

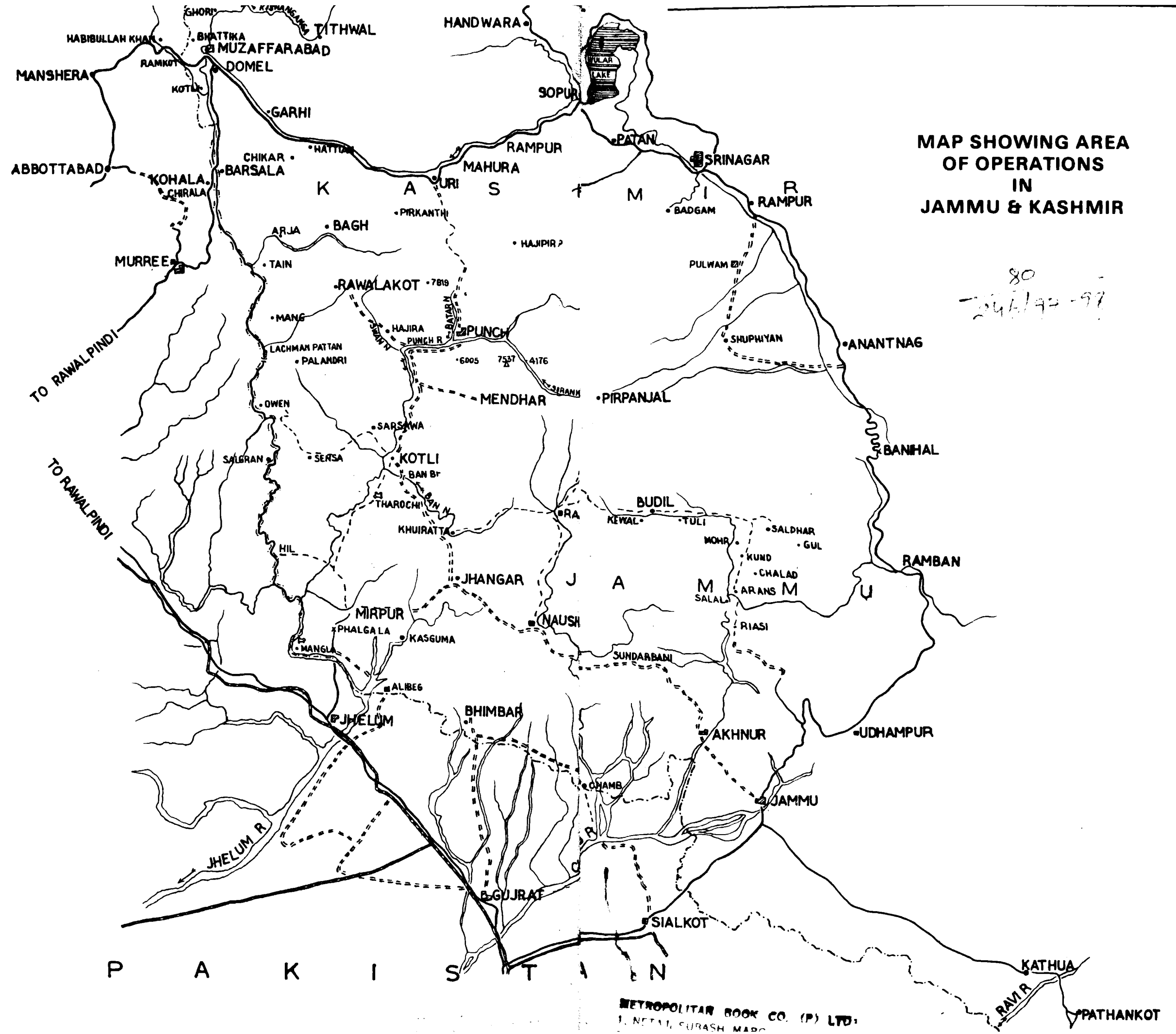
JAMMU AND KASHMIR ARMS

MAJOR-GENERAL D.K. PALIT



MAP SHOWING AREA
OF OPERATIONS
IN
JAMMU & KASHMIR

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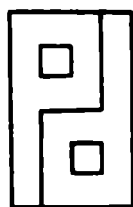




JAMMU AND KASHMIR ARMS

History of the J&K Rifles

MAJOR-GENERAL D.K. PALIT, VrC



PALIT & DUTT, PUBLISHERS
DEHRA DUN

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This Book is Dedicated
to
All Ranks of the J&K Rifles
Past and Present

Preface

As the Colonel of the Regiment writes in the *Foreword* to this book, we decided from the start to make it a Regimental History with a difference. Instead of assembling the usual stereotyped account limited to regimental activities and sub-unit trivia (which young officers read only under duress) we resolved to compile a history of the military traditions of the Jammu and Kashmir region so that the story of the J&K Rifles would be presented against a backdrop of the regional tradition of arms, which would be of interest both to Regimental officers and to students of Indian military history.

The compiling of this book has been of particular interest for me because during the J&K campaign of 1947-48 my own battalion, the 1st Battalion 9th Gorkha Rifles, served alongside three battalions of J&K infantry in Poonch. Many of the names and incidents recorded in this book are familiar to me and the writing of it enabled me to renew acquaintance with many old friends when I visited Jammu in search of personal accounts.

I am grateful to the Commandant of the J&K Regimental Centre, to Colonel Goverdhan Jamwal, Lieutenant-Colonels Maluk Singh, Kanwal Singh and Bhagwan Singh and many other retired J&K officers for providing me with an outline record of Regimental events. To my first research assistant, Margaret Sood, I am indebted for all the collation work, for producing the first draft of chapters 1 to 8 and for organising the research material for the chapters on the J&K campaign. Her assistance was invaluable.

Pamela Burdick, who worked with me during the final year of this compilation, not only researched and wrote the chapter on the operations in Gilgit and Baltistan (1947-48) but also edited the whole manuscript and helped in numerous other ways to see the book through the press. To her I acknowledge a very great debt.

Lastly, I record my gratitude to Catherine Burdick who devoted many days of her winter holiday in India in meticulously going through the proofs not only correcting errors but also making valuable suggestions in style and syntax.

Finally, I thank "Kash" Katoch, Colonel of the Regiment, for his whole-hearted support both in enabling me to obtain all the details and other requirements for producing a book such as this and for his generous cooperation at all times.

Palisade
Dehra Dun
March, 1972

D.K. PALIT
Major General

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Foreword

by

LIEUT-GENERAL K.S. KATOCH, MC
Colonel of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles

It was as far back as 1962 that the writing of the history of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles was first mooted. In those days young officers were still required to pass their Retention examination in which Regimental history was one of the subjects prescribed. In the case of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles which had been formed from the erstwhile State Forces, there was no written Regimental history in existence. An *ad hoc* Research Cell was set up by those of us who happened to be posted at Army Headquarters in New Delhi, to try and dig up old records. As a result of this research a small pamphlet was brought out and kept at the Indian Military Academy for distribution to new officers joining the Regiment.

A significant development from this research was the fascinating prospect of preparing a history which would not only be a Regimental history in the normal military sense but one that would cover the entire evolution of Jammu and Kashmir Arms from ancient times and through the four generations of the Dogra *raj*. Such a work would be of interest not only to the military reader but also to any student of history interested in this momentous period. Moreover, this would also cover the many gaps in the past and more specially the critical days just before and after Independence which have either not been recorded or about which loose statements and snide remarks have been made based either on misinformation or out of prejudice.

We felt that it was our duty that the courage, sacrifice and the unstinted loyalty displayed by officers and men of the Jammu and Kashmir State Forces during this critical period should not go unrecorded. There has been some talk, mainly by those who themselves have made little contribution to the Regiment, that perhaps it would have been better to employ one of our own officers to write

this account. I am glad, however, that wiser counsel prevailed in getting a military writer of repute to write an unbiased account in a style and language worthy of the cause. The presentation that follows will show that this was indeed a wise decision and I congratulate General Palit and all those who have assisted him in the final outcome.

It will be noted that this book was purposely intended to keep clear of any controversy of what may have appeared elsewhere and also not to enter into an unseemly exercise in mud-slinging. Let facts speak for themselves and let the reader be the judge.

The author has gone to great trouble in ferreting out factual information after two years of research which included checking and cross-checking with units, officers and men who either took part themselves or could be relied upon as first hand witnesses. The chapter dealing with the J&K operations of 1947-48 may appear to be disproportionately long. However, as I have mentioned earlier, it was intended that the events and operations during the critical days from July to October 1947, when the state and its ruler stood alone, should be covered in detail. It will be seen from this account that *this* was the time when the fate of Jammu and Kashmir indeed hung by a "slender thread". He has also brought out why Brigadier Rajinder Singh although holding the appointment of Chief of Staff, went out to Mahura at the head of a small force and sacrificed his life. As an eye-witness to these events I can say that but for this delay imposed on the enemy, the entire history of subsequent events may well have been different. In fact, it is my considered view that but for the sacrifice made by Brigadier Rajinder Singh and later by Colonel Ranjit Rai of the Indian Army, we would undoubtedly have lost the Valley.

This volume takes the history up to the end of 1947-48 Kashmir operations, with an *Epilogue* to cover the post-operation period. When a fuller account can be written of the 1962, 1965 and 1971 operations, I hope this will form the subject of a second volume. Among the many who have helped to prepare this work, I would particularly like to thank Kanwal, Goverdhan and Raj Katoch for their contribution and, even more, their refreshing enthusiasm on Regimental matters. I would also like to thank Dr Karan Singh for contributing the historical pictures which appear in this work from his personal collection. His advice and good wishes have always been welcome.

My own time as the Colonel of the Regiment is now coming to

an end and there can be no better opportunity for me to express my gratitude to all ranks of the Regiment for the signal honour they did in asking me to become their first Colonel. Any small contribution I may have made in the service of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles has undoubtedly given me the greatest satisfaction and a sense of achievement in my military career. This has been made possible only by the support and unfailing co-operation I have had from all ranks throughout the last twelve years.

I have already named some of those who have helped me in not only bringing out this Regimental history but who have also been close to me in other Regimental matters. I would, however, like to make a special mention of the real architects of the Regiment—the younger lot of our Officers who, although coming from different parts of India, have completely aligned themselves with the men and the traditions of the Regiment. They came like a breath of fresh air, removing the cobwebs of intrigue and petty jealousies and establishing an *esprit de corps* which is now second to none.

I must also put on record the contribution made by some of the more senior Officers who have come to us from other Regiments and who, with few exceptions, staked their own future entirely to the cause of the Regiment. It gives me no little satisfaction that some of them have distinguished themselves in the recent Indo-Pak War and quite a few are now well qualified to reach the higher rungs of promotion.

Lastly, no doubt past history is important but only if kept in the correct perspective. I have known many old Regiments with even finer record fall by the wayside because they continued to rest on past laurels. The present and the future matter more in the life of a Regiment, always and every time. From what I know of the present generation, I have not the slightest doubt that the future record of the Regiment will surpass its past glory.

Simla
3 March, 1972.

K.S. KATOCH
Lieut-General



MARTAND

1

Medieval History and Military Background

FEW REGIONS of the world have been so generously endowed by nature as the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. Nestling between the inner and outer ranges of the great Himalayàs, the Vale of Kashmir contains some of the grandest scenery in the world. Awe-inspiring mountain peaks laden with perpetual snow, serene lakeland expanses and the lush pastures of numerous winding valleys—all these made Kashmir an outstanding attraction for travellers long before the modern era of industrialised tourism.

Broadly speaking, the state comprises three main physical areas—the northern region beyond the Zojila range of the outer Himalayas, drained by the middle reaches of the Indus; the Vale of Kashmir, lying between the two Himalayan ranges and drained by the Jhelum and Kishenganga rivers; and the southern strip of the Jammu plains, drained by the upper reaches of the Chenab. To the north, its mountain border marches with those of Afghanistan, Sinkiang, and Tibet; and to the south with that of Pakistan.

Legend has it that Kashmir Valley was originally a vast lake, known as the Lake of Sati, the consort of Shiva. In it dwelt a *rakshas*, or demon, Jalodbhava, who frequently devastated the neighbouring regions. Once when the sage Kashyapa, King of the Nagas, was on a pilgrimage in the north of India, his son Nila, King of the Kashmiri Nagas, told him about the devastations of Jalodbhava. Kashyapa sought the help of Brahma and other gods who agreed to mount a divine campaign against the *rakshas* and accordingly took up positions on the mountain peaks around the lake. Vishnu directed his brother to drain the lake by piercing the mountains. When this was done and the waters drained out to the west, Vishnu and the other gods fell on Jalodbhava and killed him. Kashyapa then sent human beings to settle in the newly drained land, “where they dwelt among gods and goddesses.”

Appealing as the legend is, it is also a fact proven by archaeological research that Kashmir Valley was indeed originally a lake. However, between prehistory and the classic era there is a wide gap unfilled by archaeological or other scientific research.

On the other hand, we are fortunate in that Kashmir has produced a unique work of literature—Kalhana’s *Rajtarangini* written by the great philosopher-poet during the twelfth century. It records in elegant Prakrit verse four thousand years of Kashmiri legend and lore—from 3000 BC to 1100 AD. It is the earliest known work of Indian history and was translated into the Persian in Moghul times.

Beautiful as is the homeland of the Kashmiris, it is unfortunate that their history should have been so singularly devoid of beauty and serenity. From the earliest times the people of Kashmir have lived through an almost continuous period of turbulence and tyranny, constant warfare, savagery and exploitation. It is true that periodically there have appeared such illustrious rulers as Meghavahana and Lalitaditya, Shahab-ud-din and Zain-al-Abdin—whose reigns brought peace and prosperity for brief periods—but they could do little to mitigate the overall misery of millennia.

The Aryans who moved across Central Asia into India are the first people who can be traced to residence in Kashmir. The first recorded king was Gonanda I, a relative of the king of Magadha. Kashmiri tradition says that when Magadha was engaged in battle with Krishna on the banks of the Yamuna, Gonanda went to his relative’s aid at the head of a large army and besieged Krishna in a fortress. The Kashmiris fought bravely but were eventually routed and Gonanda was killed by Krishna’s brother. While no mention

is made of Kashmir in the *Mahabharata*,¹ the Kashmiris cling to the belief that the Pandavas once ruled in Kashmir.

Between the prehistoric and mythological eras of Kashmiri history and the reign of Ashoka, Kashmir constituted part of the Gandharvan Empire in eastern Afghanistan. We also know that after the expansion of the Persian Empire in the fifth century BC, Kashmir came under Persian rule for a brief period. However, it is only in the reign of the Great Ashoka that Kashmiri political history begins to take form.

The grandson of the founder of the Mauryan Empire, Ashoka, was sent on a mission to North India by his father to restore order in prosperous Taxila. His acquaintance with Kashmir grew thereafter and he took great interest in developing and beautifying the region. He is credited with having founded the original city of Srinagar. However, the most significant feature of Ashoka's association with Kashmir was his propagation of Buddhism. Under his direction the new religion spread in Kashmir and from there to Central Asia. The Valley of Kashmir became for some time a renowned centre for the study of Buddhism.

After the death of Ashoka, one of his sons, Jalauka, became the independent ruler of Kashmir. During his reign Kashmir was prey to constant raids by "foreigners", possibly Greek chieftains who had remained behind in India after Alexander's return to Macedonia. Jalauka is credited with repulsing these invasions, overrunning Kanauj and Gandharva and importing intellectuals from those areas to Kashmir.

After the decline of the Mauryan Empire, raids by the Indo-Greeks increased in intensity and at various times parts of Kashmir came under foreign rule, particularly the southern areas. These contacts between the Greeks and the Kashmiris had one fortunate result—they brought the influence of Greek art to Kashmir and the fusion produced the Gandharva school of art, the application of the classic Greek style to Buddhist subjects.

