTALION

⁵ A copy of this letter was amongst the papers accompanying Dorward's medals.

This highly complimentary letter does not seem to have accomplished the goal of gaining a commission for Dorward, as he was still a Subadar Major at the time of the Abor Campaign 1911-12. For his services in that campaign Subadar-Major Dorward was mentioned in dispatches 'as having done good work.'⁶

During the Great War, when already serving in France, Dorward finally received a King's Commission as Temporary 2nd Lieutenant in the Indian Army Reserve of Officers on 13th April 1917. He was promoted to Temporary Lieutenant on 13th April 1918. He is shown as attached to the 39th (Manipuri) Labour Corps in the October 1918 Indian Army List. His war services included operations in France and Belgium between 13th April 1917 and 30th June 1918.

In January 1920 Dorward was acting Captain and Commandant, 114th Indian Labour Corps, a unit formed in 1918 and disbanded in 1920. This Gurkha unit's Indian Officers were all pensioned VCO's of the 2-6th Gurkha Rifles, 1-8th Gurkha Rifles, and 1st Assam Rifles.

Towards the end of 1920, with an end to his Temporary Commission looming, Dorward started to look to his future employment prospects. A job in Assam would have suited him down to the ground. Amongst his papers there is an intriguing letter of reference written by Lieut. Colonel J. Masters of the 16th Rajputs, who knew Dorward from his Abor days.

To: Chief Secretary, Government of Assam

From: J. Masters, Lt. Col. 16th Rajput,

Harnai, Baluchistan, 4th December, 1920.

I have known Captain W. Dorward since 1911. We served together in the Lakhimpur Battn. Assam Military Police on the Abor Expedition. He was mentioned in despatches for the good work he did on this Campaign. From my personal knowledge of his character I can thoroughly recommend him for the post of Extra-Assistant Commissioner. He is still very active and I do not consider his age to be any disadvantage.

A footnote on a copy of this testimonial, written in Dorward's hand and signed by him, states simply: 'When the above was written I was on field service as O.C. the 114th Gurkha Labour Corps.'

⁶ Dispatch of Major General Hamilton Bower CB, to the Government of India, dated Kobo, 11 Apr 1912



DORWARD (RIGHT) IN FIELD SERVICE KIT DURING WW1 WEARING WHAT APPEAR TO BE WARRANT OFFICER RANK BADGES ON BOTH SLEEVES. THIS IMAGE MUST HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN EUROPE PRIOR TO DORWARD'S COMMISSIONING, AS IT IS PRINTED ON THE OBVERSE OF A FRENCH-LANGUAGE POSTCARD.

The outcome of this correspondence is not known, but it is evident that Dorward was not yet prepared to cut loose his ties with Assam.

Remaining with the I.A.R.O. for just a few more months, he was advanced to Captain on 13th April 1921 before finally retiring from the Regular Army a little more than three months later on 30th July. Also in the Dorward archive is a printed document, with manuscript additions, entitled 'Protection Certificate issued by the India Office to British personnel of the Indian Services.'

The under mentioned officer [Temporary Captain William Dorward, I.A.R.O.] is released from Military Service with effect from 30th July 1921, unless he hears to contrary from the War Office or India Office, on or after which date he will not be entitled to draw pay. He will be entitled to wear uniform for one month from the above date and upon occasion authorized by Regulations.



WILLIAM AND EMILY DORWARD IN RETIREMENT IN ENGLAND

It appears that, as soon as he was released from regular military service, the energetic Dorward joined the India Defence Force as a volunteer with the 6th Assam Valley Light Horse with whom in a very short time he was awarded the Volunteer Long Service Medal [Indian Army Order No. 345 of 1921]. This presumably took account of his accumulated years in other arms of the service.

In later life he and his wife lived in England and the photo above shows them in front of their cottage in Barnet. With no direct descendants, details of Dorward's life are sketchy and the year of his death is uncertain. That event is believed to have occurred after 1949 and before 1953, according to his great niece. A few documents, some photos, and a group of medals are all that remains of 'the last of the European Subadars.'



ORIGINS OF THE GARHWAL RIFLES

Rana Chhina

The Garhwal Rifles was raised in April 1887 as the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd (The Kumaon) Gurkha Regiment. The battalion was to be composed of Garhwalis from upper Garhwal. A nucleus was provided by approved transfers from all corps that enlisted Garhwalis.¹ The regimental history goes on to record that:

Up to 1887 the Garhwalis continued to be represented in the ranks of the first five Gurkha regiments.

The first proposal to raise a regiment of this class originated in July 1880 through the Panjab Government and was revived from time to time, till in January 1886 His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief (General Sir FS Roberts) again took up the subject. The following are the terms of his recommendation:

‘The men would be an excellent fighting class. The present 5th Gurkhas had many Garhwalis in its ranks who have repeatedly proved themselves brave and faithful soldiers, and are considered by the officers of that corps as quite equal to the pure Gurkha in physique and pluck. The other Gurkha regiments count their Garhwalis as amongst their best soldiers, and all the officers who know this class best speak in the highest terms of their military qualifications.’²

However, in a coffee table book published by the regiment in 2004, a new twist was added to the tale. In a section entitled ‘Birth of the Regiment’ it was stated:³

The exceptional valour and courage shown by Subedar Bal Bhadra Singh during the Afghan War prompted Field Marshal Sir FS Roberts, Commander-in-Chief, India (later Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar) to remark that, ‘*a nation which can produce men like Bal Bhadra Singh must have a separate battalion of their own*’.⁴ For his immense contribution during the Afghan War, Subedar Bal Bhadra Singh was honoured with the ‘Order of Merit’ in 1879. The awards of ‘Order of British India’ and ‘Supreme Soldier’ were also conferred on him while he was *aide-de-camp* (ADC) to Field Marshal Roberts. Bal Bhadra Singh induced the Commander-in-Chief to raise a separate regiment of the Garhwalis and persuaded him to recommend the case to the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin. Thus, Field Marshal

¹ Evatt, J., *Historical Record of the 39th Royal Garhwal Rifles, Vol 1 1887-1922*, (Gale & Polden, London 1922), p10

² *Ibid*, p9. The remark was actually made by Maj Gen TD Baker, KCB, Adjt Genl in his letter to the Military Sec. dated 29 Jan 1886. *National Archives of India, Military Department Proceedings*, Feb 1886 No 1666 – A

³ Anon, *The Garhwal Rifles: Where Gallantry is a Tradition*, (The Garhwal Regimental Centre, Lansdowne 2004), p20

⁴ Source attributed to Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour*. The quote, however, could not be traced.

