

THE  
9<sup>TH</sup>  
GURKHA RIFLES

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1817-1936

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By  
LIEUT -COLONEL F. S. POYNDER,  
M.V.O., O.B.E, M.C.

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1967.

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MAJOR-GENERAL W. L. O. TWISS, C.B., C.B.E., M.C.  
COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT.

1930.





## FOREWORD

**I**T is with considerable diffidence that I acceded to Lieut.-Colonel F. S. Poynder's request to write a Foreword to his History of the 9th Gurkha Rifles, as I feel that my share in the great doings of the Regiment has been so very small. Although I was appointed to the Regiment thirty-five years ago, and am the senior serving soldier of the 9th Gurkhas, I am ashamed to think that my actual service with it should have been so short. And yet this was not altogether my fault, and it was with the deepest regret, and only after strong protest on my part, that I was taken away for a staff appointment after I had commanded the 2nd Battalion for only sixteen months.

The writing of a regimental history is a big and responsible task, and can rarely be undertaken by an officer on the active list. Lieut.-Colonel Poynder has had a busy and varied career during the last ten years, and it is a wonderful tribute to his energy, industry, and determination that he has managed to find the time to write this comprehensive and excellent history. I am convinced that no man can be more devoted to the interests of his regiment than is Lieut.-Colonel Poynder to the 9th Gurkhas, and it is this strong devotion that has enabled him to carry through his great work, which has been to him a labour of love.

I congratulate him most heartily on the result of his labours, and thank him in the name of all ranks of the Regiment, past, present, and future.

One of the most difficult tasks of the regimental historian is to maintain a proper perspective between the general course of events and the part played by the Regiment. There are many actors in the drama, but the light must be kept on those representing the Regiment, and yet not to the exclusion of others who played a great part.

Lieut.-Colonel Poynder has felt, and rightly so, that the story must include descriptions of the general situation. These have added considerably to the general interest of his narrative, especially when he describes the "babuish" red tape and unwillingness to accept responsibility that characterized the early stages of the campaign in Mesopotamia; also when he tells the sad tale of the attack on the Dujailah Redoubt, with its lack of initiative and want of enterprise among the higher leaders.

He pays a graceful and well-deserved tribute to the assistance given to us by our Nepalese Allies. It is perhaps not generally known, and we are at any rate liable to forget, that no less than fifty-five thousand Gurkha recruits were enlisted between 1914 and 1919, and that over ten thousand Nepalese troops were sent to assist us in India during the Great War.

The first appearance of the 9th Gurkhas, then known as the Fatehgarh Levy, was in 1817, and Lieut.-Colonel Poynder has, in my opinion rightly, dealt only briefly with the doings of the Regiment until 1894, when it was converted into a Gurkha battalion. In 1904 the 2nd Battalion was formed, and the Regiment became one of the ten two-battalion Gurkha regiments that were to render such splendid services during the Great War. In the long period from 1817 to 1914, the history of the Regiment was highly creditable, but nothing had been done to earn particular distinction over and above other regiments. Colonel Poynder's description of the events leading up to the decision to form a battalion of Khas and Thakur Gurkhas in 1894 is very interesting: the formation of a second battalion ten years later shows that the experiment was even then regarded as a success. But, in spite of that, the period 1894-1914 was undoubtedly a period of probation, in which a new unit formed from a comparatively unknown class was being prepared for its great test.

I remember well that, before the War, the 9th Gurkhas were regarded by other regiments of the Gurkha Brigade as rather a doubtful quantity. They were recognized as being of undoubtedly good fighting material, but would the Khas and Thakur attain the magnificently high standard of the other classes? Would their supposed caste prejudices stand in the way? Would they show the same steadiness and stamina?

The curtain went up in 1914, and the 9th Gurkhas were among the first actors to appear on the vast stage. It is in no spirit of boastfulness, but with a feeling of intense pride that I can say that, from September 1914 to November 1918 in the Great War, and for five years more on the North-West Frontier from 1919 to 1923, there were no more distinguished performers in the long drama than the representatives of the 9th Gurkhas. The first great ordeal was in France, and the 1st Battalion came through it magnificently, thanks in no small measure to its splendid commanding officer, Colonel G. T. Widdicombe. Not a foot of trench was yielded during those long twelve months, only one prisoner was lost and he, a man, wounded in the course of a patrol, close to the enemy trenches. There is no better judge of a man, or of a regiment, than Field-Marshal Sir Claud Jacob, and he clearly regarded the 1st Battalion as second to none in the Indian Corps.

The record of the 2nd Battalion in Mesopotamia, from 1917 to 1919, and later, in Waziristan, was not less outstanding.

From 1914 to 1923, in France, Mesopotamia, Persia, Afghanistan and Waziristan, the history of the Regiment was equally distinguished. There were on the one hand no "regrettable incidents" and, on the other, many and convincing proofs of the highest courage and military efficiency. It is indeed a wonderful record, and Colonel Poynder has told his story well and truly, without undue laudation of ourselves, and with full regard for the feelings of the other figures on the great stage.

This narrative shows very clearly that, whilst the Regiment was to some extent an unknown quantity at the outbreak of the Great War, the Khas and Thakur soldiers proved most conclusively during the next nine years, and for all time, that any idea of inferiority to other Gurkha classes was and is absurd; they established an equality with these classes which can never again form the subject of doubt. It remains for all ranks of the Regiment, from the Commanding Officer to the latest joined recruit, to maintain this high standard, to live up to the splendid record of the Great War; and to ensure that the 9th Gurkhas remain "Second to None" in all things—in discipline, esprit de corps, morale, sport and athletics and, above all, in military training and war efficiency—so that, when the war drum beats again, the Regiment is ready to keep its proud place in the front rank, among the best and finest units of the Indian Army and in the British Empire.

W. L. O. TWISS,  
Major-General,  
Colonel, 9th Gurkha Rifles.





## PREFACE

**I**N writing and presenting for publication the history of a unit of the Indian Army, however well known and distinguished or humble it may be, certain predominating factors must be taken into consideration. Paramount among these must be the very small field to which it makes appeal. Consequent on this follows naturally its limited circulation after publication, and, by no means less important, the cost thereof.

It is thus a "family affair," limited almost entirely in appeal to past, present, and future British Officers and their relatives of the unit itself, a few hundred at the outside, on whom must of necessity fall most of the cost of publication.

Its scope therefore differs entirely from that relating to a regiment of the British service whose members of all ranks, past and present, living at the time of publication, may run into many thousands.

Bearing this outstanding factor in mind it was necessary to determine what form the record of the Regiment during its one hundred and twenty years of existence should take. Should it be a book of reference attempting to describe in detail information of all natures embracing the many changes of organization, composition, armament, dress, and so on, over this long period, besides its record on service and in peace? Or, should it be in narrative form, lightly touching with accuracy on the above important matters, but throughout attempting to give "atmosphere" both to the events themselves and to the unit's reaction to them?

Apart from my personal inclination to the latter alternative, the question was more or less solved by the fact that early records are practically non-existent. Such as have been available for my perusal have afforded the barest minimum of material to work on, and this must be my excuse for the rather cursory treatment of the record of the first seventy-five years of the Regiment's existence. This is not the case since our conversion into a Gurkha unit in 1893, from which period ample material is ready to hand, apart from the memory of living individuals, many of whom have been kind enough to assist me. No apology is needed for the amplitude of the accounts of the Great War and post-war periods. The record speaks for itself, however inadequately it may be described, and it is during these periods that the Regiment earned its present proud and distinguished reputation. I am fully conscious of the limitations of my

pen to do proper justice to the magnificent behaviour of all ranks in circumstances unparalleled in the history of war, particularly in regard to the Indian Army. I was fortunate in surviving when so many good fellows were killed or died, and I have tried to draw on my memory to give "atmosphere" to the many incidents, stirring, tragic, or humorous, which the accounts of France, Mesopotamia and the Frontier include. In doing so I can never pay sufficient tribute to all ranks, British and Gurkha, of the Regiment with whom I was privileged to serve, practically without a break, for two years at the beginning of the War in France and Mesopotamia, and in two Frontier campaigns since.

Major-General W. L. O. Twiss, our Colonel, has very kindly written a foreword to this History. I acknowledge this with gratitude; it is yet another proof of the unfailing solicitude, interest, and generosity which he has displayed towards everything concerning the Regiment during his long association with it. To him, and to Colonels G. T. Widdicombe and H. F. Collingridge, I accord my sincere thanks for having read the manuscript and given me helpful criticism and advice.

Colonel A. C. B. Mackinnon, Majors M. B. Allsebrook and N. Hurst wrote the portions devoted to the 3rd Battalion, and to the 2nd Battalion in Waziristan and Malabar, respectively. Though altered in style to conform to the remainder of the narrative, the substance of those chapters is theirs, and I am duly grateful. My gratitude is also due to Sub-Conductor J. A. Roberts, Indian Corps of Clerks, and formerly Head Clerk Landi Kotal Brigade, and Superintendent "A. G." Branch, Peshawar District Headquarters. Voluntarily, and in his spare time, he typed, or re-typed, the whole of my manuscript. I am best qualified to appreciate the complexity of his task when I remember the numerous occasions on which he referred my own draft back to me for elucidation of many completely illegible passages!

Last, but by no means least, I must thank Mr. K. R. Wilson, who has given me much valuable advice and has been responsible for the practical production and publication of this History; together with the preparation of the various Maps and the compilation of the Index.

The compilation of this History has been for me a labour of love, over which I have spent many happy hours. If it can recall adequately to past members of the Regiment some of the stirring incidents in which they took part, or inspire present and future officers to continue the great spirit of the past, I shall be fully rewarded.

F. S. POYNTER,  
Lieut.-Colonel,  
9th Gurkha Rifles.

To

“ WATTY ” AND “ SQUIB ”

(Lieutenant R. C. Walton and Captain E. F. Berry, M.C., both of the Regiment, and killed on active service with the 1st Battalion in 1914 and 1916) to whose inspiring example and early training I owe so much ; and to my many friends, British and Gurkha, with whom I have been proud and privileged to serve for so many happy and eventful years ; with due humility, and conscious of its many shortcomings, I affectionately dedicate this History.

F. S. P.

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## THE TITLES OF THE REGIMENT

1817. . . . Raised as the Fatehgarh Levy.  
1819. . . . The Mainpuri Levy.  
1823. . . . 1st Bn., 32nd Regiment, Bengal Native Infantry.  
1824. . . . The 63rd Regiment, Bengal Native Infantry.  
1861. . . . The 9th Regiment, Bengal Native Infantry.  
1885. . . . The 9th Regiment, Bengal Infantry.  
1894. . . . The 9th (Gurkha Rifle) Regiment of Bengal Infantry.  
1901. . . . The 9th Gurkha Rifles.
- 
1904. . . . The 2nd Battalion raised at Dehra Dun.



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# THE BATTLE-HONOURS

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" AFGHANISTAN, 1879-1880," " PUNJAB FRONTIER," " AFGHANISTAN, 1919 "

## THE GREAT WAR

" LA BASSÉE, 1914,"

" NEUVE CHAPELLE,"

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" ARMENTIÈRES, 1914,"

" AUBERS,"

" KUT-AL-AMARA, 1917,"

" FESTUBERT, 1914, '15,"

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1914-1915,"

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1918 "

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# THE 9TH GURKHA RIFLES

## CHAPTER I

1817-1893

### THE RECORD OF THE REGIMENT FROM THE RAISING UNTIL CONVERSION INTO A GURKHA REGIMENT

Preliminary Survey of the Bengal Army, 1756-1817. The Raising of the Regiment, 1817, and Record until Conversion into the 63rd Bengal Native Infantry, 1824. The 63rd Bengal Native Infantry, 1824-1861. The 9th Bengal Infantry, 1861-1893.

#### PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF THE BENGAL ARMY, 1756-1817

**T**HE origin of the Regiment and its record, organization, achievements, and activities are bound up with those of the remainder of the units which composed the Bengal Army. Unfortunately the early records of the Regiment are practically non-existent, and the only materials available from which to glean the early history are the original Digest of Services, not written until 1870 and thus both vague and inadequate, and the various books dealing with the Bengal Army as a whole. To understand the reason for the expansion of that Army under which the raising of the Regiment was sanctioned, it is necessary briefly to trace the history of the period between the original inauguration of the British occupation of Bengal and the date of the expansion noted. The East India Company was formed in 1599 by an association of merchants, who established their first factory at Surat in 1612, and in 1640 erected Fort St. George at Madras. In the same year was dispatched from England the first expedition to Bengal. As it was well received by the Nawab of those provinces, the Company decided to establish their trade there, and finally erected a factory at Hooghly. The Bengal settlements remained dependent on Fort St. George, while their trade was subject to the control of the Native Govern-

ment, by whom they were forbidden to entertain any military strength beyond "an ensign and thirty men" to do honour to the principal agents. From this humble and meagre origin sprang the powerful army which during the next two hundred and fifty years was to conquer the whole of Northern and Eastern India.

Bengal became independent of Madras in 1681, and by the end of the century became a Presidency. The Fort, which it had been necessary to commence building at Calcutta for the protection of trade interests, was completed and called Fort William after King William III. The total force was now one hundred and thirty men, with an artillery detachment called "The Gunner and his Crew."

Between 1699 and 1754 the gradual expansion of trade, and thereby the extension of the Company's interests further afield, led to the increased employment of troops and local levies for their protection. In 1754 the first legislative enactment for the regulation of the Company's military force was passed, and under it Articles of War were framed and continued in force for many years. The strength of the troops in Bengal at this time was five companies of infantry and one of artillery.

In 1757 Nawab Siraj ud Dowlah succeeded to the governorship of Bengal. From this year dates the real origin of the Bengal Army, just as exactly one hundred years later the Great Mutiny practically saw its demise and reconstitution. The Nawab's hatred of the British led to early hostilities and resulted in the capture by his forces of Calcutta; this was followed on June 20th by the horrible incident of the "Black Hole" and the flight of the survivors to Palta. Assisted by reinforcements from Madras, under Clive, Calcutta was recaptured, and thereafter the permanent domination of the Company over Bengal was gradually extended and consolidated. The necessity to augment the scanty forces at Clive's disposal led to the raising of the first regiments recruited in the Province. One battalion of infantry was raised before the Battle of Plassey and a second subsequently. Classes enlisted included Pathans, Rohillas, Jats, Rajputs, and Brahmins. Cavalry and artillery detachments were also formed, and by 1765 the first real organization was established. Under this three brigades were constituted, each consisting of one European battalion, one company artillery, one Rissalah cavalry, and seven battalions Indian Infantry. The whole was directly under command of the Commander-in-Chief, Bengal. The great majority of the native troops were recruited in Oudh and Bihar, on both sides of the Ganges. The classes enlisted were chiefly Brahmins, Rajputs, and Rohillas, commonly called "Hindustanis." These classes continued to form the backbone of the Bengal Army until the Mutiny.

Detachments to assist both the Madras and Bombay Armies in their

wars with the French and Mahrattas, and further commitments within the Presidency itself, led to constant expansion and re-organization, both of regular, provincial, and local forces. In 1796 a further re-organization was effected and establishments for the various arms fixed. The Bengal Army then was composed of European Artillery—three battalions of five companies each; European Infantry, three regiments of ten companies each; Regular Native Cavalry, four regiments of six troops; Native Infantry, twelve regiments of two battalions each. A Native Infantry Regiment had an establishment of 45 British Officers, 2 British Serjeants, 40 Native Officers, 200 N.C.O.s, 40 Drummers and Fifers, and 1,600 Sepoys. The Staff consisted of 1 Regimental Adjutant and Q.M., 2 Battalion Adjutants, Paymaster, R.S.M., Q.M.S., Drum and Fife Majors, and 4 Surgeons, including 2 Native Doctors.

Successive series of operations of varying size and scope entailed constant expansion and reduction in the strength of the Bengal Army between 1800 and 1817. The conclusion of the Second Nepal War in 1815 saw the entertainment for the first time of Gurkhas, and three battalions were raised from volunteers from Amar Sing's defeated forces.

In 1817 the projected war with the Mahrattas entailed a large expansion of the Army. A force was formed under command of the Marquis of Hastings and was eighty-eight thousand strong, organized in four divisions, with subsidiary forces for frontier protection, elsewhere. The Mahrattas were assisted by large bands of marauders, known as Pindaris, who roamed throughout Central India and formed a constant menace to the Army. To maintain the Grand Army numerous new formations and levies were raised, among them that which was to form the nucleus and origin of the Regiment.

#### THE RAISING OF THE REGIMENT, 1817, AND RECORD UNTIL CONVERSION INTO THE 63RD BENGAL NATIVE INFANTRY, 1824

Hostilities with the Mahrattas and Pindaris commenced in 1817, and the formation and concentration of the Grand Army was undertaken during the first half of that year.

To maintain a portion of the Army a Recruiting Depot had been formed at Farruckabad, and from this in 1817 was formed the Infantry Levy, at Fatehgarh. Similar levies were at the same time raised at Cawnpore, Muttra and Delhi. The Fatehgarh Levy was raised by Major C. S. Fagan, and in March 1818 was ordered to be increased to a strength of one thousand men. The classes composing it were "Hindustanis." British Officers were drawn from other existing corps and the first commandant was Major T. P. Smith. This levy formed the origin of the present Regiment.

In 1818 the depot was broken up and the Fatehgarh Levy split into two. The following year the two halves were separated, the first moving to Mynpoori (Mainpuri) and the second to Muttra. Both were under strength and numbered only about five hundred men, but after arrival at the new stations this was soon rectified, and the units were brought up to establishment.

The Levy remained at Mynpoori for the next four years, when a further re-organization of the Army was undertaken.

Under this four new Regular Regiments of Infantry were ordered to be raised, to be numbered 31st to 34th. The Mynpoori Levy (originally the Fatehgarh Levy) became the 1st Bn., 32nd Regiment, Bengal Native Infantry, and the Muttra portion the 2nd Battalion. This was under the authority of G.G.O. 65 of June 1823.

It is important to recall this date on which the unit became part of the Regular Army, for from it the seniority of the existing regiment, the 9th Gurkha Rifles, also dates, a fact which constitutes it the senior Gurkha Regiment. The three Gurkha Regiments raised after the Second Nepal War from Amar Sing's defeated forces, now the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Gurkha Rifles, were in fact raised two years earlier than the Fatehgarh Levy, and were known as the Nasserri, Sirmoor, and Kumæon Gurkha Regiments, but although they greatly distinguished themselves in numerous campaigns they were not brought into the Regular Army until some forty years later. Other Gurkha units, either composed of this class from their inception or converted into class Gurkha Battalions from a different composition, as was the 9th Bengal Infantry in 1893, came into existence at various times prior to the latter date. In every case, however, these were brought into the Regular Army after 1823.

Colours were presented to the Regiment while stationed at Mynpoori. The Regimental Colour was made of yellow silk, and was embroidered with the regimental number in Roman figures, "XXXII," within a wreath of Rose, Shamrock and Thistle.

The new designation was not to remain thus for long as, during the following year, a further big re-organization of the Army took place. Under this the previous system of single battalions was again introduced and a general re-numbering of all units was effected. The 1st Bn., 32nd Regiment, now, 1824, became the 63rd Bengal Native Infantry, a designation it was to bear for the next thirty-seven years.

During these six years the following changes in organization and equipment are of interest.

The rank and appointment of subedar-major was introduced in 1817, an innovation which was to have a large effect on the prestige and prospects

of the Native ranks. The appointment of colour-havildar was also instituted at this time.

In 1818 musket barrels, which had always been of bright metal hitherto, were ordered to be browned.

A significant addition of clothing was also made to the sepoy at the time of the raising of the Fatehgarh Levy in that Government for the first time issued each man with woollen pantaloons. Hitherto free issues had only consisted of a woollen coat, the sepoy having to provide himself with a pair of tight cotton trousers to wear with it.

The 1st, 32nd Regiment, had marched from Mynpoori to Cawnpore in January 1824, where after arrival the new designation was received. The number on the Regimental Colours was altered to "LXIII," to conform with this change.

#### THE 63RD BENGAL NATIVE INFANTRY, 1824-1861

The re-organization under which the Regiment received the new designation was ordered under G.G.O. dated 6th May 1824, in accordance with instructions received from the Court of Directors in England. In addition to the re-numbering of units, and their organization into single battalions, the establishment of British Officers was also altered. An increase in numbers was authorized, and as soon as these new officers had arrived, orders were issued for their cross-posting to the two battalions, alternately.

The 2nd Bn., 32nd Regiment, which like the 1st had been formed out of the Infantry Levy, became the 64th Native Infantry; it was never actually cantoned with the 63rd and was disarmed during the Mutiny in 1857 in the Punjab, and thereafter disbanded.

At the time of the re-organization of the Bengal Army in 1824, contemporary records do not indicate that the quality and efficiency were particularly good. This appears to have been due to various causes. The main one was probably the almost complete lack of sympathy and understanding existing between the British Officers and the Native ranks. The command of a regiment was of less value from any point of view than a staff appointment, even of a secondary nature, for it was attended with great anxiety and much drudgery, and carried but little influence or consideration; under these circumstances it was not a post much sought after. A second cause was the lack of consideration paid to the Native commissioned ranks at this time. Thirdly, it must be remembered that the lower ranks were liable to suffer corporal punishment for even the most trivial offences, and the treatment accorded to them by their British Officers seems to have been harsh and unsympathetic to a degree.

When all these points are considered it is surprising that the Native

Army displayed as much devotion and zeal in times of emergency as it undoubtedly did. The new order for the cross-posting of British Officers between battalions was designed and introduced largely in the hope of strengthening the ties between British and Native ranks ; this object was, however, defeated by the position of the officers themselves, and the lack of prestige of the commanding officer was probably the main reason.

A further point to be remembered was the predominance of caste among the Hindustani troops. This was probably due to the large proportion of Brahmins enlisted in the Native Corps, and also to the fact that the majority of the ranks were recruited from the Ganges plain where Hindu caste prejudices and custom were, and still are, always predominant. The main deterrent to military efficiency was the very marked aversion of the troops to service overseas.

The Regiment, under the new designation, was soon to see active service. In 1824, shortly after arrival at Cawnpore, occurred the First Burmese War. At the close of 1823 two Burmese armies invaded British territory from Assam and Manipur, with the avowed intention of possessing themselves of Chittagong and the adjoining districts.

The aversion of the sepoys to overseas service prevented any but a small detachment of Bengal troops from taking part in this expedition. Four flank battalions were, however, formed in Bengal for which twenty regiments contributed each a light company and a grenadier company. The two flank companies of the 63rd Native Infantry formed part of the Second Light Battalion and proceeded and served with that battalion in the expedition to Rangoon, and afterwards to Arakan. The operations lasted until the 24th February 1826, when peace was concluded. The expeditionary force suffered very severely from fever and sickness, and of the two hundred ranks of the 63rd who participated in 1824, barely fifty returned to duty in 1826. The Medal with clasp "Arakan" and six months' batta was awarded to those who had taken part in this campaign. The men of the flank companies were reabsorbed into the Battalion on return from Burma, despite the fact that two new companies had been authorized to be recruited in their place during their absence.

The 63rd left Cawnpore in May 1824 and proceeded to Lucknow ; after a brief stay there a move was made to Delhi.

From Delhi the 63rd joined in December 1825 a field force formed under the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Combermere, for service against Bhurtpore. The protracted operations and tardy success of the British forces in Burma were the cause of much disturbance in the newly subjugated territories of India, where a strong belief prevailed that the rule of the English was approaching a fall. The most marked defiance of British authority was

shown at Bhurtpore, where a nephew of the late Rajah usurped the throne and seized the person of the rightful prince, a boy about five years of age. The British Resident at Delhi, Sir David Ochterlony, prepared to take action to punish this outrage but was prevented by the Supreme Government. However, the ferment in Bhurtpore continued to increase, and on the 5th December 1825 the Commander-in-Chief advanced against that place with an army of twenty-one thousand men. The 63rd Native Infantry formed part of the 1st Infantry Brigade, 1st Division; commanded by Brigadier-General McCombe and Major-General Reynell, respectively. The fort at Bhurtpore was immensely strong and had long been considered impregnable. Preparations were at once made to lay siege, and the army encamped before the northern and eastern faces of the town. Batteries were constructed and fire opened on the 24th December. The fire of the guns, however, did not produce sufficient effect on the fortifications, and recourse had to be made to mining. By the 18th January two practicable breaches had been made, and on that date the assault was arranged to take place. This was successful after bitter fighting in which the enemy garrison is said to have sustained eight thousand casualties. The British casualties in the assault amounted to one hundred and three killed, four hundred and sixty-six wounded and eleven missing. The 63rd lost twenty men, including one subedar. Under authority of G.G.O. 85 of 1826 all regular cavalry and infantry regiments present at the siege were permitted to bear the Honour "BHURTPORE" on their Colours and appointments. A medal to British Officers and six months' batta to all ranks were also authorized. The existing Regiment, the 9th Gurkha Rifles, is one of only eight of the present Indian Army now permitted to bear this particular battle-honour. The short and brilliant campaign against Bhurtpore was the last in which the Bengal Army was destined to engage for many years. Immediately after the capture of the fort of Bhurtpore on the 16th January 1826 the 63rd left the field and proceeded to Hansi, where it was cantoned for three years.

For the next fifteen years the 63rd was engaged in routine duties in various stations of Oudh and Bengal, and occupied several cantonments, long since abandoned. One incident of interest was in 1839, when it formed part of a force for the subjugation of Jhansi. Contending claims to the succession and resulting misgovernment in the territories of the deceased Rajah of Jhansi forced the Government of India to assume administration. This was opposed by the mother of the late Rajah's predecessor, who shut herself up in the fort at Jhansi with a considerable following, determined to resist the orders of the paramount power. In December 1838 a force, of which the Regiment formed part, appeared before the fort and preparations were made for the reduction of the place. Prior to the actual assault, how-

ever, the Rani and her followers lost heart and fled secretly during the night of the 5th January 1839.

The fort was formally taken possession of by two companies of the Regiment during the next morning. It is interesting to remember that this formal assumption of Jhansi territory was effected by the Regiment, for the present cantonment has one of the larger permanent garrisons of the Army in India.

During the period under review successive re-organizations were frequently undertaken as expansion for service and, later, reduction in the search for economy were effected. These entailed constant fluctuations in the strength and establishment. Several innovations of great benefit to the Native ranks were introduced at this time. Chief of these was the abolition of corporal punishment and the substitution of dismissal in its stead. The introduction of good-conduct pay, wound pensions, the Orders of Merit and of British India, each carrying an increased pay and allowances, were of immense benefit and did much to alleviate the bad conditions of service previously mentioned.

The Regiment's uniform at this time was scarlet with yellow facings. The rank of the Native Officers was denoted by necklaces of gold beads, two in the case of subedars and one for jemadars; these badges of rank remained until 1856, when crossed swords and a single sword were substituted for the two ranks.

Minor alterations of interest were the substitution of fusils for pikes to be carried by havildars; and the order was promulgated whereby the regimental serjeant-major should command a parade over the Native Officers' heads, when British Officers were not present.

In 1838 the First Afghan War broke out and a considerable force, from both the Bengal and Bombay Armies, was dispatched into Afghanistan. The 63rd, as a unit, did not join, but as in the case of the First Burmese War, the light company was again detached in 1840, and formed part of the 2nd Light Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade. The varying success and failure which attended the British during this campaign form no part of this chronicle, as the 63rd, as a whole, took no part in the operations. In 1842, however, the Battalion was ordered to join the Army of Reserve which was being concentrated at Ferozepore to meet the main army returning from Afghanistan.

It must be recalled that at this time the Government of India had not annexed the Punjab, and that the majority of the territory from Jullundur to the Khyber was under the rule of Sikh Khalsa. The advance of the British Army into Afghanistan had to pass through their territory, and the paramount importance of friendly relations with the Sikhs to



afford security is obvious. In 1842, at the conclusion of the operations in Afghanistan, and when the British forces were about to withdraw to India, the hostile attitude adopted by the Sikhs became such as to cause the Government of India grave anxiety for the security of the returning army. For this reason the Army of Reserve was ordered to concentrate at Ferozepore ; it consisted of two infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade with ancillary troops, the whole under the command of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Jasper Nicolls, in person. The 63rd marched from Fatehgarh to join this concentration during the cold weather of 1842-1843, and after dispersal was ordered to proceed to Delhi.

While at Delhi orders were received to proceed on active service to Scinde, but unfortunately excessive sickness prevented the 63rd from doing so.

In 1844 the Regiment marched to Ambala, where, as was usual in those days, it again built its own lines. This was the last occasion on which this was done at the expense of the men, for thereafter a hutting grant was sanctioned. At this time practically all movements in relief involved the building of lines on arrival at a new station.

### THE FIRST SIKH WAR

The disappointment of the Regiment at being unable to proceed on active service to Scinde in 1843 was alleviated two years later when it was ordered to join the Army of the Sutlej at Ferozepore, which had been assembled to combat a hostile invasion by the Sikhs into our territory in this vicinity.

Relations with the Khalsa Durbar had for some years been becoming strained following the death of Ranjit Singh, the founder of the Sikh Dominion, in 1839. His son and grandson had also died within a year of him, and the struggle of successive candidates for the vacant throne and power soon resulted in a state of complete anarchy. The Khalsa Army became the real power in the State, and it was not long before a desire for a struggle with the British became predominant. This was rather encouraged than the reverse by the Lahore Government, who appreciated that their only real hope lay in the destruction of the army and expected that a conflict with the English would result in its overthrow and dispersion. Not much encouragement was needed, and on the 11th December 1845, in defiance of existing treaties, a portion of the Sikh Army crossed the Sutlej and took up a position within a few miles of Ferozepore.

Fortunately the British Government was not unprepared for an emergency of such a nature. A hostile inroad had been threatening for some years, and this threat, together with various other considerations, had

led to a considerable increase in the number of troops disposed along the then North-West Frontier. In consequence a force designated the "Army of the Sutlej" was quickly concentrated at Ferozepore under command of Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, who was accompanied in the field by the Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge. This army consisted of four infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade, and a proportion of artillery and engineers. The 63rd, together with H.M.'s 80th Foot and the 11th and 27th Native Infantry, formed the 6th Brigade of the 3rd Division. In August 1845, the Regiment had received orders to march again towards Scinde from Ambala and had started for this destination in October. It had just reached Ferozepore when the concentration of the force was starting. Here it joined Sir John Littler's 4th Division, which was opposing the Sikhs threatening Ferozepore while the main army was concentrating further south. Following the Battle of Mudki on the 18th December Sir John Littler marched his division to reinforce the main body, leaving the 63rd Native Infantry to hold a position guarding the flank against the Sikh forces. On the following day occurred the Battle of Ferozeshah, and the Regiment, entrenched, saw the retreat of the defeated Sikhs towards their position at Sobraon. Following these two actions it was found necessary to re-organize the main army as reinforcements reached it, to replace the numerous casualties suffered. The 63rd Native Infantry was posted to the 12th Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division, but a further re-organization, following the Battle of Aliwal entailed it being re-posted to the 6th Brigade in place of the 11th Native Infantry. The Battles of Mudki, Ferozeshah, and Aliwal had cleared the left bank of the Sutlej of the Sikhs, with the exception of their strong position at Sobraon, at which their main body was now concentrated. This was estimated to be at least thirty-five thousand strong, with a strong contingent of cavalry, a reserve in the vicinity, and many heavy guns on the right bank of the river. In addition strong entrenchments had been thrown up, and the position presented a formidable problem to the British Commander-in-Chief.

#### BATTLE OF SOBRAON, 10th February 1846

The attack on the Sikh position took place on the 10th February 1846, and commenced at 6.30 a.m. with a heavy bombardment by the artillery of both sides which continued for over two hours. Although heavy loss was inflicted on the Sikhs, shortage of ammunition entailed the infantry having to assault before real superiority of fire had been obtained. At 9 o'clock the 3rd Infantry Division on the left of the British line led the assault on to the right of the enemy position; it was met by a murderous fire and suffered heavily, but persevering gallantly the 7th Brigade, closely

followed by the 6th, of which the 63rd formed part, and supported by the 5th, forced its way into the enemy position. As it was soon apparent that weight of numbers would inevitably overwhelm this leading division, unless a diversion was staged, the 2nd and 1st Divisions were ordered to advance and assault the Sikh centre and right. A prolonged and desperate struggle followed in which more than one reverse was involved, but the enemy was gradually and surely driven out of his positions, and pushed back to the river bank. Here the bridge of boats gave way under the fire of the horse artillery and the pressure of the flying multitudes, and a dreadful slaughter of the enemy occurred. By noon the battle was over and the victory complete. The Sikh Army, routed and hurled across the Sutlej, had lost nearly one-third of its strength; sixty-seven guns remaining in the hands of the victors. The British losses were also heavy and amounted to 321 killed and 2,064 wounded. In the Regiment, Ensign Rawson, serving on the staff, was killed, and three other British Officers, Captain Ormsby, Lieutenant Morris, and Ensign Barber, were wounded; unfortunately the casualties among the other ranks are not known. The Regiment had been in the second formation to enter the hostile entrenchments, and was the first to reach the bridge of boats mentioned over which the enemy was obliged to retreat with such heavy loss. During the night succeeding the action the Regiment, with the 6th Brigade, marched thirty miles west to Hurree ka Puttun, a ford over the Sutlej, which was crossed in order to harass the Sikh retirement.

On the 12th February a bridge of boats was completed, and on the 13th the Commander-in-Chief with the whole force, except the heavy train and one division left to clear the battle-field, was encamped at Kasur, thirty-two miles from Lahore. Here the Governor-General was met by envoys from the Lahore Durbar, to whom the British Government's terms were made known. The terms were accepted and the Maharajah made his submission in person. On the 20th February the British army arrived in Lahore and two days later the citadel was garrisoned by British troops. During the advance to Lahore and after the settlement with the Sikhs the 63rd Native Infantry guarded the camp of the Governor-General and thereafter escorted him as far as Phillour in the Jullundur Doab, where orders were received to be cantoned. For services in this campaign the Regiment was awarded the Battle-Honour "SOBRAON" and all combatants were awarded a medal and twelve months' batta. A large triangular silk standard, coloured dark red, was captured from the enemy during the battle, and now hangs cased with the old Colours in the Officers' Mess at Dehra Dun. This standard is in an excellent state of preservation, despite age.

The Regiment did not stay long in Phillour, as six months after arriving at that station it was ordered to march to Neemuch. On the outbreak of the Second Sikh War in 1848 it was instructed to proceed to Agra, and was kept there in readiness to move at short notice to join the Army of the Punjab engaged with the Sikhs. The success which attended the British arms, however, did not necessitate the dispatch of any further reinforcements and the 63rd remained at Agra for another fifteen months.

In 1850 the 63rd Native Infantry moved back to the Punjab and was stationed at Sialkot for three years. During this period a certain number of Sikhs and Punjabi Mussaimans were enlisted for the first time, but after leaving the Punjab in 1853 little opportunity of recruiting these classes again occurred, and in 1858 after the mutiny of the Hindustani troops had taken place, the few Punjabis who remained were either discharged or transferred to other units.

On leaving Sialkot the Regiment moved to Cawnpore, and thence in 1855 was ordered to Dinapore in connection with the outbreak of the Santhal insurrection in Bihar and Northern Bengal. *En route* to this place the destination was altered after arrival at Allahabad. The 63rd was then sent to Barrackpore, from where it left by railway for Raniganj almost immediately. This was the first occasion on which the unit had moved by railway and was also the first time many of the rank and file had seen the telegraph.

The Regiment remained in the field against the Santhals from July 1855 until February 1856, when it moved to Berhampore, near Murshidabad, in North Bengal. Little opposition was encountered against an ill-armed and undisciplined foe and slight losses were suffered. On leaving the field it had first moved to Barrackpore, but had been moved thence owing to disaffection shown by another regiment which was moved to this station to be disbanded.

On the 1st September 1856, by a G.G.O. dated the 30th July, all ranks enlisted were enrolled for general service anywhere, and not only in India as had hitherto always been understood.

#### THE MUTINY, 1857

It is necessary now briefly to record the darkest chapter in the history of the Bengal Army, that when the majority of the Native Army mutinied in 1857. It is sad to recall that it was exactly one hundred years after the raising of the first regular unit, just prior to the Battle of Plassey, that the Mutiny occurred, and that after a century of honourable service, in which many of the cavalry, artillery and infantry earned great distinction, a large number of them became disaffected and had to be disbanded.

The causes and course of the Mutiny are too well known to warrant repetition in a work of this description, which is designed to follow the record of the Regiment only. At the same time it is necessary to record the doings of the unit during this unhappy period as the re-organization which followed was to change not only the composition but its designation. It must be remembered that during the forty years of existence the Regiment had been composed of "Hindustanis," and that it was these very classes which became the most disaffected and mutinied in 1857. Mention has been made earlier in this History of the profound influence of caste among the Hindustani troops, and of their aversion to service overseas for this reason ; indeed, on more than one occasion it had been the cause of mutiny and disaffection among isolated corps. This being so, it is not surprising that insidious propaganda to the effect that the new military reforms recently introduced were deliberately designed to prejudice caste was readily believed ; also that once such untrue rumours gained credence disaffection spread with the utmost rapidity. Indeed, it is only fair to give credit to the large number who remained staunch and unaffected, in spite of the fact that their relations and co-religionists were swept away in the general holocaust. Early, though obscure, symptoms of the coming storm had been apparent for some time prior to the actual outbreak in 1857 ; this had been manifested by the behaviour of the battalion at Barrackpore during the previous year in whose place the Regiment had been moved to Berhampore after the conclusion of the Santhal operations, instead of remaining at Barrackpore. It is also a melancholy fact that the sepoys of the 63rd were not entirely free from signs of disaffection, and isolated, though minor, incidents which caused grave apprehension, did occur prior to the actual outbreak. As at other stations in India the first open mutiny broke out on Sunday the 21st June 1857, while the majority of the officers and Europeans were in Church. One squadron of the Native Cavalry Regiment then in Berhampore repaired to the jail and, breaking the gates open, released the prisoners. The outbreak was confined to this incident, and a parade of the Regiment and other Native units present in the station passed off without incident. The following day two companies of British Infantry arrived from Calcutta, as a rumour had spread that the Native troops had risen and had attacked the Europeans. Berhampore, being situated in the Murshidabad District, was considered a dangerous locality, and this accounts for the prompt action taken by the authorities in Calcutta. This district had always been noted as one in which disaffection was rife, and an outbreak among the inhabitants had been feared.

Although no further incidents of mutiny, or open disaffection, occurred

in Berhampore, the loyalty of the Native troops in the station was considered doubtful, and it was decided as a matter of precaution to disarm them. A British battalion was sent up for this purpose, and a disarming parade held on the 1st July passed off without incident. Many of the sepoy in the 63rd offered to surrender their arms voluntarily on the day previous in order to avoid the ignominy of a public parade, but this was not allowed. The 63rd remained disarmed for two years and four months; staying during this period quietly at Berhampore, no incident of interest occurred.

At the end of 1858 the Commanding Officer was ordered to submit a report on the feelings of the men in the ranks towards Government. This proved to be favourable, and as a result it was decided to retain the 63rd in the Regular Army.

At this time the Regiment was considerably below strength, owing to a certain number of desertions and to many men having taken their discharge both voluntarily or under compulsion for doubtful loyalty; also to the fact that no recruiting had been carried out for over two years. Re-organization on a smaller establishment was temporarily resorted to, but numerous transfers from disbanded corps, chiefly from the 52nd Native Infantry, were received in 1860 and the ranks were again brought up to strength.

The Regiment left Berhampore in February 1860, and after a stay of eight months at Dehreeghat on the Soane River, a move was made to Benares.

At this station on the 25th May 1861 the Regiment ceased to bear the designation 63rd Bengal Native Infantry, a title which it had borne since 1824, and assumed that of the 9th Bengal Native Infantry. Although altered in composition this numerical designation has remained unchanged to the present day, seventy-five years later.

#### THE 9TH BENGAL NATIVE INFANTRY, 1861-1893

The Regiment assumed the new designation 9th Bengal Native Infantry, under authority of G.G.O. 990 dated the 29th October 1861.

The re-organization of the Bengal Army after the Mutiny entailed very drastic changes to regulate the confused mass of units, old and new, regular and irregular, which the storm of the Mutiny had left to represent the Army in Bengal. Many of these were of mixed composition and different establishment.

In August 1860 there were existing :

15 Regular Regiments .	Under the Commander-in-Chief.
30 Irregular and Extra Regiments	“ “ “ “ “
Punjab Infantry 18 Regiments	“ “ “ “ “

Punjab Infantry 7 Regiments	.	Under the Government of India.
Sikh and Guides Infantry	. 5	} Under the Government of India.
Hyderabad Contingent	. 6	
Nagpur Irregular Force	. 3	
Local Corps	. 7	

The 63rd formed one of the first category, three more corps of which were now disbanded. Under the general order, quoted, the line regiments were re-numbered, and the 63rd received its new number, as fifty-four of the regiments senior to it had been disbanded.

A greater change still had occurred in 1858 when it was announced that the whole of the Indian Forces were transferred to the Crown. This event, though of immense importance politically, affected the Native Army in little more than name. Actually in 1867 under authority of G.G.O. 515, the Royal Crown was substituted for the East India Company's device of the Lion and Crown hitherto borne on the Colours of all Native Infantry Corps.

The re-organization already mentioned also affected the composition of the Regiment, which was now organized on a class company basis. This was the first real change of composition that had occurred within the unit since being first raised, nearly fifty years before. The new composition was ordered to be as follows :—

Brahmans and Rajputs mixed	. . . . .	2 Companies
Hindustani Mussalmans	. . . . .	1 Company
Gurkhas and Hillmen	. . . . .	1 Company
Bundelahs	. . . . .	2 Companies
Jats	. . . . .	1 Company
Dogras	. . . . .	1 Company
Total		<u>8 Companies</u>

The last four castes were new to the Regiment, and special recruiting parties were sent to Kumaon, Bundelkund, Harina and Kangra to obtain men of these classes.

New establishments were also introduced at this time. The most important change was, however, a drastic reduction in the number of British Officers. The former complement of twenty-four was now reduced to no more than six, being a commandant, two wing commanders, one adjutant, one quartermaster, and a general duty officer. Under this new system Native Officers assumed the command of companies.

It is of particular interest to notice the introduction of a company

of Gurkhas and Hillmen into the new organization. With the exception of the five class Gurkha Regiments which existed at this time and had been brought into the Regular Army, the 9th Bengal Infantry was one of only five authorized to recruit this class. It was from this nucleus of one company that the Regiment was converted into a class Gurkha Regiment thirty years later. It cannot be doubted that very few Gurkhas of pure descent were then obtained, and it seems probable that the majority of the company was composed of Kumaonis, Garhwalis, and other hillmen, some possessing probably a strain of Gurkha blood.

In 1864 new Colours were presented at Fyzabad. The original Colours presented at Mynpoori in 1820 had been replaced at Agra in 1848, when they still had the old spiked staves which had long since been altered to bear the Crown and Lion device of the East India Company. The new Colours bore the Regiment's new designation, showing the numeral "IX" picked out in Roman letters.

#### WAR IN BHUTAN, 1864-1866

In August 1865 the Regiment received orders to mobilize for active service in Bhutan. Owing to a long-continued series of raids and incursions into British territory, culminating in an outrageous insult to a British Mission, war had been forced on the Government of India in November the previous year. An expedition, approximately two brigades of all arms in strength, was organized and divided into four columns and moved into Bhutan from Gauhati, Goalpara, Cooch Behar, and Jalpaiguri, respectively. Severe opposition was encountered, involving serious casualties, and the loss of two guns, and it was not until the following April that successful operations virtually brought the war to a close. The Bhutias were, however, by no means completely subdued, and it became necessary to keep a considerable force on the frontier until the close of the rainy season permitted further operations.

The Regiment left Fyzabad on the 7th November 1865, and proceeding by rail and steamer reached Gauhati on December 6th; it then marched to Dewangiri, where it was joined by the baggage train, which had been sent separately, on the 15th. The 9th Bengal Native Infantry remained at this place until the following February employed in road-making and jungle-clearing. On the 4th February 1866 a column consisting of three battalions, including the Regiment, marched into Bhutan with the object of expediting the surrender of the two guns captured by the enemy during the previous year. No opposition, but very difficult country, was encountered and by the 23rd February the object was achieved. Shortly after returning to Dewangiri peace was declared.



The Regiment left Dewangiri on the 3rd March 1866, arrived at Barrackpore on the 16th, at which station it remained cantoned until December 1869. The next ten years of its existence are distinguished only by minor changes of a routine nature in the matter of dress, arms, and equipment. During this period it moved successively in relief to Lucknow, Morar, and Mian Mir. Of minor passing interest is the fact that while in Lucknow in 1872 it furnished the guard over the Chief Commissioner's Residence during an official visit of the King of Siam, and also furnished guards-of-honour for the arrival and departure of His Majesty. Such royal visits were of rare occurrence in those days, although the Regiment had been present in Calcutta in 1869 and had taken part in the official ceremonies in honour of the visit of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh to India during that year.

Changes of dress during this period included the introduction of cork "Hawkes" helmets for the British Officers, and the substitution of a puggree for the old shako among the Indian ranks. It is of interest to note that the Kilmarnock cap had been discarded in favour of a form of puggree in 1861, and that during 1868 sanction to adopt the Turkish "tarbosh," with a white cloth wound round, had been refused.

Another minor alteration in the dress of the Indian ranks was the introduction of blue serge pantaloons in place of the grey cloth trousers then in wear.

More important than these changes, however, was the re-armament of the Regiment, twice, in 1872 and 1874. On the first occasion the muzzle-loading Enfield rifles were received in place of the smooth-bore muskets issued on being re-armed in 1859, after the Mutiny. These were all of the 1853 pattern, but there were numerous variations among the component parts, and in many cases the rifling at the muzzle was completely worn smooth. In 1874 the Enfield was replaced by the Snider rifle. Consequent on this re-armament a rather amusing change of status of the regimental mistri occurred; he was ordered to be sent to an arsenal to learn how to repair and maintain the newly issued rifles, and "in future would be regarded as belonging to the Regiment generally for this purpose, and not as the personal servant of the wing officer."

Contemporary records of 1874 give an interesting indication of the system of training of officers at this period. In April of this year a letter from the Commander-in-Chief is quoted verbatim; it "urges Commanding Officers to give every support to the introduction of the instructive war game among their officers, and promised that each Regiment would be supplied with the rules and a lecture on the game; also with three sets of maps prepared in the Surveyor General's Office. He suggested the

purchase, by subscription, among the officers, or from some regimental fund, of the rough apparatus for playing the game made at Roorkee." This polite request seems somewhat at variance with the present intensive training schemes issued since the conclusion of the Great War of 1914-1918.

Another introduction, reminiscent of the Great War, was the order to salute with the left hand; hitherto this custom had not been adopted in deference to the ideas of Indians that the use of the left hand for saluting constituted an insult. It will be recalled that the abolition of the left-hand salute in the course of the Great War caused considerable ridicule; it is not thought, however, that the order was actuated by any such motive as had delayed the first introduction.

In the winter of 1876 the Regiment, while moving in relief from Morar to Mian Mir, was ordered to halt at Delhi to take part in the reviews and ceremonies being organized to celebrate the assumption of the Imperial Title by H.M. The Queen.

In recognition of the occasion the Commanding Officer was awarded a silver commemorative medal, as was also Colour Havildar Dabedeen Mir "in recognition of 37-3/4 years exemplary service, of which 17 had been in the N.C.O. rank." All other ranks also received one day's extra pay.

After the Delhi celebrations the 9th Bengal Native Infantry marched to Mian Mir, where it arrived in February 1877.

In 1877 a Band was authorized to be introduced into all regiments which volunteered to raise one. The Regiment did so, and a Brass Band was started during this year.

#### THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR, 1878-1880

Less than two years after arrival at Mian Mir the Regiment was warned for active service with the Peshawar Reserve Force in connection with the Second Afghan War. This had broken out in November 1878, and severe fighting had been in progress throughout the following year. Unfortunately the Regiment was delegated to lines-of-communication duty during the whole of the period in Afghanistan, and in consequence saw little, or no, fighting.

The Regiment left Mian Mir for Jhelum by train on the 2nd January 1880, and marched thence for Peshawar, arriving at Ali Masjid on the 23rd. After a stay of two months it marched to Jellalabad and there remained until August, during which time it was employed with the Second Movable Column. H.Q. and the left wing were detached to Safed Jang for two months, but returned to Jellalabad in June.

The Second Movable Column was employed on three occasions while the Regiment was attached. During April the column moved into the

Wazir Valley to deal with a force of Khugianis who had attacked Fort Battye. In June it advanced firstly into the Kama Valley, and then to Daulatzai to deal with hostile tribes who had been involved in raids on the lines-of-communication. During July it was also called on to send a detachment to the north of the Kabul River to deal with hostile snipers.

The Regiment left Jellalabad with the Movable Column during August and went into standing camp at Lawrencepore.

Although not called upon to take an active part in the operations in Afghanistan the 9th suffered severely from sickness during the time spent in that country, particularly from fever and pneumonia. While at Ali Masjid deaths from these causes averaged at least one per day.

It is of interest to note that, despite the fact that the war had been in progress for more than a year before the Regiment received orders to join the field force, it was found impossible to issue the authorized scale of warm coats and jerseys on arrival at Peshawar in the middle of winter. To remedy this, "poshteen" coats and jerseys were obliged to be purchased in the local bazaar.

For services in Afghanistan the Regiment received the Battle-Honour "AFGHANISTAN 1879-80," and all ranks received a medal and six months' batta.

The Battalion left Lawrencepore by route march on the 25th October 1880 and arrived at Gorakhpore in February the following year; it remained at this station for the next three and a half years.

Whilst at Gorakhpore the regimental composition was changed twice. In 1881 the further enlistment of Gurkhas was forbidden and in the following year that of Bundellahs also. At this period six Native Infantry regiments were disbanded and an augmentation of strength of one hundred and twenty was authorized to those remaining. The Regiment received a company of Ahirs from the disbanded 35th Native Infantry which was absorbed into the existing Jat companies, and to replace the Gurkhas and Bundellahs two companies of Newars were enlisted from Nepal.

The composition of the Regiment was now as follows:—

" A " Company . . . . .	Hindustani Brahmans.
" B " Company . . . . .	Mussulmans.
" C " and " D " Companies . . . . .	Jats from West of Delhi.
" E " and " F " Companies . . . . .	Newars from Nepal.
" G " and " H " Companies . . . . .	Hindustani Rajputs.

This composition was to remain unaltered for the next ten years, when in 1893 the Regiment was ordered to be converted into a class Gurkha unit.

In the autumn of 1884 orders were received for a move to Peshawar,

where the Regiment arrived in January 1885. During the year there was a scare of war with Russia, which fortunately did not materialize, though all furlough was suspended. During this year also the Regiment took part in the ceremonies for the reception and departure of the Amir of Afghanistan, who paid an official visit to India. It also won the Commander-in-Chief's prize and the Native Infantry Cup; it is unfortunate that the records do not state for what purpose these two trophies were awarded, but it is presumed that they were for musketry.

While in Peshawar the companies were again largely employed in construction of barracks, as those taken over were too small to accommodate the increased strength mentioned.

The Regiment left Peshawar in October 1885 and after a camp of exercise at Delhi reached Bareilly in February 1886, moving again to Barrackpore in the following May and July.

While at this station a system of linking units was inaugurated and a Reserve was also sanctioned. The 9th Native Infantry was linked to the 7th and 8th Native Infantry, and the strength of the Reserve was authorized at two hundred and eighteen per battalion. These changes were accompanied by various other measures which benefited the Indian Army as a whole.

The recent annexation of Burma involved the enlistment of a strong force of Military Police to maintain order, and volunteers from the Indian Native Army were called for; sixty-nine men from the Regiment applied for this service.

An interesting change of dress was also now introduced, by which a universal pattern of khaki coat for British Officers and metal shoulder stars as badges of rank for Native Officers were sanctioned.

#### THE 9TH BENGAL INFANTRY

In this year, 1885, a change of designation in all Native corps was authorized by the elimination of the word "Native"; the Regiment thus became the "9th Bengal Infantry."

#### THE CHIN-LUSHAI OPERATIONS, 1888-1890

The renewal of operations in the newly acquired Province of Upper Burma in the winter of 1888-1889 had repercussion in the strips of country lying between that country and India, especially in those occupied by the Chins and in Lushai beyond the Chittagong district. Constant raids and depredations at length forced Government to take action, and in the winter of 1888-1889 two columns were dispatched into the Chin country, and to the Chittagong hill tracts, to exact reprisals and to subdue the tribes.

The Left-Half Battalion under command of Major Woodhouse, together with Lieutenants Swiney and Widdicombe, was ordered to join the Chittagong Force. It left Barrackpore on the 7th November 1888, and on arrival proceeded to Rangamatti; the following month the remainder of the Regiment proceeded to Dorunda. The command of the Chittagong Force was vested in Colonel V. W. Tregear, at this time the Commandant of the 9th Bengal Infantry.

The force, approximately two battalions in strength, was concentrated at Demagiri in February 1889. During the following two months it visited the Shendu country and destroyed the village of Howsata, which had been concerned in the murder of a British officer during the previous year. The force then returned to Rangamatti for the hot season. It was found necessary to renew the operations during the following winter, and the Chittagong Force was dispatched to operate against the Chins, Lushais, Shendus, and other tribes occupying the hill tracts lying between the Chittagong district and the Chindwin and Kale valleys in Burma. The Left-Half Battalion accompanied the northern column and advanced into the Lushai country, enforced the surrender of prisoners, exacted satisfaction for raids in past years, and opened up the country by the construction of roads, etc. By the middle of April 1890 the rainy season was approaching, and as the object had been achieved the troops were withdrawn and the field force broken up. For his services during these operations Colonel Tregear was awarded the C.B. All officers and men who took part received the Indian General Service medal with a clasp inscribed "Chin-Lushai 1889-90."

At the end of 1891 the Left-Half Battalion marched in relief from Dorunda to Lucknow and was joined there by the remainder three months later. The latter had moved to Buxa Dooars, Bhootan, in March 1890.

During 1891 the Regiment was re-armed with the Martini-Henry rifle. Three years later it was converted into a class Gurkha unit.

## CHAPTER II

1893-1905

### THE REGIMENT FROM THE DATE OF CONVERSION INTO A GURKHA REGIMENT UNTIL THE RAISING OF THE 2ND BATTALION. THE MOVE TO DEHRA DUN

The Conversion of the Regiment into a Gurkha unit. The "Khas," or Chettri, Gurkha. Measures to effect the Conversion. Move to Lansdowne. "The 9th Gurkha Rifles." Further reforms in the Army. Active service on the North-West Frontier, 1897. Death of H.M. Queen Victoria. Link with the 39th Garhwal Rifles. Mounted Infantry. Introduction of the field service hat. Coronation of H.M. King Edward VII and Durbar at Delhi. Appointment of Major-General Beauchamp Duff as Colonel of the Regiment. Introduction of the Machine-Gun Section. Detachments to Sikkim-Tibet Mission. Raising of the 2nd Battalion. Orders to move to Dehra Dun.

#### CONVERSION OF THE REGIMENT INTO A GURKHA REGIMENT

**T**HE year 1893 was to see sweeping changes introduced into the organization and composition of the Bengal Army.

The most important of these, and the one which affected the Regiment most, was the decision to convert the sixteen "Hindustani" Infantry Regiments into Class Units with a common composition. It was considered that experience had shown that, not only were recruits of a better stamp attracted to class regiments, but that all ranks were more happy and contented when serving with those of their own race and caste; the regimental system was found to work more harmoniously in such corps, while esprit de corps was fostered and a healthy spirit of rivalry between regiment and regiment engendered.

Under this re-organization the Regiment was ordered to be converted into a "Khas" Gurkha unit; this was under the authority of G.O.C.C. 309, dated 15th April 1893.

The decision to form a battalion of this class of Gurkhas was based on the recommendation of Captain Eden Vansittart, 5th Gurkha Rifles, the Recruiting Officer for Gurkhas. Army Head-Quarters had asked his opinion on the advisability of increased enlistment of Newars, and in his reply he had stressed the claims of the Khas to be enlisted into the British Service.

For some time this class had not been enlisted into the existing Gurkha battalions. A relevant extract from the original letter will be found in Appendix I. The recommendation was accepted, and this officer may thus be considered, as indeed he himself claimed to be, the "Father" of the present unit, the 9th Gurkha Rifles.

#### THE "KHAS," OR CHETTRI, GURKHA

It would be appropriate here to discuss the history and characteristics of the Khas, or as he is now known, the Chettri Gurkha. Very little was, or for that matter is yet, known about the origin or history of this class, which is unquestionably the most numerous and predominant of all the fighting classes resident in Nepal. One thing is certain, and that is that they did not form part of the aboriginal inhabitants of that country, but sprang from some mixture of blood between these and immigrants into Nepal. It is now popularly supposed that this originated between Rajputs and Brahmans fleeing into Nepal before the Mohammedan invasions into India in the eleventh century, and who mixed with the local aboriginal women whom they found in the country. The word "Chettri" seems certainly to be a corruption of the Hindu order of Ksatriya, and this lends some credence to the theory. It would appear tolerably certain that a portion, and possibly a large portion at that, of the tribe did originate in this way, but modern knowledge proves unquestionably that the Khas, as a people, existed in Nepal long before Brahmans ever penetrated into that country.

Whatever the circumstances and date of the origin of the tribe may or may not be, it is an undoubted fact that the Khas, or Chettris, formed a large portion of Prithwi Narain's army when that king set out from the State of Gurkha to conquer the Nepal Valley in 1768; it is from this date that the general term "Gurkha" is applied to all the fighting classes among the inhabitants of Nepal.

There were also very large numbers, particularly among the leaders, included in the Nepalese Army which fought us so bravely in the wars with Nepal in 1814-1815.

At present it is an unfortunate fact that the term "Chettri" is applied to the offspring of men of Indian, or mixed blood, and Gurkha women, and that such claim to be pure Gurkhas, which of course they are not. It is in a measure due to numerous such claimants that a prejudice has arisen against the class as a whole, which is in no way justified, any more than the British race in India is prejudiced by Anglo-Indians claiming to be British. The existence of this very numerous community both in Nepal, and more particularly in the large Gurkha colonies domiciled in India,

demands a much more careful system of recruiting of the Chettri class for our Service than is the case for other Gurkha classes.

The Chettri certainly is a stricter Hindu than the others enlisted and observes the Hindu law in regard to ceremonies in connection with marriage and food to a greater extent than do the Magars and Gurungs. It was this fact that created a tendency to regard them as less desirable as soldiers prior to their enlistment into a class unit, and isolated instances in the past among individuals, mixed in a great minority in regiments, may have been responsible for this prejudice. In more than forty years in which the Regiment has existed up to the time of publication of this History, experience of both peace and war in no way bears it out ; this is referred to in Chapter VII—which recounts the doings of the 1st Battalion in France under probably the most difficult circumstances in which the Indian, or Gurkha, soldier will ever be called upon to serve. Both in appearance and physique the Chettri differs from the other classes, being generally slighter in build and more aquiline in features. He is generally more intelligent, but is more reserved and requires different handling to gain his confidence. In courage, endurance, and soldierly instincts he in no way suffers by comparison with any of his kindred, and in frequent instances by virtue of his better breeding and greater intelligence has shown himself their superior. As far as our Service is concerned the only prejudice as regards food and drink that he observes is in the cooking and eating of dhal and rice ; for this his caste demands that he removes his footgear and eats on the actual site at which the food is prepared. On occasions on active service this observance is impracticable, and on these, with the full concurrence of the men themselves, the ration of rice is not issued.

From the first conversion the Regiment was regarded as a class Khas Gurkha unit, and was authorized to be maintained as such, but in actual fact from the very beginning it has contained a large proportion of Thakurs. This class has indisputably the highest status and social standing in Nepal, and with the Chettri composes the vast majority of the ruling and governing classes of the country. The Thakur is difficult to obtain in large numbers, but an average of one-third Thakur to two-thirds Chettri is aimed at in the Regiment and normally kept up. In their case one further minor caste prejudice exists, in that while a Chettri can eat food cooked by a Thakur, the converse does not apply.

The foregoing account of the characteristics, origin, and habits of the Chettri caste has been given in some detail on account of the fact that the 9th Gurkhas has always been, and still remains, the only Gurkha unit which recruits this class exclusively. Far from regarding themselves as in any way inferior to other classes of Gurkha, they definitely consider themselves



superior, and in fact look down on them by virtue of their better breeding and higher status in their own country.

#### MEASURES TO EFFECT THE CONVERSION

At the time of conversion the Regiment was stationed at Lucknow, and measures were at once taken to give effect to the change of composition ordered. The strength was temporarily fixed at five companies, and between May and July the following changes took place :—

“ A ” Company (Brahmans) was transferred to the 1st B.I.

“ B ” Company (Mussalmans) was transferred to the 17th B.I.

“ C ” and “ D ” Companies (Jats) were transferred to the 6th B.I.

“ G ” and “ H ” Companies (Rajputs) were transferred to the 13th B.I.

“ E ” and “ F ” Companies composed of Newars since 1883 were retained ;

and the following transfers received from other regiments :—

2 companies from 18th B.I. and lettered “ C ” and “ D ” Companies.

1 company from 13th B.I. and lettered “ A ” Company.

These companies were composed of Gurkhas and Hillmen.

It will therefore be seen that the composition of the Regiment on first conversion differed considerably from that of a class Khas Gurkha battalion ordered ; the classes were very mixed, and it would appear that only a small proportion of pure Gurkhas were included.

#### THE 9TH (GURKHA RIFLE) REGIMENT OF BENGAL INFANTRY

In addition to the change of composition the following alterations in designation, dress and accoutrements, and badge were ordered :—

Designation changed to “ 9th (Gurkha Rifle) Regiment of Bengal Infantry.”

Dress. Green, instead of scarlet, with black, and silver accoutrements for the officers, and Rifle pattern sword hilt. The badge was changed to crossed kukris, edge downwards, with the regimental numeral between the handles.

Sanction was obtained to retain the old Colours to be placed in the Officers' Mess House.

#### MOVE TO LANSDOWNE

The Regiment remained in Lucknow during 1893 and 1894 and in October of the latter year was ordered to move to Lansdowne for permanent location. It moved to this station early in November by rail to Kotdwara and thence by road. In December permission was received to recruit up to the full establishment of eight companies, and this was effected during

the cold season of 1894-1895. Recruiting parties were dispatched to Gorakhpore and men of the authorized class enlisted from Nepal. In addition a number of transfers of the Chettri class was received from other Gurkha units.

The two years following the arrival of the converted Regiment at Lansdowne were spent almost entirely in the construction of new Lines and a Mess House for the officers ; in commencing the construction of a cart road from Railhead at Kotdwara, and in recruit training.

The other corps stationed at Lansdowne when the Regiment moved there were the 2nd Bn. 3rd Gurkha Rifles and the 39th Garhwal Rifles. The latter had been converted into a class Garhwali unit in 1890 by transfer of six companies of that class from the 2nd Bn. 3rd Gurkhas ; this battalion was then re-organized on a class Gurkha basis in the following year. In March 1891 all Gurkha Regiments were designated Rifle Regiments, and from this date the Regiment became the 9th Gurkha Rifles. It is of interest to note that, five years previously in 1886, a Second Battalion for each of the older Gurkha units, the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th, had been raised, and that in March 1891 the 42nd, 43rd and 44th Gurkha Rifle) Regiments of Bengal Infantry were re-designated the 6th, 1st and 2nd Battalions, 8th Gurkha Rifles, respectively. Eight of the existing ten Gurkha Regiments were thus then constituted, and a Second Battalion for the 6th and 9th was raised thirteen years later.

#### FURTHER REFORMS IN THE ARMY

In 1895 occurred the most far-reaching of the reforms of this period which had given birth to the conversion of the Regiment to its new composition. This was the abolition of the Presidency Army system, under which the Bombay and Madras Armies had been maintained on a separate footing under the control of the Governments of those Presidencies, and independent of the authority of the Commander-in-Chief in India. By this reform the Commanders-in-Chief Bombay and Madras were abolished, and the Presidency Governments ceased to exercise all military control and authority. Simultaneously the Bengal Army was for administrative purposes divided into two portions styled respectively the Punjab and Bengal Commands. The Army in India now consisted of the Punjab, Bengal, Bombay and Madras Commands, each under a lieutenant-general, and the whole under the direct command of the Commander-in-Chief in India, and under the control of the Government of India. This corresponds very much to the four Command organization introduced after the Great War and in force at the present time.

Lieut.-Colonel V. W. Tregear, C.B., completed his tenure of command

in 1893 and was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel H. O. Woodhouse; this officer was thus the first Commandant of the 9th Gurkha Rifles.

#### THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER, 1897

In August 1897 the Regiment was ordered, by telegram, to proceed as rapidly as possible to Rawal Pindi to form part of a reserve brigade for operations on the North-West Frontier. Leaving Lansdowne on the 18th August, it arrived at Peshawar on the 29th, and was ordered to form part of the 2nd Brigade Mohmand Field Force. With this formation it marched to Adizai on the 10th September and thereafter by the following route—Dand, Ghalanai, Nahakki, Yakdand, Pepal, arriving at the latter place on the 1st October. From Pepal the Regiment, together with one section Mountain Battery, one company Sappers and Miners, and one section Field Hospital, under command of Lieut.-Colonel Woodhouse, was ordered to carry out a reconnaissance through Pindiali to Matta Moghul Khel. The column marched via Danesh Khel to Halki Pindiali-Lagam, and thence to Matta Moghul Khel on the 5th October, returning to Peshawar via Adizai, where the Mohmand force was broken up.

During these operations hired pack transport was issued, e.g. donkeys with their owners' equipment and no saddles or slings. The immense difficulty of operating with such transport will be appreciated; for the Tirah operations Government pack transport was provided.

On the 21st October the Regiment was ordered to join the Peshawar Column, Tirah Expeditionary Force, and marched to camp Bara. On the 19th November it proceeded to Ilm Gudr, being employed there until the 6th December on reconnaissance and road improvement in the Gandao Defile; here the first casualty was received. It then took part in the operations in the Bara Valley from the 7th to the 14th December. Marching on the 7th to Swaikot in the Bara Valley it was obliged to bivouac on the hills that night to allow the passage of the transport. On the 10th the march to Barkai was resumed; on the nights of both the 10th and 11th the picquets were sniped, but no casualties resulted. On the 12th the Regiment returned to Swaikot, marched to Ilm Gudr on the 14th, and reached Jamrud on the 17th. From here it operated in the Khyber Pass until the end of the month, being employed in picqueting, foraging, and demolition of villages. A few casualties were incurred in the course of these operations.

The Regiment remained in the Khyber throughout 1898 and was relieved by the 2nd Bn. 3rd Gurkha Rifles in March 1899, when it returned to Lansdowne. For services rendered during the campaign the Regiment received the Battle-Honour "PUNJAB FRONTIER," and all ranks were awarded the Indian General Service Medal with clasps "N.W. Frontier 1897-98" and

“ Tirah 1897-98.” The medals were presented on a brigade parade at Landi Kotal on the 5th March 1899. The Order of British India, 1st Class, was also awarded to Subedar-Major Fateh Sing during this year.

During 1900 the double-company organization was first introduced under command of British Officers ; the company remained the tactical unit under Gurkha Officers ; this remained in force until the Great War, when the platoon organization was introduced.

#### DEATH OF H.M. QUEEN VICTORIA

The death of H.M. Queen Victoria occurred on the 22nd January 1901, and it was decided to raise a memorial fund in her memory. All ranks contributed one day's pay and a sum of Rs. 853/13/2 was thereby collected. It was determined to devote this sum towards building an institute with separate rooms for G.O.s, N.C.O.s and O.R.s. As some doubt existed as to whether the Regiment would remain permanently located at Lansdowne, this money was deposited in the Savings Bank until the question was definitely decided. It was eventually devoted towards the Gurkha Officers' Club built in Birpur after the move down to Dehra Dun in 1905.

#### LINK WITH THE 39TH GARHWAL RIFLES

The 49th Garhwal Rifles (subsequently called the 2/39th) was ordered to be raised during 1901, and together with its own 1st Battalion was linked to the Regiment. So started an association of comradeship which remains firm to the present day.

#### THE 9TH GURKHA RIFLES

During this year, 1901, the Regiment, now styled “ 9th Gurkha Rifles,” was re-armed with the Lee-Enfield rifle, and also earned the distinction of winning the Bengal Command's Shooting trophy, the “ Luck ” prize, open to the whole of the Command.

#### MOUNTED INFANTRY

It is of interest to note that Mounted Infantry training was now started, and a detachment of two companies was ordered to be formed. Captain C. M. Porteous of the Regiment was seconded as an assistant instructor at the Mounted Infantry School at Fatehgarh, and a section of two N.C.O.s, twenty Riflemen and one Bugler, under Jemadar Prem Sing Bisht (afterwards subedar-major of the 2nd Battalion), was trained at the School. They proceeded thence to manœuvres and to the Coronation Camp at Delhi. Despite the general opinion that Gurkhas were unsuitable for mounted

duties on account of their physique and build, the men, by virtue of their pluck, became fair horsemen and were outstanding as horsemasters.

#### INTRODUCTION OF FIELD SERVICE HAT

In July 1902 a field service hat made of khaki greatcoat cloth, stiffened with drill and with a broad brim, was introduced for wear in field service order ; this was the forerunner of the felt hat used by all Gurkha Regiments to-day, which is now an Ordnance issue. From the inception the Regiment adopted no badge, or flash, on this hat, nor does the 1st Battalion of the Regiment at the present time. With the exception of the 6th Gurkha Rifles it is the only one among the Gurkha Regiments which does not do so. The 2nd Battalion adopted a black diamond made of fur (symbolical of Persian lamb) after the War to commemorate its services in Mesopotamia.

#### CORONATION OF H.M. KING EDWARD VII AND DURBAR AT DELHI

In celebration of the Coronation of H.M. King Edward VII, which took place on the 9th August 1902, a Coronation Durbar Camp was formed in Delhi in November of that year, and T.R.H. The Duke and Duchess of Connaught came out to represent His Majesty. The Regiment as a whole did not proceed to Delhi, but a detachment of ten N.C.O.s and seventy-one Riflemen, under command of Lieutenant Mackinnon, was attached to the 1/39th Garhwal Rifles, and attended the manœuvres and afterwards the Durbar Camp.

#### CONCESSIONS

In connection with the Coronation several concessions to the Indian Army were announced ; among these the following are of interest :—

(i) The designation " Staff Corps," to which all British Officers had hitherto been posted, was abolished and " Indian Army " substituted.

(ii) Six Native Officers were ordered to be appointed, annually, as Orderly Officers in attendance on H.M. The King for one season in England.

(iii) Honorary rank on retirement for Native Officers in possession of the Order of British India was approved, as was the issue of one extra Meritorious Service, and one Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, both with gratuity, per Infantry Battalion. A monetary grant of Rs. 200 per Native unit was also sanctioned.

#### GURKHA ORDERLY OFFICERS

It is a matter for the greatest regret that the caste laws of Nepal now prohibit Gurkha Officers from performing what is to them the highest

honour possible in their service, that of doing Orderly Officer to the King. Following the funeral of King Edward VII in 1910, the last occasion on which Gurkha Officers were detailed for this duty, one of the officers was out-casted on return to India. Since that date the Nepal Durbar has refused to allow Gurkhas to perform this honourable duty. In view of the changed conditions of the present day, by which a Nepalese Envoy is present at the Court of St. James in England, a representation has been made to H.H. The Maharajah pointing out the earnest desire of all Gurkhas serving in our Regiments to be allowed to perform this duty again, and it is to be hoped that this request will receive favourable consideration. The gradual relaxation of the caste laws in Nepal being introduced gives some hope that this may be so. In 1936 the restriction was removed, and it is sincerely desired that Gurkha Officers will soon again be deputed for this coveted duty.

#### MAJOR-GENERAL BEAUCHAMP DUFF APPOINTED COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

In 1903 also the appointment of distinguished officers of the Indian Army as Honorary Colonels of Native Regiments was approved. On the 13th May 1904 Major-General Beauchamp Duff, C.B., C.I.E., who had been posted to the 9th Bengal Infantry from the Royal Artillery, and wherein he had served for several years, was appointed Colonel of the Regiment.

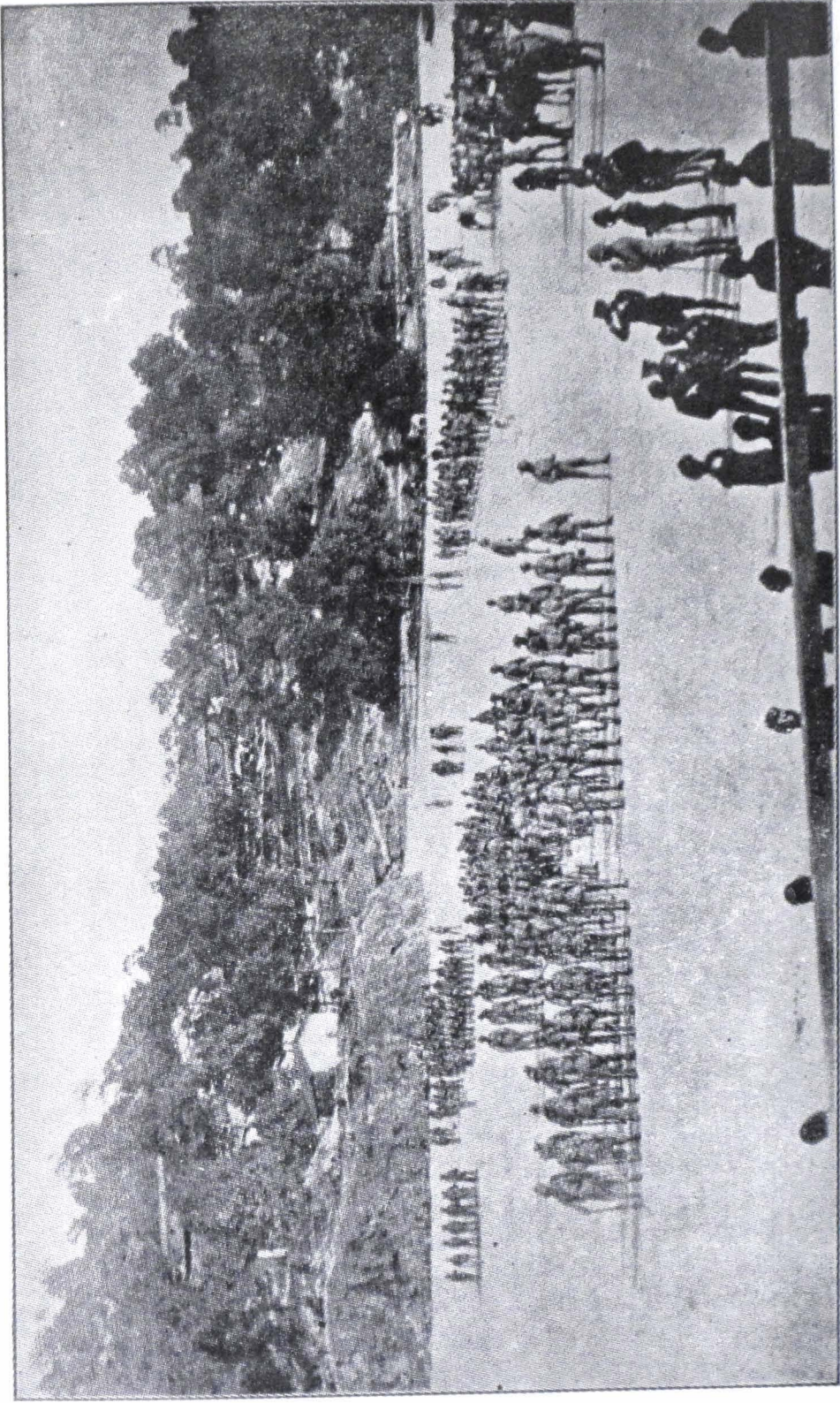
#### INTRODUCTION OF MACHINE-GUN SECTION

An increased establishment of fourteen men was authorized in Native Infantry Battalions to replace the personnel of the newly introduced Machine-Gun section. The issue of two Maxim machine-guns per Native Infantry battalion of the Field Army was authorized in May of this year. These were issued from Arsenal in August, but mules for their transport were not received until February the following year.

#### DETACHMENTS TO THE SIKKIM-TIBET MISSION

In October 1903 the Regiment was ordered to furnish a detachment for service with the Sikkim-Tibet Mission. On the 10th this detachment, forty-eight strong under command of Lieutenant W. L. O. Twiss, left Lansdowne to join that force for duty with yak transport. At the conclusion of the operations the work of the detachment was very well reported on by those under whom they served; in particular Lce.-Naik Bhagat-bahadur Adhikari and eight men were especially commended for good work in action during the attack on Kangma Post. As will be seen in a later chapter, this N.C.O. was promoted to Gurkha Officer when the 1st Battalion mobilized at the beginning of the Great War, and greatly distinguished him-





THE TWO BATTALIONS LEAVING LANSDOWNE.  
20th January, 1905.





self in France, being awarded the Military Cross and Russian Order of St. George for gallantry in action. His selection for promotion was largely influenced by the excellence of the report received after the Tibet Mission. Invalided from France this G.O. unfortunately died at sea during his return to India.

In May the following year, 1904, the Maxim-gun detachment, under command of Lieutenant H. F. Collingridge, was also detailed for active service with the Tibet Mission. It was attached to the 1st Bn. 8th Gurkha Rifles and, like the transport detachment, received the highest commendation for work in the field. The officers and men of both detachments received the special medal struck to commemorate this campaign.

#### RAISING OF THE 2ND BATTALION

On the 9th November 1904, under the authority of I.A.O. 800, a Second Battalion of the Regiment was ordered to be raised in replacement of the 11th Coorg Regiment which had been disbanded.

This was to be commenced in the first instance by the transferring of four complete companies to form a nucleus of the new Battalion, and thereafter each was ordered to recruit up to authorized strength. The division was actually carried out on the 10th December 1904, when the Right-Half Battalion was transferred to form the 2nd Battalion.

#### DEHRA DUN

With this decision to form the 2nd Battalion came the order for the transfer of the Regiment from Lansdowne to Dehra Dun. This was in accordance with the policy of the then Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, to concentrate formations of the field army at stations served by a railway in order to effect more rapid concentration for the North-West Frontier. The Regiment was ordered to be replaced in Lansdowne by the 2nd Bn. 10th Gurkha Rifles, who did not arrive in the station before our departure. The two Battalions left Lansdowne by route march on the 20th January 1905 and arrived at Dehra Dun on the 30th of the same month. In the absence of all other accommodation officers and men were located in tents on an open space between the lines of the two battalions of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles.

Prior to the arrival of the Regiment the recruits of both Battalions under Lieutenants W. L. O. Twiss and F. N. Maclaran had moved down to Dehra towards the end of November 1904. Recruit training was carried on and arrangements made for the reception of the two incoming Battalions.