While the art of the Indo-Greek period flourished, the dominions of the rulers declined with the migration from Central Asia of a nomadic, restless people, the Kushans—who descended upon North India in the first century AD and soon established their empire. Buddhist records, coins, and copper pieces found in Kashmir attest to a long period of Kushan rule.

Kanishka, the best remembered of the Kushan monarchs, was converted to Buddhism and became a staunch supporter of the religion. The third Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir under

his direction and Kashmir, already an intellectual centre, became for a time the main seat of Buddhism. Kushan rule in Kashmir did not long survive Kanishka and except for occasional religious conflicts Kashmir experienced a peaceful era until the arrival of the Huns in the fifth century.

Coming from Central Asia across the northern passes, as did all early invaders and conquerors of India, the White Huns under Mihirakula succeeded in undermining the Gupta dynasty of Magadha and wreaking havoc in their wake. When Mihirakula was finally defeated by the kings of Malwa and Magadha, he took refuge in Kashmir, eventually seizing the throne and establishing a reign marked by cruelty and depravity. In later life, he became a worshipper of Shiva and reintroduced Hinduism to Kashmir. Eventually, the nobles of Kashmir rebelled against the Hun ruler and overthrew him.

Although much of the annals of Kashmir concern warring kings and tales of conquest and civil war, neither Kalhana nor any other contemporary historian tells us a great deal about military organisation. The first details we have of a feat of Kashmir arms concerns the reign of Pravarasena, who ruled Kashmir during the middle of the sixth century—a scion of the powerful Ujjain dynasty which had been invited to accept the throne of Kashmir when Mihirakula was overthrown.

Pravarasena is credited with having organised a vast expeditionary force with which he embarked upon an invasion of the plains of India, eventually reaching Gujarat—where he founded the city of Prayapura. On return to his native Kashmir he set about organising the hill chieftains of the area to form a system of regional defence to withstand the marauding Central Asian tribes. The exploits of Pravarasena established a tradition of military supremacy of Kashmir that was to last for more than a hundred years.

The founding of the Karkota dynasty in the mid-seventh century marked the beginning of one of the high points in early Kashmiri history. The first ruler was an expansionist and extended the dominions of Kashmir from Poonch to Taxila and to the central plains of the Punjab. The political influence of Kashmir was significant in this period. Chinese records (left behind by Huein Tsang, a pilgrim who visited India in 631–633 AD) indicate that the Kashmir ruler was recognized as a king by the Chinese Emperor and his friendship much valued. It is also known that Chinese military help was sought against Arab incursions into Kashmir in the early eighth century.

The zenith of the Karkota dynasty was reached in the mid-eighth century under the fourth ruler, Lalitaditya, a contemporary of Charlemagne. His accomplishments in administrative and economic reform were many but he is primarily renowned for his military prowess and achievements. He was greatly influenced in political and military affairs by the Chinese, whose techniques were superior to those of the Indians.

For the most part, Lalitaditya recruited his army from the hill tribes, probably the forbears of the Dogras. In this period the king's army was under the control of a commander-in-chief called the *Kampanesa*. He was one of the highest officials in the administration, second only to the heir apparent. The *Kampanesa* was responsible for organizing foreign expeditions and leading the royal forces in battle. However, Lalitaditya himself maintained a close relationship with his troops, charting their strengths and weaknesses and measuring individual talents. He engendered a loyalty which helped counter rebellions or mutinies during set-backs.

While there is no accurate record of the strength of the army in this period, estimates indicate that Lalitaditya and his successor, Jayapida, maintained armies consisting of 100,000 and 80,000 litters respectively. (Litters were seats for the high-born warriors mounted on platforms and carried or pulled by slaves or low caste conscripts). Recruitment to the army was open to all castes and classes and there were Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and agriculturalists all holding responsible posts in the military organisation. Lower classes were often pressed into military service for menial duties.

With this well organised army Lalitaditya succeeded in extending his empire across the Punjab plains to Kanauj, and then marched across Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. From there, he answered a request for help in the Deccan in a local succession struggle and returned to Kashmir by way of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Lalitaditya then turned his attention to the north of Kashmir where he marched through Dardistan and established effective control to thwart any attempt by the Arabs to move into Kashmir from that sector. And in the east, when the Tibetans began moves that threatened his kingdom, he conquered Ladakh easily and intimidated the Tibetans sufficiently to dissuade them from any further territorial ambitions.

Lalitaditya's grandson, Jayapida, attempted to maintain the empire but in so doing depleted the treasury and weakened the kingdom. His expeditions to Allahabad, Bengal and Kanauj accom-

plished little as they yielded only meagre tribute and territory of questionable value to Kashmir. These expeditions were particularly expensive since the caste army in the Hindu period was considered to be in the direct employ of the King and soldiers and officers were paid regular monthly salaries directly from the royal treasury. Furthermore, a handsome allowance was paid to the troops when they marched outside their cantonments. Nor were supplies for the army left in the hands of private traders; instead, logistical staffs were maintained to procure fodder for animals and to see to the administration, uniforms and equipment of the troops. Weapons and armaments were produced in state-owned armament factories with very little help from outside sources. Such vast state enterprises began to have their effect on the treasury.

The later Karkota rulers were incapable of effective rule and allowed their relatives and friends to abuse the power and resources of the court. Consequently, territories of the kingdom were lost and revenues wasted as the Karkota dynasty came to a dismal end in the mid-ninth century.

A new dynasty soon arose, the Utpalas, remembered only for the introduction of a vast and efficient irrigation system in the Valley. The remainder of the century of their rule saw inept foreign expeditions, the introduction of forced labour (the *Begar* system) and a totally debauched and corrupt administration. The politico-military situation reached so low a level that at one point, when a queen ruled Kashmir, her paramour, a former buffalo herdsman, was the commander-in-chief of the army. Rajouri, then a possession of Kashmir, tried to assert its independence but the army, under the upstart herdsman entered Rajouri, burned it and forced it to pay tribute to Kashmir.

The rule of absurdity that had gripped Kashmir for many generations passed into the House of Lohara at the queen's death when one of her nephews ascended the throne. During the early years of Lohara rule, in the beginning of the eleventh century, the latest of the many invaders of North India, Mahmud Ghazni, began a series of raids into the Punjab though he did not attempt any incursions into Kashmir. However, when he threatened Und, a neighbour of Kashmir, the ruler sought help from Kashmir. The Kashmir king sent a large body of troops, but it proved vulnerable in battle against the invaders, who fought with new tactics. Instead of taking defensive positions as advised by the leader of Und, the

Kashmir army attacked Mahmud's forces, was defeated and forced to retreat. Und then came under Mahmud's control.

An attempt was made by Mahmud of Ghazni to invade Kashmir in the second decade of the eleventh century but it failed. His invasion route was to have been up the valley of the Jhelum and through Toshmaidan Pass, but the fort of Lohkot, on the southern slopes of the Pir Panjal range near the Pass, withstood his seige and he was forced to withdraw.

During this period a new force emerged in Kashmir which significantly influenced the affairs of state: the feudal landlords, or Damaras. The Lohara dynasty, the last of the Hindu kings, imposed heavy taxes to enable the rulers to carry out forays against the Damaras—but as the latter exercised wide control throughout the Valley, they held people firmly in an economic vice. Intrigue was rampant among these landed nobles and they were not averse to playing at king-making.

Thus, there was always some pretender or other who claimed the throne and engaged the king's forces in battle, often employing guerrilla tactics in the mountain fastnesses. The Loharas did not distinguish themselves in military exploits. In fact even the best known of the Lohara rulers, Harsa, was defeated in many of his major undertakings, particularly in a campaign against Rajouri; and in his attempt to capture a fort *en route* to Dardistan, a snow-storm forced the army to retreat—until the Dards made it a rout by pursuing and harassing the invaders.

Harsa's ultimate defeat was at the hands of the Damaras. His clumsy war machine was not good enough to withstand their guerrilla tactics. Conspiracies between the Damaras and other aspirants for the throne resulted in widespread civil war in which the anti-royalist guerilla forces captured the heights surrounding Srinagar and then attacked downhill from the northern slopes—thus avoiding open combat with the only well trained troops, the Royal Cavalry. Their surprise attack succeeded in panicking the king's army. The attackers entered the city and in a fierce battle in the streets, Harsa's war elephant was wounded. When the animal bolted Harsa's forces were demoralised—and he himself was killed.

The organisation of the army under Harsa was typical of the military organisation of the middle ages in Kashmir. There were four traditional units: elephantry, cavalry, infantry, and litters (which were used in place of chariots in the plains) as well as eighteen "divisions". Elephants were of little use in the mountains but in the

Kashmir army they were employed mainly for portage and, occasionally, in attack and defence on level ground. In battle, the elephants were protected by armour covering the head, joints and other parts but they were nevertheless vulnerable to arrows because of their huge bulk and slow, lumbering gait. In marked contrast, the cavalry was the main strength of the Kashmir army. The horses were imported from Central Asia and Afghanistan and thrived on the rich pastures of Kashmir. In battle both the horse and the rider were protected by armour and the horseman carried two javelins and a buckler (a short sword) and wore chain armour and a helmet. The importance of this "heavy cavalry" was such that rulers reckoned their stability by its calibre.

The Kashmir infantry was heavily armed—carrying a broad two-handed sword suspended from the left shoulder, and a long buckler. Each man also carried either a javelin, a bow or a mace, and a doubled-edged long knife slung from his belt. The infantry was highly trained in archery and dart-shooting; these missiles were often coated with poison. Harsa's enterprising commander-in-chief sometimes ordered the archers to smear vegetable oil on the arrows, and ignited them before despatch: the enemy was thus doubly dismayed. The sling was a popular weapon in Kashmir from the time of Jayapida to the reign of Gulab Singh. The stone used in sling was always a round pebble so that it could be discharged with extraordinary accuracy.

It is interesting to note that though we have learned about two illustrious warrior kings—Pravarasena and Lalitaditya—whose military exploits took them far beyond the borders of their own territories, most other campaigns of Kashmir medieval history were fought defensively within its borders or just beyond. Hence the Kashmir armies of those days were organised and trained essentially for positional, defensive warfare and never acquired the streamlined, flexible character of, say, Alexander's Army. Nor was there ever a highly developed tactical consciousness among the commanders; generalship depended more upon birth, personality and leadership than on military acumen.

While supply and transport facilities were catered for, the mountainous nature of the terrain made wheeled transport impracticable. In its place there developed the *corvée* system, borrowed from the Tibetans, whereby all able-bodied villagers who were not pressed into combat service were made to perform forced portage duties in relays between villages—transporting food, fodder and armaments for an army on the march.

The kings of the twelfth century were hardly exemplary rulers but any good they might have done was thwarted by the pernicious influence of the Damaras. Because of the unrest in Kashmir and North India, connections with outside centres of trade and commerce were gradually severed. Dependence on local agriculture increased and the power of the landlords expanded enormously. The landlords exercised their authority in their districts and villages by means of their own mercenary troops and often threatened the king's authority. The kings tried to subdue them but various efforts ended in failure.

The maintenance of security in Kashmir depended primarily upon the well-planned system of forts on the borders and at strategic locations within the Valley. These forts were of two types: land forts and water forts. Land forts were usually built on the spurs of hills. (The Damaras in their rebellion against the ruler often built their own fortresses at the seat of their holdings). As for Srinagar, in spite of being the seat of cultural and political affairs since ancient times, it had no fort of its own until the sixteenth century. However, even up to the fourteenth century the natural defences of Srinagar—water on three sides and a narrow strip of high ground in the north—were sufficient to enable it to withstand the occasional attacks to which it was subjected at the end of the Hindu period. Fortifications along the water's edge were referred to as "water forts."

The forts on the passes were garrisoned by small detachments of trusted troops under the command of an officer called the *Kotapadati*. These garrisons were settled permanently in their forts and usually held the surrounding agricultural land in fief. The system aimed at enabling these forts to withstand long sieges and for that purpose ponds were dug to store water and pits to hold snow in the winter. While maintenance of watch on the passes and defence against invaders were their primary tasks, subsidiary tasks were also allotted—such as preventing a rebel from escaping, or collection of customs duties and local police administration.

The overall commander of these frontier forts, the *Dvarapati*, was one of the most important military figures in Kashmir. He also had command of the marches and exercised judicial power over the *Kotapadati* and the commanders of the individual forts.

The close of the Hindu period in Kashmir was marked by moral degeneration of the ruling families so extreme as to bring statecraft to a standstill. Areas once subservient to Kashmir asserted their independence—among them the Kabul Valley, Rajouri, Poonch, Kangra, Jammu, Kishtwar and Ladakh. These principalities

turned hostile to the Srinagar administration and began to conduct raids on the capital that once controlled them.

It was during this period of instability that Islam came to Kashmir. Mahmud of Ghazni had tried to invade Kashmir with a huge army of "human locusts" over the Pir Panjal Pass in 1015 AD and again in 1021, but each time he was repulsed. However, though the Muslim conqueror was held at bay, the ideas and practices of equality that Islam preached had already begun to make an appeal to the downtrodden masses of Kashmir.

The transition from the Hindu era to the Sultanate period was made by one Shah Mir, a Muslim *jagirdar* from Swat who had been appointed a minister in Srinagar and later rose to be prime minister of Kashmir. In 1343 AD, he seized the throne and declared himself king under the title of Shams-ud-din—thus founding the Sultanate dynasty which ruled Kashmir for two hundred and twenty-two years.

During the rule of the Sultans, Islam became firmly established in Kashmir and its artistic and cultural expression flourished. However, as rulers the Sultans brought no greater stability than their Hindu predecessors and Kashmir did not benefit economically or politically.

Foreign conquest was resumed under the Sultans. In the early period of the Sultanate the army was kept in good condition and used vigorously in the conquest of Sind, Afghanistan, Ladakh, Baltistan, Kishtwar and Jammu. The commanders capitalized on the combat abilities of the hill people and encouraged their martial traditions. Under good leadership the army of the Sultanate soon grew into a formidable force and even ventured to engage the forces of the Emperor of Delhi on the banks of the Sutlej. Although the outcome was a stalemate, the treaty that followed allowed the Kashmir ruler jurisdiction over all the territory from Sirhind to the borders of Kashmir.

The strength of the Kashmir expeditionary force at the battle on the Sutlej against the Delhi forces was about 1,00,000—consisting of 50,000 cavalry and 50,000 foot soldiers. It was the best army that Kashmir had ever produced because it was an entirely professional standing army.

The earlier Sultans of Kashmir had instituted a recruiting system organising the army into four distinct socio-military categories—the standing, regular army; the provincial or territorial army; the feudal levies; and the "volunteers."

The principal source of internal power and external prestige was,

of course, the regular army—which was always billeted in or around Srinagar under the Sultan's personal command. It consisted mainly of cavalry and infantry elements—but also included a small elephant corps and an auxiliary corps consisting of archers, slingers and battering rams. The classes recruited into the regular army were mainly Khasas and Rajputs, with a Kashmiri admixture of Magreys, Chaks, Rainas, Damaras and Lavanyas. In addition, hill tribes from Kishtwar, Poonch and Rajouri were also eligible for enlistment.

In battle the regular army was trained to adopt the standard formation of Muslim armies of those days. The first line of skirmishers, the vanguard, consisted of a mixture of mounted and dismounted troops. The two cavalry wings on each flank came next, somewhat behind the vanguard but ahead of the main body. They corresponded to the Moghul *tulghama*, and their main role was envelopment from the flanks. The main body for shock action contained the elephantry and infantry under the direct command of the C-in-C. Behind them came the *chandawal* or rearguard.

This formation did not make for great manoeuvrability, especially before the days of artillery when the opposing forces approached each other fairly closely before engaging in battle. It was only the employment of the cavalry on the flanks that gave the commander-in-chief some semblance of mobility and flexibility. However, as standing armies go, the Kashmir regular army during the early Sultanate period was as good as the best anywhere in India.