Roberts recommended the raising of a separate regiment of the Garhwalis in January 1886.⁵

Who was Subedar Bal Bhadra Singh? What was his contribution, if any, in influencing the Commander-in-Chief to raise a separate regiment composed entirely of ethnic Garhwalis? What was the authenticity of the information claiming a significant place for Bal Bhadra Singh in the history of the regiment? An attempt has been made to resolve the issue by consulting a number of primary and secondary sources.

Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh Negi⁶, *Bahadur*, enlisted in the army on 6th May 1849. He transferred to the 5th Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) when that regiment was raised in 1858. He was commissioned as a Jemadar on 6th February 1867, being promoted to Subedar on 1st May 1870 and becoming Subedar Major on 17th October 1879. The regimental history of the 5th Gurkhas notes that in 1881 Subedar-Major Balbahadur Negi was appointed Aide-de-Camp on the Personal Staff of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in recognition of the services of the Regiment during the Afghan Campaign.⁷ He served in this capacity till 1885. It also records that a Havildar Balbahadur was awarded the Indian Order of Merit, 3rd Class, for acts of gallantry during the Ambela Campaign, on 6th November, 1863.⁸ However, the Bengal Army Lists do not record the award to Subedar Balbhadra Singh. On 8th April 1883 he was admitted to the 2nd Class of the Order of British India, which carried with it the title of 'Bahadur'.⁹

Balbhadra Sing is mentioned twice in official Military Department correspondence in the period preceding the raising of the Regiment. He first finds mention in 1879 as being successful in obtaining Gurkha recruits for his regiment, while a British officer from another regiment had failed to do so. He is next mentioned in the following general observation from Brigadier-General JI Murray, Commanding Rohilkhand District, to the Adjutant General dated 25th September 1881. He stated that:

7. In conclusion, should government be desirous of increasing the number of hardy hill-men in the native army, I cannot too strongly recommend, for consideration, the formation of a regiment composed entirely of men belonging to Garhwal and the adjoining northern Kumaun districts, who have proved themselves to be second to none in *fighting* qualities. The Goorkha regiments will soon be almost entirely composed of Nepalese, and in the event of hostilities with that State, I much doubt if

⁵ There are a number of factual errors in the statement. Sub Maj Balbhadra Singh was not awarded the IOM in 1879. He was probably given this award in 1863 (see f/n 8), although this is not supported by the Army Lists of the period. The title of 'Supreme Soldier' is not one that was used in the Indian Army. Award of the OBI 2nd Class carried with it the title of 'Bahadur', and this may possibly be the basis of the claim. He was ADC to the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, and not to Field Marshal Lord Roberts.

⁶ There are various transliterations of his name, with or without Singh and/or Negi. It is rendered as 'Bulbhudder Naigee' in the Bengal Army Lists of 1884 and 1885.

⁷ Anon., *History of the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) 1858 to 1928*, (Gale & Polden, Aldershot circa 1929), p451

⁸ *Ibid*, p450; see also GO 76 of 29 Jan 1964: Havr Bulbhudder [sic], 5th Goorkha Regt, admitted to the 3rd Class IOM for gallantry at Ambela on 6 Nov 1863.

⁹ Authority GGO 565, 19 Oct 1883.

they could be depended upon; whereas the Garhwal and Kumaun men are their hereditary enemies, and bound to the British Government by the strongest of ties - that of self-interest.

8. With Sir Henry Ramsay's assistance, a splendid regiment would be raised in a few months; they are physically larger and finer men than the approved Goorkha, and Sir Henry Macpherson and other competent authorities entertain the highest opinion of their soldierly qualities, while the few who are prejudiced against them, admit their superior intelligence. I may mention that the Viceroy's Aide-de-Camp Bulbhudur Naigee is a Garhwali, as also four other native officers of that distinguished corps, the 5th Goorkha Regiment.

The oft-quoted, very first recommendation that came through the Punjab Government to raise a regiment of Garhwalis emanated as follows:

*Extract from demi-official dated 5th May 1880, from Major Sym, officiating 2nd in Command, 5th Goorkha Regiment, to the Secretary to Government, Punjab, Military Department.*¹⁰

There is a tolerably large field for recruiting which has hitherto been almost untouched, but from which first-rate men could be got, and that is Gurhwal [sic].

I would not advocate enlisting this class for Goorkha regiments, but they would be a great addition to any other of the regiments of the force, or, if Government approved of it, a regiment composed entirely of Gurhwalis, might be raised, and I think it would turn out second to none.

As you know, we used to have a number of Gurhwalis in our regiment, and as far as my experience goes, they make quite as good soldiers as Goorkhas, being equally plucky, and far more intelligent. I am just a little doubtful, however, whether a united body of 600 or 800 of them might not develop an unnecessary amount of caste prejudice.

The Gurhwali is a far better man than the Kumaoni, in every way, and I don't think that the latter class as a rule is worth enlisting. We have now four Gurhwali native officers, and three of these are about the best we have. Some years ago, Subadar Roop Sing was transferred from our regiment to the Guides. He was also a Gurhwali, and if he had lived, he would have been made a Subadar-Major. Jenkins considered him to be the best native officer they had ever had; but he was killed last December in the attack on the Koh Asmai.

I think that it is quite right that they should not be enlisted in a Goorkha regiment, because they are not Goorkhas, but they would make a first-rate element in other

¹⁰ *NAI Mily Dept Progs (Kabul)*, December 1880 No. 14508-10 – A: 'Proposed enlistment of Garhwalis in the Native Army'

regiments. I dare say that the senior Assistant Commissioner in Gurhwal could give you a great deal of information about them, which I cannot possibly supply.

I think the subject is worthy of consideration, and so I have written to you about it.

There is no doubt that the major incentive for raising the Garhwal Rifles regiment came from the exertions of Field Marshal Sir F.S. Roberts, Commander-in-Chief in India. In so doing he would have consulted with, and sought the opinion of, a large variety of notable individuals who had intimate knowledge of the fighting qualities of Garhwali soldiers, at the time. However, in all the primary and secondary sources consulted, there is no direct mention of Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh's role in convincing Lord Roberts to raise a regiment of Garhwalis, although there is no reason to doubt the oral tradition passed down in his family, that he was consulted by the 'Jangi Laat'¹¹ on the question. The available evidence would suggest that Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh was not the sole individual consulted in the matter. Indeed, it would be immature to assume that a single individual could sway or mould official opinion to the extent suggested. It is, however, reasonable to assume that Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh was indeed consulted, along with a variety of other knowledgeable individuals, and was a part of the process by which official opinion was solidified.