## CHAPTER III

1905-1914

### THE TWO BATTALIONS AT DEHRA DUN, CHITRAL AND DELHI

Dehra Dun, 1815-1905. Birpur, 1905. Measures to complete establishment. Construction of the Lines. Plan and Design. Building and Improvement. The Development of Dehra Dun and constitution of the Brigade Formation. The period 1907-1914. Move of the 1st Battalion to Chitral. Coronation of H.M. King George V and the Delhi Durbar, 1911. The Band. The Pipe Bands. Simla Guard, 1912. Move of the 1st Battalion to Delhi. The State Entry and Official Inauguration of the Capital and Bombing of the Viceroy. Detachment to Pamirs. Appointment of General Sir Beauchamp Duff as Commander-in-Chief, India. Transfer of the 1st Battalion to the Field Army.

#### DEHRA DUN, 1815-1905

**T**O appreciate the conditions prevailing at Dehra Dun at the time of arrival of the Regiment in January 1905, it is necessary to trace briefly the history of the Doon and neighbourhood from its first occupation by the British, almost exactly ninety years before.

Prior to 1815 and the conclusion of the Nepal Wars, the Doon had formed part of Nahan, or Sirmoor, State and had been overrun by the Gurkhas about five years previously ; this was at about the same time that Saharanpur had first been established as a British military station.

At the conclusion of the war, and simultaneously with the raising of the 2nd Gurkhas, or Sirmoor Battalion as it was then called, the district was annexed by the British, and that regiment ordered to be located there. The Hon. Fred Shore was the first Civil official in charge of the district, and thanks to his energy and enterprise, together with that of Captain F. Young, the officer who raised and first commanded the regiment, rapid strides were made in opening up this hitherto little known district. The only approaches over the Siwalik Range were by Hardwar, opened in 1824, and by the Mohan Pass, which Shore had improved with convict labour during the previous year.

The original cantonment was built round the site of the present Club maidan, which formed the parade ground, and the small township was located to the south of this. Old Civil records indicate that the eastern

Doon, right up to the Raspannah Nullah, was dense forest, through which only a rough cart-track existed to connect Dehra and Hardwar ; the Western Doon, however, is spoken of as open and cultivated.

To the north, Landour formed an unofficial sanatorium for the British living in the plains south of the Siwaliks up to the early 1820's ; this was definitely acquired and developed as such for military purposes in 1826-1827.

Mussoorie was started in 1823, the first house built being a shooting lodge belonging to Shore and Young. About 1824 Surveyor-General Everest built houses for his department in what is now known as the Park, and a road to join this and Dehra was started. With the development of Landour this, however, fell into disuse, and the Survey offices were transferred to Dehra shortly afterwards. An interesting and descriptive account of these early days is to be found in the *History of The 2nd Gurkhas*, to which the reader is referred, for only the briefest outline can of necessity be included as part of the History of the 9th.

The Viceroy's Bodyguard came to Dehra in 1831, when lines, approximately on the site of those existing to-day, were built.

The original cantonment was occupied until 1869, when the growth of the city made removal to a better site advisable. Survey was first made of the ground towards the Raspannah, but it was decided that the present location of the 1st Bn. 2nd Gurkhas' lines, to the west of the Bindal Nullah, offered better facilities, and the cantonment was accordingly moved there. The municipality took over the old site, and the Forest School and Park were shortly afterwards constructed where the original barracks had stood.

Chakrata was first occupied by British troops in 1868, and a Second Battalion for the 2nd Gurkhas raised in 1886. A site at Birseni, overlooking the Jumna from the north-western slopes of Badraj, was at first selected for the lines of this battalion ; in August 1887, however, the area of Bijapur village to the north of the existing lines was decided on, and by 1890 the lines were completed.

Two mountain batteries had been stationed in Dehra from 1889-1897, and in 1900, concurrent with the opening of the railway, the Imperial Cadet Corps was raised and located in the station. Other than these and the Viceroy's Bodyguard, no troops, except the 2nd Gurkhas, had ever occupied the Doon.

Since its first annexation this Corps had been intimately associated with, and instrumental in, the development of Dehra, and the district had formed its home for ninety years prior to 1905. It had enjoyed more or less complete freedom of the excellent sporting facilities in the surrounding jungles and hills, and had not unnaturally come to regard these as its own perquisites. At the same time the lines and bungalows were its private property,

and it enjoyed practically complete freedom throughout the greater part of each year to formulate and carry out training.

With the arrival of the 9th in 1905, followed almost immediately by a brigade headquarters and staff, and later by two mountain batteries, this former isolation and freedom of action were to pass for all time and henceforth be subject to supervision and sanction of official authority. It is thus easy to understand that some resentment was caused by the development of the station, and that at first it was much felt by the older battalions.

All ranks of the 9th Gurkhas can willingly and cordially pay a tribute to their now sister regiment for the sportsmanlike and helpful attitude adopted towards them on their first arrival despite the above factors. It is pleasant to recall this thirty years later, when intimate association, in both peace and war, has cemented an initial mutual regard into a close feeling of friendship and comradeship between all ranks of both regiments.

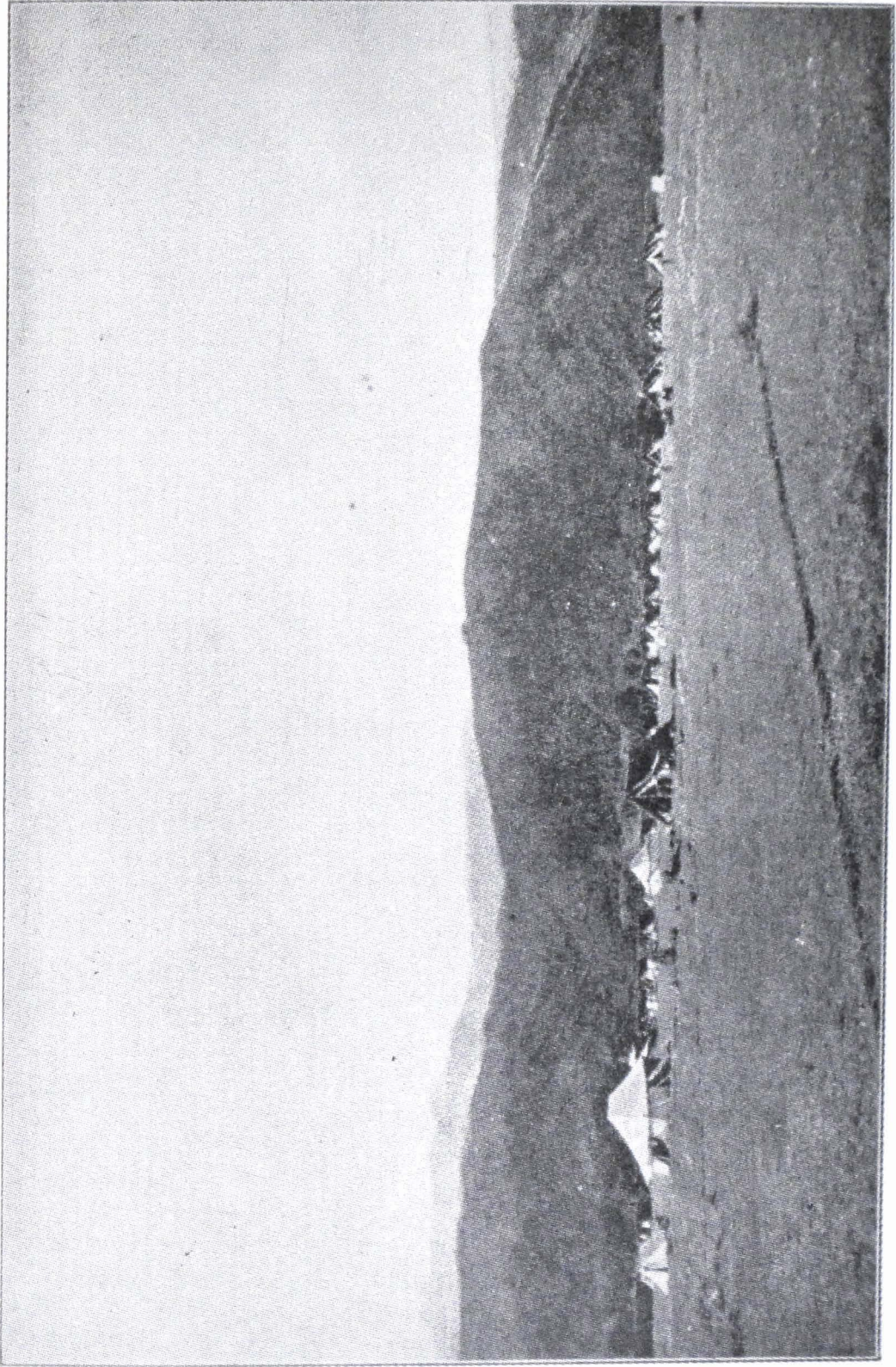
As stated in the previous Chapter, both Battalions of the Regiment on arrival in Dehra were encamped on an open space separating the barracks of the 2nd Gurkhas ; this was near what is now known as the I.C.C. polo ground. They remained here for four months while a survey was made to decide the site for permanent location of their lines. Birpur was eventually decided upon, and both Battalions commenced moving over there on the 26th May 1905. (Illustration facing this page.)

#### BIRPUR, 1905

At this time the area merely consisted of a bare stony plateau situated some two miles to the west of the old cantonment, beyond Garhi village and across the Tons Nullah. The area derived its name from a small native village situated on the site of the present officers' bungalows, and surrounded by a few trees and jungle. No roads, or water supply other than that in the Tons Nullah, existed, nor was there a bridge over the nullah. While the plateau commanded a fine extensive view of the lower Himalayas crowned by Mussoorie, it nevertheless presented a scene of desolation unrelieved by anything except the scenery, and devoid of any amenities.

The two Battalions were encamped on a stony waste piece of ground just south of the native village on what is now the polo ground. In view of the hot season and the approaching monsoon, sanction was accorded to the erection of grass shelters over the tents, but even with these, conditions were extremely bad. It can really be said that they could hardly have been worse for a new unit composed of more than fifty per cent raw recruits just enlisted from Nepal ; as a result there was considerable sickness and there were not a few deaths ; these included, to the great regret of all ranks, Major H. V. Bradley, recently transferred from the 2nd Gurkhas as second-





THE REGIMENTAL CAMP AT DEHRA DUN.



in-command of the 2nd Battalion, and Captain G. C. Garratt, Adjutant of the 1st. Both these officers died from enteric fever, and two more also contracted the disease. At this time all drinking water had to be brought across the Tons Nullah on mules from a standpipe near what is now Flagstaff House, a distance of nearly three miles; a temporary trestle bridge over the Tons, erected some time later, shortened this distance slightly, but it still constituted a grave hardship to all ranks.

#### MEASURES TO COMPLETE THE ESTABLISHMENT

As mentioned earlier, after the division of the old Regiment into wings to form the new Battalion, both Battalions were ordered to recruit up to strength; recruiting parties were accordingly dispatched to Gorakhpore in the season of 1904-1905. Early in 1905, and prior to the move over to Birpur, both Battalions had been brought up to strength, the 1st by the enlistment of 464 recruits, and the 2nd by 448 and 46 transfers from other formations. Recruits of excellent stamp were obtained despite this heavy demand, and the Recruiting Officer's prediction of 1890 (see Appendix I) was thus proved to have been correct. To fill the officer establishment in the first instance, five officers of the old Regiment were temporarily transferred to the 2nd Battalion; Lieut.-Colonel C. Y. Crommelin, who had been transferred from the 1st Gurkhas in 1903, was appointed as the first Commandant of this Battalion. In March 1905 Lieut.-Colonel F. G. R. Ostrehan, who had been transferred from the Garhwal Rifles in 1900, completed his tenure of command of the 1st Battalion, and was succeeded by Major J. M. Stewart, on transfer from the 1/5th Gurkhas. During 1905 numerous British Officers were posted to both Battalions, both on transfer from other regiments and on first appointment, and the establishment was completed by the end of the year.

In April 1905 the Regiment was inspected by the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, who warmly commended the two Commandants on the expeditious manner in which the units had been recruited up to full strength.

#### PLAN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE LINES

The actual location of the lines was selected shortly after the move over to Birpur. The configuration of the ground on the plateau between the Tons Nullah on the east, and that dividing Birpur and Ganghora on the west, more or less automatically divides the area into two. The western portion, being a continuous ridge, was the more desirable, as the main road of necessity cuts through the eastern. The selection was therefore decided by the spin of a coin between the two Commandants; Lieut.-Colonel Crommelin won and selected the western for the 2nd Battalion.

After considerable discussion it was decided to build both sets of lines on the same general plan ; this was for the sixteen single men's barracks, each containing half a company, to be built in the form of a square enclosing a parade ground ; the blocks of married quarters, and those for the followers, were then designed, in accordance with the ground, to the south of the two main areas ; quarters for the Gurkha Officers were planned in two lines on the north and south faces of the squares, and behind their respective companies ; cook-houses to serve the latter were then fitted into the general scheme.

In the case of the 1st Battalion area the configuration of the ground necessitated not only a smaller parade ground with two barracks outside the actual square, but also the division of the married blocks into two portions above and below the main road ; the *bazar* had also to be located on the lower level.

The respective quarter-guards, together with the rifle *kots* and stores, were sited on the edges of the Tons and Range Nullahs in the extreme background of each set of lines. To the modern mind the motives prompting this decision are somewhat difficult to appreciate, but, short of a complete reconstruction of the lines, their removal to a more prominent and conspicuous site is not feasible.

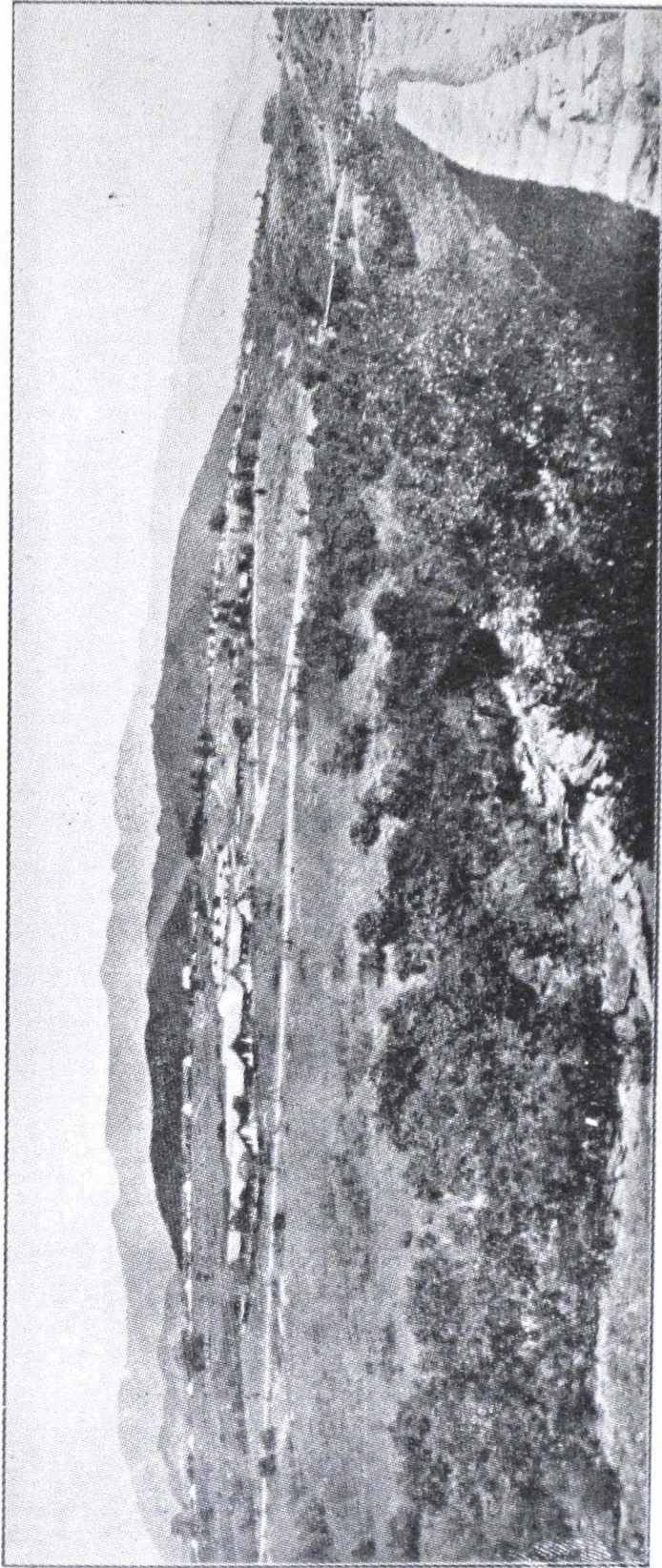
Thus to the present day the guard rooms, far from occupying pride of place in the barracks, bask in the obscurity of the furthest limit that the ground permits.

The general design of the barracks was for each to be built of mud brick walls, earthen floors, and red-tiled roofs, and a sum of Rs. 79,000 per Battalion was sanctioned. This was considered to be a most liberal grant, and certainly compared favourably with any previously accorded. As will be seen from the record of line construction described previously, it was not until 1844 that any hutting grant at all was sanctioned, and the Regiment of those days had to construct its lines, not only by its own labour, but at the expense of the men themselves. It is interesting to compare the grant of 1905 for each Battalion with that of eighteen years later, when the lines of the 2/2nd Gurkhas were rebuilt at a cost of Rs. 11½ Lakhs.

#### THE BUILDING AND IMPROVEMENT OF BIRPUR

Owing to various causes of delay orders for work to commence on line construction were not received until November 1905, and even then further delay was incurred in getting contractors to take up the work. As a result during this year little was done beyond digging and laying foundations of the bachelors' barracks, collection of wood and other building materials, and the making of sun-dried bricks ; all this work was carried out by the men themselves.





BIRPUR, FROM GARHI HILL.  
1906.



With short periods for brigade training the next two years were mainly devoted to line construction, and the two sets of lines were completed and occupied by the end of 1907. They were called "Bhurtapore" and "Sobraon" Barracks in commemoration of these two battle-honours earned when we were the 63rd Infantry.

In March 1906 the demolition and clearing of the native village was started to allow of the building of the Mess and officers' bungalows; several of the better village houses were occupied by officers in preference to tents. It is amusing now to note that the present soda-water factory was the first Officers' Mess, a fact which will bring home to the present generation the atrocious conditions under which Birpur was first occupied. A mud bungalow, now the Mess Office, was built and used as a mess not long afterwards until the new Mess house was finished, and several officers built small mud cottages in the vicinity. This description will give those who only know Birpur as it is to-day some idea of the labour and planning devoted by the Regiment to turn a waste bit of jungle and a native village into what is now possibly the most picturesque cantonment in India.

By the end of 1906 the two ranges had been completed, and after the occupation of the lines in 1907 efforts were concentrated on the improvement of the appearance of the plateau, and on the forming of some amenities. These included the construction of a polo ground on the waste site hitherto occupied by the tents of the two Battalions. The levelling involved great labour, entailing, as it did, the raising of one end and the cutting down of the other by several feet; the work was done entirely by regimental labour, and the result is a fitting testimonial to the successful efforts of the men; it earns the gratitude of succeeding generations, for Birpur unquestionably now has one of the best turf polo grounds to be found in the country.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF DEHRA DUN AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BRIGADE FORMATION

The remainder of Dehra was being expanded simultaneously with the development of Birpur. In the cantonment a brigade headquarter staff office was built on the site of the old station staff office and hospital, opposite the 2nd Gurkhas' Mess. This was followed by the raising of two mountain batteries, now the 11th and 12th, and the construction for them of lines at Ghangora, a mile west of Birpur, in 1907. Permanent lines were built for the Imperial Cadet Corps, and somewhat later a Forest Research Institute at Chand Bagh. In the Civil lines the building and opening of the "X"-Ray Institute of India on the Rajpur Road was a further development at that end of the station.

While this expansion of the cantonment undoubtedly changed com-

pletely the old isolation and freedom enjoyed by the 2nd Gurkhas, it really took the form of making several self-contained communities. These are separated by the general aspect of the terrain found in Dehra, by which the whole station is cut into sections by nullahs, and the congestion and discomfort of many other cantonments in India are thereby avoided. At the same time it involves considerable distances, a fact which now complicates normal peace routine duties.

The brigade formation constituted at this time was designated the Garhwal Brigade, and the brigade commander was made responsible for Dehra Dun, Landour, Chakrata, Roorkee, Almorah and Lansdowne. This was found to be too much for one commander, and in 1910 the area was split into two. The Dehra Dun Brigade then became responsible only for the former three stations, while the newly formed Garhwal Brigade at Lansdowne assumed command of the remainder. The first brigade commander at Dehra was Major-General Browne.

#### THE PERIOD 1907-1914

The seven years succeeding the completion of the building of Birpur up to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 may be regarded as a period of consolidation of the Regiment in its new form, consequent on the raising of the 2nd Battalion; this had rapidly been completed to establishment in both officers and men, but both Battalions were in reality practically new, formed as they were from a fifty per cent cadre of the old Corps, itself but ten years old in its new composition. Training of the large number of recruits had been carried out under conditions of extreme difficulty, and it is greatly to the credit of both Battalions that they were able to fulfil their rôle successfully in the annual brigade training camps. In December 1906 they had proceeded, together with the 2nd Gurkhas, to Agra, and had taken part in the concentration and ceremonies in connection with the visit of the Amir of Afghanistan. While there the 1st Battalion was selected as escort to H.E. The Viceroy, and received the unstinted commendation of His Excellency and of the Divisional and Army Commanders. This Battalion was also called upon to furnish the Naini Tal detachment during the summer of 1907.

In addition to the annual brigade training camps, hill training beyond Mussoorie was carried out by double companies in succession, and the practice of sending the new recruits each summer to Badraj during the two hottest months until the monsoon broke was successfully started.

During this period of consolidation the Regiment laid the foundations of discipline and esprit de corps, which were to stand it in such good stead not many years later in the holocaust of the Great War. Successive excel-

lent annual reports by all inspecting officers constantly urged the selection of one of the Battalions for active service should the opportunity occur ; but at that time it was little realized that either would be called on to be tried so highly, and so soon. As will be seen, they were not found wanting when the time came.

#### MOVE OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO CHITRAL, 1910

The year 1910 was to see the separation of the two Battalions for the first time, for in the month of September the 1st Battalion was ordered to do garrison duty in Chitral. Since the Chitral Relief Expedition of 1895, the garrison of this outpost had invariably been found by a Gurkha Battalion, and in view of the novel change of environment and excellent sporting facilities offered, it was a duty eagerly looked forward to by the battalion detailed.

The 1st Battalion arrived there on October 2nd and relieved the 1/3rd Gurkhas. Headquarters and three double companies were located in Kila Drosh Fort, with one double company in Chitral itself, twenty-six miles distant. During the winter the whole area is completely snow-bound, but in the spring and summer excellent facilities for hill training exist.

To complete the establishment; as the recruits were left in Dehra Dun, Lieutenant Gore, with five Gurkha Officers and fifty other ranks from the 2nd Battalion, were attached during the tour.

Two road reconnaissances towards the Russian frontier were carried out, one by Major Widdicombe and Lieutenant Walton, and one by Captain Pike ; the former proceeded to Yasin by the Tui Pass and returned by the Darkot and Baroghil Passes, all over 17,000 feet in height.

Good sport was enjoyed by all ranks and numerous fine trophies of markhor, ibex, and urial now adorn the Mess in Dehra, and pay tribute to the skill of various officers. Among these is a fine ibex measuring 48½ inches, then the record in Chitral, shot by Lieutenant Ostrehan, son of the former Commandant.

The Battalion was relieved by the 2/6th Gurkhas and returned to Dehra on the 26th October 1911. Since the Great War the Chitral tour lasts for two years, and is now no longer found by Gurkhas.

#### CORONATION OF H.M. KING GEORGE V, AND THE DELHI DURBAR, December 1911

During 1910, and prior to the departure of the 1st Battalion, occurred the death of H.M. King Edward VII and the accession of H.M. King George V. At the beginning of this year Lieut.-Colonel H. D. Watson had been transferred from the 2nd Gurkhas to command the 2nd Battalion in

succession to Lieut.-Colonel Crommelin. This officer had been an A.D.C. to His Majesty during his tour in India as Prince of Wales in 1905, and in the Birthday Honours of 1910 was appointed an Extra Equerry to The King. During 1911 he proceeded to England with the Indian Contingent for the Coronation. Accompanying him to represent the Regiment were Subedars Dirgu Mal and Prem Sing Bisht of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, respectively. In November 1911 the 2nd Battalion, with the remainder of the Dehra Dun Brigade, proceeded to Delhi for work under the Durbar Committee in preparing the extensive camps for the forthcoming Coronation Durbar. Their Majesties visited India during December to announce His accession to the Throne.

The Battalion was at full field service strength, to attain which the sister Battalion attached three Gurkha Officers and forty-eight other ranks. It took part in all the ceremonies connected with the Durbar, as did the regimental Band, which formed part of the massed bands. Lieut.-Colonel Watson acted as an Extra Equerry to Her Majesty, and was subsequently awarded the Victorian Order. Selected officers and men were also awarded the special Silver Medal struck to commemorate the occasion.

#### THE BANDS

The Band of the 9th Bengal Infantry had been retained after the conversion of the Regiment, though a number of the musicians had perforce been changed with the change of composition. On the raising of the 2nd Battalion it was decided to augment the old single-battalion band into a regimental one, composed of men of both Battalions. A number of instruments had also been received from the 11th Coorgs, in whose place the 2nd Battalion had been raised. Though normally playing as a regimental band under a European bandmaster, it was organized into two separate component parts to enable them to play with their own units on the march, etc. The first bandmaster in Lansdowne days had been Mr. Humphreys, late band-sergeant of the York and Lancaster Regiment, who retired and died in Dehra some years later. He was succeeded by Herr Ludwig, an Austrian, an outstanding musician, who remained with the Band until 1915. He was then unnecessarily interned as a foreign subject during the Great War, and thereafter did not rejoin. Under his supervision the standard of the Band rose to an exceptionally high level, and earned a reputation to be justly proud of. Many of the musicians, though wearing our full dress uniform with the Kilmarnock cap, were not Gurkhas at all, and in fact a number of Indian Christians were included. The older generation will recall an amusing episode in regard to this latter class which caused some discomfiture to two distinguished officers of the Gurkha Brigade.

Bruce and Lucas, both of the 5th Gurkhas, and generally acknowledged as authorities on Gurkhas as a whole, were dining in our Mess one night when the conversation turned on the appearance and characteristics of the Khas tribe, of which less was known then than now. The two 5th Officers had stated their opinion at some length, and to prove their point had, with their audience, wandered out on to the lawn to look at the Band. Bruce pointed out a man who he said formed a splendid example of what he maintained was typical of the Khas, and then asked the man his name; he replied, "Charles Bellingham."

On conversion to Gurkhas the Regiment had started a Pipe Band in addition to the Brass Band, about 1895. A distinctive full dress had been evolved, copying in essentials the Highland piper's dress, without in any way infringing on clan or regimental customs, and adapted to conform to the regimental uniform. It consisted of a Highland doublet in green cloth, with green serge trousers and puttees, a green cloth plaid fastened with the regimental badge brooch, black leather crossbelt, and Kilmarnock cap. Pipes were ordered from Scotland, mounted with dark green silk ribbons and without banners. The pipers and the drummers were sent for training to Scotch, or Highland, battalions, and soon attained a high standard of proficiency. The 2nd Battalion started a similar Pipe Band in 1910. Though essentially Battalion Bands, they were trained to play together as a regimental one, and did so frequently for "Retreat," At-homes, and similar functions. Although the Brass Band was disbanded in 1932, the two Pipe Bands still remain and, though full dress for the Regiment is now abolished, both have been re-equipped in the former pattern described herewith. They play as a regimental combination when the Battalions are together, or with their respective Battalions when separated.

#### THE SIMLA GUARD, 1912

During the summer of 1912 the 2nd Battalion was selected to furnish the Simla Guard. No. 3 Double Company was detailed for this duty, supplemented by non-commissioned officers and men of other companies. The detachment, under command of Major C. R. Bradshaw, with two Gurkha Officers, Subedar-Major Bishan Sing and Subedar Jaiban Karki, and one hundred and eighty-eight other ranks, proceeded to Simla on March 24th and returned to Dehra on November 4th. The annual detachment is located in barracks near Annandale, and furnishes permanent guards on Viceregal Lodge and Snowdon, besides guards-of-honour, escorts, etc., when necessary.

On the return of the detachment to Dehra the following letter was addressed to the Commandant by the Military Secretary to H.E. The Viceroy :—



“ SIR,—

“ I am desired by His Excellency the Viceroy to address you in regard to the services of the detachment of your Regiment, which has supplied his guard during the summer of 1912. I am to say that His Excellency has keenly appreciated the work of the above Guard, which, under the orders of its Commanding Officer, Major C. R. Bradshaw, has been carried out with smartness, efficiency, and zeal. His Excellency while congratulating you on commanding a Battalion that can furnish such a detachment, under such an officer, is also able to congratulate himself on the fact that he will see more of the 9th Gurkhas at Delhi this winter.”

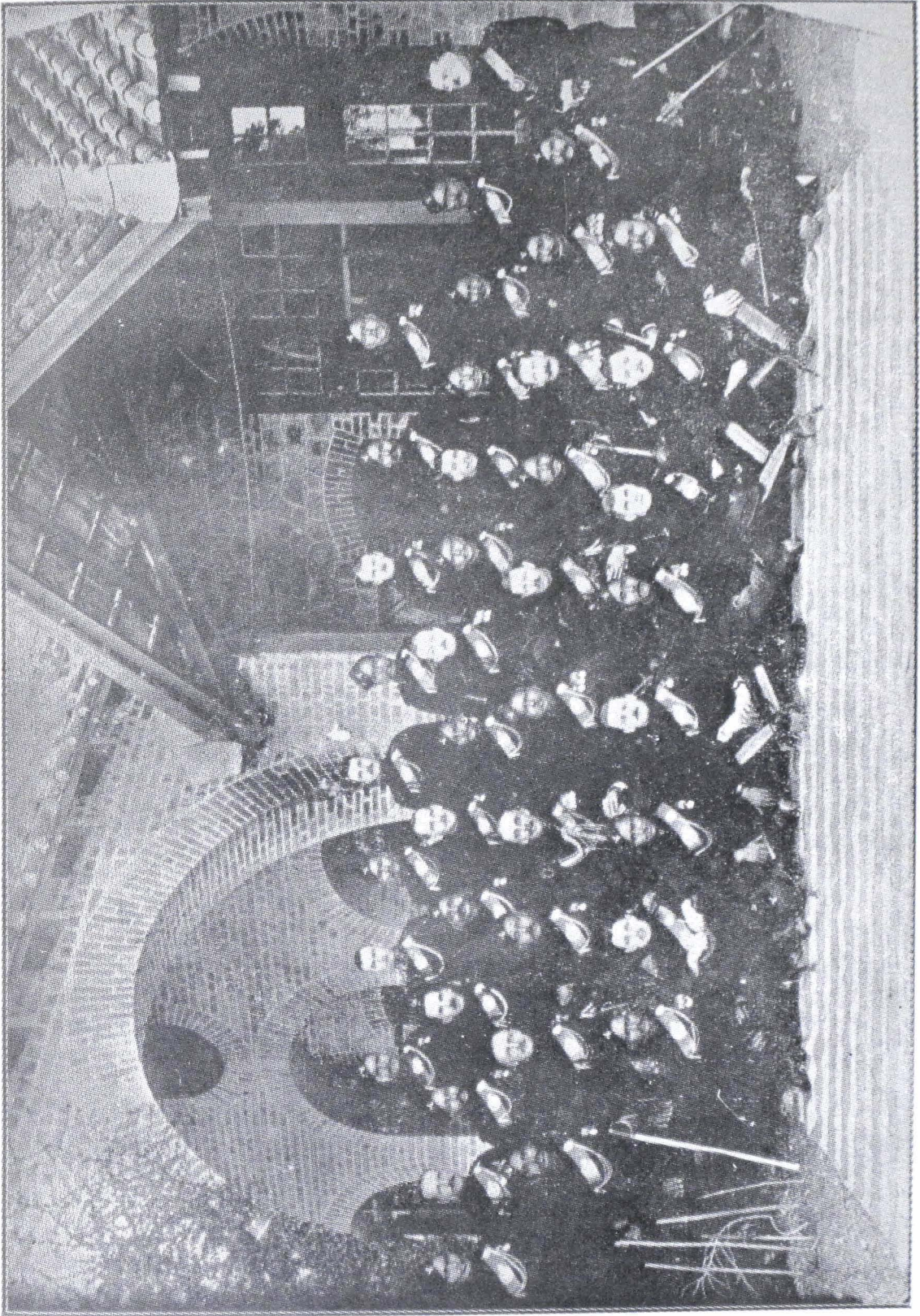
A semi-official letter couched in similar terms was addressed to the Commandant by the Military Secretary to H.E. The Commander-in-Chief.

While such letters may be considered as more or less normal, following the satisfactory performance of duties of this nature, it is particularly praiseworthy to note that such commendation was earned by the 2nd Battalion within only seven years of being raised.

#### MOVE OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO DELHI FOR GARRISON AND VICEREGAL GUARD DUTIES

The reference to The Viceroy seeing more of the Regiment during the winter of 1912 was given effect to in an order detailing the 1st Battalion for garrison duty at Delhi from December 1912. One of the changes announced at the Durbar the previous year had been to transfer the winter residence of the Viceroy and Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi, and the winter of 1912 was to see the inauguration of the latter as the Capital City. Pending the building of the new Imperial Delhi, a project which on account of the Great War was to take nearly twenty years to complete, a temporary Viceregal residence and Government Secretariat were constructed at the Kingsway end of Old Delhi beyond the Ridge. The majority of the Government Officials had of necessity to live in tents in the absence of other accommodation; these were pitched on the site of the Durbar camps. The then garrison of Delhi consisted only of a British Royal Artillery detachment and one Indian Infantry Battalion, which formed the garrison of the Fort several miles away, and was quite inadequate to perform the official guard duties. For this latter purpose, therefore, the 3rd Bn., 60th Rifles, from Meerut, and the 1st Battalion were brought to Kingsway, and located in a comfortable standing camp opposite the Durbar polo grounds. The 1st Battalion arrived in Delhi by train on the 17th December.





BRITISH AND GURKHA OFFICERS, THE 9th GURKHA RIFLES.





STATE ENTRY AND OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE CAPITAL  
BOMBING OF THE VICEROY

On the 23rd, the Battalion, together with the 60th Rifles, lined a portion of the route to be traversed by the State Elephant procession, by which the Viceroy was to proceed to the Fort to hold a Durbar. At this, the official transfer and inauguration of Delhi as the new Capital were to be announced. The Battalion also detailed a guard-of-honour of three Gurkha Officers and one hundred other ranks, with the Regimental Band at the main station. From this point the Viceregal party was to transfer from motor-cars to the elephants for the State Procession. The portion of the route lined by the Battalion was from the end of the Chandni Chouk, via the Ahmed Puri Surat road and Dufferin Bridge, to the Mori Gate. H.E. The Viceroy, after inspecting the guards-of-honour, mounted the State Elephant and the procession of some fifteen elephants, escorted by a full Viceregal escort of cavalry and artillery, moved off slowly through the Queen's Gardens to the Chandni Chouk, *en route* to the Fort. Shortly after entering the Chandni Chouk, and at a point about four hundred yards from the City entrance to the Gardens, a bomb was thrown which severely wounded the Viceroy in the neck and left shoulder. Lady Hardinge, who was sitting alongside him in the State howdah, was miraculously uninjured, but of the two State servants sitting behind them, one was killed and the other severely injured. The Viceroy was with difficulty removed from the howdah into a motor-car, and together with Lady Hardinge was driven back to Viceregal Lodge.

Some of the Battalion formed up at the western end of the Chandni Chouk saw the smoke and heard the explosion of the bomb. Shortly afterwards an order was received to send a company to surround the group of houses from which the bomb was thought to have been thrown; also for the rest of the Battalion to close, search the Queen's Gardens, hold the main station, and block certain thoroughfares. While this prevented the dense crowd from panicking and getting out of order, the search was fruitless. In the meantime the procession continued to the Naubat Khana in the Fort, where the Durbar was held under the presidentship of Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, the Senior Member of Council, in the absence of the Viceroy. The procession then returned by a slightly altered route to the Mori Gate. Such of the Battalion as was available lined a portion of the route.

Thus ended in tragedy, but fortunately without fatal results, the official inauguration of Delhi as the new Capital. The announcement of the decision to effect the transfer from Calcutta had aroused considerable controversy, and in view of the long and tragic history of Delhi, the super-

stitious may well infer a sinister omen from the events above recorded, and possibly predict an evil future for the new Capital City. Time alone can answer this.

This was the last occasion on which a State procession on elephants was held in British India, and in view of the results will probably remain so. Despite the horrifying incident, it formed an epic sight; the magnificently caparisoned elephants, slowly gliding along, vied with the full dress uniforms of the staff and escort to form a spectacle reminiscent of the most fantastic episodes of *The Arabian Nights*.

The Battalion remained in Delhi until March 29th, 1913, when it returned to Dehra Dun. It was twice visited informally and unofficially in camp by both the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who had tea in the Mess and to whom the Gurkha Officers were introduced; H.E. The Viceroy also distributed the prizes at a Battalion sports meeting. After return to Dehra letters were received by the Commandant, similar in substance to those quoted concerning the Simla Guard of the 2nd Battalion, the previous summer.

#### DETACHMENT WITH PAMIR TRIANGULATION SURVEY PARTY, 1913

Between April and October 1913, thanks mainly to the friendship of Lieutenant Blandy with the leader of the party, that officer, together with four non-commissioned officers and seven men of the 2nd Battalion, chiefly signallers, was allowed to proceed to the Pamirs with the Survey of India Triangulation party. Splendid opportunities for sport were also enjoyed, as two excellent *ovis poli* heads in the Mess testify. For the men a visit to this remote part of the world was an experience quite unique, and most unlikely ever to be repeated under official auspices.

#### APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL SIR BEAUCHAMP DUFF AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN INDIA, AND HIS VISIT TO DEHRA DUN

The 8th of March 1914 is distinguished for the Regiment by the appointment of the Colonel, General Sir Beauchamp Duff, G.C.B., K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., C.I.E., as Commander-in-Chief in India. On April 4th he visited Dehra Dun and inspected the Brigade on a parade at which both Battalions of the Regiment were present; the same afternoon he attended the regimental sports on the polo ground and distributed the prizes, and in the evening dined in the Mess as a member of the Regiment; this was the first occasion he had been able to do so since his appointment to the colonelcy of the 9th Gurkha Rifles, in 1904. In the course of the evening he proffered the suggestion, and accorded his consent, to the pipers of the Regiment adopting the Duff Clan tartan as a plaid in full dress uniform,

and as ribbons for the instruments ; he also generously subscribed Rs. 1,200 for this purpose. During the winter of 1914-1915, while on garrison duty at Delhi, the 2nd Battalion adopted this change of dress, which was also worn during the following winter in the course of a similar duty. Thereafter, owing to mobilization for active service, and the subsequent abandonment of full dress after the War, the wearing of the Duff tartan was discontinued. Owing to mobilization in August 1914 the 1st Battalion was unable to comply with their Colonel's wishes.

For an old Glenalmond School dinner held at Snowdon, one evening in May 1914, Sir Beauchamp Duff requested the presence of the regimental pipers, an honour which was greatly appreciated by the men.

#### TRANSFER OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO THE FIELD ARMY, May 1914

During May 1914, the 1st Battalion in normal relief came into the Field Army organization of the Dehra Dun Brigade, 7th Meerut Division, and took over mobilization orders and equipment from the 1/2nd Gurkhas, and immediately completed its own mobilization scheme. Little did anyone think that, within three months, this was to be put into operation, and that this Battalion was at last to be given the opportunity of proving itself on active service, a chance which had been yearned for so many years.

## CHAPTER IV

1914

### THE GREAT WAR. MOBILIZATION. VOYAGE OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO FRANCE AND ARRIVAL AT THE FRONT

Outbreak of War. Mobilization of the 1st Battalion. Move to Bombay. The Dehra Dun Brigade. Embarkation and Voyage to Marseilles. In camp at Marseilles and Orleans. Journey to the Forward Area. Arrival at Merville.

#### OUTBREAK OF WAR. ORGANIZATION

**T**HE war organization of the Dehra Dun Brigade in 1914 comprised the British Infantry Battalion at Chakrata, both Battalions of the Regiment, and the 2/2nd Gurkhas. The Brigade was commanded by Brigadier-General Johnson, with Major Walker, Royal Fusiliers, as brigade-major. Captain Freeland, 35th Sikhs, joined the Brigade as staff captain on mobilization. The Serajevo murder occurred on June 28th, 1914, and thereafter rumours of a European war became current.

Although it was known that, in the event of Great Britain becoming involved, two divisions from India had been earmarked to proceed overseas, few people, if any, had any real hope that our Brigade would be one of the fortunate ones to be selected, nor that these two divisions would go to Europe.

#### MOBILIZATION OF THE 1ST BATTALION

The order to mobilize the 1st Battalion was received on August 9th, 1914, and caused the greatest excitement and joy among all ranks, though this was somewhat tempered by the fact that the 2nd Battalion had not received similar orders. It was later learned that only one Battalion of each linked pair was to mobilize, the other becoming a draft-finding unit. In view of the very heavy casualties and the paucity of reserves this policy received ample justification as the War progressed.

It was advantageous that the outbreak of war coincided with a visit of H.E. the Viceroy to Dehra, for by the courtesy of his staff the Mess was provided with copies of the latest news telegrams as they arrived.

Both Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Widdicombe and the second-in-command,

Major J. McK. T. Hogg, were on leave in England when mobilization was ordered, and Major B. H. Bignell was in temporary command. On August 12th this officer was ordered to report to Bombay to proceed, as was learned later, with the advanced party of the Indian Corps. Until arrival at Port Said, where Colonel Widdicombe rejoined, the Battalion was commanded by Captain A. C. B. Mackinnon.

Owing to the formation of a Depot, and being the furlough season, the Battalion was much below war establishment, and the 2nd Battalion was ordered to furnish a draft of 2 British Officers, Lieutenants R. G. H. Murray and D. Baillie, 5 Gurkha Officers and 188 Gurkha other ranks; this included a first reinforcement of 1 Gurkha Officer and 70 Gurkha other ranks. The Depot, left in Dehra, was commanded by Captain B. A. R. Blewitt, with 2nd Lieutenant I. J. Hughes, 2 Gurkha Officers, the drill and clerical staffs, some 50 to 60 men, either medical unfits or new recruits, and part of the Band.

#### MOVE TO BOMBAY AND EMBARKATION

The Battalion reported ready to move on August 20th and left Dehra, strength 9 British Officers, 17 Gurkha Officers, 804 Gurkha other ranks and 42 followers, on August 31st. It arrived at Bombay on September 4th, and together with the 2/2nd Gurkhas was bivouacked in some extensive goods sheds near the docks to await embarkation. It was now learnt that the Indian Corps was to consist of the Lahore and Meerut Divisions under the command of General Sir James Willcocks, together with a Cavalry Division composed of the Ambala, Meerut, and Secunderabad Brigades. The Lahore Division had already sailed, and our embarkation only awaited the concentration of the troops in Bombay and the arrival of a sufficient number of transports. The Dehra Dun Brigade consisted of the 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders, our 1st Battalion, 2/2nd Gurkhas and the 6th Jat Light Infantry. The men were most gratified at being brigaded with a Highland battalion, and the traditional Highland-Gurkha friendship was both maintained and increased during the War.

The Battalion remained in Bombay for ten days pending embarkation and was bivouacked alongside the docks. The port presented a remarkable sight, being packed with ships of every size and description which were being converted into transports in an almost incredibly short time, and every inch of spare space in the vicinity of the docks was crowded with troops and animals whose numbers were daily increased by new arrivals from all over India. Being the monsoon season the weather was very hot and wet, and sites for bivouacs presented a difficult problem. By the courtesy of the Taj Mahal Hotel all British Officers of the Division were

accommodated there free for four days, and thereafter at a reduced tariff.

For the rank and file Bombay was a source of the greatest amusement, and it is strange to recall that at that time only two or three men in the whole Battalion had ever seen the sea before. Electric trams, dodging the traffic, and the Zoo, were joyful novelties, as was bathing in Back Bay, where they discovered to their astonishment that the sea was salt; this strange fact was found out by one of the first men to enter the sea, who, tasting the water, came out and ran down a hundred yards, thinking that he had entered a dirty patch.

The arrival of the transport "Dongola" was of interest, as she brought back over one thousand officers of various ranks who had been on leave in England when War broke out. All under the rank of field officer were accommodated on the troop decks, with their attendant discomforts in the monsoon, and had to carry out troop routine and baggage fatigues. Of the Regiment, Colonel G. T. Widdicombe, Major J. McK. T. Hogg, and Captain G. D. Pike, together with other officers of the Meerut Division, had been disembarked at Port Said to await our arrival, while Lieutenant A. F. Spreckley, of the 2nd Battalion, came on to Bombay.

The Battalion embarked on September 16th and was split into two wings. H.Q., Nos. 2 and 4 Double Companies with the 2/2nd Gurkhas were accommodated in S.S. "Angora," while Nos. 1 and 3 under Captain H. Mullaly were with the 6th Jats in S.S. "Arancola"; both these vessels belonged to the British India Line and were normally employed on the Calcutta-Rangoon mail service. The saloon accommodation was excellent, but, as they were only fitted normally to carry five hundred coolies, the troop decks were uncomfortably crowded with twelve hundred men and one hundred animals on board. Bathing and cooking arrangements were particularly difficult, and the greatest credit is due to all for the way in which they settled down to the strange conditions; especially worthy of praise was the machine-gun section. Most of the men were seasick at least once daily in the course of stables, and in the unpleasant duty of cleaning out the mule standings.

#### THE VOYAGE TO MARSEILLES

The two ships remained in the stream for four days while the convoy concentrated, and bad weather conditions were experienced, with the result that the majority of the men were sick. The flotilla of some forty ships, escorted by H.M.S. "Swiftsure" and "Fox" and R.I.M.S. "Dufferin," sailed at 2 p.m. on September 20th and presented a remarkable sight leaving Bombay harbour. Ten more ships bringing the Garhwal Brigade from



Karachi joined the convoy the second day out. The speed was that of the slowest ship, some nine knots, and this slow pace strained many vessels severely, with the result that breakdowns, chiefly of steering gear, were frequent, and in the unaccustomed formation collisions were avoided with difficulty.

The men displayed the liveliest interest in the working of the ship, and many naïve and searching questions as to the mysteries of navigation and marine engineering were asked. They were most intrigued as to how the ship found its way at sea, and much credit is due to a shrewd British Officer who took some G.O.'s to the stern and, showing them the wake, said that was the ship's "rasta" that they were on. Parties were also taken to the stokehold and stoked for short periods to their great amusement.

Aden was passed on September 27th, Suez reached on October 2nd, and Port Said the next night. The first signs of war were seen here; there being troops along the Canal and several British and French warships at Port Said.

Colonel Widdicombe rejoined and assumed command at this place.

#### ARRIVAL AND CAMP AT MARSEILLES

The convoy sailed on October 6th, now escorted by an aged French battleship, the "Jaurré Guiberie." After some rough weather during the last two days it reached Marseilles at dawn on October 12th, the "Angora" and "Arancola" being the first two vessels to arrive. The 1st Battalion disembarked and formed up in two large hangars on the quay. The companies were then completely re-armed with H.V. rifles, M.G. barrels, and Mark VII ammunition; the whole operation took less than two hours, and contrasted strangely with peace-time procedure in India. Transport was obtained from local French sources, and the Battalion marched at 2.30 p.m. to camp La Valentine. The greater part of the march was through the town, and the troops were greeted with the most intense enthusiasm and curiosity by the local people, many of whom thrust flowers and trinkets into their hands as they passed. The Mongolian appearance of Gurkhas with their felt hats was a source of bewilderment to the crowd, who summed them up as either Boers or Japanese. As a result the followers received the warmest greeting, since they could be recognized as Indians by their puggris.

The whole of the Meerut Division was encamped at La Valentine, some four miles beyond the suburbs of the town, and the camp was situated in some low lying fields. As it rained continuously during the whole five days we were there the site rapidly became a quagmire and was most trying for everyone.

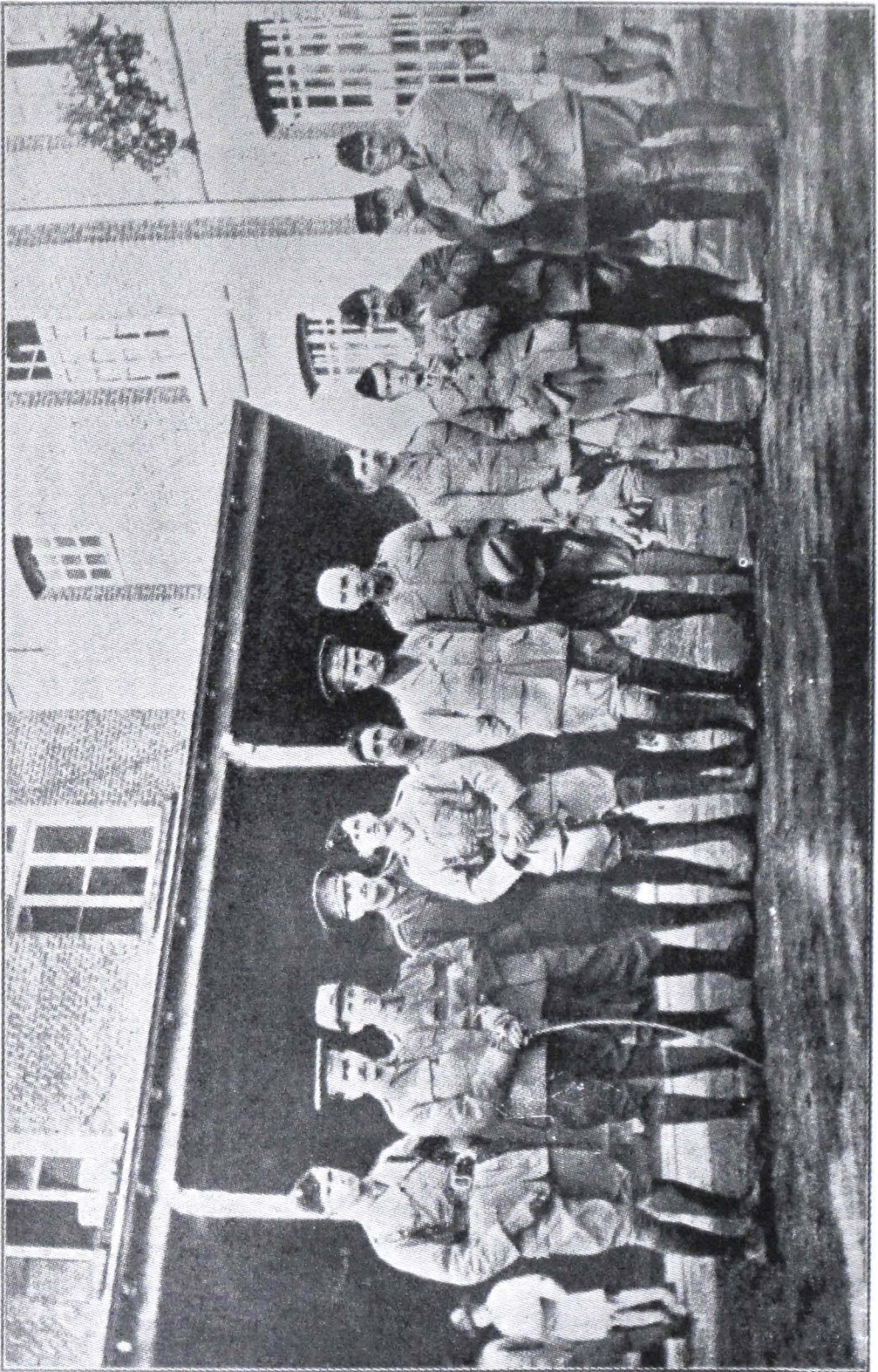
Three interpreters, 2nd Lieutenant Doll and Messrs. Robiony and Penon, joined at this camp. M. Robiony was either with the Battalion or Dehra Dun Brigade H.Q. as interpreter throughout our stay in France, and proved himself invaluable, both as a comrade and a helpmeet.

Marseilles was formed into the base for all Indian troops in France, while Orleans was the advanced base and equipping station. The Battalion, less the first reinforcements and Base Depot personnel, left Marseilles on the 17th October, and owing to congestion on the main Paris line proceeded by a roundabout route via Narbonne and Toulouse, arriving at Orleans on the 20th. Passing through the wine country the men were literally overloaded with gifts of wine and grapes by the inhabitants, and were most impressed throughout by European methods of agriculture.

#### CAMP AT ORLEANS AND JOURNEY TO THE FORWARD AREA

The Division was encamped at Orleans for six days, during which time warm clothing and transport were issued and all tentage stored. The warm clothing consisted of thick underclothing, Balaclava caps, and mittens only, which entailed the men being clothed in their thin khaki drill tunics and shorts and British-warm coats until December. A comical result was the purchase in Orleans by the interpreters of three thousand safety-pins to enable the men to wear long drawers with shorts. This non-issue of serge uniform was to cause the greatest hardship to the Indian troops, straight from the hot weather and rains in India, for the first two months in the trenches. First-line transport presented a difficult problem. All animals and vehicles had been drawn from civilian sources in England, and much improvisation had to be resorted to. Also, no drivers had been provided, and Indian units were told to find these from among their followers. The results to start with were almost farcical, as the majority of the animals were untrained, while the followers had not the remotest knowledge either of driving or of horse management. Eight of the regimental bhisties attempted in vain to drive either a butcher's cart pony, or a pair of shire horses straight from the plough, with results comical, and at times almost tragical. One of these was the occasion on which the battalion's cook-cart, driven at a wild gallop through the camp, wrecked a divisional staff officer's tent and drew the most potent abuse on the transport officer's head. The introduction of the driver "Bhisty Lal Bahadur," who was responsible for the sacrilege, did something to pacify the justly incensed staff officer. (Major Isacke, afterwards commanding at Dehra Dun.)

An equally farcical incident was a divisional route march designed to test out this transport. For some time prior to the starting hour, and





for a considerable time after, the camp presented a scene reminiscent of a stampeding circus ; in every direction could be seen single, or pair, horsed carts of every size and description, with the horses either jibbing and backing in a complete refusal to start, or else galloping madly through and over the tents after being flogged into a frenzy to make them start at all. In either case the bhisti " Jehu," perched aloft and completely paralysed with fear, could exercise no form of control whatever. At a rough estimate, approximately, fifteen per cent of the transport accompanied its unit on that march.

The above account of the regimental first-line transport and warm clothing has been stressed to point out the conditions under which the Battalion entered the War. On these we were to be dependent when we went into action for the first time, and, for all we knew, for weeks or months of mobile warfare. Had this been the case we should undoubtedly have lost the whole of our first-line transport, and with it the majority of our equipment. Actually serge clothing was issued in December and thereafter replaced regularly, and the bhisties were replaced by selected men who underwent a short course of driving and animal management with the train.

At 4 p.m. on October 26th the Battalion entrained and left for an unknown destination at the front ; after passing Abbeville, Etaples, Calais, and Hazebrouck, it detrained at Merville at 2.30 a.m. on October 28th and was billeted in a large school, Institut d'Espérance, about two miles from the station.

Thus just two and a half months after the Battalion had mobilized at Dehra Dun it arrived in the forward area of operations in France, and detrained within ten miles of the front line. It remained in billets in Merville during October 28th, being seen there by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John French, who rode past the school on his way to meet the Indian Corps Commander, and sent for, and had a short conversation with the Commanding Officer. At midnight 28/29th October orders were received to march to Vieille Chapelle, some four miles from the front line, the following morning, at which place the Battalion arrived at 2 p.m. ; that night it took over a portion of the line held by the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Division, 2nd Corps, British Expeditionary Force.



## CHAPTER V

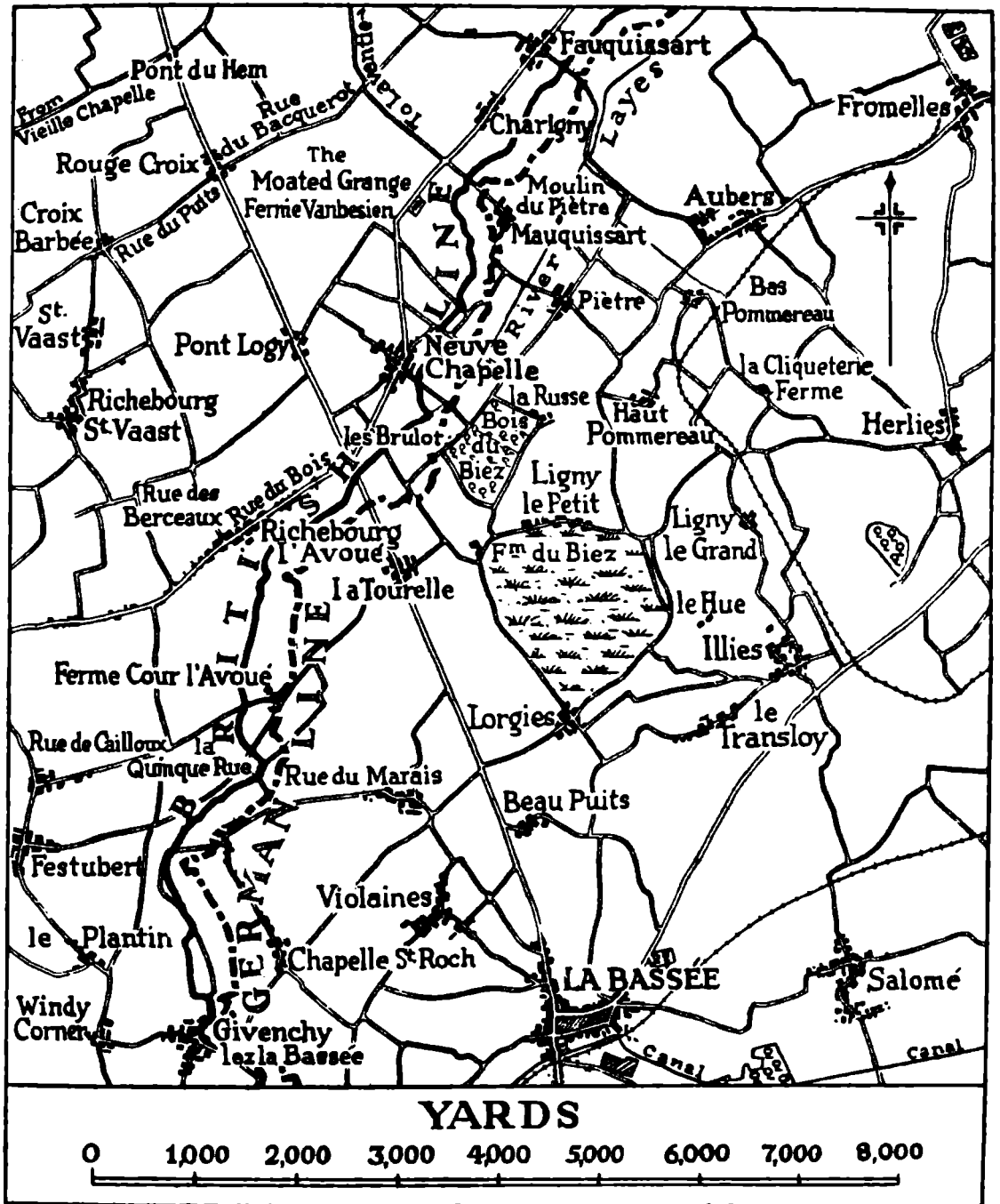
### FRANCE. THE WINTER OF 1914-1915

Situation at the Front on arrival. Relief of the Lincolnshire Regiment and Royal Fusiliers by the Battalion. The First Trenches. Relief and Billets. In support of the Garhwal Brigade, 13th November. Escort at Funeral of Lord Roberts. Second Trenches, Richebourg l'Avoué. Third Trenches, Festubert. Support and Relief of the 2nd Gurkhas. Relief and Rest Billets. Move to Forward Area again. Fifth and Sixth Trenches.

#### SITUATION ON ARRIVAL AT FRONT

**I**N order properly to appreciate the conditions under which the Battalion first took over the line in France it is necessary briefly to survey the operations which led up to the situation as we found it. After the Battle of The Aisne the British Expeditionary Force had been moved to the Allied left flank in order to shorten their lines-of-communication and in the hopes of outflanking the Germans in the North. The 1st Corps moved to Ypres in support of the 7th Division which had been operating towards Antwerp, and the 2nd Corps detrained at Hazebrouck early in October with the object of advancing on Lille. The enemy had conceived the same plan of outflanking us, with the result that resistance to the advance of the 2nd Corps gradually increased and the situation stabilized, while further north it developed into the First Battle of Ypres. The 3rd and portions of the 5th Divisions, whom the Meerut Division relieved, had been held up roughly on the line Violaines-Fromelles, and had in places been driven back from points of tactical importance, e.g., the Aubers Ridge, which dominated the country in that sector. The 9th Brigade, whom the Dehra Dun Brigade relieved, had taken the village of Neuve Chapelle on October 15th, but had been driven out on the 26th, and had occupied a position roughly astride the Estaires-La Bassée road, approximately six hundred yards west and north of the village. An attack by the 47th Sikhs and No. 20 Company, 1st Sappers and Miners on the afternoon of October 28th temporarily regained the village, only to be lost again.

The country was flat and open, interspersed with small copses and villages, and was very low-lying and devoid of cover. The trenches occupied by our troops were either shallow ditches temporarily converted into fire trenches, or pits dug by individuals along hedgerows as they silted, and



FRANCE.  
 1914-1915.

in no way intended to be permanent ; communication trenches were non-existent, nor was there any wire. The enemy occupied a similar position some six hundred yards distant. It was in fact the embryo of the trench system and warfare which definitely set in at the conclusion of the First Battle of Ypres, and was roughly the position held in this sector until April 1918.

#### OCCUPATION OF THE FIRST TRENCHES, 29th October-13th November

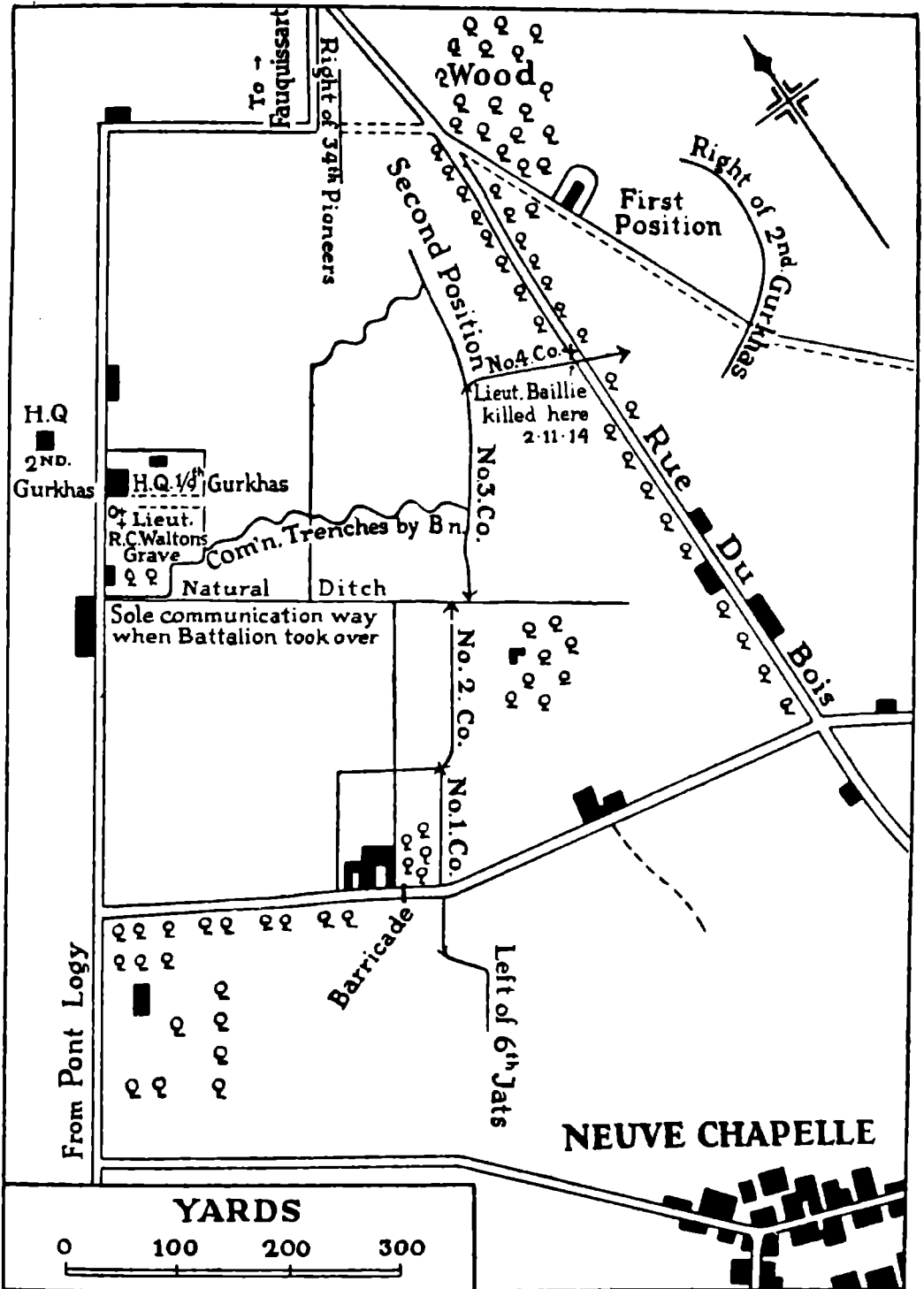
The Battalion had arrived at Vieille Chapelle during the afternoon of October 29th, having marched from Merville. That night it relieved a portion of the 9th Infantry Brigade near Pont Logy opposite Neuve Chapelle, actually taking over from the Lincolnshire Regiment and 4th Bn. Royal Fusiliers. The front occupied was about five hundred yards in length, linking up with the 6th Jats on the right and 2nd Gurkhas on the left. Two heavy bursts of rifle and shell fire occurred during the approach to the line, and from these the Battalion received its first casualties, two men and one mule being wounded. Heavy firing of this description, quite unaimed and altogether valueless, frequently occurred at this period of the War and was doubtless due to the novel conditions during the transition stage between mobile and trench warfare.

The Battalion had all four double companies in the line, No. 1 having both companies up, and the others one company up and one in support. Two platoons of No. 3 Double Company formed the Battalion reserve. At this time British Officers were distributed as follows in the Battalion :—

H.Q. O.C.	Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Widdicombe.
Adjt.	Capt. J. R. L. Heyland.
Q.M.	Lieut. R. G. H. Murray. (Also No. 4 Double Company.)
M.G.O.	Lieut. R. C. Walton.
Sig. Offr.	Lieut. D. Baillie. (Also No. 3 Double Company.)
M.O.	Lieut.-Colonel J. T. Daly, I.M.S.
No. 1 Double Company.	Capt. G. D. Pike. Lieut. F. S. Poynder. (Also Transport Officer.)
No. 2 Double Company.	Major B. H. Bignell. Capt. H. Mullaly.
No. 3 Double Company.	Major J. McK. T. Hogg. Lieut. T. N. C. Kemp.
No. 4 Double Company.	Capt. A. C. B. Mackinnon.

Major Bignell and Lieutenant Kemp were temporarily absent on Railway Transport duties.





THE FIRST TRENCHES, NEAR NEUVE CHAPELLE.

29th October-13th November, 1914.

An amusing incident happened on the road between Pont Logy and the line when a British Officer of the Royal Scots Fusiliers mistook M. Penon, one of the interpreters, for a spy. This was not altogether surprising, as that gentleman had attempted to disguise himself as a Gurkha. His kit was a brown uniform of French cut, yellow field boots, and a Gurkha slouch hat. As he was also fifty inches around the waist, wore pincenez, and spoke English with a strong foreign accent, his disguise was not convincing. Challenged when marching at the head of the Battalion in the dark he first spoke French and then English, and was promptly tackled as a spy by the officer. A scuffle involving Major Hogg and several men ensued, and tragedy was only avoided by a voice in an unmistakably Scotch accent asking what was being done to his officer. Explanations and apologies ensued and the incident ended. It is significant that M. Penon thereafter resumed his blue uniform and képi.

Fortunately for the Battalion the next morning was quiet and opportunity was afforded to inspect both its own and the German positions. That afternoon, however, shelling started, particularly on No. 4 Double Company's position on the left, and such shelling continued with varying degrees of intensity throughout the time the Battalion was in this portion of the line; this caused severe casualties owing to the shallowness and inadequacy of the trenches. Steps were at once taken to improve these and to make communication trenches also, but little could be done except at night, and as stated there was no wire.

#### ATTACK ON 2ND GURKHAS

On November 2nd at 8 a.m. news was received that the left of the 2nd Gurkhas had been heavily bombarded with large trench mortars which had forced them to evacuate a portion of their trenches. The situation becoming worse, supports were asked for, and at 11 a.m. a counter-attack, composed of about one hundred and fifty of the 2nd Gurkhas, one squadron each of the 7th Dragoon Guards and Poona Horse, and one double company 6th Jats, the whole under Colonel Norie, 2nd Gurkhas, was launched, but failed to regain the trenches and suffered heavy casualties. Prior to this counter-attack the Battalion reserve consisting of "F" Company was sent forward under Lieutenants Baillie and Kemp to support the left of No. 4 Double Company which was in danger of being turned. This party came under heavy shrapnel and machine-gun fire and Lieutenant Baillie, leading, and two men were killed. A second counter-attack during the afternoon was also unsuccessful. To deal with the gap in the line thus formed, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and a composite regiment, formed of portions of the 34th Pioneers, 58th Rifles and 9th Bhopal Infantry, was

brought up in the evening and dug in to the left rear of No. 4 Double Company. As the left of this company's former position was completely in the air, the trench was filled in and the majority of the company was withdrawn to reserve. Lieutenant Murray, with Subedar Haridhoj Khattri, and " F " Company covered this reconstruction of the line from the small wood near by, and this Gurkha Officer's gallant conduct on this occasion was afterwards rewarded with the I.D.S.M., and later with the Military Cross. During the day the 2nd Gurkhas lost no less than seven British Officers killed, all of them personal friends of the Regiment, and their deaths were most keenly felt by all our officers.

On November 5th, after a severe bombardment of the line, a half-hearted attack on the trenches held by Nos. 2 and 3 Double Companies was made. The attack was easily repulsed, though one German was killed within ten yards of No. 3 Double Company's trench. On the right, however, they dug in appreciably nearer Nos. 1 and 2 Double Companies, occupying a lateral ditch some three hundred yards distant.

On November 7th the Battalion suffered a great loss by the death of Lieutenant R. C. Walton (" Watty "), who was killed while superintending the fire of the M.G. section.

During this week, Battalion H.Q. was constantly shelled and had to move first into a disused midden alongside the farmhouse it first occupied, and then, on the latter being burnt down through shell fire, into another farm midden further down the Rue Tilleloy, where comparative safety was eventually achieved. The Battalion was relieved by a battalion of the Suffolk Regiment of the newly formed 8th Division on the night November 12/13th.

#### IN SUPPORT OF THE GARHWAL BRIGADE, 13th November

On the following night the Battalion marched to the Richebourg area in support of the Garhwal Brigade which was making a raid that night with the 2/3rd Gurkhas and part of the 1/39th Garhwalis ; the raid failed with severe casualties. No. 1 Double Company was sent up to the forward trenches in support, and succeeded in recovering several wounded men of the 2/3rd lying out in the open under fire. In recognition of cool gallantry on this occasion L/Naik Jaman Sing Khattri received the I.O.M., 2nd Class, and Rfn. Ranbahadur Sahi and Gajbir Bisht the I.D.S.M. ; these were the first decorations received by the Battalion in France.

#### DEATH OF F.-M. LORD ROBERTS

On the 16th November the Battalion had the honour of forming part of the guard-of-honour to Field-Marshal Lord Roberts' body at St. Omer, at which place the grand old soldier had died on the previous day. The

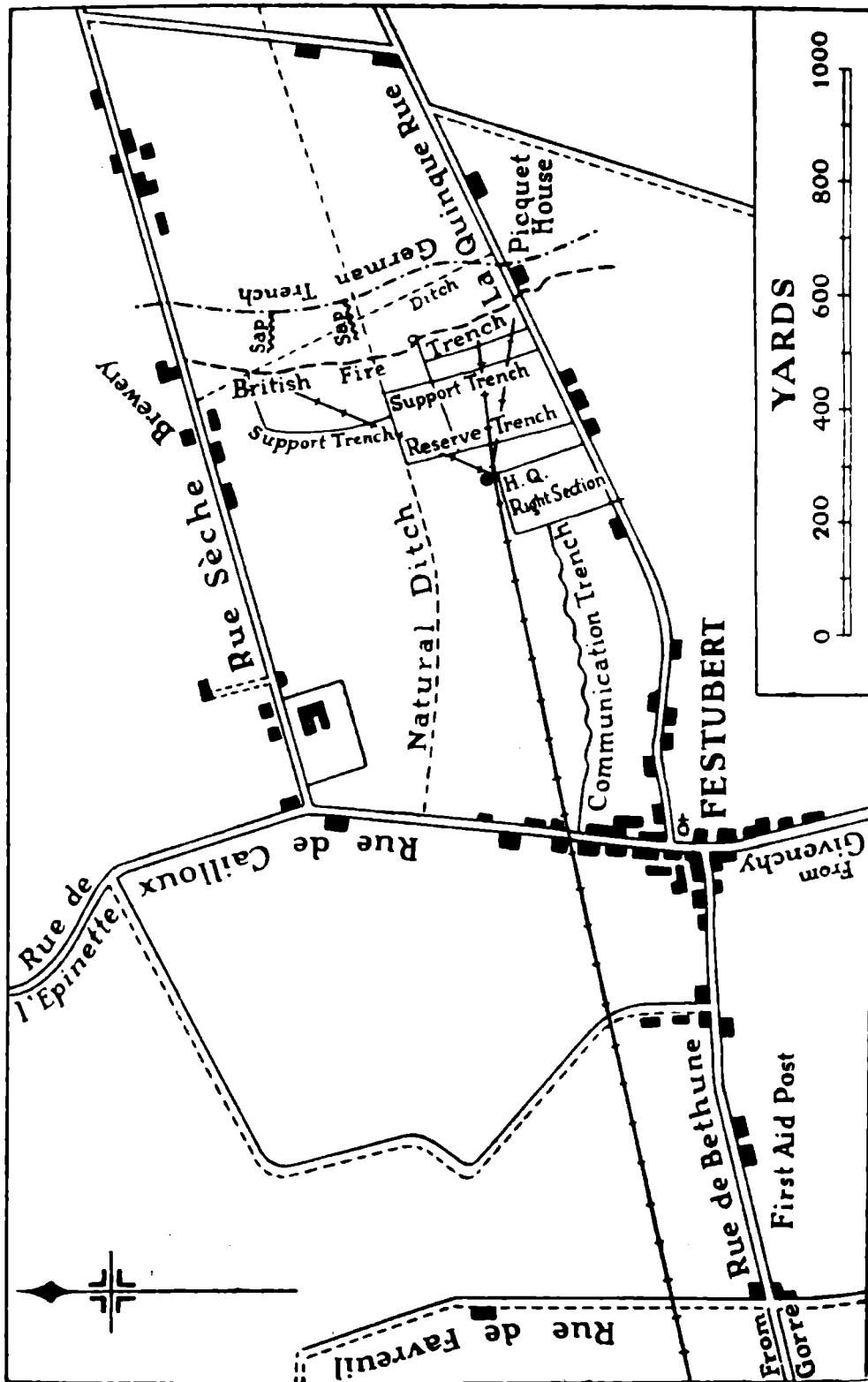
Adjutant, one G.O., one N.C.O., and two Riflemen formed this party and, together with a similar number of the 2nd Gurkhas, actually carried the coffin from the house to the gun-carriage. The Battalion was deeply sensible of the honour accorded to it in thus assisting at the honours paid to its old chief "Bobs Bahadur."

#### SECOND TRENCHES AT RICHEBOURG L'AVOUÉ, 19th-23rd November

The Battalion had a second spell of trench duty a few days later, taking over a portion of the line from the 1/39th Garhwalis in the Richebourg l'Avoué area ; this was in front of a place known as " Factory Corner," so called on account of a large chimney in the village, and close to the scene of the raid of the 13th just mentioned. These trenches contrasted favourably with those occupied previously, being much deeper and better constructed, and little shell fire such as we had previously experienced took place. These trenches were occupied for four days in conditions of intense cold, snow and rain falling daily. The Battalion suffered a severe loss in the death of Subedar-Major Bidan Sing Adhikari, on November 21st ; he was mortally wounded and died shortly after reaching the regimental aid post, to the great regret and grief of all ranks of the Regiment. He had been transferred from the 5th Gurkhas in 1908, and had always been conspicuous for his loyalty, devotion to duty, and the good influence he had exercised in the Battalion. The senior Subedar, Balbahadur Khattri of " H " Company, was promoted subedar-major in his place shortly afterwards. Few casualties occurred during this tenure of the trenches. One amusing, if nearly tragic, occurrence deserves recording. The factory chimney was used as an observation post for the artillery in the area with great circumspection owing to the remarkable view it gave. It was tragic therefore that a large verbose Australian gunner officer should have given it away one morning by having a violent argument with his telephonist below, sitting as he was on the extreme top of the chimney, in full view of the enemy. Intense gun fire was promptly opened on the O.P. and some twenty feet were knocked off before the subaltern escaped from the bottom. His description of the incident at battalion head-quarters that night, after he had received his brigade and battery commanders' comments, will be remembered for long by all who heard it.

#### THIRD TRENCHES NEAR FESTUBERT, 3rd-16th December

After a week in billets in the Festubert area the Battalion took over a singularly unpleasant portion of the line in front of that village. It here joined up with the 2nd Bn. The Black Watch at a point known as " The Picquet House," or " Hell Corner," and in this vicinity the German saps



THE FESTUBERT SECTOR.

3rd-16th December, 1914.

ran up to within five or ten yards of our front line. This proximity obviated much shell fire but introduced us to an even more unpleasant close contact with hand grenades and trench mortars. Our reply to the German article was the "jam tin" and "hair brush" grenades, both very improvised weapons, and also the original trench mortar. This was a piece of gas pipe which stood in a box and fired a shell case filled with guncotton by means of black powder; it was invented by a major in the Meerut Divisional Artillery and was the first of the kind used in France. "(Patterson's Patent Pills for Portly Prussians.)" The effect was moral rather than material, and as each round when fired drew heavy retaliatory shell fire on the resultant cloud of smoke, it was regarded with deep aversion by the infantry who held the trenches, from which it was fired. The Battalion's trenches were the first selected for this honour.