The provincial army was a territorial *gendarmerie* force, recruited on a state-wide basis but stationed permanently in outlying areas such as the main passes or along the main trade routes. Their task was to defend the ingresses to the Valley, or at least to hold the enemy till the regular army could be rushed to the scene. Their subsidiary role was the maintenance of law and order and to carry out the duties of armed police. The provincial force was paid from the royal treasury and was not subordinate to local administrations. The head of this organisation was called the *Nayak* (the successor of the old *Dvarapati*).

Of much smaller significance were the feudal levies, who were the personal troops of local nobles and did not owe direct allegiance to the Sultan. However, the feudal levies could be summoned by the Sultan when the country was threatened with invasion—and although their standards of arms, equipment and training were far below those of the regular army, they did on occasion render yeoman service to the state.

It is not entirely clear who the “volunteers” were. The system was probably introduced by the Sultans to open up a channel for the higher caste Kshatriya families to seek voluntary military service. In all probability the “volunteers” signified a method of entry into official military service rather than a separately organised body of troops.

Weaponry in general continued much the same during the early Sultanate period as it was during the Hindu kingdoms. Personal weapons of the soldiers were the sword, spear, battle-axe and mace—and the auxiliaries carried bows and slings. Both foot soldiers and cavalry wore armour—even the horses being lightly armoured with chain mail.

The most illustrious of the Sultans was Zain-ul-Abdin, a great monarch who achieved communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims—and has been described as the Akbar of Kashmir. Having spent some years at the splendid court of Tamerlane in Samarkand, Zain-ul-Abdin had acquired a high degree of general education—including architecture, engineering and military science. He not only initiated vast irrigation and road construction projects in the state but also led his army to many conquests in the Punjab plains and in western Tibet.

After the Sultanate dynasty came to an end there was a brief period when the Chaks, descendants of the Dards, ruled Kashmir—but as usual their main concern was the amassing of huge personal fortunes regardless of the plight of their subjects. A series of internecine wars brought the administration of the state to a standstill. So desperate was the situation that a deputation of nobles went to the Moghul Court in Delhi and invited the Great Akbar to include Kashmir in his dominions, an invitation which the Emperor accepted. With the passing of the Chaks ended the independence of Kashmir State.

Akbar's rule was marked by a number of religious, social and economic reforms—not the least of which was a law preventing the mal-practices of the army in their areas of location. In fact, so rampant were those abuses that Akbar at one stage completely disbanded the local army, garrisoning the state with Moghul troops. However, after a period, Kashmir forces were re-raised and the strength of the Moghul-Kashmir army brought up to 90,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry.

Towards the end of Moghul rule its hold on Kashmir became increasingly tenuous—mainly because of the system of absentee

governors who preferred to live amidst the splendours of the Moghul Court in Delhi rather than in the remote fastness of a provincial capital.

As effective control of the Empire gradually shrank after the death of Aurangzeb it became more and more difficult to administer an outlying province like Kashmir with any degree of effectiveness. Constant raids by plundering hill tribes from the Zanskar Range and the Kangra principalities further disrupted the local governmental system—and gradually the peripheral territories began to assert their independence.

The next dynasty to rule Kashmir was that of the Afghan, Ahmed Shah Abdali—the successor to Nadir Shah. It is interesting to note that in spite of the internal strife and disorder then prevalent in Srinagar and the Valley, the Kashmir army defeated the army of Ahmed Shah Abdali in its first attempt to invade the Valley. When the Afghans returned the next year and marched up to the Pir Panjal Pass, one determined faction in Kashmir sought to give battle again and mustered a strong force at Shopiyan, a village situated at the foot of the northern side of the Pass. However, the commander of the force defected to the Afghans and the battle was stillborn. The Afghans were able to march through to Srinagar and claim possession of the Valley.

Conditions under the Afghan governors were far worse than under the Mughals and for the sixty years of their rule Kashmir was prey not only to natural disasters, against which an ineffective and corrupt administration could offer no relief, but also to constant persecutions and oppressions. Many Kashmiris fled to escape the cruel taxation, trade was crippled and agriculture largely abandoned.

Amid the succession of rapacious governors occasionally a ruler of compassion and moral fortitude would appear on the scene. One such was Raja Sukh Jiwan, an adviser to an Afghan governor who proclaimed himself ruler of Kashmir on the death of the governor in 1754. He promptly declared his allegiance to the Moghuls in Delhi and administered Kashmir benevolently for eight years.

To defend the Valley from marauding Afghans, Raja Sukh Jiwan reorganised the Kashmir army virtually from scratch. Unable to muster a regular field force quickly, he concentrated on revitalising the old mountain *gendarmerie*—and was soon able to train and equip a force of 30,000 soldiers to man the passes and other ingresses to the Valley. This force did its duty well—and kept the Afghans out of Kashmir for nearly a decade. Unfortunately Raja Sukh Jiwan

became overconfident about his military strength and, in 1756, embarked upon an ambitious campaign southwards to repossess some of the hill districts which had traditionally been under Kashmir rule—the principalities of Bhimber, Rajouri and Jammu. The latter, however, sought the help of the Afghans and in a prolonged campaign the Raja finally lost out and Kashmir once again came under Afghan rule.

Subsequent Afghan governors failed miserably to govern the province with any semblance of impartiality, indulging instead in rampages of extortion, religious bigotry and wholesale looting. Those nobles who entered government service were played off against each other and the governors alternated between declaring themselves independent of Kabul and surrendering the province to invaders.

With the rise of the Sikhs in the Punjab it was inevitable that Afghan dominance in North India should be gradually undermined. As dissensions within the Afghan territories increased, its power weakened and strategic control of the area passed into the hands of the new strong man of India, Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

In 1812, after Kashmir had been declared an independent state by yet another governor, Ata Muhammed Khan, the Afghan ruler Mahmud Khan sought Ranjit Singh's help to subdue the rebel governor. Ranjit Singh sent a *misl* of 10,000 Sikhs under Diwan Mukhand Chand to join the Afghan ruler's punitive expedition to Kashmir. At the foot of the Pir Panjal Pass the Sikhs and Afghans engaged the forces of the rebel governor in a furious battle and defeated them. Thereafter the wily Sikh ruler not only accepted the tribute promised him by the Afghan King—one third of the annual revenue of the Afghan governorate of Kashmir—but also extracted from the defeated governor of Kashmir the strategic fort of Attock, which had until then been under Kashmir control.

So desperate had the internal situation become in Kashmir under the Afghans that after this first contact with the Sikhs, the Hindu nobles resolved to seek Ranjit Singh's support. One nobleman, Birbal Dhar, who had been appointed to the post of revenue collector by the new governor, Azim Khan, escaped to Jammu and sought shelter with Raja Gulab Singh, who gave him an introduction to his brother, Dhyani Singh, a trusted member of Ranjit Singh's court. Ranjit Singh was persuaded in 1819 by Birbal Dhar to send an army to invade and take Kashmir.

In April, 1819, Ranjit Singh sent an army of over 30,000 troops

under the command of Prince Kharak Singh and Diwan Misr Chand — and himself followed up to the first camp at Wazirabad, whence he could direct the campaign and arrange logistical support. The occupation of Attock fort had made his line of communication secure.

The Sikh army was pushed up to Rajouri, from where it split into two columns—one each under Kharak Singh and Misr Chand—with the aim of making a pincer movement against Kashmir Valley. The earlier expedition had given the Sikh army much experience of mountain warfare and the two columns found no difficulty in forcing their way northwards.

Kharak Singh went up the Jhelum Valley and entered Kashmir through Baramulla, while Misr Chand crossed the Pir Panjal. The two columns converged on Shopiyan, where they sighted the Afghan army—about 12,000 strong—arrayed for battle. The main engagement was fought on 3 July, when the superior artillery of the Sikhs wrought havoc in the Afghan ranks. The issue was quickly decided: the Afghans fled before the Sikh onslaught, giving the Sikhs clear passage to Srinagar and possession of Kashmir.

The inauguration of Sikh Rule in Kashmir did not redress all grievances immediately but the Sikh governors at least abstained from oppressive treatment of the subjects. There were outbreaks of religious persecution as the Sikhs sought to check the emergence of Muslim opposition and some of the governors reimposed heavy taxes. However, there were no massacres, extortions or wilful destruction under the new Sikh governors and by the late 1820s there was a semblance of economic recovery in the state.

Ten Sikh governors ruled in Kashmir between its annexation and the Treaty of Lahore in March 1846 (by which Kashmir was transferred from Sikh rule, through the British, to Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu.)

The first governor was the general who had helped conquer the province, Diwan Misr Chand. During his brief tenure, he consolidated Sikh power in the Valley and extended Ranjit Singh's control into the surrounding hills. Diwan Moti Ram, the son of Ranjit Singh's able general, Diwan Mukhand Chand, was the second governor. His revenue collector was Birbal Dhar, the same Kashmir nobleman who had earlier invited Ranjit Singh to enter the Valley. Moti Ram's administration while not particularly vigorous was just and helped restore stability in the state.

Upon Moti Ram's retirement the Maharaja deputed his famous

general, Hari Singh Nalwa, as the governor of Kashmir. However, Hari Singh Nalwa was a better general than administrator and had to be recalled after a short tenure. His revenue policy, although also administered by Birbal Dhar, was so exacting that the Kashmiri taxpayer found himself too heavily burdened. Albeit, Nalwa does have two accomplishments to his credit: the conquest of Uri (when its chieftain defaulted in his payment of annual tribute); and the introduction of a common currency, the Hari Singh rupee, which was worth, at that time, about twelve annas. This currency was used thereafter for all transactions throughout Jammu and Kashmir and continued in use until the late nineteenth century.

When it appeared that Hari Singh was less than an astute administrator, Maharaja Ranjit Singh replaced him with the same Moti Ram who had preceded him. The second term of this popular governor saw continued attempts at improving the conditions of the people of Kashmir. However, jealousies continued to smoulder among the ruling *elite*, especially between the governor and the revenue minister. The ensuing intrigue impeded progress in economic conditions. Accordingly, in 1825, Moti Ram was succeeded by his son, Diwan Kirpa Ram. Paradoxically it was during the rule of this mild and somewhat self-indulgent governor that Kashmir began to experience its long-awaited economic recovery. A new land settlement was made and while large sums of money had to be paid as annual revenue, other taxes were apparently not oppressive.

When Raja Zabardast Khan of Muzaffarabad attempted to revolt against Sikh rule, Kirpa Ram led a punitive expedition into the hills to subdue him. The rebels at first inflicted heavy losses on the Sikh army but under the leadership of Ganesh Pandit Dhar, the minor hill chiefs were subdued and Zabardast Khan was captured and imprisoned.

Although Kirpa Ram's six years of rule brought stability, beautification of Srinagar and much revenue to the Lahore Durbar, he was dismissed ignominiously when Dhyani Singh conspired against him and urged Maharaja Ranjit Singh to replace him.

For a year Kashmir was administered by an acting governor, Bhima Singh Ardali. During his tenure a severe clash erupted between the Shias and the Sunnis resulting in the destruction of a suburb of Srinagar. The subsequent appointment of Prince Sher Singh as governor in 1832 proved to be of no great value to Kashmir. There was a severe famine when an early snowfall destroyed the rice harvest. Thousands starved or emigrated but Prince Sher Singh

failed to take any action to import grain or release hoarded stocks. Complaints about the Prince's indolence led Maharaja Ranjit Singh to replace him with another of his able military commanders, Mian Singh.

Colonel Mian Singh was the most successful Sikh Governor of Kashmir. His first move was to relieve the famine by importing grain from the Punjab. He remitted some of the taxes and reorganised the revenue system. A degree of prosperity was restored to the villages and the functioning of the government was revitalized. Agricultural loans were made to farmers without interest and a system of weights and measures was introduced. Mian Singh also dispensed justice promptly and fairly and devoted himself to the task of being an equitable administrator.

Unfortunately his fellow Sikhs did not share his sympathy for the people of Kashmir. Sikh soldiers posted in Kashmir were accustomed to imposing their own taxes and demands on the Kashmiris, especially as their pay was usually in arrears. When Mian Singh exercised rigid control over these excesses by the army, they revolted and murdered him in April 1841. To quell the ensuing uprising and punish the mutinous troops Maharaja Ranjit Singh's successor, Maharaja Sher Singh, despatched Raja Gulab Singh to Kashmir with a strong force. When peace had been restored, Maharaja Sher Singh appointed Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din governor in 1842.

Raja Gulab Singh who had been the ruler of Jammu since Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed him in that position in 1820, had been gradually extending his influence in the regions around Kashmir, some of which had earlier been subject to Kashmir. Many members of Ranjit Singh's court and several governors of Kashmir had resisted Gulab Singh's ambitious moves but the Maharaja was favourably inclined towards Gulab Singh and his brother, Dhyani Singh, and their posts were reasonably secure. As related in a subsequent chapter, Gulab Singh, with the aid of his famous general, Zorawar Singh, extended control over Ladakh, Baltistan and Skardu and during the power struggle and instability in Lahore after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, Gulab Singh was able to wield considerable influence in the affairs of Kashmir. Wisely, he maintained good relations with the new governor, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din, and was thus able to exploit the resources of Kashmir for his own purpose.

Mohi-ud-din was a just and able administrator and ruled Kashmir well during the three years he served there. He attempted to improve

the conditions of the people by such measures as reducing grain prices, awarding grants to scholars and religious leaders and restoring mosques and temples. When Raja Gulab Singh's army of 6,000 men moved through Kashmir to reduce Ladakh after Zorawar Singh's defeat and death in 1842, ten thousand villagers were deputed to carry the Jammu army's baggage into Ladakh that winter and fifteen days' rations were provided for the soldiers. The burden on the Kashmiris was heavy but perhaps there was some satisfaction in the ultimate success of Gulab Singh's expedition and the eventual subjugation of Ladakh.

Mohi-ud-din himself was then engaged in extending his own control in Gilgit. Unstable conditions in the ruling dynasty there had encouraged the Sikhs to send a force under Mathra Dass. He chose a ruler who would be responsive to the directives of Lahore and Gilgit became a territory of the Sikhs. However, Mohi-ud-din was not so successful in quelling a revolt of the Bombas in Muzaffarabad. Their leader, Zabardast Khan, had been imprisoned in Srinagar but his deputy, Sher Ahmed, attacked Ghori, inflicted thousands of casualties on the Sikh army, raided the countryside and began a march on Srinagar. The governor's son, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, opposed him with twelve thousand troops at Shilal but was defeated and Zabardast Khan was returned to Muzaffarabad.

On Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din's death in 1845, he was succeeded by his son, Imam-ud-din, who also had the friendship and confidence of Gulab Singh. However, in spite of this and his own leadership he was powerless to contribute greatly to the state's welfare. Conditions in Lahore at the seat of Sikh power had seriously deteriorated in the six years after Ranjit Singh's death. Several rivals claimed and vied for the throne only to be murdered or to die in the midst of their struggles. Administration had crumbled; the fiscal position was shaky; the army, its pay in arrears, was discontented; and the British, in their anxiety to secure their northern frontier, were beginning to exert pressure. As the last Sikh governor of Kashmir, Imam-ud-din was unable to rule effectively and could do little but witness the downward slide of the Sikh empire.