The secondary publications consulted during the research are listed in the appended bibliography. It is noteworthy that while Lord Roberts makes mention of a number of Indian soldiers in his autobiography, including Risaldar Major Ganda Singh, his Indian ADC during the Second Afghan War, there is no mention of Balbhadra Singh, either in this book, or in *The Military Papers of Field Marshal Lord Roberts 1876-1893*, edited by Brian Robson (see Bibliography). He finds no mention in *A Matter of Honour* by Philip Mason, as has been claimed.

The Government General Order¹² authorizing the raising of the Garhwal Rifles, reproduced below, predictably makes no mention of Bal Bhadra Singh.

General Orders, Military Department Fort William, 19th December 1890

Organization: Native Army

No. 1110 – With the sanction of the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India, the Governor-General in Council directs that the changes detailed below be made in regard to the corps named, with effect from the 1st January, 1891, or such subsequent dates as may be practicable:-

I [pertains to the raising of 37th Regiment of Bengal Infantry]

II [pertains to the raising of 38th Regiment of Bengal Infantry]

III The 39th Regiment of Bengal Infantry, as at present constituted, will be mustered out at Jhansi, and to replace it, a regiment of Garhwalis to be styled 'The 39th

¹¹ *Lit:* Jangi Lord, or War Lord; the C-in-C in India.

¹² GGO 1110, 19 Dec 1890.

(Garhwali) Regiment of Bengal Infantry' will be formed from the six companies of Garhwalis now in the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Gurkha Regiment, and from volunteers from the two companies of hill-men forming part of the present 39th Bengal Infantry. The Garhwali companies of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Gurkha Regiment (which are now serving in Burma), will take the new designation set forth above, from the date above specified: the re-formed regiment will eventually be stationed at Lansdowne (Kaludanda).

RAISING AND ORIGINS

In order to fully appreciate the events leading up to the raising of the regiment in 1887 it is important to understand the political and military situation that prevailed in the preceding decades.

For twenty years following the rebellion of 1857-59, the government of India was obsessed with the danger of a fresh rebellion. This resulted in an extremely limited role for the Indian Army. However, the period after 1878 was marked by events which had a deep impact on India's military affairs. The principal events of this period were the Second Afghanistan War (1878-80), the extension of British influence in Baluchistan and adjoining districts, the annexation of Upper Burma (1885-87), and the complete alteration of the political and military situation on the north-west frontier in the context of the perceived Russian menace after the Second Afghan War. In the minds of the military planners, the growing Russian influence in Central Asia and the considerable Russian forces on the northern frontiers of Afghanistan posed the worst ever threat to the security of India.

Another major factor that influenced recruiting patterns in the British Indian Army was the rise of the 'martial races' theory, the chief proponent of which was Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, who was the Commander-in-Chief in India from 1885 to 1893. The theory and its ramifications are well known and are not being discussed here.

In 1879, the Army Organisation Commission (Eden Commission) proposed a reduction in the strength of the Indian Army. However, before the recommendations could be effectively carried out, the 2nd Afghan War broke out. This was followed by the Panjdeh incident of 1885, and the Russian scare that followed not only gave a great stimulus to army affairs in India, but also oriented the role of the army to defending the external frontiers of India.

As a result of these developments, the policy of reduction was reversed, and in 1885 additions were made to the British Army and Indian forces in India. The strength of the British Army was increased from 59,000 to 70,000 and that of the Indian Army from 123,254 to 140,000.¹³

¹³ Military Despatch from India No. 112 and 135 of 1885; Military Despatch to India, No. 275 of 29 Oct 1885

The proposed increase of the infantry element was as follows:

- A new regiment of Mazhabi pioneers (the 34th)
- Three new battalions of Sikhs
- Five new battalions of Gurkhas

The raisings were carried out in the period 1886-1891 as soon as financial considerations permitted. In reporting the progress of the increase in strength of the Army, the Military Department informed¹⁴ the Government of India that:

- A battalion of Dogras (37th) have been formed in lieu of one of Sikhs.
- A battalion of Garhwalis was formed in lieu of one of Gurkhas and designated the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Gurkha Regiment. Measures are, however, now in progress to make this battalion a purely Gurkha one, and the Garhwalis will form a separate corps of the line (the 39th).

Therefore, in the period immediately preceding the raising of the regiment two significant events took place. The Second Afghan War of 1878-1880 resulted in a massive deployment of the Indian Army beyond India's frontiers with accompanying extreme shortages of recruits for replacement of war wastage of personnel; and the Panjdeh incident of 1885, which led to a near-war situation with Russia and an urgent need to increase the strength of the available military forces in India. This, then, was the backdrop in which the Garhwal Rifles was raised, in lieu of one of the five battalions of Gurkha infantry, sanctioned by the Government of India in 1885.

Two question now arise: why was this change effected, and to what extent, if any, was Subedar Major Balbhadra (or Bal Bahadaur) Singh responsible for it?

The Second Afghan War exposed many defects in the organisation and training of the Indian Army. One of the most glaring of these was the system of obtaining recruits. Recruiting in those days was a regimental affair, done entirely by regimental recruiting parties from classes resident in certain preferred districts. When the battalion was deployed on active service, operational exigencies disrupted the normal recruiting programmes, and casualties together with long overseas deployment in harsh conditions led to a decrease in the number of recruits willing to join. Nowhere was this difficulty more acutely felt than in the case of the Gurkha regiments of the Indian Army. The Army Organization Commission noted as early as October 1879 that 'It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain recruits for the Goorkha Corps - their expansion being "altogether impossible" and due to the strain caused by the (present) war all of them are below strength.'¹⁵

¹⁴ Official, *Military Affairs Transacted by the Government of India 1886-1891*, n.d.

¹⁵ Official, *Military Affairs Transacted by the Government of India 1886-1891*; quoting from Army Organization Commission No. 543 dated 1 Oct 1879

It is in the context of the increasing difficulty in obtaining Gurkha recruits from Nepal that Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh first finds mention in official correspondence. In a report submitted to the authorities in 1879, a British officer complained that, while his own regiment, the 18th Native Infantry, had difficulty obtaining recruits because the orders to not cross the border were well enforced, ‘the 5th Goorkhas with an influential Goorkha native officer Subedar Balabhaddar managed to secure 300 recruits in no time by crossing the frontier surreptitiously.’