The Battalion held these trenches for a fortnight during which it rained incessantly and the whole area became a quagmire some eighteen inches deep. There was little activity by either side except for sapping, which was carried out nightly by both sides, and frequently resulted in a small bomb battle without much result. Opportunity was, however, afforded to show enterprise and initiative in patrolling, and in this Lieutenant Murray and Naik Kharakbahadur Basnet of "H" Company were conspicuous. The latter received the I.D.S.M. in recognition of his intrepidity and initiative. On December 14th Major Hogg, the Battalion's second-in-command, was severely wounded in both knees by a rifle grenade, and did not subsequently rejoin the Battalion. After a period of duty in England he was posted to the 2nd Battalion in India, and later raised the 3rd Battalion of the Garhwal Rifles.

Three incidents are worthy of record in connection with these trenches. The first was the support afforded to the Battalion by a 6-inch Howitzer Battery which was the first siege artillery with which the Battalion had come in contact. This battery, commanded by Major (afterwards Major-General) Mackenzie, responded readily to all calls made upon it for support, and the heavy detonation of the 100-lb. shells, which could frequently be seen travelling through the air, was a source of constant delight to the men who hitherto had never been covered by artillery heavier than 18 pdrs., or French .75 guns. The second was the attachment for forty-eight hours of one officer and forty-eight other ranks of the 8th Hussars who were sent up to gain some experience of trench conditions. Incessant heavy rain, with resultant deep mud and slush everywhere, and close contact with bombs and trench mortars, gave these dismounted cavalrymen a very intimate, if somewhat unpleasant, introduction to trench life; their comments thereon were amusing, if unprintable. Finally no account of these

trenches would be complete without mention of the Mess Goanese Butler, Correa. Clad in a follower's jerkin and begrimed Balaclava cap, he was invariably seen day and night standing up to his knees in mud and water in the Battalion H.Q. trench, crouching over a brazier, and administering to the needs of the Colonel and Adjutant, and of any officers of the Battalion on their infrequent visits there. Always smiling, he was never once heard to complain, and his excellent services in the Mess all the time the Battalion was in France, and later in Mesopotamia and on the Frontier, merited the gratitude and thanks of every officer in the Battalion.

The Battalion was relieved by the Seaforth Highlanders on the afternoon of the 16th December and went into billets in the Rue de L'Épinette, close behind the forward trench area.

#### ISSUE OF SERGE GREATCOATS

In these billets the normal service pattern greatcoat was issued, and the first instalment of serge clothing began to arrive, but no opportunity of issuing occurred until the end of the month. Until this date the men had been wearing the "British warm" coats and khaki drill tunics and shorts, issued in India, all through the severe conditions of rain, snow, and mud; many men were literally in rags, some having nothing on their thighs except the warm drawers received in Orleans.

#### ACTION AT "THE ORCHARD," RUE DU BOIS

The Battalion's rest after this long spell of very trying trench duty was to be short-lived. Two days after relief from the line it was called upon to succour the 2nd Gurkhas, who had been driven from a portion of their trenches near "the Orchard" by minenwerfer fire. Nos. 1 and 2 Double Companies spent the night of the 19/20th in that Battalion's portion of the line, and on the 20th the whole Battalion had to come to their assistance when they were driven from the Orchard by an enemy attack. This retirement caused a large break in the line, and it was with great difficulty that touch was regained with the battalions holding the two flanks of the gap. This was effected on the left by our Battalion occupying several ruined houses and portions of communication trenches in the "Chocolat Ménier" vicinity, and by the 58th Rifles and Black Watch coming up on the Battalion's right and regaining touch with the Seaforth Highlanders who were in our late trenches in front of Festubert. There is no doubt that, but for the initiative shown by the Battalion, who were the first reinforcements to arrive on the scene, the enemy's exploitation of their success would have led to a very serious situation.

## ARRIVAL OF THE 1ST CORPS

Enemy action had not been confined to this sector, as a concentrated attack had been launched on the Sirhind Brigade, south of Festubert, where also considerable local successes had been gained by the enemy, chiefly by the use of mines. To deal with this situation the 1st Corps was brought up in buses on the 21st, and the 1st Division was ordered to counter-attack to regain the lost ground. Two battalions of the 2nd Infantry Brigade, the 1st Bn. Northamptonshire and 1st Bn. Loyal North Lancashire Regiments, made a counter-attack on the Orchard trenches across the Battalion's front on this night. They succeeded in reaching the Strand (a long deep communication trench behind the Orchard held by No. 1 Double Company on the night of the 19/20th December) and portions of the trenches beyond, but darkness, unfamiliarity with the ground, and severe losses, obliged them to retire to the former. The following morning a counter-attack by German bombing parties on their right forced them to evacuate this also, both battalions again suffering severe casualties. The Northamptonshire Regiment retired along the Strand through the Battalion's position; attempts to follow them up by the enemy were frustrated by the Battalion's fire.

ACTION OF LIEUT. L. C. C. ROGERS AND RFN. PANCHBIR MAL,  
24th December

On the morning of the 22nd, the 41st Dogras came up on our right, relieving the 2nd Gurkhas, and the 4th Guards Brigade took over the line on their right, relieving the 58th Rifles and Black Watch. A number of wounded of the Northamptonshire and Loyal North Lancashire Regiments were brought in by the Battalion on this and the succeeding day. The line was now definitely re-established, though considerably bent back. A large number of British corpses were lying between the trenches as a result of the counter-attack on the 21st, and the discovery that one of these was alive was responsible for a very gallant action by Lieutenant Rogers (1/7th Gurkha Rifles, attached to the Battalion) and his orderly, Rifleman Panchbir Mal. A shallow ditch ran forward from the Coldstream Guards' trench (this battalion of the 4th Guards Brigade had arrived the previous night) some distance to the right of that held by the Battalion, in the direction of the wounded man. Lieutenant Rogers crawled along this, and running forward about one hundred yards reached, and with difficulty picked up the man and started to return. Unable to carry the weight, he fell some forty yards from the end of the ditch where Panchbir had been told to remain. The latter at once rushed to his assistance and together they lifted the wounded man on to Panchbir's back and restarted. Heavy rifle fire had now been opened and Lieutenant Rogers fell, hit through the back, while



the wounded man was again hit in the leg, and the orderly had two bullets through his greatcoat. Undeterred, Panchbir carried him to the ditch, and then, retracing his steps, in turn brought back Lieutenant Rogers. Lieutenant Murray had now reached the spot, and with his assistance both were then successfully brought into the safety of the fire trench. This particularly gallant act took place in broad daylight, at 3 p.m. on a still quiet afternoon, when conditions did anything but inspire cold-blooded deeds of bravery. Unfortunately Lieutenant Rogers died of his wounds the following morning. Both were strongly recommended for the Victoria Cross. Lieutenant Rogers, however, received the Military Cross posthumously, while Rifleman Panchbir received the I.O.M., 2nd Class, and was promoted havildar.

That night the Battalion was relieved by the 1st Bn. Irish Guards and marched to billets at Vieille Chapelle. One machine-gun and team was left in position in an old communication trench running at right angles to the fire trench; this was done at the request of the O.C. Irish Guards. They returned to the Battalion next day bringing a note with compliments and thanks for their assistance. The large Guardsmen found that our trenches afforded little cover and the majority, being recruits or reservists, like all newcomers to the line, were ducking at the sound of any bullet however distant. Seeing this the subedar-major remarked to his company commander that he considered our Battalion ought to remain with them for two or three days, until they became "Khushi"; this suggestion was not passed on to the Guards, who it is thought would not have appreciated the remark.

On Christmas Day the Battalion marched to Croix Marmeuse, where it was visited by the Divisional Commander, Lieut.-General Sir Charles Anderson, who sincerely congratulated the Commanding Officer, and complimented the Battalion in most flattering terms on its behaviour in the recent fighting. From Croix Marmeuse the Battalion marched back two marches to rest billets at Bailleul-les-Pernes beyond Lillers, where a month was spent in re-organization and re-fitment. The Battalion had been almost continuously in the line, practically without rest and never out of range of shell fire, for two months, and had more than deserved a thorough rest. This, and the issue of serge clothing and comforts, was much appreciated. Much useful training was also carried out. While in these billets the Dehra Dun Brigade was inspected by the Corps Commander, and also by the G.O.C.-in-C., Sir John French.

Short leave to England was opened to British Officers for periods of a week, a concession most readily taken advantage of.

During January 1915 the command of the Brigade devolved on Colonel Claud Jacob, till then G.S.O.I., Meerut Division, vice Brigadier-General Johnson, relieved. Now a field-marshal, and until recently Chief of the

General Staff and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Northern Command in India, General Jacob, throughout his tenure of command of the Brigade in France, and up to the present day, always displayed the keenest interest in the welfare and doings of the Battalion, and thoroughly endeared himself to all ranks.

On January 19th Major H. F. Bateman-Champain, and a draft consisting of one Gurkha Officer and one hundred and thirty-five other ranks, including twenty-nine men of the Assam Military Police, joined the Battalion ; this draft was mainly the balance of furlough men recalled on mobilization.

Whilst in these billets a Territorial Battalion, the 4th Seaforth Highlanders, was posted to the Brigade ; a magnificent body of men, they, like their regular 1st Battalion, became firm friends with all ranks of the Battalion, and remained so during the whole time we were in France.

#### MOVE TO THE FORWARD AREA

The Dehra Dun Brigade moved to the forward area on January 23rd and the Battalion again took over the line near Richebourg l'Avoué on February 1st ; it had two spells of trench duty in this area during the month when, owing to the flooded condition of the forward positions, the garrison had to be divided into small picquets, relieved at short intervals of a few hours. When not actually in the trenches the Battalion, and all others, were engaged nightly in heavy carrying and digging fatigues in the forward area. In spite of the cold and wet the general health was extraordinarily good ; this is shown by the fact that from October 29th, when the Battalion first went into the trenches, until March 9th, when it took part in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, only one hundred and fifty-two men had been transferred sick to hospital, of whom fifty-two had rejoined the ranks. Of the one hundred and fifty-six transferred wounded during this period, thirty-five had similarly re-joined. This proportion of thirty-nine per cent re-joining is a striking tribute to the spirit evinced by all ranks during the trials of perhaps the most severe winter experienced on the Western Front.

#### AWARDS

In the first *Gazette* published since the Indian Corps arrived in France, and following a despatch from the Commander-in-Chief describing the operations in November and December, the following decorations were awarded to officers of the Battalion : Military Cross : Captain G. D. Pike ; Captain J. R. L. Heyland, Adjutant ; Lieutenant L. C. C. Rogers, 1/7th G.R. attd. (posthumous award).

Captain W. L. O. Twiss, of the 2nd Battalion, on the General Staff H.Q. Indian Corps, also received this decoration.



THE 1st BATTALION IN THE TRENCHES AT RICHEBOURG L'AVOUE.  
2nd February, 1915.



## CHAPTER VI

### FRANCE. THE BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE 10TH-13TH MARCH 1915

Preparation and scheme for the Attack. Move to A I Redoubt. The Initial Attack. Move to original front-line trenches. Attack of Dehra Dun Brigade. Situation, night 10/11th March. Orders to attack when 23rd Brigade, 8th Division, moves. Death of Captain Heyland. Orders for relief and withdrawal. Withdrawal and march to Les Lobes. March to Richebourg St. Vaast. March to billets, Les Lobes. Inspection by G.O.C. Division. Retrospect.

#### PLAN FOR THE ATTACK

**R**UMOURS of an attack on a large scale had been current for some time, and these materialized on March 8th, when confidential orders were issued to officers commanding. These were to the effect that, following an artillery bombardment, the 4th and Indian Corps were to attack the village of Neuve Chapelle on the morning of March 10th, and then push on to capture the Bois de Biez and the high ground between Aubers and Ligny-le-Grand. The attack was to be carried out by the 7th, 8th, and Meerut Divisions, with the Lahore Division in support of the latter. Of the Meerut Division, the Garhwal Brigade was to assault the enemy front system from the vicinity of Port Arthur, with the Dehra Dun Brigade in support to attack the Bois de Biez; the Bareilly Brigade was to hold the original trenches. The whole attack was to be roughly on a front of four thousand yards and, with a view to pinning the enemy reserves, subsidiary attacks were to be made by the 1st Corps from Givenchy and the 2nd Corps from Hooge.

#### MOVE OF THE BATTALION TO A I REDOUBT

At 2.45 a.m. on the 10th the Battalion marched to A I Redoubt (afterwards known as Lansdowne Post), approximately six hundred to eight hundred yards south-west of Port Arthur trenches, which point was reached at 5 a.m.—the remainder of the Brigade being concentrated in suitable localities in the vicinity.



### PRELIMINARY BOMBARDMENT AND ATTACK BY THE GARHWAL BRIGADE

Dawn of March 10th broke with a fine, clear, crisp morning with nothing unusual foreshadowing coming events. An occasional gun registering, and the drone of an aeroplane overhead, were the only sounds audible until 7.30 a.m., when the bombardment started, and pandemonium broke loose. Some four hundred guns had been concentrated, and with a gun every ten yards, and with all batteries firing rapid, the resultant noise can better be imagined than described. A 1 Redoubt was situated close in front of the battery positions so that the Battalion had the full benefit. It may here be mentioned that this was the first bombardment on such a scale that had been attempted by the British Expeditionary Force in France, and was the forerunner of the vast bombardments carried out later in the War.

It is understood that this actual concentration of guns per yard of front was greater than on any subsequent occasion on the Western Front, or elsewhere.

Half an hour later, as soon as the artillery fire died down, heavy rifle and machine-gun fire could be heard from the German trenches, but this in turn gradually died down as they were captured. Shortly afterwards the glad sight of a long column of German prisoners, some two hundred in number, greeted the Battalion's vision, and it was learnt that except for a short section of trench on the right, the Garhwal Brigade had captured the whole of their objectives, while the 8th Division had captured the village.

### MOVE TO THE ORIGINAL FRONT LINE

At 11 a.m. the Battalion was ordered to move up to support trenches held by the 6th Jats near Port Arthur ; here it remained until 4 p.m., while bombing parties of the Garhwal Brigade, with artillery support, attempted to take the uncaptured portion of the enemy trenches, previously mentioned.

At 4 p.m. the following order was received :—

“ The D.D. Bde. will advance on the Bois de Biez and make good the Road on western edge before advancing further. The 9th Gurkhas will direct with left on House SQS.5.A ; thence on Cross Roads S.6.A 5/9 right directed on Road Junction S.5.B.S.E. 2nd Gurkhas to prolong line to right to cover remainder of Wood. 4th Seafort's will move half-Bn. in rear of each Gurkha Bn. as support. Two Bns. of Jullundur Bde. (Lahore Division) will be in reserve behind our right flank. First Objective Line of R. Laves. Os.C.Bns. to get bridges from R.E. depot. Reports to Supporting Bn. Time 3.45 p.m.”

The 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders at about the same time was ordered to assault the portion of the enemy trench which had remained uncaptured since the morning. This was about five hundred yards to the right of the Brigade attack.

#### ATTACK BY THE DEHRA DUN BRIGADE

The Battalion's advance from the Port Arthur trenches was slow, being delayed by numerous obstacles such as ditches, enemy trenches, and ruined buildings. The enemy wire in this sector, unlike that further north, had been completely demolished by the bombardment. The Battalion left the trenches at about 4.30 p.m. and striking a "Katcha" road leading into the village advanced along this in file under cover of houses and orchards to a point some three hundred yards from it; at the time this was being heavily shelled by the enemy. From this point on there was no cover from view, and the Battalion deployed into lines of platoons, Nos. 1 and 2 Double Companies leading, with No. 2 on the left, and Nos. 3 and 4 in support. At about 5.30 p.m. the Smith-Dorrien line (the original trenches of the 3rd Division held in October where the Garhwal Brigade was now entrenched) was passed, and from thence the ground sloped gently to the River Layes over open fields bounded by ditches and pollards.

Across this open ground the leading companies were subjected to a traversing machine-gun fire from the front and left flank from the edge of the Bois de Biez, but as it was now almost dark the shooting was high and very few casualties occurred. (Map, page 69.)

The 2nd Gurkhas prolonging the line to the right should have kept in touch with our No. 1, the directing, company, whose right was on the road leading from Neuve Chapelle village to the Bois de Biez; they, however, swerved to the right and failed to do so, with the result that our two support companies had to push up on the right of No. 1 and the whole Battalion came into line, No. 3 connecting with the 2nd Gurkhas. Some of the two latter crossed the River Layes and penetrated the edge of the Bois de Biez, No. 3 Company capturing seven prisoners and severing the cable of a searchlight. It later transpired that these prisoners were captured by Subedar Mehar Sing Khattri's platoon. On being challenged in German at the edge of the wood he answered "First Ninth," whereupon seven Germans put up their hands and surrendered, and five more were killed. The attack had succeeded in obtaining its first objective, namely the line of the River Layes.

It was now quite dark; to have attempted an advance at night through the Bois de Biez, with such an extended line and with only half a battalion in support, over unknown ground, and with an exposed flank, was out of

the question. With the G.O.C. Brigade's approval, therefore, the Battalion and the 2nd Gurkhas consolidated on the right bank of the River Layes—some three hundred yards west of the Bois de Biez. The 2nd Gurkhas, prolonging the line of No. 3 Company, were in touch with our own troops on their right, but the Battalion's left flank, No. 2 Company's, was entirely in the air. It slightly overlapped and was some four hundred yards in advance of the 2nd Bn. Rifle Brigade, who were the right battalion of the 8th Division on the Meerut Division's left. It was consequently thrown back some fifty to eighty yards and both the battalion machine-guns, under Lieutenant Murray, were placed in position there. The weak part of the line taken up, and the real danger to the Battalion, lay in this exposed flank. At about 2 a.m. a party of the enemy did attempt to get round this flank, but was beaten off by rifle and machine-gun fire with loss. With the exception of this incident the night passed quietly and was utilized in consolidating the new position as far as possible. This was extremely difficult and had to be mainly executed with portable "Sirhind" tools, as all companies had deposited their implements prior to deployment. The depth of trench, and thickness of parapet, obtained during the night therefore left much to be desired, and several casualties occurred next morning through men being hit through the parapet. About midnight, parties were sent back to bring up rations from the vicinity of Port Arthur.

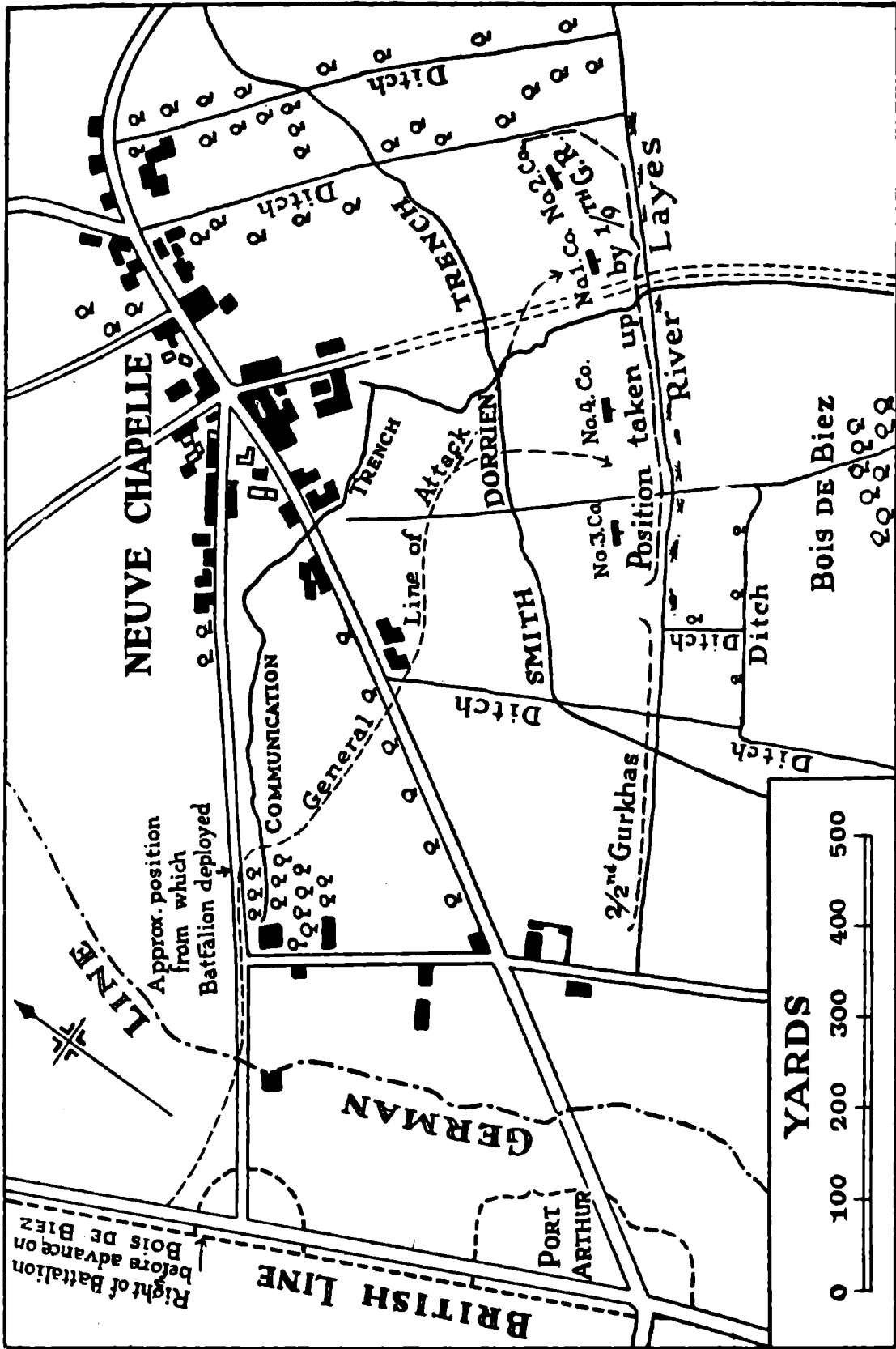
#### EVENTS OF MARCH 11TH

Dawn of March 11th disclosed the Germans in entrenchments they had thrown up during the night along the western edge of the Bois de Biez and also midway between our own line and this wood. Numbers of them could be seen issuing from the latter and disappearing into ruined cottages along a road which ran along the western edge, in which also a number of machine-guns had been placed. Movement along our own trench was a matter of great difficulty and danger owing to the narrowness and lack of depth, and a number of men were wounded in the early morning. The men continued to improve their positions all day, still a matter of great difficulty owing to lack of tools.

At 7 a.m., and again at noon, orders to attack the Bois de Biez as soon as the 8th Division moved on our left were received, but during the whole day no such movement by the latter was made, and the attack therefore never materialized.

At about 8 a.m. our ration parties, which had been sent back about midnight, appeared from the direction of Neuve Chapelle village carrying large boxes of biscuit, making for their respective companies, and struggling





THE BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE.  
Night of 10th-11th March, 1915.

along across the open in full view of the enemy. Several machine-guns immediately opened on them, but undeterred, and handicapped by their heavy loads, they continued at a feeble pace to gain their own trenches ; many were hit, but the majority arrived. It was a gallant, if foolhardy, execution of duty.

At 2 p.m. our artillery heavily bombarded the enemy trenches and western edge of the wood to our front ; the enemy retaliated by bombarding the village and Smith-Dorrien line. It was thought that this was possibly the preliminary to a further attack, and the Battalion eagerly awaited signs of movement on our left, without which we had been specifically prohibited to advance. No such movement developed, however, and a favourable opportunity went by, for the enemy was obviously shaken by the bombardment, and in fact had commenced to evacuate his trenches at about 3 p.m. The half-battalion, 4th Seaforth Highlanders, in support of the 2nd Gurkhas, acting under a misapprehension, advanced to the support of that battalion and suffered severe casualties to no purpose, as no attack was made. This inaction was much regretted at the time, but, with the Battalion's exposed left flank, nothing but subsequent disaster would have been courted by an independent advance by our Brigade, though a local tactical success would have been assured.

Towards 5 p.m. all firing had ceased and the enemy had entirely evacuated his trenches to our front. By 6 p.m. telephonic communication with Brigade H.Q. in Neuve Chapelle village was established ; all messages up to this hour had been carried by runners, a number of whom had become casualties. Information that we would be relieved that night was received and an officer was ordered to report at Brigade H.Q. at 9 p.m. Subsequent orders cancelled this relief, and the officer deputed to go to Brigade H.Q. received verbal orders that both Battalions would withdraw to billets at Vieille Chapelle as soon as the wounded and stores could be evacuated ; he was also instructed to convey similar orders to the 2nd Gurkhas, directing them to conform to the Battalion's retirement, which was to commence from the left flank.

#### WITHDRAWAL FROM THE RIVER LAYES

The evacuation of the wounded presented a difficult problem ; there were about forty stretcher cases and only eight stretchers available. The nearest dressing-station was in Neuve Chapelle village, several hundred yards to our rear, and the Battalion's first-aid post was back near A 1 Redoubt, one and a half miles away. Evacuation, either by stretcher or plank, was commenced at once, but the majority of the wounded had to be carried on a comrade's back, a slow and laborious proceeding. For-

tunately the night was pitch dark, which was in our favour and assisted our withdrawal. The evacuation of the non-walking cases was not completed until nearly midnight. Just prior to our retirement a heavy and sustained burst of rifle and shell fire was opened upon our part of the line and to the rear, on what later transpired to be the 59th Rifles advancing to our relief. Orders cancelling this relief had miscarried, with the result that this battalion suffered severely to no purpose and was merely ordered again to withdraw. This incident further delayed the evacuation of our position, as did the withdrawal of the battalion on our right, which retired without informing us, and thus left both our flanks in the air ; No. 3 Double Company extended its position to the right partly to cover this flank. To mask our retirement a desultory fire was kept up and the strictest silence was enforced. Nos. 3 and 4 Double Companies commenced withdrawing shortly after midnight proceeding through the Garhwal Brigade's trenches in the Smith-Dorrien line. The retirement of Nos. 1 and 2 Double Companies and the M.G. Section took longer, owing to fresh casualties occurring. This retirement was ably covered by a small rear-guard, under Subedar Bhagatbahadur Adhikari, detailed from No. 2 Double Company.

In recognition of this, and of his previous excellent work throughout the winter, this Gurkha Officer was subsequently awarded the Military Cross and the Russian Order of St. George, 4th Class. Evacuated sick to England later in the year, he eventually died at sea *en route* to India in 1916. His two decorations and five war medals, presented by his widow, now hang in the Officers' Mess at Dehra, and form a lasting tribute to this officer's long and gallant record of service.

The complete withdrawal of the Battalion was not effected until after 3 a.m., and the last parties did not reach Vieille Chapelle until 7 a.m. ; this was due to the great confusion and congestion in Neuve Chapelle village and on all approaches leading thereto. Relieved, and relieving, regiments struggled along roads and paths torn by shell-holes and littered with obstacles ; the whole area was being persistently shelled and further casualties added to the confusion and delay, while long strings of stretchers with wounded further blocked and retarded movement. Just as the Battalion reached A 1 Redoubt, from which it had started two days previously, the German shelling increased to intensity, and was the prelude to a fierce but unsuccessful counter-attack by the enemy on his lost positions. The repulse on the Garhwal Brigade front, which the Battalion had just left, was in a large measure due to skilfully brigaded machine-guns. This was the first occasion on which machine-gun sections had been thus brigaded in the Meerut Division.

### MOVEMENTS AFTER WITHDRAWAL FROM NEUVE CHAPELLE

The rear parties of the Battalion had hardly reached Vieille Chapelle than orders were received to proceed to Les Lobes, four miles further back. On arrival, some delay was incurred in finding billets as those allotted were already occupied. Scarcely had accommodation been found, and the whole Battalion sunk into exhausted sleep, than fresh orders were received to march back to Richebourg St. Vaast, six miles distant. This was reached by 8.30 p.m. that evening. Completely exhausted, it was as much as the officers and non-commissioned officers could do to get the men thus far, and in reviewing the events of the last three days this was not surprising. They had had no sleep for three days and nights, and had in the meantime fought a severe action, with nerve-racking shell fire of varying intensity almost the whole time; in addition they had laboured for over twenty-four hours consolidating the advanced position won with hand entrenching tools, had marched some twenty miles, and had suffered over twenty per cent casualties.

On the following evening the Battalion again marched back to Les Lobes and remained in billets at that place for ten days; it was inspected by the Divisional Commander on the 15th who, in most complimentary terms, congratulated all ranks on their gallantry and exemplary conduct throughout the action.

### RETROSPECT OF THE BATTLE

Thus ended the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, the first attack on a big scale in which the Battalion had taken part, and the first launched by the Meerut Division as a whole. Viewed in comparison with the vast attacks on the Somme and at Passchendaele in later years, it fades into comparative obscurity, both in scale and results. It was nevertheless the first occasion on which such an attack had been attempted by the B.E.F. in France since the inception of trench warfare, and the lessons deduced therefrom were of great value in subsequent operations. The actual results were the capture of the village, the enemy's front-line trenches on a front of about two miles, some strongly defended works, and approximately two thousand prisoners. In addition it was calculated that the enemy had suffered some twelve thousand casualties in killed and wounded, which greatly exceeded our own total. Nevertheless it must be admitted that the general opinion of all who took part in the action was one of disappointment, both at the paucity of the results obtained, and at the letting slip of the favourable opportunities offered. Had the Division on our left been able to advance with us during the 11th, the capture of the Bois de Biez,

and possibly the high ground beyond, seemed assured, as in those days extensive systems of reserve trenches in the rear were non-existent. It was, however, learned later that both the 7th and 8th Divisions had suffered very much more severely than had the Meerut Division, in the capture of the village, chiefly through much wire being left uncut to the north. To this can be attributed their not advancing during the 11th. Also it must be admitted that, after six months of static warfare, staff arrangements and liaison between formations had not attained the efficiency that was later apparent.

In a *Gazette* published subsequent to the operations Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Widdicombe was awarded the C.B. ; Lieutenant R. G. H. Murray the M.C. ; and Subedar Mehar Sing Khattri and Jemadar Shibdhoj the I.O.M., 2nd Class.

The Battalion's casualties during the battle were :—

Killed : Captain J. R. L. Heyland (Adjutant) ; 3 G.O.s : Sub. Bhairabhadur Khattri, Sub. Ranbahadur Rawal, Jem. Bombahadur Gharti ; 50 G.O.R.s.

Wounded : 3 G.O.s : Sub. Shersing, Sub. Dilbahadur, Jem. Damodhar ; 100 G.O.R.s. Total, 157.

Captain Heyland's death was deeply deplored throughout the Regiment. He joined in 1906 and had been employed first as quartermaster and then as adjutant during the seven years preceding his death. A keen, cheerful personality, his enthusiasm and example inspired all who came in contact with him ; this had been particularly noticeable since the Battalion's departure for active service seven months previously. He had been deservedly awarded the Military Cross in the first *Gazette* published since the Indian Corps' arrival in France, and his death left a gap of which all ranks were conscious for months to come. Lieutenant E. F. Berry, attached from the 2nd Battalion, who had joined in the previous November, was appointed adjutant in his place.

## CHAPTER VII

### FRANCE. THE SUMMER OF 1915

Re-organization and Draft. Chettri and Thakur Gurkhas on service. Trenches north of Neuve Chapelle. Inspection by Sir John French. Change of First-Line Transport. Trenches at Neuve Chapelle. Attack on 9th May. Trenches, Richebourg Area. Action of L/Nk. Tikaram Kanwar. Condition of the Trenches in the Summer Months. Death of Captain Gore. Move to Billets at St. Floris. Change of the Battalion's Interpreter.

#### RE-ORGANIZATION AND DRAFT FROM THE BURMA MILITARY POLICE

**T**HE Battalion remained in billets at Les Lobes for ten days, re-organizing and re-fitting after the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. Several drafts were received, including one of two hundred strong from the Burma Military Police ; these men were drawn mainly from the Myitkina and Lushai Hills battalions and were of all classes of Gurkhas, but chiefly Limbu and Rai. Except for a small draft from the Assam Military Police received in January, they were the first draft composed of castes other than our own Chettris and Thakurs. Some doubt was felt as to how they would mix with our men, but this was soon dispelled after they had been distributed evenly throughout the companies and platoons in the Battalion ; here they quickly identified themselves with their sub-units, and were treated and acted in a manner which made them soon indistinguishable from our own men.

#### CHETTRIS AND THAKURS

This is a suitable place to digress slightly and to discuss briefly the imagined caste prejudices regarding food which the Chettri and Thakur Gurkhas were supposed to have, and which were thought would influence their efficiency on active service. There is no doubt that there was an impression existing among officers in the Gurkha Brigade generally before the Great War that these castes would be of less value on field service owing to their supposed prejudices in this respect. This may possibly have been formed as the result of experience in former campaigns of isolated individuals mixed in a great minority among other classes in Gurkha Battalions. There was certainly no indication of this in the Battalion from the time of leaving

Bombay for overseas, nor in any other theatre of operations in which any of the three Battalions of the Regiment took part. In the strange environment and crowded accommodation on board ship, and later in the still more difficult conditions of trench life, no sign of any prejudice or discontent was ever apparent. These conditions frequently involved resort having to be made to tinned meat or biscuit, and in regard to these our men in fact demurred less than those of other Gurkha Battalions with whom they were in contact. On occasions they even asked for an issue of the ration bread given to the British troops, as a variation to biscuit. Cooks not being included in the follower establishment in those days, two men per company were detailed for this duty under the Quartermaster while the Battalion was in the line, and from first to last the arrangements for cooking and issue of rations went smoothly and well.

#### TRENCHES NORTH OF NEUVE CHAPELLE

The Battalion had a four-days' spell of trench duty at the end of March, taking over practically the identical trench sector from which the 2nd Gurkhas had been driven out in the previous November when our Brigade had first entered the line. These trenches had been retaken during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. The brutal and callous character of the enemy can be gauged by the fact that the bodies of two officers of the 2nd Gurkhas, killed on November 2nd, were found unburied at this date, five months later. Except for improvement of defences, and burying a large number of enemy corpses killed in the counter-attack after the Neuve Chapelle battle, little of interest took place during this tour of the front line.

On relief, the Battalion marched to billets at Croix Marmeuse. While here the Battalion paraded twice for valedictory purposes. On the first occasion the Commanding Officer presented a handsome gold medal to Havildar Panchbir Mal ; this had been presented by Mrs. Rogers, the mother of Lieutenant Rogers, of the 7th Gurkhas, in recognition of Panchbir's gallant action on Christmas Eve when Lieutenant Rogers had been killed in trying to save a wounded man. Both had been recommended for the Victoria Cross for their bravery on that occasion.

#### INSPECTION BY F.-M. SIR JOHN FRENCH

On the second occasion the Dehra Dun Brigade paraded at Lestrem for inspection by the Commander-in-Chief of the B.E.F., Field-Marshal Sir John French, who addressed the Battalion conjointly with the 2nd Gurkhas in the following terms, Captain Gore acting as interpreter and repeating the speech in Gurkhali :—

“Gurkhas, I have come here to visit you to-day in order to congratulate you on your gallant conduct during the recent attack on Neuve Chapelle. During the fighting you took the Bois de Biez, from which for tactical reasons you were ordered to withdraw; I know full well that, had you not received this order, you would never have abandoned the position you had won, but in war occasions of this sort arise. I realize that, having come from a warm climate, you must have found this winter climate of France extremely trying, and this makes your magnificent behaviour during the winter months all the more creditable. Again, I wish to thank you for the fine work you have performed on all occasions, and I am confident that when you are called upon to attack again you will acquit yourselves as bravely as you did at Neuve Chapelle. I cannot say how pleased I am to have had the opportunity of meeting you all.”

#### CHANGE OF FIRST-LINE TRANSPORT

While in these billets the Battalion's first-line transport of nine A.T. carts and drivers, brought from India the previous year, was replaced by six L.G.S. wagons with horses and British drivers. We were sorry to lose them, for they had done excellent work ever since the Battalion had arrived in the forward area, six months before. The light carts were mobile and handy, particularly on the wet and muddy tracks in the trench area, and the mules had kept hard and well throughout the cold and wet conditions of the winter. The drivers, the hitherto somewhat despised “Drabi,” had done consistently well, and two of them had received the I.D.S.M. as a reward for bravery in bringing up ammunition under fire. The British personnel and horses received in their place were only partially trained, and the L.G.S. wagons much more fragile.

#### TRENCHES AT NEUVE CHAPELLE

The Battalion again took over the line on April 11th and remained there until the 27th. The sector assumed was actually guarding the village of Neuve Chapelle itself, and was that taken by the 8th Division on our left during the battle. As a result of the fluctuations during that operation two peculiar bulges towards the enemy existed in this sector, known as the “Boar's Head” and “Duck's Bill,” forming the flanks. The former extended from Neuve Chapelle Brewery practically to the position held by No. 1 Double Company during the battle, and was a veritable bomb trap, day and night, the retention of which appeared valueless. A portly field officer of the battalion whose company we relieved summed it up as “Conceived in ignorance and maintained in folly!” The “Duck's Bill” was



even longer and was surrounded on three sides by hostile trenches. The very existence was unknown until the morning following the relief. In the half-light of early dawn the machine-gun section, posted on the Battalion's left flank, saw what appeared to be peculiar and most obtrusive enemy movement, and at once opened heavy fire; the immediate result was the most vehement protest from a huge N.C.O. of the Black Watch, whose company was garrisoning the "Duck's Bill," and who, in most potent language, pointed out the undesirability of being fired at from the one side on which they were not surrounded by enemy! Two other incidents during our tenure of this sector deserve mention; the first was the surrender of a deserter who came into No. 1 Double Company's trench one night and was a source of great interest to all; the second was the pathetic shortage of artillery ammunition available in the batteries covering the line. All these had explicit orders only to fire "one round per gun per day, and only in case of emergency." As a result our only means of retaliation to the heavy and continuous enemy bombardment was by rifle grenades and sniping.

The relief of the Battalion on the 23rd was postponed owing to the sudden move of the Lahore Division to the Ypres Salient to deal with the situation created by the Germans using gas in that area. As a result the Battalion was not relieved until the 27th after a tour of sixteen days' continuous duty. It then took over support and reserve positions in rear of Richebourg, where it remained for six days.

On May 1st a totally unexpected and very severe bombardment of our line and support and reserve positions in this area occurred. It was probably accounted for by the fact that, but for the Second Battle of Ypres having disorganized arrangements, a British attack on a large scale had been planned for this date. There can be no doubt that the enemy was aware of this impending attack and that this heavy bombardment was in anticipation of same.

#### ATTACK ON MAY 9TH

On May 9th this rumoured attack materialized, when the 1st, Indian, and 4th Corps B.E.F. launched a large-scale attack from Richebourg to Rouge Bancs, opposite Fromelles. This attack was subsidiary to a main operation being undertaken by the French further south in the "Notre Dame de Lorette" and "Souchez" area. The objective was the high ground from Aubers towards La Bassée; and the subsidiary object the pinning of enemy reserves so that they could not be moved to meet the main French attack.

The 1st and Indian Corps were to attack from approximately Port

Arthur to Festubert, while the 4th Corps put in a subsidiary attack from Rouge Bancs on to Fromelles. The initial assaults were to be carried out by the 1st, Meerut, and 7th Divisions, with the 2nd, Lahore, and 8th Divisions in support. The plan was based on a short intensive artillery bombardment which had been so successful at Neuve Chapelle. A further lesson learnt from that battle was that all local successes were to be immediately exploited, even though the flanks were held up. In the Meerut divisional sector the Dehra Dun Brigade was to make the initial assault, with the Garhwal and Bareilly Brigades in support. In our Brigade the 1st and 4th Seaforth Highlanders and 2nd Gurkhas were to assault the enemy's forward system, supported by the Battalion and 6th Jats. The Battalion's objective was the Ferme de Biez, a large farmhouse known to be strongly fortified and held, and having a broad moat all round. It was situated on the south-eastern edge of the Bois de Biez and could not be seen from any point in our lines, but was known to be of great natural and artificial strength, capable of the stoutest resistance. It was, however, hoped that our heavy guns, which now included "Granny," a 15-inch howitzer, would neutralize the defence prior to assault. The Battalion's task was a formidable one, and it may be mentioned that this farm remained uncaptured by the British until 1918. The Battalion moved from billets in the Vieille Chapelle area to the forward trench system near Port Arthur on the night 8/9th May.

The bombardment commenced at 5 a.m. and continued until 5.40, when the assault was launched; this failed dismally with very severe losses, and in no case did the leading troops reach the enemy front line. This was due, in the main, to the hostile machine-guns being cleverly concealed in emplacements made through the base of the parapet, and being untouched by the bombardment. A second assault by the 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders, made with the utmost gallantry, failed in like manner, and the leading platoons were killed almost to a man without any material result.

The Battalion moved forward with two double companies in support of each of the 1st and 4th Bns. Seaforth Highlanders at 6.30 a.m. and No. 1 and part of No. 3 Double Companies moved out of the fire trench to support a further assault. This was, however, cancelled owing to the very severe losses already incurred. The attack of the 4th Seaforth Highlanders and 2nd Gurkhas on the right of our Brigade, and of the 1st Division to the south of us, failed similarly with severe loss.

The Dehra Dun Brigade was relieved by the Bareilly Brigade at 12 noon and withdrew into reserve to the Garhwal Brigade, near Lansdowne Post.

A second attack by the Bareilly Brigade at 3.45 that afternoon also failed badly in spite of a fresh bombardment. It was apparently intended

to make a further assault with the one formation hitherto uncommitted, the Garhwal Brigade, and at 5 p.m. the Battalion moved up to a position, for support, in the assembly trenches behind Richebourg. This attack was, however, cancelled and the Battalion withdrew to billets in Vieille Chapelle, arriving there at 10.30 p.m.

The day had been a disastrous one. On the 1st and Indian Corps front three separate attacks failed to reach even the German front line in spite of the greatest gallantry and the severest of casualties. On the 4th Corps front portions of the front line were captured, only to be lost again in the evening.

#### RETROSPECT OF THE BATTLE

Reviewing this operation in retrospect there seems little doubt that the enemy was fully aware that an attack was contemplated in this area, and had made adequate preparations to meet it. The unusual air activity towards the end of April, the heavy anticipatory bombardment on May 1st, the zero day originally fixed, and the heavy accurate and sustained counter-bombardment throughout May 9th, appear to prove this beyond question. This counter-bombardment caused severe casualties among supports and reserves owing to the congested nature of the assembly trenches. Although no portion of the Battalion was actually committed to the assault it suffered no less than eight killed and one hundred and sixteen wounded during the day.

The Battalion remained in billets in the Vieille Chapelle and Croix Barbée area from May 10th-23rd, during which period the 2nd, 7th, Canadian, and Lahore Divisions continued attacks from Richebourg to Festubert. These attacks were mainly launched by night and achieved limited results.

These operations during May 1915 afterwards came to be known as the Battles of Aubers and Festubert.

#### TRENCHES, RICHEBOURG AREA

The Battalion took over the line south of Richebourg Factory Corner on May 23rd, relieving the Sirhind Brigade. Very warm weather and numerous corpses rendered the trenches almost untenable, due to flies and stench, and it is surprising that a serious epidemic of disease did not result.

#### ACTION BY L/NK. TIKARAM KANWAR

On May 26th the Divisional Commander, Lieut.-General Sir Charles Anderson, while visiting the Battalion's line, witnessed a very gallant act by L/Naik Tikaram Kanwar of No. 3 Double Company. Seeing one of the supposed corpses occasionally lifting an arm some two hundred yards

from our fire trench, and close to the German line, this young N.C.O., on his own initiative, and unaccompanied, crawled out of our trenches and creeping from shell-hole to shell-hole successfully brought in the wounded soldier ; this turned out to be L/Cpl. Gregory of the Highland Light Infantry who had been severely wounded in the thigh in the Sirhind Brigade's attack on the night of the 21/22nd, and had been subsisting in a shell-hole half-full of water, and without food, since that date until rescued by L/Naik Tikaram Kanwar. The latter received the Divisional Commander's warmest congratulations on his gallant act, and the Commanding Officer was instructed to forward his name for reward. He, later, received the I.O.M. 2nd Class, and subsequently the Medal of the Russian Order of St. George.

#### THE FRONT TRENCHES IN THE SUMMER MONTHS

The Battalion remained in the forward system of trenches in this area until July 10th, actually occupying the front line on three more occasions during this period. Conditions in these forward trenches had now materially altered and they were occupied under conditions of comparative comfort in contrast to the cold and wet of the winter. The grass in "No-Man's Land" had, however, grown to an alarming extent, in places being waist high, and demanded an ever-increasing degree of vigilance in the front line. This was effected chiefly by means of patrols, an onerous and dangerous duty ; encounters with similar German patrols were not infrequent, and two of these deserve mention.

On the first, on the night of May 31st, a picquet and working party of No. 1 Double Company, under Lieutenant Taylor, was suddenly surprised and fired into and bombed from close range. The party was obliged to retire, having two men killed, and one Gurkha Officer and four men wounded, one of whom died shortly afterwards ; in addition one man, Rifleman Bombahadur Khattri, was wounded and missed when the party was retiring, being subsequently captured by the enemy. During the whole time the Battalion was in France and Mesopotamia, a period of over two years, this Rifleman was the only prisoner captured by the enemy from the 9th Gurkha Rifles.

#### DEATH OF CAPTAIN A. C. E. ST. G. GORE

The second occasion on June 26th resulted in the death of Captain Gore, who was attached from the 2nd Battalion. A patrol from his double company bumped into a German patrol in the long grass and one man was killed. Receiving a report that there were numerous enemy in this vicinity Captain Gore, himself, went forward to verify this information. Ignoring the non-commissioned officer's warning and protests, he walked boldly

forward and was shot dead at point-blank range, a fatality deeply regretted by all ranks of the Regiment.

#### MOVE TO REST BILLETS AT ST. FLORIS

On July 11th the Brigade, less the Seaforth Highlanders, who remained in the line, marched back to rest billets at St. Floris, some ten miles in rear of the forward area. This was the first real rest, immune from shell fire, which the Battalion had experienced since January at Bailleul-les-Pernes. If conditions in the forward area contrasted favourably with those in the winter, conditions in billets did so even more; the gardens and orchards were in full bloom and leaf, and many of the men slept in the open in preference to the stuffy barns and outhouses previously occupied. Divisional baths had been established where the men were not only able to have hot baths, but also to have their clothes disinfected, and to receive a fresh issue of underclothing. Organized recreation was also started, and inter-company, battalion, and brigade sports and football tournaments were inaugurated, from which the greatest benefit accrued. At a brigade horse show held in this area the Battalion swept the board with its Transport, receiving three 1st and two 2nd Prizes in six events. The Battalion was thoroughly re-organized and re-fitted during this rest, being brought up to strength in British Officers and men by drafts from the 2nd Battalion. Considerable attention was paid to close order drill and turn-out, very necessary training after long spells in the forward area such as the Battalion had experienced. Training in the quick and accurate adjustment of gas masks was also undergone; parades for this purpose were with difficulty restrained from becoming somewhat lighthearted, as the men's appearance in the masks then issued, with the rubber tube protruding, was comical to a degree.

It was amusing to watch the Gurkhas' relationship with the French peasants on whom they were billeted, and with whom they came in daily contact. Not even the most experienced and knowledgeable pre-war officer of the Gurkha Brigade could have conceived what was now a sight of common occurrence and which excited little comment. This was "Johnny Gurk," clad in serge tunic and Balaclava cap, sitting in a French peasant's kitchen with his feet on the stove, smoking a pipe and drinking beer or coffee, and discussing life and the war situation in halting and broken French! The Gurkha was deservedly popular with his temporary hostesses for his cheerful spirits, his good discipline and cleanly habits, and for his rather extravagant ideas which appealed very much to the French madame.

While in these billets the Battalion regretfully parted from M. Robiony, the French interpreter. He had joined us in Marseilles ten months before,

and his energy, self-sacrifice, and unselfish devotion to our interests had endeared him to all ranks. His good work had been rewarded by the Croix de Guerre and promotion on the recommendation of the Commandant ; this unfortunately entailed his transfer to Dehra Dun Brigade H.Q., but we were glad to be able to maintain touch with him. He was relieved by M. Pichon, an officer of the Chinese International Customs Service, who in turn quickly identified himself with the interests of the Battalion.

While on leave in England during this month Lieut.-Colonel Widdicombe and Lieutenant Murray were received by H.M. The King at Windsor Castle and were invested with the C.B. and M.C., respectively, awarded after the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. Both officers had the honour of remaining to luncheon after the investiture.

## CHAPTER VIII

1915

### FRANCE. THE LOOS ATTACK AND THE REMAINDER OF 1915. DEPARTURE OF THE 1ST BATTALION

Return to the Forward Area. Trenches, Moated Grange Sector. Re-armament with Vickers Guns. Transfer of the Burma Military Police. Changes of command in the Indian Corps. Scheme and preparation for the Loos Offensive. Mining. The Attack on September 25th. Retrospect of the Attack. Action of Subedar-Major Balbahadur Khattri on September 26th. Relief and move to the Festubert Area. The attitude and feelings of the men to Trench Warfare. Parades for Inspection by H.M. The King and Anniversary Muster. Departure of Lieut.-Colonel Widdicombe. Rumours of transfer confirmed. Last tour of trench duty. Departure from the Forward Area. General Jacob's commendation. Subedar-Major's visit to England. Departure for Marseilles and Embarkation. Retrospect of France.

#### TRENCHES, WINCHESTER ROAD AND MOATED GRANGE SECTOR

ON return to the forward area on August 1st the Battalion was comfortably billeted in La Gorgue and remained in this place until the 8th. A further draft under 2nd Lieutenant Burke, I.A.R.O., was received in these billets, and while here the officers played polo twice on the aerodrome; these games were against the 15th Lancers and a Field Brigade, R.A. On the night of the 8th the Battalion again took over the line near Winchester Road, the most northerly sector in which it had been employed.

On the morning of August 12th another heavy minenwerfer bombardment was experienced by No. 3 Double Company when eleven heavy bombs were fired, fortunately without serious results and only two men were wounded. One of these atrocities failed to explode and lay in the open just behind the fire trench. It was a source of tremendous interest as there had been much speculation as to the actual size of these bombs; on measurement it was found to be 3 feet 4 inches long, 15 inches in calibre with a casing only about  $\frac{3}{8}$  of an inch thick, which showed the very large quantity of explosive contained. This was the Battalion's third experience of them, at close quarters, since arrival.

### RE-ARMAMENT WITH VICKERS GUNS

The Battalion remained in this forward sector, either in the front or reserve trenches, for the remainder of the month, during which it was re-armed with four Vickers machine-guns; these were a great boon, as the gun and mounting combined weighed less than the old Maxim, and was in every way a superior and more accurate weapon. Hitherto the establishment of the M.G. Section in the line had necessitated a carrying party of a platoon in addition to the M.G. personnel.

### TRANSFER OF THE BURMA MILITARY POLICE

On the 20th August the balance of the draft of the Burma Military Police, one Gurkha Officer and seventy-one other ranks, who had joined in March, were transferred to the 1/4th Gurkhas, and proceeded with them to Gallipoli. We were very sorry to say good-bye, for they had done excellent work while with the Battalion and had in every way identified themselves with us, having behaved in an exemplary manner throughout their attachment.

Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Bateman-Champain had been transferred to command the 1/4th Gurkhas in the previous April.

### CHANGES OF COMMAND IN THE INDIAN CORPS

Early in September the command of the Indian Corps changed on the departure of General Sir James Willcocks. This involved the transfer of Lieut.-General Sir Charles Anderson, our divisional commander, to command the Corps, and of Brigadier-General Jacob, our brigade commander, to command the Meerut Division; this latter transfer in particular was keenly felt and regretted by all ranks of the Battalion, by whom he was universally esteemed and respected. Lieut.-Colonel Harvey of the 2nd Bn. The Black Watch shortly afterwards assumed command of the Dehra Dun Brigade.

The rear of the foremost system of trenches was at this time organized into a series of strong posts, and their construction, together with the improvement of existing defences, entailed very heavy fatigue work for all battalions not actually holding the front line. Between August 21st and September 3rd the Battalion actually provided 2,510 men for fatigues on these works.

### THE LOOS OFFENSIVE

The Battalion again took over the forward trenches in the Tilleloy sector on September 4th. Preparations were now in full swing for a large-



scale attack to be launched on September 25th. The general scheme for this operation was, that in conjunction with a big offensive by the French in Champagne, the British 1st Army was to attack from Loos, a few miles to the south of us, with the objective of the Lens coalfield. Subsidiary to this attack, and to pin reserves, the 1st Corps was to attack from Givenchy, and the Indian Corps from Mauquissart, north of Neuve Chapelle. It was in preparation for this attack that the heavy work had been put in in rear of the foremost trenches, and the Battalion now came in to further contact with arrangements in the front line.

Very active patrolling and reconnaissance in "No-Man's Land" was in progress nightly, of which the Battalion took its full share. On the night of September 5th, Lieutenant Spreckley, who had joined with a draft from the 2nd Battalion in August, with a patrol of No. 2 Double Company encountered an enemy patrol at close quarters; as a result, he, together with Jemadar Bombahadur Khattri and two men, was severely wounded by a bomb.

#### MINING

We also had our first experience of mining, as a long shaft was being driven forward from our fire trench to undermine a strong German work opposite known as the "Birdcage." Mining in this area presented the greatest difficulty owing to the wet nature of the subsoil, and necessitated considerable pumping operations. The disposal of the excavated soil, which was of a light grey colour and most conspicuous, involved very heavy work for our men detailed to assist the miners. Laborious work was also entailed in the construction of shallow galleries at selected points in the parapet, to which great importance was attached. We had many mysterious visitors to the line nightly, who were continually sending off long messages in cypher, and who were most reticent as to their meaning. It later transpired that these galleries were to accommodate gas cylinders, and the mysterious messages were the result of meteorological observations of wind and temperature. The strictest secrecy was ordered, and gas, if mentioned at all, had always to be referred to as "Perrier." On arrival of these cylinders in this sector the Battalion alone was employed in carrying them into the line, a matter of no little difficulty, as they were four feet long and weighed over one hundredweight each. The Battalion was relieved on September 8th, and some excitement was caused just prior to the arrival of the relieving battalion by a deserter coming into No. 1 Double Company's trench; he turned out to be a Westphalian miner, employed in the German counter-mining to our shaft towards the "Birdcage," and later gave much useful information in this respect. Our N.C.O.'s

report to his company commander when the man came in caused temporary alarm as it was couched in the following words, "Dushman ayo hamro morcha ma" (The enemy have come into our trenches!). The Battalion spent ten days in reserve and billets after being relieved in these trenches, during which another draft was received under Captain A. H. Parsons of the 2nd Battalion. Also Captain G. D. Pike and Lieutenant R. G. H. Murray were transferred elsewhere, the former to the General Staff, IV Corps, B.E.F., and the latter to the Royal Flying Corps. The Battalion then took over the same front-line sector on the 18th.

A four-days' bombardment commenced on September 21st in preparation for the attack on the 25th, and appeared to be most effective, with little enemy response. Adequate supplies of artillery ammunition now allowed far heavier and more protracted bombardments than had hitherto been possible. On the 23rd No. 3 Double Company's trenches were heavily bombed throughout the morning by medium minenwerfers, killing two, and wounding eight. The position of the German mortar battery was spotted from a flank, but artillery counter-fire was only obtained with the greatest difficulty as all F.O.O.s were employed on definite tasks in the bombardment. It was eventually silenced by the fire of a 4.5 howitzer battery. On the night of the 24th the Battalion was relieved by the 4th Bn. The Black Watch of the Bareilly Brigade, who were to take part in the initial assault the next morning, and withdrew to reserve in the Rue de Bacquerot area.

#### THE ATTACK ON SEPTEMBER 25TH

The scheme for the attack by the Meerut Division in this area was for the Garhwal and Bareilly Brigades to launch the initial assault from the Duck's Bill to Winchester Road, supported by the Dehra Dun Brigade. The springing of the mine under the "Birdcage" was to be the signal for the assault, and, weather conditions permitting, a gas cloud was to be released prior to the attack. After the adequate artillery bombardment already effected, and with ample reserves of ammunition now available, it was hoped that success would attend the use of these, to us, hitherto strange weapons. This was the first occasion on which the British were to use gas, and great optimism as to its potential powers prevailed. This was based on the success achieved by the Germans at the Second Battle of Ypres.

A muffled roar, and marked trembling of the ground at 5.50 a.m., followed by an intense bombardment by all available artillery, marked zero hour for the assault. No news as to progress was received until 7.15 a.m., when the Battalion was ordered to move up to the support

trenches previously occupied in this sector. On arrival there it was learnt that the Bareilly Brigade had captured four lines of enemy trenches, and were about to attack the Moulin de Pietre, a strong work situated in rear of the enemy front trench system. The attack of the Garhwal Brigade on the right had achieved limited results, as their success had been prejudiced by our gas floating back and causing many casualties.

News of these initial successes caused the greatest optimism amongst all ranks, and it was hoped that, by their speedy exploitation, a definite break through would be achieved.

Attack orders for the Dehra Dun Brigade were received at 11 a.m. by which the Battalion was ordered to move up to our original front line and to be in support of the 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders when that battalion attacked. The move forward to the old front line was accomplished with difficulty owing to great congestion in the communication trenches. The previous arrangements, by which certain trenches were allotted for up-and-down movement, proved ineffective in the heat and excitement of the action, and with a heavy hostile counter-bombardment they were soon choked with wounded and debris. As a result the Brigade was not concentrated in the front line until nearly 1 p.m. The German counter-bombardment all over the forward area was deemed to be too severe to warrant movement over the open, and this decision was to be bitterly regretted later, and to prove the turning-point in the success, or failure, of the day's operations.

During the three hours in which concentration of the Reserve Brigade was taking place, the forward elements of the assaulting brigades were severely counter-attacked and driven back, and our concentration was effected too late to be of any value, or to restore the situation. At 1 p.m. verbal orders were received cancelling the attack and ordering the Battalion and 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders to hold our original front line. This was effected by 4 p.m. At 7 p.m. a further extension of the front held by the Battalion was ordered, and the portion held by the 2nd Gurkhas was taken over, in addition. This involved the whole Battalion being in the forward and support trenches, with no battalion reserve.

The scene in the front trenches defies description. The whole of the Bareilly Brigade's first-line equipment, tools, ammunition, greatcoats, and reserve rations, had been dumped ready to be moved forward as opportunity offered, and when the ground gained had been consolidated. As this had not been effected it was lying about choking the narrow trenches; large numbers of dead and wounded also caused congestion and confusion. Much of the gas released, particularly from "The Duck's Bill" on the right, had blown back over our own trenches and caused numerous casualties.

A sickly reek still hung over the whole area and this, together with heavy rain all the afternoon, added to the squalor and confusion apparent on every side.

By nightfall the enemy had re-occupied the majority of his positions captured in the morning, though many forward elements of the assaulting battalions held out and could be heard firing throughout the night. This passed free from enemy action and was devoted to re-organization and the evacuation of casualties.

#### RETROSPECT OF THE ATTACK

Thus ended in disaster a day which had promised far-reaching results after a big initial success. The high hopes based on the use of gas for the first time had been dashed, and its employment had caused grievous loss to our own troops. The Division suffered over three thousand casualties, and the only material result was the pinning of some of the enemy's reserves to this sector. Had the Dehra Dun, the Reserve, Brigade, moved over the open and not along the congested communication trenches as ordered, although increased casualties from shell fire would have been entailed, it seems probable that much of the ground gained might have been retained and consolidated ; as it was, the day was spent in wandering about and achieving nothing.

This was common in these early days of trench warfare in France, when large-scale attacks were infrequent, and it was on the costly experience gained in these operations that the successful tactical methods adopted later in the War were learnt. This, however, did little to alleviate the disappointment and chagrin of the troops concerned.

During the day the Battalion had two British Officers wounded, Captain H. L. Ainsworth and 2nd Lieutenant J. Burke ; seven other ranks killed, and fifty-five wounded.

The subsidiary attack by the 1st Corps from Givenchy to the south of us failed similarly with severe loss, but material, if limited, success was achieved by the main attack from Loos ; active operations in this area continued for a week before the situation stabilized.

#### ACTION OF SUBEDAR-MAJOR BALBAHADUR KHATTRI

Dawn of the 26th September broke with a thick mist covering the forward area. Under cover of this the enemy heavily bombarded No. 4 Double Company's trenches with minenwerfers, and attempted an attack along two parallel ditches running across No-Man's Land. This was frustrated and repulsed with loss. The credit for this is due to the Subedar-Major, Balbahadur Khattri, who was in command of this sector. Anticipating

an attack when the minenwerfer bombardment started, he cleared the trench affected, and moved parties forward to hold the ditches mentioned. The attack was then easily repulsed without a single casualty to our men.

#### RELIEF AND MOVE TO THE FESTUBERT AREA

The Battalion was relieved by a New Army formation on the 27th and, after five days' comparative rest in reserve, took over the line again near Festubert. This was practically the same sector as that held near "The Picquet House" the previous December, but the forward line had been considerably advanced as a result of the attacks during May. The Battalion remained in this area for a fortnight, having three spells of front-line duty, and then moved to the Richebourg area, taking over the line near the Cinder Track. Although these trenches were invariably very wet and unpleasant, the conditions under which they were garrisoned had improved materially since our occupation of them during the previous winter; this was due to the improved situation as regards artillery ammunition, and to the introduction of trench mortars and tramways. Our retaliation to the German bombardment was now of equal intensity and effect, and the trench tramways saved immense labour and fatigue work in bringing up trench stores and rations, and in evacuating casualties.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE MEN TOWARDS TRENCH WARFARE

The men's comments on the changed situation in various familiar sectors were always interesting, and a remark by a senior Gurkha Officer gives a good indication of their attitude to the War as a whole. In one sector, near Richebourg, the front line was about one hundred yards in rear of that held almost exactly a year previously. He naïvely asked how far it was to Germany, and on being told about two hundred miles he remarked: "This war is going to last a long time; we have been here a year and instead of advancing have retired about one hundred yards!" The potency of the remark cannot be denied, nor would a discussion on grand strategy, and Allied resources being gradually developed, have achieved anything. For the men the War was the affair of the "Sirkar," and they obeyed blindly, ignorant of the reason, but convinced of the justness of the British cause. The greatest merit must be accorded to the Indian soldiers for this, and it was a genuine proof of the loyalty and obedience which they had sworn to observe on attestation. For them there was neither the glamour of patriotism, nor risk to their homes or relatives to fight for, and this was even more the case as regards Gurkhas, who owed no allegiance except the soldiers' oath.

### PARADES FOR INSPECTION BY H.M. THE KING AND ANNIVERSARY MUSTER OF OUR ARRIVAL IN FRANCE

On relief from the Richebourg sector the Battalion had a week's rest in billets at Paradis. On October 28th it paraded in brigade formation for inspection by H.M. The King. After a five-miles' march, and two hours' wait in a biting wind and torrents of rain, the parade was cancelled owing to His Majesty having met with an accident at a similar parade elsewhere, at which he was seriously injured. This was naturally a source of the greatest disappointment to all.

The following day, the anniversary of the date on which the Battalion had taken over the front line for the first time, a muster parade was held at which it was found that, of the 13 B.O.s, 17 G.O.s and 804 G.O.R.s who had landed at Marseilles on October 12th, 1914, but 4 B.O.s, 4 G.O.s and 280 G.O.R.s remained. Of these 52 had rejoined from hospital after being wounded, and 105 after recovery from sickness.

### DEPARTURE OF LIEUT.-COLONEL G. T. WIDDICOMBE

On October 30th Lieut.-Colonel Widdicombe was transferred to hospital, and thereafter did not rejoin the 1st Battalion, as on recovery he was transferred to command the 2nd Battalion in India. His departure was a source of the greatest regret to all ranks of the Battalion, in which he had served practically continuously all his service, and which he had commanded for three years. He had long been a sick man, even before the outbreak of war, and it was only sheer devotion to duty that had kept him at the head of the Battalion through the severe strain of the last twelve months. He had, however, realized the ambition of his life and had seen his beloved Battalion proved in the furnace of war and not found wanting. In fact, under Colonel Widdicombe's firm but gentle hand, and able command, it had achieved a name for itself second to none.

### RUMOURS OF TRANSFER OF THE INDIAN CORPS CONFIRMED

At this time persistent rumours of the transfer of the Indian Corps to another theatre of war, which had been prevalent for some time, were confirmed. Several battalions had already been dispatched to Egypt, and had been replaced by others who had been doing garrison duty in that country.

### LAST TOUR OF TRENCH DUTY, NEAR RICHEBOURG

The Battalion was to have one last spell of duty in the front line, and on November 4th relieved the 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders in the Cinder

Track sector at Richebourg. This was held for twenty-four hours under the worst conditions yet experienced, the various picquets in the front line having to stand waist-deep in mud and water. The Battalion was then relieved by the 4th Bn. Seaforth Highlanders, and this was to prove our farewell to that fine battalion. Owing to our impending departure elsewhere, it, and other Territorial Battalions which had been attached to the Indian Corps, were transferred to other divisions. We had been brigaded with them for ten months, throughout which the friendly comradeship and close liaison had been most marked, and we parted with the greatest regret.

#### THE BATTALION LEAVES THE FORWARD AREA FINALLY

The Battalion left the forward area by omnibus on the 6th November and was billeted in the Hazebrouck-Lillers area until the departure for Marseilles at the end of the month. While here all trench stores and equipment were handed over, and the first-line transport horses exchanged for mules, a fact bitterly resented by our mess-cart driver Rifleman Randhoj Mal, a reservist. His cart and horse, which had been requisitioned from a French brewery a year previously, had throughout been a well-known feature of the Battalion, and his parting from his favourite was a sad episode. We now learnt to our great regret that our Divisional Commander, Major-General Claud Jacob, was not to accompany the Division from France, but was to be transferred to a newly raised "New Army" division. He visited the Battalion in billets on November 17th to say good-bye and personally shook hands with all British and Gurkha Officers.

#### COMMENDATION OF THE BATTALION'S SERVICES BY MAJOR-GENERAL JACOB

In reviewing the Battalion's work and achievements during its tour in France both before, during, and after he had assumed command of the Dehra Dun Brigade, Major-General Jacob spoke in the most congratulatory and flattering terms, complimenting all ranks on their steadiness under fire, consistent good work and spirit, and invariable good discipline and behaviour, both in and out of the trenches; in particular he emphasized the fact that the 9th Gurkha Rifles had never given up a single yard of the line entrusted to them, and had only lost one prisoner. He stated that, in his opinion, it was the best all-round unit in the Meerut Division, and probably in the Indian Corps. Our sadness at parting from him was somewhat relieved by a most cheerful guest night when he and M. Robiony, our late interpreter, to whom we were also bidding adieu, dined in the Officers' Mess.

### THE SUBEDAR-MAJOR'S VISIT TO ENGLAND

Prior to our leaving France the Subedar-Major, Balbahadur Khattri, accompanied a party of Indian Officers for a week's visit to England and personally conducted tour of London. While there he was received at Buckingham Palace by Her Majesty The Queen, in the King's absence owing to his accident, and was invested with the Order of British India, 2nd Class, which had been awarded to him some months previously. Reviewing the period the Indian Corps was in France it seems a pity that such visits, both of Indian Officers and selected men, were not organized more frequently. There is no doubt that, having come as far as France, the men were very disappointed at not seeing "Vilayet," and the tales and description of it brought back by sick and wounded undoubtedly enhanced this regret.

### DEPARTURE FOR MARSEILLES AND EMBARKATION

The Battalion entrained at Lillers on the evening of November 23rd and left for Marseilles. The Corps Commander, Lieut.-General Sir Charles Anderson, came to the station and personally bade farewell to all the officers. He in his turn complimented the Battalion in most congratulatory terms on the work performed and the good behaviour in France. We reached Marseilles on November 26th and were most comfortably camped at Camp Santi, five miles west of the town. After certain readjustments of personnel with the Base Depot, the Battalion embarked in S.S. "Cawdor Castle" on December 4th and sailed for an unknown destination on the 6th.

### RETROSPECT OF FRANCE

Thus ended the time the 1st Battalion served in France, a period of nearly fourteen months since disembarkation at Marseilles on October 12th, 1914. Viewed in retrospect, the good fortune of being in a formation selected to go to France on the outbreak of War can be appreciated. Indian troops had previously never been employed in a European theatre of war, and the advisability of their employment against a European enemy had, and has been, the subject of much controversy. Be this as it may, there can be no question that the Indian Corps not only played its part in France in 1914-1915, but played it well. The Indian Corps arrived at a time when the small British Expeditionary Force was as hard, or harder, pressed than ever it had been on any former, or subsequent, occasion, and so filled a gap for which there were no trained troops in the whole Empire immediately available. It not only relieved some of the hard-pressed regiments of the B.E.F. which had been fighting continuously since Mons, but it



also garrisoned a large portion of the line, and allowed time for the recruitment, training, and concentration of the Territorial, Colonial, and New Army formations.

Amongst the many regiments in France, embracing every caste and creed of Indian soldier and follower, the Gurkhas were outstanding in gallantry, initiative and devotion to duty. Of the six Gurkha Battalions included in the two Divisions of the Corps, the 1st Battalion had achieved a name and record second to none ; it had mobilized in August 1914 with a reputation for good training and discipline, but since re-organization into a " Khas Gurkha " unit in 1893, it had, hitherto, never had an opportunity of proving its true worth on active service, for really serious fighting in the Tirah Campaign of 1897 was not experienced. Our men, as a whole, were regarded before the War as of rather an unknown quantity, but the 1st Battalion's achievements in France, and those of all three Battalions subsequently in other theatres, disproved, once and for all time, any idea of inferiority to other castes of Gurkha, and established an equality with them which cannot, again, form the subject of doubt. Their gallantry in action when called on to attack, their tenacity of purpose and initiative when holding the line, and their cheerful good spirits, behaviour, and discipline, wherever they were, and in the worst possible climatic conditions, were the subject of comment and approbation throughout the Brigade, Division, and Corps.

While in France the 1st Battalion had occupied the forward trench line on twenty-six occasions, sometimes for as long as a fortnight, or more, on end without relief. Though frequently heavily bombarded, bombed, and attacked, not a single sector of trench held was ever lost. In addition, throughout the fourteen months in that theatre only one man in the whole Battalion had been captured by the enemy. Also, a prominent part had been taken in the three major attacks in which the Meerut Division was engaged, and on each of these occasions the compliments and thanks of the superior commanders had been received.

During the period in France the Battalion suffered the following battle casualties :

	B.O.s.	G.O.s.	G.O.R.s.
Killed . . . . .	4	5	125
Died of Wounds . . . . .	1	1	22
Wounded . . . . .	6	10	511
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>658</b>

The Battalion had received 19 B.O.s, 8 G.O.s and 679 O.R.s in drafts, thus almost exactly turning over itself in strength in just over a year.

For the services of the 1st Battalion in France the Regiment subsequently received the following Battle-Honours:

“LA BASSÉE, 1914,” “ARMENTIÈRES, 1914,” “FESTUBERT, 1914, '15,” “GIVENCHY, 1914,” “NEUVE CHAPELLE,” “AUBERS,” “LOOS,” “FRANCE AND FLANDERS, 1914-1915.”

March 10th, “Neuve Chapelle” Day, is now celebrated as an annual battle commemoration holiday in the 1st Battalion.

## CHAPTER IX

1916

### VOYAGE OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO MESOPOTAMIA AND THE SITUATION ON ARRIVAL

S.S. "Cawdor Castle." Call at Malta. Attack by enemy Submarines, off Crete. Call at Alexandria and Port Said. Arrival at Basra. Conditions at Basra in January 1916. Voyage Up-river. Situation on arrival in Mesopotamia. News of the sinking of S.S. "Persia."

#### S.S. "CAWDOR CASTLE"

**T**HE 1st Battalion embarked in the S.S. "Cawdor Castle" on December 4th, 1915. This vessel was a cargo boat of the Union Castle Line of about 5,000 tons draught, and as she was not fitted to carry animals, the First-Line Transport, under Lieutenant C. Frisch, was embarked in another vessel, the S.S. "Taroba." On board the "Cawdor Castle," in addition to the Battalion, was the Sikh Wing of the 93rd Burma Infantry and the Rawal Pindi and Meerut Base Hospitals, a total of 1,520 all ranks. The accommodation for the officers was both meagre and indifferent, but that for the non-commissioned officers and men on the large airy cargo decks was most comfortable.

The ship sailed at 10 a.m. on the 6th and called at Toulon that afternoon; thence we proceeded in convoy with two other vessels, escorted by a French destroyer, the following morning. Enemy submarines were most active in the Mediterranean Sea at this time, and as a result the course followed hugged the French and Italian coasts closely.

#### CALL AT MALTA

We reached Malta during the morning of December 11th, and our vessel was ordered to proceed into the Grand Harbour, while the remainder of the convoy went on independently. After dropping anchor it was found that we had been ordered in, in error, and we sailed again at 5 p.m., alone and without escort. The Grand Harbour presented a most interesting sight, being full of French warcraft of all descriptions from "Dreadnoughts" to destroyers. These were all as pick and span as if for a peace-

time review, in marked contrast to the few British light craft present which were blackened with smoke from patrol and escort duty.

#### ATTACK BY ENEMY SUBMARINES, NEAR CRETE

On the afternoon of the 13th we were attacked by an enemy submarine in the vicinity of Crete. The first intimation of attack was a shell falling about eight hundred yards astern of the ship. It was a clear calm afternoon, and about 2 p.m., and it was easily discovered that a submarine had broken surface about eight thousand yards in our rear, and was clearly visible. Our hired transport, like all others passing through the Mediterranean at this time, was armed with a 12-pounder naval gun mounted on the stern, and manned by two Royal Marine gunners. The German vessel was at once engaged by this gun, and our ship was ordered to proceed at full speed on a zigzag course. The alarm was sounded, and the men fell in quietly on their posts. The enemy boat stopped on being engaged, but continued firing and made good practice, though without scoring a direct hit. About a dozen shells were fired before we were out of range. At 3 p.m., and again at four, a second submarine appeared close on our port quarter, but disappeared on being fired at and was not seen again. It had been an exciting if nerve-racking experience. The men deserve the greatest credit for falling in quietly and without panic, and this behaviour caused the ship's commander to publish a complimentary order commending them on their steadiness. It must be admitted that they did not fully realize the critical position in which we were placed, as their main comment was that there was nothing to fear from such small shells, and that they had experienced very much worse in France. Had we been sunk and forced to take to open boats it would have been a very different story. Our escape was undoubtedly due to the good marksmanship of the two Marine gunners, who were assisted by a carrying party of the men, and to the ship's engineers and stokers who managed to get up a speed of fifteen knots in a very short time; we were told that this speed exceeded any ever accomplished by the ship previously, even on her maiden trials.

#### CALL AT ALEXANDRIA AND PORT SAID AND ARRIVAL AT BASRA

We reached Alexandria on the 16th, and Port Said on the following day; both presented most interesting sights in view of their being base ports for the Gallipoli and Salonika operations.

At Port Said the few remaining details of the Burma Military Police were disembarked, together with those of other units which had come with us from Marseilles. We entered the Canal on the following day and

reached Suez that evening. Here the wing of the 93rd Infantry was transferred to the S.S. "Taroba," a fact which greatly increased the accommodation available for our men, an amenity which was later on much appreciated in the heat of the Red Sea. At Suez we were definitely told that our destination was Basra, and we sailed for that port on the 20th. Aden was passed on Christmas Day, and we arrived at the bar off the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab River at 6 a.m. on January 2nd, 1916. The ship sailed at 4 p.m. and arrived at Basra on the morning of January 4th, exactly a month after we had embarked at Marseilles. Here Captain F. N. Maclaran, with a draft from the Depot, joined the Battalion.

#### CONDITIONS AT BASRA IN JANUARY 1916

In view of what it became later on in the War the appearance of, and conditions prevailing at, the port deserve a brief description. With the exception of a few camps scattered among the palm groves, and many vessels lying in the stream waiting to be unloaded, the port presented a spectacle very little different from what it must have been before the War, and quite unlike the base port for an overseas campaign. No piers, or jetties, existed, and no ocean-going ships could go alongside the bank for unloading. As a result all stores and cargo had first to be transhipped into barges or native craft, and these again unloaded at the bank. The result was the retention for periods of up to a month or more of sea-going vessels urgently required in other theatres all over the world, and great delay in discharging stores and ammunition of vital importance at the front, two hundred and fifty miles away up-river.

The situation ashore was little better, and the lack of communications, and inadequate facilities for storage and issue, involved a further delay in equipping and feeding the newly arrived. All departments were understaffed and overworked, bound hand and foot by peace-time "red tape" and procedure, and in glaring contrast to the celerity and efficiency to which we had become accustomed in France. In fact we had again come into Indian conditions and "Babuism," and our experience at the base was an indication of what we were to suffer later on at the front. Seven or eight flat-bottomed river paddle-steamers, mostly belonging to the Lynch Company which had traded between Basra and Baghdad before the War, were, with local native sailing craft, alone available to maintain the equivalent of four divisions, two hundred and fifty miles from the base. Such were the conditions obtaining at Basra on our arrival, and these were undoubtedly responsible to a large degree for the subsequent disasters in the attempt to relieve Kut-al-Amara.

The Battalion remained on board the "Cawdor Castle" throughout

January 5th and drew rations and stores from the base depots ashore ; the first-line transport, which had arrived ahead, had already been disembarked, but was left in Basra on our departure as the river craft were too small to carry animals.