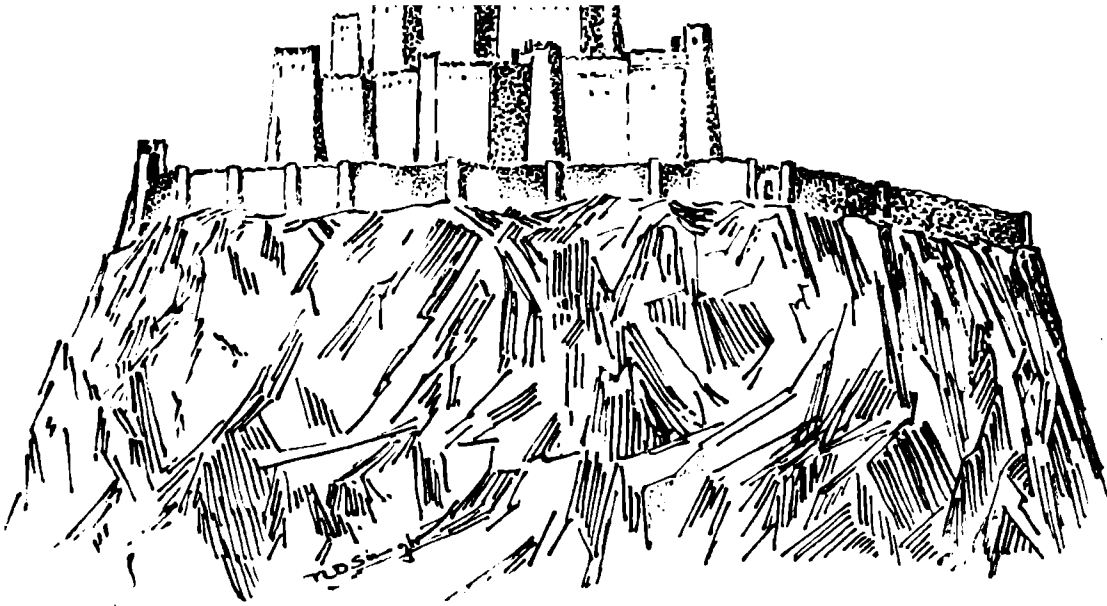
Mal-administration and court intrigues so weakened the power of the Sikhs that the British, who had been covetously eyeing the Sikh territories, at last saw the opportunity for a conquest of the Punjab. The Sikh *mists* were dispirited and some of the Sikh chieftains were already in communication with the British—willing to surrender the sovereignty of their empire in exchange for personal aggrandisement.

On 13 December, 1845, the British attacked the Sikh army near Hari-ki-Pattan on the Sutlej. Subsequent battles were fought at Mudki, Ferozeshahr, Buddowal and Aliwal. At the last battle, the traitorous Sikh generals, Tej Singh and Lal Singh, sent information of their battle positions to the British and then fled the battlefield. The British were thus able to encircle the Sikh positions and put their redoubtable artillery out of action. A crushing defeat was then inflicted on the Sikhs. The First Sikh War ended in a decisive victory for the British.

The treaties concluded between the Sikhs and the English were negotiated by Raja Gulab Singh, a mediator acceptable to both sides. By the Treaty of Lahore of March 9 and 11, 1846, the Sikhs were required to relinquish the Jullundur Doab and both banks of the Sutlej River, pay an indemnity of Rs 1.5 crores and reduce their army to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. A British unit was to be posted in Lahore for the remainder of the year, with the Sikhs paying the expenses.

The Sikhs were unable to pay the full indemnity and instead ceded additional territory to the English; the hill territories between the Beas and Indus Rivers, including Kashmir and Hazara. As the English were not prepared to occupy so much additional territory and preferred to encourage a rival power to balance the Sikhs, they kept only the eastern-most portions (Kangra, Kulu, Nurpur and Mandi) and sold the rest, principally Kashmir, to Raja Gulab Singh for Rs 75 lakhs. On March 16, 1846, the Treaty of Amritsar was concluded by which the British recognised Raja Gulab Singh and his descendants as rulers of Jammu and Kashmir. It is reported that Gulab Singh wryly commented upon this generous reward that he was "Zar zarid"—a slave bought with gold.

The history of Kashmir arms henceforward revolves around its Dogra ruler and the Dogra people. It would therefore be appropriate at this juncture to pause in our study of the military history of Jammu and Kashmir to trace the story of the origin and development of the Dogras of the hills of north-west India.



KANGRA FORT

2

The Dogras : Their History and Culture

ALTHOUGH JAMMU has been tightly bound to Kashmir during the last century, the state has had its own and very separate development. Little of substance is known about these hill tracts before the thirteenth century but the Dogra homeland, situated on the summit of the first sloping ridges rising from the plains of the Punjab, has been inhabited, fought over, transversed, cultivated and extolled since the ancient *Puranic* periods of Indian history.

Just east of Jammu city are two lakes—Mansar and Siroinsar. It was from these two lakes, “do garta” or “do girath” that the original name of the region was derived “Durgara”. (The word “Durgara” appears on two eleventh century copper plates from Chamba relating events of the tenth century.) Initially the term was a geographic designation but the word “Dogra” has come now to refer to the inhabitants of the hilly regions of Jammu and Kangra regardless of the class or clan to which they belong.

The Dogra people trace their ancestry back to the *Mahabharata*,

in which history and mythology are intertwined. According to Kangra tradition the Dogra is a descendant of the founder of the Katoch branch of the Lunar race of Rajputs, Susarma Chandra. He was a descendant of Bhum Chand, a mythological figure miraculously created out of sweat which fell from the brow of the goddess Bhagvati. The original kingdom of Susarma Chandra was supposed to have been located at Multan. Tradition says that he married the daughter of Raja Duryodhana of Hastinapura (Har-dwar) who made Susarma Chandra commander of his forces in the Great War against the Pandavas in the thirteenth century BC. After Duryodhana's defeat at Thanesar, Susarma Chandra settled in Jalandhara (probably the present Jullundur and at the time considered synonymous with Kangra and the neighbouring plains) and founded the Katoch dynasty. The Katoch kings ruled from ancient times until Akbar's capture of Kangra fort in 1556—through the turbulent years of invasion, destruction and re-structuring of north India.

The area now known as Jammu originally consisted of about twenty-two small Dogra states of which Jammu State was the most important and influential. These small states were probably founded by Rajput adventurers from Oudh and Delhi when men and armies moved north to halt the advancing Greeks under Alexander in the fourth century BC.

According to legend the house of the Jammu Dogras is descended from the *suryabansi* or solar branch of Rajputs and its first scion, Agnigiri, came from Ayodhya. His descendant, Jambulchand of the Manhas clan who moved into the hills from Sialkot, laid the foundations of Jammu *raj*. Later, one of his sons, Daya Karn, is said to have conquered and ruled all of Kashmir—as did his descendants for 52 generations.

In the eleventh century AD, when Jammu was still known as Durgara, the capital was at Babbapura, seventeen miles east of Jammu city. Two or three rajas of Babbapura were vassals of Kashmir in the century. Jammu city became the capital in the thirteenth or fourteenth century and the rajas of Jammu took their name, Jamwal, from the capital.

The territory of the Dogra rulers extended from the northern Punjab plains into the hills of Jammu and Kangra. Survival, unity and sovereignty became increasingly difficult during the middle ages due to a series of invasions to which north India was subjected from the eleventh century onwards. About the time of the incursions

of Mohammed Ghorī at the end of the twelfth century, the Kangra kingdom was forced to retreat further into the hills abandoning its earlier capital in the plains, Jalandhar. And in the fourteenth century, Jammu and Kangra lay in the path of the retreating invader, the infamous Timur, after his ferocious sweep through Delhi, Meerut and Hardwar in January, 1398. Timur's army marched along the Siwalik Hills and captured Kangra on January 16. The rival kingdoms and small principalities combined against the invader but were impotent in the face of his massive and destructive army. Jammu was sacked and the people of the hills massacred in large numbers.

Thus, except for occasional references to the region, a detailed account of Jammu begins only during the Moghul Empire. Kangra fort was the first stronghold in the area to fall into Moghul hands in 1556, when Akbar ascended the throne. He also took over sixty-six villages to form an imperial estate with a quota system under which each kingdom or principality had to pay tribute to the Emperor. In 1595, seeking to consolidate and secure his rule in the northwest, Akbar extended his control over several of the hill kingdoms including Jammu, Jasrota, Mankot, Lakhanpur, Bhadu and Balaur. Once secure in this quarter, Akbar (as also his successors) concentrated their attention and forces further south—so that the hill states of Jammu and Kangra were no longer molested. The states, for the most part feudatories, retained a great deal of independence during Moghul rule but were free to manage their own affairs. However, twice during Moghul rule the Rajputs of Jammu and Kangra themselves staged rebellions against the emperors. In retaliation, the Emperor Jehangir made them pay tribute and send hostages to his court.

When the zenith of the Moghul Empire had passed and north India was again open to invasion from without and conflict within, the hill states attempted to reassert their independence and recover the territory earlier ceded to the Moghuls. The invasions of the Afghans under Ahmed Shah Abdali in the 1750s precipitated the transfer of the hill states from Moghul to Afghan rule as the vigorous Afghans humbled the crumbling Moghuls. When the Afghans advanced on Delhi, the Moghul Emperor ceded his western and northern territories to Ahmed Shah Abdali to hold him off. Thus, Jammu and Kangra and the neighbouring hill states became nominal subjects of the Afghan, though they actually maintained a considerable degree of independence—as much because of their geo-

graphic isolation as because of their minor significance in wealth and power. It was this isolation that had also insulated them from the spreading Islamic faith and permitted the preservation for many centuries of traditional Hinduism in this area.

In the early eighteenth century, the Rajput Dogra, Raja Dhrou Deo, was considered the leader of the small states in the Jammu region. His son, Ranjit Deo, sought to extend his own control over this region and as much more as he could obtain. The other leader in the region was Raja Kirpal Deo of Jasrota whom Ranjit Deo cunningly disposed of in order to appropriate his territories. He persuaded Kirpal Deo to come to Jammu on the pretext that discussions must be held to form a united stand against demands by the Moghul Empire for tribute payments. When Kirpal Deo arrived in Jammu, he was imprisoned. Ranjit Deo sent word to Delhi that he accepted the suzerainty of the Moghul Empire and was rewarded for his loyalty with permission to appropriate Kirpal Deo's territory. Ranjit Deo then allied himself with Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1758 in repulsing an attack by Raja Sukh Jiwan, the self-proclaimed independent ruler of Kashmir, on Bhimber and Rajouri. Ahmed Shah bestowed a *jagir* upon Ranjit Deo thus helping him extend his territory and legitimize his rule.

Ranjit Deo is credited, in spite of his intrigues and ambitions, with providing an orderly and peaceful administration which enabled Jammu to become a trade and business centre for the first time. Traders from Afghanistan, Kashmir, Central Asia and India converged on the city to transact affairs with businessmen and financiers from Lahore and Delhi. The various disturbances in north India in that period had driven merchants to seek the relative safety of the hill routes in spite of the physical hardships of the journey. Ranjit Deo extended his rule over most of the Dogra areas west of the Ravi River and by means of forays and minor battles he was able, by 1773, to defeat the weak rulers near Sialkot and claim control over the region from the Chenab to Gurdaspur.

Ranjit Deo's successes could not be maintained in the face of the increasing strength of the Sikhs and the quarrels within his own family for succession. In 1780 one of the Sikh leaders attacked Jammu and withdrew only after extracting tribute from Ranjit Deo. In the same year, Ranjit Deo died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Brij Raj Deo. The father had earlier nominated his second son, Dalil Singh, as his successor as he felt Brij Raj was not morally fit to rule. Infuriated by his father's move, Brij Raj had conspired with

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When the zenith of the Moghul Empire had passed and north India was again open to invasion from without and conflict within, the hill states attempted to reassert their independence and recover the territory earlier ceded to the Moghuls. The invasions of the Afghans under Ahmed Shah Abdali in the 1750s precipitated the transfer of the hill states from Moghul to Afghan rule as the vigorous Afghans humbled the crumbling Moghuls. When the Afghans advanced on Delhi, the Moghul Emperor ceded his western and northern territories to Ahmed Shah Abdali to hold him off. Thus, Jammu and Kangra and the neighbouring hill states became nominal subjects of the Afghan, though they actually maintained a considerable degree of independence—as much because of their geo-

graphic isolation as because of their minor significance in wealth and power. It was this isolation that had also insulated them from the spreading Islamic faith and permitted the preservation for many centuries of traditional Hinduism in this area.

In the early eighteenth century, the Rajput Dogra, Raja Dhrou Deo, was considered the leader of the small states in the Jammu region. His son, Ranjit Deo, sought to extend his own control over this region and as much more as he could obtain. The other leader in the region was Raja Kirpal Deo of Jasrota whom Ranjit Deo cunningly disposed of in order to appropriate his territories. He persuaded Kirpal Deo to come to Jammu on the pretext that discussions must be held to form a united stand against demands by the Moghul Empire for tribute payments. When Kirpal Deo arrived in Jammu, he was imprisoned. Ranjit Deo sent word to Delhi that he accepted the suzerainty of the Moghul Empire and was rewarded for his loyalty with permission to appropriate Kirpal Deo's territory. Ranjit Deo then allied himself with Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1758 in repulsing an attack by Raja Sukh Jiwan, the self-proclaimed independent ruler of Kashmir, on Bhimber and Rajouri. Ahmed Shah bestowed a *jagir* upon Ranjit Deo thus helping him extend his territory and legitimize his rule.

Ranjit Deo is credited, in spite of his intrigues and ambitions, with providing an orderly and peaceful administration which enabled Jammu to become a trade and business centre for the first time. Traders from Afghanistan, Kashmir, Central Asia and India converged on the city to transact affairs with businessmen and financiers from Lahore and Delhi. The various disturbances in north India in that period had driven merchants to seek the relative safety of the hill routes in spite of the physical hardships of the journey. Ranjit Deo extended his rule over most of the Dogra areas west of the Ravi River and by means of forays and minor battles he was able, by 1773, to defeat the weak rulers near Sialkot and claim control over the region from the Chenab to Gurdaspur.

Ranjit Deo's successes could not be maintained in the face of the increasing strength of the Sikhs and the quarrels within his own family for succession. In 1780 one of the Sikh leaders attacked Jammu and withdrew only after extracting tribute from Ranjit Deo. In the same year, Ranjit Deo died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Brij Raj Deo. The father had earlier nominated his second son, Dalil Singh, as his successor as he felt Brij Raj was not morally fit to rule. Infuriated by his father's move, Brij Raj had conspired with

one of the Sikh *mists* to attack Jammu. Ranjit Deo, aware of his son's treachery, had enlisted the aid of another *misl* but before these rival forces could accomplish anything, their Sikh leaders were themselves killed, Ranjit Deo had died and Brij Raj assumed the throne of Jammu. As a ruler, military chief and politician, Brij Raj confirmed his father's apprehensions.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the various Sikh *mists* were frequently at war with one another and often sought temporary alliances with outsiders to achieve a particular objective. Mahan Singh, leader of the Sukarchakia *misl* and father of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, sought the friendship of Brij Raj Deo. The Jammu ruler availed himself of this new alliance to launch an attack on the Bhangi *misl* which had earlier taken some of Brij Raj's lands. The Bhangi Sikhs joined with another *misl*, the Kanheyas, and when Mahan Singh and Brij Raj attacked their armies, the Kanheyas were able to defeat them and extract tribute. This defeat weakened the friendship between Mahan Singh and Brij Raj and within a few months Mahan Singh joined his former enemy, the Kanheyas, and on a flimsy pretext they launched a vigorous attack on Jammu. Mahan Singh stormed, sacked and burnt Jammu with a large force and withdrew only after amassing great loot and extracting an annual tribute of 50,000 rupees from Brij Raj.

Although Brij Raj continued to rule the hills of Jammu, his control over the more remote areas was greatly reduced. He was prey to constant inroads and attacks from his strong Sikh neighbours, especially the Bhangis who made frequent forays into his territory and, on one occasion, even seized Sialkot and raided the treasury. In a valiant but vain attempt to exert his authority and regain his power, Brij Raj offered battle at Rumal; but he himself was killed and his forces routed. His one year old son, Sampuram Dev, succeeded him under the guardianship of Brij Raj's cousin, Mian Mota. With the child's death ten years later, Jit Singh, the son of Brij Raj's younger brother, Dalil Singh, came to power.