This Subedar even stated that the Nepal Durbar had put a reward on his head ‘Dead or Alive’ for his actions.¹⁶

The matter of obtaining suitable Gurkha recruits was referred to the Foreign Department, who asked for the comments of the British Resident (Ambassador) in Nepal. In a letter dated 7th December 1879 the Resident suggested, among other points, that:

The sphere of choice both as to places and classes might be usefully extended. I do not see why natives of Ghurwal, Kumaon, Sirmoor, Mundi and other hill states should not be enlisted as recruits, and I think that other castes besides the Muggurs and Gurungs, from whom the Goorkha regiments are now almost entirely recruited, might be usefully admitted to the ranks.¹⁷

It can thus be seen that one of the main considerations for widening the base for obtaining military manpower was the problem being faced by the authorities in obtaining recruits for Gurkha regiments. It was in this context that one of the earliest official suggestions to widen the recruiting base to Garhwal was made in 1879. However, Garhwalis were already being enlisted in Gurkha and other line regiments under the loose class description of ‘hill men’.

The discussions and views relating to the formation of a pure Garhwali battalion were recapitulated in a Military Department file, as an official synopsis, in 1887.¹⁸

<i>Source</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Office Notes	Sir H. Ramsay ¹⁹ wrote to General Strachey (1879) and said ‘Gurhwal men are excellent. Ask Tytler, Fisher or Garstin or others who have had experience on service and they will tell you Gurhwal men are first-rate soldiers.’

¹⁶ *NAI Mily Dept (Kabul) Progs*, April 1880 Nos. 8003-9: ‘Recruiting of the Goorkha Regiments’. Remarks of the Station Staff Officer (initials A.C.T.) in the Office Notes on file, dated 4 Oct 1879.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, April 1880 Nos. 8003-9

¹⁸ *NAI Mily Dept Progs*, June 1887 Nos. 1444-1448 – A: ‘Non-enlistment of Garhwalis for the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Goorkhas. The 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Goorkhas to be composed of pure Garhwalis from Upper Garhwal.’

¹⁹ Commissioner of Garhwal

<p>Proceeding, August 1880 No. 8006 A</p>	<p>Girdlestone writing to Foreign Dept. in December 1879 said: ‘Again, I am unable to understand why in the recruiting orders of the 1st Goorkhas it should be laid down that ‘natives of Gurhwal, Kumaon, Dhoteal, Sirmoor, Baghat, Mandi or other hill states are on no account to be entertained.’ It seems to me unreasonable to assume that the Sardeh on one side or Mechi on the other are the limits of good fighting-men in the Himalayas.’</p> <p>In July 1880 the Punjab Government, in addressing the Adjutant General, forwarded a demi-official letter from Major Sym, 5th Goorkhas, and said that ‘Government may feel disposed to institute inquiries regarding Gurhwal as a recruiting field.’</p> <p>Major Sym speaks highly of the Gurhwali and considers him quite as good a soldier as a Goorkha – equally plucky and far more intelligent; and in his opinion a regiment of Gurhwalis would be second to none. But he most strongly deprecates their being mixed up with the Goorkhas, and he is just a little doubtful whether a united body of 600 or 800 of them might not develop an unnecessary amount of caste prejudice.</p>
<p>Kabul Proceedings A, December 1880, No. 14510</p>	<p>The Commander-in-Chief caused certain commanding officers to be consulted, and the opinions expressed are certainly not in favour of the Gurhwali as compared with the Goorkha, and the opinions of the officers commanding 41st and 42nd are decidedly unfavourable, and both complain of their caste prejudices.</p> <p>Col. Johnson gives the Gurhwalis very faint praise and Sir Donald Stewart says: ‘I do not myself believe in Gurhwalis. They were very indifferent performers at the siege of Delhi, and they have since then been almost eliminated from the battalion, now the 3rd Goorkhas, then the Kumaon Battalion.’</p>
<p>January 1882, No. 2846 A</p>	<p>In January 1882, the Adjutant General, replying to an enquiry from the Govt of India, said that Sir D. Stewart thought a good battalion might be formed of Gurhwalis, and that in a General Order he had called attention to them of Commanding Officers of the regiments authorized to entertain hill men; he mentioned that Commanding Officers of Goorkha regiments had been consulted who, ‘while admitting the superior qualities of Gurhwalis as soldiers, were averse</p>

<p>February 1886, No. 1666-69 A</p>	<p>to their enlistment in Goorkha regiments.’ Sir H. Macpherson said: ‘there are few better soldiers in our ranks than the men of Gurhwal,’ and he recommended that each Goorkha regiment should have a hundred Gurhwalis on its rolls.</p> <p>No action was taken on this as the army was being reduced.</p> <p>In December 1885 and January 1886, the Commander-in-Chief put forward proposals for raising a regiment (preferably 2nd Battalion 3rd Goorkhas) from the province of Gurhwal. He speaks very highly of the superior qualities of the material to be found there, and he quotes Sir A. Ramsay and Col. Fisher as speaking in the highest terms of their military qualifications. (Both of them were very old local military civilians who cannot have had military experience of them).</p> <p>The proposal was held in abeyance for financial reasons.</p> <p>Again in September 1886 (Prog no. 3542, Dec. 1886) the C-in-C pressed the raising of a Gurhwali Battalion to the 3rd Goorkhas very strongly, naming many of the advocates of that class and mentioning that the general opinion of officers experienced with Goorkhas was in favour of a Gurhwali Battalion.</p> <p>For financial reasons only one battalion could be raised, and on being given the choice of Goorkhas or Gurhwalis, the Commander-in-Chief preferred Goorkhas. The Gurhwali Battalion question was again deferred.</p> <p>The Secretary of State may, therefore, be told that the enlistment of Gurhwalis is not finally negated but held in abeyance for the present, and will be again considered when the question of raising a second battalion to the 3rd Goorkhas is again put forward.</p> <p>Experience is not in favour of a local regiment locally enlisted, such as the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Goorkhas, would be if formed of Gurhwalis; and it is thought that if the Gurhwalis are to be enlisted – and there are no reasons why they should not be – their enlistment should be confined to regiments of which the composition comprises hill men, as the knocking about they would thus get would tend to diminish the caste prejudices which would otherwise be developed by the formation of a battalion situated in the midst of their country.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">13-2-1887 A.C.</p>
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CONCLUSION

The contention that Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh Negi was the sole factor responsible for convincing the C-in-C in India, Lord Roberts, to raise a regiment composed entirely of ethnic Garhwalis is specious. The initial suggestion to raise a regiment composed entirely of Garhwalis came from Major Sym, officiating 2-i-c, 5th Gurkha Regiment, in 1880. The 5th Gurkhas had a number of Garhwalis in their ranks. Along with Balbhadra Singh, the other Garhwali soldier to be quoted as an example was Subedar Rup Singh, senior Indian officer of the Gurkha Company of the Guides Infantry, who was killed leading his company at the Asmai Heights north of Kabul in 1879.