#### VOYAGE UP-RIVER

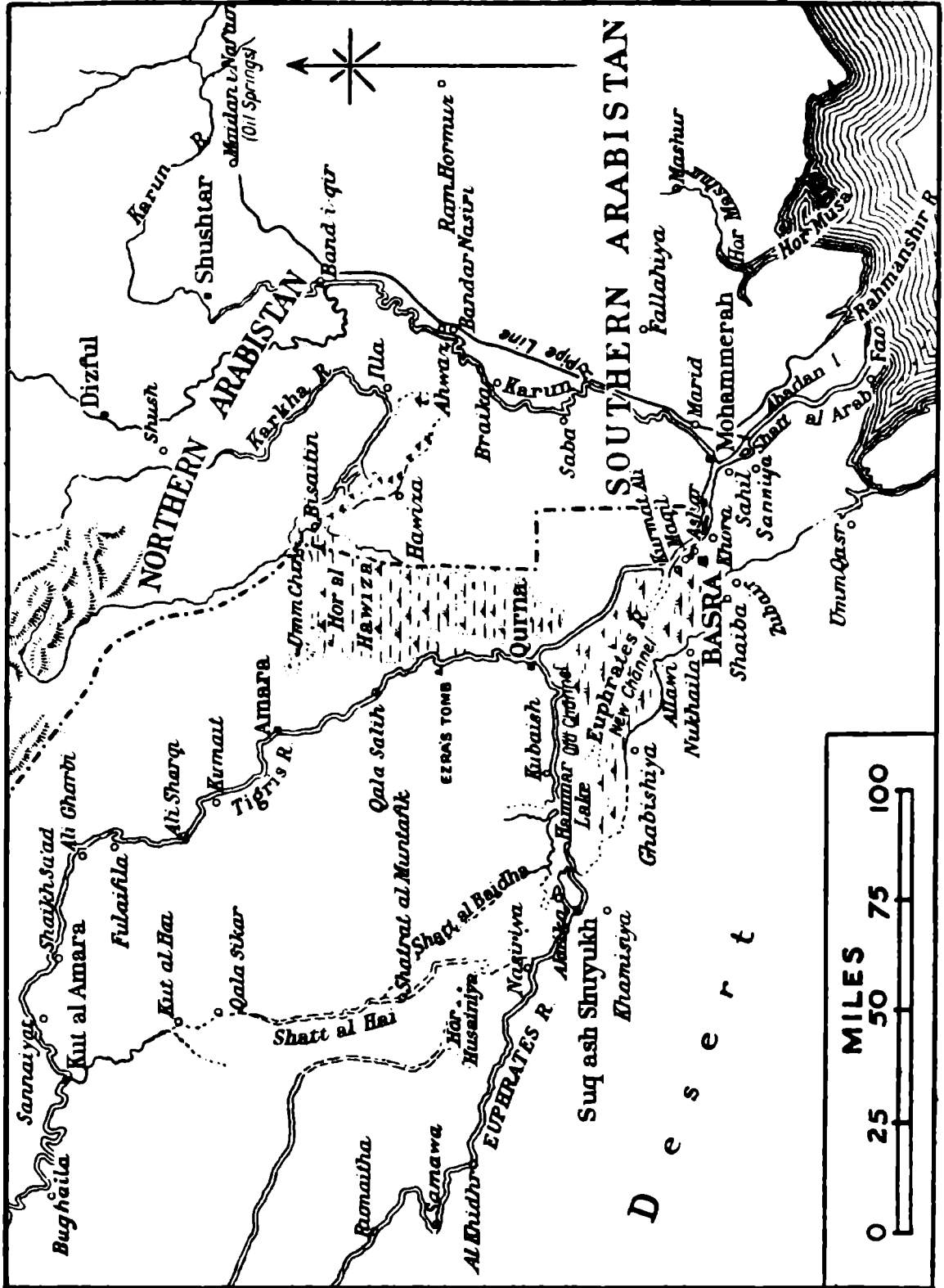
The 1st Battalion embarked in the "Mosul" on the evening of the 6th for the voyage up-river ; she was an aged flat-bottomed Turkish paddle-steamer which had been sunk at the Battle of Kurna in 1915, but had been refloated and impressed to help out the grave shortage of river craft available to maintain the force. Her asthmatic engines were only capable of some five miles per hour against the stream, and, owing to not having alternating paddles, her only method of negotiating the numerous bends of the river was to charge the bank and then to reverse off once, or even more often, before going ahead. There was practically no accommodation for troops in the steamer, so the majority of the men were put into two large barges lashed alongside ; with the primitive methods of navigation above mentioned it is surprising that some were not flung overboard. The vessel tied up to the bank each evening when, after picquets had been posted, the men were allowed ashore to cook meals.

Ezra's Tomb was passed on the 8th, Amara on the 9th, and Ali Gharbi reached on the 11th. At this place orders were received for us to proceed to join the Tigris Corps at Shaik Saad, and the vessel arrived at that place at 1 a.m. on January 12th.

#### THE SITUATION ON OUR ARRIVAL IN MESOPOTAMIA

A brief summary of the campaign up to this date is necessary to appreciate the situation prevailing when the Battalion arrived and joined the Tigris Corps.

In November 1914, one brigade of the Poona Division had been sent from India to protect the pipe line running down to Abadan on the Shatt al Arab River from the valuable oil-fields in Southern Persia. Adequately to effect this, the remainder of the Poona Division was dispatched and Basra occupied. To protect this important port an extension of our occupation was found necessary, and another Division, the 12th, was sent from India. Three successful actions at Shaiba, Kurna, and Nasariyeh were fought, and the Basra vilayet, up to and including Amara, was occupied. As a result of this initial success undue optimism, and an underestimation of the Turkish fighting power, prevailed, and it was decided to push on to capture Baghdad. Reinforcements of two divisions were asked for, a request which had entailed the dispatch of the Indian Corps from France.



**SOUTHERN ARABISTAN**

**NORTHERN ARABISTAN**

D e s e r t



Without awaiting our arrival, the Poona Division advanced and captured Kut-al-Amara, and then was engaged in the severe action of Ctesiphon, some twenty miles south-east of Baghdad. Although a tactical success, the heavy losses incurred, together with lack of transport and arrival of large enemy reinforcements, necessitated a retirement back to Kut-al-Amara, where the greater part of the force was invested on December 24th.

The Lahore and Meerut Divisions, largely reconstituted with new units from Egypt and India, started arriving piecemeal in the middle of December, and were nominally concentrated at Ali Gharbi prior to advancing for the relief of Kut. Misinformed as to the supply situation of the garrison, and again underestimating the Turkish power of resistance, the Meerut Division was pushed forward before being properly concentrated. Only partially staffed, and lacking the vital ancillary services, it fought a severe action at Shaik Saad, an indecisive battle which involved losses of over four thousand men. It was four days after this battle that the Battalion arrived and disembarked in the forward area.

#### NEWS OF THE SINKING OF S.S. " PERSIA "

On arrival at Basra, news was received of the torpedoing and sinking of S.S. " Persia " in the Mediterranean, on December 30th. To the great regret of all ranks of the Regiment, amongst those drowned in this disaster were Lieutenant A. F. and Mrs. Spreckley and their youngest child, and Captain H. L. Ainsworth of the 1/10th Gurkhas, who had been attached to the Battalion in France, and wounded at the Battle of Loos ; Spreckley had been wounded by a bomb earlier in September. Both " Spreck " and " Pinky," as they were familiarly known to innumerable friends, had recovered in England and were on their way to India to return to duty. Amongst the passengers who were saved was Lieutenant C. W. F. Scott, then returning to India after having been severely wounded in Gallipoli with the Ceylon Planters' Rifles ; this battalion had been in the initial landing at Anzac with the Australian and New Zealand Corps. Lieutenant Scott was posted to the 2nd Battalion on his eventual arrival in India.



## CHAPTER X

1916

### MESOPOTAMIA. THE ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE KUT-AL-AMARA

Disembarkation at Shaik Saad. Night March and Battle of Wadi. Transfer of the Battalion to the Lahore Division. Attack on Arab Village. Battle of Hannah. Camp Orah and outpost duty. Concentration, advance and Battle of Dujailah Redoubt. Return to Orah and outpost duty Abu Roman area. Floods. Second Battle of Hannah. Falahiyeh and First Battle of Sannaiyat. Attack at Abu Roman. Night attack, Beit Aiessa. Attack on Beit Aiessa. Final attack on Sannaiyat. Establishment of outposts towards Sinn Abtar Redoubt. Dispatch of the "Julnar." Fall of Kut-al-Amara.

#### DISEMBARKATION AT SHAIK SAAD

**T**HE "Mosul" tied up to the left bank at 10 a.m. on January 12th, and the Battalion immediately commenced disembarkation, with orders to join the 9th Brigade as Corps Troops. H.Q. of the Tigris Corps and 7th Meerut Division were situated on this bank, and the whole morning, and greater part of the afternoon, were spent in disembarking stores and equipment and in drawing first-line transport. Complete first-line G.S. limbered wagons and animals had been brought from France, but these had been disembarked and left at Basra as it was impossible to bring them up in river craft. At noon the Battalion received orders that it would be attached to the Bareilly Brigade for an attack the following day, and would join it at a stated rendezvous after dark for a night advance. During the day Lieutenant H. Hickley, 2/7th Gurkhas, joined the Battalion.

We then learnt to our great disappointment that our own formation, the Dehra Dun Brigade, with which the Battalion had been since the departure from India in August 1914, had been reconstructed with fresh battalions from Egypt and India, leaving the 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders as the only original battalion. All ranks hoped that this would be only a temporary measure, and that we would rejoin our friends as soon as the situation permitted.

It was only now that we could appreciate the disastrous effect of the premature advance of the Tigris Corps from Ali Gharbi before its vital

ancillary services had arrived. This premature advance had been ordered on incorrect information, which indicated that little enemy opposition to the advance of the relief column might be expected ; also that the beleaguered garrison in Kut-al-Amara could hold out for a very much shorter period than was actually the case. The action at Shaik Saad prior to the Battalion's arrival had been much more severe than at first reported, and the force had suffered over four thousand casualties, in killed and wounded. These casualties strained the inadequate medical services almost to breaking-point, to the indescribable suffering of the wounded, many of whom did not even have their wounds dressed for three or four days.

#### CONCENTRATION AND NIGHT ADVANCE

The Battalion marched from the river at 6 p.m. and joined the Bareilly Brigade at the rendezvous at 9 p.m. This was commanded by Brigadier-General Norie, late of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles, and consisted of the 2nd Black Watch, 6th Jats, 41st Dogras and 9th Bhopal Infantry. The 1st Seaforths passed us in the process of concentration and many cheerful whispered greetings passed between their men and ours.

The concentration of the force of three Infantry Brigades, the 19th, 21st, and 35th, one Cavalry Brigade, and Divisional Artillery was completed by 9.30 p.m. ; soon after an advance in close columns across the open desert began and was continued until midnight ; a halt was then ordered and the troops deployed according to plan, in preparation for a further advance to be made at dawn. The night was fine but cold and no enemy opposition had been encountered. The plan of attack was for the force to advance in echelons of brigades against the Turkish left flank, thought to be on the Wadi River, to which they had retired after the Battle of Shaik Saad. It was hoped that the leading brigade would strike the enemy's left flank and, by pinning him to his ground, would enable the remainder of our force to outflank him and cut his line of retreat along the river.

The Bareilly Brigade was ordered to act as advanced guard, with the Battalion as vanguard.

#### THE BATTLE OF WADI

Daylight broke with a slight haze covering the plain. The Battalion moved at 7.30 a.m. in lines of double companies, with No. 3, under Captain B. A. R. Blewitt, leading. The country consisted of bare open desert intersected by shallow irrigation channels and quite devoid of any cover. Occasional Arab encampments were passed and a few mounted men emerged

from most of these, fired several shots, and galloped off towards the Turkish lines. After advancing some five miles the Wadi River was reached; although nearly dry it had steep banks which had to be cut back to allow of the passage of artillery and transport, and this caused considerable delay. At 10.20 a.m. the Battalion was ordered to change direction slightly northwards, and at 10.45 came under long-range shrapnel fire from a Turkish battery. At 11 a.m. it came under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, partly in enfilade, and though still some one thousand yards from the enemy's position, casualties were at once incurred. The Battalion deployed according to plan, Nos. 1 and 2 Double Companies moving up on the left of No. 3, with No. 4 in reserve. The remainder of the Brigade deployed on the Battalion's right. Despite this heavy fire the Battalion advanced to within three hundred yards of the Turkish position which was almost entirely obscured by a mirage. The Brigade was then ordered not to commit itself to close quarters, but to attempt to pin the enemy to his ground while the remainder of the force turned his left flank. Shallow pits were therefore dug with Sirhind tools, and a sustained fire kept up on the enemy's trenches. This apparently achieved little result as the Turks could be seen transferring reinforcements to their left flank to meet our further attacks as they developed. The meagre artillery support available was also ineffective. Continual sniping went on throughout the afternoon with no further advance either by the Battalion or Brigade, which now had all five battalions deployed in the line. Numbers of our wounded were lying about in the open under fire, and these were most gallantly attended to by the Battalion's medical officer, Captain Cullen, I.M.S., although he himself was slightly wounded.

At about 3 p.m. an attack by the 28th Brigade (the reconstructed Garhwal Brigade of the Meerut Division) was launched about one and a half miles south of the Battalion's position, but failed to reach the strong Turkish position, and suffered very heavy casualties. The outflanking attacks to our north had likewise failed to cut the enemy's line of retreat and darkness fell with our objective unachieved. This was largely due to the delay incurred in crossing the Wadi River in the morning, and to the great difficulty of passing information and issuing orders.

At 6 p.m. the Battalion's line was re-organized and No. 1 Double Company refused the left flank and put out battle outposts. At 7 p.m. tools, water, ammunition, and machine-guns were brought up and the line consolidated. Wounded were evacuated as soon as possible, but owing to the only available ambulance being some miles in rear, great difficulty was experienced in reaching it, and many walking wounded suffered great hardship by losing their way and wandering about in the desert most of

the night. A number of these were also killed by marauding Arabs in search of loot.

The Battalion's casualties during the day had been : Killed : Lieutenant I. J. Hughes, 2nd Lieutenant W. Mowbray, 2 G.O.s and 20 O.R.s. Wounded: Lieutenant F. S. Poynder, 5 G.O.s and 83 O.R.s.

#### SITUATION ON JANUARY 14TH

Reconnaissance at dawn disclosed that the Turks had retired up-river during the night, our outflanking attacks having failed to cut their line of retreat. A column was at once organized to follow them up, but the advance provoked heavy hostile artillery fire which prevented the gunboats and parent ships from moving up-stream, and also disclosed the enemy strongly entrenched in the narrow Hannah defile between the river and the Suwaikieh Marsh.

With the force disorganized after the action of the previous day a further advance, or attack, was considered inadvisable, and the division was ordered to return to bivouac on the river bank, north-west of Wadi. This withdrawal was effected without incident except for occasional brushes with marauding Arabs.

The force had suffered over one thousand six hundred casualties and had achieved nothing, except again to prove the lessons of the Battle of Shaik Saad. These were the futility of attacking a strongly entrenched and stubborn enemy across the open without adequate artillery support, the great difficulty of observing artillery fire in mirage, and that a flank attack, to envelop and turn an entrenched enemy out of a position, must be pressed home and not only threatened.

#### TRANSFER TO THE LAHORE DIVISION

On January 16th the Battalion was transferred to the 9th Brigade of the newly arrived Lahore Division, and ordered to join this formation on the right bank of the river. This crossing was done by ferry under very bad weather conditions, and the Battalion bivouacked near the river bank. The other units in the Brigade were the 1st Bn. Highland Light Infantry, 1/1st Gurkha Rifles, and 93rd Burma Infantry; the latter had been with the Dehra Dun Brigade for about two or three months prior to the Indian Corps leaving France. We were much flattered to learn that the 1st Seaforths had asked that the Battalion might be allowed to remain in the same brigade with them, but unfortunately this was not sanctioned and caused great disappointment to all ranks.

## ATTACK ON ARAB VILLAGE, JANUARY 19TH

There were few enemy on the right bank, but Arab Village, situated on the river bank opposite the Hannah defile, harboured small bodies of hostile cavalry who continually sniped the bivouac.

On the morning of January 19th the Battalion was ordered to attack this village, the capture of which was achieved with little difficulty, although there was heavy firing from the opposite bank of the river. This fire was effectively checked and kept down by the M.G. Section, whose commander, Havildar Karn Bahadur Khattri, manhandling one gun, brought it into position in the foremost line on the river bank, and by his action in checking the hostile fire enabled the remainder of the Battalion to construct trenches and consolidate the line gained; this non-commissioned officer was awarded the I.O.M., 2nd Class, as an immediate reward for his gallant conduct.

The casualties suffered during the day were Captain A. H. Parsons wounded, four G.O.R.s killed and six wounded. The remainder of the Brigade came up the following day, when further outposts were established and a bridgehead formed to cover the divisional bivouac. These outposts were occupied until February 12th without incident, when the Brigade was relieved and returned to camp at Orah. On January 21st a heavy attack was launched by the Meerut Division on the Hannah defile opposite Arab Village, but, though assisted by fire from the right bank, it failed with terrible losses. The Tigris Corps was thereafter compelled to sit still and re-organize and to await reinforcements. The paucity of available river craft greatly delayed the arrival of these new formations and drafts.

## CAMP ORAH

Orah ruins and camp are situated on the right bank of the River Tigris, at a point just south of the Wadi River and camp.

It was pleasant to return to camp, as the Battalion had now been without tents for nearly a month, and in the worst possible weather conditions of cold and wet. However, even this camp compared unfavourably with trenches in France in winter, as the force was quite devoid of the luxuries issued to the troops there, and the rations were poor and meagre in contrast with the generous scale formerly received. In spite of this, the sick return remained surprisingly low.

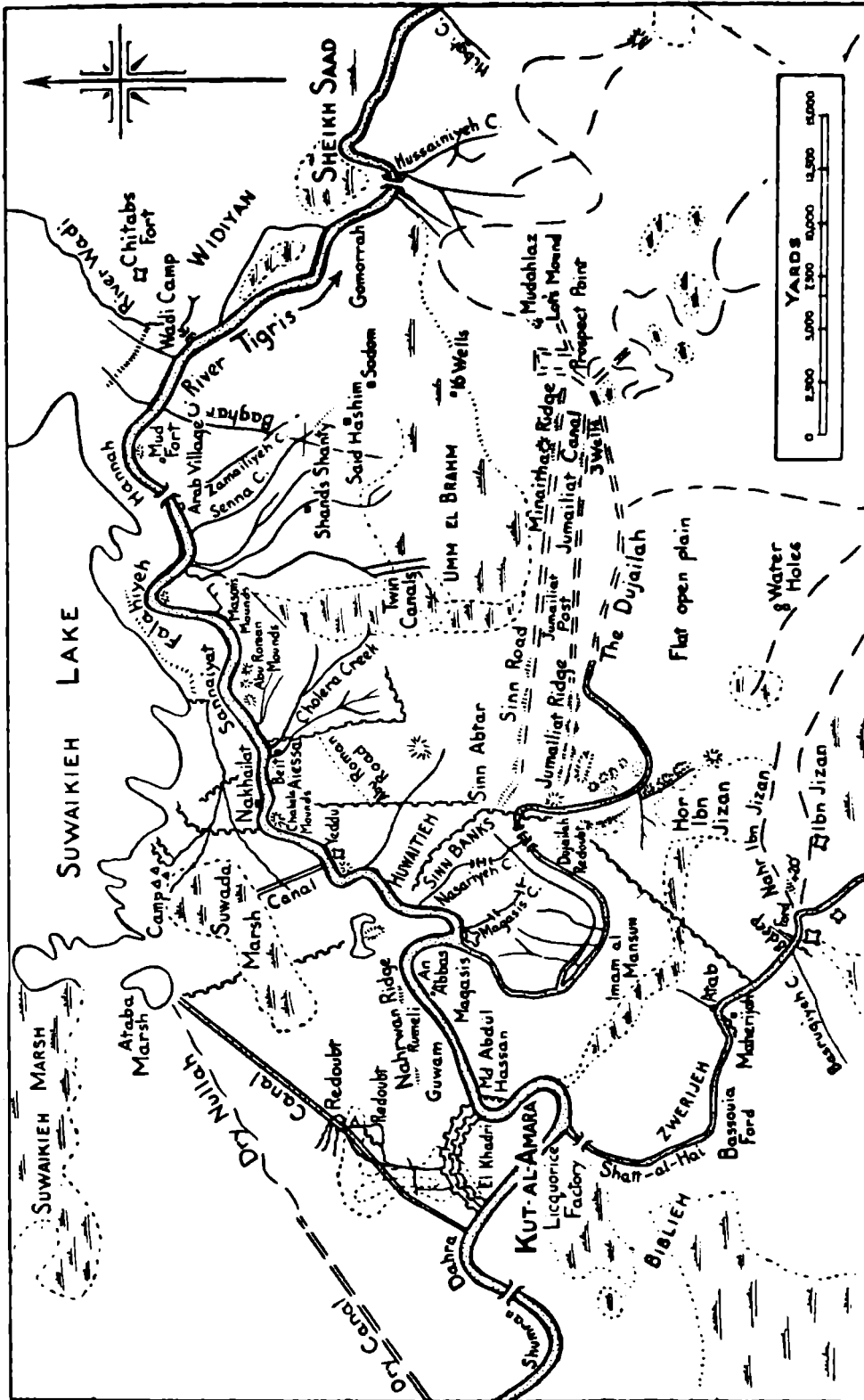
On February 14th a draft of two B.O.s, Lieutenant F. N. Lane and 2nd Lieutenant H. G. D. Clutterbuck, three G.O.s and one hundred and three G.O.R.s of the 2/7th Gurkha Rifles joined the Battalion; this draft had been intended for its own battalion, but on arrival had found them

in the beleaguered force in Kut-al-Amara. They were at first formed into a separate company, but were later absorbed into our own companies, to replace wastage.

On February 20th Lieut.-Colonel C. M. Porteous, of the 2nd Battalion, arrived and assumed command of the Battalion. Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Widdicombe on discharge from hospital in England was ordered to assume command of the 2nd Battalion in India. The Brigade remained in camp until the 21st February, when it moved up-stream and established an out-post line beyond Mason's Mounds, towards Abu Roman. This line was consolidated by February 28th, when the Brigade returned to bivouac at the Sanna position. Lieutenant H. Hickley and 2nd Lieutenant H. G. D. Clutterbuck (2/7th Gurkha Rifles attached) and Subedar Rup Sing were wounded, and one G.O.R. killed and thirteen wounded during the operation. A successful feint crossing of the river opposite Abu Roman after a night march, combined with heavy shelling of a camp on the 23rd February, had caused severe casualties to the enemy.

#### CONCENTRATION AND ATTACK ON DUJAILAH REDOUBT, March 7th-10th

The first week in March was spent in preparing a concentration area near the " Pools of Siloam " for a proposed attack on the Dujailah Redoubt, the southern flank of the strongly fortified Sinn position which guarded Kut. The situation on the left bank had developed into trench warfare following the heavy fighting in January, and successive strongly fortified trenches on a narrow front between the river and the Suwaikieh Marsh offered little scope for a successful advance. It was decided therefore secretly to transfer the 28th, the 36th, half the 37th Infantry Brigades, and a portion of the Meerut Divisional Artillery, to the right bank and, together with the Cavalry Brigade and Lahore Division, to make a night advance against the Sinn position and to attack its right flank. This position was situated some twelve miles from the point of concentration. The concentration, a model of good staff work, was successfully carried out after dark on the evening of March 7th, and the two divisions marched at 10.10 p.m. The plan was to reach the Jumailat Ridge just before dawn and then for an outflanking force under Major-General G. V. Kember, consisting of the 36th, 28th and 9th Brigades, to move west and attack the Dujailah Redoubt from the left flank. The remainder of the force was to be held ready to exploit any initial success gained, and to pass round the flank of the Redoubt and advance on Kut from the south. A bridge to cross the River Hai was carried with the train, and hopes ran high that, by a rapid and secret advance, the strong Sinn position would be turned and Kut relieved.



KUT-AL-AMARA AND THE RIVER TIGRIS.

1916.

The first part of the programme was successful beyond the most sanguine hopes ; the two divisions with first-line transport, artillery, and a bridging train, moving by night across flat unknown desert scored with irrigation channels and guided by a single officer, marched over twelve miles on a compass bearing, and arrived at the point of assembly practically up to the time programme ; a remarkable achievement.

The Dujailah depression, a broad slightly swampy waterway almost dry, was crossed before dawn, and the flanking division advanced to its assembly positions with orders to attack as soon as these were reached. The 9th Brigade on the right connected with the 28th Brigade, while the 36th Brigade moved further west to attack the Redoubt from the left rear ; the Cavalry Brigade guarded the left flank. Only a few small Arab encampments could be observed, the occupants of which appeared to be quite unaware of our presence, and the Redoubt as far as could be seen was only very lightly occupied. Everything augured well for the attack, and hopes ran high. The attack by the 9th Brigade was ordered on a two-battalion front, the 1st Gurkha Rifles on the right and the 93rd Burma Infantry on the left. Our Nos. 3 and 4 Companies with two machine-guns were in support of the leading battalions and Nos. 1 and 2 Companies and the second machine-gun sub-section with the Highland Light Infantry, in reserve. Shortly prior to the commencement of the attack, orders postponing zero hour were received from Corps Head-quarters in order to allow an artillery bombardment of the Redoubt. With this position either empty, or at the most very lightly occupied, the probable value of a bombardment by the limited artillery available did not appear to justify the surrender of the initiative achieved by the surprise advance which had been so brilliantly successful ; it would also allow the enemy time to rush up reinforcements. In spite of the strongest protest by all brigade commanders, no advance was allowed to take place before 10 a.m., by which time strong enemy forces had occupied the trenches and Redoubt, and our attack was at once vigorously opposed. The attack had to proceed some three thousand yards from the point of assembly to the objective, and it was soon found that there were numerous cleverly concealed forward trenches in the low scrub which had been quite untouched by the artillery. The 9th Brigade's attack commenced at 10 a.m., the leading battalions advancing in extended lines across the open plain devoid of all cover, and inadequately supported by either artillery or machine-gun fire.

The attack was made in full view of the Redoubt and enemy positions which afforded the now strong garrison almost perfect observation ; by 2 p.m. it was definitely held up some fifteen hundred yards from the Redoubt. By this time the left half-Battalion had been absorbed into



the 93rd Burma Infantry's positions, and orders for the right half-Battalion and H.L.I. to move up and continue the attack were received. At 3.30 p.m. a further attack commenced which resulted in an advance of some five hundred yards at the cost of further heavy losses. The whole Brigade was now committed and held up, as was the advance of the 28th and 36th Brigades, on our left.

At 4 p.m. a new assault by the 8th and 37th Brigades was staged, to be pushed in against the south-eastern face of the Redoubt, and orders were sent to the flanking force to support this attack by a further advance from the south-west. However, in spite of the most gallant efforts, and further losses, no appreciable advance was made. The new attack by the 8th and 37th Brigades succeeded in reaching and partially entering the Redoubt, but was counter-attacked and driven back. In the 37th Brigade was included the 1/2nd Gurkhas, for whom this was their first action since arrival. Like their 2nd Battalion in France they, to our regret, lost several senior officers, all old friends of the Regiment. With the failure of this second attack the day's operations came to a close with the realization of a definite failure.

At 6.30 p.m. the 9th Brigade re-organized and entrenched ; the Battalion digging in between the 1st Bn. Highland Light Infantry and 93rd Burma Infantry. The night passed quietly and was spent in re-organizing scattered detachments, burying dead, and evacuating wounded. It had been a disastrous day, and a costly one for the Battalion ; two company commanders, Captains B. A. R. Blewitt and A. H. Parsons, and twenty-nine other ranks had been killed. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel C. M. Porteous, Lieutenant F. N. Lane, 2nd Lieutenant O. J. Pryor, six G.O.s, including the subedar-major, and one hundred and seven other ranks had been wounded. The wounded suffered terribly in the retirement to Orah the following day.

The complete failure of the two assaults during the day, heavy casualties, lack of water, and the distance the force was away from the river and its supply organization, decided the Corps Commander to retire on Orah the following morning ; orders to this effect were issued during the night. The Battalion moved at 4.15 a.m. and took up an outpost line along the bank on the edge of the Dujailah depression to cover the retirement of wounded and transport ; this was successfully accomplished with little, or no, enemy interference. At 10 a.m. the retirement on Orah commenced with the Battalion acting as right flank guard to the Brigade. The 7th Brigade, which had not been committed the previous day, acted as rear-guard to the main body. Little enemy activity was displayed throughout the day and small parties of Arab cavalry were easily beaten off. The

men were completely exhausted by the events of the last thirty-six hours and suffered acutely from lack of water. The retirement to camp of some eighteen miles throughout that long hot day was a nightmare that will not readily be forgotten by those who took part in it. In spite of this, when the Battalion reached camp at 10 p.m. that night, only two men had fallen out, and these rejoined by midnight. During the day four other ranks were wounded. It was later learnt that the 7th Brigade had had a sharp brush with the enemy when re-occupying the Sanna position.

Thus ended the disastrous action of the Dujailah Redoubt and with it a golden opportunity to relieve Kut-al-Amara. Carefully and secretly planned, the initial concentration and approach march had succeeded in a manner beyond the most sanguine hopes of all who participated. A complete surprise had been effected, and the immensely strong Sinn position had been outflanked by two divisions and found practically unoccupied. The attack had, however, been delayed to allow of an artillery bombardment which gave the enemy time to rush up reinforcements, and when pushed in had failed with heavy casualties. It can only be assumed that the lessons of the earlier attacks were so paramount in the mind of the higher command, that they were afraid to risk an attack without bombardment, in spite of the apparent fact that the positions were very lightly held. The utmost gallantry and determination shown by the troops could not repair this initial error, and the operation was a costly failure and really sealed the fate of the beleaguered garrison of Kut-al-Amara.

### OUTPOST DUTY

On the 11th March the Battalion proceeded on outpost duty and remained in the Pools of Siloam and Sanna areas until the end of the month, during which nothing of importance occurred. During this period the force was again re-organizing, and a great shortage of supplies was experienced owing to the majority of the river transport being employed to bring up the 13th Division, which had recently arrived from Gallipoli. This Division was commanded by Major-General F. S. Maude, later to become Corps and Army Commander and the captor of Baghdad.

### SITUATION END OF MARCH

The situation in Kut was now becoming so serious owing to shortage of supplies, that it was imperative that a further effort for relief should be made at the earliest possible opportunity. Plans for a new offensive were pushed forward, and it was decided to commence operations on the left bank by an attack against the Hannah and Falahiyeh positions with the 13th Division, supported by fire from the right bank. The Meerut Division

was to exploit any success gained and the two divisions were then to force the strong Sannaiyat position. The River Tigris was now in full flood owing to recent heavy rains and was with great difficulty prevented from encroaching into camp sites situated on the banks.

#### ATTACK ON LEFT BANK, April 4th

Operations commenced on April 4th, when it was found that the enemy had evacuated the Hannah position; this was occupied almost without opposition, although the 13th Division was engaged in a sharp fight on reaching Falahiyeh. The divisional camps and river boats moved up to this position on the 6th, and a bridge was thrown across the river that day. Except for threatening advances by hostile cavalry, no movement on the right bank had taken place during the above operations.

The Turks, anticipating an advance by our forces on this side of the river, cut the river banks in the vicinity of Beit Aiessa on April 5th, and by the 7th extensive floods had spread right across the 3rd divisional front. The enormity of the flooding can be gauged by the fact that men of the Battalion slew fish up to 25 lb. in weight with their kukris while bathing five miles from the river.

On April 7th, 8th, and 9th, assaults by the Meerut and 13th Divisions on the Sannaiyat position failed with very heavy losses, and it was thereafter decided to transfer operations to the right bank.

#### OPERATIONS ON THE RIGHT BANK

The plan was first to seize the Abu Roman position, and thence to advance deliberately against Beit Aiessa and Chahela in order to concentrate for an attack on the Sinn position. The Abu Roman position was found to have been evacuated following the enemy flooding of the area in front of Beit Aiessa, and was occupied by the 7th Brigade on April 10th. The Battalion moved to this vicinity on the 11th, going into bivouac some two miles south of Abu Roman Mounds on arrival. On the 12th a picquet line was established half a mile east of Beit Aiessa by the 7th and 37th Brigades, and thereafter plans for an attack on this position were formulated. The extensive floods limited power of manœuvre, particularly of artillery and transport, to a very serious degree. It was decided to assault the forward positions of the Beit Aiessa system by a night attack with the 7th and 9th Brigades on the night of April 14th, and then to stage an attack with these two brigades from this position on to the main trench system.

## NIGHT ATTACK, BEIT AIESSA, April 15th

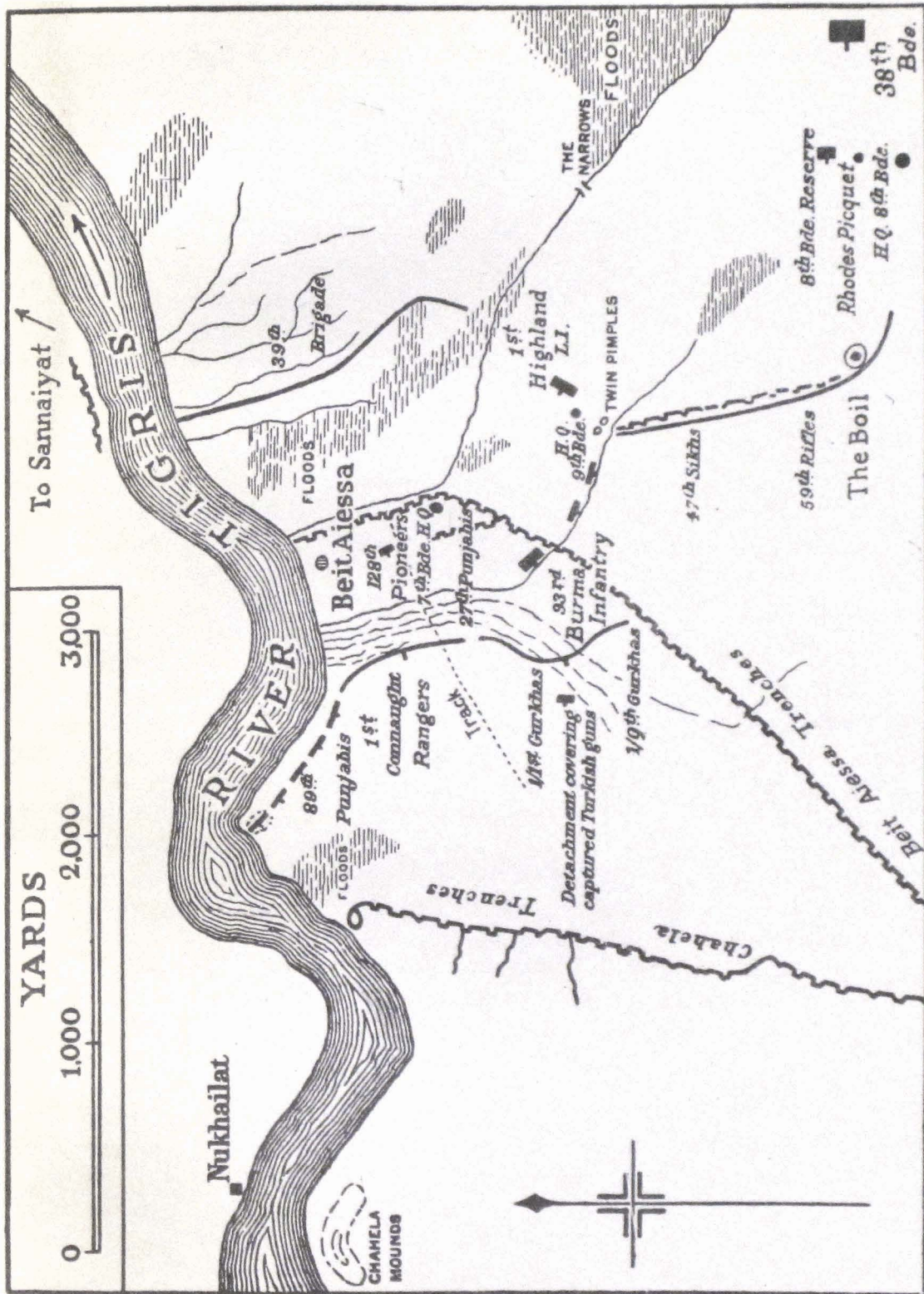
The 7th Brigade took up a picquet line to the south of the 37th Brigade, and the Battalion prolonged this line to their south, on the 14th. The advanced enemy position was situated some four hundred yards in front of the 7th Brigade, between Twin Pimples and The Boil. At 9 p.m. on the 14th orders were received for two battalions each of the 7th and 9th Brigades to concentrate for a night advance on this line, with a view to an assault at dawn on the 15th. The battalions selected for this operation were the 1st Bn. Connaught Rangers and 27th Punjabis of the 7th Brigade, and the H.L.I. and 1st Battalion of the 9th. Concentration was effected in the vicinity of Rhodes Picquet at 3 a.m. with great difficulty owing to a violent thunderstorm.

The advance commenced at 4.45 a.m. on a compass bearing of 280 degrees, and under conditions of extreme difficulty owing to rain and darkness. As a result the leading companies inclined too much inwards, and those of the Connaught Rangers, the H.L.I., and the Battalion got hopelessly mixed up in the darkness. The advance thereafter became a confused mass, moving along blindly and having lost all sense of direction. Dawn broke to find this mass of three battalions advancing against the trenches held by the 1/2nd Gurkha Rifles of the 37th Brigade, considerably to the right of the objective. Fortunately some two hundred men of all three battalions had somehow managed to maintain the correct direction, and these assaulted and captured the northern portion of the enemy's trenches near Twin Pimples. The 27th Punjabis then came up and captured the remainder as far south as The Boil. Forty-five prisoners, mostly Arabs of the 35th Regiment, were taken of which the Battalion captured twenty. A weak counter-attack was beaten off at about 11 a.m., after which the mixed-up units were re-organized and the captured trench consolidated. The Battalion took over the whole trench at 8 p.m. that night, and most of the 16th was spent in further improvement and consolidation.

The Battalion's casualties in the operation were: killed, Captain F. N. Maclaran and six other ranks; wounded, nineteen other ranks.

## ATTACK ON BEIT AIESSA, April 17th

Orders for operations on the 17th were received during the afternoon of the 16th, and were to the effect that the 7th and 9th Brigades would concentrate in the vicinity of Twin Pimples during the night 16/17th, and would assault at dawn, the objective being a series of irrigation channels in rear of the enemy's trenches; the frontage of the attack was to be seven



THE ACTION OF BEIT AIESSA.

17th April, 1916.

hundred yards, with the 7th Brigade on the right. The 7th Brigade were ordered to exploit any success by advancing up the river bank on their right, and the 9th Brigade to bomb down and double block a long communication trench running from the right of the enemy line towards Chahela. An artillery bombardment would commence at 6.45 a.m. and lift at 7.10 for the final assault. In addition an advanced enemy picquet in a ditch between Twin Pimples and the enemy front line was to be bombed out.

The Battalion was relieved by the 47th Sikhs at 9 p.m. and concentrated near Twin Pimples. The order of attack in the 9th Brigade was as follows: Assaulting troops—1st Gurkha Rifles in two lines on a frontage of three hundred yards closely supported by the Battalion in a similar formation, the right flank of both being on Twin Pimples. The Battalion's bombing section was ordered to bomb out the advanced enemy picquet just prior to the advance. On arrival at the enemy trenches the left half-Battalion was ordered to support the bombing section, and to capture and consolidate as much as possible of the communication trench running towards Chahela. Reserve, the H.L.I. and 93rd Burma Infantry, with Brigade H.Q., at Twin Pimples. At 6.50 the Battalion bombers advanced under cover of machine-gun fire and quickly drove out the enemy picquet. At 6.55 the 1st Gurkha Rifles and 7th Brigade advanced, with the Battalion closely following the 1st Gurkha Rifles; despite the fact that the artillery bombardment had not lifted, the enemy's front trenches were rushed and captured. Details of the left half-Battalion, preceded by the bombers, bombed down the long communication trench, inflicting severe casualties on the surprised enemy, and double blocked this trench some six hundred yards down in the direction of Chahela. The action of Naiks Puranbahadur Karki and Matbar Thapa of the bombing party deserve special mention. Lieutenant C. Frisch, commanding the section, was killed by a wounded Arab on first entering the enemy front line, but undeterred, Naik Puranbahadur organized the bombing party in accordance with previous orders, and himself led the attack. Naik Matbar advanced along the top of the trench level with him, and shot down survivors in successive bays as soon as the grenades exploded. In this manner the trench was quickly cleared, double blocked, and occupied by a portion of Nos. 3 and 4 Companies. Both these N.C.O.s subsequently received decorations for their conspicuous gallantry. The remainder of the Battalion cleared the enemy trenches of the left of the 1st Gurkha Rifles, inflicting heavy casualties with the kukri, and occupied the watercourses in the rear. Jemadar Gajman Rai of the Assam Military Police, with No. 1 Double Company, deserves special mention during this clearing up of the enemy trenches; though

wounded he refused to go back and was conspicuous for his gallantry and initiative.

The attack of the two brigades had been immediately successful, and re-organization and consolidation of the captured trenches was ordered. About 2 p.m. Lieutenant T. N. C. Kemp, commanding No. 1 Company, discovered two enemy light field guns in position some four hundred yards north-west of the position held by that company; he promptly organized an attack on them, captured both without difficulty, taking also two officers and eighteen other prisoners. After capture, the horses of these guns were discovered dug in some three hundred yards further on, from which position intermittent sniping was being directed on to No. 2 Company. Rifleman Randhoj Karki of this company, armed only with his kukri and with one hand grenade, ran out alone under fire, and reaching the trench flung his bomb and disappeared out of sight, shortly afterwards emerging with eight prisoners; he was then joined by Rifleman Astal Rai (A.P.M. attached), and together the two men brought back the prisoners to the company's position, both being wounded in the process. Both had acted entirely on their own initiative, a fact which indicated the high moral elation evinced at the success of the morning's attack. Rifleman Randhoj was awarded the I.O.M., 2nd Class, as an immediate reward, and Rifleman Astal the I.D.S.M. later. Owing to their exposed position the captured guns could not be brought back in daylight, and No. 1 Company therefore took up a position covering them.

At 7 p.m., just as darkness was falling, a heavy counter-attack was launched by the Turks, chiefly against the left flank and into the gap between our advanced position and that of the 8th Brigade near Twin Pimples. In the darkness and confusion they succeeded in penetrating our positions, and those of the 1st Gurkha Rifles on our right. The two battalions were therefore obliged to fall back on to the brigade reserve near Twin Pimples, where they, and battalions of the 7th Brigade who had also been forced to retire, were rallied. Counter-attacks by the 13th Division succeeded in holding up the enemy advance, which had been definitely checked with terrible loss on the front of the 8th Brigade, on our left. Heavy firing continued throughout the night, but no further attempt by either side was made. On the morning of the 18th the Brigade was relieved by the 13th Division, and retired to bivouac near Rhodes Picquet.

It had been a disastrous day for the Battalion; it had commenced with a brilliant success in which the men had surprised and overwhelmed the enemy, and had killed and captured some four hundred of them, with two guns and several machine-guns. This was the first occasion, either in France or Mesopotamia, on which they had come to hand-to-hand grips,



and the value of the kukri as a trench weapon was well shown. The Battalion's progress and achievement had been recognized by the receipt of a personal telegram about mid-day from the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Percy Lake, himself, saying "Well done 9th Gurkhas." Our subsequent enforced retirement, and the relinquishment of all that had been so brilliantly captured, was therefore doubly disappointing. It was later learnt that the Turkish counter-attack had been made by the 2nd Anatolian Division, famous in Gallipoli, which had suffered three thousand in killed alone in this attack. The Battalion's casualties were :

Killed : Captain E. F. Berry (Adjt.), 2nd Lieutenant C. Frisch and 12 O.R.s.

Wounded : Lieutenant F. N. Lane, 1 Subedar, 5 Jemadars and 75 O.R.s.

Missing : Lieutenant H. Hickley, 2nd Lieutenant H. G. D. Clutterbuck, 2 G.O.s, Jemadar Karnbahadur and Gajman Rai, and 41 O.R.s. Of the latter 24 O.R.s were subsequently traced in hospitals as wounded, but nothing further was heard of the remainder, who were undoubtedly killed.

The two captured guns, six enemy machine-guns, and also the four Battalion Vickers guns were lost. This area was occupied by the Battalion two months later after the Turks had retired, when large heaps of cases showed where our machine-guns had been in position, and testified to their having been kept in action to the last.

The loss of Captain E. F. Berry ("Squib"), the Adjutant, was deeply deplored by all. He had joined the Battalion in France in November 1914, following home leave in England from the 2nd Battalion to which he belonged, and had been appointed adjutant after Captain J. R. L. Heyland had been killed at Neuve Chapelle. A cheerful Irishman, his inspiring example, and good spirits, had done much to maintain morale in the bad conditions experienced since our arrival in Mesopotamia.

Lieutenant F. S. Poynder was thereupon appointed adjutant of the Battalion.

The week after this action was spent in re-organization. Second Lieutenant H. Graham, I.A.R.O., and a draft of seventy-three other ranks joined from Dehra Dun, but the Battalion was still much under strength. On the 22nd a final, unsuccessful assault against the Sannaiyat position was launched, and this sealed the fate of Kut-al-Amara.

#### DISPATCH OF THE "JULNAR"

A forlorn but gallant attempt to run food up to the beleaguered town was made on the night of April 25th in the "Julnar," a river craft employed on the Tigris in pre-war days. It failed owing to running into a cable stretched across the river near the Sinn position at Magasis.



## FALL OF KUT-AL-AMARA

On the 24th the 9th Brigade was ordered to push out an outpost line towards Sinn Abtar Redoubt ; this was effected at dawn, after a night advance, by the H.L.I. and 93rd Burma Infantry with a half-battalion each of the 1st Gurkha Rifles and ourselves in support. The Brigade advanced about fifteen hundred yards, pushed back the enemy picquet line, and consolidated along a dry watercourse and in some disused enemy trenches. During the operation 2nd Lieutenant H. Graham and Jemadar Panchbir Mal were wounded, and two other ranks killed and thirty-six wounded. This line was consolidated and improved during the next few days, and the Brigade was relieved and proceeded to bivouac on April 30th. This brief period was marked by a very severe outbreak of cholera, extreme hardship from lack of water, a plague of flies, and great heat.

Kut-al-Amara surrendered on April 30th after all remaining stores and ammunition had been destroyed, and thus ended one of the most tragic episodes of the Great War

## RETROSPECT

From the commencement the relief force had had to contend as much with the elements as with the enemy, and it is doubtful whether troops have ever been called on to face hardships such as had been experienced since the previous January. There had been extremes of climate throughout, a complete absence of everything except bare necessities of food, frequent severe actions with heavy casualties, and above all a never-ending drain of sick due to successive epidemics of every description: In spite of this the soldiers cheerfully undertook the many arduous tasks which they were called upon to carry out. Nowhere was this better exemplified than with the 1st Battalion. Of the 14 officers and 850 other ranks who landed in Mesopotamia in January, but 2 officers and some 250 men remained present at the end of April ; but nevertheless the same cheerful willing spirit so well evinced in France had continued, and the Battalion carried on with equal zeal.

The 1st Battalion had rapidly accustomed itself to the very different conditions prevailing in Mesopotamia compared with France, and the former tenacity displayed in holding the trench line there had been replaced by a determination to close with the enemy in attack. During the four months from January to April it had suffered more than double the battle casualties in British and Gurkha Officers than had been incurred during the fifteen months in France, and only about one hundred and fifty fewer among the men.

## CHAPTER XI

1916

### MESOPOTAMIA. THE SUMMER OF 1916. THE DEPARTURE OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO INDIA

Situation after the Fall of Kut-al-Amara. Inspection by the Commander-in-Chief, Occupation of the Sinn position. Move to Chahela. River outpost line. Ambush of convoy. Issue of pith Helmets. Move to "The Narrows." Orders for the Relief of the Battalion received. Light railway to Shaik Saad constructed. Departure of the Battalion for Basra. Draft to the 2nd Battalion at Basra. Embarkation and Return to India. Battalion "State" on return.

#### SITUATION AFTER THE FALL OF KUT-AL-AMARA

**A**FTER the fall of Kut-al-Amara the morale of the Tigris Corps was low, and all formations and units were much below strength. This was not surprising in view of the great hardships and incessant fighting which the troops had been called upon to face, in a rigorous climate and with a minimum of river transport; this latter had been sufficient only to allow of the issue of bare necessities and of no comforts, or luxuries. The heavy wastage due to sickness increased the problem of providing reinforcements, and the limited river transport was strained to the utmost. Immediate steps were taken to re-organize and re-fit.

The situation on the left bank was the stalemate of trench warfare opposite Sannaiyat. On the right bank the enemy held the Sinn position some miles further up the river, and left the British force on this side with an open flank back to the advanced base at Shaik Saad.

The 13th Division was re-transferred to the left bank, and the 35th, 36th, and 37th Brigades, formed into the 14th Division, moved to the right. Two divisions were thus located on each bank, with Corps H.Q. at Falahiyeh. General Maude succeeded first to the command of the Corps and then of the Army; General Cobbe becoming corps commander. An increase of river transport also shortly afterwards became available.

The Battalion remained in bivouac and on outpost duty from May 1st to the 19th in the area occupied on April 24th. Useful work on defences was carried out, which imposed a heavy strain on the men who suffered acutely from heat and severe shortage of water.

A bad outbreak of cholera, due to the insanitary conditions of the disused Turkish positions in which the outpost line was situated, entailed all water being strongly disinfected with permanganate, a fact which increased the men's sufferings from thirst. Being five miles from the river all water had to be brought up in pakhals, and the two daily trips barely sufficed to give each man an allowance of one water bottle per diem. British Officers were reduced to a ration of two water bottles each daily for drinking, cooking, and washing purposes.

#### INSPECTION BY THE G.O.C.-IN-CHIEF, SIR PERCY LAKE

The Battalion was inspected by the Army Commander, Sir Percy Lake, on May 3rd, who heartily congratulated all ranks on their fine work, during the preceding four months' operations. Rewards for the action around Beit Aiessa were published on May 10th, the Battalion receiving one M.C. (Lieut. Kemp), one I.O.M., and five I.D.S.M.'s. A grave shortage of British Officers due to casualties and sickness necessitated the attachment of three B.O.s from the 1st Gurkha Rifles for a fortnight, but on May 18th Major G. D. Pike rejoined the Battalion from a staff appointment in France, Captain Brown 2/6th, and Lieutenant Mills 2/7th, Gurkha Rifles, were posted to the Battalion, while Lieutenants T. N. C. Kemp and F. N. Lane rejoined from hospital.

#### OCCUPATION OF THE SINN POSITION

On May 19th it was reported that the Turks were evacuating the Sinn position on the right bank, and on the night of the 19/20th the 3rd Division was ordered to concentrate and move forward to occupy it. The Division marched at 4.15 a.m. on the 20th, with the 9th Brigade as advance guard, and reached Jumailiat at 6.45 a.m. At 7 a.m. it advanced on the Dujailah position, the Battalion acting as vanguard. The Brigade advanced in battle order, and, encountering no opposition, the Battalion occupied the Redoubt at 9.15 a.m. The remainder of the Division with the 35th, 36th and Cavalry Brigades operated westwards towards the River Hai and established outposts. The 9th Brigade occupied the Dujailah position from May 21st until June 17th, during which period no incident of importance occurred. The time was spent in improving defences and filling in old trenches, in training, and in frequent reconnaissances and ambushes against marauding Arabs from the south, who constantly raided the lines-of-communication back to Orah.

It was of much interest to go over the ground over which the attack had been launched on March 8th, and thus to appreciate the enemy point of view. The Redoubt was of immense natural strength with four tiers of fire,

and many flanking trenches and posts from which cross fire could be brought to bear in any direction. The flank attack in which the Battalion was engaged had, however, been checked from some cleverly concealed trenches, situated nearly two thousand yards south-west of the Redoubt, and quite indistinguishable in the surrounding scrub, even from a short distance. It is quite certain that these trenches were unoccupied on the early morning of March 8th, and it was the delay caused by the postponement of zero hour that had enabled the enemy to push up reinforcements and to hold them against us.

#### MOVE TO CHAHELA

During June the 9th Brigade was relieved in the Dujailah position and moved to Chahela camp, where it remained until the end of July. Shortly prior to this move the detachment of the 2/7th Gurkha Rifles (2 B.O.s, 2 G.O.s and 106 O.R.s), who had been with the Battalion since February, proceeded to Amara to form the nucleus of a new battalion to be raised in place of that which had been captured in Kut-al-Amara. We parted from them with great regret, for they had done excellent work throughout their attachment and had quite identified themselves with all ranks of the Battalion.

#### RIVER OUTPOST LINE

At Chahela the brigade camp was situated some two miles from the river. Picquets along the river bank were held by three companies of one battalion at Daq al Hajjaj, Yeddu, and Saffa, with battalion head-quarters and a reserve company in camp. This outpost line was opposite the Turkish position at Nakhailat, several miles in rear of the Sannaiyat position on the left bank, and was designed to prevent a possible crossing of the river, now very low, in this area. Consistent sniping from both sides, and frequent heavy work in revetment of the trenches which constantly filled up with sand, marked the only feature of this period of duty.

#### AMBUSH OF CONVOY

During the night on which the picquets were taken over by the Battalion a large cart convoy, proceeding to Sinn, and escorted by one hundred rifles of No. 1 Company, was ambushed half-way between Chahela camp and its destination. The escort had two men wounded, one being stabbed in the back, seven drivers were killed and two wounded, while twenty-five animals were stolen and several more killed and wounded. Convoy movement by night, introduced on account of the heat, was thereafter discontinued, and the tedious escort duty involved was also obviated by the establishment of picquets.

### ISSUE OF PITH HELMETS TO GURKHAS

Intense heat during this month caused numerous cases of heat stroke, particularly among Gurkhas, and all our battalions were therefore equipped with pith helmets. This decision was most unpopular with the men, and the helmets were most unsightly, but it was undoubtedly sound and beneficial; the precedent has been recognized as a necessity and has been followed whenever Gurkhas are employed on active service in the plains during the hot weather.

### MOVE TO "THE NARROWS"

The Brigade remained at Chahela until July 22nd, when shortage of water necessitated a move to The Narrows camp in the Beit Aiessa area. Water for Chahela camp had been obtained by means of pumps at Daq al Hajjaj picquet, but the fall of the river level involved the hoses becoming silted up and a grave shortage was experienced.

A plucky act in this connection earned Rfn. Newal Sing Khattri of No. 4 Double Company the I.D.S.M.; despite close sniping from the far bank this man volunteered to go out three times in broad daylight to clear the hose pipes of silt. The Narrows camp was in the area of the battle of April 17th, and ample water was provided by means of a canal. A close inspection of the scene of the April action was of the greatest interest; the nature of the ground, a mass of trenches intersected by numerous irrigation channels, showed how easy it had been for the Turks to percolate into our unconsolidated positions on the evening of the action, when their heavy counter-attack had been launched at dusk.

The Battalion remained in this camp throughout August, being employed on the river outpost picquet duty periodically, and in training and escort duties. Training was marred by a bomb accident in which one N.C.O. was killed; and one B.O. (2nd Lieut. Tyler, I.A.R.O.), one G.O. and four men were wounded. The N.C.O., Naik Chandra Sing Panre, No. 3 Company, had been a conspicuous member of the bombing section throughout the fighting in France and Mesopotamia, and had been decorated for gallantry in action.

### ORDERS FOR RELIEF OF THE BATTALION RECEIVED

Rumours of the relief of the Battalion began to be current during this period and this was definitely ordered in the middle of the month. It was then learnt that the 2nd Battalion from India would replace us in the Mesopotamian Force, and that we would be relieved by the 105th Mahratta Light Infantry in the 9th Brigade. There is no doubt that this decision

was sound, as the Battalion, depleted by heavy casualties in wounded and sick, was only maintained at an average of four hundred and fifty strong, with difficulty. A bad outbreak of scurvy and jaundice involved nearly a third of this number being turned over monthly all through these summer months. Actually this scourge affected the Battalion less than others, due to a munificent gift of several hundred tins of canned fruit, generously presented to us by the Maharani of Bettiah.

#### LIGHT RAILWAY SHAIK SAAD TO SINN CONSTRUCTED

During August the construction of a light railway from Shaik Saad, the advanced base, to Sinn had been commenced, and by the beginning of September this reached the Twin Canals area, some three miles from The Narrows camp. As has been mentioned previously, this was an open flank constantly harassed by marauding Arabs. The defence of the light railway was effected by a series of small well-built blockhouses connected by a wire apron. The Battalion took over the garrison of eight of these posts for the first three weeks of September, the remainder of the unit being encamped on a new site in the Twin Canals area, known as S.P.4. During this period surplus war equipment was handed over to the Mahratta advanced party. The Battalion was relieved on September 21st, and on the 22nd entrained in two light trains and proceeded to Shaik Saad.

Prior to departure we were inspected by the Brigade and Divisional Commanders, who caused complimentary orders, and regret at our departure, to be published in Battalion Orders.

Together with the 107th Pioneers, another original unit of the Meerut Division in 1914, we embarked in the H.T. "Mejidieh" and sailed for Basra the same day. On arrival at the base the Battalion was ordered to embark immediately in H.T. "Chakdina," a small British India vessel which had just brought the 2nd Battalion from India. All details of the Battalion, present in the country, had previously been collected in the vessel. A draft of two G.O.s and one hundred other ranks for the 2nd Battalion, found from men of that unit previously drafted as reinforcements, was disembarked in the evening. The officers of the 2nd Battalion dined on board also, and the re-union after two years of separation naturally caused the greatest pleasure to both Battalions.

The "Chakdina" sailed on the 26th, and after a smooth and comfortable voyage arrived at Bombay on October 3rd. The Battalion disembarked at dawn the next morning and entrained for Dehra Dun. It arrived at its home station at noon on October 6th, and received an enthusiastic welcome from the residents, marching to the lines in Birpur along roads lined by the 2nd Gurkhas and the men of both Depots.

## 1ST BATTALION "STATE" ON RETURN TO DEHRA DUN

Of the original Battalion which had left Dehra over two years previously very few officers and men returned with it on the above date. Of the British Officers, Lieutenant F. S. Poynder was the only one, though Major G. D. Pike had joined the Battalion at Port Said. Of the original Gurkha Officers the then Jemadar Adjutant, now the Subedar-Major, Mehar Sing Khattri, and Jemadar, now Subedar, Shibdhoj Mal, were the sole representatives. Both these Gurkha Officers had been awarded the I.O.M. for gallantry in France, and Mehar Sing had not been absent for any cause for a single day, in over two years' continuous active service.

It is impossible to say how many of the original N.C.O.s and men remained. Owing to casualties many of them had been promoted either to Gurkha Officer or N.C.O., and they included many who had re-joined the Battalion from hospital after recovery from wounds, or sickness. Several of the original followers, all of whom had done consistently well on service, notably the Jemadar Bhisti Jitbahadur Thapa of No. 1 Double Company, also returned with the Battalion.

The strength of the 1st Battalion arriving at Dehra was

4 British Officers :	{ Lieut.-Colonel C. M. Porteous, Commandant ; Major G. D. Pike ; Lieutenant F. S. Poynder, Adjutant and Q.M. ; 2nd Lieutenant Peake, I.A.R.O.
16 Gurkha Officers, 539 O.R.s and 68 Followers.	

Despite the draft given to the 2nd Battalion at Basra the above numbers still included a fair proportion of non-commissioned officers and men belonging to that Battalion who now re-joined their own Depot.

All men, on returning, were allowed to proceed on special furlough in two batches ; the first did so as soon as they had undergone the "Pani Patiya" ceremony.

The Battalion then reabsorbed the Depot, which was over twice its strength, owing to returned casualties and a very large number of recruits under training. Its activities thereafter are described in Chapter XIV.

## CHAPTER XII

1916-1917

### MESOPOTAMIA. THE MOBILIZATION AND ARRIVAL OF THE 2ND BATTALION AND SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS UP TO THE CAPTURE OF BAGHDAD

Mobilization and Departure from Dehra Dun. Embarkation and Voyage. Arrival at Basra, September 22nd. Conditions prevailing at Basra. Personal Escort to the Commander-in-Chief. Garrison of Nasariyeh Railway Defences. Move to the Tigris front. Operations prior to the Shumran Crossing. Plan for crossing the River Tigris. The Crossing, 23rd February, and Result. Attack of February 24th. The Pursuit to Baghdad. Retrospect of the Shumran Action. The Victoria Cross awarded to Major Wheeler.

#### ARRIVAL OF THE 2ND BATTALION IN MESOPOTAMIA. GARRISON OF THE EUPHRATES LINE RAILWAY DEFENCES AND MOVE TO THE TIGRIS FRONT

**T**HE 2nd Battalion received orders to mobilize for overseas in July 1916. Departure was delayed owing to an epidemic of measles and it did not leave until September 12th. On this date it entrained for Bombay, strength B.O.s 13, G.O.s 18, O.R.s 981. The Battalion was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Widdicombe, who had relieved Lieut.-Colonel C. M. Porteous in the previous January. Owing to six of the permanent regular officers (of whom five had been killed) having proceeded to join the 1st Battalion with drafts, there were only seven regular officers with the unit on departure. Of these Captain V. Beadon, a former officer of the Regiment, had rejoined from the Burma Commission, and three more, Lieutenants G. V. B. Gillan, H. de L. Penfold and R. H. B. Wilson, had only joined since the outbreak of War. The remaining officers belonged to the Indian Army Reserve. The Subedar-Major was Prem Sing Bisht, an officer who had already had a distinguished record on active service on the North-West Frontier and in Tibet, and who had proceeded to England in 1911 with the Indian Contingent for the King's Coronation.

The 2nd Battalion arrived at Bombay on September 15th and embarked immediately in H.T. "Chakdina," a British India vessel of about 5,000 tons. The ship sailed at 11 p.m. that night and after a smooth and uneventful



voyage arrived at Basra on the 22nd. After disembarking at Rest Camp pier at 6 p.m. and marching to camp at No. 3 Indian Base Depot, Makina, the Battalion was temporarily posted to the 41st Infantry Brigade and was ordered to take over numerous guard and picquet duties, including two detachments at Fao and Muhamerah.

On the 25th September, the 1st Battalion from the Tigris front arrived and embarked in the "Chakdina," leaving a draft of two G.O.s and one hundred O.R.s of the 2nd Battalion, who joined their own unit.

The conditions prevailing at Basra and in Mesopotamia on the arrival of the 1st Battalion in January 1916 have been described in Chapter IX. The astonishing change at this port only nine months later, when the sister Battalion arrived, merit description, as do the reasons which caused it.

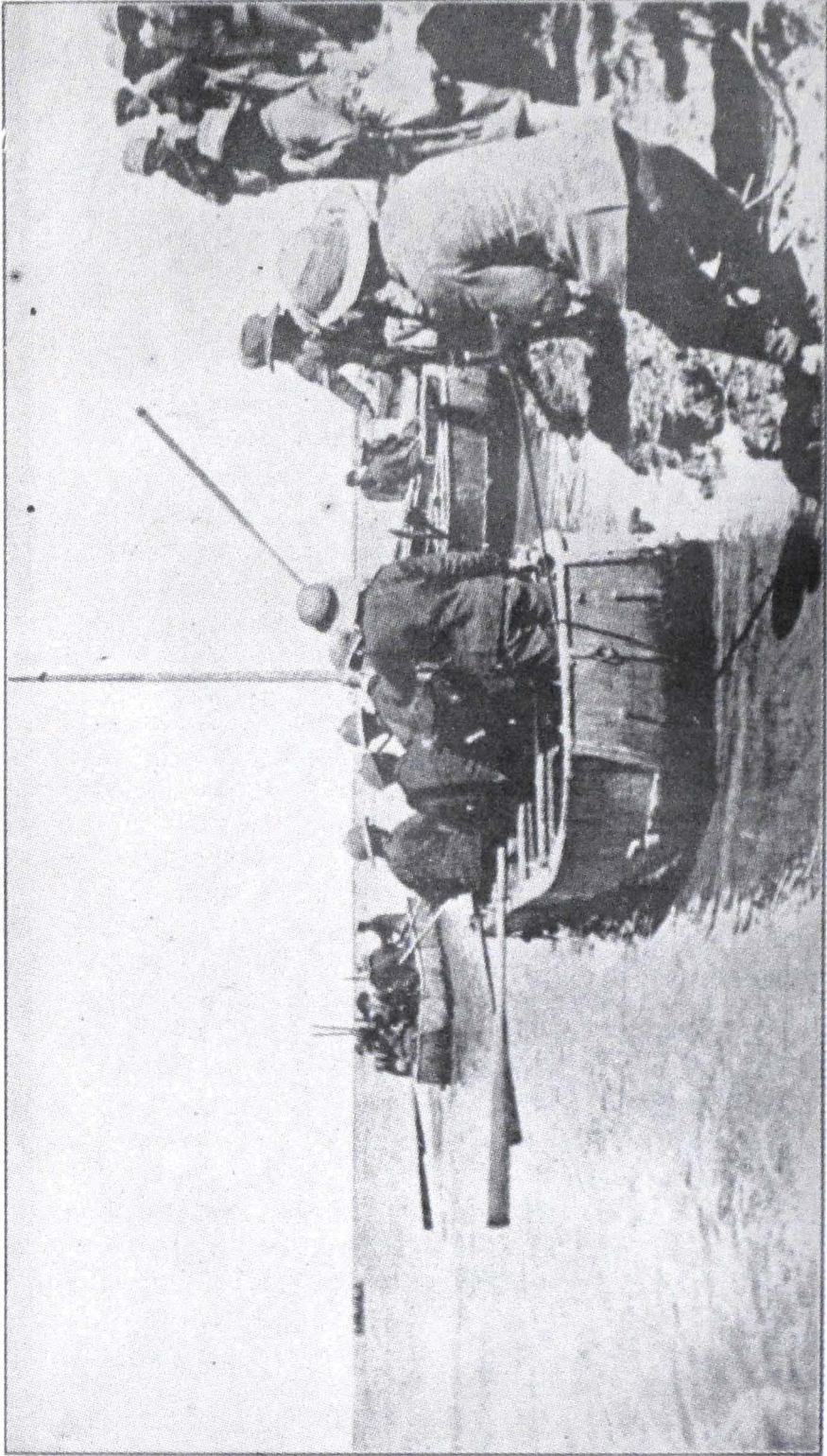
The failure of the Relief Force to reach and succour the beleaguered garrison in Kut-al-Amara earlier in the year, and the unparalleled hardships which that force, and in particular the sick and wounded, had had to undergo, had led to a commission of enquiry after the fall of the town; the findings had ascribed the reason of the failure as being largely due to inadequate organization of the base port, and river transportation services, a conclusion which the previous description of these conditions earlier on amply justifies. As a result the Imperial Government assumed responsibility and a sweeping re-organization was instituted during the summer of 1916. With the abolition of Indian "babuism" and cramping financial control, the organization of the port and lines-of-communication was taken in hand, and in the course of a few months the general arrangements were adequate to the needs of a force of six divisions, fighting in a major campaign, overseas. The river services of the world were scoured for the purchase of craft suitable for the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers by which the leading forces in Mesopotamia were largely maintained: piers and jetties on the river banks at Basra were constructed by which ocean-going craft could unload direct into shore depots and thereby economize shipping; hitherto many vessels had lain idle in the stream for weeks on end, despite the fact that a grave shortage was seriously prejudicing the successful conduct of the War elsewhere; finally shore depots, hospitals, rest camps, and adequate roads and communications were organized and constructed along the river banks. By these means the maintenance and reinforcement of the fighting troops were properly provided for, with results that were soon justified in the capture of Baghdad, and the final successful prosecution of the campaign. Not the smallest innovation was the construction of railways to run from Basra to Nasariyeh, and thence later via the River Hai to feed the Tigris front, and also from Qurnah to Amara. These projects had been vetoed by the Indian Government during the previous year on financial grounds.

These were the conditions prevailing at Basra on the arrival of the 2nd Battalion, and in addition to being able to take advantage of these amenities, the Battalion was fortunate in that it was to have four months in which to settle down under active service conditions before being called on to take part in operations.

During October in addition to taking over numerous guard duties as mentioned, including one G.O. and fifty O.R.s on General Head-quarters at Ashar, the Battalion was called on to furnish a personal escort of one B.O., two G.O.s and one hundred O.R.s for the Commander-in-Chief. This detachment, under command of 2nd Lieutenant Wilson with Subedar Padam Sing Thapa and Jemadar Amar Sing Bohra, proceeded up-river to assume duties on October 19th. During the whole of its two and a half years' service in Mesopotamia, and in spite of numerous moves, casualties, and the vicissitudes of active service common to all, the 2nd Battalion had the signal honour of furnishing this personal escort throughout. On three occasions it was relieved for short periods by other units on account of infectious disease but was each time brought back.

Towards the end of the month "B" and "C" Companies, with one platoon "A" Company attached, moved up the Nasariyeh Railway and took over the garrison of No. 2 Section Railway Defences under the orders of the Officer Commanding Euphrates Defences. The detachment found six posts with Head-quarters at Ratawi, and continued to hold these until December. Head-quarters and the remaining companies remained at Makina carrying out guards and duties and such training as was possible. On October 25th Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Widdicombe was invalided sick to India and was thence sent to England and did not again serve with the Regiment. He was succeeded temporarily by Major H. L. C. Turner, and command of the Battalion then devolved on Lieut.-Colonel F. E. Coningham; the latter officer had been transferred to the 1/10th Gurkha Rifles in 1913.

At the end of December 1916 the Battalion was ordered to proceed up the railway to garrison No. 4 Section Railway Defences from Tel-al-Lahm to approximately Nasariyeh, in relief of the 31st Punjabis. Head-quarters and the Makina details moved by train on January 2nd, 1917, and the detachment finding No. 2 Section from Ratawi, on relief by the 6th Jat Light Infantry, joined them at Tel-al-Lahm on January 5th. The Battalion furnished the garrison of several posts and a mobile column throughout the month without incident, except for occasional brushes with Arabs. On January 28th telegraphic orders were received to proceed immediately to Arab Village on the Tigris front for attachment to the 1st Corps. After relief by detachments of the 1/10th Gurkha Rifles and the 1/4th Bn. Somerset Light Infantry, the Battalion proceeded by rail and concentrated at Makina.



THE 2nd BATTALION PRACTISING ON THE SHATT-AL-HAI FOR THE CROSSING AT THE SHUMRAN BEND.  
20th February, 1917.



On February 2nd the Battalion, strength B.O.s 14, G.O.s 16, G.O.R.s 804, embarked in "P.55" and proceeded up-river; the first-line transport followed in "P.19." Arriving at Arab Village on the morning of February 6th, instructions were received to encamp there, in relief of the 28th Punjabis, and for temporary attachment to the 7th Meerut Division. The Battalion remained in camp from the 6th to 14th February, furnishing protection of G.H.Q. and numerous guards on Supply and Ordnance dumps, and was exercised in bombing and assault practices.

On February 14th, on relief by the 14th Sikhs, the 2nd Battalion marched to Twin Canals *en route* to join the 37th Infantry Brigade, 14th Division, at Bessouia, where it arrived on the 16th. "C" Company was detailed as a guard over one thousand Turkish prisoners captured in the Dahra Bend the day previously.

On February 18th, the 37th Brigade, consisting of the 2nd Bn. Norfolk Regiment, 1/2nd Gurkha Rifles, 2/9th Gurkha Rifles and 67th Punjabis, was concentrated at Bessouia. Training and practice for the impending crossing of the Tigris was carried out from the 17th to 21st, all ranks being practised in launching, embarking in, and disembarking from pontoons on the River Hai, both by day and night. On the morning of the 21st, operation orders for the crossing of the River Tigris at Shumran Bend on February 23rd were received.

#### THE CROSSING OF THE RIVER TIGRIS AT THE SHUMRAN BEND AND THE PURSUIT TO, AND CAPTURE OF, BAGHDAD

For the operations prior to the crossing at Shumran, see Map, page 107.

To appreciate the significance and strategical value of the crossing of the Tigris at Shumran, a brief review of the operations preceding this action must be given here.

Prior to the commencement of these operations the position of the opposing forces near Kut-al-Amara was as follows:—

(i) *Enemy.* The Turks on the left bank (north) of the Tigris held the immensely strong position of Sannaiyat, the flanks of which were protected by the river and Suwaikieh Marsh, with numerous other strongly fortified positions right back to Kut-al-Amara, fifteen miles in rear. The whole of the river bank throughout this length was also entrenched and picqueted. On the right bank they had evacuated the Sinn position during the previous May, and now held a strong bridgehead facing Kut-al-Amara from a point on the Tigris three miles to the north-east, across the Khadairi Bend, to a point two miles south of the junction of the Rivers Tigris and Hai, and thence westwards across the Dahra Bend to Shumran. There was a pontoon

bridge across the Hai River near its junction with the Tigris, and another across the latter river on the eastern side of the Shumran Bend. The Turks also occupied the Hai for several miles down-stream of the bridgehead with posts and Arab auxiliary mounted troops.

(ii) *British.* The Tigris force was organized into two corps and one cavalry division. The Ist Corps (3rd and 7th Divisions, General Cobbe) held the left bank and position facing Sannaiyat, where the trenches were one hundred and twenty yards apart, only. This Corps also held a portion of the river picquet line on the right bank. The IIIrd Corps (13th and 14th Divisions, General Marshall) held the Sinn position on the right bank eleven miles up-stream from Sannaiyat, with advanced posts two miles from the Turkish position in the Khadairi Bend and five miles from the River Hai.

The Cavalry Division was on the right bank, operating on the left flank of the IIIrd Corps.

Except that communications had been greatly improved, these positions were practically identical with those prevailing when the 1st Battalion had left.

It was decided to clear the right bank of the enemy, firstly by seizing the River Hai (which would prevent movement or threat against our force on the Euphrates at Nasariyeh), and then by constant pressure as far westwards as possible to force the Turks to extend and weaken their long line protecting their lines-of-communication on the left bank. Having achieved this, Sannaiyat was to be attacked and simultaneously a force was to be thrown across the river to sever the enemy lines-of-communication.

The operations were conducted in four phases :

(i) *December 13th–January 4th.* The occupation and consolidation of a position on the River Hai by the IIIrd Corps and Cavalry Division. The enemy's advanced troops were driven back on to the Hai bridgehead, the River Hai was bridged at Atab, and the enemy's bridge on the eastern face of the Shumran Bend destroyed. In addition, interposition between two enemy trench systems on the right bank opposite Kut severed his lateral communications on this bank, and gave us command of the River Tigris up-stream of the Khadairi Bend. Communications were pushed forward to the Hai, and the cavalry made numerous harassing raids on Arab encampments, west of that river.

Very wet weather and floods were experienced towards the end of December.

(ii) *January 5th–19th.* Occupation of the Khadairi Bend by the Ist Corps. This was successfully accomplished only after severe and continuous fighting, and the enemy evacuated their final positions on the night 18/19th January.

During this phase demonstrations were carried out at Sannaiyat, and the Cavalry Division raided and occupied Hai town for several days, making important captures of arms, ammunition, and supplies.

(iii) *January 20th–February 5th.* Operations against the Hai salient by the IIIrd Corps; this entailed very severe and bitter fighting. By February 3rd the Turks fell back to the Liquorice Factory—a line east and west across the Dahra Bend.

(iv) *February 6th–16th.* Operations in the Dahra Bend. Strong intricate enemy positions were captured and the bend cleared completely by February 16th.

The operations in these phases, ii, iii, and iv, were particularly difficult owing to the enemy positions being “horse shoe” shaped and very broken up by nullahs; both factors offered ideal positions for defensive enfilade fire by machine-guns.

As a result of the above operations the Turks were cleared completely from the right bank from the Sinn position to Shumran, at which place their lines-of-communication and battle fronts joined. Our constant attacks had forced them to extend their front considerably, and this was now held by attenuated forces, owing to heavy casualties, and offered vulnerable points. It was decided to attack Sannaiyat on the 17th, and to force a crossing at Shumran a few days later. The first attack on the former position failed, but two lines of trenches were captured on the 22nd, on which night also two successful feint raids at Kut and Magasis induced the enemy to concentrate reserves in the Kut peninsula. These were too far away to influence the crossing at Shumran on February 23rd.

#### THE CROSSING OF THE RIVER TIGRIS, February 23rd

Following the above successful operations and feints to deceive the enemy, orders were issued on the 22nd that the 14th Division would force the crossing of the River Tigris at the Shumran Bend at daybreak on the 23rd. The 37th Brigade was detailed to provide the covering force, and to cross in three columns and establish itself on the general line K.53—K.57—K.59—K.60—a point opposite M.41.

Three ferries were detailed. (See Map, page 131.)

No. 1 Column, 2nd Norfolk at M.32.

No. 2 Column, 2/9th Gurkha Rifles at M.29.

No. 3 Column, 1/2nd Gurkha Rifles at K.55.

The Brigade objective was on a frontage of three thousand yards at a depth of about fifteen hundred yards from the river. As soon as the covering force was established on the left bank a bridge was to be thrown across just above No. 1 Ferry at M.32. Each ferry was provided with ten



pontoons, and the columns organized in tows to make continuous crossings as soon as each tow landed and the boats had returned to the right bank.

The river had an average width of three hundred and sixty yards at the site selected, and at the time was swollen with flood water running at a speed of five knots per hour. The far bank had a "band," loopholed and entrenched with head cover, and known to be held by enemy picquets with machine-guns and covered by artillery. At No. 2 Ferry this band was at an average distance of fifteen to fifty yards from the water's edge, with mud of varying depth intervening. To achieve success surprise was essential, and some measure had been achieved by successful feints opposite Kut-al-Amara and at Magasis, at which points it was ascertained later that enemy reserves had been collected. As soon as the covering force was established, and the bridge had been opened for traffic, the remainder of the Division was to cross to attack the northern exit of the bend, and to operate against the enemy lines-of-communication. The crossing and attack was to be covered by artillery of the IIIrd Corps. Simultaneously a further attack was to be launched at Sannaiyat.

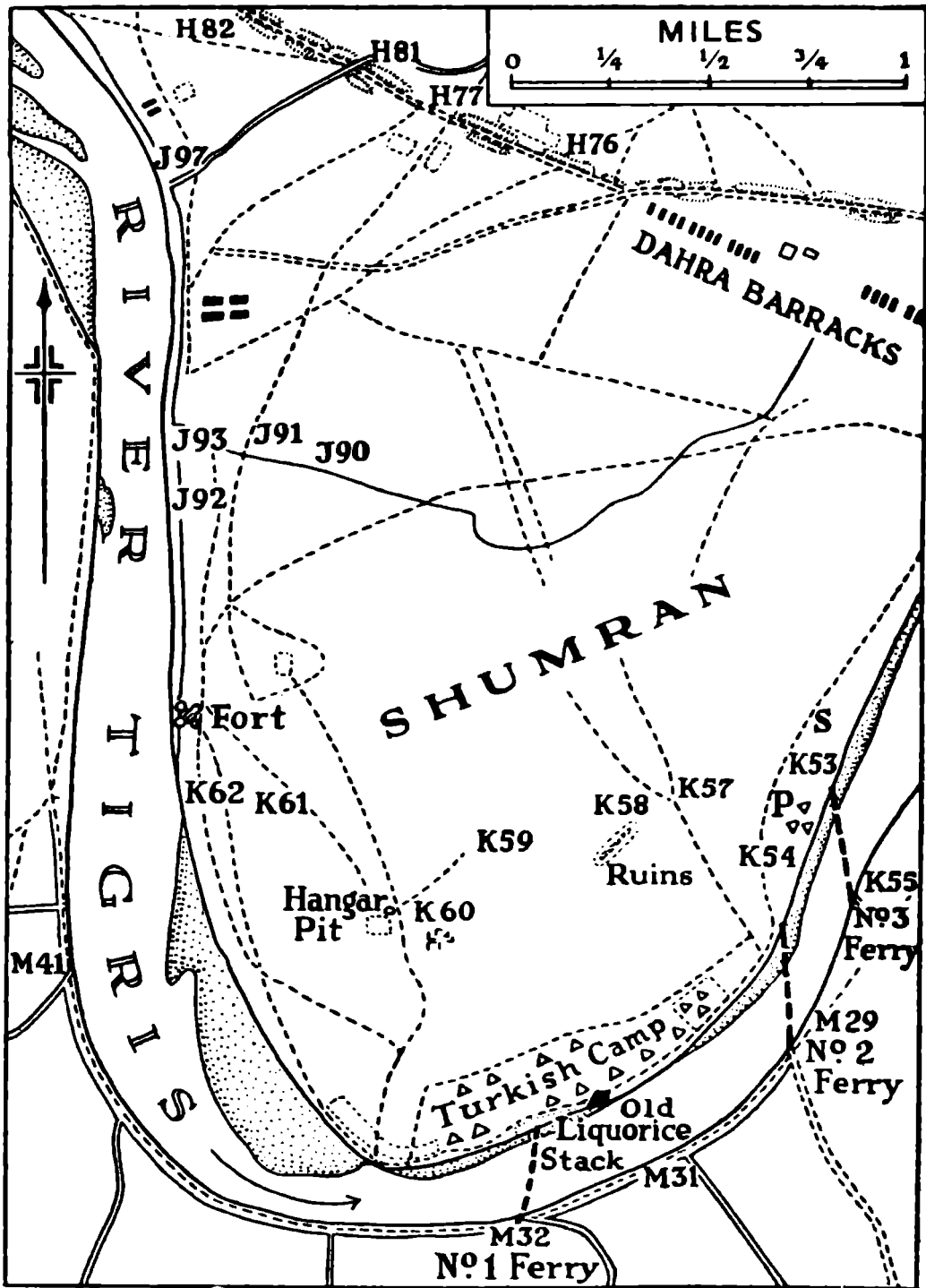
No. 2 Column concentrated at 5.30 p.m. on the 22nd and moved at 6 p.m. The troops and transport were organized in minute detail according to tows in the order for the crossing the next morning, and the column had a beachmaster and ferrymaster, with a detachment of Sappers and Miners for offloading and launching pontoons and to provide spare rowers.