Jammu was still without a competent ruler but Jit Singh's wife, a conniving, ambitious but able woman, managed the affairs of state for some time by herself. However, conditions prevailing in Jammu State were unstable and ripe for take-over by a superior power.

Ranjit Singh succeeded his father as head of the Sukarchakia *misl* in 1792 and was, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the ruler in Lahore with the ambition of becoming the supreme

ruler of all the Sikh states and neighbouring regions. In 1808, he despatched an expedition under Bhai Hukm Singh with the mission of subduing Jammu State and annexing it to the territory of the Lahore government. The forces of Jammu State, although ultimately defeated, put up a strong resistance and it was in this engagement that Gulab Singh, a descendant of Ranjit Deo and a relative of the ruling raja, was noticed by Bhai Hukm Singh—who reported the young man's bravery and perseverance in battle to Ranjit Singh.

With the annexation of Jammu by the Lahore government the independent Dogra kingdom in the Jammu Hills, consolidated during the eighteenth century from many petty states into a single kingdom, ceased to exist and was not revived until 1820 when Maharaja Ranjit Singh nominated Gulab Singh Raja of Jammu.

The River Ravi was considered a dividing line between the Dogra peoples under the Jammu *raj* and those under the Kangra *raj*. While following the same general course of history in the ancient and medieval periods, the sudden and significant rise of Sikh power in the eighteenth century affected these hill states in different ways. The kingdoms in the Kangra hills east of the Ravi did not feel the encroachment of Sikh domination as early as the western states did. In the mid-eighteenth century the rajas of Kangra were the leading chieftains in the Kangra hills with their capital at Nadaun. Kangra fort was still garrisoned by Moghul troops and the small kingdoms of the Kangra hills were feudatories of the Moghul Empire.

In 1774 the ambitious and self-styled Kangra leader, Sansar Chand, laid siege to Kangra fort. It fell only with the aid of the Kanheya Sikhs who refused to return the fort to the Katoch ruler. The Kanheyas then attacked their rivals, the Sukarchakias under Mahan Singh. He in turn requested aid from Sansar Chand and the Katoch ruler was only too willing to seek vengeance on the Kanheyas. In the ensuing battle at Batala, Jai Singh and his Kanheyas were defeated and forced to withdraw from Kangra fort, which then reverted to the Katoch dynasty after two centuries in alien hands.

Sansar Chand then eagerly sought to restore to Kangra the power and possessions of earlier times. The Sikhs had withdrawn from the Kangra hills and the Moghul Empire was weakened beyond the point of fighting for the small hill tracts legally in its domain. Sansar Chand reasserted the supremacy of Kangra over all the eastern states in the hills and plains and declared himself the

supreme authority over all their leaders. For twenty years he ruled as a despot encroaching upon their territories, seizing land and establishing his position in the region. Having consolidated his territories in the hills, he sought to recover all the lost Katoch territories in the Punjab plains, and perhaps even re-establish a new Katoch kingdom over all their former possessions. In 1803 and again in 1804, he invaded the Jullundur Doab but was repulsed by Ranjit Singh. He next moved against the Rajput state of Kahlur (Bilaspur) in 1805 and seized the land on the right bank of the Sutlej River. The other hill chiefs then united in protest against his appropriation of their territory and demands for sovereign recognition. The Raja of Bilaspur called upon the Nepalese for assistance and in the name of the other chiefs of the Kangra hills invited the Gorkha commander, Amar Singh Thapa, to invade Kangra, promising him the support of the hill rajas.

The Nepalese accepted the offer, crossed the Sutlej and joined forces with the confederated states. The army of Sansar Chand was defeated by the alliance at Mahal Morian but Kangra fort could not be taken in spite of a three year long siege. However, they devastated the countryside, caused the inhabitants to flee and disrupted the agricultural economy of the region.

Sansar Chand had little chance of repulsing the attackers and the desolation of his state robbed him of much wealth. With no other recourse, he appealed to Ranjit Singh for aid. The latter agreed on the condition that Kangra fort be surrendered to him. Thus were the Gorkhas finally defeated by the Sikhs and forced to withdraw across their Sutlej boundary once again. Sansar Chand and his Katoch kingdom were not saved, however, as Ranjit Singh took the fort as agreed and the lands of the imperial estate including the sixty-six villages that had originally gone to Akbar. Sansar Chand continued as the nominal ruler of the rest of Kangra but in reality his lands and those of the other states of the Kangra hills were subject to the Lahore Court and under Sikh domination. Independent Dogra states ceased to exist by 1810 and the Rajas of the hills became feudatories of the Sikh ruler in Lahore.

Dogra Culture and Customs

While the Dogra people have not been a particularly large group numerically, they have figured with some prominence in the history, politics, trade and military events of their region. Their geographic isolation permitted certain traditional practices to continue and

led to the development of some customs unique to the Dogra community and of interest to those outside.

The Dogra people are mainly of Rajput descent, carrying with them the habits and attitudes of a martial clan. Military leaders who have commanded Dogras have found them, as soldiers, brave, honest, truthful and direct. They are known for their loyalty and respect for authority as well as enthusiasm and dedication to a cause when they are motivated. They are anything but flamboyant by nature; and whether in peace or at war, their special qualities are endurance, unflinching courage and orderly obedience.

The Dogras are an agricultural people and cherish greatly the hills of their homeland. As a people, they are sensitive, often diffident and docile but chivalrous guardians of their women. The Dogras have always accepted authority and when that authority also commanded their respect and admiration, their natural deference was overshadowed by their great allegiance.

Physically Dogras are inclined to be short and slight in build compared to their Sikh neighbours. Similar to other hill groups, Dogras are of medium-fair complexion. One chronicler of the Dogra people has described the typical Rajput Dogra face as: "a fine nose, narrow nostrils and narrow arched eyebrows." Physique and features have naturally been modified through the generations by occasional intermarriage and changes in occupational habits. Dogras are keen sportsmen: they enjoy shooting, wrestling and other team sports—as well as chess.

The traditional dress of the Dogras is the white *pyjama*, tight-fitting below the knee, and the *cholu* or white cotton shirt reaching almost to the knees, with close-fitting long sleeves. In cold weather, a waistcoat is worn, usually made of coloured silk. Among the poor, the costume is simpler: a loin cloth, a loose shirt and a *pagri* (*pyjamas* are worn only on special occasions). It is a custom adhered to even today by most Dogra families to wear a brightly coloured *pagri* for weddings or other celebrations—even if western clothes are worn. Dogras are fond of ornamentation and decorate the *pagri* in gold and silver tinsel. Not uncommonly they will wear necklaces and earrings on ceremonial occasions.

Dogras followed the joint family system and developed the pattern of allotting a house to each brother and his family. Each of these houses was arranged around a common courtyard. The whole compound was surrounded by a thick hedge for privacy and protection and the village homes sparsely furnished with an emphasis on utility.

Where Dogras have settled in the plains, their villages are large and compact; but in the hills, the villages are spread over a considerable area or sprinkled in many isolated hamlets grouped for administrative purposes into one unit. When the hill rajas ruled, and principalities were their personal estates, each was divided into *talukas* which were then subdivided into individual fiscal units. Each unit was small enough to be supervised by one official and his staff. Later, in Jammu for example, these divisions were reorganised as *wazarats* and *tehsils* in which the *wazarat* was a district. The smallest fiscal unit, whatever its formal designation, was the main community. An Englishman describing a village scene in 1870 noted :

The houses are scattered in pleasant and picturesque localities not congregated into villages. Every man resides on his own farm and builds his cottage open to the sun yet sheltered from the wind. The house is of sun-dried brick, generally two-storied. The family occupies the lower floor, the upper being used as a store room. During the rains, the upper room is used for cooking and often for sleeping. The upper roof is made of thatch, thick and substantial and neatly trimmed, but lately slates have been extensively used.

The outside walls are plastered with red or light coloured earth. The entrance is usually to the east or south while the west is superstitiously eschewed. The upper castes occupy the highest and most secluded parts of the village and it would not be tolerated if a man of low caste raised his dwelling overlooking those of higher birth.

In the hundred years since this report was written, the basic structure of the village has changed little although various amenities, including electricity in some instances, are now available.

The village headman in Dogra communities was known as the *lambardar* and his main responsibility was to collect revenues from each unit in the *taluka* and deposit it in the local treasury; he also assisted in the general local administration. His compensation was about five per cent of the revenues collected. Other officers included the *patwari* (village revenue accountant) who kept records, maps and registers up to date and the *chowkidar* who was virtually in the employ of the *lambardar*. Each village had its complement of workmen and craftsmen to fulfil essential tasks such as carpentry, shoemaking, washing, barbering, weaving, milling and sweeping, most of which services were paid for in grain.

Dogras are as meticulous about food habits as other Hindu communities but in general the diversity of acceptable food has been

fairly great. When possible, a Brahman is employed as cook and the food divided into *pakki roti* (cooked in *ghee*) and *kachi roti* (not cooked in *ghee*). This separation was the guideline in determining which castes could eat together, as *ghee* was considered a purifying agent.

Those engaged in agriculture usually take three meals a day—a small breakfast called *dhatialu* in Kangra and *nahari* in Jammu, a noon lunch of *dal* and rice or *chappaties* and a good sized dinner in the evening. Maize is a popular grain, heavily consumed in winter. Meat is taken with relish as is fish but the restricted economy permits these delicacies only on festive occasions. *Haldi* is generously added to many preparations. Fowl and eggs were formerly completely eschewed but are now acceptable.

Dogras have traditionally been particular about their drinking water and use only brass or copper vessels for storage. Two people must never use the same glass; when of necessity they must, purification by passing the vessel through fire is required. Dogras are great milk drinkers, and *sherbet* has also been a popular drink. The consumption of liquor, though permitted, has been confined more or less to certain classes. Some drugs are used—*bhang*, opium and *ganja*—but not very widely. The *hukka*, however, is very popular among men and sometimes among women too. Cigarette smoking was not widely accepted in the past although it is gradually replacing the more cumbersome *hukka* these days.

The role of women in Dogra families and communities has always been a very important one but they are, as most Hindu women, generally excluded from social contact with men. Traditionally the wife walks behind the husband in public though this custom is not enforced now. A Dogra woman attends to all the household chores but does not assist in agricultural work or other outdoor tasks.

Women's dress consists of long loose trousers called *suthan*, a *ghagra*, *choli* and *dupatta*. For daily wear, the clothing is of simple material and plain colours but on festive occasions, the *ghagra* is decorated with silver or gold, colours are freely used, jewelry is worn and the *dupatta* is bright and shimmery. The language of the Dogra people is Dogri, but Hindi is widely known and used.

The Dogra is a Hindu by religion and while he still lives in his isolated hills his religion is more influenced by the original nature worship of the Aryans of the pre-Hindu era than by the later Brahmanism, Buddhism or Islam. As is the case in many hill commu-

nities, the Dogras are highly superstitious and frequently deify the forces and articles encountered in daily life.

Ceremonies performed at the significant junctures of a person's life are generally the same among Dogras as in the whole Hindu community, with certain unique variations. At birth a *pundit* is summoned to prepare the infant's horoscope and, in the case of an especially auspicious birth, family and friends gather for several days of celebrations and the naming of the child. For ten days after the birth of a child, the Dogra household is considered impure and the mother is secluded in separate quarters. On the fourteenth day a *pundit* is called to purify the house by sprinkling Ganges water and the reading of sacred scriptures. In thanksgiving an offering is made to a local *mandir* and the birth ceremonies are over.

As the child grows other customs are followed to ensure his happy and prosperous development. Dogras, like other Hindus, restrict the use of one's name for fear of it being bantered about carelessly and incurring a curse. Thus, a pet name is usually used until adulthood for all but official purposes. At six weeks of age, a Dogra infant is shown to the sun god, *Surya*, and appropriate *mantras* are recited. At two years of age, the hair is completely removed from the head in the first tonsure ceremony and in the second, all but a small tuft is removed.

The superstitions surrounding infancy are many: swaddling clothes should be borrowed from another person's house; on the sixth night after the birth, the whole household keeps a vigil over the child to ensure a happy future and ward off such calamities as smallpox. On the birth of a son, a net is hung on the doorway, a charm struck on the wall and a fire lighted on the threshold to keep away evil spirits. For a daughter only the barest ceremonies are performed as girls are often considered a misfortune and even today do not arouse the enthusiasm that the birth of a son does.

Dogra boys at about the age of ten years are initiated into Hinduism by the tying of the sacred thread. The elaborate ceremony lasted eight days in earlier times and was performed at a *havan* with the *pundit*. The thread is placed on the young man's left shoulder while *mantras* are whispered into his ear; the *pundit* then addresses the young man briefly urging him to pursue the religious and moral precepts of Hinduism. In former times, the significance of this ceremony to the Dogras was such that as much as five hundred rupees was spent in charity and ritual gifts on these occasions.

Among most Dogras early marriage—even child marriage—was

the custom. It was considered important to marry a daughter into a family of higher status than one's own : this custom often imposed restrictions because marriages within the same clan were prohibited. In spite of the many complications, marriages, once arranged, are gaily celebrated. At one time, the engagement was made when the boy was as young as six and the girl an infant, but with the general raising of the age of marriage all over India, the Dogras too have discarded child marriages. In the Dogra community, as in other hill regions, the boy's father initiates the proposal of marriage by sending an emissary to the girl's father. Most of the negotiations, preliminary and final, are conducted by Brahmins and the factor most important to the girl's father is the social standing of the boy, not his wealth. Engagements can be arranged in several ways : without exchange of any money or gifts ; under agreement involving the mutual engagements of various families each to another ; by payment of cash, or by agreement of the prospective groom to work for a given period for the girl's father.

Once these terms are agreed upon and the actual suitability of the boy and girl considered, the *tikka* ceremony is arranged by the *pundits* of both sides. A *tikka* is placed on the boy's forehead signalling the official betrothal—and the time to commence dowry discussions.

The wedding can take place only on the auspicious day chosen by the *pundits*. A letter written on yellow paper called *lagan* is used to notify the relatives of the marriage date and for several days prior to the wedding both families engage in holding feasts and celebrations. The marriage ceremony itself takes place at the girl's home. The boy's family and friends gather with him while he is heavily adorned in rich (often red) clothing, jewels and garlands. About his head is tied a veil of gold threads called *sehra* and he departs (usually on horseback) for the girl's home with a younger brother or cousin accompanying him. With the arrival of the *barat*—groom's procession—the two families meet, the groom is received by the bride's relatives and after a short religious ceremony, a large meal is served.

At the auspicious hour, the girl's *pundit* commences the wedding ceremony : the *havan* is lit and everyone assembles and the bride and groom sit opposite each other at the *havan*. The performance of the marriage entails the recitation of appropriate *mantras* by the *pundit*, feeding the fire with *ghee*, *atta* and rice and the bestowal of gifts on the groom by the girl's father and other relatives. The climax of the ceremony is the *pheras* in which the couple arise, have the

ends of their garments tied together and walk around the fire. The numbers of circuits varies between four and seven but at least one circuit is required to solemnize the marriage. The actual marriage is then complete but the festivities continued in earlier times for as many as three days and even now may go on for many hours of singing and story-telling.

The departure of the bride for the groom's home has been traditionally considered a moment of trauma for her and for the family because it signalled the severing of relations with her family. Traditionally the bride's palanquin preceded the groom's to his place. In the case of a child marriage, it was the custom among Dogras to allow the girl, after a few days in the husband's home, to return to her family until the couple was old enough to consummate the marriage. Later, on an auspicious day chosen by the *pundits*, the husband went to the girl's home briefly and after a visit with the family, they formally took leave of the girl's parents. The married Dogra woman is recognized by the nose ring or *balu* she wears; no unmarried girl or widow may do so.

The last set of customs in which the Dogras have their own special observances pertains to a death in the family. At the approach of death the *pundit* is summoned and the afflicted one is laid on the ground with certain sacred objects—either a sprig of *tulsi*, a piece of gold or some Ganges water placed in the mouth.