The move to form a separate regiment composed of Garhwalis had been afoot for nearly a decade before the regiment came into being in 1887. As Indian ADC to the Viceroy (1881-1885), Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh Negi would have undoubtedly stood as incontrovertible evidence of the suitability of the Garhwali as a soldier. While there is no written record to the effect, there is every possibility that Lord Roberts may have spoken to Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh Negi about the matter. While the degree of influence that he may, or may not, have wielded in influencing the C-in-C's opinion is a matter of conjecture, it is a matter of recorded fact that there were a number of other senior, distinguished and influential British officials who were strongly recommending the case for formation of the regiment. In light of this recorded evidence, against the oral account of the Subedar Major's family history, it would be incorrect to suggest that Subedar Major Balbhadra Singh Negi was single-handedly responsible for the creation of the regiment. He was, however, a part of the process, and deserves recognition as being one of two men who were individually named, as being examples of distinguished Garhwali soldiers in building up the case before Government.

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THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S CADET ESTABLISHMENT AT BARASETT, BENGAL

Tim Ash

I had heard of Barasett but could find no detail on it, even in *Guide to the Records of the India Office Military Department* (A.J. Farrington; India Office Library & Records, London 1982), a most detailed guide to the India Office Military Records. Then one day I was given a birthday present by my wife's aged cousin: *The Old Field Officer, or The Military and Sporting Adventures of Major Worthington* (edited by J. H. Stocqueler; Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh 1853). The following extract from that volume is the most detailed, and only, account that I have seen so far.

It was a strange place that Barasett. If the Governor-General of the time being, with the best aid of the Commander-in-Chief, the members of the Council, the whole Secretaries, and the chiefs and big wigs of all departments into the bargain, had assembled in solemn conclave for the one purpose of devising how best to bring ruin and demoralization into the ranks of the young and inexperienced on their first arrival as Cadets in this country, the chances are ten to one if they could have fallen upon so sure, safe, and expeditious a plan of eradicating all good, and instilling every evil, as that same precious institution of Barasett.

It was a regular Asiatic hot-bed of ruin and mischief. And yet, doubtless, could one only see the minutes of Government, with the elaborate explanations provided in the despatches of that day, for the information of the home authorities on its first establishment, we should assuredly light upon the usual be-praisings of a new plan, the vaunted anticipations of future benefit to the service, with all the changes officially rung on the cabalistic promise of advantage to the State, economy to the Government, and efficiency for the army. We should see announced the fledged production of admirable linguists, eminent officers, and valuable public servants, in fact, all the bright shewings of one side of a question so needful to induce superiors to sanction a job. And the job was of some importance too; it was to give to the Government of Bengal the means of nominating three or four staff-friends to fat

appointments, with the distribution of some thousands of rupees monthly, in the shape of rent, salaries, and establishments.

The crowd of officers who have passed through the fiery ordeal of Barasett is now fast disappearing from the Bengal army. Not a tithe, probably, of its existing members know aught regarding such an institution; and many of the elders among the field-officers, and grey-headed captains, remember it only as a dream of their youth, and think of its ancient scenes of riot, and wildness, and folly, but as portions of their boyhood, and as part and parcel of their school-day recollections. But that such a place had once a prominent being in the vicinity of Calcutta, and was the subject of more apprehensive discussion and alarm to the high functionaries in any way responsible for it, than half the other establishments of the army put together, is a fact which the old records of the adjutant-general's office can well testify, and regarding which many poor devils of victims to its ills are yet alive to bear unhappy witness.

About fifteen miles from the Government House of Calcutta, and about seven miles from Dum-Dum, arose a few brick and chunam residences, beside a small sequestered village, embowered, as it were, in a series of surrounding groups of large tamerind, lime, mango, and other trees of this part of Bengal. It was an agreeable retirement from the bustle of Calcutta, possessing the advantage of being so located that the owner could manage to superintend several small indigo works in its neighbourhood, and at the same time avail himself of daily intercourse, if necessary, with the metropolis of British India. It was to this spot that Government directed its attention as a convenient place in which to establish a military college or institution for the reception of Cadets on their arrival in India. Young candidates for military fame in India were here to acquire a knowledge of its vernacular language, with a fitting smattering of drill and daily parade duty. And so essential did these high qualifications seem in the eyes of the founders of the institution, that they were thought to be cheaply purchased by the outlay of some lacs of rupees, and the risk and danger of bringing together two or three hundred heedless boys in the hot blood of untrammelled youth, just released from the wholesome restraints and still necessary supervision of their late parents and guardians. To secure this place itself a high monthly rent was granted to the proprietor, on the condition of his erecting barracks, with other sufficient accommodation, for the officers and staff. And the early part of the present century soon witnessed the secluded and pleasing retreat we have described converted into a nursery of riot and diableries, under the aristocratic title of 'Institution for Gentleman Cadets.'

The establishment itself was composed of an elderly officer, as commandant or head school-master, a second in command who was also a professor or teacher of Hindoostanee, and a couple of subaltern officers, likewise professors, while one of the latter acted as adjutant of the Cadet company, and the drill superintendent of the military tyros. As soon as the Cadets arrived from England in the different ships, which were then in the habit of coming out in fleets of ten or twelve Indiamen to avoid the French cruisers, so formidable to the Honourable Company's trading vessels, the cadets, to the number of a few score at a time, were handed over to the Cadet Institution. They were directed by the town-major to betake themselves at once to Barasett, and palankeens were supplied at the public expense to carry them off, as early as practicable, from the taverns, and other temptations of the metropolis. Many, however, contrived to linger behind in the town, to have a few days of fun at Cadit

Flouef's, a well-known punch house of that day; but others, rather more quietly disposed, were soon at Barasett - to the horror of a few of them, on their first reaching the pandemonium it presented.