Each tow consisted of thirteen pontoons, each with five rowers; nine pontoons were allocated to rank and file, ten men to each boat; two were for Lewis guns and teams, and two for bombers. The rowers for Nos. 2 and 3 Ferries consisted of two hundred and thirty volunteers from the 1/4th Bn. Hampshire Regiment, Territorial Battalion, mostly Southampton watermen in civil life.

No. 2 Column reached the vicinity of M.29 at 9.30 p.m. and, after reconnaissance by the O.C. and ferrymaster, the column was brought up to the sunken road. The pontoons were placed in position ready for launching and complete boat parties and fatigues, organized in detail, halted beside them. The beach had been prepared for the purpose to some extent previously.

The first tow under command of Major G. C. Wheeler consisted of "D" Company, with 2nd Lieutenant R. T. Russell, company officer, 2nd Lieutenant H. G. Alington, Lewis gun officer, and 2nd Lieutenant E. T. Kerr, bombing officer, with the regimental bombers. In addition to its normal load, each pontoon carried one spare box S.A.A., or one box of bombs, or entrenching tools.





THE PASSAGE AT THE SHUMRAN BEND.

23rd-24th February, 1917.

The second tow was to be "C" Company under Captain R. Blandy, with 2nd Lieutenant S. D. Gladstone as company officer.

The remaining tows in order of crossing were organized similarly to No. 1 tow, and bivouacked in the sunken road near Pt.M.29. Nos. 5 and 6 tows had no Lewis gunners, or bombers.

The night was dark and still and the concentration was effected without incident. No indication of any enemy knowledge of our intentions was apparent and hopes for surprise ran high.

Punctually at 5.30 a.m., February 23rd, the boats were launched and loaded, and the first tow pushed off at 5.45 a.m., ten boats followed by three. There was just sufficient light to see the far bank but insufficient to distinguish figures or movement. Each boat was rowed by four Hampshire rowers with a non-commissioned officer acting as coxswain and working the stern oar. When about half-way across, the first tow came under desultory rifle and machine-gun fire, apparently from enemy posts near "P" and "S" on the sketch, and this rapidly became more intense as the boats approached the left bank. Ten boats were seen to reach their destination, with three more drifting down-stream, apparently out of control.

Major Wheeler landed with the first boat party, who immediately rushed the trench opposite them and some fifteen yards distant; they were met by bombs and rifle fire, but replying with bombs, scattered the enemy and established a footing in the trench. 2nd Lieutenants R. T. Russell and E. T. Kerr arrived shortly afterwards and their parties were ordered to clear the trenches to right and left of where Major Wheeler was established. Lieutenant Kerr had been wounded during the crossing.

They were in turn followed by 2nd Lieutenant Alington with Jemadar Kishan Sing and two Lewis guns. Lieutenant Alington was shot dead on arrival at the trench, but the two Lewis guns were at once sent to right and left to cover the flanks of the parties extending our hold on the captured trenches. After firing one magazine the left Lewis gun jammed, and this enabled an enemy party, thirty or forty strong, to counter-attack across the foreshore on to the rear and flank of Major Wheeler's party in the centre. This officer with 2nd Lieutenant Russell and three men immediately charged and dispersed this party with bombs and bayonets, killing, or wounding, the majority. Major Wheeler was fired at and missed at point-blank range by three Turks; one of these then threw his rifle with fixed bayonet at him and caused a severe scalp wound some six inches long across the top of his head. Lieutenant Russell was also hit in the shoulder. After this, and in spite of his severe wound, Major Wheeler rallied as many men as possible and dispatched one party to guard the left flank from among some ruins, and another of thirty men, with a Lewis gun, to occupy and hold

a trench some one hundred and fifty yards forward ; another Lewis gun on arrival was sent to the left flank.

Immediately after landing the first tow the ten boats started on their return journey ; by this time shell fire of some intensity had started and continued throughout the operation, searching the river, both banks, and approaches to the right bank. The boats immediately came under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire and only six reached the ferry at varying intervals, the remainder drifting down-stream on the current and out of control, with the crews dead, or wounded. These six were towed up and immediately loaded with "C" Company under Captain R. Blandy with Lieutenant S. D. Gladstone and pushed off again. They in turn came under heavy fire from the same direction, which caused casualties, especially among the rowers ; three out of the four rowers in the leading boat were hit and the coxswain was severely wounded. Captain Blandy seized the oar and guided the boat in, receiving two bullets through the left sleeve in the process. Just as he was disembarking he was wounded in the abdomen, the bullet fortunately being deflected by his belt buckle and thus not proving fatal.

At 7 a.m. three boats had arrived with Captain Blandy, and two more under Lieutenant Gladstone reached the shore shortly afterwards. The latter officer taking command moved to the right flank and occupied the ruins near K.54, bombing out the defenders ; he then organized bombing parties and cleared the enemy to a depth of about one hundred and fifty yards inland, and established communication with the parties on his left. A Turkish picquet, of about twenty-five men, at these ruins had caused many of the casualties in the crossing. None of the second tow boats succeeded in making the beach on the return journey, and at about this time a message was also received from the 2nd Gurkhas at No. 3 Ferry asking for boats, if available, as ten were stranded on the left bank.

At approximately 8 a.m. three boats were towed up from down-stream and sent across with spare rowers, a F.O.O. and telephone. These rowers could not, however, reach the stranded boats owing to machine-gun fire ; our artillery fire which had been called for failed to neutralize this. At 8.45 a.m. "B" Company, under Captain V. Beadon, was sent to cross at No. 1 Ferry, while two more salvaged boats were loaded with spare ammunition, bombs, and a few men as crew. While supervising the loading of the latter 2nd Lieutenant P. F. Toogood was wounded in the head by shrapnel and died shortly after reaching the regimental aid post.

By 9.30 a.m. the whole of "D" Company, half "C" Company with five Lewis guns, and the regimental bombers had crossed and were established on the far bank, but both flanks were in the air.

The 2nd Norfolk at No. 1 Ferry had achieved a complete surprise and

were firmly established on the far bank, having captured five machine-guns and about three hundred prisoners. By 8 a.m. work was therefore started on the construction of the bridge. The 2nd Gurkhas at No. 3 Ferry, on the right, had met with severe opposition, and like ourselves had with difficulty established about one hundred and fifty men on the left bank.

By 9.30 a.m. all work on Nos. 2 and 3 Ferries had to be stopped owing to lack of boats, and enemy fire, and the remainder of both battalions was ordered to cross by No. 1. "B" and "A" Companies crossed at about 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. respectively, and linked up our rather precariously held positions with the Norfolk Regiment on the left and 2nd Gurkhas on the right. A gap of some fifty yards, swept by a hidden machine-gun, had existed between us and the 2nd Gurkhas for some time, and had caused some anxiety. By 3 p.m. the three battalions were established and digging in on their objective, and the reserve battalion was being ferried over. The bridge was completed by 4.30 p.m. and the remainder of the 14th Division commenced to cross. The Battalion was relieved at 10 p.m. and bivouacked near the "Hangar Pit," nine hundred yards north-west of the old Liquorice stack opposite M.31. During the day the 37th Brigade captured seven hundred prisoners, of which the Battalion had taken two hundred. The 1st Corps attack at Sannaiyat had also succeeded in capturing the enemy third and fourth lines, and had started infiltration into the fifth. At 11 p.m. orders were received that the 14th Division would attack the Dahra Banks position at dawn the following morning, with the 36th Brigade on the right, 37th Brigade left, and 35th Brigade in reserve.

#### THE ATTACK TO CLEAR THE SHUMRAN PENINSULA, February 24th

The front of attack allotted to the 37th Brigade was from "R" in Ruins, two hundred and fifty yards south-west of K.58—K.59—K.61—K.62 with the objective H.76—H.82. The attack was on a two-battalion front, 2nd Norfolk right, 67th Punjabis left, with the 2nd Battalion in support of the Norfolk and the 1/2nd Gurkhas supporting the Punjabis. The attack was to be covered by artillery, mortars, and machine-guns from the right bank.

The advance commenced at 6 a.m., the Battalion, following the Norfolk, extended on a two-platoon front in eight lines at one hundred and fifty yards' distance. A machine-gun company followed the Battalion. The advance was carried out over a bare open plain devoid of cover, but broken up by nullahs and with some scrub in places. In spite of fairly heavy artillery, machine-gun, and rifle fire, at times in enfilade from both flanks, the attack continued steadily in quick time, and by 7.20 a.m. the enemy's position was reached and assaulted. The 2nd Norfolk captured the first line, and the Battalion passing through occupied and consolidated the second

at H.76—H.77—H.81. The attack of the Punjabis and 2nd Gurkhas on our left was checked temporarily, and as a result the left flank of the Battalion was in the air, covered only by two Lewis guns of " B " Company, and one of the Norfolk. To cover this flank Lieutenant D. S. Gribble with a party of fifty bombers and another Lewis gun was detached, but shortly afterwards the Punjabis and 2nd Gurkhas succeeded in capturing the sunken road from H.81—J.97. The 35th Brigade then passed through this position and captured the line H.81—H.82. The enemy were in strength and their positions, situated in an intricate mass of ruins, mounds, and nullahs, made rapid progress impossible and enabled them to put up a stout resistance. The attack was, however, pressed home and the captured position consolidated and counter-attacks were beaten off. The Cavalry and 13th Division crossed the bridge during the afternoon, but the former were checked by a strong enemy rear-guard when they attempted to debouch on to the Baghdad road to cut the enemy lines-of-communication. At dusk the Battalion was relieved by the 35th Brigade and returned to bivouac on the line J.90—91—92. 2nd Lieutenant C. W. F. Scott was wounded by a sniper just prior to the relief.

Simultaneously with the above action the 1st Corps cleared the remainder of the Sannaiyat position, the two succeeding positions at Nakhilat and Suwada, and the remainder of the left bank as far as Kut, without much opposition.

The enemy was defeated and the road to Baghdad was open. During the two days' action in the Shumran Bend four field guns, eight machine-guns and over sixteen hundred prisoners were captured.

#### THE PURSUIT TO BAGHDAD

During the 25th, the 37th Brigade and the Battalion halted to rest and re-organize, while the Cavalry and 13th Divisions, with the naval flotilla of gun-boats, passed on to pursue the enemy who had evacuated his positions on the Dahra Banks during the night 24/25th. The enemy occupied successive rear-guard positions and succeeded in delaying the pursuit materially as far as Aziziyeh, where a halt to re-organize our extended lines-of-communication and system of supply was made. In their rapid retreat a large number of prisoners and quantities of guns, ammunition, and other booty fell into our hands. This included H.M.S. " Firefly " captured by the Turks in the retreat from Ctesiphon in 1915, three other river steamers, and numerous barges, pontoons, and other craft with large quantities of stores. The advance was resumed on March 5th as soon as the supply situation admitted, the main fighting falling on the Cavalry and 13th Divisions supported by the naval flotilla. On the 7th and 8th, the 13th Division was

strongly engaged in the passage of the Diyala River, which was only achieved on the 10th, after the heaviest fighting and with severe casualties. In this crossing the 38th (Lancashire) Brigade of the 13th Division especially distinguished itself.

On the 10th and 11th, working up both banks of the River Tigris, the remaining enemy were driven back and Baghdad was occupied.

The 2nd Battalion, marching with the main body of the 14th Division, was not called upon to take part in any further actual fighting prior to the capture of Baghdad. From February 25th to March 7th the Battalion found protective duties on the march and in bivouac; leaving Aziziyeh on the 5th, passing Ctesiphon on the 7th, and halting at Bawi on this night. On the 9th the 37th Brigade relieved the 36th as right flank guard to cover the operations for crossing the Diyala River by the 13th Division. Patrols from the Battalion advanced up to the river and found no enemy on the left bank but some scattered detachments on the far side. On the 10th the Brigade advanced and established itself on the river, which it crossed the following day with orders to co-operate with the 13th Division in their attack on the Qararah-Tel Mahomed position. The enemy had, however, evacuated this, and our troops pressed on and occupied Baghdad. The 37th Brigade was therefore concentrated and bivouacked at the Diyala bridge. Its action after this is described later.

Subsequent operations were for the consolidation of our position at Baghdad and to deal with the remnants of the Turkish Corps, north of the city. The 14th Division was destined to proceed to the north-east of Baghdad to Baqubah, and to take part in the operations initiated from that centre.

#### RETROSPECT OF THE SHUMRAN ACTION

The successful crossing of the River Tigris on February 23rd was the culminating action to the two and a half months' determined fighting which had commenced on December 13th with the advance to the River Hai. While it enabled us to threaten the enemy lines-of-communication above Kut-al-Amara, to an extent which was largely responsible for forcing him to evacuate his immensely strong positions further down the river, and thus open the road to Baghdad, it cannot be claimed that this action alone achieved this important result. The crossing had only been made feasible as the result of the successful issue of the protracted and bitter fighting all along the right bank and at Sannaiyat since December, a success achieved by good generalship, a sound plan, and the dogged determination and gallantry of the troops engaged. This in turn enabled the Commander-in-Chief to deceive the enemy and to achieve surprise with results com-

mensurate to the breadth of vision with which the plan had been conceived. This in no way minimizes the results achieved by the three battalions of the 37th Brigade, or detracts from the credit due to them for their gallant and successful action. The Norfolk at No. 1 Ferry had a comparatively easy task owing to their good fortune in achieving complete surprise at that crossing. But for this, and for the fact that the remainder of the two Gurkha Battalions were enabled to cross here later and reinforce their comrades, the precarious hold established by the leading tows at Nos. 2 and 3 Ferries might well have been lost, and the success of the whole operations jeopardized. No praise can be too high for the action of these leading tows, and in particular for those of the 2nd Battalion.

This was the Battalion's first action in face of the enemy, and it had only arrived in the forward area a fortnight before and had not previously been under fire. A large proportion of the men in the ranks were also young soldiers, in reality mere boys, who had been enlisted since the outbreak of the War. Their first taste of fire was to be no advance covered by a heavy barrage—with a shoulder-to-shoulder rush on to the enemy to stimulate élan. On the contrary, it was to be the far harder test of embarking in small slow-moving boats in the cold grey light of early dawn, and then to be rowed slowly across a flooded river nearly four hundred yards wide, with a current running at five knots, and swept by fire the whole way. In our case there was no question of surprise, and once launched the men could merely sit and bear it, and await either arrival at the far side, or death or wounds in the passage. A due measure of praise must therefore be given to them for their gallant action in forcing out a ready-prepared enemy from strong selected positions on the far bank, and for holding on and resisting counter-attack and artillery fire until support arrived. Still further praise is due to the second and subsequent tows who had already seen the plight of their leading comrades.

#### THE VICTORIA CROSS AWARDED

Major G. C. Wheeler's action has been described, and to him and to Lieutenant R. T. Russell must be accorded the main credit for the successful establishment of the Battalion on its objective. But for them the leading parties might well have been overwhelmed, to the prejudice of any further crossing at No. 2 Ferry, and quite possibly of the whole operation. Major Wheeler was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross and Lieutenant Russell the Distinguished Service Order.

Finally nothing too good, or too much, can be said of the volunteer rowers of the 1/4th Bn. Hampshire Regiment at Nos. 2 and 3 Ferries, and without them the operation could not have taken place; for sheer gallantry and

devotion to duty their conduct has surely never been surpassed. Owing to the closing of Nos. 2 and 3 Ferries after the second tows had crossed the spare rowers found by No. 12 Company, Sappers and Miners, were not employed.

The steadiness in attack of our men on the succeeding day also deserves mention, and was on a par with their intrepid action of the 23rd. Considering the important rôle it had played the Battalion received surprisingly light casualties in the two days' operation ; these amounted to :

Killed :	2 B.O.s.	1 G.O.	15 G.O.R.s.	} Total 107, All Ranks
Wounded :	5 B.O.s.	3 G.O.s.	75 G.O.R.s.	
Missing :			6 G.O.R.s.	

The Battalion was extremely fortunate in being selected for participation in this stirring battle and subsequent successful pursuit and actions. It had not only worthily upheld the splendid record of its sister Battalion in both France and Mesopotamia, but had added lustre to the name already achieved by the 9th Gurkhas. The 23rd February is now observed as a battle commemoration holiday, annually, in the 2nd Battalion.



## CHAPTER XIII

1917-1919

### MESOPOTAMIA. OPERATIONS SUBSEQUENT TO THE FALL OF BAGHDAD. THE DEPARTURE OF THE 2ND BATTALION TO INDIA

General Plan of Operations. Operations towards the Persian Frontier and on the Khalis Canal. Passage of the Adhaim River, April 18th, and Action of 30th April. The Summer of 1917. Punitive Operations against the Arabs. Move to Beled Ruz. The Jabal Hamrin Hills. Reconnaissance of the Diyala River, near Tawilah. Death of Lieut.-General Sir Stanley Maude. Across the Diyala in December. 1918-1919. Move to Kurdarra Camp. Departure of "B" Company to 3/11th Gurkha Rifles. Moves to Tawilah and Mirjana. Return to India. Retrospect of Mesopotamia.

#### PLAN OF OPERATIONS DURING MARCH AND APRIL 1917

**T**HE consolidation of our position at Baghdad led to further heavy fighting during March and April 1917. Two enemy Corps, the XIIIth, which had retired up the River Tigris after the fall of the city, and the XVIIIth, which was said to be falling back before the Russians advancing from Persia, still constituted a potential menace; this was also the case with the Euphrates line which afforded the most direct route for enemy reinforcements from Europe. The plan of operations was firstly, to contain the enemy on the Tigris and also to prevent threatened floods from the north and north-west of Baghdad; secondly, to watch the Euphrates line to the west of the city; thirdly, to co-operate with the Russians and by vigorous action against the Turkish XVIIIth Corps opposing them to assist our Allies to establish themselves at Mosul.

The 7th Division advanced up the right bank of the River Tigris, and defeating the enemy in an action at Mushahida drove them twenty-five miles northwards. Simultaneously the 13th Division occupied the left bank as far as Kasirin, while a brigade group of the 3rd Division advanced and occupied Felujah on the Euphrates without opposition. The 14th Division was made responsible for the city and lines-of-communication on the Tigris below Baghdad and on the Diyala River. The 2nd Battalion was to take part in the operations up the latter river designed to co-operate with the Russians.

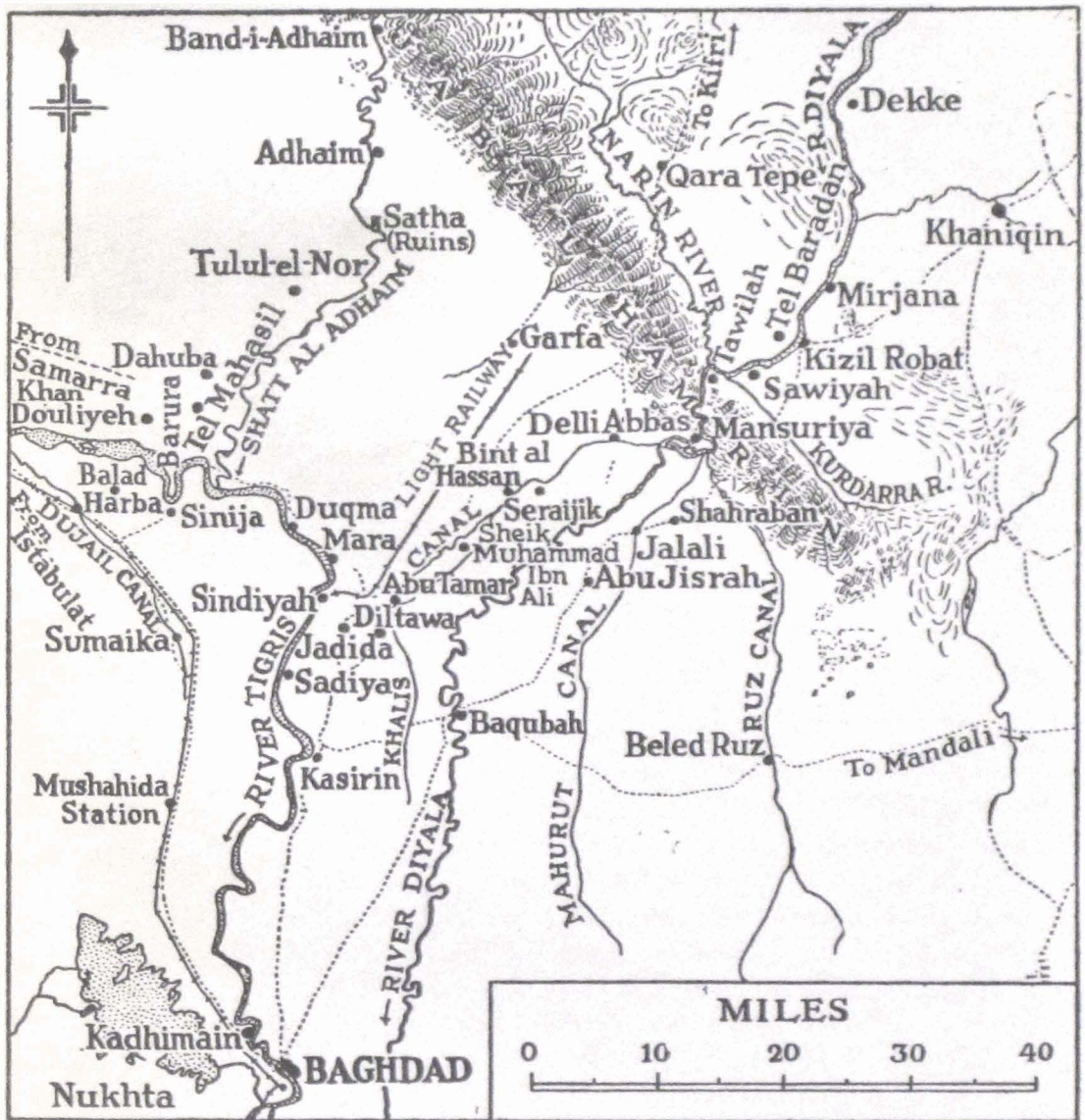
## OPERATIONS TOWARDS THE PERSIAN FRONTIER

The information that the Turkish XVIIIth Corps (2nd and 6th Divisions) had been defeated and were retiring before the advancing Russians proved to be grossly exaggerated, and the British operations initiated to strike the enemy flank in the Jabal Hamrin hills to assist our Allies led to severe fighting. It was not the first time during the Great War, or in our history, that the British were to place too much reliance on their Allies.

A small force, in mechanical transport, occupied Baqubah in the middle of March and was followed by the 3rd Division (less one brigade) and attached troops (Keary's Force) which advanced to Shahraban. It was then involved in a severe action in the Jabal Hamrin hills along the Ruz Canal, and was engaged with two enemy divisions in a prepared position instead of with a weak rear-guard said to have been defeated already, as had been anticipated. The IIIrd Corps was thereafter called on to operate in this area.

The 2nd Battalion remained on the Diyala bridgehead until the end of March. The remainder of the Brigade, the 37th, having moved to Baqubah, it was made responsible for the bridgehead and outposts and also established a post with two companies and attached troops at Khan Bani Saad (Coningham's Post). On being relieved it rejoined the brigade at Baqubah on March 29th. During this period Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Bateman-Champain arrived and assumed command, and Lieut.-Colonel F. E. Coningham proceeded to take command of the 1st Battalion 8th Gurkha Rifles. He commanded that Battalion during the fierce action at Istabulat, for which he was awarded the D.S.O.; later he commanded the 1/10th Gurkha Rifles at the Battle of Sharqat during 1918, an action which largely contributed to the final defeat of the Turks in Mesopotamia. He thus commanded three different Gurkha Battalions in three of the fiercest battles fought in Mesopotamia, the 2/9th at Shumran, the 1/8th at Istabulat and the 1/10th at Sharqat. Subsequently he gained great distinction as a brigade commander during the Arab Rebellion of 1920. Promoted major-general, he commanded the Burma Independent District from 1928 to 1932 and was appointed colonel of the 10th Gurkha Rifles in 1927.

On April 5th the Battalion formed the main part of "Champain's Force" of one and a half battalions with some artillery and machine-guns attached, and took up a defensive position from Diltawa-Sindiyah. This was in support of a column of all arms known as "Marshall's Column," consisting of the 13th and Cavalry Divisions, which was concentrating to operate against the enemy 2nd and 14th Divisions, reported to be advancing between the River Adhaim and the Khalis Canal. The position on the



OPERATIONS, NORTH OF BAGHDAD.

1917.

Tigris right bank had been secured temporarily by a successful action at Balad, where the 7th Division decisively defeated part of the Turkish 52nd Division at trifling cost

#### THE KHALIS CANAL

The advance of the Turkish Division down the River Adhaim and Khalis Canal constituted a potential menace of junction between the XIIIth and XVIIIth enemy Corps, and the operations of Marshall's Column from the 9th-16th April were designed to counter this. From the 6th-9th April the Cavalry Division was in close contact with the advancing 2nd and 14th enemy Divisions and was gradually pushed back south-westwards. On the 9th Champain's Force was absorbed by the 35th Brigade, 14th Division (less two battalions), which arrived at Abu Tamar on this date and was joined by the 2/4th Gurkha Rifles on the following day. This brigade was commanded by Brigadier General W. M. Thomson, who had commanded the 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders in the Dehra Dun Brigade in France. On the 11th Marshall's Column attacked the advancing enemy. Their right flank was partially enveloped by the 13th Division after a night march, but in the meantime the Cavalry Division, on their right, had been pushed back and a considerable gap occurred. To fill this Thomson's Column (35th Brigade with 1/2nd and 2/9th Gurkha Rifles and attached troops) advanced from Abu Tamar at 2 p.m. Two hours later, after passing 13th Divisional Head-quarters it moved east across the Khalis Canal, and advanced with the object of locating the enemy positions and filling the gap on the right of the 13th Division. The 2nd Battalion with the 37th Dogras formed the leading line, and advanced in extended order in eight lines with "A" and "C" Companies leading. It advanced somewhat over a mile in a north-easterly direction, coming under long-range artillery and sniper fire. At 6 p.m. orders were received to halt and consolidate and a picquet line was established with the left on Sheik Muhammad Ibn Ali. The night passed without incident and the Battalion had incurred no casualties during the day. The enemy evacuated his positions during the night and was followed up throughout the following day by the 13th Division and 35th Brigade. The Battalion again led the 35th Brigade in this operation and after a long hot march, during which some artillery fire was experienced, our line was established with the right about two miles short of Bint-al-Hassan. The Turks were now found to be strongly entrenched in this area and our advance on April 13th was opposed. By nightfall the British line was about fifteen hundred yards from the main Turkish position between Bint-al-Hassan and Seraijik. The Battalion suffered fourteen casualties from shell fire during the day's operations and the troops were

much affected by thirst and heat exhaustion. The enemy evacuated their positions on the evening of the 14th, and the Battalion carried out an exhausting march that night and the following day in pursuit, and then bivouacked for the night near Seraijik. The enemy were now reported to be retiring into the Jabal Hamrin hills and the pursuit was discontinued.

Marshall's Column was now split up, the 13th (less one brigade) and Cavalry Divisions being left in observation of the hills near Delli Abbas, while the 35th and 38th Brigades moved to the Tigris. On the 16th April the Battalion marched twenty-six miles to Sindiyah, arriving in bivouac on the banks of the river at 11 p.m. Marching again at 5.15 a.m., it reached Dogameh at 8 a.m. and bivouacked.

#### PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Having disposed of the threat from the north-east, the plan was now to force the passage of the Adhaim River at its junction with the Tigris on the left bank and thence to advance to the Barura peninsula, and bridge the latter river there. By this means the operations of the 1st Corps against the strong Istabulat position covering Samarra and the railhead of the Baghdad railway on the right bank would be assisted. It would also further separate the two enemy corps, as a junction via the Adhaim was still possible.

#### PASSAGE OF THE ADHAIM RIVER

The 38th Brigade, assisted by a cavalry force working on the flank, forced the passage of the Adhaim at dawn on April 18th. The 35th Brigade, of which the 2nd Battalion formed the advanced guard, was detailed to pass through the 38th Brigade to pursue the enemy as soon as the Adhaim had been bridged. It did so at about 12.30 p.m. with orders to advance up the Nahrwan Canal towards Tel Mahasil, and thence on Khan Douliyah to secure the Barura Peninsula. The surprise achieved in the attack that morning, and the bold and brilliant pursuit of the cavalry that afternoon, had, however, turned the Turkish retirement into a rout, and the cavalry advanced fourteen miles before dark and secured eight hundred prisoners and three machine-guns. The Battalion thus had no fighting and together with the remainder of the Brigade bivouacked that night at Khan Douliyah. An incident of this battle was the capture of thirteen Turkish prisoners by the Battalion's quartermaster, Lieutenant Pickthall, who when riding forward suddenly came upon a group of armed Turks hiding in a nullah; hastily drawing his pistol he was prepared to sell his life dearly, but to his relief and astonishment the Turks surrendered, and he marched them back to Battalion H.Q. in triumph!

In this brilliant action the British forced a defended river crossing, practically annihilated the 40th Turkish Regiment, and took twelve hundred and fifty prisoners and six machine-guns at a cost of seventy-five casualties. The Battalion remained in bivouac at Khan Douliyeh from April 18th-24th and dug a defensive position ; a bridge was thrown over the River Tigris at the Barura Bend during this period. The 1st Corps on the right bank then advanced and in a severe action at Istabulat defeated the enemy and occupied Samarra, which attack was supported by fire from the left bank.

During the course of the foregoing operations a further threat from the enemy XVIIIth Corps advancing down the Adhaim occurred, and their 14th Division with some cavalry advanced as far as Tulul-el-Nor. On April 24th this force was defeated at Dahuba and retired on to a prepared position covering Band-i-Adhaim. A concentration of the 35th, 38th and 40th Brigades was thereafter ordered to attack this position.

On the 25th the Battalion was relieved in the defensive position at Barura and after an exhausting march of over twenty miles, due to the inability of finding water, joined the brigade column some six miles south of S<sup>2</sup>th<sup>a</sup> ruins at 11 p.m. The following day it advanced with the 35th Brigade to reconnoitre the enemy position ; this was found to be some five miles from Band-i-Adhaim with a division holding each bank astride the river. By a night march on the 26/27th the Brigade advanced and occupied some broken ground two miles from the main enemy position. Some deep fissures and ravines provided good cover for the companies, but they were subjected to intermittent shell fire ; one shell pitched right into the 2nd Battalion mess tent, fortunately with only minor results as the majority of the officers had just finished breakfast. The mess secretary, Captain W. P. Hogg, I.M.S., the Battalion's medical officer, had a lucky escape ; he was shaving at the time and had his tackle buried, but was himself unhurt ; one British signaller was, however, killed and another severely wounded. An amusing aspect to an otherwise tragic episode was the sight presented by the mess cook ; he, with the other mess servants, fled from the unhealthy site in temporary panic and with porridge streaming from his beard. The explosion had apparently found him engaged in preparing a saucepan of this homely dish and had blown the contents all over his face ! Further shelling, thereafter, did not encourage expert culinary art, but, as always, the servants stuck loyally to their job.

The 27th-29th were spent in reconnaissance and artillery registration and orders for an attack on the 30th were issued. The Battalion meanwhile held an outpost position through " The Island " and adjoining nullahs and broken ground. The Island, which was really a graveyard, was somewhat in advance of the rest of the position, and subject to enemy sniping. The

plan was for the two brigades of the 13th Division to attack the enemy on the right bank under a barrage, while the 35th Brigade formed a strong left flank across the river to counter any hostile movement from that direction. The leading Battalion of this Brigade was then to advance and attack the "Boot," a commanding position covering the whole river-bed, at this point of considerable breadth. The 2nd Battalion was detailed for this duty and the advance was to be covered from the left by another battalion occupying high cliffs; cavalry were to cover both flanks of the operation.

#### ACTION ON THE 30TH APRIL

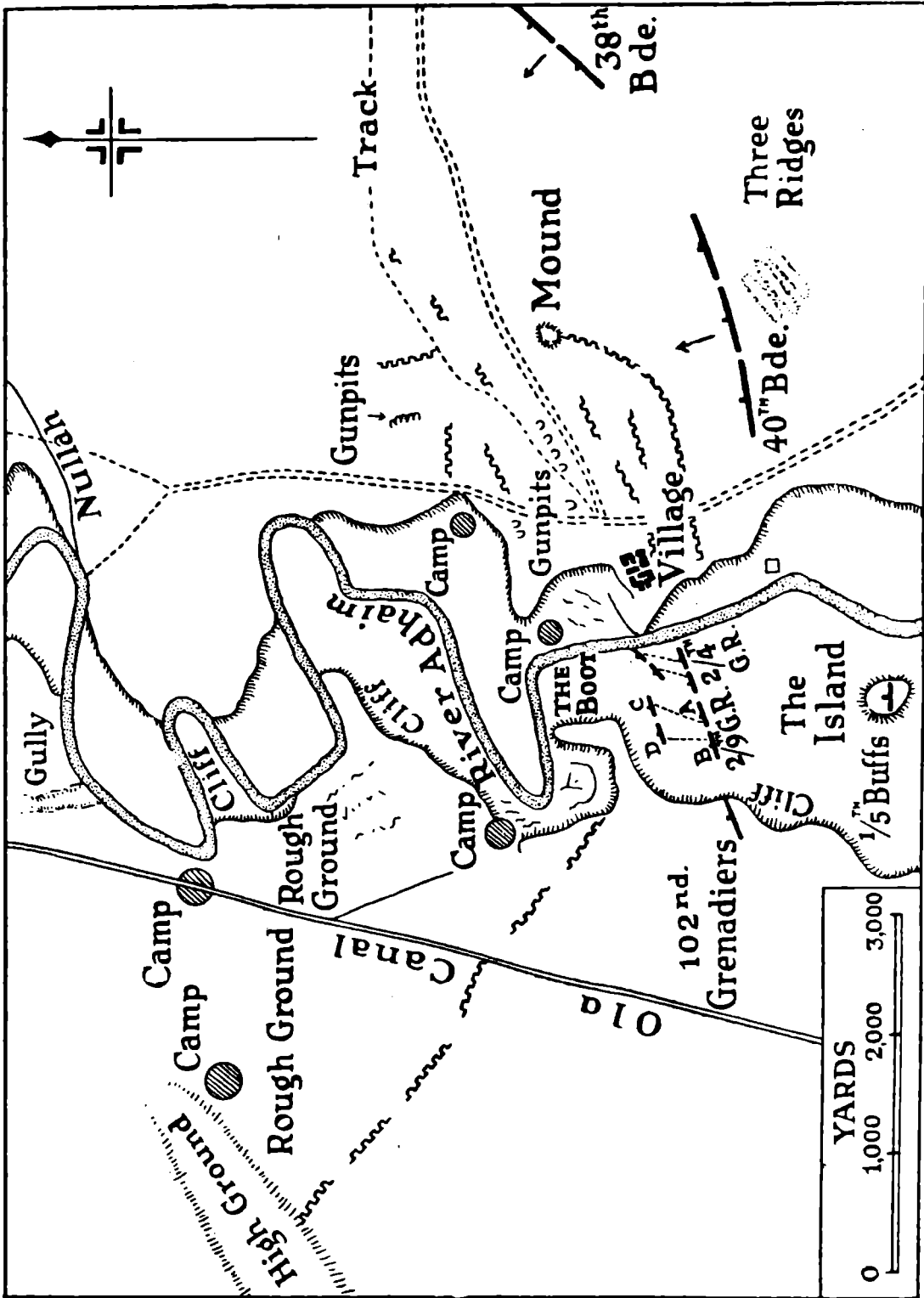
The initial attack on the right bank, covered by a barrage from all available artillery, was immediately successful and the 40th Brigade captured Adhaim village and pushed on beyond. Just prior to zero hour for the Battalion's attack on the "Boot," however, a violent dust storm arose, and under cover of this the enemy counter-attacked vigorously and pushed back the leading battalions of the 40th Brigade and re-took the village. From this cause the attack of the 2nd Battalion was at once enfiladed from the right flank. "C" Company, under Captain Blandy, and "D" Company, under Lieutenant Gribble, led the attack at 5 a.m., and moved forward in four lines of platoons followed by "A" and "B" Companies in similar formation, eight hundred yards behind. The left flank was protected by the 102nd Grenadiers in position on the cliff. The ground was bare and open except for some low scrub and the leading companies at once came under long-range fire of artillery, machine-guns, and rifles, but advanced with insignificant casualties. Some nine hundred yards from the starting line and about midway to the "Boot" was a peculiar rise, probably an ancient bund, which gave some cover. The companies re-formed behind this and "C" Company then pushed on some two hundred yards under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. The ground in front of "D" Company was bare and open and impossible to cross in full view of the enemy without artillery covering fire; this was provided at 7 a.m. and "D" Company pushed on into line with "C," where it was also held up. At this point the right flank of the Battalion was heavily enfiladed as a result of the successful enemy counter-attack. At 8 a.m. two companies of the 2/4th Gurkha Rifles came up in support of the Battalion. Under cover of fire by one section No. 155 Company, Machine Gun Corps, they advanced up into line with our leading companies, and between them and the river, but were then held up by enfilade fire from the east bank. A further bombardment at 9.20 failed to silence the opposing machine-guns on the "Boot" and no further advance was possible. A gap having occurred between "C" and "D" Companies, two platoons of "A" Company under Lieu-

tenant M. B. Allsebrook were sent up to fill it about noon ; these two platoons had a long advance under heavy machine-gun fire and only succeeded in reaching "C" Company after losing eight casualties. The situation then was two and a half companies 2/9th Gurkhas, and two companies 2/4th Gurkhas, held up some three hundred and fifty yards from the foot of the "Boot," with the remainder of both battalions in position on the ancient bund ; the 102nd Grenadiers were still protecting the left flank from the cliff. About 1.30 p.m. orders were received not to press the attack unless the enemy were seen to be withdrawing from the "Boot," and as this did not occur the situation remained as thus described till darkness. Under cover of darkness the forward companies of the Battalion were withdrawn to the bund, wounded were collected, and outposts put out. At 10 p.m. patrols were sent out to reconnoitre and discover the situation at the "Boot" ; they returned at about midnight to say that the Turkish trenches had been evacuated, and all that remained was a party of wounded in a depression which was being used as an aid post. The Battalion prepared to advance at dawn. Air reconnaissance at daybreak revealed that the Turks had retired on both banks of the Adhaim and were moving towards Kifri and the Jabal Hamrin hills. With them went some one hundred unfortunate British prisoners from the 39th and 40th Brigades, captured in the counter-attack of the previous day. The Cavalry Brigade took up the pursuit, but the enemy got into the hills and the pursuit was stopped.

The Battalion arrived on the "Boot" soon after daylight, and took up a position to cover the clearing of the battlefield and to keep off marauding Arabs. Over forty Turkish dead were buried and a number of wounded collected on the Battalion front. The occupation of the "Boot" was of particular interest to those who had spent many hours the day before lying three hundred yards away from the position and being shot at ; it was instructive to examine the machine-gun positions and note how skilfully they had been concealed. ... On May 2nd the troops commenced to withdraw to summer quarters.

But for the violent dust storm which enabled the enemy to counter-attack over known ground, and to drive back our advanced troops from Adhaim village, the day's action might well have been a decisive success. This counter-attack was delivered by the 2nd Anatolian Division, a formation famous in the Gallipoli theatre of war. They were old opponents of the Regiment, for it was this same division which had executed the counter-attack at Beit Aiessa almost exactly a year before, and with whom the 1st Battalion had been so fiercely engaged. As it was, at a cost of some seven hundred casualties we had driven off two divisions of the enemy, and had taken three hundred and sixty prisoners and buried over two hundred





THE ATTACK ON "THE BOOT."

30th APRIL, 1917

dead. The Battalion had put four hundred and fifty rifles into the firing line, of whom fifteen were killed and thirty-seven wounded, some severely. The behaviour of all the men had been excellent and several were recommended for awards for gallantry. With the coming of the hot weather, and the defeat of both the Turkish XIIIth and XVIIIth Corps above described, the immediate operations for the consolidation of our position at Baghdad were concluded. But for the defection and inaction of the Russian forces in Persia, to assist and co-operate with whom our operations beyond Baqubah had been initiated and planned, our success might have been decisive and of great consequence. Even without their help, however, the action of the British forces had been uniformly successful and the enemy defeated whenever met. Intense heat had been experienced throughout April and the conduct and gallantry of the troops, who were called on to carry out long marches and frequent attacks, deserves the highest praise. The 2nd Battalion since moving from the Diyala in March had been called on to play its full share and could now be regarded as a war-seasoned efficient unit, capable of undertaking any form of operation which it might be called on to perform.

#### THE MOVEMENTS OF THE 2ND BATTALION AND OPERATIONS DURING THE REMAINDER OF 1917

After the successful dispersion and defeat of the two enemy corps north and north-east of Baghdad already described, the rôle of the IIIrd Corps was to construct adequate defensive positions to protect Baghdad from the north-east, and to rest the troops in summer quarters. The 2nd Battalion was, however, to be ordered to take part in several arduous punitive operations against hostile Arabs: also to do heavy work in the preparation and garrisoning of defensive lines, throughout the heat of the summer months.

On the day following the action at Band-i-Adhaim the Battalion was ordered to form part of a column returning to Baqubah to rejoin the 37th Brigade. This marched via the Adhaim, Mara and Diltawa and reached Baqubah on the 9th. The Battalion remained there for the rest of the month doing routine duties in camp. During this period short leave to India was opened and a party of two B.O.s, three G.O.s and sixty-eight G.O.R.s left for Basra. This concession, continued throughout the summer for the remainder of the campaign, was of inestimable benefit and was readily availed of by the limited numbers permitted to go.

The Commander-in-Chief visited Baqubah on the 25th May and presented the ribbons of decorations awarded as immediate rewards. These included that of the D.S.O. to Lieutenant R. T. Russell and of the I.D.S.M. to one Rifleman, both awarded for gallantry at the Shumran action.

A few days after this, and for the first half of June, the Battalion was engaged in punitive operations against marauding Arabs and marched thirty-two miles in seventeen hours in intense heat on May 28/29th to, and from, Abu Jisrah.

The hostility of the Arab Beni Tamin tribe in the Shahraban-Kizil Robot-Beled Ruz area was undoubtedly provoked by the Turks still in the area along the Persian frontier, and as a result, the intended rest for the troops in summer quarters at Baqubah was to be rudely interrupted. The dispatch of the column mentioned was due to an attack on, and the burning of, a police post some eight miles from Baqubah. Within a few days of its return another column of all arms, including the 2nd Battalion and attached troops, under command of Brigadier-General Maclachlan was organized to undertake punitive operations against the tribe. The column proceeded via Abu Jisrah and Shahraban to the Beled Ruz area and operated there for some days; in the course of the operations it covered something like one hundred miles in five days, which was a fine feat of marching at any time, let alone in a Mesopotamian June. Numerous hostile gatherings were engaged and dispersed with loss, encampments were burnt, and some seven thousand head of camels, cattle, and sheep collected and driven in. This involved long trying marches in intense heat both by day and by night, and the escorting of the exhausted animals proved an arduous and exacting duty. Only those who have experienced it can realize the difficulty of driving enormous flocks of camels and sheep. One British Officer and the rear-guard company had a practical illustration of the difficulty of "passing a camel through the eye of a needle." Two hundred camels penned up in a narrow walled street in Beled Ruz refused to go through an archway which spanned the road. Close up behind them was the transport, which could neither turn back owing to the narrowness of the streets, nor get on because of the camels which would not budge. The rear-guard was thus held up for five hours. The sheep were little better; one large flock of about five thousand presented a strange spectacle, as the sheep on the outer circumference moved round in a circle, while those in the centre stood fast. The mass gyrated but did not move on; a whole company failed to stir them and they were finally abandoned. On more than one march of some twenty miles in length, escorts to animals did not arrive in camp till after midnight, and numerous animals either died by the way or had to be left exhausted, to be picked up by prowling Arabs. An additional difficulty was the fact that no ambulance, or transport organization, was provided to pick up the wearied escorts who were necessarily miles in rear of the column.

Fortunately owing to the fitness of the men the percentage which fell

out was small. The column returned to Baqubah on June 7th, having taught the Arabs a salutary lesson, but only by dint of an arduous and exacting duty in conditions of extreme heat.

The remainder of June was spent in digging a defensive position round the camp during which some activity by hostile aeroplanes was displayed. Reports that Turks were occupying Shahraban and inciting the Arabs to further indiscretions led to a battalion being sent to Beled Ruz, which in turn involved "C" Company, under Captain Blandy, being sent to prepare and garrison a defensive position at Mahrut post.

Further reports that three battalions of Turks had advanced on the 29th from Kizil Robot towards Imam Asker to support the Arabs, led to the 2nd Battalion being ordered to march to Beled Ruz that night. It did so, reaching Mahrut at 6 a.m., and, marching again that afternoon, arrived and bivouacked two miles east of Beled Ruz at 10 p.m. on the 30th. A report was received that the Turks had retired on Shahraban and two columns of all arms were organized to conduct punitive operations in the Imam Asker area. The 2nd Battalion joined that commanded by Brigadier-General Maclachlan, and both columns advanced and burnt several villages on July 3rd. The Battalion remained in camp at Beled Ruz from July to the middle of October, being utilized in digging a defensive position and in doing as much training as possible. It also found two companies as garrison of Mahrut post until the end of August and again during October. Several columns of varying strength were employed during this period in punitive work against the Arabs, but the 2nd Battalion did not join any of these. During September two companies under Captain Blandy formed the escort to a survey party and suffered severely from heat. By the end of September the strength of the Battalion was 10 B.O.s, 16 G.O.s and 988 G.O.R.s.

On August 5th Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Bateman-Champain left the Battalion to assume command of the 36th Brigade and did not thereafter serve again with the Regiment. He had joined from the 1st Gurkhas on the raising of the 2nd Battalion in 1905 and had served with the 1st Battalion in France during 1915 and thereafter commanded the 1/4th Gurkhas in Gallipoli. Captain V. Beadon and Major H. F. Collingridge assumed temporary command until relieved by Lieut.-Colonel C. R. Bradshaw on October 25th.

#### THE JABAL HAMRIN HILLS

From October to December 1917 the IIIrd Corps was in constant contact with the Turks in the Jabal Hamrin hills and Kizil Robot area. By early December the enemy strength had increased considerably along the

Persian frontier, and it was decided to consolidate our rather scattered defensive positions in the Baqubah–Delli Abbas area by securing the naturally strong defensive line of the Jabal Hamrin range. This would also give us control of the canals flowing from the Diyala River.

On this decision the 13th, and two brigades of the 14th Division, were ordered to advance on both sides of the Diyala River with the objective Delli Abbas to the crest of the Jabal Hamrin, where the Kizil Robot road crosses.

The 2nd Battalion operated with the 37th Brigade group under Brigadier-General Maclachlan with the objective of the crest of the hills from the river to the Shahraban–Kizil Robot road. The Battalion was ordered to reduce its establishment to the old war establishment of 753 O.R.s, and this entailed 7 G.O.s and 173 G.O.R.s under Lieutenant Gribble being left at Beled Ruz, while two platoons of " B " Company, under Lieutenant Scott, garrisoned Mahrut post.

Maclachlan's Column of all arms concentrated at Beled Ruz on October 16th, and marching via Tel Qubah bivouacked near Chariz on the night of the 18th. On the 19th it advanced to the objective without opposition along the Kurdarra River, it, and a cavalry column protecting its right flank, having turned the flank of the enemy position. The Battalion formed part of the main body in the advance and furnished two companies on outpost duty that night. The cavalry column just failed to cut the enemy line of retreat, but shelled his rear-guard effectively near Tawilah ; during the following day Kizil Robot was occupied, but a return to bivouac ensued that evening.

#### THE DIYALA RIVER

On the 21st the Battalion, with two companies 1/2nd Gurkha Rifles, a battery, and one section M.G.C., carried out a reconnaissance to find a suitable place to bridge the Diyala near Tawilah. The 13th Division was ordered to carry out a similar task on the right bank ; the orders were for a reconnaissance and not a fight. The advanced guard, consisting of " B " and " D " Companies with two sub-sections M.G.C., under Captain Beadon, was organized in three columns and started at 9.15 a.m.

Right Column (Captain Beadon)—" B " Company and one sub-section M.G.C. on Imam Ismail.

Centre Column (Lieutenant Allsebrook)—two platoons " D " Company and one sub-section M.G.C. between Imam Ismail and Tawilah.

Left Column (Lieutenant Wilson)—" D " Company, less two platoons, on Tawilah.

H.Q. and the remainder of the column followed the centre party moving

on Jibrook village. Small parties of enemy cavalry retired before the left and centre columns of the advanced guard, and by 10.30 a.m. all three parties came under rifle fire, the centre column being held up. In the meantime Column H.Q. had moved up to Jibrook, but had to move about one thousand yards south owing to enemy shelling. The left column of the advanced guard moved up the west bank of the Kurdarra River to attempt to reach the junction of the Narin and Diyala Rivers, but came under accurate enemy shell fire six hundred yards from the objective. By 12 p.m. the right column had occupied a mound near Imam Ismail under heavy fire from the Turks holding the right bank of the Diyala; the centre column was held up by enemy in position about five hundred yards from the left bank; the left column was being heavily shelled in the Kurdarra River bed. At 12.30 the left column was ordered to retire to H.Q., being covered by "A" Company, in position east of Jibrook. It arrived at 1.30 p.m., having sustained several casualties from shell fire. As the enemy, and not the 13th Division, was holding the Diyala River a further reconnaissance was obviously impossible and the G.O.C. ordered a withdrawal at dusk; this was successfully accomplished with "C" Company acting as rear-guard and the column reached bivouac at 7 p.m. The day's operations had disclosed the enemy in strength, in prepared positions, covered by guns on the right bank of the Diyala, and it was thereafter decided to construct and hold a defensive position along the Jabal Hamrin, as originally intended. The Battalion had one man killed and eleven wounded during the day's operations.

As further reconnaissances during the next few days also drew heavy hostile fire, from which it was obvious that the enemy occupied the river in strength, work on the defensive line was commenced on October 26th. The Battalion was detailed to the centre sub-section of the 37th Brigade line; this extended in a rough semicircle from the crest of the Jabal Hamrin to the left bank of the Diyala River, four miles south-west of Tawilah, a length of nine miles. The Battalion had two companies forward, each holding a front of approximately one mile. The preparation and garrisoning of this defensive position, together with active patrolling, continued throughout November, during which much enemy air activity was displayed and some hostile shelling experienced. The Beled Ruz and Mahrut detachments re-joined at the beginning of the month.

#### DEATH OF LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR F. S. MAUDE

On November 18th news was received of the death of the Commander-in-Chief, Lieut.-General Sir F. S. Maude, who had died of cholera contracted in Baghdad. This news was received with the greatest regret,

not only by the Mesopotamian Force, but by the Empire generally. He was succeeded by Lieut.-General Sir W. R. Marshall of the IIIrd Corps; he, in turn, being succeeded by Major-General R. G. Egerton.

#### ACROSS THE DIYALA RIVER, 1st-4th December

Early in December the IIIrd Corps once more engaged the enemy north of the Diyala in the Kizil Robat area. The Turkish forces between Kifri and Abu Zenabil on the right bank of the river were now estimated to be of a strength of approximately four thousand infantry, strongly supported by artillery and machine-guns.

The plan of operations was to cross the river above Kizil Robat and to turn the enemy left flank in the Tel Baradan-Tawilah area, while a Russian force protected the left flank by occupying Kirkuk. The 37th Brigade was detailed for this turning movement, while the 35th Brigade operated along both banks of the river with a view to bridging it near Kizil Robat; the 13th Division meanwhile attacked north of the river. The Cavalry Division was ordered to operate to the north and north-west towards Qara Tepe.

A reconnaissance under Captain Blandy discovered a ford over the river at Mirjana, north of Kizil Robat, on November 30th, and the 37th Brigade concentrated at Kurdarra and Kirr Chand nullah on the evening of December 1st. On the night of December 2/3rd the Battalion, less "B" Company, left the defensive position on the Jabal Hamrin and marched on Mirjana; after some delay caused by canals and narrow bridges the ford was reached at 2.30 a.m.; the 67th Punjabis following. Preceded by "A" Company, under Lieutenant Gladstone, the Battalion had crossed the river by 5 a.m. It then advanced on its objective, the high ground towards Tel Baradan, from which it was to form a bridgehead to cover construction of the bridge near Kizil Robat. The advance was delayed by thick high grass and numerous small streams, but by 7.30 a.m. it had reached the objective and was consolidating: the 67th Punjabis were on the left and one squadron of cavalry guarded the right flank on a front of one and a half miles. Small parties of the enemy were seen retiring from Tel Baradan in a northerly direction.

At 8.30 a.m. the cavalry on the right flank were withdrawn and some long-range enemy machine-gun fire was experienced; this was kept in check by bold handling of the Battalion's Lewis guns. Until 12.30 p.m. accurate enemy shelling was experienced to which our artillery still on the far bank of the Diyala, could not reply, being out of range. Some minor readjustments of the line to link up with the 67th Punjabis were made and at 1.30 p.m. a message was received that two companies 2nd Bn.

Norfolk Regiment were crossing the newly constructed bridge. At 2.15 p.m. news that the 35th Brigade was holding Karawaniyah came through and the Battalion was ordered to move on to the line Tel Baradan-Karawaniyah. The advance commenced at 3.30 p.m. with "A" and "C" Companies leading, and being a flank movement across the enemy's front was shelled accurately and unceasingly till dark. The Battalion was ordered to close on Tel Baradan at 4.15 p.m., and by 5.30 p.m. had collected and bivouacked at that place. The attack, due chiefly to the successful night advance and flank movement of the 37th Brigade, had caused the enemy to retire, and orders were issued for the 35th Brigade to follow up towards Qara Tepe. The Battalion had two men killed and eighteen wounded during the operation.

On December 4th the Battalion marched to Tel Suleman, crossing the river by the new bridge, and on the next day returned to Kurdarra camp. Here it remained till the 19th doing routine escort and camp duties. One company was moved to the junction of the Kurdarra and Diyala Rivers to find picquets and patrols on fords near Tawilah and Sawiyah, while numerous digging fatigues on the defensive line were also furnished. Patrolling was a popular duty, for herds of wild pig were to be found on the islands in the bed of the Diyala River; a returning patrol sometimes shot as many as five pig. On the 20th the Battalion moved to camp on the Ruz Canal and after Christmas holidays routine training commenced.

#### 1918 AND THE 2ND BATTALION'S DEPARTURE FROM MESOPOTAMIA, February 1919

Although the 2nd Battalion was to serve for another fourteen months in the country, the operations near Kizil Robat, just described, were to be the last in actual contact with the enemy in which it took part. Up to the time of the Armistice in November, together with the remainder of the Brigade, less the 1/2nd Gurkhas who went to Persia, it was employed in arduous fatigue duties on road and railway construction, combined with such training as was possible. The Kizil Robat-Khaniqin road was now to become the main line-of-communication in connection with operations in Persia, first of "Dunster Force," of which Major H. C. Duncan of the Regiment was principal "Q" Staff Officer, and later of further forces which moved up through Hamadan towards the Caspian Sea, under Brigadier-General H. F. Bateman-Champain. The fatigue work was devoted firstly to the improvement of the existing road, particularly through the Jabal Hamrin hills, and later on to the construction of a railway between Tawilah and Mirjana. The Battalion remained at Ruz Canal camp throughout January 1918, during which some hostile air activity was displayed,



and early in February moved again to Kurdarra camp to rejoin the 37th Brigade ; it remained here, still employed on road construction and training, until the middle of May, when a further move was made to Tawilah. The period was devoid of incident except for unsettled weather and a mild outbreak of cholera which was rapidly checked. The first anniversary of the Shumran crossing was celebrated in a suitable manner by all ranks of the Brigade and sports and nautches were organized. Just prior to the Battalion's move to Tawilah " B " Company, complete, under command of Lieutenant Scott, was transferred to the advanced base to proceed to India to form part of the 3/11th Gurkha Rifles who were being raised at the time. This was in conjunction with the general expansion of the Indian Army then in progress and described later. The battalion was raised by transfer of complete companies from the 2nd Battalion and 1/10th Gurkha Rifles, and a draft of two platoons from the 1st Battalion, in India, also joined. The departure of the company was marked by a suitable ceremonial before the Battalion marched to Tawilah. The 3/11th Gurkha Rifles were to give a good account of themselves two years later in Waziristan. Numerous leave parties also proceeded to India in batches throughout the summer months, but in spite of these and of the transfer of " B " Company, the average strength of the Battalion was maintained at well over seven hundred. The British Officer cadre was kept up by the drafting of several young officers, both from the Depot and from the 1st Battalion in India, who replaced various officers transferred to staff and other appointments. These transfers included that of Captain Beadon, who proceeded to India to join our newly raised 3rd Battalion in January, and Captain Blandy, who joined the 4/11th Gurkha Rifles as second-in-command and later proceeded to Palestine with that unit.

The Battalion was encamped at Tawilah and employed mainly on the arduous task of railway construction, until the end of September, when it moved to Mirjana. Work on rock cutting and blasting in the Diyala gorge was unfortunately responsible for several accidents, some of them fatal. It was interesting to find old G.O.s and N.C.O.s in the ranks who had learnt to blast when building the Lansdowne barracks and road many years previously and before the raising of the 2nd Battalion. Conditions were ameliorated considerably by the issue of E.P. tents, and by facilities for bathing in the Diyala River being available. Intense heat and an outbreak of Spanish influenza was experienced, but on the whole the health of the Battalion remained remarkably good. In a *Gazette* published for operations during the previous cold weather Captain V. Beadon received the Military Cross, while Captain W. P. Hogg, I.M.S., the Battalion's medical officer, was awarded the Military Cross and Bar, and Captain

R. Blandy a Bar to his previous decoration. The Subedar-Major Prem Sing Bisht was also awarded the Order of British India, 2nd Class.

During August the shooting season opened and all ranks enjoyed excellent sport with black partridge. Shooting pig afforded great sport and relaxation, and a large boar captured was adopted as a regimental mascot.

The Battalion moved to Mirjana on September 27th and was encamped at the approximate site of the crossing effected during the previous October. Activities here were devoted to platoon training, but this was seriously prejudiced by heavy guard duties. Inter-platoon musketry and football competitions were, however, inaugurated and were continued until the time of departure of the Battalion from Mesopotamia, the following February. The excellent organization and training for these competitions undoubtedly laid the foundation of the Battalion's outstanding successes in the A.R.A. and football competitions of the post-war period.

News of the Armistice with Turkey, October 28th, followed by that on all fronts, culminating in Germany's capitulation on November 11th, brought all active operations to a close. Thereafter demobilization formed the most serious consideration and throughout the winter months numerous officers and men left the Battalion. We parted with great regret from several Indian Army Reserve Officers, especially Lieutenant S. D. Gladstone, M.C., who returned to normal civil life after having proved their worth and serving the Battalion with exceptional zeal during the War. During January 1919, Major H. F. Collingridge returned to India to assume the appointment of Military Secretary to H.E. The Governor of Madras, and later Captain H. de L. Penfold joined a staff appointment with the North Persian Force. Lieutenants M. B. Allsebrook and O. J. Pryor also proceeded to Siberia to join General Knox's "White Russian" Mission.

Only four Regular Officers being permitted to return to India with the Battalion, Lieutenants B. S. Hartland and O. T. Lovett were transferred to the 1/3rd and 1/2nd Gurkha Rifles, respectively.

#### THE RETURN TO INDIA

Orders for the 2nd Battalion's return to India were issued early in February 1919, and the advanced party left on February 6th. The Battalion entrained at Mirjana on February 21st and, arriving at Kut-al-Amara the following day, embarked in "P.59" and proceeded to Basra. On the 28th it was re-joined by 2 G.O.s and 126 G.O.R.s from the Army Commander's guard.

The Battalion returned to India, strength: B.O.s 6, G.O.s 10, G.O.R.s 1071, Followers 71, and reached Dehra Dun on March 13th, under the command of Major H. Mullaly.

## RETROSPECT OF MESOPOTAMIA

The two Battalions of the Regiment had served in Mesopotamia for just over three years. One, or the other, had been present in the foremost fighting when the two outstanding incidents of the campaign had occurred : the tragic fall of Kut-al-Amara, and the triumphant capture of Baghdad.

The campaign in Mesopotamia had developed from an insignificant beginning into that in which greater Imperial forces had been employed than in any theatre, other than the Western Front. Turkey's early entry into the War on the side of the Central Powers had involved the dispatch of one brigade from India to guard the pipe line at Abadan on the River Shatt-al-Arab, on which the Royal Navy depended largely for supplies of oil. From this minor beginning the force had grown out of all proportion and had involved the dispatch and maintenance of two corps and a cavalry division, with a line-of-communication stretching for nearly five hundred miles from the Base. The resources of India had been strained to a degree that involved untold hardships for the troops, and it was not until the Imperial Government had assumed responsibility for their maintenance that adequate organization and supply had assured a victorious issue. From a single division occupying Basra in 1914 the campaign had extended until the Army dominated the whole of Mesopotamia, a large portion of Persia, with a considerable force in Transcaspia. The 1st Battalion had experienced the terrible rigours of both heat and cold involved when the relief force failed to reach Kut-al-Amara after investment. As has been pointed out, this failure was in a large measure due to inadequate organization of the Base and line-of-communication river services. The troops had in consequence to fight an elated, prepared enemy in strong positions, with inadequate support, and indifferent maintenance devoid of anything except the bare necessities, and often on a reduced scale at that. The morale of the Battalion had, however, been maintained in spite of these conditions, and of severe casualties, from which all but two of the remaining original British and Gurkha Officers were either killed or invalided. Great credit is due to the men that they carried on so well, regardless of the never-ending drain of sick, throughout the nine months during which the Battalion served in Mesopotamia, especially during the summer of 1916.

The 2nd Battalion was more fortunate ; the arrival synchronized with the complete re-organization of the Force, and especially of the Base and river transport ; it was also given four months to settle down to active service conditions before proceeding to the forward theatre of operations. Its first action at the Shumran Bend in February 1917 was the culminating blow to the Turks still holding their positions round Kut-al-Amara, and

brought to a successful conclusion the hard-fought operations started in December 1916, which opened the road to Baghdad. In this, and subsequent actions in which the Battalion was called upon to attack, it worthily upheld and added lustre to the reputation earned by its sister Battalion in France. In addition, it had the unique honour of providing the personal escort to the Commander-in-Chief, uninterruptedly, throughout its two and a half years' stay in the country. The guard, consisting of 1 B.O., 2 G.O.s and 100 G.O.R.s, received the most complimentary recognition from both Generals Maude and Marshall, who stated that it had been a model in smartness, discipline and behaviour, throughout.

#### SERVICES OF THE REGIMENTAL BRASS BAND

Apart from the services of both Battalions, the Regimental Band was also sent to Mesopotamia in August 1916. Under command of Havildar Kalyan Sing Negi of the 2nd Battalion, it was thirty-five other ranks strong and remained in the country for just one year and played at Basra, Kut and Baghdad; its dispatch was in a measure due to the absence of both Battalions from Dehra at the time, and to the regrettable and unnecessary internment of Herr Ludwig. Neither Battalion came into contact with it nor heard it play while in Mesopotamia, and the net result was a heavy depreciation in the value of the instruments, for which inadequate compensation from Government was received.

The battle casualties incurred by the Regiment between January 1916 and February 1919 were as follows:

	B.O.s.	G.O.s.	G.O.R.s.
Killed . . . . .	11	6	156
Wounded . . . . .	14	23	537
Total . . . . .	25	29	693

Numerous decorations for gallantry in action were awarded and will be found in Appendix IV.

For services rendered in Mesopotamia the Regiment received the Battle-Honours "TIGRIS, 1916," "KUT-AL-AMARA, 1917," "BAGHDAD" and "MESOPOTAMIA, 1916-1918."

"Shumran Day" is celebrated, annually, as a battle commemoration holiday in the 2nd Battalion. In memory of its services on the Persian Border this Battalion also adopted a diamond-shaped hat flash of black skin, symbolical of Persian lamb.



SENTRY, 2nd BATTALION,  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S GUARD, G.H.Q., BAGHDAD.  
29th April, 1917.



## CHAPTER XIV

1914-1919

### INDIA

**Reinforcements. Escorts to H.E. The Viceroy at Delhi and Basra. Indian Army Reserve of Officers. The Nepalese Contingent. Gurkha Convalescent Camp. Mobilization and Departure of 2nd Battalion. The Depot 1st Battalion 1914-1916. Drafts to New Units. Re-mobilization and Move of 1st Battalion to Camp Utarshisha. Introduction of Free Rations and Clothing Allowances. Moves to Nowshera and Attock. The Armistice. Attock Camp and Fort. Demobilization. Transfer to Peshawar and Move of Depot. The Punjab Riots. Outbreak of War with Afghanistan, 1919. The Depot, 2nd Battalion, 1916-1919. The Officers' Mess. The Lines.**

**T**HE record of one or other Battalion on active service overseas during the four years of the Great War has been described in detail. It is now necessary, and of interest, to follow the movements of the Battalion left in India, and to record the problems and work faced by the Depots, and the general atmosphere prevailing in the country subsequent to the declaration of War.

On the mobilization of the 1st Battalion, August 1914, the 2nd Battalion provided a draft of 2 B.O.s and 198 O.R.s to bring its sister battalion up to strength, in the absence of the furlough party, and to provide a first reinforcement. Throughout the period 1914-1916 it continued to furnish numerous drafts to replace the heavy wastage in battle casualties and sick; these formed approximately one-third of the strength of the 1st Battalion at the time of transfer from France to Mesopotamia in December 1915.

#### ESCORTS TO H.E. THE VICEROY AT DELHI AND BASRA, 1914

In October 1914 the 2nd Battalion proceeded to Delhi to form part of the escort to H.E. The Viceroy, and remained there until the following April. In December 1914 it had the honour of providing an escort to him when he proceeded on inspection duty to Basra. The escort, commanded by Major H. L. C. Turner, consisted of Lieutenant H. de L. Penfold, four Gurkha Officers and one hundred and ninety-six other ranks; it accompanied H.E. in R.I.M.S. "Northbrook" to Basra, and returned to India in February 1915. It is thought that this duty was perhaps unique in the

history of the Indian Army, for it is considered that never before had a Viceroy inspected an overseas theatre of war.

In the cold weather of 1915-1916, the Battalion, in recognition of its good work during the previous year, was again selected as escort at Delhi and was on duty there from October 1915 until March 1916.

On both occasions it was accompanied by the Regimental Band under Herr Ludwig. On this gentleman's regrettable internment in 1915, the Regiment was fortunate in being able to obtain the services of Sergeant Phillips of the Viceroy's Band, and late of the 52nd Light Infantry, as Bandmaster.

### INDIAN ARMY RESERVE OFFICERS

During these two years numerous young officers of the Indian Army Reserve were posted to the Regiment, and a number proceeded to the 1st Battalion with drafts. Several of them were accustomed to handling Gurkha labour in civil life, such as on tea gardens, and their knowledge of the men and of the language was of the utmost value.

Two innovations of interest occurred in Dehra Dun in 1916: the arrival of the Nepalese Contingent, and the formation of the Gurkha Convalescent Camp.

### THE NEPALESE CONTINGENT

The dispatch to India of the Nepalese Contingent was an instance of the magnificent voluntary help given by the Nepal Durbar to the Government of India. In view of the grave depletion of trained British Regular troops, due to departures for overseas theatres of war, and of the restless conditions prevailing in India, caused by alien propaganda, H.H. The Maharajah, Sir Chandra Sham Sher Jung, generously volunteered to supply ten thousand of his State troops, partially to replace the regular garrison, and to assist in Internal Security duties and N.W.F. Defence. The offer was gratefully accepted, and early in 1916, eight picked regiments, made up to war strength by amalgamation with others, were sent down to India and stationed at Dehra and Abbottabad. They were commanded and administered by their own officers, but had regular British Officers of Gurkha Battalions and British N.C.O.s attached to them as supervising and instructional staff. Though originally quite untrained, except in drill at which they were excellent, they were a magnificent body of men and were gradually equipped and trained on the same lines as the Indian Army. Certain units were to give a good account of themselves in due course on the Frontier.

The Dehra contingent, five thousand strong, was commanded by the



Maharajah's cousin, General Tez Shum Sher Jung, and consisted of the Kalibahadur, 2nd Rifles, Mahindradal and Subuj Gorakh Regiments. The Abbottabad contingent, commanded by General Padma Shum Sher Jung, was composed of the 1st Rifles, Purano Gorakh, Pasupati Pershad, and Sham Sherdal Regiments.

All British Officers, with the Dehra contingent, lived in our regimental Mess, and every Gurkha Battalion had a representative at one time or another.

Of the Regiment, Lieut.-Colonel C. M. Porteous, Majors A. C. B. Mackinnon and G. C. Wheeler and Lieutenant T. N. C. Kemp were attached for varying periods. Lieut.-Colonel Porteous was senior supervising officer of the Abbottabad contingent when the two detachments were reviewed by H.E. The Viceroy at Delhi in 1919, prior to their return to Nepal.

The Dehra Dun contingent was located in Ghangora, with two battalions encamped on the Lower Parade Ground at Birpur. Close contact and liaison between the contingent and the Regiment was maintained throughout the stay in India ; this was of intense interest to all ranks and many of the men had relations in the Nepalese regiments.

#### THE GURKHA CONVALESCENT CAMP

The necessity for a central depot in which to collect Gurkha casualties of all regiments from four different overseas theatres of war was recognized early in 1916, and Dehra was selected as the most suitable spot. A camp was organized under the command of Captain H. Mullaly, assisted by Lieutenant H. W. Seton, both of the 1st Battalion, near the station hospital, and in this was concentrated the personnel of all Gurkha Battalions invalided from whatever cause from overseas, before dispatch to re-join their own Depots. In addition to routine administrative questions, arrangements were made for men to undergo the "Pani Patiya" ceremony to reinstate them in their caste after returning from overseas and before proceeding on leave, or pension, to Nepal. This central depot was to prove of inestimable benefit to all Gurkha Regiments and by the end of the War had assumed a considerable magnitude.

#### MOBILIZATION OF THE 2ND BATTALION

The 2nd Battalion was ordered to mobilize for service overseas in July 1916 and embarked for Basra in H.T. "Chakdina" at Bombay on September 15th.

The same transport brought back the 1st Battalion on departure from Mesopotamia, and the unit arrived at Birpur on October 6th.

## THE DEPOT 1ST BATTALION, 1914-1916

The work and problems at the Depot during these first two years of the War after the 1st Battalion's departure overseas must now be reviewed; these problems, and their consequence later, were to have a profound influence for several years. Pre-war mobilization schemes had envisaged the possibility of sending two Indian Divisions overseas and had been framed with that object. The dispatch of six complete divisions and their maintenance thereafter to five different overseas theatres of war, the withdrawal of ninety-five per cent of the British Regular garrison and replacement by Territorial battalions, the mobilization of numerous Imperial Service Units, and the departure of many experienced staff and regimental officers from A.H.Q. and all formations, involved a confusion of administrative problems that was to take years to unravel. Those applicable to the Depot were for an inadequate staff to try and compete with the unforeseen and unprecedented demands of the Great War. The Depot formed on mobilization under command of Captain B. A. R. Blewitt consisted of two B.O.s, two G.O.s and about one hundred and fifty men; this establishment was deemed sufficient to form a training, draft-finding, and record centre, and was based on the experience gained in minor campaigns on the Indian Frontiers.

The furlough party was recalled on mobilization, the reserve called up, and a special recruiting party immediately dispatched to Nepal. As ten of the twenty regular Gurkha Battalions proceeded overseas during 1914, special recruiting arrangements were instituted by the Durbar at the request of the Government of India. Subedar Surbir Karki of the 1st Battalion was employed on recruiting duty from 1914-1917 and was made subedar-major at Gorakhpore. In view of his good work, and the splendid results achieved, he was awarded the Order of British India and a special recruiting badge.

The hope that the Depot staff could function adequately was soon to be severely shattered. Instead of dealing with a turn-over possibly of one to two hundred recruits, reservists, and casualties, during the absence of the Battalion, this minute staff was called upon to train one hundred reservists and about one thousand recruits in the first eighteen months of the War, in addition to keeping the records and accounts of some three thousand men, many of other units, and some of them non-regular at that, who passed through the Battalion during the first two years. This work, and the fact that the system of pay was altered twice during the first few months, strained the inadequate staff almost to breaking-point, and produced confusion and administrative chaos that deteriorated rather than improved, monthly. The greatest credit is due to the Officers, and to the drill and

clerical staffs, for keeping things going as they did. In actual fact it took nearly five years to straighten out the accounts and records, and for the rest of the War and for some years after "the pen was mightier than the sword."

#### DRAFTS TO NEW UNITS

During 1917 and 1918 no less than fourteen new Gurkha Battalions were raised from nuclei of the regular units, including a Third Battalion for each Regiment, and a new unit of four battalions designated the 11th Gurkha Rifles. The dislocation of organization, and the administrative confusion above described, which was common to all, to a greater or lesser extent, was in no way eased for the 1st Battalion by constant and increasing demands to find drafts for the 2nd Battalion in Mesopotamia, and detachments to raise or reinforce new formations. Between 1916 and 1918, it found one complete company for the 3/3rd and 3/5th Gurkha Rifles, two companies for its own 3rd Battalion, and two platoons each for the 3/6th and 3/11th Gurkha Rifles, a total of 8 B.O.s, 15 G.O.s and over 1,000 O.R.s. The same applied to the 2nd Battalion to a slightly lesser degree during the War, but to an equal extent during 1919.

The raising and record of the 3rd Battalion by Major A. C. B. Mackinnon is described separately.

#### RE-MOBILIZATION OF THE 1ST BATTALION, AND MOVE TO CAMP UTARSHISHA

After return to Dehra in October 1916, fifty per cent at a time of those who came back with the 1st Battalion were allowed to proceed on six months' special war leave to Nepal in two batches. All normal furlough had been stopped since the outbreak of the War. In February 1917 orders to mobilize for the North-West Frontier were received. The Frontier had been quiet on the whole since the outbreak of the Great War and only two minor expeditions had been necessary, but a restless state prevailed, and at this time trouble was anticipated in the Black Mountain Country, west of Hazara. For this reason the 1st Battalion and 2/8th Gurkha Rifles were mobilized and ordered to form part of the 3rd Infantry Brigade of the Peshawar Division. The two battalions were moved to Abbottabad in April, but as there was no accommodation available in the cantonment, or at Kakul, they were located in camp at Utarshisha, thirty miles north along the Kashmir road; it was a pleasant camp in a pine forest with a good climate, but afforded no facilities for training other than in field work.

Actually no disturbance, either in 1917, or subsequently, occurred in the area, possibly due to the arrival of the two battalions.

## INTRODUCTION OF FREE RATIONS AND CLOTHING ALLOWANCES

The introduction in 1917 of free rations, and the abolition of "Half Mounting" with adequate clothing allowances in its place, were of inestimable benefit to all Gurkha ranks and to the Indian Army generally.

## MOVE TO NOWSHERA. RETURN TO UTARSHISHA. ATTOCK

The 3rd Infantry Brigade was concentrated for training at Nowshera during the winter, and the 1st Battalion, together with the 2/8th Gurkha Rifles and the "Purano Gorakh" Nepalese Battalion, moved to that station by rail early in December. Together with the 1st Bn. Yorkshire Regiment at Peshawar the Brigade carried out training at Asad Khel, twenty miles south of that cantonment, during January 1918, and on conclusion the 1st Battalion was detailed for one month's garrison duty there. The following April the Battalion, with the 2/8th Gurkha Rifles, returned to Utarshisha and remained there throughout the summer.

At the end of October the two battalions received orders to proceed to Attock, on transfer to the 5th Brigade of the 2nd Rawalpindi Division; they proceeded by route march, the Battalion one day in rear of the 2/8th Gurkha Rifles, and arrived at Camp Mullan Mansur three miles from Attock Fort on November 11th.

## THE ARMISTICE

At Camp Hatti, news was received of the declaration of the Armistice in France, and this information was given to the men when falling in for the next and final day's march. Though a feeling of relief and gratification was apparent in all ranks, it must be admitted that this stupendous announcement was received with little enthusiasm, and was rather overshadowed for the moment by the routine of preparing for the march. This was not altogether surprising, for to the men, many of whom were recruits who had not seen active service, the Great War seemingly ended with the Battalion's return from Mesopotamia in 1916. Even those who had been in France and Mesopotamia lacked the imagination and knowledge to appreciate the stirring events that had happened in France and elsewhere during the years 1917 and 1918, and the Armistice, to them, meant that now that the War was over, the Battalion would probably return to Dehra and to normal peace conditions. Subsequent events on the Frontier were soon to disillusion them.

## ATTOCK CAMP AND FORT. DEMOBILIZATION

The Battalion remained at Attock until April 1919. Work was mainly devoted to demobilization, orders having been received in December to

reduce the Battalion to an establishment of 850, including the Depot. This entailed the discharge of 2 G.O.s and 250 O.R.s. A large number of the men enlisted since 1914 had been conscripted in Nepal, where conditions were now very bad owing to the heavy drain caused by the enlistment of fifty-five thousand recruits during the War, and the necessity for the return of all men, surplus to requirements, was urgent. Furlough, hitherto much curtailed since the outbreak of War, was also opened and enabled many, not due for discharge or demobilization, to visit their homes. A number of temporary British Officers were also demobilized during this period, the Battalion being much over strength in officers owing to numerous postings during 1917 and 1918.

Many British Officers had been posted to the Regiment, on permanent transfer to the Indian Army from temporary commissions in British regiments of all arms, from the Cadet Colleges and R.M.C., from the I.A.R.O., and on promotion from the ranks. Demobilization at this stage dealt practically entirely with the two latter categories. A further reduction was effected in 1922.