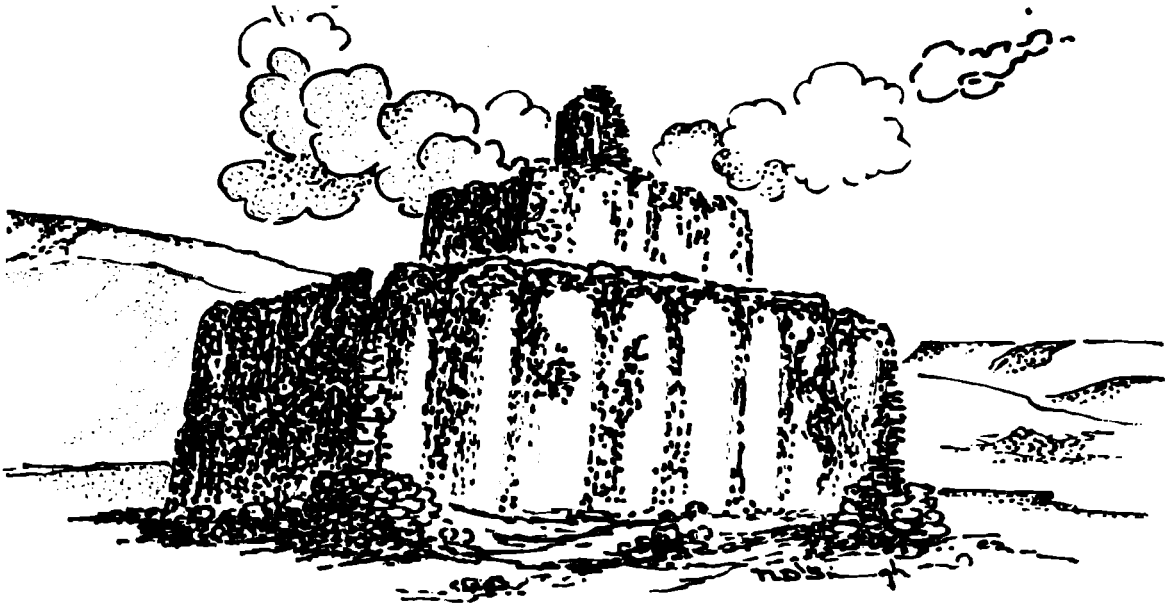
At the moment of death, the Maha-Brahmin begins his particular rites. A ball of flour is offered to the deceased whose body is then washed, shaved and covered with a white cloth—often a new *dhoti*. *En route* to the cremation ground, water is sprinkled around the bier and a son or close relative breaks a *matka* (earthenware pot) and cries aloud of the man's passing. Once placed on the *ghat* five balls of flour are placed near the body and the son lights the pyre with a flame lit by the *pundit*. The skull is cracked and after the cremation the mourners bathe before returning home. The mourning period among Dogras varies between eleven and twenty-one days during which the men of the family shave their heads and beards especially if the deceased was older than the mourner. Only uncooked food is eaten in the mourning period, women do not wear jewelry and no music is permitted.

At the end of the mourning period, *shradh* ceremonies are held during which rice balls, *ghee* and sugar are scattered and a vessel of water is hung on the *pipal* tree for the deceased soul's use until his reincarnation. After these rites Brahmans purify the house and

are fed along with relatives and friends. On the first and fourth anniversaries of the death the *shradh* ceremonies are repeated.

Dogras are particular about performing the ceremony of *chaudarsi*. At the fourth anniversary of the person's death, the bones of the toes, fingers and jaws, called *phul*, which were collected at the cremation, are thrown into the Ganges. The annual *pitrapaksh* is observed carefully by Dogras in honour of deceased fathers and grandfathers. On this occasion, every September, enough food for one man for a year is prepared and given to Brahmans by the family.

In the event of a child's death no special ceremonies are performed; if the child is under five years, burial is more common than cremation.



SAMADHI OF GENERAL ZORAWAR SINGH

3

Maharaja Gulab Singh : The Founder

THE MAN credited with the founding of Jammu and Kashmir State was a highly controversial figure in his times and recorded in history as unscrupulous on the one hand and dedicated to his subjects on the other. Described as soft-spoken, ambitious, far-sighted and self-seeking, Gulab Singh nevertheless must be credited with the establishment of a viable Dogra state in Jammu. Later, after his acquisition of Kashmir, it was he who provided, perhaps for the first time in its history, peaceful and orderly administration to that state. His own self-interests and power-plays fortunately resulted in long-range benefits for the people he ruled—especially the Kashmiris—and the founding of a progressive and stable ruling family in the state.

Gulab Singh had spent his childhood with his grandfather, Mian Zorawar Singh. He received the barest education but was taught by his grandfather to ride, fence and shoot. As already related, when he was barely sixteen he took part in the defence of Jammu when Ranjit Singh's general, Hukm Singh, had marched in to

annex the ill-governed hill state. Gulab Singh fought well and was noticed by the Sikh commander but the youth was on to his next adventure before they could meet.

For a short time in 1809 Gulab Singh served under Diwan Kushwaqt Rai, manager of Sardar Nehal Singh Attari's estates. Soon after Gulab Singh's arrival, a rebellion was staged by the villagers and the fort was attacked. Gulab Singh was credited with quick and courageous efforts to defend the fort and quell the rebellion.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh had been informed about both these valorous actions in Gulab Singh's young career and later sent for him. Gulab Singh joined the Sikh Army as a common trooper under Jamadar Khushal Singh's command; he was later given his own command of a small force. He conducted himself well and earned a good reputation in Ranjit Singh's ever-active army. He participated in one of the many assaults on Kashmir prior to its final annexation by the Sikhs in 1819. In the campaign of 1814, the Sikh Army had been defeated and forced to retreat but Gulab Singh was credited with rallying his troops competently and withdrawing in good order. In the spring of 1818, at the siege of Multan, then held by the Afghans, Gulab Singh exhibited daring almost to the point of recklessness in recovering the fallen body of one of Ranjit Singh's favourite *sirdars* during the battle. This feat naturally won him great praise—and the confidence and favours of the Maharaja.

Gulab Singh's ultimate triumph as a commander in Ranjit Singh's army came in his home state of Jammu. The area had been under Ranjit Singh's control since the end of the first decade of the century but the Sikh forces in Jammu were being subjected to constant harrassment by the rebel Mian Dido and other chiefs of the Jammu hills. Several attempts to liquidate the insurgents had failed and the Sikh garrison in Jammu fort continued to be threatened. Gulab Singh was promised Jammu as a *jagir* if he could secure the area. His first move was to cut off Mian Dido's support by punishing the sympathetic villagers; the rebel was eventually surrounded by Gulab Singh's forces, captured and executed.

In 1820, the state of Jammu was given to Gulab Singh as a *jagir*. He soon persuaded the Maharaja that in order to collect the revenues and maintain order, he required an army. He was then permitted to raise a small force of his own and was granted the title of Raja. The initial force raised and trained by Gulab Singh in 1820 was the fore-runner of the present Regiment of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles.

Prompt in exploiting his new power and position, Raja Gulab Singh conquered Kishtwar to the northeast in 1821. By fomenting dissension in the government of Kishtwar between the ruler and his minister, Wazir Lakhpat, Gulab Singh caused the collapse of the administration and was able to march in and annex the state. His next expedition was undertaken under the specific directions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In the Maharaja's campaign in Kashmir, the Raja of Rajouri had deserted to the Afghans as the Sikh Army advanced towards the Pir Panjal Range and Ranjit Singh was anxious to humiliate him. Gulab Singh quickly defeated the Raja, took him prisoner and was generously rewarded by the Maharaja.

In 1822 the Maharaja came to Akhnur, eighteen miles west of Jammu, to congratulate Gulab Singh on his victory at Rajouri (which was apparently of greater psychological than strategic value to Ranjit Singh) and to confer on him and his descendants the title of Raja and the principality of Jammu. With the performance of the *Raj Tilak* ceremony, the state of Jammu officially passed again into the hands of a Dogra ruler.

Soon after his installation as Maharaja, Gulab Singh raised a small cavalry force of a hundred Dogra horsemen for the protection of Jammu and his *jagirs* at Ramgarh and Lal Chobara. This unit eventually became the Jammu and Kashmir Bodyguard Cavalry. It continued to serve well into the next century and was disbanded only in 1956.

While Gulab Singh remained in Jammu, his two brothers, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh, had already been given influential administrative positions at the court and in the army of Ranjit Singh and they continued to wield power for their own advantage and occasionally to help Gulab Singh implement his objectives.

Gulab Singh was a strong ruler though his methods were often harsh. He took great interest in administration. The governmental system was reorganised and the penal code vigorously enforced; taxes and expenditures were supervised by him personally and officialdom was screened to prevent abuses. Accordingly, the people began to prosper in many ways.

With his position secure in Jammu and the resources of the state increasing, Gulab Singh began his long series of conquests of territories to the north of Jammu. Lahore was still his overlord and therefore his expeditions had to be undertaken with the Maharaja's approval—tacit or direct. By 1827, Gulab Singh had annexed most of the territories between Jammu and the Kashmir Valley and was

gradually increasing the strength of his army and grooming such men as Zorawar Singh for leadership and command of the forces for future undertakings.

Zorawar Singh, the most famous of Gulab Singh's generals, was a Rajput Dogra born in Ghaloor in Kangra in 1786. He also had received no formal education and fled from his village as a youth after a quarrel with his cousin over family property. During a penitential visit to Hardwar, he met Raja Jaswant Singh of Galian (Ram Nagar—fortyfive miles north of Jammu) and agreed to join the Raja's household. There he was trained to use military weapons and to ride, but before he could put his newly acquired skills to use he left Galian after a misunderstanding with the Raja. Coming aimlessly to Jammu, he is said to have met Gulab Singh quite by chance while taking a bath in the Tawi River and, after some discussion, joined the Riasi garrison as a sepoy in Gulab Singh's army.

Zorawar Singh's talent was, strangely enough, administration. Early in his career he effected a change in the rationing system of the troops. His suggestion of reducing the daily ration of *atta* from the excessive two pounds per day to one-and-a-half succeeded in saving the government over one lakh rupees annually. When this suggestion was successfully implemented, Gulab Singh promoted him to the post of Supplies Inspector for the forts in northern Jammu. His relationship with Gulab Singh deepened as he became one of the ruler's confidants and his proximity to power gave him experience in high level administration and command.

In 1823, after Gulab Singh had become Raja of Jammu, Zorawar Singh was appointed governor of Kishtwar, which had recently been annexed to Jammu. (The *Wazir* of Kishtwar, Lakhpat, had quarrelled with his Raja and sought the assistance of Gulab Singh. The Jammu Raja, only too pleased at the opportunity, moved up to Kishtwar with his force and the Raja of Kishtwar surrendered without a fight).

With the title of *wazir*, Zorawar Singh provided firm administration to the isolated but fertile region and concentrated on training and preparing his men for later campaigns. Both Gulab Singh and Zorawar Singh aimed at extending the territory of the Jammu *raj* and they took advantage of the first opportunity to invade Ladakh.

Since the 15th century a Tibetan dynasty under the suzerainty of Lhasa had ruled Ladakh—but Tsepal Namgyal was abominably inefficient. Using as a pretext the internal disorder in Leh and the claim that Ladakh had earlier been a subject of Kishtwar and

should be so restored, Zorawar Singh embarked upon the conquest of the region in 1834.

The physical obstacles in conquering Ladakh were formidable and Zorawar Singh's forces succeeded only because of their intensive training in snow and mountain warfare. The campaign was conducted at 12,000 feet above sea level, where breathing is laborious, temperatures sub-zero even in summer and vast stretches devoid of vegetation or human habitation. Water sources are frozen, passes blocked, tracks obliterated and (even today) communications unreliable. Nevertheless, the indomitable Zorawar Singh set out in July, 1834, with 10,000 Dogras including elements of what was to become, on its raising in 1837, the *Fateh Shibji*, the present 4th Battalion Jammu and Kashmir (JAK) Rifles. His force was organised in artillery, infantry and cavalry units and equipped with weapons made in the Jammu Arms Factory.

The Dogra force crossed the Zanskar Range in July and entered Ladakh through the Purig Pass at the head of the Suru Valley in August.

Zorawar Singh hoped to avoid fighting a guerrilla campaign in this unknown terrain and succeeded in formally engaging the Ladakhis on August 16, 1834, at Sanku. Five thousand Ladakhis under their leader Mangal had taken up well-fortified positions on the hill. However, they had only one route of withdrawal—along the river—and Zorawar Singh positioned his infantry on the left and his cavalry on the right thus blocking the Ladakhis' retreat. When the Dogra force advanced up the hill to the Ladakhi positions, they were repeatedly repulsed. However, after a full day's fighting, the Dogras managed to dislodge the enemy. The Dogras suffered six dead and six wounded compared to the enemy's thirty dead and fifty wounded. That night the Dogras camped on the north side of the hill. The next day they marched to Suru where they halted for a month and built a small fort.

In mid-September, 1834, Zorawar Singh marched his army to Sachar leaving thirty-five men in Fort Suru and ten others to guard a bridge on his line of communication. He continued his advance through Langkartse and Manji to the bridge at Pushkyun where the Ladakhis had organised a defensive position. A vigorous engagement took place, in which the Dogras lost seven killed whereas the defeated Ladakhis counted over sixty dead and many more wounded, but by a clever manoeuvre the Ladakhis were able to cross the Pushkyun bridge and destroy it behind them. The Dogras however were not

dismayed; the next day they crossed the river on inflated skins and pursued the enemy.

The chief of Pushkyun had already fled to Sod, where he hoped to halt the Dogra advance by manning prepared defensive positions. He succeeded for a time, because when the Dogras reached Sod they found the enemy defences so strong that even ten days of artillery bombardment had no effect. Finally a dawn attack was launched by five hundred men under Colonel Basti Ram, supported by artillery fire; by day-break the enemy position—and their leaders—had been taken. The total number of Ladakhi prisoners was over six thousand. Zorawar Singh opened negotiations with the ruler of Sod by which he intended to establish a peaceful and loyal relationship between the newly conquered territory and his government. He succeeded but only temporarily and later the Dogra army had to return to Sod to quell another revolt.

While Zorawar Singh was still in Sod, the Raja of Ladakh marched with a force of 22,000 men to Mulbik and sent his emissaries to Zorawar Singh's camp. After some initial threats and attempts to frighten the Dogras, the Ladakhi representatives declared their readiness to accept honourable terms and proposed that Dogra representatives accompany them to the Ladakhi Raja for discussions. *En route* the five Dogra representatives were seized and all but one, who managed to escape, were murdered.

While his agents had been keeping the Dogras occupied, the Raja of Ladakh sent a strong force on a circuitous route behind the Dogra positions and attacked from the rear. Many Dogra prisoners were taken before Zorawar Singh was able to organize a retreat to Langkartse in the Suru Valley.

Secure in the valley, the Dogras awaited further developments and within four months the Ladakh Raja again mustered 22,000 troops and marched to Langkartse where they took positions about one and a half miles from the Dogra camp. This time a party of two hundred Dogras were despatched to launch a surprise attack—with swords—and the terrified Ladakhis fled, hounded by the pursuing Dogras until they were routed. Dogra losses were about twenty killed and sixty wounded, but in spite of the casualties Zorawar Singh counted this victory as one of the major steps in the subjugation of Ladakh. He then marched again to Pushkyun using prisoners as porters, and then on to Mulbik and Lama Yuru where he established his headquarters. The Raja of Ladakh soon sent Zorawar Singh an offer of peace upon which Zorawar Singh proceeded to Leh for four

months and settled the tribute to be paid by Ladakh to Kashmir (a yearly sum of Rs 20,000 as well as a war indemnity of Rs 50,000).