It was there, after the riotous salutation first awaiting them, and their prompt initiation into the not infrequent orgies of the place, they were consigned to the custody of the sergeant-major. A barrack-room, or a portion of a room, was allotted them, according to the crowded state or otherwise of the Cadet company, and soon amid the 'awkward squad' they were taught the goose step, and seduced into the erudite mysteries of the 'right face', 'left turn', and other great rudiments of the drill. After much dire preliminary marching and countermarching without arms, they were promoted to the dignity of handling an old artillery fusil, until tolerably well drilled into its use and exercise. All this occupied the mornings and evenings; in the day time, the young gentlemen had to attend classes, or lectures as they were called; but though the professors could enforce attendance of all, it was a task beyond them to ensure attention to anything like study; and thus the presence of four-fifths of the youngsters at class, in spite of the kindness and exertion of the teachers, was a mere farce, a practical exemplification of 'Love's labour lost' - or a more free and easy periodical exhibition of 'As you like it'. Scarcely a youngster dreamed of serious application. Ponies, terriers, pariah dogs, shooting, sauntering about the barracks, smoking, drinking, gaming, and much worse amusements formed the sole occupation of the many. Picture to yourself two hundred or more tall strapping youths of eighteen or nineteen, of all possible dispositions and pursuits, as the very age of all others for reckless disregard of prudence and of consideration for the future; fancy these boys crowded together in a new country - in a bewildering and exciting climate, with no immediate check on their humours or ebullitions, and roaming about the noisy barracks, at a mile's distance from the officers of the Institution, and you may conjure up some idea of the daily row and riot of the place. On one side might be seen collected a turbulent group surrounding some unfortunate bill-sircar, who had brought a few bills in master's name, from certain stable-keepers or tailors in Calcutta. The bills were at once snatched from his trembling grasp, and then opened and handed round for the edification of the group. Soon the documents were tossed about or flung in the air, for the amusement of beholding the terror and alarm of the bill-sircar. But see, a few of them are actually torn in the increasing riot and excitement of the moment; in vain the sircar protests, begs, and implores; all the bills are, by this time, in tatters, and an unlucky voice has suggested the propriety of 'ducking the dun' in a neighbouring tank. With a shout, the agitated bill deliverer is borne away from the earth, uplifted by his arms and legs, and in a few moments is struggling and gasping away, in the muddy waters of the pitiless tank, half drowned, amid the cries, and yells, and exultations of his seeming fiendish tormentors! A little to the left another party are baiting a jackal, which has been tied to a stake. Half a hundred ill-bred curs and half Anglicised pariahs are barking around him, and yelping and snapping at their dreaded victim as their owners are 'stirring him up with a long pole', and giving the devoted jackal sundry cruel thumps with brick-bats and other missives to give him energy and animation. At last a single terrier rushes into the ring. He flies at the beast, amid shouts of admiration that make the barracks ring again. The terrier is discomfited. Taunts, jeers, and angry exclamations are the order of the day - dog after dog is seized up, and thrown in upon the prey, who braves them all; but a heavy brick-bat has floored him, and at once fifty rank curs rush on the momentarily disabled victim. He is torn, and dragged, and shaken, and gnawed at; while the

sportsmen around yell, and yoick, whoop, and tally ho, and exultation peals around, as though a Badajos had surrendered, or a Bengal tiger had fallen before them. Similar feats of prowess - the fighting of a few well-spurred cocks, the backing of a kicking and obstinate tattoo, the firing at kites and crows flying hurriedly and screamingly in the air above, the reports of pistols, the blasts of ten mail-coach horns, and the practising upon copper bugles - these, and a dozen other recreations of a like nature, but all, all of them noisy and uproarious, formed the pleasing pursuits and avocations of the young gentlemen at the amiable Institution I have been describing. No wonder that study was not the idol of their adoration.

Many were the serious evils, however, arising from the congregation of so many young and thoughtless individuals together. Even the steady and well-disposed were partly carried down with the stream, and though perhaps uninjured in the main, and not much deteriorated by the bad examples before them, still they were not improved by them. There is a certain polish and sheen which cannot bear any coarse contact whatever, and there is a delicacy in some youthful minds - a purity of feeling which it is best to keep ever apart and unacquainted even with the coarseness and contamination of baser companions. It must not be supposed that, among the crowds of Cadets, there were not some who did not escape the ordeal with credit; but they had to contend with much that was displeasing, and the very struggle and opposition they had to make was far from beneficial. They did not join in the turmoil and folly every around them, it is true, and left the Institution in a few months; but they had witnessed what had better have been unknown to them - and, though they came off victorious, they carried away with them somewhat of the stain, and dust, and soiling of the conflict. But if these were unimproved by Barasett, what must have been the fate of the unwary, the thoughtless, the yielding, and too facile of the number so early exposed? Debt and extravagance were the least of the evils they fell into; habits of drinking, coarseness of language and demeanour, love of low sport and vulgar amusements, were the good fruits of the place; while, to crown all, gaming and a want of principle in pecuniary transactions, were so engendered and confirmed by the exposure, that the effects remained for life, and debased for ever the future career of the thoughtless victim. It was a wise awakening of the authorities at head quarters, when, roused by the ill success of their institution, by the ruin of many promising young men, the premature deaths of not a few, and the disgrace and shame that overtook no mean portion of the crowd of unfortunate youths then exposed, bringing some to the bar of the Supreme Court, and others into the debtors' jail, and all into disrepute, they at length determined, in the middle of 1811, to break up the college and disperse the entire establishment.

Barasett was accordingly suppressed, and Cadets thenceforward sent at once to their corps, where, under the eye of their seniors, they soon fell into the manners and demeanour of more fitting examples, while the riots and disturbances, before marking the career of the juniors of the Indian service, became unheard of and unknown.

Extracted verbatim from: *The Old Field Officer, or The Military and Sporting Adventures of Major Worthington*; edited by J. H. Stocqueler (Adam & Charles Black, Edinburgh 1853). 'Major Worthington' appears to be a fictitious character, no doubt based on a melange of officers known to the originator. Only one officer named Worthington served in the HEIC Army before 1853, a Bengal Artillery lieutenant: year of appointment 1846; captain 1858. (Ed.)