In February 1919 two companies moved into Attock Fort in relief of a detachment from a British Garrison Battalion due for repatriation to the United Kingdom. From this detachment was found the guards on either end of Attock Bridge, one mile distant. The remainder of the Battalion moved into the Fort at the end of March

Some speculation was rife as to our destination now that the Great War was over, for it was obviously unnecessary and undesirable under peace conditions to keep the men under canvas in one of the hottest parts of the Punjab. It was certain that the 1st Battalion would not return to Dehra for some time, and rumour indicated the probability of our going into camp in the Murree Hills.

#### TRANSFER TO PESHAWAR, AND MOVE OF THE DEPOT

At very short notice, however, orders were received at the end of March for the Battalion to move by road to Peshawar to relieve the 3/5th Gurkha Rifles in the 1st Infantry Brigade. This move was effected in four marches early in April, the Battalion halting one night in its old camp site at Nowshera.

As it appeared likely that we would be stationed here for some time the Depot, together with the families, was ordered to join the Battalion in Peshawar, and left Dehra about the middle of April. The amalgamation of the Battalion and Depot was very necessary, as the strength of the Battalion, owing to demobilization and leave, had fallen to three hundred and fifty.

### THE PUNJAB RIOTS

The serious disturbances following the passing of the Rowlatt Act broke out at this time, culminating in the "Dyer" affair at Amritsar.

The troop train containing the Depot under the command of Captain G. P. Crampton arrived at Amritsar Station when the riots were at their worst, and the Depot was instructed to detrain to help to restore order. The Battalion at Peshawar was being re-armed at this time with H.V. Rifles, and the Depot had handed in all arms at Dehra prior to departure, and thus had no rifles when they detrained. Fifty men were therefore marched to the Fort and rifles and ammunition were issued there from the Indian Defence Force armoury. Picquets were then posted at various points in the city and cantonment to assist the Police. Brigadier-General R. E. Dyer, with the brigade staff of the 45th Infantry Brigade and reinforcements, arrived from Jullundur the following day and assumed command. Martial law was then proclaimed.

On April 13th a prohibited mob gathered in the Jallianwalah Bagh in defiance of orders, and General Dyer, with twenty-five riflemen, each from the Depot and 59th Rifles, proceeded rapidly to the spot and dispersed the mob by rifle fire. This virtually ended the rebellion throughout the Punjab and the Depot proceeded to Peshawar and re-joined the Battalion. Their conduct and discipline in this most unpleasant incident were the subject of several laudatory and congratulatory letters, and there is no doubt that the men behaved in an exemplary manner in a most trying and distasteful episode.

### OUTBREAK OF WAR WITH AFGHANISTAN, 1919

On Sunday, May 4th, shortly after the Depot's arrival, at a few hours' notice the 1st Battalion was ordered to furnish two hundred rifles to form part of a small mobile column proceeding up the Khyber Pass to reinforce the Khyber Rifles. The following day war was declared against Afghanistan and general mobilization ordered.

### THE DEPOT 2ND BATTALION, 1916-1919

The 2nd Battalion Depot remained in Dehra during the Battalion's absence in Mesopotamia from September 1916 to March 1919. As this Battalion had been in India during the first two years of the War, when the heaviest casualties and worst administrative dislocation occurred, this Depot was not confronted with the immense difficulties with which that of the 1st Battalion had striven so hard to compete. Nevertheless it, too, in common with all Indian Army Depots, whose units were overseas, was

inadequately staffed and organized for the work to be done, but it was able to benefit from the experience gained by the sister Battalion. Frequent changes in command, in consequence of the demands for reinforcements overseas, were not the least of the difficulties that had to be contended with.

#### THE OFFICERS' MESS

The Officers' Mess was kept open throughout the War despite the absence of one or other of the regular Battalions, and for long periods of both. Although the Mess was at times filled to capacity by the presence of officers attached to the Nepalese Contingent, and of the newly raised 3rd Battalion and 4/39th Garhwal Rifles, in addition to those serving at the Depots, it of necessity suffered, owing to the numerous changes in the Mess staff; this affected both the credit of the funds and the interior decoration and condition of the furniture and trophies. A considerable renovation took place in 1917, when electric light was also installed; as the main system in Dehra had not then reached Birpur, this was done by bringing a line over from the hospital across the Tons Nullah. While the replacement of oil lamps by electricity was much appreciated, that of punkhas, by overhead fans, was of inestimable benefit and comfort to everyone. Certain structural alterations within the building itself, and the introduction of numerous trophies, brought back from France and Mesopotamia, greatly improved the appearance.

#### THE LINES

No structural alterations in the barracks and married lines were undertaken during the War, but the appearance of Birpur in general was improved immensely by the growth of numerous trees and shrubs which had been planted in the decade since the Regiment had first made its home there in 1905. The construction of a swimming bath in the Tons Nullah, below the 1st Battalion Quarter Guard, proved to be an innovation which was, and is, greatly appreciated by all.

The long absence of both Battalions from their regimental home undoubtedly increased the affection of all ranks for Birpur. Continuous efforts to maintain and improve the amenities have been, and are, the pride and endeavour of every member of the 9th Gurkha Rifles.

## CHAPTER XV

1917-1921

### THE 3RD BATTALION

Orders to raise a 3rd Battalion of the Regiment from a nucleus of both the 1st and 2nd Battalions received in June 1917. Expansion of the Indian Army, 1917-1918. Nepal's Contribution to the War. Raising of the 3rd Battalion. Connection with the Garhwal Rifles. Administrative difficulties. Escort to H.E. The Viceroy at Delhi. Death of General Sir Beauchamp Duff. Return to Dehra and Move to Kohat. Adoption of the Puggree. Demobilization. Outbreak of War with Afghanistan. Move to Parachinar. Mutiny of the Kurram Militia. Move to Dehra for Disbandment. Representation re Khas-Thakur Group. Final Disbandment. Retrospect.

#### EXPANSION OF THE INDIAN ARMY, 1917-1918

**T**HE demands to replace war wastage in overseas theatres, and the simultaneous necessity for maintaining formations for internal security and N.W.F. Defence, led to a large expansion of the Indian Army in 1917 and 1918. For the main part this was effected by raising new units linked to existing regular regiments and battalions. As far as Gurkha Regiments were concerned this expansion took the form of raising a 3rd Battalion for each ; with a new regiment of four battalions designated the 11th Gurkha Rifles. In the case of the latter and of at least two other new battalions, this raising was effected by the transfer of complete companies and platoons from the regular battalions, generally without regard to composition, a procedure which involved mixing the various classes and which was not altogether satisfactory. The majority of the new battalions were therefore raised by transferring a nucleus from their own regular units, and thereafter recruiting them up to strength under their own arrangements. This was done in the case of the 3rd Battalion of the Regiment.

#### NEPAL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR

The above account of the expansion of the Indian Army, and in particular of the Gurkha Rifles, is a suitable occasion on which to mention briefly the magnificent response made by the Nepal Durbar to our request



for assistance. Prior to the outbreak of the Great War the Nepal Government had agreed to maintain twenty Infantry Battalions each at an approximate strength of nine hundred, and in addition to allow recruitment for one company of Gurkhas in the Guides Infantry, and a certain number for the Kashmir Imperial State Forces and the Burma and Assam Military Police. In 1916 the Durbar had sent down to India ten thousand picked troops and had also made munificent gifts of money towards the prosecution of the War. The war wastage of the ten regular Gurkha Battalions employed in overseas theatres involved unprecedented demands in recruiting, and in addition to these came the decision to raise fourteen new battalions. Also in the case of the Guides Infantry the maintenance of the one company expanded into large demands for Gurkha recruits in the new 2nd and 3rd Battalions raised at this time, and composed of some thirty per cent Gurkha soldiers. To meet these demands the Durbar introduced conscription in Nepal, and by its efforts not only maintained its own ten State Battalions at full strength, but also met adequately the ever-increasing requests for recruits, to keep up to strength the thirty-four battalions, each at twelve hundred, and the equivalent of another three or four battalions for the Guides, and for various State and Military Police establishments. This involved the recruitment of no less than fifty-five thousand men between 1914-1919, a generous response, uninfluenced by motives of patriotism, self-advancement, and protection, which is probably unique in history on the part of a self-governing and independent State.

#### RAISING OF THE 3RD BATTALION

The original orders to raise the 3rd Battalion were received on 5th June 1917, and the establishment then sanctioned was for 1 Commandant, 2 Wing Commanders, 1 Adjutant, 1 Quartermaster and 1,200 O.R.s. In the first instance a nucleus was to be formed by the transfer of 35 G.O.s and N.C.O.s and 150 O.R.s from the 1st Battalion, 1 Subedar as subedar-major and 33 G.O.s and N.C.O.s from the 2nd Battalion, and 400 O.R.s with not less than six months' service from the Depot, 2nd Battalion. These numbers were augmented by the further transfer of 100 O.R.s from the 1st Battalion in October.

#### CONNECTION WITH THE GARHWAL RIFLES

Major A. C. B. Mackinnon of the 1st Battalion was appointed wing commander and officiating commandant, an appointment which was confirmed in August; in the first instance he was assisted by Major A. G. Lyell, Lieutenants E. C. Robinson and Egerton Smith, all of the 3/39th

Garhwal Rifles, as wing commander, adjutant and quartermaster, respectively. As an interesting side light to these appointments it may be mentioned here that Major J. McK. T. Hogg of the 1st Battalion, who had been wounded and invalided from France in 1914, had raised the 3/39th Garhwal Rifles during the previous year. These transfers, and the subsequent appointment of Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Collingridge, on completion of his tenure as commandant of the 2nd Battalion in 1927, as administrative commandant of the Garhwal Rifles Territorial Battalion, cemented the connection of the Regiment with the Garhwal Rifles with whom the old 9th Gurkha Rifles had been linked in Lansdowne in 1901. All our Battalions frequently came in contact with one, or other, battalion of that Regiment on active service, and the 4/39th Garhwal Rifles were raised in Dehra and their officers lived in our Mess there from 1916-1919.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES

Great difficulty in raising the new Battalion was encountered owing to the administrative chaos prevailing in the Depots of both the regular Battalions, which has been mentioned previously. In spite of this, arrangements had been completed to receive the nucleus by July 1st, and the new unit was accommodated in the lines of the two Battalions at Birpur. This location alongside the offices of both the Depots assisted in administrative matters immensely.

By October, organization permitted of expansion to the strength authorized and a recruiting party was dispatched to Nepal. To compete with the excessive demands being made for recruits at this period a special bonus of Rs.50 per recruit accepted was sanctioned. Major A. H. Jukes and Captain R. W. Russell, both of the 2nd Battalion, were appointed wing commanders in October, and eight junior officers, mostly transferred from British regiments overseas, were posted in the same month.

#### GARRISON DUTY AND VICEROY'S ESCORT AT DELHI,

October 1917-March 1918

Intensive training was carried out and the progress achieved is indicated by the fact that the 3rd Battalion had the honour of being selected to furnish part of the Viceroy's escort at Delhi during the cold weather of 1917-1918. The Battalion, less a Depot with recruits and instructional staff left in Dehra Dun, arrived at Delhi on October 29th and was accommodated in a comfortable camp at Kingsway, on the same site as that occupied by the 1st and 2nd Battalions in 1912-1914 and 1915. Activities were for the most part confined to ceremonial and guard duty, a fact which



GENERAL SIR BEAUCHAMP DUFF, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., C.I.E.  
Colonel of The Regiment, 1904–1918.  
Commander-in-Chief, India, 1914–1916.



interfered seriously with field training. That the performance of these duties received the commendation of both the Viceregal and Army Headquarters authorities is a tribute to the keenness and efficiency displayed.

#### DEATH OF GENERAL SIR BEAUCHAMP DUFF, COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

On the 21st January 1918, news was received of the death, in London, of General Sir Beauchamp Duff, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., C.I.E., Colonel of the Regiment, and formerly Commander-in-Chief in India, 1914-1916. A memorial service was held in St. James's Church, Delhi, which was attended by the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief and all the leading Civil and Military Officers in the station. Prominent seats were allotted to the British and Gurkha Officers of the 3rd Battalion, all of whom attended the service. As a mark of respect all ranks of the Regiment wore mourning for one month. Sir Beauchamp Duff had joined the 9th Bengal Infantry, on transfer from the Royal Artillery, in 1881, and had held successive high staff appointments at Army Headquarters including those of Adjutant-General during Lord Kitchener's regime, and Military Secretary India Office. He was appointed Colonel of the Regiment in 1904 and had visited Birpur, shortly after his assumption of the appointment of Commander-in-Chief, in April 1914. His untimely death was undoubtedly due to the excessive strain imposed on his office during the first two years of the War, and he did not live to see the success of the efforts initiated by him in these early days, which only came to fruition in the later stages of the War. Captain R. W. Russell, of the 2nd Battalion, acted as A.D.C. to him during 1915 and 1916.

#### RETURN TO DEHRA AND MOVE TO KOHAT

The Battalion returned to Dehra Dun on March 26th, 1918, and was ordered to move to Kohat on full relief scale immediately. It arrived at Kohat on April 7th and was accommodated in the McQueen lines. On April 30th it furnished the Thal detachment under command of Major Jukes, strength 13 B.O.s, 8 G.O.s and 450 O.R.s. At this time the Battalion had no less than 25 British Officers, mostly young officers transferred from British regiments, or belonging to the I.A.R.O., though the majority had seen active service, they had had no experience of the men and no knowledge of the language. The Battalion remained in Kohat until April 1919, when the Afghan War broke out, and furnished the Thal detachment for six months. This detachment, together with very serious depredations in numbers due to sickness and heavy guard duties, seriously interfered with training. The health of the men, owing to the ravages of the influenza epidemic in 1918, and to the heat in old barracks, scarcely fit for habitation

in Kohat, was sufficiently low to warrant the dispatch of parties of fifty at a time to Fort Lockhart to convalesce during the summer months. In addition, a hill depot for the recruits of all Gurkha Battalions stationed in the plains during the summer was inaugurated at Kalabagh in the Murree Hills; one hundred and seventy instructors and recruits of the Battalion proceeded there early in August and re-joined the Battalion during the ensuing cold weather.

#### ADOPTION OF THE PUGGREE AS HEAD-DRESS

Owing to the stocks of felt hats being exhausted the Battalion was ordered to adopt the puggree as head-dress during the year. This decision was most unpopular with all ranks, and, on representation by the majority of Gurkha Battalions, permission was accorded to the issue of pith helmets during the summer months. This adoption of the puggree only applied to the new Battalion as the 1st Battalion had sufficient old stock to meet requirements, and the 2nd Battalion in Mesopotamia had already been issued with helmets.

#### THE ARMISTICE AND DEMOBILIZATION

With the declaration of the Armistice in November 1918, demobilization was ordered and the strength of the 3rd Battalion was gradually reduced from 1,260 to 850. Furlough was also re-opened.

During the cold weather facilities for company and battalion field training were accorded for the first time since the raising of the Battalion in June 1917. This was most fortunate in view of being called on to proceed on active service in the following May. The period spent in Delhi had been devoted almost entirely to ceremonial and guard duties immediately after formation, and the Thal detachment, heavy duties and poor health during the summer of 1918 had precluded all field training.

#### RIOTING IN INDIA—OUTBREAK OF THE THIRD AFGHAN WAR

As a result of the serious rioting which broke out in the Punjab and elsewhere early in April 1919, following the passing of the Rowlatt Act, troops were detailed to protect essential communications, especially between the Punjab and the trans-Indus garrisons. Two B.O.s, two G.O.s and eighty-seven O.R.s of the 3rd Battalion were detailed to guard the bridge at Khushalgarh and moved there on April 18th.

About this time orders were received to proceed on full relief scale to the Samana in relief of the 3/8th Gurkha Rifles, and the advanced party and heavy baggage was actually dispatched from Kohat. The outbreak of the Third Afghan War on 6th May, however, entailed the cancellation

of this relief, and the Battalion left Kohat for Thal on field service scale on May 18th; the part played in the investment and relief of Thal, and in the subsequent punitive operations against the Kabul Khel Wazirs, is described in the next Chapter, devoted to the Third Afghan War.

#### MOVE TO PARACHINAR

On August 25th the Battalion left Thal by road for Parachinar on receipt of orders to move in relief of the 3rd Bn. Q.V.O. Corps of Guides; it arrived there on August 29th and encamped to the south-west of the Militia post.

Head-quarters and the 60th Brigade (Brigadier-General Fagan) had occupied Parachinar since May, and had conducted successful operations against the Afghans on the Upper Kurram front during the period of hostilities. The conduct of the local Militia had been particularly creditable on this occasion. The Brigadier, with his head-quarters and remaining troops, departed for Thal on September 29th and command of the station devolved on Lieut.-Colonel Mackinnon; the 3rd Battalion being the only regulars present.

It moved into occupation of the Fort on October 15th, and thereafter relieved the Militia guards posted in the keep over the treasure and munitions which were stored there. This was to prove a wise move in view of subsequent events.

#### MUTINY OF THE KURRAM MILITIA

Between the 12th and 16th November occurred a serious mutiny of the Kurram Militia. This corps was locally recruited from the Upper Kurram Valley and was composed almost entirely of Turi and Mangal "Shiah" Mohammedans. They had remained loyal to Government since the Second Afghan War and service in the Militia had been popular and sought after. Hostile (Sunni) tribal aggression had been opposed successfully on several occasions, and as mentioned the Corps' behaviour during the Third Afghan War had been exemplary. It transpired later that certain local Maliks had been intriguing with the Afghans subsequent to the cessation of operations in the previous June, and had been responsible for fomenting the trouble and discontent which led to the mutiny under review.

On the evening of November 12th a riot broke out in the Militia lines and the quarters of a Sunni Subedar were violently attacked. This officer with great difficulty succeeded in escaping to the Fort and sought refuge under the protection of the 3rd Battalion. The Commandant of the Militia



requested the O.C. Battalion to take over all guards as he considered his command out of hand, but although these reliefs were detailed and remained in readiness, they were not posted and the night passed quietly with no further disturbances. A telephone message to the Brigade Commander at Thal was dispatched, and he undertook to visit Parachinar and to hear the grievances of the Militia the following day. The promulgation of this news to the men was probably responsible for the absence of further incidents. Two durbars were held on the 13th and 14th November, the whole of the Militia then in Parachinar, some four hundred and fifty in number being drawn up and present on the second occasion. In case of a disturbance occurring the Battalion stood to in readiness in the Fort, with guards detailed to relieve those found by the Militia.

On the G.O.C. stating that he was prepared to overlook the incident in recognition of the Militia's previous good conduct, the proceedings promised to be peaceful. The men, however, demanded certain terms, including the dismissal of the Sunni Subedar, and on being met with a firm refusal all rose with a shout and rushed to their barracks. Great credit is due to their own officers, British and Pathan, for their handling of the situation and for preventing the men from opening the rifle kots. Close on their heels followed the guards already detailed by the Battalion, who relieved the Militia guards without incident. The whole Militia thereupon deserted to their villages, even taking their sick from hospital with them, having previously signalled to outlying posts of their action. Fortunately these latter took no part in the mutiny, possibly owing to ignorance of the events preceding it.

One company of the Battalion was detailed as inlying picquet, a second to occupy the deserted Militia lines, and the remainder of the Battalion was occupied in guards and patrols all over the station for the remainder of the day and night. No further incident occurred owing to this prompt preventive action, but it was some weeks before the valley resumed a normal state and the Militia was re-embodied. Throughout this period precautionary measures had to be adopted. It transpired later that a body of some five hundred tribesmen, with standards, had marched on Parachinar from the direction of Shublan with the intention of destroying British property and murdering officers, but they were dissuaded by the efforts and influence of pensioners in the valley.

As it was found necessary to take over several posts on the line-of-communication to Thal from the Militia, and also to find escort duties, two companies (Sikh) of the 1st Bn. 90th Punjabis arrived at Parachinar early in December to reinforce the Battalion.

Following a durbar held by the Chief Commissioner N.W.F.P. on the



30th November, the Militia was gradually re-embodied and the composition was altered by the inclusion of a proportion of Khattaks; the ranks were also thoroughly purged of the discontented element, which was chiefly composed of N.C.O.s.

The quiet suppression of, and lack of unfortunate incident in, this unpleasant and potentially dangerous situation was undoubtedly due to the presence of a Gurkha Battalion in Parachinar at the time, and the 3rd Battalion deserves credit for its prompt action and tolerant behaviour. The Battalion was inspected on April 17th, 1920, by the G.O.C. Northern Command, who not only expressed his satisfaction with the excellence of the parade itself, but warmly commended all ranks on their behaviour in the recent disturbances.

One amusing incident in connection with this affair deserves record. A deserting militiaman leaving the lines on November 14th addressed a subedar of the Battalion and asked him if the Gurkhas intended to remain loyal to the British, as they, the Turis, were shortly going to attack the Fort and murder the officers. He received the answer that the keep had two mountain guns and was full of ammunition, and did not his questioner realize that the only reason the Gurkha had been brought into the world was to "strafe" Pathans. This remark may be said to summarize the men's feelings towards the whole affair.

In July 1920 Subedar-Major Jagarnand was promoted honorary lieutenant in recognition of his valuable services rendered during the War. This officer had received the Order of British India, 2nd Class, in the *Gazette* of January 1st, 1919.

#### PARACHINAR, 1920, AND MOVE TO DEHRA DUN FOR DISBANDMENT

The 3rd Battalion remained in Parachinar until the end of October 1920 doing routine duty and training, and no further incidents of interest occurred. It left Parachinar by road for Darsamand on October 29th, arriving there in six marches on November 3rd. At this place orders were received to return forthwith to Dehra Dun and, in common with all newly raised Gurkha Battalions, to reduce establishment to a cadre by January 20th, and to disband finally by February 28th, 1921. The Battalion left Darsamand for Kohat in three trains on the 19th and 20th November and arrived at Dehra Dun on the 22nd; it was there accommodated in the temporary barracks of the ex-Convalescent Camp across the nullah from Birpur, and for the first time in existence met its two sister Battalions.

REPRESENTATION FOR A KHAS-THAKUR GROUP IN THE RE-ORGANIZATION  
SCHEME OF THE INDIAN ARMY

Re-organization of the Indian Army into groups of linked battalions was now in process of introduction and in the first instance the scheme was to have been made applicable to Gurkha Regiments. Had this been put into effect it would have entailed the amalgamation of the two regular Battalions of the Regiment with two battalions of Magars and Gurungs or other classes, an intermixture which had been effected in certain of the newly raised battalions, and which had not proved altogether successful under peace conditions. In view of the fine record of the Regiment on active service since 1914, during which the composition had remained unaltered, although drafts of other classes had been received, a strong representation was made pressing the claim of the Khas-Thakur class to form a separate group. This was justifiable, not only on account of their war services, but also because the class is the most numerous of those recruited from in Nepal, and is only formed into two regular British, as opposed to Nepalese, Battalions out of twenty. The memorial was signed by all Gurkha Officers of the Regiment and was addressed to both Army Head-quarters and to the Maharajah of Nepal. It received sympathetic consideration, but was not found to be practicable; the Durbar would not sanction recruitment for more than twenty regular Battalions in peace-time, and Army Head-quarters were not prepared to alter the composition of two existing units. This scheme for amalgamation into groups was later not made applicable to Gurkha Regiments.

The further demobilization of the 3rd Battalion was therefore carried on, and the Battalion was finally disbanded on the 28th February 1921. A number of the British Officers were transferred to the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and on special recommendation one hundred G.O.s and O.R.s were authorized to be transferred to the two regular Battalions in excess of establishment for a short period. This enabled certain selected men desirous of continuing in the Service to be retained, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions demobilized men with less claim, and thus reduced down to the authorized establishment.

RETROSPECT

The 3rd Battalion had existed for just under four years and, in spite of the difficulties inseparable from being newly formed and organized during war, had faithfully upheld the traditions of the Regiment. It had been commended for smartness and efficiency in guard and ceremonial duties when selected for duty as Viceroy's escort within four months of

being incorporated ; notwithstanding lack of facilities for field training it had distinguished itself in the operations on the Kohat-Kurram front in 1919, having then acted in an exemplary manner in the extremely difficult situation provoked by the mutiny of the Kurram Militia at Parachinar.

This record is the more praiseworthy in view of the constant transfer of its British Officers. Major (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Mackinnon, who raised the Battalion in June 1917, was the only officer on the establishment who remained on strength throughout, while no less than nine officers acted as second-in-command, and some thirty young officers, none with previous experience of Indian or Gurkha troops, or knowledge of the language, served for varying periods.

Under these circumstances the conduct and efficiency of the 3rd Battalion, formed from an amalgamated nucleus of the two regular Battalions, and thereafter containing nearly fifty per cent of raw recruits, is worthy of the best traditions of the 9th Gurkha Rifles.

## CHAPTER XVI

1919

### THE THIRD AFGHAN WAR

Events in Afghanistan. Situation in the Khyber. Outbreak of War. Concentration at Landi Kotal. Attacks on Bagh. Reconnaissance to Spinatsuka. Cavalry Brigade through Khyber. Afridi hostility in Pass. The 1st Battalion moves to Dakka. Reconnaissance to Girdi. Enemy attack on Dakka. Attack of May 17th. Armistice. Camp Routine and Foraging. Tribal Hostility and Ambushes. Peace and Withdrawal. The Kohat-Kurram front. The 2nd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion. Investment of Thal. Arrival of the Relief Column. Attack on Khadimakh Ridge. Retrospect of Thal operations and of the Campaign.

#### EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

**A** BRIEF description of events in Afghanistan prior to the Third Afghan War is necessary to appreciate the causes which led up to this campaign. Under the rule of Amir Habibulla, Afghanistan throughout the Great War had remained loyal to her obligations which had been entered into with us under the Durand Convention in 1893. This had been particularly difficult after Turkey had joined the Central Powers. A Turco-German mission visited Kabul in 1915 with the object of enlisting Afghan sympathy and support, but returned having achieved nothing. A party in favour of war was, however, formed of which the Amir's third son, Amanulla, his mother, the Ulya Hazrat, and Nadir Khan, the commander-in-chief of the army, were prominent members.

This party intrigued secretly with the revolutionaries in India, but were unable to act openly. In February 1919 the Amir was murdered and the throne seized by Amanulla mainly with the support of the army. To consolidate his insecure position, and to placate the army and war party, Amanulla again commenced plotting with the revolutionaries in India. Misinformed as to their power, and also with regard to the numbers and state of the British forces available, he started moving troops towards the frontier in April when the Punjab riots were at their worst. This culminated in Afghan forces and tribesmen occupying Bagh Springs, near Landi Khana, in the Khyber on May 3rd. This place lay well within the recognized British frontier, although the Afghans disputed our right to it. Seditious propa-

ganda declaring a Jihad was simultaneously distributed along the frontier and in British India, and the Government of India, most unwillingly and realizing its unpreparedness, was forced to declare war on May 6th. This initial invasion of British territory synchronized with the appearance of Afghan troops on other portions of the frontier, notably on the Peiwar Kotal and down the Kurram Valley between Parachinar and Thal. Later the enemy also appeared along the Chitral border, and towards the frontier of the Zhob and Baluchistan. The immediate effect of this, and of virulent anti-British propaganda along the border, was an increasing restlessness among the tribes, particularly the Afridis, Wazirs and Sherannis. This, and the defection of a number of the militias, involved the evacuation of the forward militia posts in the Upper Tochi and Gumal areas, which in turn entailed extensive tribal action in the Zhob and later a major campaign in Waziristan. The part taken by the Regiment on the Khyber and Kohat-Kurram fronts is described in this Chapter.

In Baluchistan a British force attacked and occupied Spin Baldak Fort, six miles from Chaman, but further action on this front was precluded by the signing of an armistice with the Afghans on June 3rd.

#### THE 1ST BATTALION. THE KHYBER FRONT

The main operations of the campaign occurred on the Khyber front, and these are described in some detail, both because the 1st Battalion of the Regiment played a prominent part, and also because the future re-organization of the North-West Frontier defence, introduced after the campaign, was largely influenced by events on this front.

Prior to the outbreak of this war no regular troops were employed trans-frontier except in Malakand and Chitral, and the garrison of the Khyber was found by the Khyber Rifles, a local corps, some twelve hundred rifles strong, located at Landi Kotal and Jamrud, and enlisted from the Afridi, Shinwari and Mullagori, tribes bordering the Pass. The growing restlessness of these tribes, fanned by enemy propaganda, involved numerous desertions and, though immediately reinforced by regular troops, these increased daily. Although the Khyber Rifles for the most part co-operated loyally with the regular troops in the opening phases of the operations, their loyalty was doubtful and they were disbanded on May 16th.

#### DECLARATION OF WAR AND CONCENTRATION AT LANDI KOTAL

The 1st Battalion arrived in Peshawar from Attock on April 4th. Owing to demobilization and the recent dispatch of a large furlough party it was considerably under strength. The month prior to the outbreak of war with Afghanistan was marked by the serious revolutionary outbreak in India,

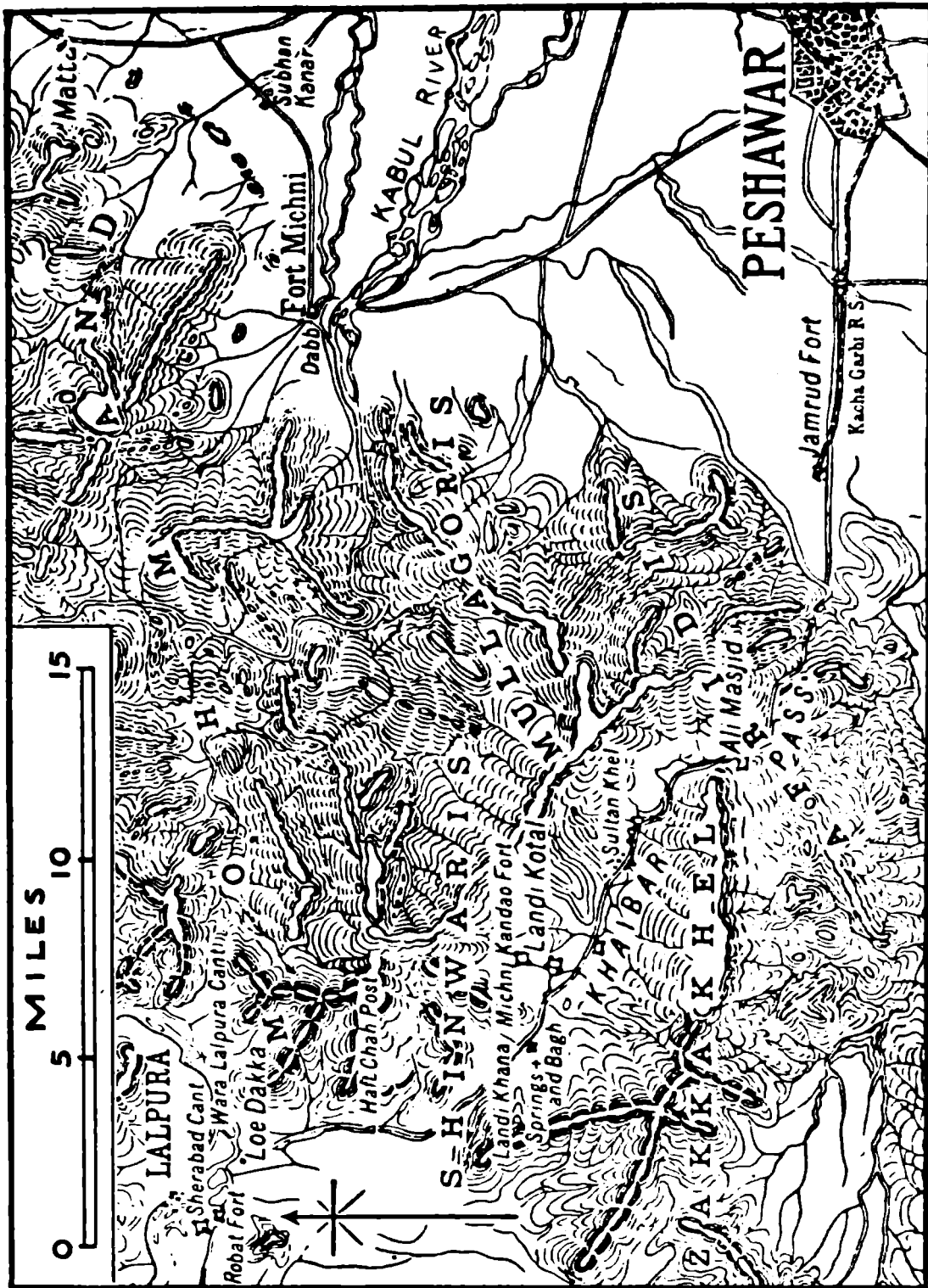
chiefly in the Punjab. The Depot *en route* to join the Battalion from Dehra was involved in the "Dyer" incident at Amritsar, described elsewhere, but joined the Battalion on April 19th. The Afghan incursion into British territory, and the declaration of war and general mobilization, was so unexpected that, when an order to furnish two companies for a mobile column was received early on May 4th, it was thought that this column was destined for city disturbance duties. "B" and "D" Companies were concentrated after some delay owing to scattered guard duties all over Peshawar cantonment and city area, and later in the day were ordered to join a small mobile column for dispatch to the Khyber in lorries the following morning. This column had, in addition to our companies, one company 15th Sikhs and one section each of Royal Artillery and Sappers and Miners. It embussed at 4.30 a.m. and reached Landi Kotal at 9 a.m., where on arrival it was ordered to establish numerous picquets in the vicinity of the Fort; some sniping of these posts was experienced during the following days. The Afghans had occupied Khargali Ridge and Bagh Springs above Landi Khana in strength, and a tentative plan to attack them with the mobile column and Khyber Rifles the following day was formulated but not sanctioned.

On May 6th war with Afghanistan was declared, and the concentration of the 1st Division and 1st Cavalry Brigade at Landi Kotal was ordered. The 1st Battalion, as part of the 1st Peshawar Infantry Brigade, marched to Jamrud on May 7th and thence to Landi Kotal the following day. Arriving there at 3.30 p.m. on the 8th after a march of nineteen miles, it was immediately ordered to furnish numerous picquets on Ash Khel Ridge, north of the Fort.

#### ATTACKS ON BAGH

The following morning an attack by two battalions of the 1st Infantry Brigade on the Afghan position at Bagh was launched, but lacking depth, weight, and adequate support, failed.

The concentration of the 2nd Infantry Brigade from Nowshera was delayed owing to the necessity of surrounding Peshawar city for the arrest of numerous bad characters, but it arrived on the 10th and the leading elements of the 3rd Brigade from Abbottabad the following morning. The Nowshera Brigade was ordered to renew the attack on Bagh on May 11th. Carefully planned after close personal reconnaissance, and adequately supported by artillery and machine-gun fire, this attack was brilliantly successful with few casualties and heavy enemy loss. The Afghan force dispersed in complete disorder, leaving two guns and a quantity of equipment behind. The 1st Battalion was ordered up in reserve behind Bright's Hill on the



THE KHYBER PASS.

1919.

arrival of the leading battalions of the 3rd Infantry Brigade at Landi Kotal ; although it moved forward in close support as soon as the objective was taken, it was not engaged and returned to camp during the afternoon.

#### RECONNAISSANCE TO SPINATSUKA

The following day, together with a portion of the 35th Sikhs and No. 8 Mountain Battery, the 1st Battalion carried out a reconnaissance, towards Spinatsuka, five miles north of Landi Kotal. This was to clear up conflicting information which indicated that a large Afghan force was concentrating in this area with the object of advancing on Landi Kotal from the north. The Battalion acted as advanced guard and right flank guard in the advance, and rear-guard in the retirement. The Spinatsuka-Top Sar position was found occupied by some eight hundred enemy with two guns, but no further concentration was found, nor did this force show any intention of advancing. After engaging the enemy with fire the column withdrew to camp ; the Battalion suffered one casualty only. On this day Afghan concentrations at Dakka, a village situated on the Kabul River at the northern end of the Khyber Pass, were effectively bombed by our aircraft.

#### CAVALRY BRIGADE ADVANCE TO DAKKA AND AFRIDI ACTION IN THE KHYBER

The 1st Cavalry Brigade from Risalpur marched through the Pass and occupied Dakka on May 13th. Picqueting from Landi Khana to the northern exit of the Pass was undertaken by the Nowshera Brigade, now encamped at Landi Khana.

The forward move of the 1st Division into Afghanistan was delayed by tribal opposition to the concentration of the 2nd Division between Jamrud and Ali Masjid, and to the defection of the Khyber Rifles. Several sharp brushes with the Afridis occurred, and after disbandment of the Khyber Rifles it was decided that, in order adequately to secure the line-of-communication through the Pass, it was necessary to locate the whole of the 2nd Division therein. One brigade was therefore established each at Landi Kotal, Ali Masjid and Jamrud, and remained there throughout the campaign.

#### BATTALION WITH PART OF THE 1ST BRIGADE TO DAKKA

It was essential to support the Cavalry Brigade at Dakka as soon as possible, but pending the arrival of the 2nd Division at Landi Kotal only one regiment of cavalry, two battalions of infantry, and one battery could be spared from protective duties. The 1st Battalion was included in this force which was commanded by the Brigadier, 1st Infantry Brigade, and marched from Landi Kotal to Dakka on the 14th May. It acted as advanced guard and picqueting troops throughout this hot trying march, but no



opposition was encountered ; on arrival it encamped alongside the Cavalry Brigade close to Dakka village. The camp site was a bad one as regards defence, being commanded by a high ridge, nine hundred yards to the west. Even had this been picqueted, which was not the case, there was still scope for the enemy to work round the flanks in broken ground and to interpose between the picquets and the camp ; the selection and retention of this site were to be regretted most bitterly three days later.

The 15th May was spent in organizing camp defences and in preparing a landing ground for aircraft. During the afternoon " C " and " D " Companies were dispatched to picquet the three miles of the Pass between Painda Khak and the western exit of the Pass. These companies remained there for the nights 15/16th and 16/17th.

#### RECONNAISSANCE TO GIRDI, May 16th (see Map, page 185)

As there was no sign of the enemy in the vicinity a mixed force of one squadron cavalry, one section R.H.A., and two companies infantry, was sent on the morning of the 16th to work through the Khurd Khyber defile, west of Dakka, and to reconnoitre towards Girdi village. Unopposed for four miles, this force encountered increasingly severe opposition to the west of the village, and the retirement was closely followed up and harassed right back to camp. It was not until after the cavalry squadron had charged the enemy that it became successfully disengaged. During the above operation the two remaining battalions of the 1st Brigade reached Dakka.

#### ENEMY ATTACK ON DAKKA

In spite of the fact that the reconnaissance had disclosed the presence of considerable enemy forces in the vicinity of the camp, the hill features to the west and south-west were still left unoccupied by our troops, even by picquets. By 1 p.m. these were seized by three thousand enemy with seven guns ; a heavy fire was poured into the camp, causing great confusion and stampeding many of the cavalry and transport animals. At 2.30 p.m. the Battalion, less " C " and " D " Companies still on picquet duty, supported by one company 15th Sikhs, was ordered to occupy a position in the foothills to the south-west of the camp to prevent enemy incursion from the direction of the Gorhi-Ghakhai Pass. The 35th Sikhs moved out towards Robot Fort on a similar duty. This was achieved at the cost of a few casualties, but, as the enemy showed no signs of advancing, the troops were withdrawn to camp at dusk. In the Battalion, Captain T. N. C. Kemp and two other ranks were killed, and three other ranks wounded. Several false alarms and heavy sniping occurred during the night, but no enemy attack was made.

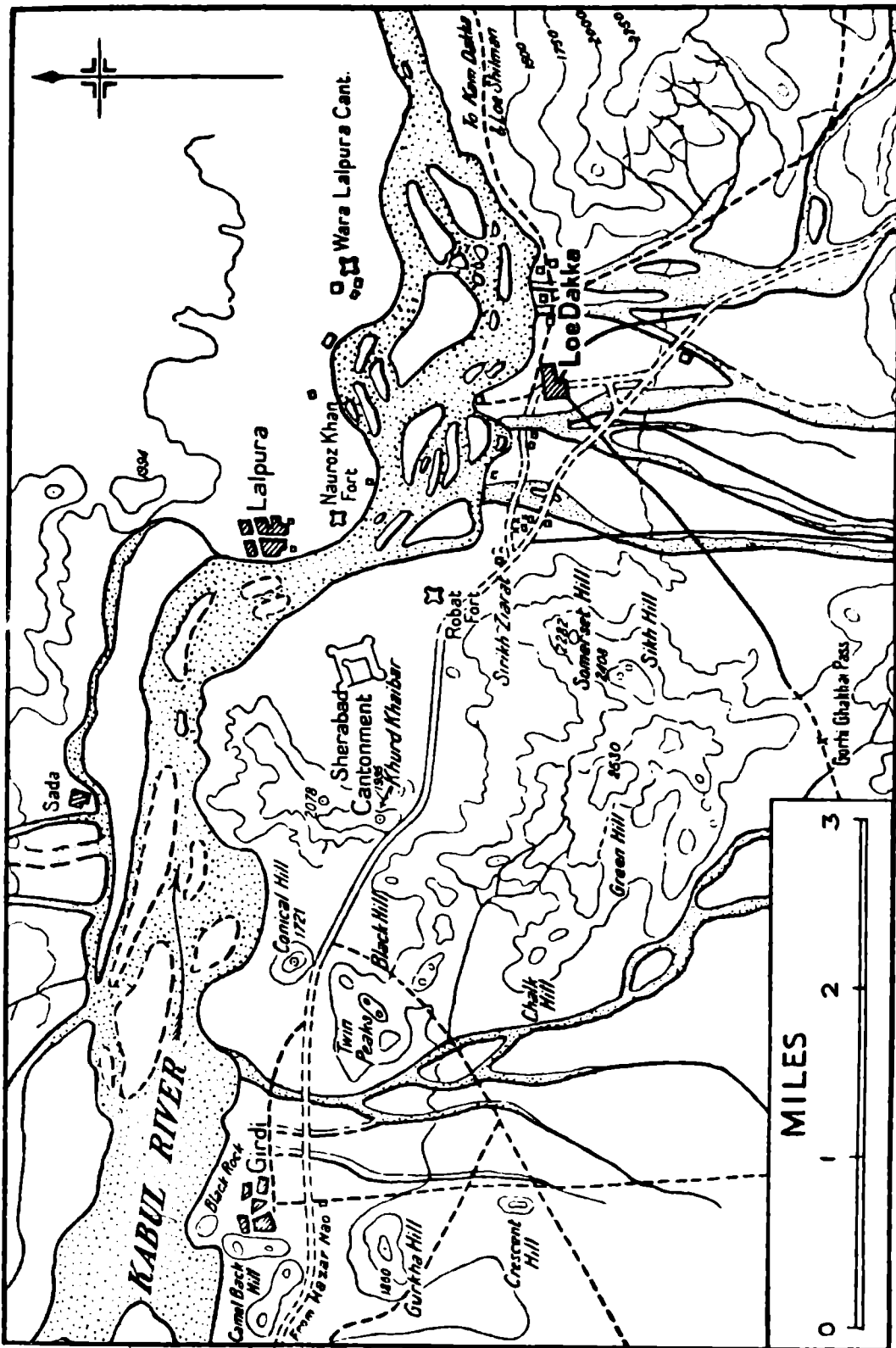
## ATTACK OF MAY 17TH

Notwithstanding the paucity of numbers and artillery it was imperative to attack as soon as possible and orders for an assault at dawn were issued during the night. These orders were for the 35th Sikhs supported by the 1st Battalion (less "C" and "D" Companies) to attack Somerset Hill, and for the 15th Sikhs to attack Sikh Hill. (These features were afterwards known by these names.)

Concentration was to be effected in darkness in the foothills below the objective. "M" Battery R.H.A. and No. 8 Mountain Battery (both gun batteries) with one squadron Machine-Gun Corps were to support the attack, with the 2nd Bn. Somerset Light Infantry in reserve. Reinforcements and ammunition were promised from Landi Kotal to arrive as early as possible.

The 35th Sikhs, covered by our "A" and "B" Companies, worked up a long spur and succeeded in approaching to within one hundred yards of the crest without opposition by 5.30 a.m. The leading companies were then met by very heavy fire on a steep narrow front and after incurring severe casualties retired through the Battalion's supporting companies. One company was re-formed and acted in support of "A" and "B" Companies, who renewed the attack by moving up converging spurs under heavy fire. Two platoons under Lieutenant W. C. Tungate and Subedar Shibdhoj Mal worked up to within twenty-five yards of the crest, but were too weak to assault, and hung on with great difficulty owing to the severe enemy fire. The two gun batteries, firing shrapnel, failed to keep down this fire owing to the steep knife-edge nature of the crest which the enemy were holding. The attack of the 15th Sikhs on the left flank was similarly held up, and the Brigade's assault was definitely checked by 10 a.m.

Fortunately the promised reinforcements consisting of two battalions, two sections Howitzers, one company Machine-Gun Corps, and three lorries of gun ammunition, began arriving at 11.30 a.m. These were under the command of Major-General A. Skeen, who assumed charge and at once made arrangements to renew the attack in the early afternoon. The two Howitzer sections immediately engaged the enemy with accurate fire, and the effect of this fire, and of the preparatory deployment of the 1st Bn. Yorkshire Regiment and 2/1st Gurkha Rifles, was too much for the enemy, who commenced retiring at 1 p.m. The reserve battalion was now pushed up and, taking along our "A" and "B" Companies with it, occupied Somerset Hill with small opposition. The 15th Sikhs on the left flank similarly seized Sikh Hill without difficulty. The Afghans retired in complete confusion very rapidly, leaving guns and quantities of rifles and ammunition behind.



LOE DAKKA.

17th May, 1919.

Among other trophies found by the Battalion were an Afghan battalion commander's H.Q. flag and an officer's sword.

Our casualties in the two days' action were 32 killed and 247 wounded, with 58 animals killed and 30 wounded. Of these casualties the Battalion suffered 2 B.O.s, Captain T. N. C. Kemp and Lieutenant A. G. R. Henderson, and 4 O.R.s killed ; 1 B.O., Captain A. F. W. Brown, 1 G.O., Subedar Damarbahadur Sen and 12 O.R.s wounded. Lieutenant W. C. Tungate was awarded the Military Cross, and Subedar Shibdhoj Mal the Order of British India, 2nd Class, as immediate rewards in recognition of their intrepid action in the early stages of the attack. "C" and "D" Companies re-joined the Battalion on the evening of the 17th, and the whole force moved to a new camp site in the vicinity of Robat Fort the following morning. A welcome draft of two G.O.s and two hundred O.R.s from the 2nd Battalion arrived and joined the Battalion a few days later ; this draft had been delayed owing to tribal action in the Pass near Ali Masjid, described earlier.

#### ARMISTICE

Concentration of the remainder of the 1st Division was then pushed forward with a view to advancing on Jellalabad, and both this town and Kabul were successfully bombed by aircraft. Arrangements were completed by May 26th, but had to be postponed owing to a large portion of the available transport being diverted to the Kurram, where Thal had been invested. The relief of this post was followed by an armistice at the request of the Afghans, which was granted on June 3rd, and further active operations were suspended from that date, pending the result of negotiations.

#### CAMP ROUTINE AND FORAGING

The troops remained in camp, which was thoroughly organized both for comfort and protection, and the days were passed mainly in arranging adequate camp defences and picquets, and in reconnaissances. The camp was continuously sniped by night by the Mohmands occupying Lalpura village on the far bank of the river, but few casualties were incurred. Foraging was also undertaken, partially to augment the inadequate supplies coming through the Pass due to the very limited transport available. The last of these expeditions took place on June 10th, when part of the 1st Infantry Brigade, consisting of the Battalion and 2nd Bn. Somerset Light Infantry, with the 1st King's Dragoon Guards and No. 8 Mountain Battery, advanced to Hazarnao ; this was the furthest advance made into Afghanistan during this campaign. Starting at 4.45 a.m., it involved a march of over eighteen miles and the rearmost troops did not reach camp till after 7 p.m.

that evening. The Battalion acted as advanced guard and picqueting troops during the advance, and formed the rear-guard for seven miles of the retirement, which was half-heartedly followed up. The official shade temperature recorded in camp on this day was 124 degrees, and all suffered acutely from heat and thirst ; over one hundred men of the Battalion alone, including the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel B. H. Bignell, were admitted to hospital suffering from heat exhaustion on return to camp that evening. Thereafter foraging was discontinued ; following the Mesopotamia precedent, Gurkhas were also issued with pith helmets.

### TRIBAL HOSTILITY AND AMBUSHES

Encouraged by the inactivity of our force at Dakka (one infantry division, less one brigade, and one cavalry brigade) which the terms of the armistice with Afghanistan imposed, the hostility of the Shinwari and Mohmand tribesmen grew considerably, and sniping of the camp and picquets and opposition to cavalry reconnaissances towards Girdi increased. The sniping from the far bank of the river around Lalpura was kept within limits by artillery and machine-gun fire, and by the establishment of a ferry and bridgehead on the far bank down-stream from the village.

To deal with the opposition which the cavalry were meeting almost daily in the Girdi plain, two successful ambushes were laid, in both of which the 1st Battalion took a prominent part. In the first, " C " Company under Captain G. P. Crampton secretly established picquets in the Twin Peaks-Conical Hill area under cover of the dust raised by a number of transport mules driven out to graze in this vicinity. Some three hundred of the enemy were lured forward by isolated cavalry patrols, who together with the animals then retired to camp ; by executing a false retirement under cover of the hill crests, " C " Company allowed the tribesmen to approach within two hundred yards of their former positions. These were then quickly re-occupied and a heavy fire opened on the enemy, who suffered fifteen casualties before they could take cover. During the resultant confusion the company retired to camp ; not a single casualty was suffered in this brilliantly conceived and executed little exploit, for which Captain Crampton was mentioned in a Special Divisional Order of the Day.

Much annoyed at thus being outwitted a large force of Mohmands crossed the river that night and joined the Shinwari lashkar at Girdi. The camp was heavily sniped on the night 19/20th, and information was received of an intended attack on the following evening. To forestall this, an ambush was laid in the same area as that in which " C " Company had operated so successfully on the previous day. On this occasion the force was on a larger scale and consisted of 1st Infantry Brigade H.Q., the Battalion, two

companies each of the Somerset Light Infantry and 15th Sikhs, together with two squadrons 33rd Cavalry, No. 8 Mountain Battery, two sections of "M" Battery, R.H.A., and one section Machine-Gun Corps. "A," "B" and "D" Companies of the Battalion occupied Twin Peaks and Conical Hill ridges, with small picquets only visible, and the machine-gun section and artillery were then concealed in positions near the latter hill. Adopting similar tactics to the day before, the cavalry lured the tribesmen to within effective range with small patrols and then at a given signal retired at the gallop across the front held by the Battalion. Heavy fire was at once opened by all arms for fifteen minutes, scattering the enemy in all directions and causing them thirty killed and twenty-five wounded. A deliberate retirement back to camp was then conducted, the only casualty being the Battalion's Medical Officer who was wounded in the thigh by a spent bullet. After these two salutary lessons the tribal lashkar dispersed, and the camp was left unmolested for a week.

A few days after this, and twice during July, the tribesmen opposed the posting of picquets either in the camp area or on the line-of-communication back to Landi Khana. On each occasion they were only driven off after severe fighting, but suffered a number of casualties. A large force of Afridis also harassed our picquets in the Ali Masjid area in the middle of July and attacked and captured Barley Hill picquet, near Fort Maude, on July 17th. This involved the closing of the Pass for two days and entailed the dispatch of a force from Peshawar to clear up the situation.

Raiding into the Peshawar Plain was at this time only got under control after drives had been organized to comb the Kajuri Plain, south-west of the cantonment. The severe heat seriously hampered these operations and caused the troops engaged the greatest discomfort and hardship.

With the exception of the minor actions above recorded, life in camp was confined to routine and picquet duty. The Battalion was also employed several times in laying ambushes to deal with isolated marauders who constantly cut the telegraph lines, or raided outlying transport lines. The very intense heat from June to August, combined with the thick choking dust all over the camp site, was trying in the extreme, and the only relaxation available was bathing in the Kabul River. The scene on the river bank each evening when some two thousand British and Indian soldiers were bathing was almost reminiscent of a seaside resort without the feminine element, except when snipers bullets fell among them and a rush for cover ensued. Thanks to full-time occupation on fatigues and protective duties, and to this bathing, the sick returns were astonishingly low notwithstanding the heat and difficult conditions of a large force in camp in the height of the summer. The draft received from the 2nd Battalion in May enabled

the Battalion to take its full share of work both in camp and on picquet, ambush, and foraging duties.

#### CONCLUSION OF PEACE AND WITHDRAWAL FROM DAKKA

An Afghan peace delegation passed through Dakka *en route* to Rawalpindi during July and peace was signed there on August 8th. After this the frontier in the disputed area near Landi Khana was demarcated by a joint Anglo-Afghan Commission and the 1st Division and 1st Cavalry Brigade started withdrawing to Peshawar. The 1st Battalion left Dakka on September 10th and marched into its former barracks in Nicholson Lines on September 13th. The 2nd Division remained in occupation of the Khyber throughout the winter of 1919-1920, during which the Afridis remained restless and continuous raids into the Pass and Peshawar Plain occurred. Re-organization subsequent to this campaign involved gradual reduction of the Pass garrison as the restlessness diminished, and with a resumption of trade caravans into Afghanistan duties became of a routine nature. The Khyber is now garrisoned permanently by a brigade of regular troops and both Battalions of the Regiment have done two year's tours of duty there since the inauguration of the policy.

#### GURKHA SCOUTS

An interesting innovation during the operations at Dakka had been the revival of the Gurkha "Scouts." A separate detachment of selected men from all Gurkha Regiments serving in the area was formed, in which fifteen men from the 1st Battalion were included. As in 1897 in the Tirah Campaign, they gave an excellent account of themselves and on many occasions outwitted the enemy at their own tactics of surprise and ambush.

#### THE KOHAT-KURRAM FRONT

While the 1st Battalion was engaged in these operations on the Khyber front, both the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Regiment formed part of the Kohat-Kurram Force. On this front the vulnerability of the Kurram salient was well shown by subsequent events. Afghan forces first appeared on the Peiwar Kotal on April 26th and between the 28th and 30th threatened the Militia Posts of Karlachi, Lakka-Tigga and Badama. The Kurram Militia remained loyal, but after repeated requests by the Political Agent at Parachinar they were reinforced by regular troops of the 60th Brigade on May 7th.

Meanwhile the Afghan army, under General Nadir Khan, advanced from Matun in the Khost salient; it moved down the Kaitu River to Spinwam, a militia post which had been evacuated on the 25th, and appeared opposite Thal, which place it invested on May 27th. The immediate effect of this

advance was the evacuation of our forward militia posts in the Tochi and Gumal, and the suspension of the proposed advance on Jellalabad by our force in the Khyber ; this was in order to provide transport for the column being organized at Kohat to relieve Thal. As a strategical move the effect on our concentration and plan of campaign was of far-reaching consequences. Thal was relieved by the 45th Brigade under General Dyer, of Amritsar fame, on June 1st ; after this the Afghan forces retired, and the armistice mentioned before came into force on June 3rd.

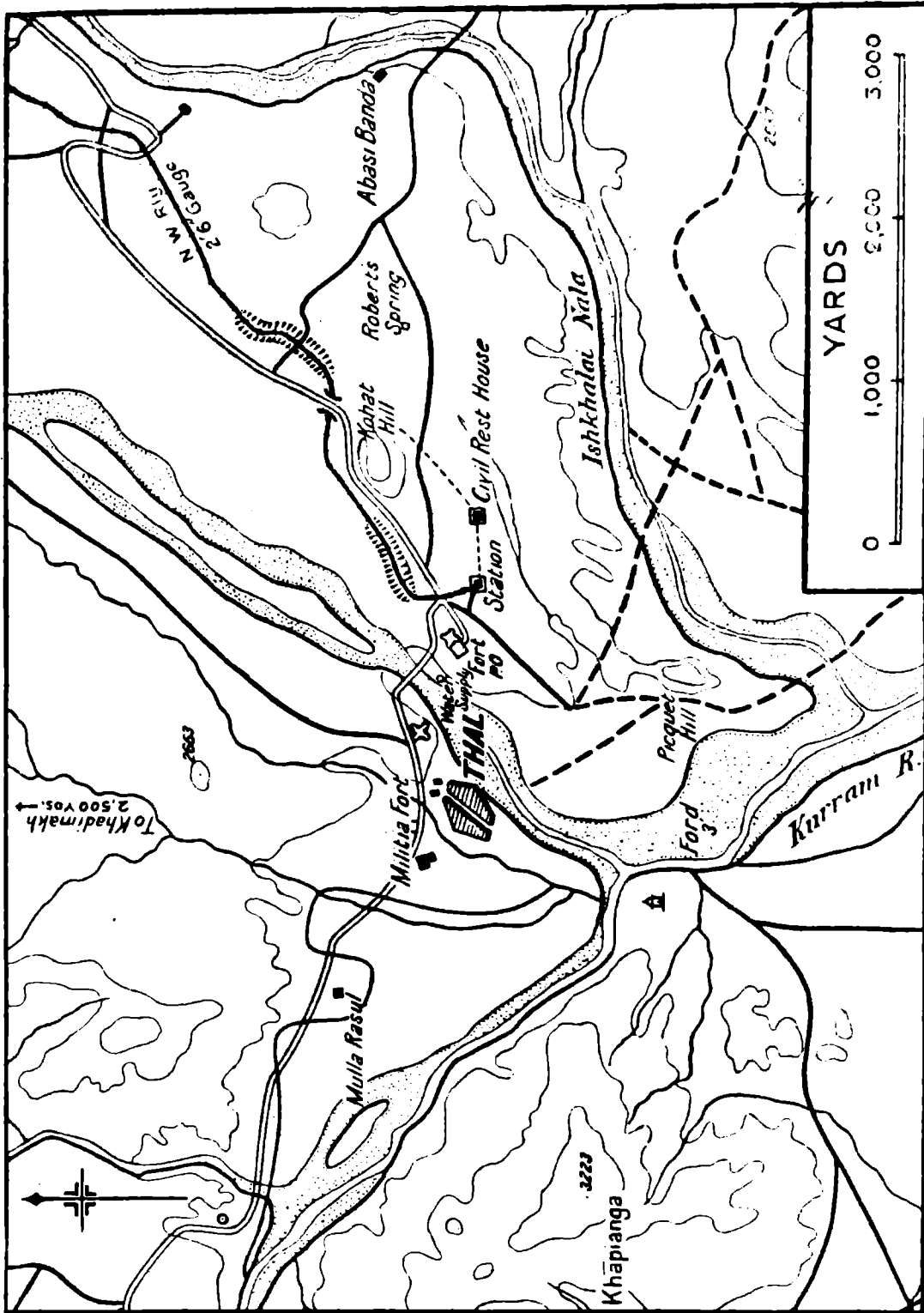
#### THE PART OF THE 2ND BATTALION

The 2nd Battalion, though moved to the Kohat area, was not destined to take an active part in these operations. It had only arrived in Dehra Dun after two and a half years' active service in Mesopotamia on March 13th, and on the outbreak of hostilities with Afghanistan had one company absent at Fyzabad on internal security duties. The Battalion was ordered to mobilize on May 13th and simultaneously to provide a draft of two hundred to join the 1st Battalion on the Khyber front. After concentration at Ambala, it proceeded to Kohat on May 31st, and was there encamped with the 2/7th Gurkhas near the railway station. A severe outbreak of cholera in this cantonment, from which the Battalion suffered several casualties, entailed being moved to Hangu on June 14th, where it remained until July 5th ; the practical cessation of hostilities thereafter, and the fact that an undue proportion of Gurkha units was included in the field army, involved relief and return to Dehra, where it arrived on July 7th. With the exception of the cholera outbreak two incidents only deserve record. The first was an attack on June Bridge picquet, near Hangu, on the night June 23/24th which was successfully repulsed with a loss of only two men wounded. The second was the order to transfer two complete companies in drafts to the 3rd Battalion and 3/8th Gurkhas ; these were dispatched on June 25th. Together with a draft of two hundred men sent to the 1st Battalion in May, this meant that nearly three-quarters of the 2nd Battalion had been transferred elsewhere in the three months following its return from Mesopotamia.

#### THE 3RD BATTALION

At the outbreak of hostilities the 3rd Battalion found part of the garrison at Kohat, having moved there on relief scale in April 1918. On May 16th, 1919, the Battalion was ordered to Thal ; it arrived there by train from Hangu on the evening of the 19th and was encamped on the north-east side of the Fort. On May 24th information was received that an Afghan attack on any point on the Kurram River between Parachinar and Bannu might be





THAL AND THE KURRAM VALLEY.

May, 1919.

expected. On the following day Major-General Eustace, Commanding Kohat District, arrived at Thal with reinforcements of two battalions of infantry, and one section of mountain artillery. The garrison of four battalions of Infantry, 3/9th Gurkha Rifles, 1/109th Infantry, 1/151st Sikhs and 4/39th Garhwal Rifles, each less than five hundred rifles strong, was distributed on a perimeter of some five miles to guard the plateau on which Thal Fort was situated, and to protect the water supply at Roberts Spring in the Sangroba nullah. The 3rd Battalion was detailed to hold the Fort, Railway Station, and Civil Rest House, with two companies in general reserve. The two sections mountain artillery were put into action in the horn work of the Fort.

#### INVESTMENT OF THAL

Nadir Khan's army of some three thousand regular Afghans, with two 10-cm. and seven 7.5-cm. Krupp guns and a large number of tribesmen, chiefly Wazirs and Khostwals, appeared opposite Thal on the morning of May 27th. Afghan head-quarters were established at Yusuf Khel, three miles north-west of Thal; their artillery was brought into action on Khapianga ridge beyond the Kurram River, and Afghan infantry occupied Thal village. Approximately six thousand tribesmen were in position on the lower slopes of Khadimakh hills, north of the Fort, and the hills south of the Ishkalai nullah, thus investing the plateau on three sides. In addition, a large number of Orakzai and Zaimukht tribesmen were "sitting on the fence" in the vicinity awaiting the progress of events. The Afghan artillery registered on the Fort and surrounding buildings during the 27th, doing some damage, and consistent sniping from Thal village was opened. On the 28th the enemy artillery fire, particularly that of the 10-cm. guns, was intense and not only outranged our artillery, but did further damage to the Fort, and set on fire some bhoosa stacks and petrol and ration dumps near the Railway Station, just outside the Fort; the W/T station was also hit and temporarily put out of action. Co-operation by two Royal Air Force machines only achieved limited results in keeping down the enemy artillery bombardment, and it was estimated that over three hundred shells were fired into the Fort and vicinity during the day; some half-hearted attacks by Afghan infantry were easily repulsed during the morning. During the night 28/29th, the Frontier Constabulary garrisoning the militia post across the Sangroba nullah, fifteen hundred yards north-west of the Fort, evacuated their post which was seized by the tribesmen, and the garrison water supply was thereby endangered; this and the burning of the ration dumps the previous day also necessitated the troops being put on a reduced scale of rations and water.

The Afghan artillery maintained a steady bombardment throughout the 29th and 30th, and one gun brought into action, south of the Ishkhalai nullah, did much damage. During the night 29/30th Picquet Hill, south of the Fort, was attacked unsuccessfully by the enemy.

#### ARRIVAL OF THE RELIEF COLUMN, 31st May

The relief column, under General Dyer, arrived nine miles east of Thal on the evening of the 31st, and was made acquainted with the situation. General Dyer decided to attack the tribesmen occupying the hills south of the Ishkhalai nullah on the following day, and was successful in dislodging them during that afternoon; the opposing artillery, posted on Khapianga, was also silenced by our guns. The Ishkhalai ridges were picqueted and the relief column encamped two miles east of Thal that night. Large numbers of the enemy had been seen retiring southwards after the attack on Ishkhalai ridge; but attempts to intercept them, in which two companies of the 3rd Battalion took part, were unsuccessful, owing chiefly to the exhaustion of the troops of the relief column; this was not surprising in view of the forced marches they had made under most trying climatic conditions.

#### ATTACK ON KHADIMAKH RIDGE

Orders for an attack on the Khadimakh ridge were issued during the night and this was successfully launched at 8.30 hours the following morning. The Brigade covered by all available artillery attacked on a two-battalion front supported by two battalions, and rapidly attained all objectives with few casualties. The 3rd Battalion was the left leading battalion on a front of two companies, and advancing with dash seized its objective without loss. One rifleman of "B" Company, rushing ahead of the firing line, almost into the bursting shells of the barrage, captured an enemy standard which is now in the Officers' Mess, at Dehra.

It was now obvious that the Afghan force was in full retreat. The heat precluded further action by the infantry, but cavalry and armoured cars followed up and harassed the retiring enemy, and the Afghan camp at Yusuf Khel was found deserted the following morning. By their precipitate retirement the Afghans escaped without being greatly molested by our troops, but retaliatory action was taken on the 5th June against the Wazirs who had joined them, and the large village of Biland Khel was thoroughly destroyed and the towers were blown up.

The armistice with Afghanistan was concluded on June 3rd and no further operations against them were undertaken. The 3rd Battalion, however, formed part of a punitive force against the Kabul Khel Wazirs

during July, when fifty-four villages and forty-five towers, some of very imposing dimensions, between Thal and Shewa, down the Kurram River were destroyed. Thereafter the 3rd Battalion remained in Thal until the end of August, when a move was made to Parachinar. During this period the Battalion was employed on routine escort duties to convoys on the Thal-Parachinar road ; here was experienced a bad epidemic of cholera.

#### RETROSPECT OF THE THAL OPERATIONS

Thus ended the operations on the Kohat-Kurram front, of which the investment and relief of Thal were the main feature. Nadir Khan's advance down the Kaitu River over very difficult country, encumbered by gun elephants and baggage, had been a masterly stroke and a strategical surprise of the first order. Had this advance been followed by bold aggressive action at Thal, where he had both the initiative and also superior numbers and guns, his efforts might well have been crowned with success and of far-reaching consequences. The surrounding tribes would certainly have joined him, and the weak garrison of Thal, extended on a perimeter of five miles, vulnerable at all points, would have been overwhelmed before reinforcements could have arrived.

This in turn would have isolated our force in the Upper Kurram valley, at Parachinar, and would probably have entailed a general rising of the tribesmen along the whole frontier. His weak dilatory tactics at Thal discounted the initial advantage gained, and allowed time for a relief column to be organized and dispatched ; this saved the situation and turned the tide, which ended in his defeat and flight. Our casualties in the defence of Thal were thirteen killed and eighty-one wounded ; this small number was mainly due to the weak garrison contained and to the fact that the Afghan artillery had little H.E. shell.

The 3rd Battalion, having the rôle of defending the Fort and vicinity, and in reserve, had been subjected to the full force of the bombardment, but had suffered few casualties ; three incidents, however, during the siege deserve mention.

On May 28th, seeing that no flag was flying over the Fort and that the lanyard had been cut, a rifleman of the Battalion volunteered to hoist the Union Jack ; under close accurate sniping he swarmed up the flagstaff and securely nailed the flag to the staff, where it remained throughout the siege ; this Union Jack is now in the Mess at Dehra. The second incident was the manning by men of the machine-gun platoon of the only piece of Fort armament contained in the post ; this was an ancient Maxim-Nordenfelt gun, which contained no asbestos packing, and as a result the volume of fire was in ratio to the time that water remained in the barrel casing ; it had

little value in defence but caused the crew manning it intense amusement. The mere existence of this gun, as the sole weapon for protection of a border post, is an indication of the necessity for re-organization of North-West Frontier defence, subsequently undertaken. Finally to their pride and amusement, the Battalion captured Nadir Khan's private charger, a white stallion, which galloped up to the Fort, unattended, and was promptly secured.

#### RETROSPECT

The Third Afghan War was forced on the Government of India at a time of extreme difficulty and on our part was entered into with the greatest unwillingness. The army was composed mainly of war-worn and weary men, recently returned from overseas theatres of war, or of newly raised troops who were only partially trained. In addition, regiments were widely scattered on internal security duties on account of the recent violent revolutionary movements in the Punjab and widespread political agitation all over India.

However controversial may be the opinion concerning General Dyer's action at Amritsar, in which affair the Depot of the 1st Battalion had been most conspicuous, there is no question that it effectively quelled the revolutionary movement in the North of India and thereby released a large portion of the field army when general mobilization was ordered. It is also certain that anti-British propaganda by Indian agitators in Kabul had induced the belief that British authority in India had practically ceased, and that an energetic advance by the Afghans would be crowned by immediate and far-reaching success. Had this been prosecuted early in April, instead of a month later, and had the Afghan incursions on the Khyber and Kurram fronts been co-ordinated with the outbreaks in the Punjab, the situation which the Government would have been called upon to face might well have been critical. As it was, the rebellion in India was crushed before any Afghan movement was made, and the two half-hearted invasions made at Landi Khana and Thal were met and defeated in detail. Nevertheless, as is common throughout British history, the enemy's ability and power were underestimated and their request for an armistice was only proffered after the severe action at Dakka and the investment of Thal for four days.

The Regiment took a prominent part in both actions and in all operations conducted on these two fronts. All three Battalions were actually in the theatre of war, the 1st and 3rd Battalions forming part of the two brigades called upon to bear the brunt of the fighting. Although the 2nd Battalion did not itself take an active part in actual contact with the Afghans, it had supplied large drafts to its two sister Battalions by which both had been

enabled to take their full share in the operations in which they were engaged. The 1st Battalion had mobilized less than three hundred and fifty rifles strong and with these sparse numbers had taken a major part on the Khyber front. The 3rd Battalion, invested in Thal, had a strength of only four hundred and seventy-five, of whom many were raw recruits in a newly raised battalion which had had little opportunity of practical training, chiefly on account of ceremonial duties in Delhi during the previous winter. In spite of this and of the trying climatic conditions, the same cheerful, willing spirit, which had been so noticeable in France and Mesopotamia, was again conspicuous in these two Battalions, and earned for them the compliment of selection for the most tiring, or hazardous, undertakings.

General Eustace, writing a complimentary letter of thanks to the 3rd Battalion, said :—

“ It was again apparent that, when it comes to fighting, the Gurkha will go through the Pathan every time.”

The Third Afghan War was the prelude to the introduction of a sweeping re-organization of the Army in India and also to extensive operations in Waziristan ; these latter are dealt with in the next Chapter.

The Battle-Honour “ AFGHANISTAN, 1919 ” was subsequently awarded to the Regiment and the majority of the officers and men qualified for the award of the Indian General Service Medal, with clasp, the issue of which was sanctioned later.

## CHAPTER XVII

1919-1924

### WAZIRISTAN

**Cause of the Campaign. Composition of the Striking Force. The Opening Phases. Re-organization. Mobilization and dispatch of the 2nd Battalion. Battalion joins the Striking Force. The Battle of Ahnai. Advance to Sorarogha. Picqueting by "A" Company. Passage of the Barari Tangi. Picquet on the Bluff. The Action at Barari Tangi. Advance to Piazza Raghza. Occupation of Plaza Camp. Punitive Operations at Makin. Submission of Umar Khel. Withdrawal from Makin. Advance to Kaniguram. Punitive Operations against the Abdur Rahman Khel. Decision to occupy Waziristan permanently. Move of the 2nd Battalion and Return to Dehra Dun. Re-organization of N.W.F. Defence. Move of the 1st Battalion to the Tochi. Road to Razmak started. Plan for advance and move of Field Force. Advance to Tauda China. Destructive Operations. Move to new camp site and Return of 1st Battalion to Dehra Dun. Retrospect.**

#### THE CAUSE OF THE CAMPAIGN AND THE OPENING PHASES

**T**HIS campaign was a direct outcome of the Third Afghan War, and lasted from November 1919 until the beginning of 1924. It was characterized by most bitter fighting and unprecedented casualties on both sides throughout.

Both Battalions of the Regiment played a prominent part therein.

Afghan neutrality during the Great War kept the tribes in Waziristan comparatively quiet. The outbreak of war with Afghanistan and Nadir Khan's advance down the Kaitu, which caused the evacuation of the forward Militia posts, was too much for them, and numerous desertions, with quantities of arms and ammunition, at once started in the Militias. Fantastic rumours at once gained credence, fanned a growing restlessness among the tribes, and raiding commenced. Owing to commitments elsewhere the weak British garrisons were obliged to adopt a passive rôle and between May and September 1919 there were one hundred and eighty raids into British territory, involving over six hundred casualties to our subjects.

A punitive expedition as soon as circumstances allowed was inevitable, but at no time in our history was the occasion less opportune. Demobiliza-

tion and re-organization were in full swing, regular regiments few in number and war weary, and stocks of stores and equipment were low; a large proportion of the field army was also composed of second-line units, inadequately trained. The situation, however, brooked no delay.

A striking force of two brigades and attached troops, under Major-General A. Skeen, concentrated at Miranshah in November. It advanced to Datta Khel and overawed the Tochi Wazirs within ten days and with no fighting; it was then transferred to Tank and re-named the Derajat Column. Except for one light battery it contained no British troops; in the infantry there were but four regular Indian battalions, all of whom had served on one or more fronts in the Great War; there were only two pack batteries and no machine-guns; all transport was of necessity on pack.

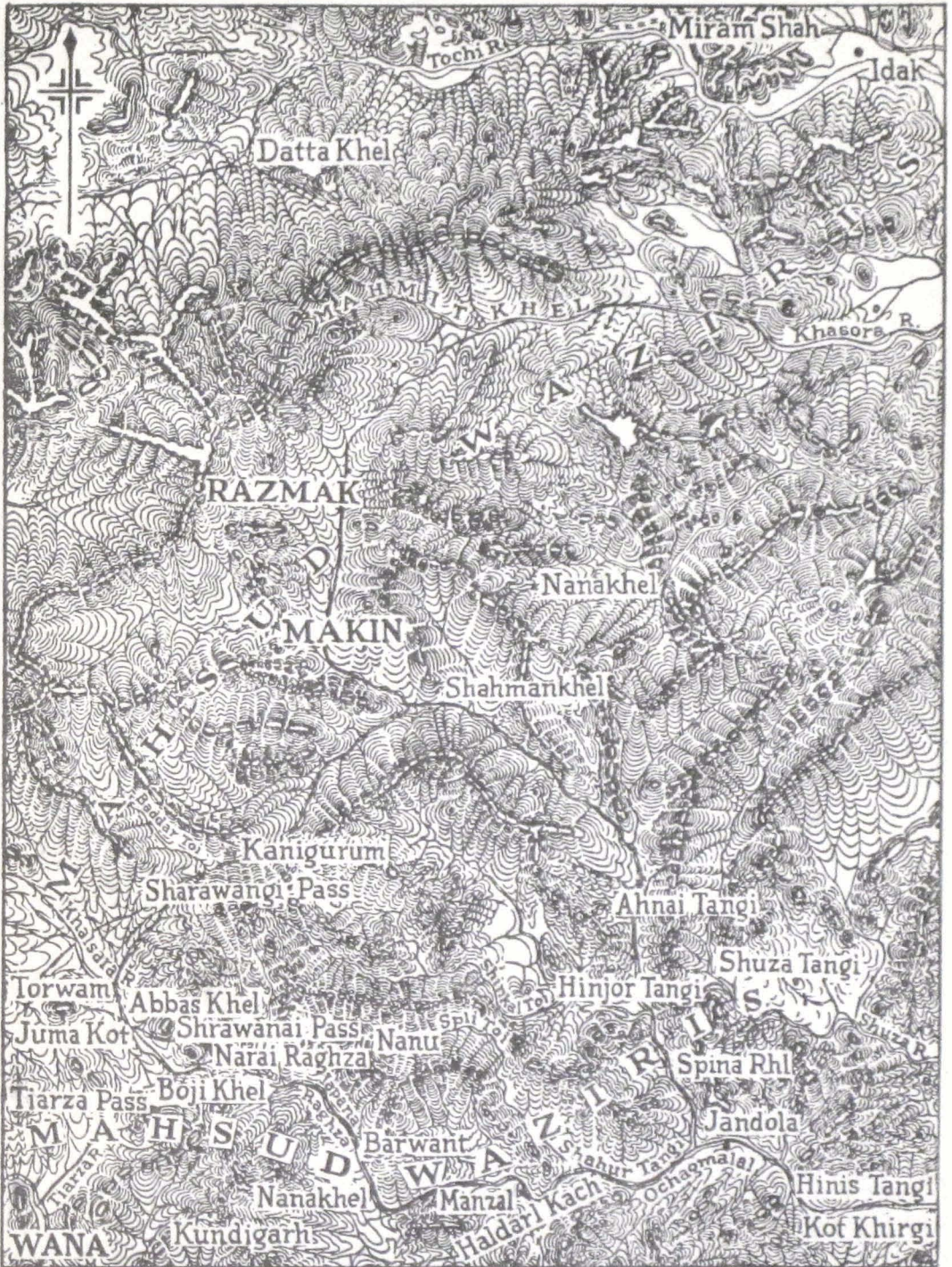
The plan was to advance up the Tank Zam to Dwa Toi, by which time it was hoped to have secured the Mahsuds' submission; failing this, punitive expeditions were to be sent against Makin and Kaniguram.

Political and air action having failed, the column commenced the advance on December 13th, 1919, and the first phase lasted until December 29th, when Palosina was permanently occupied. From the outset the advance was bitterly opposed and was marked by continuous heavy fighting. A large Mahsud lashkar, adequately armed and containing numerous militia deserters, well versed in our tactics of North-West Frontier fighting, rapidly established a moral superiority over our raw troops and inflicted severe casualties. The tribesmen attacked with reckless bravery supported by intense accurate covering fire, a form of tactics hitherto never employed by them, and doubtless due to the militia deserters. Elated by success their numbers swelled rapidly, and time and again our troops, though superior in number, were overwhelmed and driven back. As a result the column only advanced four miles in ten days and suffered one thousand casualties; in addition, the enemy daily captured quantities of arms and ammunition and even grenades. Despite success they, too, had suffered considerable losses, which entailed the temporary dispersal of the lashkar and was responsible for a tentative peace offer. This was rejected as insincere and a full and unqualified submission to our terms demanded or else the advance would continue; this submission was not forthcoming.

The striking force required drastic re-organization during the temporary lull. Several battalions whose morale had suffered were relegated to line-of-communication duties and replaced in the forward brigades, and the G.O.C. Force requested immediate reinforcement by experienced regiments versed in North-West Frontier warfare and tactics.

This demand led to the mobilization and dispatch of the 2nd Battalion and 2/5th Gurkhas, and later of the 4/3rd and 3/11th. The arrival and





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action of these, particularly the two former, was to prove the turning-point in the campaign.

#### THE MOBILIZATION AND ARRIVAL OF THE 2ND BATTALION AND THE OPERATIONS UP TO THE OCCUPATION OF PIAZHA RAGHZA

The 2nd Battalion had arrived in Dehra Dun from Mesopotamia in March 1919, and from May to July of that year had served in the Kohat area during the Third Afghan War. During this latter period three-quarters of its strength had been turned over in drafts to other units. The order to mobilize was received on December 22nd, when the Battalion was busy with peace celebrations on the official conclusion of the Great War. The Battalion, although under strength owing to the recent departure of a large furlough party, was ordered to proceed to Waziristan without awaiting the arrival of leave details on recall.