Consolidation of Dogra control in Ladakh was interrupted by several revolts throughout the territory. No sooner had Zorawar Singh and the Raja of Ladakh come to terms in Leh than the ruler of Sod revolted, killing the fifty-five Dogras garrisoned there. The main body of Dogra troops force-marched to Sod only to discover that the enemy had already withdrawn. An additional two days march of thirty-seven miles over very difficult terrain brought the Dogras to Suru, where they surprised and overwhelmed the enemy by a night attack. After their defeat the leaders of the revolt were harshly punished.

On the heels of this uprising Zorawar Singh learned during a visit to his garrison at Zanskar that a rebellion had broken out in Leh. The Sikh governor of Kashmir, Mian Singh, was considered responsible for instigating this revolt. (The Sikh governors of Kashmir were still jealous of Gulab Singh's growing power and increasing territory and had sought to inhibit his influence in the north and north-east.) Zorawar Singh set out at once for Leh to put down the revolt and by travelling 45 to 60 miles per day in terrain that lay at an average altitude of 11,000 feet and in severe cold, he accomplished a memorable forced march. The Raja of Ladakh came to receive him at Chachot to mollify the general but Zorawar Singh dealt severely with the Ladakhis, imposing a heavy fine and replacing the Raja of Ladakh with Ngroub, a relative of the previous ruler. The Dogra general also built a fort outside the city and garrisoned it with a force of 300.

With the conquest of Ladakh apparently completed, Zorawar Singh started his trek back to Jammu. *En route* he marched through Zanskar to Balde, which he captured. A garrison of twenty men was posted in the fort of Chatargarh. Zorawar Singh returned to Jammu, but early in the next year he learned that the new governor of Ladakh, Ngroub, had also revolted, wiped out the Dogra garrison in the fort in Balde and was besieging Dogra units throughout Ladakh. Zorawar Singh again assembled an army—this time of three thousand Dogras—and marched to Ladakh.

Chatargarh fort was recaptured by the Dogras with heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy. Zorawar Singh left another garrison there as he moved into Zanskar across the mountains. The Ladakhi governor, Ngroub, fled Leh as Zorawar Singh approached but was closely pursued by the Dogras and finally captured at Tabo

village in Spiti and imprisoned. The previous ruler of Ladakh, Akabat Mahmood, was reinstated and made to pay an annual tribute of Rs 23,000 and a war indemnity of Rs 50,000 as well as the expenses of the Dogra troops stationed in Ladakh.

Although Ladakh was not then officially under the domain of Raja Gulab Singh (1836), on two other occasions Zorawar Singh marched into Ladakh to quell rebellions and to ensure Ladakh's subjugation to the Jammu *raj*. Ultimately Zorawar Singh resorted to the public execution of a leader of the rebellion, Sukamir, in an attempt to deter further agitation. He obviously succeeded because by 1840 Ladakh was a secure tributary of Jammu.

In 1841, Gulab Singh was still a subject of the Sikh Empire but in the political turmoil that followed Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, the Sikhs were preoccupied with local matters in Lahore, thus giving Gulab Singh a free hand in the regions bordering Kashmir. The British, too, witnessed Jammu's expansion uneasily but were unable to exercise any checks. In fact, before the invasion of Ladakh, Gulab Singh had enquired from the British Government if there was any objection to his proposed adventure and when none was forthcoming, he had proceeded with his conquests. With no curbs on his ambitions, Gulab Singh intervened in the political affairs of many of the small kingdoms in the north and furthered his own interests by military action.

Immediately after the long campaign in Ladakh, Zorawar Singh began preparations for the subjugation of Baltistan, which consisted of the three states, Skardu, Gilgit and Hunza. Ladakh and Skardu were involved in intrigues to overthrow each other's governments and Zorawar Singh used this as the pretext for intervention and conquest. Some Ladakhi nobles had been in correspondence with Ahmed Shah, Raja of Skardu, planning to overthrow the Raja of Ladakh. At the same time, Mohammed Shah, the eldest son of the Raja of Skardu, had fled to Leh and the protection of the Raja of Ladakh after some differences with his father. Ahmed Shah sent his troops to Leh to escort his son to Skardu. The entry of the Skardu forces into Ladakh was the pretext Zorawar Singh required. He sent a letter to Ahmed Shah stating that Mohammed Shah must be released immediately as he had sought the protection of Ladakh and thereby of Jammu and the capture of Mohammed Shah by the Skardu forces was tantamount to an invasion of Jammu territory. Ahmed Shah was firmly told that unless he freed his son the Dogra

army would march into Skardu on behalf of Mohammed Shah. Ahmed Shah did not reply to this letter.

Accordingly, at the end of 1840 Zorawar Singh assembled an army of 15,000 Dogras for the invasion of Baltistan. A reinforcement of Ladakhi troops led by a Ladakhi general greatly augmented Zorawar Singh's army, provided him with hill ponies and helped in maintaining and guarding the long lines of communication (more than six hundred miles from Jammu).

Skardu, the strongest of the three states of Baltistan, was to be engaged first, but Ahmed Shah, in anticipation of war with the Dogras, had secured his position, deployed a large number of troops along both possible routes and recruited a number of discontented Ladakhis to his own forces. The advance of Zorawar Singh's troops was effectively delayed by the destruction of the bridge over the Indus at Khalsi by Ahmed Shah's men.

The Dogra army moved along the right bank of the Indus from Leh towards Skardu. During his twenty-five day march, Zorawar Singh consolidated Kargil, Dras and Suru, received the submission of the chiefs of Khatakchan and Khapalu and added new recruits to his force. However, when he detached a force of five thousand under Mian Nidhan Singh to advance by way of Shigar to look for a new route and collect provisions, the Baltis encircled the Dogra force after allowing it to advance for fifteen days. Attacked from all sides in overwhelming superiority, the Dogra column was destroyed and only four hundred men returned to rejoin the main force along the river.

At the beginning of 1841, Zorawar Singh's position was made precarious by a severe winter, by the lack of supplies and by the low morale of the troops. However, the Dogra general planned to approach the Indus from the south-west below Skardu, to cross over to the north bank and thence to mount his attack.

The enemy's well-fortified positions precluded the construction of a bridge at that site. Several attempts by Zorawar Singh himself and his officers to find an alternate crossing place proved fruitless. In the middle of one night Colonel Basti Ram and one companion explored the river for several miles while the rest of his party continued diversionary firing at the opponent. When it was discovered that the river had started freezing near the banks, Colonel Basti Ram engaged some of the local residents to place logs across the river connecting the frozen portions. A bridge was thus made, over which the Dogra force was able to cross the Indus by five o'clock next morning.

Zorawar Singh then despatched a small force to attack the enemy from the rear while the remainder commenced the main assault. Surprise combined with renewed enthusiasm among the Dogras forced the Skardu defenders to abandon their position; they lost their commander and left over two hundred dead and four hundred wounded as they fled. The Dogras lost twenty-five killed and fifteen wounded—but suffered an additional five hundred casualties due to frostbite during their exposure to cold in the following weeks.

The retreating enemy was pursued and harassed for nine miles up to Marwan where the Dogras halted for a few days to reorganise. When Zorawar Singh continued his march into Skardu, his skilful use of cavalry and infantry tactics overcame the Skardu defences. The other two states, Gilgit and Hunza, were persuaded to accept the suzerainty of Gulab Singh, though a final stand was made by the Skardu force in their fort. For two weeks Zorawar Singh laid siege to this fort and only when their water supply was cut off did the Skardu force under Ahmed Shah surrender.

Having successfully concluded his military mission, Zorawar Singh fulfilled his ruler's ambition of creating a tributary state in Skardu. He deposed Ahmed Shah and installed his son, Mohammed Shah, as ruler on the condition that an annual tribute of Rs 7,000 should be paid to Jammu. His forces then marched into Gilgit and Hunza but did not inflict reprisals on his new subjects. A Dogra garrison was left behind in a new fort at Skardu on the bank of the river. Ahmed Shah was taken prisoner as Zorawar Singh and his army returned to Leh.

The territories-in-tribute now held by Jammu extended up to the borders of Tibet. Elated by these successes, Gulab Singh readily agreed with Zorawar Singh's proposal to continue his conquests beyond those distant and inhospitable regions. The only possible pretext for such an invasion was that two provinces to the west of Ladakh, Rudok and Gar, had once formed part of Ladakh though since the mid-seventeenth century they had been separated from Ladakh and were under the rule of Lhasa. In spite of the rugged terrain and high altitude, Rudok and Gar, where some of Tibet's finest wool was made, were coveted as rich areas.

In May 1841, with a force of five thousand Dogras under Colonel Basti Ram and Ladakhis and Baltis under General Ghulam Khan, Zorawar Singh left Leh and marched up the Indus, entering Tibet at Tashigong. His cavalry consisted of horses and ponies collected in Ladakh and Baltistan.

The *Fateh Shibji* battalion (the present 4 JAK) distinguished itself by capturing the renowned Mantalai flag on 30 May 1841 at the battle at Purang border. (The unit celebrates *Mantalai Day* on 30 May every year in commemoration of this victory and the flag is displayed at the Regimental Centre.)

Zorawar Singh overran Rudok and Gar, the headquarters of the Chinese government in eastern Tibet, within a few weeks, continued his march, passed the source of the Indus and established his headquarters at Tiritha Puri on the Sutlej River in the holy district of Mansarowar. He positioned his capable officer, Colonel Basti Ram, to the right at Takla-Khan near the borders of Kumaon and Nepal, and a Balti officer, Rahim Khan, at the Spiti border.

Zorawar Singh's advance had been too easy: the Tibetans deliberately avoided an encounter with him, luring him deeper into Tibet and allowing the severity of winter to aid them in their defensive plans. By November, when no significant encounter had occurred, Zorawar Singh debated whether to return to Ladakh in that inhospitable weather and terrain, or to try to survive the winter there and continue his campaigns in the spring.

By this time news had reached the British of this remarkable advance by Zorawar Singh. They began to put pressure on the Lahore ruler, Maharaja Sher Singh, who was in fact the overlord of Jammu and Gulab Singh, to cease these operations and abandon his newly acquired territory in Tibet. However, Lahore was hardly capable of executing such a directive and, in any case, this campaign had been undertaken at the behest of the ruler of Jammu—not the Sikh ruler in Lahore. Nonetheless, the Lahore Durbar despatched Captain J.D. Cunningham to recall Zorawar Singh; but before Cunningham could reach him, Zorawar Singh was engaged in battle with the Tibetans.

The news of the advancing Tibetan army ended Zorawar Singh's quandary early in November 1841. He sent a detachment of three hundred to oppose the oncoming ten thousand Tibetans and Chinese—confident that his army was far superior to the Tibetans. However, illness (mainly pneumonia), and frostbite had taken a heavy toll in the Dogra ranks and among the horses; and with supplies running short, their spirit and strength had greatly dissipated. The cavalry, in fact, had virtually ceased to exist.

The first party sent to engage the Tibetans was surrounded at Kardamkhar and virtually destroyed. A force of six hundred men was then sent on November 19, under the command of General

Ghulam Khan but they were also annihilated. The Tibetans, augmented by reinforcements, continued to advance and Zorawar Singh chose to conduct his defence by mounting a bold counter-attack. He was outnumbered by roughly three-to-one and faced a well-acclimatized, and freshly organized army: but he never considered the possibility of defeat.

On December 10 he advanced from his headquarters, meeting the Tibetans that day and engaging in only minor skirmishes for two days. Finally on December 12, the Dogras launched an attack on the enemy's main body led by General Shatra and were doing well in battle until General Zorawar Singh was struck in the shoulder by a ball. He fell from his horse but continued fighting and encouraging his men until a Tibetan pierced him with a lance.

With the death of their revered general, the Dogra force became demoralised and disorganized. As many as seven hundred were taken prisoner and conducted to Lhasa, while many more died of cold and illness in their retreat from Tibet. The only substantial force to return to Jammu was that under Colonel Basti Ram, which had been stationed on the Nepal border. The Tibetans quickly reoccupied Rudok and Gar and, in the spring of 1842, a body of three thousand Tibetans marched into Ladakh and laid siege to the Dogra garrison in the fort in Leh. The Ladakhis gave the Tibetans their support and even Skardu rebelled against Dogra rule in the hope that a Dogra defeat would bring them independence again. However, in May Gulab Singh sent a fresh force of six thousand under Diwan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratanu and came himself to Nasim Bagh near Srinagar to direct the operations. After a brief encounter at Skardu, the Dogras marched towards Leh where the enemy attempted a defence, hoping to hold the Dogras off until winter set in. The Dogras, instead of mounting a frontal assault, dammed the Indus downstream of the defensive positions, flooding the Tibetans out and forcing them into open battle. The Tibetan general was killed and after his force was decisively defeated the Lhasa government sued for peace.

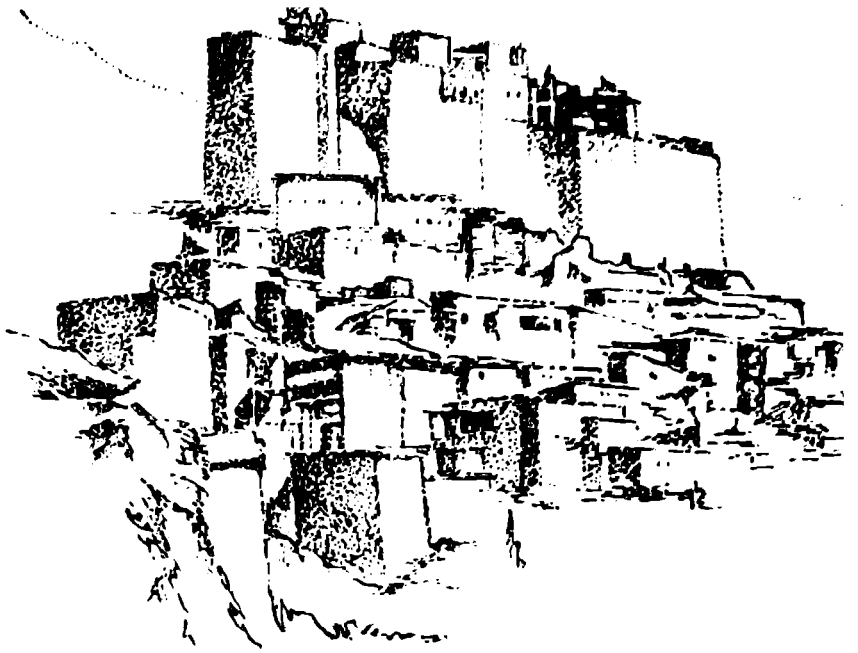
With the death of Zorawar Singh, the Dogra army lost the most determined and daring general of that era. While many of his exploits would now be considered high-risk and unnecessary, he is justly revered in the history of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles for his perseverance in six marches across the Himalayas at heights of 15,000 feet, his success in subduing those remote and barren areas for his ruler and his flair for fair and humane administration in subject areas.

His character was exemplary in an age still permissive of pillage and plunder in conquered regions. He amassed no personal fortune as a result of his conquests and refused to accept gifts for himself or his men. He discouraged looting by imposing strict punishment. Though a rigid disciplinarian, he won the admiration and loyalty of his men by his attention to their well-being. He is remembered kindly for his simplicity and his qualities of leadership, administration and organisation.

In battle Zorawar Singh used his resources to the fullest and when necessary freely employed local assistance especially men and ponies. His attempts to win local support brought him ready allies and enabled him to maintain most of his force intact without detaching security and guard sections.

The young army he commanded had the disadvantage of being loosely organised and poorly equipped. His force consisted of foot soldiers, riflemen, archers, lance or javelin bearers and swordsmen, besides a small detachment of cavalry and a few guns. The army generally lived off the land as it marched. Zorawar Singh's troops were mobile, light and self-contained. They wore leather trousers and jackets in winter and carried country-made rifles and gun powder. Dogra troops proved themselves to be tenacious fighters, brave and loyal, and usually convinced of their invincibility in the face of the enemy.