PORTRAIT OF A HITHERTO UNIDENTIFIED INDIAN OFFICER

Image from the Sean Weir collection

This officer, whose unnamed portrait [following page] was taken during a visit to England, is wearing three campaign medals: an India General Service Medal with one clasp, an Afghanistan 1878-80 Medal with one clasp, and a Kabul to Kandahar Star. The crossed swords device on the collar indicates commissioned rank in the infantry, and was used on No 1 Dress or 'Review Order' uniform (the equivalent in Gurkha regiments was crossed kukris). The shoulder-belt plate is adorned with what appears to be a *cross patée* or Maltese Cross, as worn by some Baluch regiments, with a single scroll beneath.

The aiguillettes might signify an ADC's appointment of some kind. However, a Richard Simkin painting depicts an officer in marching order with two red cords (possibly not aiguillettes) coming from the back and pinning under the cross belt, much as they appear in this photograph. From the manner in which the officer's whiskers are worn, he appears to be a Muslim rather than a Sikh.

A number of Indian officers were ordered to England where they received their 'Egypt 1882' campaign medals from the Queen, arriving in London from Egypt on 13th November 1882. Details of these officers are found in a correspondence filed in the British Library's archives [*India Office Records*, L/MIL/7/5350: 'Native Officers and Men – Order of British India conferred on Native Officers who were deputed to England from Egypt in 1882']. Of the officers in the deputation, eleven were recommended for appointment to the 1st or 2nd Class OBI, although two already had the OBI 1st Class and there was a suggestion they should receive the CIE instead. Only the names of these eleven are included in this correspondence; there is no mention of the number or identity of any other officers who may have been present. From this short list of eleven officers, there is only one who matches the subject of the photo as regards medals, namely Subadar Peer Bux of the 29th Bombay Native Infantry (2nd Baluch Battalion).

The 29th Bombay Infantry served in Persia in 1856-57, in Afghanistan in 1878-80 including Kandahar, and in Egypt at Tel-el-Kebir in 1882. For these campaigns it received battle honours and the four appropriate campaign medals and clasps.

The photo of Peer Bux, for surely it is him, must have been taken in 1882 prior to attending the parade assembled for the bestowal of his Egypt medal and 'Tel-el-Kebir' clasp by the Queen, and before receiving the insignia of the OBI 2nd class [gazetted on 21st November 1882] which he may not have collected until his return to India. For this reason, he is wearing only his earlier three medals.



The various regimental devices are somewhat unclear from the photo, but appear to conform to the contemporary regimental pattern of the 29th Bombay Infantry. The regiment's silver shoulder belt plate bore a Maltese Cross surmounted by a Victorian Crown, encircled by a laurel wreath, with '29' in the centre within a crescent. Battle honours for PERSIA, BUSHIRE, KHOOSHAB, RESHIRE were inscribed on the four arms of the cross. Contemporary to 1882, a separate scroll below the belt plate carried the battle honours KANDAHAR 1880, AFGHANISTAN 1878-80. The honour TEL-EL-KEBIR was not granted until the following year. The gilt buttons reflected the regiment's subsidiary title, with a crown over '2' and a crescent, and below BELOOCH REGIMENT. The jacket was in rifle green cloth adorned with black Russian mohair braid. Scarlet facings were piped with scarlet cloth. Pyjamas were of scarlet serge, without piping; gaiters were white canvas with cord loops. The pagri or turban was described as 'regimental pattern – green.'

A group photograph of Indian officers of the 29th Bombay Infantry dated circa 1888 is held in the Baluch Regimental Centre archives. Seated at centre is Subedar Major Peer Bux, by then wearing the OBI 2nd Class and five medals: IGS with clasp Persia; Afghanistan 1878-80 with clasp Kandahar; Kabul to Kandahar Star; Egypt 1882 clasp Tel-el-Kebir; Khedive's Star.

Editor's note

The portrait of Peer Bux has been loaned by IMHS member Scan Weir from his collection of photographic images of Indian Army subjects. Sean has kindly agreed to provide further images which will appear in future editions of *Durbar*. Neville Poulson, Ashok Nath, Rana Chhina and Tony McClenaghan have all been most helpful in the process of identifying Peer Bux and providing background detail.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM MEMBERS

● BHEEL CORPS

Tim Ash has provided some further information on the identity of the Bheel Corps stationed at Bhopawar and Sirdapore in July 1857 [see *Durbar*, Volume 25 No. 2, Summer 2008, p. 102], drawing from the memoirs of Captain Alexander Ross Elliot Hutchinson, late 13th Bengal NI, Political Officer and Bheel Agent at Bhopawar from 1851 to 1857.¹ Hutchinson records that, fearing for his relatively precarious situation in Bhopawar, he moved with his family and other Europeans to nearby Sirdapore 'to concentrate forces' on 2nd July 1857. According to the 1857 East India Register, Sirdapore was at the time the depot of the Malwa Bheel Corps. It was no more than a gallop away from Bhopawar in the direction of Indore. There were 200 of the Malwa Bheels at Sirdapore – the bulk of the regiment having been dispatched to strengthen the Indore garrison. By writing down his memoirs, Hutchinson has provided us *ipso facto* with eye-witness evidence of disaffection within the Malwa Bheel Corps about which very little seems to be recorded elsewhere. That it was the Malwa Bheels at Sirdapore is in no doubt. The two other Bheel corps, the Meywar Bheel Corps and the Kandeesh Bheel Corps, were stationed elsewhere - at Khairwarah [Kherwara] and Dhurrungaum [Dharangaon] respectively.

At first the Bheels at Sirdapore appeared steady and ready to defend the station and their European officers and families. However, this situation suddenly changed when, during the night of 3rd/4th July, a large armed band of rebels was reported to be approaching the town. Without any apparent warning, the Bheels refused to remain in the town and generally behaved in an insubordinate manner. Hutchinson had no alternative but to retreat to Baroda taking the evidently unreliable Bheels as escort. The first objective was to reach Jhabua

¹ The memoirs of Alexander Hutchinson remain with the family, and the transcript in Tim's possession was kindly provided by D.R.C. Hutchinson Esq.

where the loyal Rajah would be able to provide temporary shelter. The fugitives left Sirdapore early in the morning of 4th July – and halted for the night at 6 p.m. at the Pullasee postal station. It was destined to be an uncomfortable night. Rumours were received to the effect that a party of hostile horse and foot were on the way to detain them. This caused further consternation amongst the Bheel escort. Although they had been overheard plotting the demise of the Europeans, they caused them no harm. However they deserted in the early morning hours of 5th July. In spite of this setback, the fugitives reached the safety of Jhabua at 9.00 a.m. that same morning.