Mobilization was completed on December 28th and the Battalion strength, B.O.s 12, G.O.s 16, O.R.s 616, Followers 65, left Dehra Dun for Darya Khan on December 31st. How far did it fulfil the G.O.C.'s request for "reinforcement by experienced battalions versed in N.W.F. fighting"? In the latter, scarcely at all. Except for two and a half months in the Kohat area the previous summer, when little or no training had been possible, the Battalion had never served on the North-West Frontier; on the other hand, it had just returned from two and a half years' service in Mesopotamia, and numerous men had also served with the 1st Battalion in both France and Mesopotamia, and a certain number in the Khyber. Of the British Officers only two, the Commanding Officer and Second-in-Command, had pre-war service. The Adjutant had five years' service, the Company Commanders four or less, and the remainder less than two years. This lack of service was to some extent compensated for by experience of active service. The Gurkha Officers and N.C.O.s, though young, were senior in rank, and most of them had been on active service in one or two theatres of war. Amongst the men was a fair proportion who had seen active service, but there were also numerous young riflemen with one to two years' service whose training had been somewhat rushed.

The Battalion's weakness in ignorance, or want, of training in N.W.F. warfare was compensated for in a large measure by a high degree of keenness and esprit de corps inspired by its achievements in the Great War.

The Battalion arrived at Darya Khan on January 2nd, 1920, and drew the balance of its mobilization equipment. Prominent newspaper placards of "Peace with Mahsuds" on Dehra Station had inspired a witty remark by the Subedar-Major to the effect that news of the 2nd Battalion's depar-

ture for Waziristan had immediately caused the Mahsuds to sue for peace. They were soon to be disillusioned.

The 2nd Battalion marched for Dera Ismail Khan on January 3rd and reached Jandola on the 9th. Here it was ordered to join the 67th Brigade at Kotkai. This place had been occupied by the reconstructed 43rd Brigade on December 29th, and permanent picquets had been established after severe fighting between there and Palosina by January 5th. The 67th Brigade joined the 43rd at Kotkai on the 6th, and the two brigades made three unsuccessful attempts to seize the approaches to the Ahnai Tangi, a steep narrow gorge beyond the camp, through which any further advance would have to pass.

The 2nd Battalion approached Kotkai to the sound of gun fire and it was ascertained that an action was in progress. Two companies were called on to support the retirement of the 4/39th Garhwalis prior to reaching camp, and the Battalion was thus in action, and actually received a casualty, before officially joining the force. It joined the 67th Brigade (Brigadier-General Lucas) on arrival, to which formation the 2/5th Gurkhas had been posted a few days previously. The Ahnai Tangi was successfully secured after a night march on January 11th, both brigades being employed. The 67th Brigade formed camp at Ganna Kach and the 43rd returned to Kotkai on the conclusion of operations. Unfortunately, through an error, the 2nd Battalion's train transport accompanied the latter, and this involved the majority of the men having to sleep that night in the open in wet clothes in bad weather. Four B.O.s and thirty O.R.s were subsequently admitted to hospital with pneumonia, from which disease, to the great regret of all ranks of the Regiment, Major H. Mullaly died shortly afterwards. The next three days were spent road-making and picqueting and only minor brushes with the enemy occurred. The Battalion suffered two casualties and had a good opportunity to shake down, which was fortunate, for it was to be called on to take part in the fiercest action of the campaign on January 14th.

#### THE BATTLE OF AHNAI TANGI

A brief description of the country over which this action was fought is necessary to appreciate the sequence of events. Preparatory operations on January 12th and 13th had secured and consolidated the heights guarding the entrance to the gorge. Just clear of, and to the west of the exit thereof, a steep spur runs up from the nullah and forms a long ridge culminating in a flat-topped hill, some nine hundred feet above the river bed; this was one hundred yards long and called "Flathead Left." Along this same ridge one thousand yards to the north-east, but separated by a



deep ravine, is another hill which was termed "Flathead Right." Northwest of Flathead Left, and also separated from it by a gully, is another commanding hill designated "Marble Arch." These three features are mutually supporting and each commands the river bed. Flathead Left in particular has a wide field of fire over a large section of the Tank Zam, and the occupation and retention is of vital importance to any force advancing up that river. This fact was fully appreciated by the Mahsuds.

Rightly anticipating that the occupation of Flathead Left would be the deciding factor, two companies of the 2/5th Gurkha Rifles were detailed as right flank guard with a special mission to seize and picquet it. The tasks allotted to the 2nd Battalion of escort to guns and transport and picqueting did not promise to be very exciting; these duties were, however, soon to be changed, and the Battalion was to be called upon to be the deciding factor in the day's operations.

The Tangi was passed without incident, but on reaching Asa Khan the advanced guard was heavily engaged from Marble Arch and held up. The right flank guard reached Flathead Left at 8.30 a.m., but immediately encountered severe opposition from Flathead Right. Under close covering fire from this latter position the enemy fiercely attacked and attempted to eject the 2/5th Gurkhas; the latter were outnumbered and only stayed the Mahsud attack after hand-to-hand fighting in which their commanding officer was killed leading a bayonet charge. The 2/76th Punjabis were sent up from the main body as reinforcements, but sustained very severe casualties before they even reached the crest, and were able to afford but little support to the hard-pressed 5th Gurkhas. To meet this situation "B" Company of the Battalion was sent up from Tangi itself at 10 a.m.; this Company reached the crest at 12.15 and found a critical situation. Scattered groups of the 5th Gurkhas and 76th Punjabis were holding the hill, but the enemy was attacking fiercely and ammunition was practically exhausted; it was only a matter of time before the defenders would be overwhelmed and this vital position lost. The arrival of "B" Company saved the situation temporarily and infused a new spirit into the defence. Two platoons advanced to the most forward positions under heavy opposing fire and there assisted in repelling further attacks. The enemy under cover of dead ground in the steep nullah, previously mentioned, worked up to close range, and even rolled stones on to the harassed defenders. The slightest movement drew fire and rendered any attempt at sangaring impossible. Fighting continued throughout the afternoon and a precarious situation was only saved by the arrival of two platoons each from "A" and "C" Companies of the Battalion, now the only available column reserve; these arrived at about 3 p.m. Four further determined attacks,

in which bombs, bayonets, kukris, and pick-helves were freely used, were beaten off, but it was not until after 5 p.m. that the enemy fire allowed work to be started on a sangar. This was commenced by the two platoons of " C " Company at a site about three hundred yards south of Flathead Left, but lack of stones and sandbags and accurate sniping prevented much progress before darkness fell. An hour later fire died down and allowed of the withdrawal of the 5th Gurkhas from the advanced position. " B " Company and the remaining details of the Battalion were left to construct the sangar, and at 7 p.m. that company with one platoon of " A " Company remained to finish the work and find the garrison during the night. Fortunately this passed without hostile action, though the Mahsuds were heard moving about freely, recovering their dead, or plundering our casualties who had been left out. A number of bodies, both British and Gurkha, were brought back by our men ; most of these were found stripped, though not mutilated.

The action of the remainder of the force must now be followed briefly. The advanced guard was held up by a surprise attack near Asa Khan from the direction of a nullah running down from Marble Arch. This attack was repelled, chiefly by the artillery firing over open sights at four hundred yards' range, but the enemy continued to hold Marble Arch and prevented any further advance. By 1.30 p.m. the transport consisting of eight hundred camels and fifteen hundred mules was closed up and clear of the Ahnai Gorge. Time and the situation prohibited a withdrawal to Kotkai, and it was therefore decided to camp at Asa Khan, although a bad and most dangerous site. Security was entirely dependent on the retention of Flathead Left and it was touch and go whether our small numbers could hold on to the hill. The situation was so critical that the most urgent messages were sent both by the Commanding Officer and General Skeen, himself, to the officer-in-command to hold the position regardless of cost. This, " B " Company, under Lieutenant N. Hurst, did with great tenacity, and consolidation and building of the sangar was carried out throughout the night. Attempts to picquet high ground about one mile west of camp failed ; but the enemy was contained at this point and the camp was left undisturbed during the night.

The action, described, was to prove the turning-point in the campaign. The hitherto unknown enemy tactics of attack pressed home under concentrated covering fire, which had proved so successful against our untrained troops in the earlier operations around Palosina, and which were unquestionably due to the presence of militia deserters in their ranks, were now gradually to revert to normal tribal action of sniping picquets and camps, or harassing withdrawals. It was learnt later that the large

Mahsud concentration and bitter opposition to our advance on this day was due to a belief that the column was about to advance into the Shuza valley, and this belief had rallied numerous half-hearted supporters to the enemy ranks. For the first time they were met by troops whose gallantry, initiative, and tenacity were equal to their own. It had been a critical day, and one of great anxiety for the commander and the whole force. The safety of the column, hampered by an unwieldy mass of transport and irrevocably committed after the passage of the Ahnai Tangi, was dependent almost entirely on the retention of Flathead Left, and the loss of this feature must have been followed by disaster. The two Gurkha Battalions were to prove equal to the task, and to them must be given the credit for the success of the operation.

It had been a fortunate debut for the 2nd Battalion ; the routine rôle of picqueting and escort at the beginning of the day had been changed to one on which depended the success, or failure, of the action. But for the timely arrival of " B " Company, and subsequent details of other companies, the hard-pressed 5th Gurkhas must have been overwhelmed and Flathead Left lost. No other reserves remained with the column and even stretcher bearers had to be used to take forward the ammunition. The prompt behaviour and gallant tenacity of our men turned the scale in our favour and the day was won. It is estimated that the Mahsud lashkar numbered about five thousand men and that they suffered about seven hundred casualties, with over three hundred killed, on this day alone. The total losses of the column were fifteen British Officers and four hundred and fifty other ranks. Of this total the Battalion was extremely fortunate in losing only five killed and fifteen wounded, a remarkably small number considering the importance of the task ; the high moral elation at the success achieved, in this its first action, was to be of inestimable advantage in subsequent operations. Finally, mention must be made of the assistance rendered by the Royal Air Force. Throughout the day low-flying aeroplanes materially assisted the hard-pressed troops on Flathead Left, and by the use of bombs and machine-guns did much to break up hostile attacks which had threatened to overwhelm the defenders on several occasions.

#### ADVANCE TO SORAROGHA

No action comparable with that fought at Ahnai Tangi occurred again during the campaign, but subsequent operations in the advance up to Dwa Toi were rendered more arduous for the troops by the steeper nature of the country and by the atrocious weather encountered. The higher slopes of the hills were now covered with scrub which gave good cover to

those confronting us, and made surprise essential to success ; this necessitated much night work.

The force advanced and occupied Sorarogha plateau on January 18th and remained there for ten days while supplies were collected and an aerodrome was built : this greatly facilitated the work of the Royal Air Force, whose nearest landing-grounds hitherto had been at Bannu and Tank, the former over ninety miles away.

On the day of arrival " A " Company, in trying to establish a permanent picquet on the west bank of the Tank Zam, had a sharp brush with the enemy. The advance to the selected position was unopposed, but on reaching the crest, heavy fire was opened from three sides on higher ground overlooking the site. This rendered any attempt at sangaring impossible and a close attack on the left flank was only checked by the use of bombs. Withdrawal was ordered at 5 p.m. and took place in full view of the camp, from which effective artillery fire rendered material assistance. The retirement was skilfully conducted by Lieutenant Fagan, who showed fine leadership and example in extricating his company in face of close enemy pressure and delay caused by casualties. One section commander, Naik Sarabjit Karki, twice returned despite heavy enemy fire and rescued a wounded man and thereafter brought back his rifle ; this gallantry was rewarded by the immediate bestowal of the I.O.M. The picquet was thereafter established by the Company under cover of darkness. Lieutenant H. A. Fagan and Naik Dasrath Bisht received immediate rewards of the D.S.O. and I.O.M., respectively.

#### PASSAGE OF THE BARARI TANGI. THE BLUFF

The remainder of the month was employed in preparations to force the Barari Tangi, a gorge somewhat similar to that at Ahnai, formed by the Tank Zam passing through the Sarkai Ridge. This gorge is commanded by three high tactical features called " The Barrier " and " Barari Centre " on the right bank and " Gibraltar " on the left ; the entrance is commanded by two features Barari Left and The Bluff, and preliminary operations to secure these were undertaken. The Battalion was ordered to occupy and build a permanent picquet on The Bluff, a commanding feature on the right bank of the Tank Zam, on January 23rd. The Battalion left camp at 3 a.m., and after a long and successful advance over very difficult ground, of which only a distant reconnaissance had been possible, reached the picquet position in darkness at 5 a.m. " C " and " D " Companies were detailed as covering troops, while " B " Company, with some sappers and pioneers, constructed the sangar. Daylight disclosed steep ground from which withdrawal would have been nearly impossible if opposed,

and the covering positions were modified accordingly. Good progress in the building of the sangar was achieved and this was wired, rationed and garrisoned by " B " Company at 12.15 p.m. Until 11 a.m. there had been little enemy activity, but thereafter sniping increased and casualties occurred ; these included Lieutenant F. W. W. Birch, attached from the 2nd Gurkhas, who was killed whilst superintending the removal of wounded ; his body was recovered after dark, after three unsuccessful attempts had been made in daylight. The retirement commenced at 2 p.m. and was delayed by very difficult ground and hampered by casualties. Good co-operation by the Royal Air Force and artillery checked the enemy following up, and the covering companies were successfully extricated by 5 p.m. The casualties during the day had been eight killed and eleven wounded.

The features commanding the entrance having been secured, preparations to force the gorge were pushed forward. The 43rd Brigade moved up from Kotkai and was detailed for the advance, while the 67th Brigade was to assist the operations from Sorarogha, to which camp a return was to be made. The Battalion, though part of the 67th Brigade, was made column troops to move with the 43rd Brigade.

#### THE ADVANCE AND ACTION AT BARARI TANGI

The advance commenced on January 28th. As a preliminary to the main operation, the 67th Brigade made a night march and captured Barari Centre. This left the two features The Barrier and Gibraltar to be secured by the column. To capture the former a special detachment consisting of the 4/39th Garhwal Rifles and the Battalion, less two companies, was detailed. This detachment moved behind the advanced guard and achieved the objective with comparative ease. Meanwhile the advanced guard, consisting of two battalions, had moved through the Tangi itself. On reaching Gibraltar they were opposed and held up. An attack by the 57th Rifles secured the lower slopes, but was unable to proceed further and the whole column was brought to a halt. No further movement was possible, nor could camp be established until the hill was captured. " C " and " D " Companies of the Battalion, who composed the column reserve and were marching in rear of the main body, were detailed for the task. The orders conveyed to them were a model of brevity to the effect, " Form up on the flats over there and take the hill." These two weak companies, under command of Major H. Exham, advanced at 11 a.m. and soon reached the position held by the 57th Rifles, where a reconnaissance was carried out. The enemy dispositions were pointed out, and the best line of advance having been decided on the companies advanced at 12 noon, " C " Company leading, with the 57th Rifles and artillery giving covering fire. Heavy



sniping and difficult ground retarded the advance, which had at times to be made on a very narrow frontage and involved much stringing out of the leading company, but steady progress was made. "D" Company halted to give additional covering fire and "C" Company, hardly awaiting the lifting of the artillery fire, closed and rushed the crest. It was now 1 p.m.; portions of "D" Company arrived shortly afterwards, and later more men from the 57th Rifles, with a carrying party of pioneers, brought up S.A.A. The initial attempt to construct a sangar was prevented by close accurate sniping, but after the arrival of these reinforcements with some sappers, work was started in earnest and continued in spite of casualties. The picquet was wired and fit for occupation by 9 p.m., when "D" Company was left as garrison and the remainder of the troops withdrew to camp; this had been established at Ahmedwam as soon as Gibraltar had been captured. The 67th Brigade then returned to Sorarogha with the empty second-line transport.

It had been another fortunate day for the Battalion; as at Ahnai Tangi, the success, or failure, of the day's operations had been dependent on two weak companies of the Battalion brought up from reserve. They had been given a task which the whole advance guard had already failed to accomplish, but by their determination and steady advance had pressed forward and secured the objective. This had then been consolidated notwithstanding enemy pressure and casualties and had enabled the remainder of the force to establish camp in safety. The action formed the subject of a congratulatory telegram to the 2nd Battalion from the G.O.C. Force, and several awards for gallantry were received later.

#### ADVANCE TO PIAZHA RAGHZA

A great increase in the strength of the lashkar opposing our advance was apparent after the forcing of the Barari Tangi. This was due to the arrival of an Afghan commander, named Shah Daula, who had brought a large Wazir lashkar and two six-pounder guns from Wana; he was joined by another Mahsud lashkar of Shabi Khel and Abdullai tribes, and extravagant promises, based on the alleged marvellous powers of the guns, were circulated.

These promises were badly exploded when the force advanced and occupied Aka Khel camp on February 1st. The Battalion was detailed to establish a permanent picquet on a steep precipitous feature named "Plume Hill"; as severe opposition was expected, surprise was essential and very careful reconnaissance had been carried out. The Battalion marched at 3.15 a.m., and achieving complete surprise occupied the hill by 5.30 and commenced work on a sangar. The enemy recovered them-

selves by 7 a.m. and opened fire with the two guns at about fifteen hundred yards' range ; these were easily spotted by the large clouds of smoke from the black powder discharge, and a few rounds by our artillery sufficed to silence them and to drive the two pieces and a large crowd of assembled tribal leaders into a cave. The enemy lashkar which had been optimistically awaiting the successful issue of the artillery duel was thereafter dispersed by air bombing. Another column on the far bank of the nullah had achieved an equally successful advance, and the force occupied camp at Aka Khel according to programme. Two miles of very difficult country, strongly held by a large lashkar, had been secured and the disheartened tribesmen thereafter dispersed, sadly disillusioned. The success of the day's operations had been unquestionably due to the large degree of surprise obtained, and to the comparative inaction of the enemy owing to the expected results from the Afghan guns. Opposition to our further advance was thereafter purely defensive.

#### OCCUPATION OF PIAZHA RAGHZA

The force advanced and occupied Piazha camp, close to Dwa Toi, on February 8th, having experienced exceptionally severe weather during the last few days of the advance.

The final stage, as originally planned, had now been reached. It was hoped that our successful advance, in spite of the severe opposition encountered, would induce the Mahsuds to accept our terms in full and render unnecessary further punitive operations into the Makin and Kani-guram areas. These hopes proved abortive, for though the headmen tendered their submission and sued for peace, they were unable to produce the necessary quota of rifles as a guarantee of good faith, although some were brought in. They were given a specified date up to which they could renew their efforts, but as these were unsuccessful further operations of a punitive nature were launched according to plan.

Piazha camp was occupied from the 6th to 14th February, when the 67th Brigade from Sorarogha joined the advanced column. The 2nd Battalion re-joined this, its own brigade, which also received a welcome reinforcement in the arrival of the 4/3rd and 3/11th Gurkhas. Half the latter battalion had been raised by drafts from both Battalions of the Regiment in 1918. The 67th Brigade was now composed of four Gurkha Battalions and 55th Coke's Rifles, and was detailed for the punitive operations in the Makin area, while the 43rd Brigade remained at Piazha on line-of-communication duties.

## THE OPERATIONS IN THE MAKIN AND KANIGURAM AREAS.

Makin is the name given to a group of villages lying on both sides of the Dara Toi and occupied by the Umar Khel section of the Mahsuds ; this section includes the warlike Abdullai tribe. The villages are adjoined by terraced fields (*kach*) and the valley is surrounded by hills covered with thick scrub. The latter rendered surprise almost vital to the success of operations which, being of a punitive and destructive nature, were bitterly opposed on all occasions.

The first stage of the advance was to Marobi. Being the residence of one of the leading Mahsud headmen, Fazl Din, and also the location of the tomb of his celebrated father the Mullah Powindah, severe opposition was expected, but the advance succeeded at the cost of light casualties ; these included Lieutenant Noel, attached to the 2nd Battalion from the 1st Gurkhas, who was dangerously wounded early in the day. The <sup>1</sup>Brigade then pushed on and formed camp at Tauda China, from which site the punitive operations against the villages were to be conducted. On the day after arrival a camp picquet, found by the Battalion, was involved in a sharp brush with the enemy in which the 4/3rd Gurkhas were concerned. The picquet garrison was found mainly from armourers and bootmakers commanded by the Bugle-Major, and had joined the 4/3rd in rounding up some enemy who had attacked a wood-cutting fatigue. The incident is mentioned only because an assistant-armourer, Rfn. Anwar Kami, subsequently received the I.D.S.M. for gallantry, on the recommendation and at the request of the 4/3rd ; one bootmaker was also wounded.

Destructive operations against the villages on the left bank of the Dara Toi commenced on February 19th ; these were to include Makin itself, a large village, or small township, at the mouth of Mandesh gorge ; Manzakai, the village of one of the leading Maliks, Musa Khan, was also to be dealt with. Severe opposition was anticipated and to achieve success surprise was once again essential. (See Map, page 219.)

To obtain this the 4/3rd Gurkhas moved at 2 a.m. to establish a permanent picquet on a dominating feature called " Tree Hill " which commanded the right flank. The 2nd Battalion and 3/11th Gurkhas were to reach Makin at daybreak, and on passing through were to cover destructive work in the villages from a ridge which commanded the valley from the further side. The Battalion, moving at the head of the main column, reached the foot of Tree Hill in darkness. At this point fire was opened on it from this and surrounding features, which caused surprise as it was thought to have been picqueted ; this fire caused three casualties. The hill was at once attacked and captured with little difficulty ; it was then

found that the 4/3rd had lost their way in the dark and had picqueted another feature some distance away. A long delay was incurred in adjusting the situation and so all chance of surprise vanished. When it did move the Battalion could not follow the original direction ordered and had to push forward from Tree Hill in the face of severe opposition and all four companies were engaged long before the objective was reached. Further delay occurred before a co-ordinated attack with the 3/11th Gurkhas could be launched and severe casualties were suffered by both battalions. Success could now only be obtained at the expense of heavy loss and it was decided to cancel the rest of the day's operations. An unco-ordinated retirement was then carried out with great difficulty and closely pressed by the enemy. The day's operations had miscarried from the start and had involved over one hundred casualties, of which the Battalion suffered thirty. In spite of failure to achieve the main object a valuable reconnaissance had been effected and Musa Khan's village had been completely razed.

Successful operations on the other bank of the Dara Toi were carried out two days later, in which two villages, including seventeen towers and one hundred and sixty houses, were completely destroyed. On this day the Battalion was in reserve to the 2/5th Gurkhas, who covered the operation. On the 23rd the operations against Makin, which had miscarried on the 19th, were repeated. The plan and the troops participating were practically identical with those of the former occasion, but Tree Hill now had a strong permanent picquet established on it, and the troops were familiar with the ground. Benefiting by their previous experience, units' actions were well co-ordinated and a rapid advance and surprise were achieved. The withdrawal was ordered at 10 a.m., and a most successful operation was concluded at a cost of fourteen casualties to the whole column as against one hundred and sixteen on the former occasion.

Further destructive operations on the right bank of the Dara Toi on the 24th and 25th were too much for the tribesmen, who tendered their submission on the latter date. In the hopes of staying an advance on their capital the Kaniguram Maliks brought in a portion of the number of rifles demanded as security on February 27th. They were informed that only surrender of the full quota would be accepted, and a further specified date by which this could be effected was announced.

#### WITHDRAWAL FROM MAKIN

In spite of the submission of the Umar Khel section numerous hostiles were still present, and it was anticipated that the withdrawal from Makin would involve heavy fighting and be closely followed up. Surprise only

would enable the column to withdraw without serious interference, and it was planned to evacuate the camp site and all baggage before daylight, March 1st. The 2nd Battalion was detailed to act as rear-guard to the force, an onerous and exacting rôle on which was to be dependent the safety of the column and the success, or otherwise, of the operation.

The detailed preparations to achieve surprise were successful, and the main column, complete with loaded transport, was clear of the plateau and marching for Dwa Toi by 8.30 a.m. The Battalion, as rear-guard, was in position by 5 a.m. and companies were allotted successive positions to effect a rapid retirement. The two permanent picquets on Tree Hill and Split Hill had been ordered to withdraw during the night and arrived in camp by 6 a.m., having had to take a circuitous route to avoid prowling Mahsuds.

As soon as the main body was clear of the plateau the retirement of the Battalion commenced, being immediately fired on heavily from all directions, thus making the withdrawal of the camp picquets peculiarly difficult ; but this movement was achieved without loss. Thereafter companies retired through each other, closely pressed by the enemy, but by speed and good co-ordination the withdrawal was maintained without delay, although the enemy followed up as far as Marobi. Dwa Toi was reached at 1.30 p.m.

The Battalion had accomplished successfully the difficult and responsible task for which it had been specially selected. During the retirement it had been materially assisted by gun fire and by low-flying aircraft, but in the main had to rely almost entirely on its own rifle and light automatic fire. It will be recalled that no machine-guns, a weapon invaluable in rear-guard work, especially on the North-West Frontier, were with the force. Speed, with good understanding and co-operation between sub-units, were the predominating considerations during the day, and it was by their successful employment that the important rôle allotted to the Battalion was carried through without it becoming seriously involved. Remarkable to relate, the 2nd Battalion sustained only one casualty throughout the operation ; to the intense regret of every member of the Regiment this was the Adjutant, Captain R. H. B. Wilson, who was killed close to Makin camp. Much of the success achieved by the 2nd Battalion in this arduous campaign was due to this officer's keenness, personality, and efficiency, and it was deeply deplored that he should have been the only casualty in this, perhaps the most successful, exploit during the time in Waziristan.

## ADVANCE TO KANIGURAM

The advance of the Derajat column to Kaniguram in March 1920 brought the 1919-1920 operations in Waziristan to a rather unconvincing conclusion.

The column left Dwa Toi on March 3rd and, after some opposition, reached Ladha, where camp was formed. Two days were spent in constructing a strong point at that place and a battalion remained there as garrison. The remainder of the column marched to Kaniguram on the 6th and established camp eight hundred yards west of the town. Some sniping only was experienced during this march in which the 2nd Battalion acted as advanced guard. For the next month the force remained in camp, occupied in training and routine duties only, while the political authorities made efforts to secure a settlement with the Mahsud leaders. These pleaded their complete inability to collect the necessary quota of rifles to save the capital from destruction, while the political and military authorities realized that to destroy it would leave nothing with which to barter for submission; a state of stalemate thus arose. A further period was therefore granted to the Malikis to renew their efforts, during which a sort of armistice was observed. This was distinguished for the troops mainly by bad weather with heavy snowfalls, and by fatigue work on a sixteen-foot graded motor road which was commenced between Kaniguram and Ladha. Occasional sniping was experienced during convoy protective duties.

Between the 6th and 8th April a column consisting of the four Gurkha Battalions and 55th Rifles carried out punitive operations against a recalcitrant section of the Abdur Rahman Khel Mahsuds in the upper reaches of the Baddar Toi, beyond Kaniguram. The Battalion with two companies 55th Rifles formed the advanced guard and left camp at 5 a.m. Little opposition was encountered and the column formed camp near Sine Tizha, a hostile Abdur Rahman Khel village. Punitive operations against some Giga Khel villages two miles distant were conducted on the following day, but opposition and casualties rendered these only partially successful and the withdrawal to camp was harassed. The withdrawal to Kaniguram on April 8th was followed up and was only effected after close fighting, in which all four Gurkha Battalions were involved. During this fighting Lieutenant Harrison, attached, was severely wounded at short range. A counter-attack by the 3/11th Gurkhas, under Captain Bald, was made to recover the wounded and this officer, himself, gallantly rescued Lieutenant Harrison. Both Captain Bald and Havildar Kubir Sing Thapa, of the Battalion, received decorations for their marked bravery on this occasion.

This operation was the last serious action fought by the Derajat column.

Except for the fact that a column of troops had penetrated difficult country, hitherto considered by the tribesmen as immune from punitive action, little material result was achieved.

#### PERMANENT OCCUPATION OF WAZIRISTAN DECIDED ON

Political negotiations failed entirely to secure the complete subjugation of the Mahsuds, and it was decided, reluctantly, that the permanent occupation of Waziristan by troops must be effected, if any lasting peace were to be secured. This decision was inevitable when events described in the campaign are dispassionately reviewed. In face of severe opposition, and after unprecedented casualties on both sides, the Derajat column had penetrated into the very heart of the Mahsud country. Arrived there, extensive punitive operations had failed to secure the unqualified submission of the tribes, and a withdrawal then would only have necessitated further extensive operations of a similar nature at some future date. The Government of India decided therefore to establish a fortified camp at Ladha, from which both the Makin and Kaniguram areas could be dominated, and to build a motor road up the Tank Zam from Jandola. This was the prelude to a further extensive programme of road-making and a new policy for the domination of the tribes which is described later.

The Derajat column started moving back to Ladha on April 16th and the 2nd Battalion moved on April 18th. The withdrawal was unmolested.

#### RETURN OF THE 2ND BATTALION TO DEHRA DUN

On April 30th the Battalion was told that it would be withdrawn from the force and would return to Dehra Dun at an early date; the very next day orders were received to move by double marches to Manzai, and Ladha was left for this destination on May 2nd. Arrived at Kotkai, orders were issued to proceed by route march to Dardoni, thirty-five miles up the Tochi valley from Bannu. This march was carried out under conditions of extreme discomfort, the heat on one day being recorded as 125 degrees in the shade, and was in great contrast to the bitter cold experienced in January and February, when 25 degrees of frost had been registered. The reason for the Battalion's hurried move was a renewed scare of war with Afghanistan. Had this materialized, which fortunately was not the case, the 2nd Battalion was one of the units selected to undertake the re-occupation of Spinwam; this was the militia post evacuated in May 1919 and seized by General Nadir Khan during his advance on to Thal in the Kurram, which has been described in the last Chapter. The Battalion remained under canvas at Dardoni until July, a period of dull monotony and discomfort, which indeed was a poor reward for the con-

spicuous part played in the recent operations. Orders were received to return to Dehra Dun on July 7th. The 2nd Battalion reached its home station on July 16th, 1920, after an absence of seven months. Including Mesopotamia and the Third Afghan War it had been almost continuously on active service for three and a half out of the four years since the departure for Basra in September 1916.

Numerous awards for gallantry in action, of which many were received as immediate rewards, were bestowed on the Battalion and are recorded in Appendix IV.

On departure from Waziristan the 2nd Battalion received the most complimentary congratulations from General Skeen on its behaviour throughout these difficult operations, and in the course of a farewell address the following remarks were included :

“ You may have noticed that whenever there was a difficult situation or a nasty job to be done, you were always detailed for it. The reason was, I always chose your Battalion as I knew I could rely on it to carry it out and do it well.”

#### RE-ORGANIZATION OF N.W.F. DEFENCE AND DECISION TO OCCUPY RAZMAK AS A PERMANENT POST IN WAZIRISTAN—MOVE OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO THE TOCHI AND OPERATIONS TO OCCUPY AND CONSOLIDATE THE NEW POST. RETURN TO DEHRA DUN

The decision by Government permanently to occupy Waziristan and to dominate the Mahsud country by a strong post at Ladha, synchronized with a large scheme of re-organization of the Army in India, generally. The experiences of the Third Afghan War, and the defection of many of the militias, obviously dictated a more secure policy than had prevailed hitherto, and the whole scheme of North-West Frontier protection and defence was overhauled and re-organized.

The policy adopted was the re-organization of the militias on a non-local recruitment basis, and the holding by them of certain advanced posts in trans-border territory closely supported by regular troops. The Khyber Pass was to be garrisoned permanently by troops, and it was decided to dominate Waziristan by the establishment of a permanent brigade post at Razmak. Re-organized militias in the Tochi and South Waziristan, closely supported by regulars from Bannu and Manzai, were to hold advanced posts in the Tochi and Gumal valleys. Concurrent with this new scheme of garrisoning Waziristan was another of extensive road construction, firstly to link up the Tochi and Tank Zam by a circular road via Razmak, and later to extend this to link up the Tochi and Kurram valleys via Spinwam, and South Waziristan and the Zhob via Wana and the Gumal. To fulfil



this policy Wana was re-occupied by regular troops in December 1920 and the S.W. Militia re-organized on a non-local class basis with a view to assuming responsibility for defence in the Sarwekai-Wana-Gumal area. This was effected by the end of 1921 and the troops were withdrawn to Manzai. The next step was the Tochi, and in November 1921 the 7th Infantry Brigade stationed at Dardoni moved to Datta Khel in the Upper Tochi to cover the rebuilding of the burnt-out militia post which had been evacuated in May 1919. The re-organization of the Tochi Militia was undertaken simultaneously.

#### MOVE OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO THE TOCHI

The 1st Battalion, which had returned from Peshawar to Dehra Dun in June 1920, was ordered to proceed to the Tochi to join the 7th Brigade in November 1921, and was mobilized and left the home station on November 29th. The Battalion arrived at Bannu by train on December 3rd and marched thence, arriving at Datta Khel on December 10th. Large bands of hostile tribesmen were reported to be out in the District, led by an ex-militia Indian Officer, but the Battalion's march to Datta Khel was without incident. The day following arrival, however, when the battalion it had relieved was marching to Mahomed Khel via the Spinchilla Pass, the rear-guard was attacked and only succeeded in reaching camp after severe fighting in which the 2/3rd Gurkhas suffered approximately one hundred casualties.

The 1st Battalion with the 7th Brigade remained at Datta Khel until March 1st, 1922, and was employed in fatigue work rebuilding the militia post, and also in convoy and picqueting work on the Spinchilla Pass between Datta Khel and Mahomed Khel. Very bad weather, particularly on the Pass on which a company was located in permanent picquets, and occasional sniping were experienced, but no incidents of a serious nature occurred. The post was rebuilt and garrisoned by two hundred and fifty men of the re-organized Tochi Militia and the Brigade withdrew to Dardoni, alongside Miramshah post, on March 1st. The withdrawal to this place was somewhat delayed by the river being in spate at Boya, twelve miles from Miramshah, but was effected without any interference.

The move to the Tochi inaugurated for the 1st Battalion the new scheme of post-war N.W.F. defence, under which all Gurkha Battalions were to be called on to serve for two years in a trans-border N.W.F. station, and then return to their normal peace stations for a period of four or five years.

#### THE ROAD TO RAZMAK

The 1st Battalion remained at Dardoni from March to December, during which time normal routine training was carried out, combined with convoy

and picquet duty. During this period the scheme to extend the existing motor road in the Tochi valley so as to link up with that being made up the Tank Zam, via Razmak, was formulated and work was started in June. As the first stages of the road ran through friendly Wazir territory, construction to start with was protected by tribal levies and no troops were employed. This established a new precedent in N.W.F. development, as hitherto any encroachment into trans-border territory had only been effected as a result of fighting by a column of troops of all arms.

In August the Battalion re-established Tal-in-the-Tochi post, a small militia fort on the bank of the river which overlooked the place at which the new road was to cross. " B " Company of the Battalion, with a section Sappers and Miners, remained there in camp, and the company provided picquets for the sappers while they made a causeway over the river ; " B " Company was relieved by " A " Company in September. During the succeeding months several Sapper and Pioneer detachments were brought up for work on the road, and the Razmak field force was gradually concentrated at Idak. It was intended to push forward and occupy the Razmak plateau as soon as the road reached the Khaisora valley, as some opposition to the construction was expected from the Mahsuds after it had reached that area. The force consisted of the 5th and 7th Infantry Brigades with ancillary units, and the plan was to establish the 5th Brigade in the Khaisora to protect the communications, while the 7th Brigade pushed forward and occupied Razmak. The advance was to be deliberate with permanent picquets established and the lines-of-communication made secure, prior to the Brigade pushing on to its objective.

The 5th Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Coningham, late of the Regiment, moved on December 16th and camped at Asad Khel in the Khaisora. No opposition was encountered. The 7th Brigade was composed of the 1st Bn. Border Regiment, the 1st Battalion, the 2/3rd Gurkhas, and a battalion formed from the Tochi Militia, with No. 11 British Light Battery, No. 102 Indian Mountain Battery and No. 13 Company Madras Sappers and Miners ; the Brigade was commanded by Brigadier Herdon. The advance as far as Razani at the foot of the Razmak Narai was unopposed, though some sniping was experienced while forming camp at Tamare Oba. The Brigade remained at Razani from January 4th to 22nd, 1923 ; all battalions being daily employed in the construction of permanent picquets, which work involved heavy labour, as all the picquet sites, particularly those approaching the Narai, were covered with thick ilex jungle ; Gurkha kukris were found peculiarly useful for clearing this jungle and the 1st Battalion and 2/3rd Gurkhas were constantly detailed for the task for this reason. " B " Company formed the garrison of five picquets in the Tamare Oba

area for ten days at the beginning of the month, and the Battalion was employed daily, from dawn to dusk, constructing permanent picquets between Razani and the Narai. Two reconnaissances on to the Razmak plateau were made during the time spent in Razani camp, and a large permanent picquet was built by the Battalion and garrisoned by "C" Company and one section machine-guns on the Narai itself. This was named "Duncan's" picquet after Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Duncan, who was at the time commanding the 1st Battalion. The advance to, and occupation of, the plateau was made on January 23rd in atrocious weather. All through the preceding night, and throughout the day itself, a raging blizzard was experienced which rendered the rough track up the Narai almost impassable both to troops and transport. The Battalion acted as right flank guard during the advance and the officers and men frequently sank more than waist-deep in snow drifts. The camp site selected was approximately a mile from the Narai, and the greatest difficulty and hardship were experienced in erecting the perimeter wall and camp picquets. The Battalion's transport did not arrive in camp until 8.45 p.m. that night, the whole transport column having been delayed by numerous animals falling down the hill-side. Fortunately the abominable weather conditions obviated any enemy opposition.

The first objective had now been secured with ease and a brigade of regular troops had been established in camp on the Razmak plateau over seven thousand feet above sea-level in mid-winter. The Umar Khel section of the Mahsuds were, however, bitterly opposed to the new policy, and declared their intention of opposing any road construction in their area, near Makin; they also refused to comply with Government's terms demanded in retaliation for the murder of a Sapper officer employed on the road construction, near Razani. Political action having failed, intensive air bombing of the Makin area had been undertaken since the middle of December, but this not sufficing to bring the tribesmen to terms, it was decided to move troops to Tauda China camp, where the Derajat column had been in 1920, to conduct punitive operations in that area.

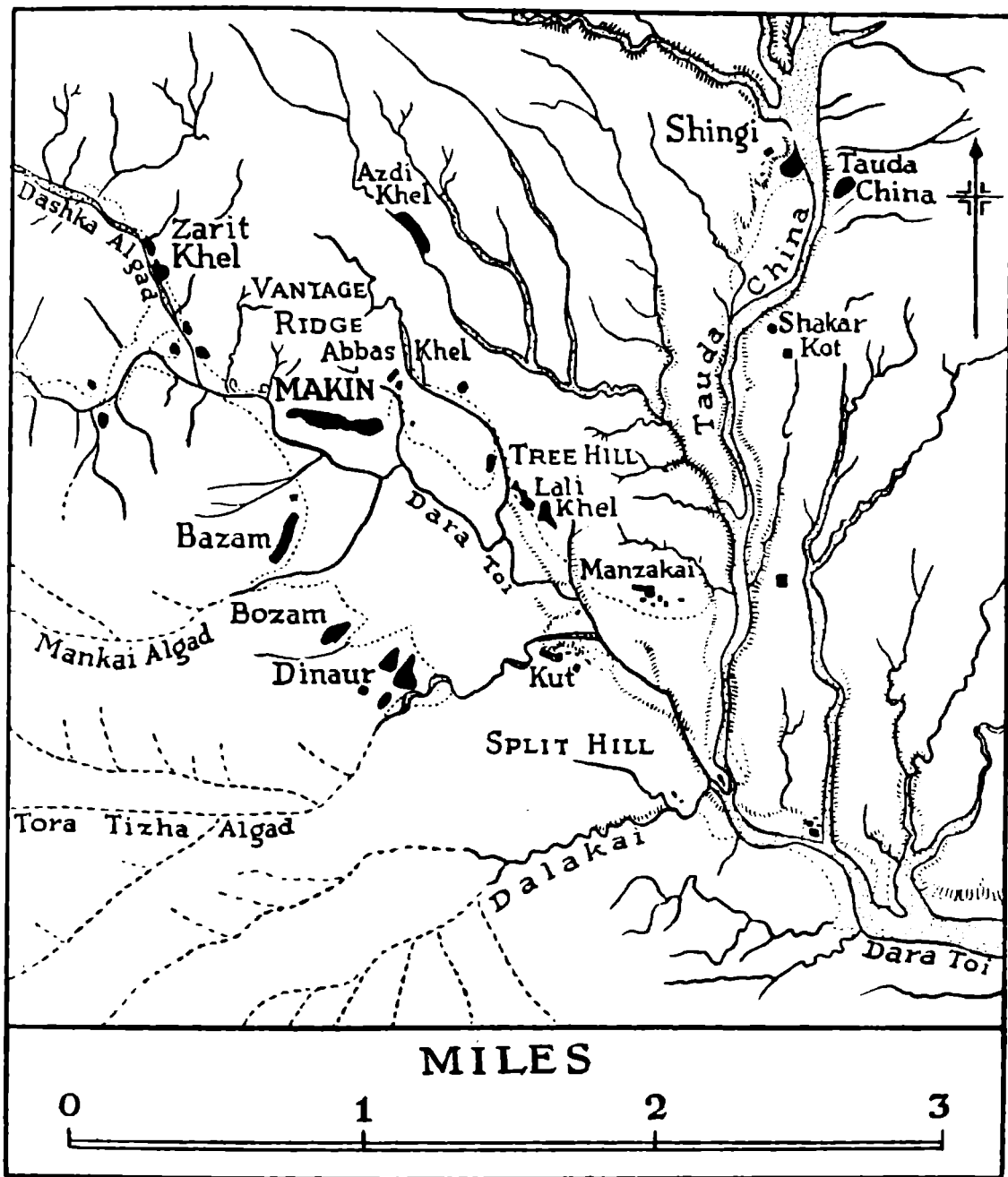
#### ADVANCE TO TAUDA CHINA

The Battalion was employed with the remainder of the 7th Brigade in constructing permanent picquets between Razmak Narai and Tauda China from January 24th-February 3rd. The 9th Infantry Brigade holding Ladha, which had been occupied since the conclusion of operations in 1920, also prepared to advance to join the 7th Brigade at Tauda China, and moved down to Piazhā to advance from that direction via Marobi. On February 4th the two brigades advanced simultaneously and occupied Tauda China.

The advance from both directions was opposed by scattered bands of Mahsuds, but few casualties were incurred. The 1st Battalion, less two companies, formed the rear-guard to the 7th Brigade, with "A" and "B" Companies marching at the head of the main body. On arrival in camp "B" Company was detailed to construct a camp picquet at Manzakai, some twelve hundred yards towards Makin on the left bank of the Dara Toi, and the site of Musa Khan's village which had been destroyed in 1920. It was at this point that the 2nd Battalion had been opposed in the original advance into the Makin area when operations had miscarried. The two platoons covering construction of the picquet encountered some sniping by Mahsuds hidden in thick scrub and terraced fields in the Dara Toi, but the making of the sangar was continued in spite of casualties. An attempt to bring in a severely wounded man from one of the covering platoons involved no less than five further casualties, which were added to by our own artillery unwittingly firing shrapnel into them. Lieutenant F. McCallum and Rfn. Prembahadur were most conspicuous in gallant attempts to bring back these casualties and to save their rifles, and both later received immediate awards for gallantry. Insistent orders to withdraw to camp could now no longer be disregarded in spite of the casualties, and arrangements were therefore made to bring these in after dark; the covering platoons then withdrew. Three wounded men managed to reach the picquet after dark, but prowling Mahsuds prevented access to the men's bodies who had been killed, and these were recovered later, stripped but not mutilated. Many young soldiers had been conspicuous in this their first baptism of fire in which the company suffered four killed, including the company havildar major, and six wounded.

A similar operation to establish a permanent picquet on Split Hill across the Dara Toi was carried out by the 1st Bn. Royal Welch Fusiliers the next day, and was effected at a cost of fourteen casualties.

On the 6th February both brigades were employed in punitive operations against the villages, the 7th Brigade being on the left bank. The 1st Battalion covered the destruction from Vantage Ridge, the identical feature from which the 2nd Battalion had performed a similar duty in February 1920. The advance to this point was unopposed, but thereafter "C" and "D" Companies who were in position thereon encountered continuous, intermittent sniping throughout the day from which casualties were incurred: these included Subedar Dalbahadur Bhandari, who died of wounds that night. The villages were, however, prepared for destruction and successfully demolished, and the withdrawal was ordered at 2 p.m. The retirement of the leading companies was closely followed up and arrangements for covering fire were much interfered with by smoke from burning houses.



THE MAKIN AREA

1923.

Although there was some delay in removing the casualties the withdrawal was successfully carried out and the Battalion arrived back in camp at 4.30 p.m. Both Lieutenant I. A. Roche and Subedar Jitbahadur Khattri were most prominent and conspicuous in organizing and covering the evacuation of the wounded during the course of the retirement. The Battalion was visited in camp that evening by the Force Commander, Major-General T. G. Matheson, who personally congratulated the Commanding Officer on the good work done. Notwithstanding its rôle in the most advanced position, the Battalion was fortunate in having suffered only eighteen casualties.

The 9th Brigade also undertook successful destructive operations of a similar nature on the right bank of the Dara Toi beyond Split Hill during the day. Heavy rain and snow precluded further operations for two days, all ranks being concerned in attempting to drain the camp site which was completely covered by three feet of snow.

On the 9th and 10th further successful destructive operations were conducted, and the Battalion on both occasions assisted in the actual work of demolition and foraging ; on February 13th it covered a reconnaissance by the Force Commander to select a site for the permanent brigade post which was to be established. That chosen is the location of the present camp and is situated in a position from which the Makin area can be easily dominated, and from which mobile columns can visit the neighbouring valleys in which are domiciled the Mahsud sections, who had proved the most hostile and recalcitrant in the past.

For the remainder of the month no further active operations were conducted, as the Mahsuds preferred peace offers. These were negotiated with success and the Battalion, with the 7th Brigade, evacuated Tauda China and occupied the new camp site during March.

The rest of the year was spent mainly in fatigues and working parties on the construction of a pipe line to the new camp site and in routine convoy escort and picquet duties.

In September, two Lewis gun sections of " D " Company were concerned in a brilliant little episode when ambushed by superior numbers of Mahsuds near the original Narai camp site. They were proceeding in two Ford vans as escort to a post lorry, when a heavy fire was suddenly opened on them by tribesmen, hidden in scrub to one flank of the road, across the Razmak plateau. The driver of one van was killed instantly, but undeterred the two section commanders, L/Nks Gajbahadur and Saktiperchand, brought their guns into action and engaged the enemy. A signaller who was sent to try and get in touch with camp was killed. The enemy were, however, held off, and even started to retire, and the two sections were eventually

able to withdraw to camp, from which a covering party had been sent out. For this exploit the two section commanders received the I.D.S.M.

#### RETURN OF THE 1ST BATTALION TO DEHRA DUN

The 1st Battalion remained in new Razmak Camp until January 1924, when on being relieved it returned to Dehra Dun.

In bidding farewell the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Borrett, wrote :

“ The conduct of all ranks in the field and in camp has been exemplary, and the 1st Battalion, 9th Gurkha Rifles, may consider itself second to none.”

#### RETROSPECT

The occupation and building of Razmak Camp formed the close of the active operations started in December 1919 and inaugurated the new policy of peaceful penetration into trans-border territory with the civilizing influence of roads constructed right through the country. In the decade which followed the operations here recorded, the policy has received full justification and has possibly given birth to a new conception of North-West Frontier protection and defence.

Both Battalions of the Regiment played a prominent part in the operations, particularly the 2nd Battalion in the very heavy fighting from the date of arrival until the occupation of Kaniguram. Both established a name and reputation for the Regiment worthy of that previously earned during the Great War.

The Indian General Service Medal with three clasps, “Mahsud,” “Waziristan 1919-21” and “Waziristan 1921-24,” were subsequently awarded, and the majority of the officers and men, of both Battalions, qualified for this distinction.

## CHAPTER XVIII

1919-1935

### THE POST-WAR PERIOD

**Declaration of Peace. Re-organization of the Indian Army. Return of all Three Battalions to Dehra. Royal Visits to India 1921-1922. Viceroy's Guard, Simla, 1921. Moves of 1st Battalion to Waziristan and 2nd Battalion to Malabar. The Moplah Rebellion. Move of 2nd Battalion to The Khyber. Successes in Football and Rifle Shooting. Reconstruction of Barracks in Birpur. Move of 1st Battalion to the Khyber. Move of 2nd Battalion to Malakand. Tribal Disturbances and the Chitral Reliefs. Move to Bengal. Return to Dehra Dun. Visit of H.H. the Maharajah of Nepal to Delhi, 1935.**

**A**S has been mentioned in a previous Chapter, the 1st Battalion returned to its old lines in Peshawar in September 1919 on the conclusion of peace with Afghanistan. Here it remained until the following June, when a return was made to Dehra Dun. The period was marked by continual trouble with the Afridis, particularly the Zakka Khel section, who made constant raids either into the city or cantonment throughout the winter. As there was then no wire around the cantonment the troops were called upon to find very heavy protective duties, and brushes with raiding gangs were frequent. The Battalion took its full share in these, a fact which much interfered with training.

#### DECLARATION OF PEACE

Peace with Germany was officially declared on June 28th, 1919, and was suitably celebrated in London by the concentration of large Imperial contingents representative of all countries in the British Empire who had taken part in the War. In the contingent organized from India the Regiment was represented by one Gurkha officer and one non-commissioned officer from each Battalion.

The representatives of the Regiment were :

1st Battalion.      Subedar Damarbahadur Sen.  
                            Naik Top Bahadur Basnet.



- 2nd Battalion. Subedar Himbahadur Sahi, I.O.M.  
Havildar Kishanbahadur Pande.
- 3rd Battalion. Subedar Shibprashad Thapa.  
Havildar Surajbhan Mahat.

#### RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE INDIAN ARMY

This conclusion of peace in Europe and the successful termination of recent hostilities on the North-West Frontier afforded opportunity to the Government of India to undertake a very necessary re-organization of the Army in India generally, and particularly of the Indian Army. The vast expansion accomplished, and the employment of Indian contingents in seven different theatres of war all over the world, had disclosed grave defects in command, organization, administration, and equipment of the Army, and it was to rectify these that a Committee under Lord Rawlinson, then Commander-in-Chief in India, introduced sweeping changes. The most important of these, as far as the Indian Army was concerned, was the abolition of the existing system of linked battalions, under which each separate battalion formed its own depot on mobilization, and the amalgamation into Regimental Groups of three to six Infantry Battalions with a single denomination. Each group was organized on a common internal class basis, and formed a number of active units for general service anywhere, with a Training Battalion at the Regimental Centre to enlist and train recruits and form the Record Office for the Group. At the same time drastic reduction of the Indian Cavalry was accomplished and Regimental Groups were formed, though no Training Regiments were organized. The accepted policy of limited Indianization of certain formations was also inaugurated, by which eight units (two Cavalry, one Pioneer and five Infantry) were organized within certain groups to absorb all Indian King's Commissioned Officers posted to the Indian Army. The Group system was originally made applicable to Gurkha Regiments, but this was cancelled after consideration of the peculiar conditions under which the men are enlisted and serve in India. In its place Gurkha Regiments with common permanent stations, such as ourselves and the 2nd Gurkhas at Dehra Dun, are nominally grouped for general mobilization purposes. Each Regiment and Battalion retained its previous number and identity, and was later ordered to form an extra company, known as the Training Company, in which all recruits are concentrated and which remains at the Regimental Centre during the absence of its Battalion for any purpose elsewhere. In the event of general mobilization, and all four Battalions of the Group being absent, the Training

Companies are to be concentrated under a single command at the Regimental Centre.

This re-organization included many far-reaching changes in administration and equipment to eradicate defects which the War had disclosed. The most important were the introduction of station hospitals for Indian troops, a very necessary re-organization of the Pay, Supply and Ordnance Services, and the issue to Indian corps of web equipment and extra Lewis guns similar to those of the British, serving in India. Another innovation was the introduction of honorary King's commissioned rank of captain and lieutenant, with distinctive dress, to selected Indian Officers. In the Regiment, Subedar-Major Mehar Sing Khattri and Subedar Sher Sing Adhikari of the 1st Battalion, Subedar-Major Prem Sing Bisht and Subedar Jogi Chand of the 2nd Battalion, and Subedar-Major Jagarnand of the 3rd Battalion were promoted to honorary lieutenant in the inaugural *Gazette* under this scheme. Concurrently with the re-organization, sanction was accorded to the issue of medals for the Great War, for which a large proportion of the officers and men of the Regiment were qualified.

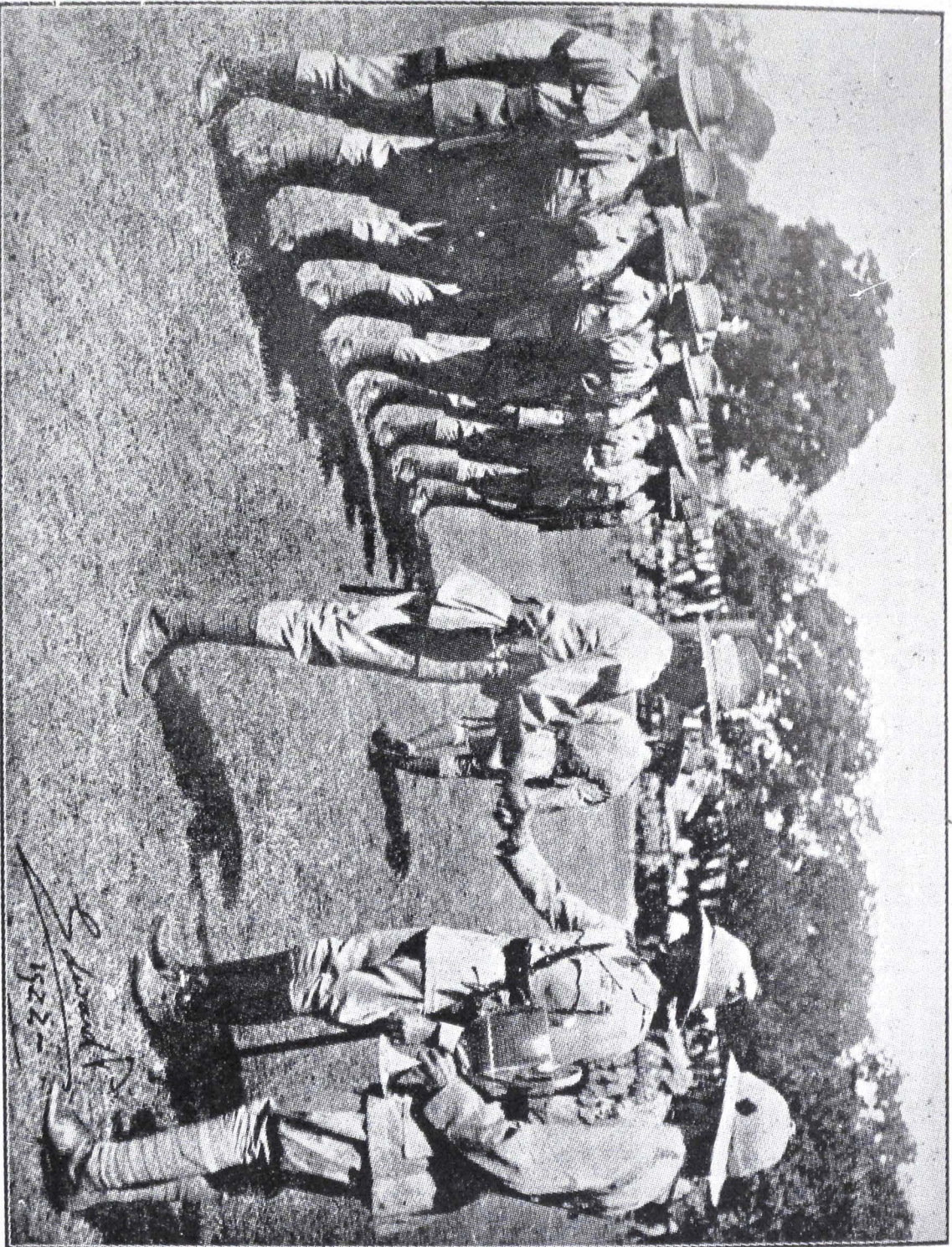
#### RETURN TO DEHRA DUN OF ALL THREE BATTALIONS

The 1st Battalion returned to Birpur from Peshawar early in June 1920 and the 2nd Battalion, from active service in Waziristan, in July. The two Battalions were thus together in their home station again for the first time for six years. This re-union was not only a source of great gratification to all ranks but was most important. Many regimental institutions such as the Officers' Mess, the Gurkha Officers' Club, and the Band and polo club had suffered severely by the long absence from Dehra of one or other, or both, of the two Battalions, and by the disorganization and many changes which had occurred during the War; their re-organization and re-fitment were at once taken in hand and entailed a heavy monetary outlay. The Officers' Mess and bungalows had been fitted with electric light in 1917 and 1921 at regimental expense, and a nine-hole golf course was started in the valley below the Mess plateau in 1920; unfortunately the latter was not found feasible, financially, and had to be discontinued in 1923.

The 3rd Battalion, which had been raised from a nucleus from the 1st and 2nd Battalions in 1917, returned to Dehra from the North-West Frontier in November of this year, and was accommodated in the lines of the old Convalescent Camp across the Tons Nullah. This was the first occasion on which either of its sister Battalions had been met and it was sad to think that it had only done so to be disbanded. This disbandment was part of the re-organization scheme mentioned, and is dealt with in more detail in the Chapter devoted to the 3rd Battalion.







*S. Leonard*  
1922

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES AND THE 2nd BATTALION FOOTBALL TEAM,  
Dehra Dun, 13th March, 1922.



### ROYAL VISITS TO INDIA, 1921 AND 1922

1921 was marked by the introduction of the Reforms in the Government of India and was the occasion of two Royal visits to India by T.R.H. The Duke of Connaught and The Prince of Wales. Both visits included numerous inspections and reviews of portions of the Indian Army and of pensioners. During that of H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught the Regiment was represented by detachments from each Battalion at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the All India War Memorial Arch in New Delhi, and also by several serving and pensioned Gurkha Officers at a garden party given by Indian Officers to His Royal Highness in Delhi Fort. The 1st Battalion was absent in Waziristan when H.R.H. The Prince of Wales came to India, but he paid a three-hours' visit to Dehra Dun on March 13th, 1922, and inspected the Dehra Dun Brigade, including the 2nd Battalion, on the occasion of the opening of the Royal Indian Military College. After the parade he presented the Gurkha Brigade Football Cup, won a few days previously, to the 2nd Battalion, and shook hands with each member of the team. Captain F. S. Poynder was selected as A.D.C. to Their Royal Highnesses for both tours and accompanied the Royal party throughout the two visits.

### VICEROY'S GUARD, SIMLA, 1921

The 1st Battalion was selected to furnish H.E. The Viceroy's guard in Simla in 1921, and a composite company of three Gurkha Officers and one hundred and eighty-seven other ranks, under command of Captain R. B. Fawcett, M.C., proceeded to that station in March and remained there until October. Here it came into frequent contact with the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Claud Jacob, who had been our brigade commander in France and who, on this occasion, as he had always previously done in 1915, took the greatest personal interest in the men.

A further internal re-organization within units was introduced during this year, by which all specialists were concentrated in a new company called the "Head-quarter Wing" under the second-in-command. A revision in pay and establishments was also ordered.

### MOVE TO WAZIRISTAN OF THE 1ST BATTALION, AND TO MALABAR OF THE 2ND BATTALION

The end of the year, 1921, was to see the separation of the two Battalions for a further period of four years. The 2nd Battalion proceeded on active service in connection with the suppression of the Moplah insurrection in

Southern India at the beginning of November, and the 1st Battalion was ordered to proceed to the Tochi Valley at the end of that month. This Battalion was destined to remain on the North-West Frontier until January 1924, a tour which inaugurated for the Regiment a scheme by which all Gurkha Battalions were to do periodical tours of duty on the frontier for two years, and then return to their permanent peace stations for four or five years. The re-organization of the Army and of North-West Frontier Defence involves Gurkha Regiments forming part of the garrison of five trans-frontier stations, and entails six battalions being on this duty at one time. The account of the 1st Battalion's tour on this occasion has been included in the previous Chapter, headed "Waziristan."

#### THE MOPLAH REBELLION, 1921-1922

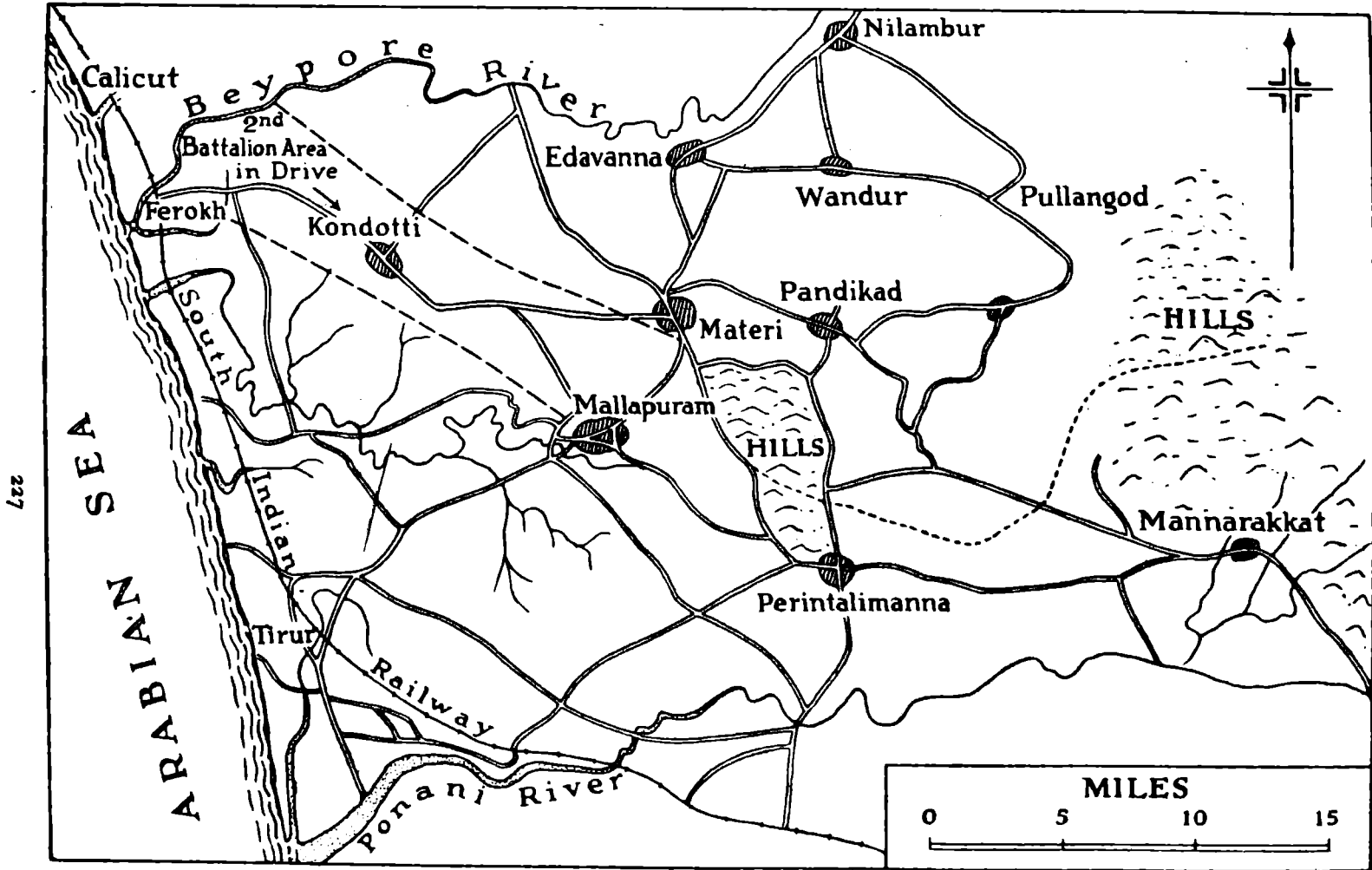
At the time of occurrence the Moplah Rebellion was the most serious that had taken place in India since the Mutiny. The origin was due to agitation by the Khilafate party, and suppression involved original methods by the troops engaged owing to the nature of the country, the tactics and character of the enemy, and the large extent of the disaffected area.

The Moplahs, or Mappillas, claim Arab origin and are possibly descended from converts made by Arab merchant sailors, or military adventurers, who visited Malabar in the past. They are Moslems of a fanatical type, possessed of great physical courage and reckless when swayed by religious fervour; they are chiefly employed as cultivators under Hindu landlords, and are numerically inferior to the Hindus in Malabar in a proportion of one to three. They were formerly enlisted in the Army, but the Moplah units had been disbanded before the Great War.

The disaffected area and scene of the operations lay mainly south-east of Calicut and was of approximately twelve hundred square miles in extent. For the most part the country was of a hilly nature covered with thick jungle. Roads were numerous, but movement off them was restricted by dense jungle, cultivated enclosures, and rice fields; also near the coast innumerable tidal backwaters and coco-nut palm groves greatly hampered manœuvring. Another feature was the very large number of mosques. The climate is hot and damp and the only transport available was either local bullock carts for use on the roads, or coolies, who always proved unreliable, for any movement off them.

The pre-War garrison of British troops had been withdrawn during the War and not replaced; a fact which invited credence to the rebel propaganda that both the British Army and authority had ceased to exist.

The outbreak commenced in July, and it was found necessary to reinforce the Police by a company of British Infantry sent from Wellington to



MALABAR.

1921-1922.

Calicut and Mallapuram. Greatly outnumbered, this reinforcement suffered severely at the hands of the rebels whose local success was the signal for a general insurrection. Police posts were wrecked and rifles captured, Government buildings were burnt and looted, and Hindus were massacred wholesale, or forcibly converted to the Mohammedan faith. The serious situation necessitated the dispatch of reinforcements from Bangalore in August, and martial law was proclaimed early in September. The close bush fighting imposed by the nature of the country, and the fact that horses immediately contracted a lowering fever prevalent in that portion of India, soon proved that cavalry and artillery could not be usefully employed in the forthcoming operations; they were therefore returned to Bangalore.

The continued spread of the rebellion compelled the Madras Government to ask for troops more suited to the type of warfare to be undertaken. The 2nd Battalion, together with the 2/8th Gurkha Rifles, and 1/39th Garhwal Rifles from Lansdowne and 3/70th Kachins, was selected, and after a six-days' journey from Dehra Dun detrained at Tirur on November 9th. A drive of all four battalions in line, each battalion on a four-five mile frontage, in an east-south-east direction from Calicut towards the Nilgiri Hills, was at once organized and commenced with the object of destroying all rebel gangs encountered and of breaking up the rebellion. The drive lasted until November 23rd, but was only partially successful owing to the rebels' refusal to stand and fight. The campaign commenced by the crossing of the Beypore River; this was successfully accomplished under cover of machine-guns mounted in a flotilla of country boats towed by motor launches, a few casualties being involved. The daily advance thereafter was only of about five miles in order to allow each battalion thoroughly to search an allotted area. Visual intercommunication was rarely possible owing to the dense jungle, and the progress of companies had to be indicated by lighting flares each clock hour. The 2nd Battalion was the right battalion, and starting from Ferokh moved astride the road Kondotti-Mallapuram. The resistance of the Moplahs was chiefly in the nature of ambushes to columns and transport on the roads, and heavy casualties were inflicted upon them, when encountered; the drive also had the effect of lowering their morale and of splitting up the larger gangs.

At the conclusion of the drive the District was divided up into four battalion areas and again sub-divided into company and platoon sub-areas. The 2nd Battalion had finished the drive on the line of the road Perintalimanna-Pandikad and was then allotted a large area radiating from Mannarakkat. By extensive patrolling, ably assisted by the Police, enemy gangs were effectively located and either broken up or forced to surrender. Several desperate encounters with influential and fanatical



leaders occurred and usually involved a bombing attack on a temple, or mosque, in which they had taken refuge.

By the end of December many thousands of rebels had surrendered and the disaffected area had been greatly reduced. The leaders were publicly executed and the majority of the remainder were induced to return to their normal pursuits. At the beginning of January 1922, the 2nd Battalion moved north and relieved a Burma Rifle battalion centred on Wandur. Near here a successful platoon attack on a temple and a surrounding courtyard deserves mention. A fanatical party of Moplahs who had taken refuge therein refused to surrender, saying that they preferred to die fighting. Driven back by Lewis gun fire they were eventually disposed of in the face of severe fire by bombs being dropped through lattice windows into the inner room of the temple. Havildar Tekbahadur Khattri's dash and gallantry on the occasion was most conspicuous.

The rebellion was definitely quashed and the troops were gradually withdrawn by the end of February, by which time military tribunals, established under martial law, had effectively and rapidly dispensed justice and punishment to the majority of the rebels.

The operations throughout were of a strenuous nature involving long marches through very difficult bush country in a most trying climate. Fresh from the arid wastes of Mesopotamia and the North-West Frontier all ranks, however, enjoyed the novelty of this type of warfare which gave junior leaders in command of isolated detachments excellent opportunities to display initiative and power of command. The Gurkha's predilection for loot was also well satisfied daily from deserted villages, and many useful souvenirs were brought back. Throughout the operations the force never exceeded two brigades in strength, a remarkable fact when the nature of the task and the size of the disaffected area is considered. The total casualties were 5 B.O.s and 43 O.R.s killed and 7 B.O.s and 126 O.R.s wounded. The Battalion was fortunate in only having two men wounded in ambushes. The enemy casualties were officially reported at 2,300 killed and 50,000 surrenders.

Two awards of the I.D.S.M. were subsequently received for gallantry in bombing raids and a clasp to the Indian General Service Medal inscribed "Malabar" was sanctioned later. The absence of the 2nd Battalion on these operations unfortunately prevented it from forming part of the escort and guard at H.R.H. The Prince of Wales's Camp, Viceregal Lodge, Delhi, during his visit to the Capital in February 1922. The Battalion had been selected for this honour during the previous year when there had been no indication that it would form part of the Malabar Force.

The return of the 2nd Battalion from Malabar at the end of February

1922 may be said to start a decade of routine duty for the Regiment under the post-War peace conditions prevailing in India up to the time at which this present History is published. The 1st Battalion remained in Waziristan until January 1924, being employed in the Razmak operations in 1923, which have been recounted in the Waziristan Chapter.

#### MOVE OF 2ND BATTALION TO THE KHYBER

The 2nd Battalion was detailed for a frontier tour of two years in the Khyber and departed in October 1923, thus leaving Birpur with only the two Depots until the 1st Battalion returned. It formed part of the post-War garrison at Landi Kotal and Landi Khana until October 1925, and in the latter year was awarded the "Barrow" Cup for being the "Best all round Unit in the Peshawar District."

#### SUCCESSSES IN FOOTBALL, RIFLE SHOOTING AND POLO

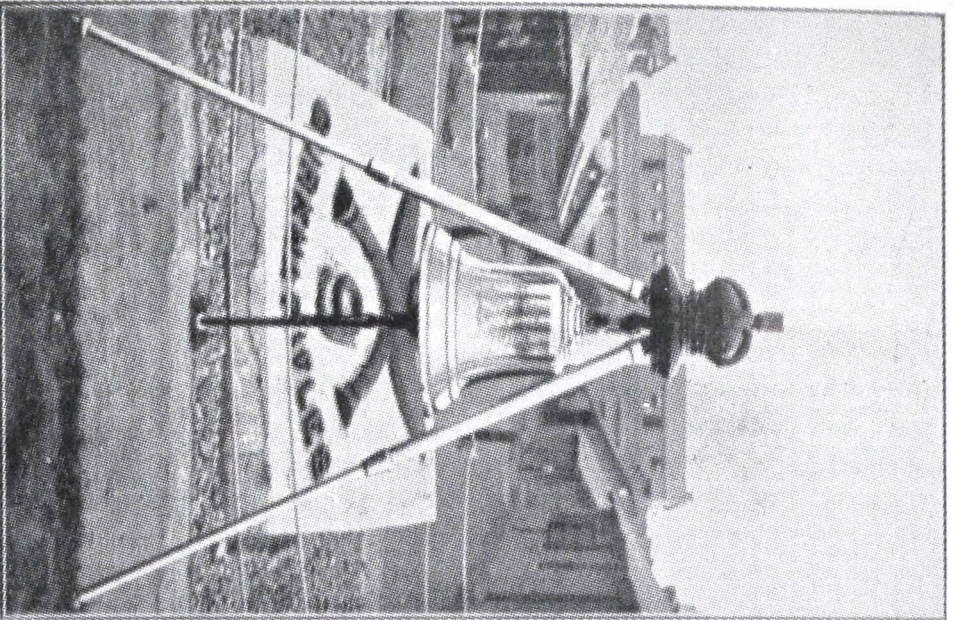
The post-War period has been distinguished for the 2nd Battalion by its outstanding prowess in football and rifle shooting. During this time it won the Gurkha Brigade Football Trophy twice, in 1921 and 1922; the Garhwal Cup in 1921, 1922, 1923, 1931 and 1934; the Victory Celebration Cup in Dehra in 1919, and also the Nepal Cup and the Peshawar District and Landi Kotal Brigade Tournaments. In the Army Rifle Association (India) Annual Competitions it has, since 1920 and up to the present day, been one of the most distinguished rifle-shooting units in the Indian Army. In 1925 it won the King Emperor's Cup for the best aggregate obtained.

The two Battalions were stationed together in Birpur in 1926 and 1927, during which a revival of polo enthusiasm occurred and the regimental team distinguished itself by winning the Dehra Dun, Mussoorie, and Naini Tal Tournaments, and by reaching the Final of the Infantry Tournament played at Lahore.

#### RECONSTRUCTION OF BARRACKS IN BIRPUR

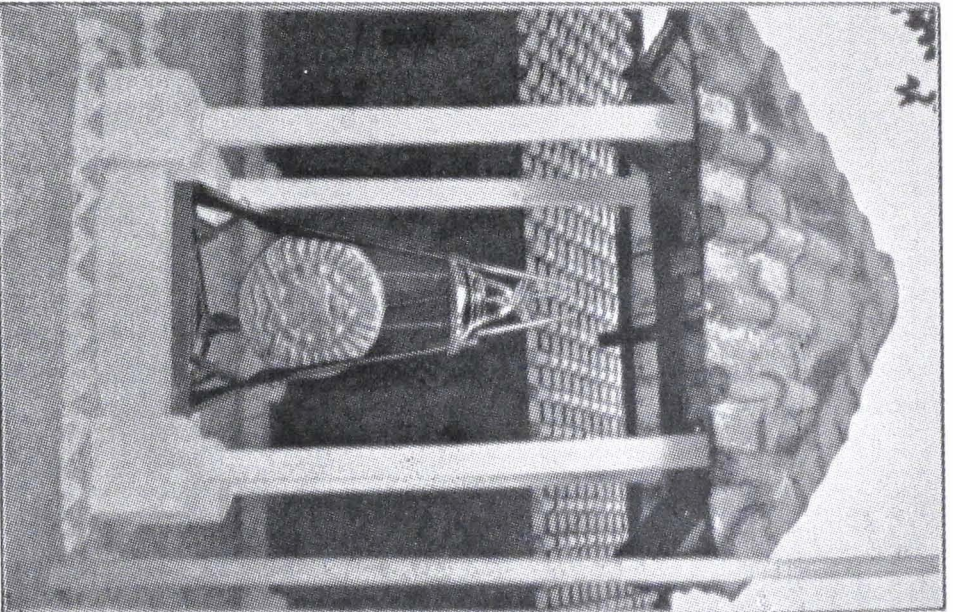
In 1927 sanction was accorded to, and work commenced on, the reconstruction of the Barracks of both Battalions in Birpur. This was most necessary as only temporary repairs had been effected since their construction, in 1905-1907, and many of the buildings were in a most dilapidated condition. The reconstruction for the main part consisted of re-roofing and re-flooring, though the majority of the married quarters were rebuilt, as were the Gurkha Officers' quarters. From an æsthetic point of view this reconstruction detracted from the general appearance of the lines, as the former picturesque red tiled roofs, now almost unique in India, were replaced by corrugated iron.





The 1st Battalion.

THE MEMORIAL GONGS.



The 2nd Battalion.

### MOVE OF 1ST BATTALION TO THE KHYBER

In October 1927, the 1st Battalion, in its turn, proceeded for a two-years' tour in the Khyber, and like the 2nd Battalion was stationed at Landi Kotal and Landi Khana throughout that period. Conditions at the latter place had been greatly improved for the troops by the recent completion of work on Bagh Fort, and by the construction of stone blockhouses for permanent picquets in this area. In the winter of 1928-1929 occurred the revolt of the tribes in Afghanistan against the Amir Amanulla, owing to his ideas of reform of the country on European lines, following his visit to Europe in the summer of 1928. The rebellion started among the Shinwaris domiciled on both sides of the frontier in the Khyber area, and rapidly spread to other sections, notably the Mohmands who are similarly located in both British India and Afghanistan. In the ensuing rise and fall of power of various sections it seemed certain that frontier "incidents" would occur, and would involve brushes with our border garrisons, but this was fortunately not the case. The evacuation of the British and Foreign Legations by air from Kabul to Peshawar was a remarkable achievement, carried out as it was without loss of life, or accident, under conditions of extreme difficulty, in the depth of winter, and in the worst possible weather. The daily passage of the big troop carriers, brought from Iraq, over Landi Kotal was a source of great interest to all ranks of the Battalion.

The 1st Battalion left Landi Kotal on relief in November 1929 and for political reasons was ordered to carry out a "flag march" through the Eastern Punjab and Western United Provinces during the return journey to Dehra Dun. It was therefore detrained at Ludhiana and marched therefrom, not arriving at Birpur until December 21st. The Battalion was then immediately called on to furnish the internal security company on the Government Clothing Factory at Shahjahanpore.

The two Battalions remained stationed at Birpur for most of 1930 and Dehra Dun was comparatively unaffected by the serious internal political riots and troubles which occurred elsewhere. The year 1931 was sadly marred for the Regiment by the death of no less than three of the British Officers, all of the 1st Battalion; Major R. V. Brandon died while on leave in England, Captain C. K. Noad while on a seconded appointment in Bangalore and Lieutenant F. Cox in Dehra hospital.

### MAJOR-GENERAL W. L. O. TWISS APPOINTED COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

On February 14th, 1930, Major-General W. L. O. Twiss, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., was appointed Colonel of the Regiment. This appointment had not been filled since the death of Sir Beauchamp Duff in 1917.

### MOVE OF 2ND BATTALION TO MALAKAND

In October 1930 the 2nd Battalion moved to Malakand for another North-West Frontier tour. Owing to political troubles, in addition to finding the garrison for Malakand, Chakdara, and neighbouring picquets, it was called on to garrison Dargai with one company. This distribution naturally much interfered with training and administration. Although Chakdara post caused considerable sickness from malaria, both officers and men enjoyed excellent sport, shooting and fishing in the vicinity.

### TRIBAL DISTURBANCES AND THE CHITRAL RELIEF, 1932

The Malakand Pass area was comparatively unaffected by the serious political trouble prevalent in the Peshawar District during 1930-1931.