The Malwa Bheel Corps was fortunate to survive this unhappy incident. It continued in existence as an ‘irregular infantry corps under the orders of the Government of India’, retaining its depot at Sirdapore. In 1907 it was removed from the military establishment, together with the Meywar Bheel Corps, the one other remaining ‘local corps’, and converted to a civil police corps.²

● 13TH BENGAL IRREGULAR CAVALRY

Regarding the link between the 13th Bengal Irregular Cavalry and the Benares Horse [see *Durbar*, Volume 25 No. 2, Summer 2008, p. 80], Brian Stevens has provided a précis of the Benares Horse entry in Bengal Military Statements for 1857-58 [*India Office Records*, L/Mil/8/65] in which the regiment is described as ‘Late 13th Bengal Irregular Cavalry’. So this provides another pointer to a link between the two regiments even if it does not amount to proof positive.



BOOK REVIEWS

● James W. Hoover, *MEN WITHOUT HATS: DIALOGUE, DISCIPLINE AND DISCONTENT IN THE MADRAS ARMY, 1806-1807*; Manohar Publishers, New Delhi 2007; 350 pages, case-bound, Rs. 750.00 (circa £9.00), ISBN 81-7304-725-1.

Despite the rather odd title, this is a scholarly investigation into the Mutiny of the 1st Bn 1st Regiment Madras NI and the 2nd Battalion 23rd Regiment Madras NI at the Fort at Vellore in the early hours of the 10th July 1806. These two were by chance the senior and junior battalions in the Madras Army.

In addition this Work covers suspected incidents at several other Madras Army Stations including Hyderabad but which, in most cases, were figments of European Officers', some of Field rank, fevered imagination.

James W. Hoover has told the story from the point of view of the Madras Soldier using the Vellore Papers in the Tamil Nadu State Archives-Madras Record Office and the British Library's India Office Records. These contain translated transcripts of evidence given to the various Commissions of Inquiry which sat over the next twelve months as a consequence of

² Chris Kempton, *The Register of Titles of the Units of the H.E.I.C. & Indian Armies, Bristol 1997*, p.145

this mutiny which had rocked the Government and military establishment of Fort St. George to its very foundations. It led to the recall of the Governor Lord William Bentinck, the 2nd son of the 3rd Duke of Portland, and the Commander in Chief of the Madras Army, Lieutenant General Sir John Craddock K.B. who was, according to convention, a Royal and not a Company's Officer.

Both were fairly recent appointments, Bentinck (Governor 1803-1807) and Craddock (C-in-C 1803-1807), neither of whom had any Indian experience. Craddock was intent on assimilating the appearance of the Indian soldier in so far as was possible to his European counterpart and which led him to issue orders regarding the Dress of the Madras Soldier that included the introduction of a new pattern Turban which the native soldiery considered looked like a 'Portugese Drummer's Topi' and to which they had strong objections.

The reasons for the mutiny are too numerous to review here but, as was normal in nearly all cases of Mutiny in India, they included a breakdown in communications between British Officers and their men; also the fact that the sons and families of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore were lodged in the Fort. Although their part in the mutiny was never proved, the very fact of their presence seems to have encouraged the mutiny ringleaders to expect their help.

The Plan of the Fort at Vellore is on far too small a scale to be of much use and it would have been better if it had been included in the Chapter dealing with the events of the 10th July 1806. There is a first class Plan in Volume 5 of Colonel Wilson's '*History of the Madras Army*' which could have been reproduced to the advantage of the reader. Furthermore, Dr. Hoover's book contains no diagram or picture of the infamous Turban or Hat although he states that when he has given presentations about the Mutiny in the United States, most of his listeners when shown a picture say that it does not appear to be a hat. Again it would have been useful to have included this picture.

Although the author provides a Glossary, nearly every page contains an Indian term - not all of which are explained. Some of these words are hardly necessary when a perfectly good English word exists; for example 'Sipahi' when 'Sepoy' would do? Dr. Hoover, who appears to be writing for an American readership, does not seem to be conversant with the distinctions in the British Peerage as he refers to 'Lord Bentinck' instead of 'Lord William', his title being a Courtesy one only and not a Peerage. Again when referring to the 2nd Lord Clive he calls him 'Lord Edward Clive'. This gentleman being a Peer in his own right, if one must use his Christian name he should be referred to as 'Edward, Lord Clive'. Somewhat jarring to British military ears, when referring to Battalion companies as opposed to Grenadier or Light companies, the author terms them Line companies. Also it is incorrect to refer to Subedars and Jemadars as Non-commissioned Officers. Whilst they did not have Commissions from the British monarch as did European Officers (Royal Commissions held by the Company's European officers were only valid to the east of the Cape of Good Hope), they nevertheless held Commissions or Warrants from the Government of Madras.

Apart from these relatively minor niggles, the author is to be congratulated on a first class piece of research which is a pleasure to read. [Brian Stevens]

● Stuart Ottowell, *CHHE-SAAAT: MEMOIR OF AN OFFICER OF THE 6TH/7TH RAJPUT REGIMENT*; New Delhi, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2008. 156 pages, case-bound, Rs. 475.00 (circa £6.00), ISBN 81-7304-763-4.

Battalion histories are an exception rather than a norm and it is therefore always a pleasure to be able to 'dig into' one. Although the title suggests a memoir this delightful book is more of a personalized battalion history. It tells the story of a war-raised battalion (the Sixth) of the Rajput Regiment from the point of view of a young British officer. Its services on the Northwest Frontier of India and in Burma are well recorded. The battalion was a part of the famous 'Black Cat' (17th Indian) Division during the re-conquest of Burma in 1945.

The book amply covers the unit's advance to Rangoon through Meiktila and Pyawbwe. Appendices include an honour roll of battle casualties as well as a list of personnel who received honours and awards. Numerous personnel, British and Indian, find mention in the text, twenty-four black and white plates flesh out the well written and engrossing narrative, and four maps ensure that the reader is never 'lost' while navigating the pages. A 'must have' for any enthusiast of the Burma Campaign and strongly recommended for anyone with an interest in the old British-Indian Army. [Rana Chhina]