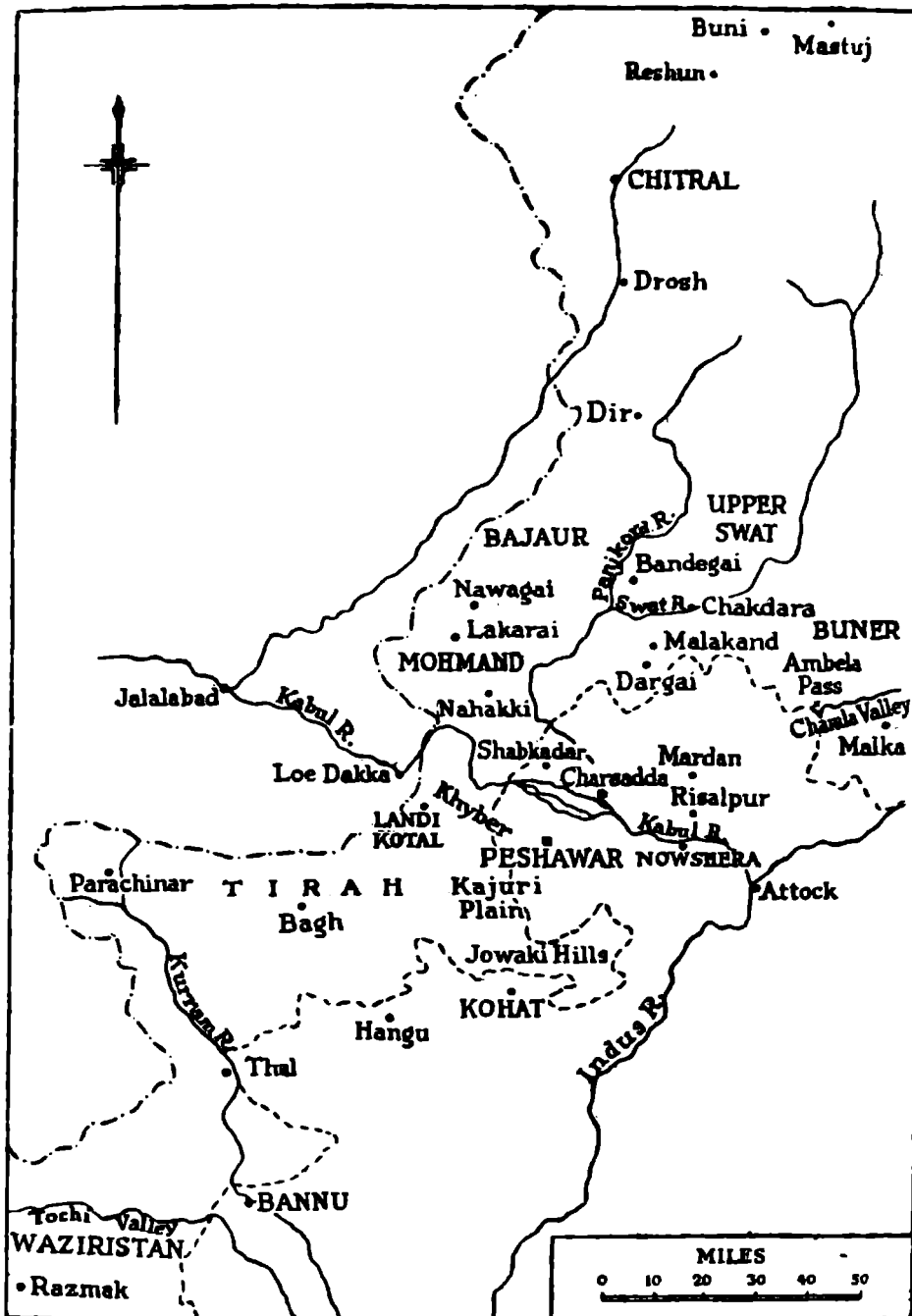
In 1932, however, the firm suppression of the "Red Shirt" movement, particularly in the Charsadda and Mardan Districts, had repercussions among the Border tribes, and resulted in hostile action by the Shamozi and Pinda Khel sections on Levy posts situated along the Chitral road in Dir State. This necessitated the concentration of a force at Chakdara during February and March, of which the 2nd Battalion formed part, but political and air action effected a temporary settlement, without the troops being called on to act.

The biennial Chitral Relief was due to take place in the month of September. In view of the existing tension an emergency column, known as "Cremcol," was formed to act in support of the normal relief column and advanced to Bandegai, two marches from Chakdara. The column was composed of Nowshera Brigade H.Q., the 2nd Battalion, 1/11th Sikh Regiment, and the Guides Infantry, and attached troops, and remained at Bandegai for nearly a month. There were frequent brushes with hostile tribesmen and more than one successful ambush in which the enemy were surprised and defeated. In these, the 2nd Battalion played a prominent part. Prior to the move to Bandegai the Battalion had been relieved in the Malakand area by the 2/2nd Gurkha Rifles, and on the conclusion of the Chitral Relief orders were received to return to Dehra Dun.

### MOVE TO BENGAL

During the summer of this year the Government of India had approved of a new policy for the suppression of terrorism in Bengal, in which Province the political situation had deteriorated to an alarming extent, and it was decided to move two brigades of regular troops to the affected area of Bengal; the Bareilly and Dehra Dun Brigades being selected for this duty. During September Dehra Dun Brigade H.Q., with the 1st Bn. Dorsetshire





THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER, INDIA.

Regiment, moved to Dacca, and the 1st Battalion to Comilla in Eastern Bengal. Owing to the absence of both battalions of the 2nd Gurkhas on the North-West Frontier, the 1/9th Royal Jat Regiment was attached to the brigade and moved to Mymensingh. The 2nd Battalion was given two months in Dehra Dun to re-fit and re-organize after its two-years' tour in the Malakand area, and moved to Chittagong and relieved the 2/8th Gurkha Rifles in December. Between the months of October and December this Battalion was thus moved from the Chitral Border to the southernmost district of Eastern Bengal, and called on to assume a totally novel sphere of duties hitherto foreign to the training and employment of regular troops. The Bareilly Brigade of three battalions was located in Western Bengal, with head-quarters at Kharagpur. The policy adopted was the moral and material reinforcement of the Police by troops in selected areas, combined with propaganda in the form of "flag marches" throughout the Districts, the majority of the inhabitants of which had never seen troops of any kind. In the Chittagong area the 2nd Battalion had a definite task of assisting the Police to round up a number of armed terrorist absconders, who had been responsible for two unprovoked and murderous attacks on Auxiliary Force and Police armouries in 1930 and 1932. Large quantities of arms and ammunition had been captured in the former raid and a number of the assailants had evaded capture by the Police for over two years. It was with the greatest satisfaction therefore that the 2nd Battalion captured the leader of this gang, Surya Sen, for whom a reward of Rs.10,000 was offered, within two months of having arrived in the District.

Conditions prevailing on the arrival of the 1st Battalion in Comilla were extremely difficult. In the hottest and worst month of the year, at the end of the monsoon, the Battalion had to go into camp on an old polo ground surrounded by tanks and flooded rice fields. No ground was available for parades or training, roads were non-existent, outside the actual town, nor was there a range. Conditions, however, gradually improved; with the end of the rainy season double-storeyed bamboo barracks fitted with electric light were erected, and bungalows for the Mess and officers' quarters acquired. The arrival of troops undoubtedly had a big moral and political effect in this, one of the worst terrorist areas, and the Battalion carried out several "flag marches" in the neighbouring districts. It was also called on to furnish several detachments on outpost duty in suspected areas for varying periods; these duties were continued to be carried out throughout 1933 and 1934.

Conditions at Chittagong were different. This was a hotbed of terrorism and, since a serious raid on an Auxiliary Force Armoury had been made in April 1930, troops had been located in the area. The 2nd Battalion, on



relieving the 2/8th Gurkha Rifles in December 1932, found temporary barracks already in existence and the Civil Circuit House provided a comfortable Mess and officers' quarters. The Battalion was, however, to have an arduous existence throughout the stay in this area for the next twelve months. A complete company was located in the Patya District, approximately fifteen miles east and north-east of Chittagong, in which area terrorists and absconders were constantly finding refuge. In addition, the Battalion had to furnish the equivalent of another company in guards and duties and small mobile columns. The outpost company was employed day and night finding patrols, cordons, and search parties, and owing to the difficulty of the country and inaccurate information, the great majority of these efforts were fruitless. The scattered nature of the villages and houses, many located in thick jungle or surrounded by flooded rice fields, the absence of roads and maps, the lack of help by the local inhabitants, and an enervating climate, all combined to render this duty most arduous and exacting for officers and men. From March to June 1933, two and a half companies of the 2nd Battalion, assisted by one and a half companies of the 1st Battalion, and one company 1st Bn. 9th Royal Jat Regiment, carried out a combined drive through the disaffected area. These measures proved successful in capturing several much-wanted terrorist absconders from justice and two of the leaders were hanged. Three of the Battalion were awarded the Indian Distinguished Service Medal for gallantry in capturing armed terrorists.

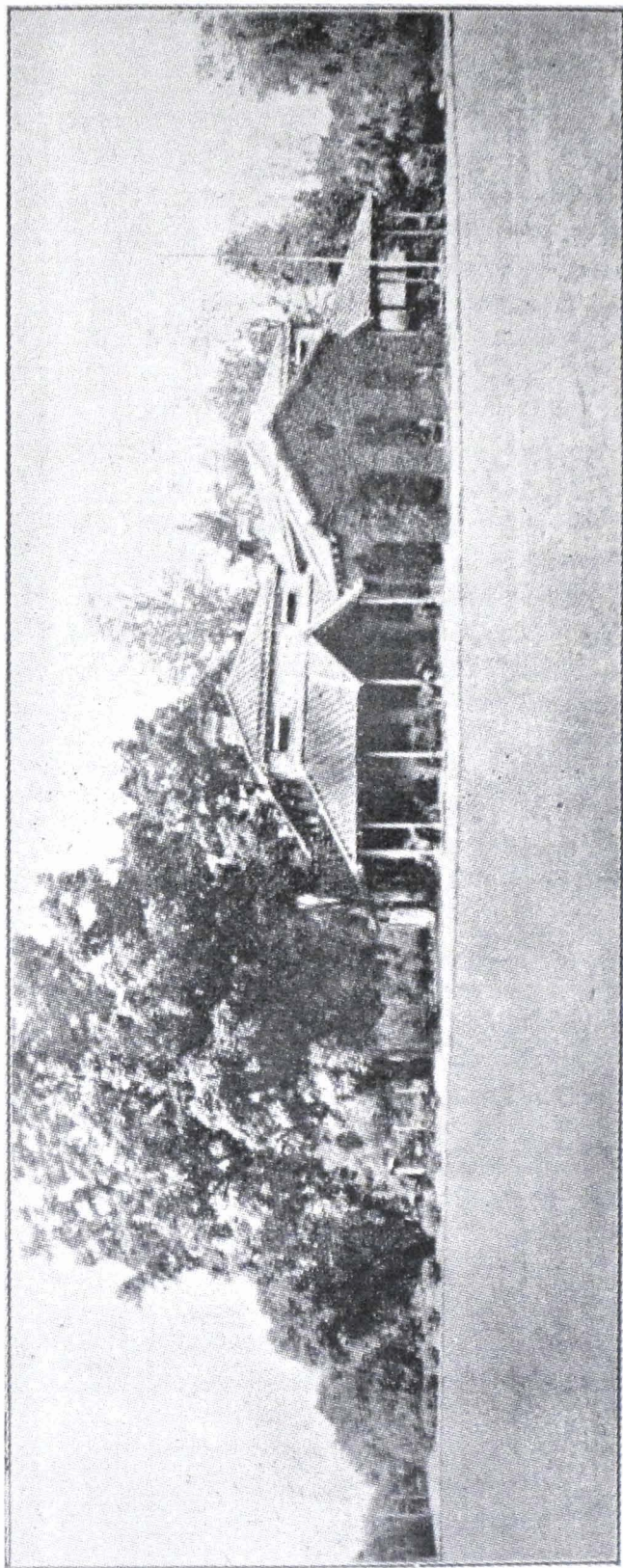
While conditions were trying, there is no doubt that their novelty was of interest to the men who had never before served in similar terrain or circumstances. Transport by river launch or sampan, together with occasional "cross-country" movement in local dugouts during the rains, was a strange experience, as were bathing parties in the Bay of Bengal at the mouth of the Karnafuli River; seeking information in Bengal villages disguised as woodcutters, or coolies, also proved both exciting and amusing. A unique experience was, however, the visit of H.M.S. "Enterprise" to Chittagong in January 1933, when the whole Battalion, in small parties, was given a personally conducted tour of the ship. Nevertheless, there was a sense of satisfaction when relieved by the 1/3rd Gurkha Rifles at the end of November and the Battalion moved to Saidpur in North Bengal. Most of the winter of 1933-1934 was occupied by extensive company "flag marching" all over the Rajshahi District, and conditions at Saidpur, though monotonous, offered good facilities for training, and were peaceful. It is of interest to recall that the left wing of the old 9th Bengal Infantry formed part of the Chittagong Column in the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-1890.

## RETURN TO DEHRA

Both Battalions returned to Dehra Dun from Bengal in October 1934 ; the following March the 1st Battalion left for a two-year Frontier tour in Razmak. Unfortunately during the five months' interim the two Battalions saw very little of each other owing to training camps.

## VISIT OF H.H. THE MAHARAJAH OF NEPAL TO DELHI

In February 1935, H.H. The Maharajah of Nepal, Sir Joodha Shumshere Jung, who had been gazetted Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, 9th March 1934, visited Delhi as a guest of the Viceroy. A special parade and march past of the troops of the Eastern Command, concentrated near Delhi for manœuvres, was held for his benefit, in which the 2nd Battalion took part. His Highness also received a deputation of representatives from all Gurkha Regiments, introduced by Major-General W. L. O. Twiss, Colonel of the Regiment. The 9th Gurkha Rifles were represented by Lieut.-Colonel C. P. Blackett, commanding the 1st Battalion, and Subedar-Major Shamsheer Mal of the 2nd Battalion. His Highness was pleased to present his portrait, a shield, and Rs.700 as a personal gift to each Gurkha Regiment.



THE OFFICERS' MESS, BIRPUR.  
1936.



## CHAPTER XIX

### CONCLUSION

The Unveiling of the Regimental War Memorial. Disbandment of the Band. The Pipe Bands. Present conditions at Birpur and in Dehra Dun.

**I**N conclusion it is thought fit to describe the Regimental War Memorial and to review the conditions under which the Regiment is serving at the present time.

#### THE REGIMENTAL WAR MEMORIAL AND RE-UNION, 1930

It had been decided some years previously to erect a suitable War Memorial in the Regimental Lines and much discussion had taken place as to what form this should take. The Regiment, in common with all other Gurkha Regiments, had subscribed to, and been represented at the opening ceremony of, the Gurkha Brigade Memorial at Gorakhpore in 1928, and a memorial plaque had been installed in St. Thomas's Church, Dehra, in 1923 in commemoration of the British Officers killed in action since 1914. (Illustration facing page 254.)

The constant separation of the two Battalions, and the work of re-organization since the War, involved delay ; but it was eventually agreed to adopt the figure of a Gurkha Rifleman, in bronze, dressed in field service order, similar to that already incorporated in the Brigade Memorial at Gorakhpore. This was to be mounted on a stepped plinth of white stone, suitably inscribed with bronze panels and situated in an open space facing the 1st Battalion parade ground in the centre of the Barracks. The figure was admirably designed and cast in London by the well-known sculptor Mr. G. Goulden, who had also been responsible for that of the Brigade Memorial ; the provision of material for, and erection of, the plinth was supervised by Captain R. T. Russell, D.S.O., one of the architects of New Delhi and a former officer of the 2nd Battalion, who had won his decoration at the Shumran crossing, in 1917. The occasion being unique in the history of the Regiment, it was decided to hold a re-union of Pensioners simultaneously with the unveiling of the Memorial, and elaborate arrangements were organized to notify former members in Nepal and to bring them down to Dehra. A most gratifying response was received and no less than sixty

Gurkha Officers and over one hundred Other Ranks collected in Birpur. Several former British Officers, including four ex-Commanding Officers and others on Staff and seconded employment, also came, and a most cordial re-union of past and present members of the Regiment took place, extending over three days.

The Memorial was unveiled by the Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshal Sir William Birdwood, on January 9th, 1930, before a special parade of both Battalions and in the presence of the majority of the residents of Dehra Dun and of the Pensioners. His Excellency was met by the senior Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel A. H. Burnett, D.S.O., of the 1st Battalion, and, after inspecting a guard-of-honour of two Gurkha Officers and one hundred Other Ranks, composed of both Battalions, commanded by Captain G. P. Crampton, M.C., proceeded to the parade ground and addressed the Regiment. Both Battalions, under command of Lieut.-Colonel E. S. Harcourt, M.C., were drawn up in a hollow square facing the Memorial with the four ex-Commanding Officers, Major-General W. L. O. Twiss, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., Colonel of the Regiment, Brigadier H. C. Duncan, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., Lieut.-Colonel G. C. Wheeler, V.C., and Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Collingridge, D.S.O., in front. After an admirable speech, delivered both in English and Gurkhali, the Field-Marshal unveiled the Memorial with the customary ritual. The figure had been draped in the combined flags of Nepal and the Union Jack. The Commander-in-Chief then lunched with the Officers in the Mess and was afterwards photographed with them; later in the afternoon he received the Pensioners on the lawn. The remaining three days of the re-union were most suitably and happily celebrated by all. (Illustration facing page 246.)

A second part of the Memorial, less conspicuous but affording a more practical purpose, was the building of the Regimental Family Hospital, close to the 1st Battalion bazaar. This fills a most important need and is a boon very much appreciated and taken advantage of by the men's wives and children, for whom no provision, or accommodation, is available in the Station hospital.

Each Battalion has in addition a memorial gong, at the Quarter-Guard, which accompanies it wherever it goes. That of the 1st Battalion is a bell mounted on a tripod and cast in bronze from some two hundred memorial plaques originally destined for the heirs of casualties who were found to be untraceable in Nepal after the War. That of the 2nd Battalion is a bronze gong, with the crest and honours embossed, suspended from a triangle formed of three captured Turkish rifles. (Illustrations will be found facing page 230.)

The unveiling of the Memorial and the successful Regimental Re-union

took place almost exactly a quarter of a century after the old 9th Gurkha Rifles had been split into two battalions and had moved down from Lansdowne to Dehra. None of the older members of the Regiment, either serving or pensioned, could fail to have been impressed by the astonishing changes that Birpur had undergone during this period.

### BIRPUR, 1936

In 1905, when the two Battalions had moved over to the plateau that was destined to become their home, they had been encamped on a stony waste near the small Indian village which gave the area its name. Here they had remained for nearly two years, largely employed in fatigue work in connection with building their own barracks, and in conditions of extreme discomfort for all ranks.

In 1936 Birpur is almost unrecognizable as being the same place. A bird's-eye view of the plateau from the top of Garhi Hill discloses a verdured prospect of great beauty, in which even the barracks and bungalows are almost obscured by trees and shrubs. Driving up to the Officers' Mess and quarters at the northern end, the visitor passes between the barracks, each with its own small garden and trim hedges, and past the polo ground which is now a level expanse of green turf, made entirely by regimental labour, and quite unrecognizable as the stony waste on which the Regiment was originally encamped. The approach to the Mess is past the Officers' bungalows, each set in gardens ablaze with flowers and shrubs and surrounded by trimmed hedges, and along an avenue of cypresses affording a view of the lower Himalayas, crowned by Mussoorie, almost unique in India. The Mess itself, a stone building roofed with red tiles, presents an atmosphere singularly akin to a country house in England, set as it is in a beautiful garden and surrounded by lawns which include tennis and racquet courts. Inside the building the numerous trophies, both of a military and sporting character, bear testimony to the world-wide record and activities of the British Officers, and are at once the care and pride of every member of the Mess. In contrast with the small mud building (now the mess office and store godown), which originally formed the Officers' Mess in 1906, the present appearance savours almost of a dream. Such is Birpur of the present day; the appearance and amenities form a striking tribute to the care and devotion that have been expended by past and present members of the Regiment to make it a home worthy of the 9th Gurkha Rifles, and are a proud legacy for the future, in which it is hoped that it may never be allowed to deteriorate. (Illustrations facing pages 236 and 240.)

### PRESENT CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR THE MEN

If Birpur has changed, so have the conditions under which the men now enlisted serve. With better rates of pay and free clothing, free rations, and an establishment of cooks, station hospitals, mosquito nets and modern equipment, the men's lot has improved out of all proportion to the brief period in which the changes have occurred. Gone are the days of extortionate buniahs and inadequate food, of fever-ridden barracks and of poor hospital accommodation for the heavy drain of sick which occurred annually during the monsoon; the modern soldier in the Indian Army now enjoys increased accommodation and care and supervision of his health and comfort undreamt of by his predecessors, of even a generation before. Similarly, the higher standard and increased knowledge required by present-day standards of training have improved the facilities and equipment both for work and games. Re-organized canteens, institutes and educational facilities also form surroundings necessary to conform with the higher standard demanded in education. Pre-War full dress, of Rifle-green and black facings, has been abolished, perhaps never to return; but the Regiment still adheres to the Kilmarnock cap for drill and review order parades, and the men themselves buy these from their now ample clothing allowances.

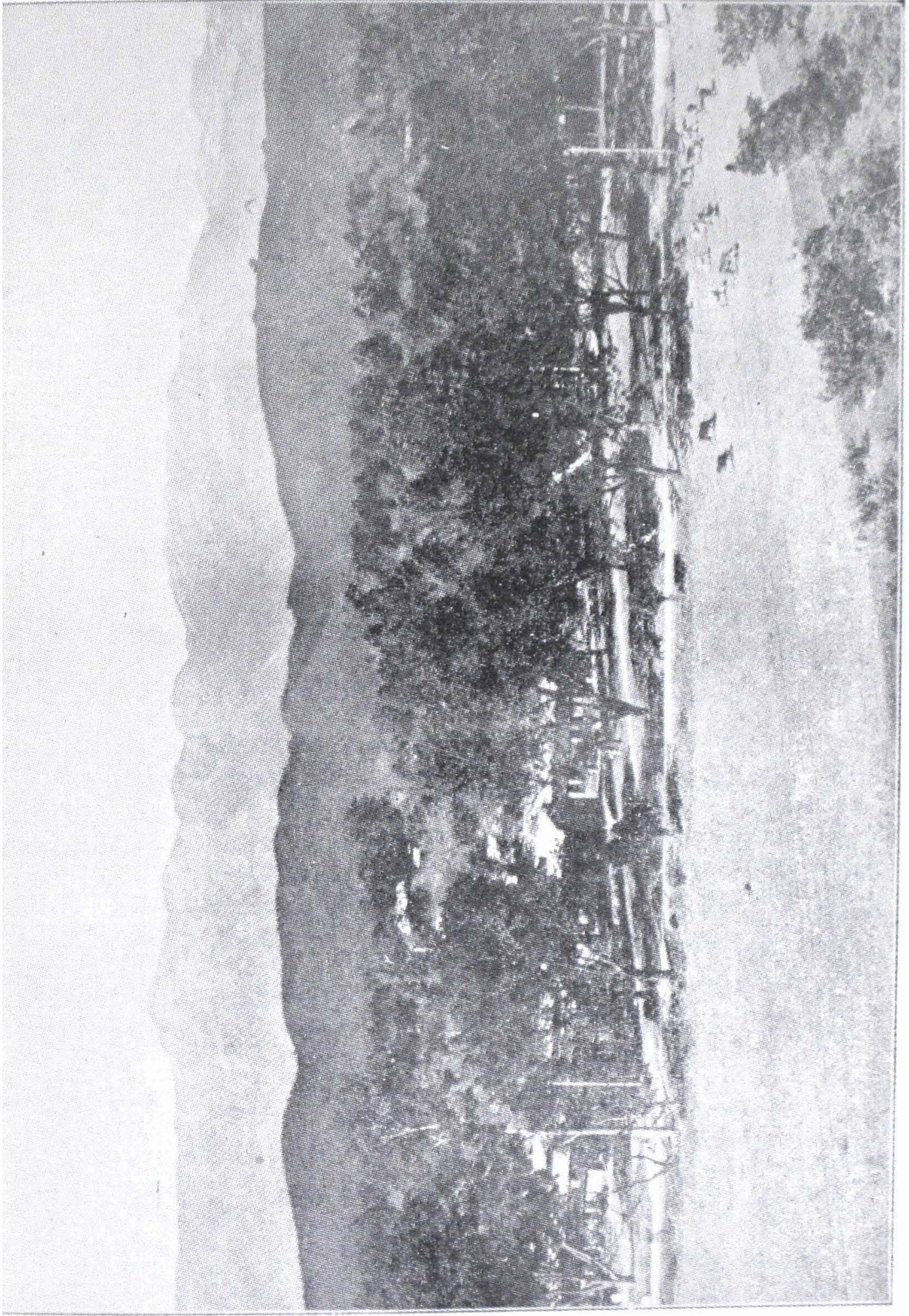
### DISBANDMENT OF THE BAND

The unparalleled world financial crisis and consequent enforced economy on every side in 1932 unfortunately necessitated the disbandment of the Band, of whose merit and performance the Regiment had been justly proud for so long. It was particularly sad to think that the loyal, skilful and successful work of Herr Ludwig and Mr. Phillips, over a period of nearly thirty years, was thus to be destroyed in almost as many days, but "necessity knows no law," and the Band ceased to exist early in that year, to the regret of all ranks of the Regiment. It was most satisfactory that, through the efforts of the officers, the Bandmaster, Mr. Phillips, who had been in charge of the Band for fifteen years, obtained the excellent appointment of Director of Music in the Jaipur State Band.

### THE PIPE BANDS

Both Battalions are now concentrating on the improvement of their Pipe Bands and each is in a state of high efficiency, a fact which will do something to compensate for the disappearance of the Band; both the Pipe Bands have now been equipped in pre-War full dress.





BIRPUR, FROM GARHI HILL.



## DEHRA DUN, 1936

This description of Birpur of the present day, and of the conditions under which the men serve, would be incomplete without reference to Dehra Dun generally. The old cantonment, accommodating only the 2nd Gurkhas before Birpur and Ghangora were built, increased in size enormously in the decade before the Great War. The post-War period under reference has seen further great expansion. The old Forest Research Institute, formerly housed in Chand Bagh near the 2nd Gurkhas' Mess, was moved to a vast new building constructed near Kaula Garh and built in an extensive and beautiful park in 1926, and this was followed by the building of a Railway Staff College beyond, on the Chakrata road, in the direction of Jajra. This has in turn become the new Indian Military Academy, opened in 1932. The old Imperial Cadet Corps Lines, used as a hospital during the War, now house the Royal Indian Military College which was formally opened by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales on his visit to Dehra in March 1922. Finally, in 1935, the old Chand Bagh buildings have been converted into the first Indian school to be run on the lines of the English public school. On the northern side of the cantonment the lines of the 2nd Bn. 2nd Gurkhas have been entirely rebuilt, and the war-time convalescent camp lines now accommodate the Supply and Transport Depots. The old Circuit House near the I.C.C. polo ground is now named "Doon Court," and constantly forms the residence of T.E. The Viceroy and Governor of the United Provinces, on their frequent visits to Dehra. Finally, the Dehra Dun Brigade war formation is now annually concentrated in the cantonment by the move into camp at Ghangora, each cold weather, of the British infantry battalion from Chakrata. With this increase in size and importance of the station it is hoped that railway facilities will be improved; a project for an extension from Saharanpore, via the Timli Pass, is understood to be under consideration, and already surveyed.

India in 1936 is at the cross-roads. The Reforms of 1919 were the outcome of the War, and at their inauguration it was decided to review the political situation every ten years in order to decide what advance towards self-government had been achieved by political progress within the decade. The outcome at this first review has been the Round Table Conferences of 1929 and 1931 and the India Bill of 1935, and far-reaching changes are shortly to be introduced in Federal India. Not the least is the future Indianization of the Army and the recent decision to Indianize more units. Concurrent with this is the opening of the new Indian Military Academy at Dehra. These changes are bound to have far-reaching effect

in the future, but it is thought improbable that they will affect materially the ten Gurkha Regiments.

#### CONCLUSION

The historical record of the 9th Gurkha Rifles has been reviewed in these pages ; in particular their doings since conversion into a Khas Gurkha unit, over forty years ago. Suffice it to say that the prediction of the Recruiting Officer for Gurkhas in 1890 has been fulfilled beyond even his most sanguine expectations.

With the traditions, esprit de corps, and pride in itself and in its achievements, the Regiment aligns itself with its sister regiments of the Gurkha Brigade, confident in its ability worthily to uphold the magnificent record of the Gurkha Race.

# APPENDICES

## I-VII



- I. EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER FROM THE RECRUITING OFFICER FOR GURKHAS TO THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL, 1890.
  - II. BATTLE CASUALTIES, 1914-1923.
  - III. OBITUARY OF BRITISH OFFICERS, 1905-1935.
  - IV. HONOURS AND AWARDS FOR GALLANTRY IN THE FIELD, 1914-1923.
  - V. WAR SERVICES OF THE BRITISH OFFICERS, 1914-1923, OTHER THAN THOSE WITH THE REGIMENT.
  - VI. PERMANENT COMMANDANTS OF THE REGIMENT, 1817-1935.
  - VII. ORDER OF BATTLE, MEERUT DIVISION, 1914.
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## I

### EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER, NO. I, DATED THE 2ND NOVEMBER 1890, FROM CAPTAIN EDEN VANSITTART, COMMANDING RECRUITING OPERATIONS, TO THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL IN INDIA

" I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your Letter, No. 4833 B, Confidential, dated Simla, 20th October 1890. and to reply thereto :—

" As the question of the advisability of enlisting Newars has been submitted to me for my opinion, I trust I shall be forgiven if I take this opportunity of bringing to notice a far more deserving class of men, and one whose soldierly qualities most certainly entitle them to consideration. I would earnestly beg that the attention of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief be called to the claims of the Khas for enlistment into our Service. By neglecting this class I am of opinion that Government is losing a possible field for the enlistment of hundreds of splendid soldiers.

" I do not speak from any partiality for the Khas, personally I prefer the Magars and Gurungs, but I cannot blind myself to the good fighting qualities of the Khas, and I feel it my duty to bring them into notice.

" All, or very nearly all, Officers Commanding, Gurkha Regiments, would probably report discouragingly on the advisability of enlisting Khas into their respective battalions, but I believe this would be so, not because they consider them as bad fighting material, but because they probably consider Magars and Gurungs better ; also because the Khas are more troublesome to manage, and have more religious prejudices than those classes.

" Were the question mooted to Officers Commanding, Gurkha Regiments, as to the advisability of raising a new regiment to consist entirely of Khas, I believe favourable reports would be received.

" Brian Hodgson, than whom, in my opinion, no greater authority ever existed, as to the respective value of the various tribes of the Gurkhas, says : ' The Khas are more devoted to the House of Gurkha, as well as more liable to Brahmanical prejudices, than the Magar or Gurung, and on both accounts are perhaps somewhat less desirable as soldiers for our Service than the latter tribes. I say somewhat, because it is a mere question of degree, the Khas having certainly no religious prejudices, nor probably any national partialities, which would prevent their making excellent and faithful servants in arms ; and they possess pre-eminently that masculine energy of character, and love of enterprise, which distinguish so advantageously the military races of Nepal.'

(Here follow extracts from the author's book on Gurkhas written in 1889.)



“Origin of the Khas” : “. . . and from these two roots (converts and illegitimate progeny mainly) spring the now numerous, predominant, and extensively ramified tribe of Khas, originally the name of a small class of creedless barbarians, now the proud title of Kshatriya, or military order of the kingdom of Nepal.”

“Meaning of the term Gurkha” : “The ancestors of the present race of Gurkhas derived their national name of ‘Gurkha’ from this district, in which they first established themselves as an independent power. The term Gurkha is not limited to any particular class or clan, it is applied to all whose ancestors inhabited the country Gurkha, and who from it subsequently extended their conquests far and wide over the eastern and western hills.”

“Khas among the original inhabitants of Gurkha” : “It would appear that in the earlier days of Prithwi Narain’s reign the inhabitants of the district of Gurkha were almost entirely Magars, Gurungs, Thakurs and Khas.”

“Comparing Gurkhas with orthodox Hindus,” extracts from Brian Hodgson dated 1832 :—

“The Gurkhas see in foreign service nothing but the prospect of glory and spoil . . . in masses they have all the indomitable confidence each in all, which grows out of national integrity and success. . . . In my humble opinion they are by far the best soldiers in Asia, and if they were made participators in our renown in arms, I conceive that their gallant spirit, emphatic contempt of the Madhesias, and unadulterated military habits might be relied on for fidelity, etc., etc.” Writing again in 1857 Brian Hodgson says : “The Gurkha from the warlike qualities of his forefathers, and the traditions handed down to him of their military prowess as conquerors of Nepal, is imbued with and cherishes the true military spirit.”

“Khas Gurkhas” : “The Khas are the predominant race of Nepal. They are generally slighter, more active, and more intelligent than either the Magar or Gurung. They are Hindus, wear the thread, and are more liable to Brahmanical prejudices than the Magar, or Gurung. They, however, make little of the ceremonial law of Hindus in regard to food and sexual relations, and their active habits and vigorous characters could not brook the restraint of ritual law. Their few prejudices are rather useful than otherwise, inasmuch as they favour sobriety and cleanliness. They are temperate, hardy and brave, and make good soldiers. In the Nepalese Army all officers above the rank of lieutenant are Khas, as are by far the greater proportion of officers above the rank of captain. They are intensely proud of their traditions and look down upon the Magars and Gurungs. In their own country the Khas who runs away in battle becomes an outcast, and his very wife is unable to eat with him.” (This ends the extracts from the author’s book.)

“I have now I trust shown sufficient points, extracted from my Book, to justify me in my belief that the Khas are well worthy of being enlisted into our Service, and would now beg to make a few additional remarks.

“By far the greater proportion of the Nepalese Army is, and ever has been, composed of Khas. Such it undoubtedly was during our own war with Nepal

in 1814 and 1816, and all must admit the bravery displayed against us then. In such an essentially military country as Nepal we may safely assume that the predominant class will be the fighting one of the country. The Khas are the predominant class of Nepal ; this is an undoubted fact and cannot be disputed. If the Nepalese Government recruits so largely from the Khas element it may very safely be assumed that they enlist from what they consider to be the best material, and we may be sure that it is good fighting stuff, even if we had not their grand record of bravery as displayed against us. In all Gurkha conquests and wars, e.g. conquests of Nepal, Kumaon, Garhwal, and wars with Tibet (twice), China and Britain, the Gurkhas have invariably displayed great valour, and the Khas have invariably been the main portion of the Gurkha Army. They have also had their share in building up the honourable record of our own Gurkha Regiments, for, since their first incorporation into the British Service till within the last ten or fifteen years, there were a large number of Khas in every Gurkha Regiment in our Service, many of whom have gained the Indian Order of Merit.

“ No regiments now enlist the Khas, and as a consequence a grand class of men, one essentially imbued with the true military spirit, a class that has proved itself in its own Army as well as in the British Service, to be a good fighting class, is now allowed to remain untouched by us.

“ I am informed that there are numbers of Khas in Nepal burning with the wish to enter our Service, and I would most earnestly beg that their claims to enlistment be considered.

“ It is with the greatest diffidence that I give my opinion, especially as I believe that it will clash with that of many officers who have infinitely more experience than I have, but I believ  that a certain percentage of Khas in every Gurkha Regiment would be an advantage. I consider that the Khas, being as it were the gentry of Nepal, would act beneficially by being taken into regiments up to a certain percentage. Also there is no disputing that the Khas is a much more intelligent man than the Magar or Gurung, and as such, would be most useful, especially nowadays that so much more is expected of a Native soldier.

“ I trust that I shall be forgiven if I have written too strongly on a subject which I believe would be received adversely by most Officers Commanding, Gurkha Regiments, but I do so from a sense of duty, and it will of course rest with H.E. The Commander-in-Chief to take such action as he may see fit. Before closing I would once more venture to pray that even if the Khas are not to be enlisted into any of the existing Gurkha Regiments, that their claim to be taken into the British Service shall be considered.

“ I venture to say that a whole regiment might be raised from a class that at present is wandering in Nepal longing for, but hopeless of, service under the British Government.

“ Maharajah Bhim Sham Sher himself told me that he wondered we did not enlist some Khas, and gave it to me as his opinion that a percentage of that class in every Gurkha Regiment would be of advantage.”





THE REGIMENTAL MEMORIAL, BIRPUR.  
Unveiled, 9th January, 1930.



## II

### BATTLE CASUALTIES AMONG BRITISH OFFICERS, GURKHA OFFICERS, AND OTHER RANKS

1914-1923

#### BRITISH OFFICERS

##### KILLED

<b>FRANCE, 1914-1915.</b>		<b>WITH 1ST BATTALION.</b>	
Lieut. D. Baillie	2nd Battalion attd.	2nd November	1914
Lieut. R. C. Walton		7th November	1914
Lieut. L. C. C. Rogers, M.C.	1/7th G.R. attd.	24th December	1914
Capt. J. R. L. Heyland, M.C.	Adjutant	11th March	1915
Capt. A. C. E. St.G. Gore	2nd Battalion attd.	26th June	1915
 <b>MESOPOTAMIA, 1916-1918</b>		 <b>WITH 1ST BATTALION.</b>	
Lieut. I. J. Hughes		13th January	1916
2nd Lieut. W. Mowbray	I.A.R.O. attd.	14th January	1916
Capt. B. A. R. Blewitt		8th March	1916
Capt. A. H. Parsons	2nd Battalion attd.	8th March	1916
Capt. F. N. Maclaran		15th April	1916
Capt. E. F. Berry, M.C.	2nd Bn. attd. (Adjutant.)	17th April	1916
2nd Lieut. C. Frisch	I.A.R.O. attd.	17th April	1916
2nd Lieut. H. G. D. Clutter- buck	2/7th G.R. attd.	17th April	1916
Lieut. H. Hickley	2/7th G.R. attd.	17th April	1916
		 <b>WITH 2ND BATTALION.</b>	
2nd Lieut. P. F. Toogood	I.A.R.O. attd.	23rd February	1917
2nd Lieut. H. G. Alington	I.A.R.O. attd.	23rd February	1917
 <b>TRANS-CASPIA.</b>			
Bt. Lieut.-Col. G. D. Pike, M.C.	1st Battalion	15th August	1918

AFGHANISTAN, 1919.		WITH 1ST BATTALION.	
Capt. T. N. C. Kemp, M.C.		16th May	1919
Lieut. A. G. R. Henderson, M.C.		17th May	1919

WAZIRISTAN, 1920.		WITH 2ND BATTALION.	
2nd Lieut. F. W. W. Birch	2/2nd G.R. attd.	23rd January	1920
Capt. R. H. B. Wilson	Adjutant	1st March	1920

## DIED OF DISEASE.

Maj. H. L. C. Turner	2nd Battalion, Nowshera	1st June	1918
Maj. H. Mullaly	1st Battalion, Waziristan	13th January	1920

## DROWNED IN S.S. " PERSIA " WHEN TORPEDOED.

Lieut. A. F. Spreckley	2nd Battalion	30th December	1915
Capt. H. L. Ainsworth	1/10th G.R. attd. 1st Battalion	30th December	1915

## WOUNDED

FRANCE, 1914-1915.		WITH 1ST BATTALION.	
Maj. J. McK. T. Hogg	1st Battalion	14th December	1914
Lieut. A. F. Spreckley	2nd Battalion attd.	5th September	1915
Capt. H. L. Ainsworth	1/10th G.R. attd.	25th September	1915
2nd Lieut. J. Burke	I.A.R.O. attd.	25th September	1915

MESOPOTAMIA, 1916-1919.		WITH 1ST BATTALION.	
Lieut. F. S. Poynder		13th January	1916
Capt. A. H. Parsons	2nd Battalion attd.	19th January	1916
Lieut. H. Hickley	2/7th G.R. attd.	26th January	1916
2nd Lieut. H. G. D. Clutterbuck	2/7th G.R. attd.	21st February	1916
Lieut. F. N. Lane	2/7th G.R. attd.	8th March	1916
Lieut.-Col. C. M. Porteous	Commandant	8th March	1916
2nd Lieut. O. J. Pryor	I.A.R.O. attd.	8th March	1916
2nd Lieut. H. Graham	I.A.R.O. attd.	24th April	1916
2nd Lieut. H. Tyler	I.A.R.O. attd.	17th August	1916

## WITH 2ND BATTALION.

Maj. G. C. Wheeler, V.C.		23rd February	1917
Capt. R. Blandy, M.C.		23rd February	1917
2nd Lieut. R. T. Russell, D.S.O.	I.A.R.O. attd.	23rd February	1917

## BATTLE CASUALTIES, 1914-1923

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2nd Lieut E. T. Kerr	I.A.R.O. attd.	23rd February	1917
2nd Lieut. C. W. F. Scott, O.B.E.	I.A.R.O. attd.	24th February	1917

### AFGHANISTAN, 1919.

Lieut. A. F. W. Brown	1st Battalion	17th May	1919
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### WAZIRISTAN, 1920.

#### WITH 2ND BATTALION.

Lieut. O. C. Noel	1/1st G.R. attd.	15th February	1920
Lieut. M. B. Allsebrook, M.C.		19th February	1920
Lieut. J. W. H. Harrison	1/1st G.R. attd.	8th April	1920

## GURKHA OFFICERS

### KILLED

#### FRANCE, 1914-1915.

Subedar-Major Bidan Sing Adhikari		21st November	1914
Jemadar Kishenbahadur Adhikari	2nd Bn. attd.	22nd December	1914
Subedar Bhairabahadur Khattri		11th March	1915
Subedar Ranbahadur Rawal		11th March	1915
Jemadar Bombahadur Gharti		11th March	1915

#### MESOPOTAMIA, 1916-1918.

#### WITH 1ST BATTALION.

Jemadar Baskar Bhandari	2nd Bn. attd.	13th January	1916
Jemadar Tilbikram Mal		13th January	1916
Jemadar Karnbahadur Khattri		17th April	1916
Jemadar Gajman Rai	A.M.P. attd.	17th April	1916

#### WITH 2ND BATTALION.

Subedar Gambir Sing Khattri		24th February	1917
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#### WAZIRISTAN, 1923.

Subedar Dalbahadur Bhandari	1st Battalion	6th February	1923
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### WOUNDED

#### FRANCE, 1914-1915.

Subedar Haridhoj Khattri, M.C.	I.D.S.M.	2nd November	1914
Subedar Himlal Khattri		4th November	1914
Subedar Jogi Chand	2nd Bn. attd.	8th November	1914
Subedar Sher Sing Adhikari		11th March	1915

Subedar Dilbahadur Khattri	2nd Bn. attd.	11th March	1915
Jemadar Damodhar Khattri	1st Battalion	11th March	1915
Subedar Kubir Sing Burathoki		31st May	1915
Jemadar Bombahadur Khattri	2nd Bn. attd.	5th September	1915

## MESOPOTAMIA, 1916-1918.

## WITH 1ST BATTALION.

Subedar Tikaram Majhi		13th January	1916
Subedar Dalbahadur Thapa		13th January	1916
Subedar Bhimlall Khattri	2nd Bn. attd.	13th January	1916
Subedar Puransing Khandka	2nd Bn. attd.	13th January	1916
Jemadar Wazir Sing Mahat	2nd Bn. attd.	13th January	1916
Jemadar Rup Sing Khandka	2nd Bn. attd.	24th February	1916
Subedar-Major Balbahadur Khattri		8th March	1916
Subedar Ratanbir Khattri, I.D.S.M.		8th March	1916
Subedar Gambir Sahi		8th March	1916
Subedar Karnbir Khattri,		8th March	1916
Jemadar Lalitbahadur Mal, I.D.S.M.		8th March	1916
Jemadar Bombahadur Khattri	2nd Bn. attd.	8th March	1916
Jemadar Wazir Sing Mahat	2nd Bn. attd.	15th April	1916
Jemadar Tilbir Thapa		17th April	1916
Jemadar Birkesar Sahi		17th April	1916
Jemadar Kulman Khattri, I.D.S.M.		17th April	1916
Jemadar An Sing Bisht	A.M.P. attd.	17th April	1916
Subedar Narbir Khattri		17th April	1916
Jemadar Panchbir Mal, I.O.M.	2nd Bn. attd.	24th April	1916
Jemadar Kharakbahadur Thapa		24th August	1916

## WITH 2ND BATTALION.

Jemadar Himlal Karki		23rd February	1917
Jemadar Durgadatt Sahi		24th February	1917
Jemadar Bhagatram Khattri		24th February	1917

## AFGHANISTAN, 1919.

Subedar Damarbahadur Sen	1st Battalion	17th May	1919
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## WAZIRISTAN, 1920.

## WITH 2ND BATTALION.

Jemadar Jaibahadur Mal		28th January	1920
Jemadar Hirabahadur Thapa		1st February	1920
Jemadar Hark Sing Khattri		19th February	1920

## BATTLE CASUALTIES, 1914-1923

251

Jemadar Samarbahadur Bhandari	19th February 1920
Jemadar Narbahadur Sahi	19th February 1920
Jemadar Pirthilal Karki	8th March 1920

### CASUALTIES—OTHER RANKS (including those of Drafts from other Units)

Campaign.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
France, 1914-1915 :			
1st Bn. . . . .	147	511	—
Mesopotamia, 1916-1918 :			
1st Bn. . . . .	117	351	—
2nd Bn. . . . .	35	132	6
Afghanistan, 1919 :			
1st Bn. . . . .	6	20	—
Waziristan, 1920 :			
2nd Bn. . . . .	31	92	—
Waziristan, 1923 .			
1st Bn. . . . .	11	26	—
Malabar, 1922 :			
2nd Bn. . . . .	—	2	—
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>1,164</b>	<b>6</b>

### III

#### OBITUARY OF BRITISH OFFICERS

1905-1935

Garratt, George Cashel (" G Cigarette Sahib "), Captain 1st Bn., Joined 9th Gurkha Rifles in Lansdowne 1901, Adjutant, and of 1st Bn. on formation of 2nd in 1904. Died of enteric fever at Landour, 31st August 1905.

Bradley, Hugh Vachell, Major 2nd Bn., Transferred from 2nd Gurkha Rifles on formation of the 2nd Bn. 31st December 1904. Died of enteric fever at Dehra Dun, 13th June 1906.

Turner, Harold Lionel Compton, Major 2nd Bn. (" Algy "), Joined 9th Gurkha Rifles in Lansdowne 1894, Seconded to Burma Military Police 1901, Posted to 2nd Bn. on formation 1905; with 2nd Bn. on service in Mesopotamia 1916, invalided. Died of heat stroke at Nowshera, 1918.

Pike, Geoffrey Davis, Major 1st Bn., Joined 9th Gurkha Rifles 1902, Qualified as Interpreter in Russian 1908, Qualified for Quetta Staff College 1913, with 1st Bn. in France as D.C.C. 1914-1915, Awarded Military Cross, General Staff IVth Corps and Brigade Major B.E.F. 1915-1916, with 1st Bn. Mesopotamia 1916, with 2/7th Gurkha Rifles Mesopotamia 1917, on special duty Transcaspia 1917-1918. Killed at Vladikavkaz 1918. Brevet lieut.-colonel.

Maclaran, Frank Nairne (" Franky "), Captain 1st Bn., Joined 9th Gurkha Rifles 1904, S.S.O. Bareilly 1912-1914, Joined 1st Bn. with draft at Basra 1916. Killed in action at Beit Aiessa, 15th April 1916.

Blewitt, Baker Arthur Rawson (" Blubarb "), Captain 1st Bn., Joined at Dehra, February 1905, Commanded Depot 1st Bn. on mobilization 1914 and joined Battalion at Marseilles, December 1915. Killed in action at Dujailah Redoubt, 8th March 1916.

Parsons, Alfred Henry (" Bingy "), Captain 2nd Bn., Joined April 1905, Qr.Mr. 1910-1912, Joined 1st Bn. with draft from 2nd September 1915, Wounded at attack on Arab Village, Mesopotamia, 19th January 1916. Killed in action at Dujailah Redoubt, 8th March 1916.

Mullaly, Herbert (" Erb "), Major 1st Bn., Joined June 1905, Adjutant 1st Bn. 1907-1911, Went with Battalion to France 1914, invalided November 1914, Raised and commanded Gurkha Convalescent Camp 1916-1917, with 2nd



Bn. in Mesopotamia 1918-1919, Commanded 2nd Bn. in Third Afghan War at Kohat 1919, with 2nd Bn. in Waziristan 1919-1920. Died of pneumonia at Jandola, 19th January 1920.

Heyland, John Roland Lacey ("Jacky"), Captain 1st Bn., Joined April 1906, Qr.Mr. December 1907-1911, Adjutant 1911-1915, Proceeded to France as Adjutant with 1st Bn. 1914, Awarded Military Cross 1915. Killed at Neuve Chapelle, 11th March 1915.

Gore, Annesley Charles Edward St. George (Charles), Captain 2nd Bn., Joined September 1907, Qr.Mr. 1913-1915, with 1st Bn. in Chitral 1910-1911, Joined 1st Bn. with draft in France 1915. Killed in action Rue du Bois, 26th June 1915.

Walton, Richard Crawhall ("Watty"), Lieutenant 1st Bn., Joined 1907, Qr.Mr. 1914, Proceeded to France with 1st Bn. as Machine-Gun officer. Killed in action, in first trenches, 7th November 1914.

Berry, Edward Fleetwood ("Squib"), Captain 2nd Bn., Joined September 1909, Extra A.D.C. to Governor of Bengal 1913-1914, Joined 1st Bn. in France November 1914, Adjutant 1st Bn. 1915-1916, Awarded Military Cross 1915. Killed in action Beit Aiessa, 17th April 1916.

Spreckley, Arthur Freer ("Spreck"), Lieutenant 2nd Bn., Joined December 1909, Joined 1st Bn. with draft 2nd Bn. August 1915, Wounded near Mauquisart September 1915. Drowned, with wife and one infant, when S.S. "Persia" was torpedoed, near Crete, December 1915.

Baillie, Duncan, Lieutenant 2nd Bn., Joined November 1910, Proceeded to France with 1st Bn. 1914. Killed in action, Neuve Chapelle, 2nd November 1914.

Hughes, Irvin John, Lieutenant 1st Bn., Joined March 1914; with Depot 1914-1915, Joined 1st Bn. at Marseilles, December 1915. Killed in action at Wadi, Mesopotamia, 13th January 1916.

Wilson, Robert Henry Birch, Captain 2nd Bn., Joined March 1915; with 2nd Bn. 1916-1919 in Mesopotamia, and at Kohat during Third Afghan War, 1919, Adjutant 2nd Bn. in Waziristan 1919-1920. Killed in action near Makin, 1st March 1920.

Kemp, Thomas Norman Campbell, Captain 1st Bn., Joined October 1913, with 1st Bn. in France 1914-1915, Awarded Military Cross in Mesopotamia 1916, Invalided to India 1916, with Nepalese Contingent 1917-1918. Killed in action at Loe Dakka, Afghanistan, 16th May 1919.

Henderson, Alan Gerald Russell, Lieutenant 1st Bn., Joined from R. Scots Fusiliers, February 1919. Killed in action Loe Dakka, 17th May 1919.

Brandon, Roy Victor, Major 1st Bn., Joined 1923 from Kumaon Rifles, Had been with 2nd and 4th Gurkha Rifles in France and Gallipoli 1914-1915. Died in England, 1931.

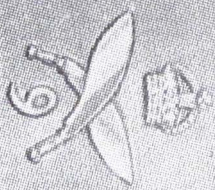
- Noad, Colin Kenneth, Captain 1st Bn., Joined 1917, with 1st Bn. in Third Afghan War 1919, and in Waziristan 1921-1924, with British Military Mission in Germany, 1920. Died of cholera at Bangalore, 1931.
- Cox, Francis Forster Fortnom, Lieutenant 1st Bn., Joined 1928 on transfer from Leicestershire Regt. Died at Dehra Dun, 1931.
- Hodder, Stanley Joseph, Lieutenant 1st Bn., Joined 1930, Qr.Mr. 1933. Died in Millbank Hospital, 1934.
- Gouldsbury, Cyril Arkwright, Lieut.-Colonel, Commandant 2nd Bn., Commissioned 1908 and joined Royal Fusiliers, Transferred to 2/5th Gurkha Rifles 1914, On active service with them in Mesopotamia 1916-1918, and N.W.F. 1921, Transferred to 1st Bn. 1932, Transferred to 2nd Bn. as Commandant 1934. Died at Dehra Dun, March 1936.

#### OFFICERS ATTACHED TO THE REGIMENT

- Rogers, Leonard Castel Campbell, Lieutenant 1/7th Gurkha Rifles, Attached to 1st Bn. in France, December 1914, Wounded while rescuing a wounded British soldier near Rue du Bois, 24th December 1914. Died of wounds the following day. Awarded Military Cross, posthumously.
- Ainsworth, Harry Lawrence, Captain 1/10th Gurkha Rifles, Attached to 1st Bn. in France 1915, Wounded at Battle of Loos, 25th September 1915. Drowned when S.S. "Persia" was torpedoed, near Crete, December 1915.
- Mowbray, William, 2nd Lieutenant, I.A.R.O., attached 1st Bn. France, September 1915, Wounded, attack at Wadi, Mesopotamia, 13th January 1916. Died of wounds the following day.
- Frisch, Charles, 2nd Lieutenant, I.A.R.O., Tea planter from Dooars, Attached 1st Bn., France, August 1915. Killed in action at Beit Aiessa, 17th April 1916.
- Hickley, Harold, son Colonel Hickley 3rd Gurkha Rifles, Lieutenant 2/7th Gurkha Rifles, Attached 1st Bn. Mesopotamia 1916, Wounded 13th January 1916. Killed in action 17th April 1916.
- Clutterbuck, Hugh Guy Daniel, 2nd Lieutenant, I.A.R.O., Attached 1st Bn. Mesopotamia, January 1916, Wounded February 1916. Killed in action at Beit Aiessa, 17th April 1916.
- Toogood, Percival Frederick, 2nd Lieutenant, I.A.R.O., Attached 2nd Bn. 1916. Killed in action at Shumran Crossing, 23rd February 1917.
- Alington, Henry George, 2nd Lieutenant, I.A.R.O., Imperial Forest Service, Attached 2nd Bn. 1916. Killed in action at Shumran Crossing, 23rd February 1917.
- Birch, Francis Wykeham Wallace, 2nd Lieutenant 2/2nd Gurkha Rifles, Attached 2nd Bn. in Waziristan 1919-1920. Killed in action at Cat's Head Picquet, 23rd January 1920.







TO THE GLORIOUS MEMORY OF THE OFFICERS 9<sup>th</sup> GURKHA REGTS  
 WHO WERE KILLED OR DIED ON SERVICE IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918.  
 THE AFGHAN WAR AND THE OPERATIONS IN WAZIRISTAN 1919-1920.

LEUT. D. BAILLIE 2/6 <sup>th</sup> and 1/5 <sup>th</sup> G.R. France.	2.11.14	LEUT. W. MERRIBY and 1/5 <sup>th</sup> Gurkha Regts Mesopotamia	13.16	2 <sup>nd</sup> LEUT. P. F. TIGGARD and 2/9 <sup>th</sup> G.R. Mesopotamia	23.2.17
LEUT. R. C. WALTON 1/5 <sup>th</sup> GURKHA REGTS.	7.11.14	CAPTAIN BARK BLENNT 1/5 <sup>th</sup> GURKHA REGTS	8.4.16	2 <sup>nd</sup> LEUT. H. G. ALINGTON and 2/9 <sup>th</sup> G.R.	23.2.17
LEUT. L. C. ROGERS M.C. 2/4 <sup>th</sup> and 1/6 <sup>th</sup> ..	25.12.14	CAPTAIN A. H. PARSONS 5/6 <sup>th</sup> and 1/9 <sup>th</sup> ..	8.4.16	BRIT. COL. G. D. PIKE M.C. 1/5 <sup>th</sup> G.R. India	15.8.18
CAPTAIN J. R. LHEYLAND M.C. 1/5 <sup>th</sup> GURKHA REGTS ..	11.4.15	CAPTAIN F. M. McLEOD 1/5 <sup>th</sup> GURKHA REGTS	17.4.16	MAJOR H. C. TURNER 2/9 <sup>th</sup> G.R. Waziristan	14.6.18
CAPTAIN A. E. S. GORE 2/9 <sup>th</sup> and 1/9 <sup>th</sup> ..	26.6.15	CAPTAIN E. F. BERRY M.C. 2/11 <sup>th</sup> and 1/9 <sup>th</sup> ..	18.4.16	CAPTAIN T. M. C. KEMP M.C. 1/5 <sup>th</sup> G.R. Afghanistan	17.5.19
CAPTAIN H. L. AINSWORTH 1/10 <sup>th</sup> and 1/9 <sup>th</sup> (Subaltern) 30.12.15	LEUT. W. D. HICKLEY 2/7 <sup>th</sup> and 1/5 <sup>th</sup> G.R. ..	18.4.16	LEUT. A. G. HENDERSON M.C. and 1/5 <sup>th</sup> G.R. ..	17.5.19	
LEUT. A. F. C. SPICKLEY 2/9 <sup>th</sup> and 1/9 <sup>th</sup> (SS) India	2 <sup>nd</sup> LEUT. C. FRISCH and 1/9 <sup>th</sup> G.R. ..	18.4.16	MAJOR H. MULLAY 1/5 <sup>th</sup> and 2/6 <sup>th</sup> G.R. Waziristan	19.1.20	
LEUT. J. HUGHES 1/5 <sup>th</sup> GURKHA REGTS Mesopotamia	13.1.16	2 <sup>nd</sup> LEUT. H. G. CUTTERBUCK 2/9 <sup>th</sup> and 1/5 <sup>th</sup> ..	18.4.16	CAPTAIN R. H. B. WILSON 2/9 <sup>th</sup> GURKHA REGTS ..	1.5.20
		LEUT. F. W. W. BIRCH 2 <sup>nd</sup> G.R. and 2/9 <sup>th</sup> G.R. Waziristan	23.1.20		

ERECTED IN AFFECTIONATE MEMORY BY THEIR BROTHER OFFICERS.

THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE, ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH, DEHRA DUN.



## IV

### HONOURS AND AWARDS FOR GALLANTRY IN THE FIELD 1914-1923

#### VICTORIA CROSS

Major G. C. Wheeler	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
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#### COMPANIONSHIP OF THE ORDER OF THE BATH

Lieut.-Col. G. T. Widdicombe	1st Battalion	France 1915
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#### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

2nd Lieut. R. T. Russell	I.A.R.O. attd. 2nd Bn.	Mesopotamia 1917
Major H. F. Collingridge	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
*Lieut. H. A. Fagan	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
Major H. Exham	2/7th G.R. attd. 2nd Bn.	Waziristan 1920
Lieut.-Col. F. E. Coningham	1/10th G.R. attd., and formerly of 2nd Bn.	Mesopotamia 1917

#### MILITARY CROSS

Capt. G. D. Pike	1st Battalion	France 1914
Capt. J. R. L. Heyland	1st Battalion	France 1914
*Lieut. L. C. C. Rogers	1/7th G.R. attd. 1st Bn.	France 1914 (Posthumous award)
Lieut. R. G. H. Murray	2nd Bn. attd. 1st	France 1915
Lieut. E. F. Berry	2nd Bn. attd. 1st	Mesopotamia 1916
Capt. R. Blandy	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
Capt. V. Beadon	Attd., and formerly of 2nd Bn.	Mesopotamia 1917
2nd Lieut. S. D. Gladstone	I.A.R.O. attd. 2nd Bn.	Mesopotamia 1917
Capt. W. P. Hogg	I.M.S. attd. 2nd Bn.	Mesopotamia 1917
Capt. F. S. Poynder	1st Battalion	Afghanistan 1919
*Lieut. W. C. Tungate	attd. 1st Bn.	Afghanistan 1919
Lieut. M. B. Allsebrook	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
Lieut. J. W. H. Harrison	1/1st G.R. attd. 2nd Bn.	Waziristan 1920
Capt. H. D. Minchinton	1/1st G.R. attd. 2nd Bn.	Waziristan 1920
Capt. G. P. Crampton	1st Battalion	Waziristan 1923

\*Signifies Immediate Reward.

*Lieut. F. McCallum	1st Battalion	Waziristan 1923
Subedar Haridhoj Khattri	1st Battalion	France 1914
Subedar Bhagatbahadur Adhikari	1st Battalion	France 1915
S.A.S. Gopinath Agarwal	I.M.D. attd. 1st Bn.	France 1915

## BAR TO THE MILITARY CROSS

Capt. R. Blandy	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
Capt. W. P. Hogg, I.M.S.	attd. 2nd Bn.	Mesopotamia 1917
Lieut. N. Hurst	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
Lieut. B. P. T. O'Brien	2/8th G.R. attd. 2nd Bn.	Waziristan 1920

## ORDER OF THE WHITE EAGLE OF SERBIA (4TH CLASS)

Major A. C. B. Mackinnon	1st Battalion	Mesopotamia 1916
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## ORDER OF BRITISH INDIA

1st Class. Subedar-Major Prem Sing Bisht	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
2nd Class. Subedar-Major Balbahadur Khattri	1st Battalion	France 1915
Subedar Chandrabir Thapa	1st Battalion	France 1915
Subedar Tikaram Majhi	1st Battalion	France 1915
Subedar Surbir Karki	1st Battalion	Special Rectg. Duty in India 1914-1916
Subedar Shibdhoj Mal	1st Battalion	Waziristan 1923
Subedar Padam Sing Thapa	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1918
Subedar Keshar Mal	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1918
Subedar-Major Jogi Chand	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920

## INDIAN ORDER OF MERIT (2ND CLASS)

*Subedar Mehar Sing Khattri	1st Battalion	France 1915
*Subedar Shibdhoj Mal	1st Battalion	France 1915
*L/Nk. Jamansing Khattri	2nd Bn. attd. 1st	France 1914
*Rfn. Panchbir Mal	2nd Bn. attd. 1st	France 1914
*Rfn. Tikaram Kanwar	1st Battalion	France 1915
*Rfn. Randhoj Karki	1st Battalion	Mesopotamia 1916
*Jemadar Karnbahadur Khattri	1st Battalion	Mesopotamia 1916
Jemadar Kishansing Bohra	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
Jemadar Himbahadur Sahi	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
Jemadar Lalu Khattri	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
Col. Hav. Mandhoj Sen	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
Nk. Lilabahadur Sahi	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917
Rfn. Tikaram Khattri	2nd Battalion	Mesopotamia 1917

\*Signifies Immediate Reward.

Hav. Amarjang Sen	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
Hav. Kubirsing Thapa	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
*Nk. Sarabjit Karki	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
*Nk. Dasrath Bisht	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
Nk. Birbahadur Khan	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
Rfn. Manbahadur Chand	2nd Battalion	Waziristan 1920
Rfn. Prembahadur Karki	1st Battalion	Waziristan 1923

INDIAN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

With 1st Battalion in France and Mesopotamia 1914-1916

Subedar Chandrabir Thapa  
 Subedar Haridhoj Khattri  
 Jemadar Damodhar Khattri  
 Jemadar Gajman Rai  
 Jemadar Tikaram Khattri  
 Jemadar Ratanbir Khattri  
 Havildar Lalitbahadur Mal  
 Havildar Gambir Sing Bohra  
 Havildar Puranbahadur Karki  
 Havildar Ranbahadur Sahi  
 Havildar Dinbahadur Kanwar  
 L/Nk. Kulman Khattri  
 L/Nk. Samarbahadur Mal  
 Rfn. Ranbahadur Sahi  
 Rfn. Gajbir Bisht  
 Rfn. Dhanbahadur Khattri  
 Rfn. Sirikishan Khattri  
 Rfn. Jahar Sing Khattri  
 Rfn. Kharakbahadur Bhandari  
 Rfn. Balbahadur Mal  
 Rfn. Manbahadur Sahi  
 Rfn. Kharakbahadur Basnet  
 Rfn. Kubir Sing Burathoki  
 Rfn. Astal Rai  
 Rfn. Dalbahadur Sen  
 Rfn. Newal Sing Khattri  
 Rfn. Panche Rai  
 Rfn. Balbahadur Khattri  
 Rfn. Dilbahadur Sen  
 Rfn. Lachman Khattri  
 Rfn. Jasbahadur Mal  
 S.A.S. Pohla Ram

\*Signifies Immediate Reward.

## HONOURS AND AWARDS, 1914-1923

## With 2nd Battalion in Mesopotamia 1917

Havildar Karnbahadur Basnet  
 Naik Birbahadur Sahi  
 Naik Dalbahadur Khattri  
 L/Nk. Tikabahadur Khattri  
 L/Nk. Moti Sing Thapa  
 Rfn. Tekbahadur Thapa  
 Rfn. Jasbahadur Mal  
 S.A.S. Wadilal Mohan Lal

## With 2nd Battalion in Waziristan 1920

Subedar Dhanbahadur Sen  
 Subedar Harak Sing Khattri  
 Jemadar Khaniram Khattri  
 Havildar Birbahadur Sahi  
 Naik Tikaram Thapa  
 Naik Bhawan Sing Adhikari  
 Naik Puranbahadur Thapa  
 Naik Keshar Mal  
 Naik Santabahadur Karki  
 Rfn. Jasbir Bisht  
 Rfn. Rabilal Khandka  
 Rfn. Uttar Sing Karki  
 Rfn. Anwar Kami  
 Rfn. Kharakbahadur Thapa

## EAR TO INDIAN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

Subedar Ranbahadur Sahi  
 Havildar Tekbahadur Khattri

## With 1st Battalion in Waziristan 1923

\*Subedar Jitbahadur Khattri  
 \*L/Nk. Balbahadur Sen  
 \*Rfn. Khuje Gharti  
 \*L/Nk. Gajbahadur Khattri  
 \*L/Nk. Sakhtiperchand Mal  
 L/Nk. Khatakbahadur Khan  
 \*Subedar Shibdhoj Mal

## MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

With 1st Bn. in France and Mesopotamia 1914-1916	.	.	25
With 2nd Bn. in Mesopotamia 1917	.	.	13
With 2nd Bn. in Waziristan 1920	.	.	8

\* Signifies Immediate Reward.



CROSS OF THE RUSSIAN ORDER OF ST. GEORGE (4TH CLASS)

Subedar Bhagatbahadur Adhikari	1st Battalion	France 1915
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MEDAL OF THE RUSSIAN ORDER OF ST. GEORGE

Rfn. Tikaram Kanwar	1st Battalion	France 1915
S.A.S. Gopinath Agarwal	I.M.D	France 1915
Hav. Matbar Thapa	1st Battalion	Mesopotamia 1916
Rfn. Newal Sing Khattri	1st Battalion	Mesopotamia 1916

## V

### WAR SERVICES OF THE BRITISH OFFICERS, OTHER THAN THOSE WITH THE REGIMENT

1914-1923

- Lieut.-Col. H. D. Watson. Inspector-General, Imperial Service Troops, A.H.Q. Simla, 1914. Commander, Imperial Service Brigade, Suez Canal, Egypt, and Palestine, 1914-1918. Commander, Suez Canal Defences, 1914. Governor of Jerusalem, 1918. Promoted major-general. K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G.
- Lieut.-Col. H. F. Bateman-Champain. Commanded 1st Bn. 4th Gurkha Rifles in Gallipoli, 1915. Commander, 36th Infantry Brigade, 14th Division, Mesopotamia, 1917-1918. Commander, British Troops in North Persia, 1918. Promoted brig.-general. C.M.G.
- Major J. McK. T. Hogg. Raised and commanded 3rd Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles, 1916-1918.
- Major C. R. Bradshaw. G.S.O.2, Aden, 1914-1915. G.S.O.1, India, 1916-1918. D.A.Q.M.G., Waziristan, 1919-1920. C.B.E.
- Major F. G. Marsh. Military Attaché, Meshed, 1914. On special duty with Russian Army in the Caucasus, 1914-1917. Special duty counter Russian Revolution, 1917-1918. Bt. lieut.-colonel. Promoted brig.-general. C.M.G., D.S.O. Two Russian decorations.
- Major H. C. Duncan. D.A.Q.M.G., 1914. Bde.-Major Canal Bde., 1914-1916. Bde.-Major, India, 1916-1917. D.A.Q.M.G., North Persia, 1917-1918. A.Q.M.G., G.H.Q. Mesopotamia, 1918-1921. D.S.O., O.B.E. Bt. lieut.-colonel.
- Major W. L. O. Twiss. G.S.O.2, Indian Corps, 1914-1915. France, G.S.O. 1 and 2, 1st Army B.E.F. France, 1915-1917. G.S.O.1, India, 1917-1919. Bt. lieut.-colonel. C.B.E., M.C., Legion of Honour, Order of the Sacred Treasure.
- Major G. D. Pike. With 2nd Bn. 7th Gurkha Rifles, Mesopotamia, 1917. Special duty in Transcaspia, 1917-1918. Killed at Vladikavkaz, 1918. Bt. lieut.-colonel.
- Captain A. H. Jukes. Staff Captain, I.S.Bde., on Suez Canal, 1914-1915. S.C., B.M. and G.S.O.2, Canadian Army Corps, 1915-1917. D.S.O. Bt. major.

- Major M. Goodall. Commandant, Assam Rifles, 1914-1918. Operations against the Kukis, 1917-1918. M.B.E. With Garhwal Rifles, Waziristan, 1920.
- Capt. R. G. H. Murray. Joined R.F.C., 1915. With London Air Defence, 1916. Wing Commander, R.A.F. India, 1917-1918, and Palestine, 1918.
- Major R. W. Russell. With 3rd Bn. 3rd Gurkha Rifles, Palestine, 1918.
- Lieut. M. B. Allsebrook. With Knox British Military Mission, Siberia, 1919.
- Lieut. O. J. Pryor. With Knox British Military Mission, Siberia, 1919.
- Capt. H. de L. Penfold. Bde.-Major, North Persia, 1918-1919.
- Capt. G. P. Crampton. With Northamptonshire Regt., T.F., Gallipoli, 1915. With Hampshire Regt., T.F., Mesopotamia, 1916-1917.
- Capt. R. M. E. King. With 7th Bn. Middlesex Regt., T.F., France, 1915-1917.
- Capt. W. L. Fawcett. With Yorkshire Regt., France, 1915-1917. Wounded. M.C.
- Capt. G. B. Matthewman. With 1/111th and 3/152nd Infantry, Iraq, 1916-1918. Palestine, 1918. With 2/150th Infantry, Waziristan, 1919-1920. M.C. and Bar.
- Capt. C. W. F. Scott. With Ceylon Planters' Rifles, Gallipoli, 1915. Wounded. Wrecked in S.S. "Persia," 1915. With, and Adjutant of, 3rd Bn., 11th Gurkha Rifles, Waziristan, 1920. O.B.E.
- Capt. W. R. Selby. With 6th Bn. Lincolnshire Regt., Gallipoli, 1915, and France, 1916-1917. Wounded. 1/98th Infantry, Persia, 1917-1918, and Waziristan, 1921-1924.
- Capt. R. B. Fawcett. With R. Scots Fusiliers, France, 1916-1918. M.C.
- Capt. N. Hurst. With R. Dublin Fusiliers, France, 1916-1918. M.C.
- Capt. H. A. Fagan. With Yorkshire Regt., France, 1916-1918. M.C. and Bar.
- Lieut. B. S. Hartland. With 1st Bn. 3rd Gurkha Rifles, Mesopotamia, 1919, and Persia.

## VI

### PERMANENT COMMANDANTS OF THE REGIMENT

1817-1935

- 1817 Major C. S. Fagan. Raised the Infantry Levy.  
1818 Major T. P. Smith. First Commandant of the XXXII Native Infantry.  
1824 Major A. Bucke. First Commandant of the LXIII Native Infantry.  
1825 Lieut.-Colonel H. E. G. Cooper.  
1830 Major C. W. Brooke.  
1833 Major J. Harris.  
1837 Lieut.-Colonel J. B. Smythe.  
1844 Major J. H. Mackinley.  
1845 Lieut.-Colonel C. D. Wilkinson.  
1847 Lieut.-Colonel C. Coventry.  
1849 Lieut.-Colonel R. Houghton.  
1857 Lieut.-Colonel J. Hannyngton.  
1859 Lieut.-Colonel W. Lennox.  
1860 Lieut.-Colonel R. Troup. Regimental Designation changed to IX Bengal Infantry.  
1864 Lieut.-Colonel H. L. Pester.  
1874 Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Hawes.  
1880 Colonel T. E. Webster.  
1885 Lieut.-Colonel F. F. J. Toke.  
1886 Lieut.-Colonel V. W. Tregear, C.B.  
1893 Lieut.-Colonel H. O. Woodhouse. First Commandant 9th Gurkha Rifles.  
1899 Lieut.-Colonel A. C. O'Donnell.  
1900 Lieut.-Colonel F. G. R. Ostrehan. 2nd Battalion raised 1904.

#### 1ST BATTALION

- 1905 Lieut.-Colonel J. M. Stewart.  
1907 Lieut.-Colonel E. E. Couper.  
1912 Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Widdicombe, C.B.

- 1916 Lieut.-Colonel C. M. Porteous.  
1918 Lieut.-Colonel C. R. Bradshaw, C.B., C.B.E.  
1921 Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Duncan, D.S.O., O.B.E.  
1923 Lieut.-Colonel G. C. Wheeler, V.C.  
1927 Lieut.-Colonel A. H. Burnett, D.S.O.  
1931 Lieut.-Colonel C. P. Blackett.  
1935 Lieut.-Colonel F. S. Poynder, M.V.O., O.B.E., M.C.

## 2ND BATTALION

- 1905 Lieut.-Colonel C. Y. Crommelin.  
1910 Lieut.-Colonel H. D. Watson, C.I.E., M.V.O.  
1915 Lieut.-Colonel C. M. Porteous.  
1917 Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Widdicombe, C.B.  
1918 Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Bateman-Champain, C.M.G.  
1921 Colonel W. L. O. Twiss, C.B.E., M.C.  
1923 Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Collingridge, D.S.O.  
1928 Lieut.-Colonel E. S. Harcourt, M.C.  
1932 Lieut.-Colonel R. Blandy, M.C.  
1935 Lieut.-Colonel C. A. Gouldsbury.

## 3RD BATTALION

- 1917-1921 Lieut.-Colonel A. C. B. Mackinnon.

## VII

### ORDER OF BATTLE, MEERUT DIVISION

1914

Commander, Lieut.-General C. A. Anderson, C.B.  
A.D.C., Captain B. de L. Brock, 126th Infantry.

#### STAFF

G.S.O., 1st Grade, Colonel C. W. Jacob, I.A.  
G.S.O., 2nd Grade, Major W. P. L. Davies, R.F.A.  
G.S.O., 3rd Grade, Captain R. E. Crichton, K.R.R.C.  
D.A.A.G., Captain B. J. Haslam, R.E.  
A.Q.M.G., Colonel A. L. Lindesay, I.A.  
D.A.A. and Q.M.G., Bt. Lieut.-Colonel H. Isacke, R.W. Kent.  
A.P.M., Captain L. Griffith, 107th Pioneers.  
A.D. Signals, Captain R. G. Earle, R.E.  
A.D.M.S., Colonel F. H. Treherne.  
D.A.D.M.S., Major H. Boulton, I.M.S.  
A.D.V.S., Captain E. C. Orton, A.V.C.  
Veterinary Officers { Captain D. Macdonald, A.V.C.  
Lieut. H. D. Lewis, A.V.C.  
A.D.S., Lieut.-Colonel A. R. Burlton, S. and T. Corps.  
A.D.T., Lieut.-Colonel H. A. P. Lindsay, S. and T. Corps  
D.A.D.O.S., Captain C. Reed, R.A.  
D.J.A.G., Lieut.-Colonel C. W. Field, Cant.-Mag. Dept.  
C.M.A., Major R. E. Carr-Hall, Mily. Accts. Dept.  
T.C.O., Captain W. B. Bailey, 2nd Gurkha Rifles.  
Chaplains { Rev. R. Irwin, C. of E.  
Rev. A. Macfarlane, Presbyterian.

#### *Attached to Divisional H.Q.*

Colonel H.H. The Maharajah of Bikanir, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., A.D.C.  
Major H.H. The Maharajah of Kishengarh, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

#### *19th Infantry Brigade.*

Commander, Brig.-General C. E. Johnson, 1st Bn. The Seaforth Highlanders.  
Bde.-Major, Major H. A. Walker, 1st Bn. 9th Gurkha Rifles.  
R. Fusiliers, 2nd Bn. 2nd Gurkha Rifles.  
S.C., Capt. J. C. Freeland, 35th Sikhs, 6th Jat Light Infantry.

#### *Troops.*

*20th Infantry Brigade.*

Commander, Major-General H. D'U.  
Keary, C.B., D.S.O.  
Bde.-Major, Major A. Young, 1st  
Gurkha Rifles.  
S.C., Captain D. Forster, R.E.

*21st Infantry Brigade.*

Commander, Major-General F. Mac-  
bean, C.V.O., C.B.  
Bde.-Major, Major A. E. Glasgow,  
R. Sussex.  
S.C., Captain M. A. Hamer, 129th  
Infantry.

*Divisional Troops.**Divisional Artillery.*

Commander, Brig.-General A. B.  
Scott, C.B., D.S.O.  
S.C., Captain R. E. Lynch-Staunton,  
R.A.

*5th Bde. R.F.A., H.Q.*

63rd Battery, R.F.A.  
64th Battery, R.F.A.  
73rd Battery, R.F.A.  
Bde. Ammunition Column.

*9th Bde. R.F.A., H.Q.*

19th Battery, R.F.A.  
20th Battery, R.F.A.  
28th Battery, R.F.A.  
Bde. Ammunition Column.

*11th Bde. R.F.A., H.Q.*

83rd Battery, R.F.A.  
84th Battery, R.F.A.  
85th Battery, R.F.A.  
Bde. Ammunition Column.

*Meerut Divl. Ammunition Column.*

*Troops.*

2nd Bn. The Leicestershire Regt.  
2nd Bn. 3rd Gurkha Rifles.  
1st Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles.  
2nd Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles.

2nd Bn. The Black Watc..  
41st Dogras.  
58th Vaughan's Rifles (F.F.).  
2nd Bn. 8th Gurkha Rifles.

*Divisional Engineers.*

Commander, Lieut.-Colonel P. G.  
Twining, R.E.

Field Engineers	}	Major C. G. W. Hunter, R.E.
		Capt. H. S. Gaskell, R.E.
		Capt. E. H. Kelly, R.E.
		Capt. C. D. W. Bamberger, R.E.

No. 3 Company, 1st S. & M.  
No. 4 Company, 1st S. & M.  
No. 35 Divl. Signal Company.  
No. 2 Printing Section. 1st S. & M.  
No. 2 Photo Litho Section. 1st S. & M.

*Field Ambulances.*

No. 19 British Field Ambulance.  
No. 20 British Field Ambulance.  
No. 128 Indian Field Ambulance.  
No. 129 Indian Field Amoulance.  
No. 130 Indian Field Ambulance.

4th Cavalry.  
107th Pioneers.

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