Zorawar Singh managed to keep his lines of communication open over the long distances he covered. In the Baltistan campaign supplies travelled six hundred miles from Jammu to Hunza. (Perhaps his defeat in Tibet was due in part at least to the lack of supply lines.) His aggressive spirit led him to attack against heavy odds even when on the defensive. He often engaged the enemy in surprise attack, thus snatching from them whatever advantage they may have enjoyed. Zorawar Singh, more than anyone else, laid a firm foundation for the growth and development of Gulab Singh's army and the training and traditions started by him have remained a proud heritage for the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles to the present day.



HUNZANAGAR CASTLE & TOWN

4

Gulab Singh : Expeditions in Gilgit and Chilas

BY THE Treaty of Lahore of March 1846, the Sikhs had surrendered the Jullundur Doab to the British and had agreed to pay an indemnity of one-and-a-half crores of rupees; but when they found themselves unable to pay the indemnity, the Sikhs were forced to surrender further territories—including Kashmir and Hazara. However, the Governor General, Lord Hastings, was reluctant to assume direct responsibility for so vast a region, especially as it seemed to be of relatively little economic value. So when Gulab Singh of Jammu, who had played such a timely role as a mediator in the peace treaty between the British and the Sikhs, offered to pay half the war indemnity—seventy-five lakhs—the British ceded to him (by the Treaty of Amritsar of 16 March 1846) all the hill areas north-west of the Beas River, recognising him (and his male heirs) as the independent ruler of the “State of Jammu and Kashmir.” He was

required, however, to submit territorial disputes between his own and neighbouring states to the British Indian Government, who in return promised him protection for his territories against external threat. In addition, "twelve perfect shawl goats and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls" would be given as token annual tribute to the British.

Gulab Singh's first task was to establish and consolidate his own *de facto* rule in the new region. The last ruling Sikh governor, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, had been officially instructed to hand over the administration to Gulab Singh but secret directions from the traitorous Sikh general, Lal Singh, called upon the governor to oppose and harass the new ruler's forces as they entered Kashmir.

When Gulab Singh's forces under the command of Wazir Lakhpat neared Srinagar, the Sikhs resisted them and a battle ensued at the base of Sankaracharya hill. Wazir Lakhpat was killed and his men took cover behind Srinagar's Hari Parbat Fort. When informed of the battle, Gulab Singh requested aid from the British who obliged with a contingent under Sir Henry Lawrence. The Sikh governor, when informed of the British assistance to the Dogras, abandoned battle, relinquished his post and left the Valley with his forces.

At the beginning of his rule in Kashmir Gulab Singh was faced with the same conditions that so many rulers had faced for centuries in the state; the economy in shambles, burdensome taxes, minimum agricultural production, frequent religious conflicts and incursions into the Valley by discontented or fortune-seeking neighbours. Sikh administration had been generally superior to that of the Afghans and even the Moghuls, but as power in Lahore crumbled, the government of Kashmir weakened. Sheikh Imam-ud-din, unable to govern effectively in spite of his considerable ability, had spent his time amassing a personal fortune and satisfying the many claims to favour by bestowing numerous *jagirs* in return for tribute from the recipients. In contrast, Gulab Singh was free to make and execute his own policy for the development of Kashmir—and to ensure that all improvements would be to the advantage of his new domain.

Dedicated to the task of consolidating his rule in Kashmir, Gulab Singh began by severely suppressing local crime and ordering public executions to deter offenders. He also firmly repulsed the invading Khakhas and Bombas (local hill tribes) and ended their periodic raids by stationing strong garrisons in the forts guarding the passes into the Valley.



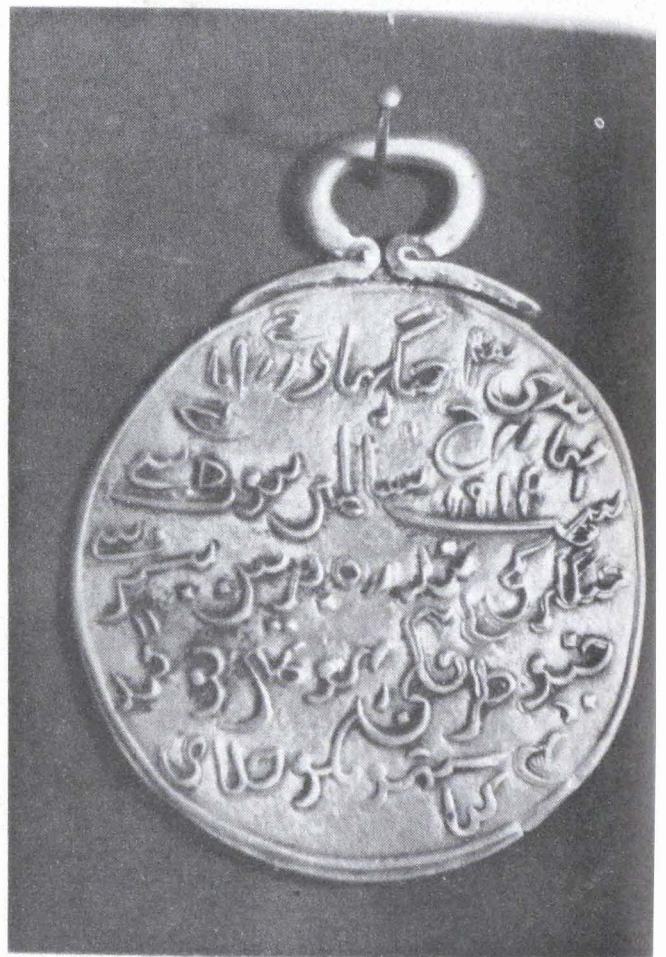
Maharaja Gulab Singh on horseback



Maharaja Gulab Singh



General Zorawar Singh



Silver medal presented in 1842 by the King of Nepal to Uttam Padhial, a senior officer in Zorawar Singh's army during the Tibetan campaign, to commemorate the latter's gallantry in that operation. Padhial was taken prisoner by the Tibetans and later repatriated through the good offices of the Nepalese *Durbar*.

With the restoration of peace, trade and commerce were resumed. Gulab Singh thoroughly investigated the *jagirs* that his predecessors had so freely allotted, differentiating between those which were legitimate and long-standing and those given to Imam-ud-din's favourites. Revenue and police administration were reorganized; he chose loyal and capable officials to fill the departments of government. Even the ancient *begar* system of forced labour was reformed so that instead of all peasants being liable to any amount of portage without compensation, each village was required to appoint a group of volunteers willing to do the work when required. They were to be paid in grain for their labour and received free rations when employed.

Government control of grain was also established to end the exorbitant black market. All rice stocks were commandeered by the government and sold at fixed rates. One of the most pressing problems for the economy was the plight of the weavers. The export of shawls had become a profitable industry in Kashmir but management controls over the weavers were so rigid that the workmen preferred to disqualify themselves from the trade than pay the exorbitant loom tax. Gulab Singh, in response to a weavers' strike of 1847, introduced new regulations by which the weaver paid a tax proportionate to the amount of work done on the loom and was free to seek a new employer when he chose.

Gulab Singh succeeded in stabilizing the administration of Kashmir and in improving the conditions of his subjects. He spent a considerable time in personally enforcing the reforms he had inaugurated. Kashmiris were no longer abused; taxes were high but not oppressive and justice was done even to the discomfiture of state officials. Gulab Singh's ambitious expeditions into surrounding territories and the intervention of the British in the affairs of the region prevented the establishment of complete internal order; nevertheless Gulab Singh must be credited with providing rational and lawful government in Kashmir.

Even at the time of the conclusion of the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846, there had been discussion among the British officials about the wisdom of awarding Kashmir to Gulab Singh. Within a few months of the signing of the treaty, Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General, after a brief visit to Srinagar, sent a note to Gulab Singh indicating that the British questioned some of his internal policies and claimed the right to post a Resident in Srinagar. No provision for a Resident had been included in the Treaty and Gulab Singh

was not one to permit this infringement on his sovereignty. However, in June 1846, Lieutenant Reynell Taylor, the British Resident in Lahore, was sent to Srinagar to enquire into the attitudes of the Muslim population of Kashmir regarding Gulab Singh's rule. Well before Taylor's public address in Srinagar, one of Gulab Singh's trusted aides, Rajakak Dhar, had tutored the public to give appropriate responses to any enquiries that might be made. Thus, when Taylor asked the crowd if they were satisfied under Gulab Singh's rule, their apparently overwhelming support of the Raja sent him back to Lahore without any evidence against Gulab Singh and only a few contrived proposals for economic control over the state.

The following year, the British renewed their pressure when the Resident in Lahore, Colonel Henry Lawrence, sent a letter to Gulab Singh complaining of several examples of misgovernment in Kashmir: distress of Kashmiris because of the high price of cloth; ruthless behaviour of some officials; four recent cases of *sati*; and Gulab Singh's military venture in Gilgit. Instead of provoking a crisis, this letter provided Gulab Singh with just the excuse he required to pursue his reform programme vigorously.

Then in August 1847, Captain J.E. Cunningham arrived in Kashmir to begin work on the boundary settlement between Punjab and Kashmir and to study the boundaries of Ladakh. British officials, state visitors and tourists continued to visit Kashmir, making British interests in the state increasingly more prominent—so that by 1851, the British presented a formal proposal for the stationing of a Resident in Srinagar. Gulab Singh again refused, stating that such a move would be a violation of the Treaty and would undermine his sovereignty. Ultimately, however, he was badgered into agreeing to a "Special Officer" who would remain in Kashmir as long as visitors were present in the Valley, to look after their interests. Thus was Gulab Singh able to prevent the appointment of a Resident *per se*—and succeeded in keeping British influence in Kashmir to a minimum.

Concurrent with his efforts to establish an orderly administration in the state and to keep the British at bay, Gulab Singh continued his exploits on the periphery of the state.

After the establishment of Dogra rule in Kashmir, the Sikh governor of Gilgit, Nathu Shah, acknowledged Gulab Singh as ruler and continued as the representative in Gilgit. (Gilgit had been annexed in 1841 by the then Sikh Governor of Kashmir, Sheikh Gulam Mohiuddin.) In the provisions of the Treaty of Amritsar,

Gulab Singh was specifically awarded the hill territories between the Indus and Ravi Rivers but it was understood that he could exercise control in Gilgit as that was already subject to Kashmir. Thus, in 1847, when the Raja of neighbouring Hunza attacked across the border of Gilgit and plundered some of the frontier villages, Gulab Singh's forces were promptly despatched to that area.

The ruler of Hunza, like other frontier chiefs, had become incensed by Gulab Singh's continued encroachment of his territories and had grown envious of his newly acquired power and sovereignty. The immediate cause of the aggression was the Hunza Raja's objection to the presence of two British officers whom Nathu Shah had permitted to remain in Gilgit. (See map on page 72).

In retaliation for the Hunza aggression, Nathu Shah led a Dogra force into Hunza; however, Nathu Shah was killed and his forces routed. The ruler of Yasin and Punial then capitalized on the disturbances and with support from the people of Darel, Gaur Rehman attacked Gilgit and captured the fort.

To avenge their defeat, two columns of Dogras, one from Astore and one from Skardu, were despatched to Gilgit. Gaur Rehman was defeated and had to withdraw to Punial—and the Dogras re-occupied Gilgit. Bhup Singh and Sant Singh, two of Gulab Singh's officers, remained behind as administrators.

There followed four years of peace, during which Gulab Singh increased the strength of his army by raising No 3 Kashmir Rifles. Raised in Jammu in 1849, the battalion was composed mainly of Gorkhas, whose ancestors had formed part of the Nepalese force under General Amar Singh Thapa which had invaded Kangra in the early 1800's at the invitation of warring Kangra chieftains. The battalion accordingly was named the *Suraj Gorkha* and today it is the 5th JAK Rifles.

It is interesting to note that Gorkhas were freely enlisted in Gulab Singh's forces. The *Raghnath* Battalion raised in 1856 (now the 3rd JAK Rifles) contained a sprinkling of Gorkhas, as did the Bodyguard raised in 1869 (now the 2nd JAK Rifles). Families of Gorkha troops were entitled to a special monthly rice allowance and Gorkhas (unlike other non-Kashmiris) were allowed to settle permanently in Kashmir.

Other units raised by the Maharaja during this period were a battery each of horse and mule artillery, sappers and miners and a cavalry regiment.

In 1852, Gaur Rehman—with the help of the Raja of Hunza—

again attacked Gilgit, surrounding and isolating the two Dogra forts at Gilgit and Nanpura. Bhup Singh, then commanding Bunji, advanced with a force of over twelve hundred to relieve Gilgit but was himself annihilated *en route*. He crossed the Nila Dhar ridge, which separates the Valley of Se and Gilgit, and reached the Gilgit River. However, the route passes through a narrow gully overhung by cliffs two to three hundred feet high, where the enemy had positioned themselves behind strong defences of stonework (*sangars*) and had blocked the exit. The Dards (inhabitants of Yasin and Punial) were led by Gaur Rehman's sons, Mulk Aman, Mir Mali, Mir Ghazi and Pahalwan Bahadur, and supported by the Raja of Hunza and his forces. They despatched a column across a mountain path to the rear of Bhup Singh's men, thus cutting off their retreat. The Dogra army, of which the new *Suraj Gorkha* Battalion (5th JAK) formed a significant part, was then attacked from all sides and destroyed; over a thousand were killed and the remainder taken prisoner and later sold as slaves. Only one Gorkha woman, a sepoy's wife, managed to cross the river and reach Bunji to relate the fate of Bhup Singh's force. (Finding herself one of the few survivors and surrounded by other women and children, the Gorkha woman had manned the remaining machine guns and when she opened fire, the enemy, thinking Dogra troops were still in position, fled from the battlefield. The woman then began her trek to Bunji, about 40 miles away, which she reached the next morning. In recognition of her courage, the Maharaja granted to the wives of all Gorkha soldiers free rations at the same scale as the men.)

Gulab Singh's other commander, Sant Singh, was also defeated. The fort of Naupura, garrisoned by Dogras, was located on a plateau about 250 feet above Gilgit plain. A force of about three hundred men set out from Gilgit fort to relieve Naupura and succeeded in getting inside the fort. Later, when their provisions were exhausted and their water supply cut by the enemy, the Dogras, in despair, sought negotiations with the enemy and were allowed to leave the fort. However, they were then treacherously attacked and decimated by the Dards. In the Gilgit fort also the Dogras maintained their positions until their rations and supplies were depleted, when they were forced to abandon the fort. They continued their resistance but ultimately were over-powered by Gaur Rehman's forces. With their defeat, the Gilgit and other territories north of the Indus fell to Gaur Rehman.

While the Maharaja's forces were meeting reverses in Gilgit,

tribesmen from Chilas, in 1851, sent a marauding expedition into Astore Valley, abducting many inhabitants as slaves. The following spring, in 1852, Gulab Singh despatched a strong force commanded by Diwan Hari Chand, Wazir Zorawar, Mian Batu and Colonel Bijay Singh. The Chilasis resisted stubbornly and inflicted considerable losses on the Dogras: one column, under Colonel Devi Singh, was annihilated and Mangal Singh and Bijay Singh severely wounded. The Dogras were later able to lay siege to the Chilasis' fort and continued to invest the fort in spite of the scarcity of supplies. The surrounding area was barren and the Dogras resorted to eating leaves and the barks of trees while awaiting the arrival of rations from Kashmir. The Chilasis too were without supplies and finally sued for peace. The leaders of the raids were brought to Gulab Singh in Srinagar where they agreed to accept his suzerainty and to leave their sons as hostages.

Internal politics in Kashmir had been stable for the most part since Gulab Singh's rule had begun. However, he was still threatened by the surreptitious activities of the British, who continued to seek ways of regulating his power in the north. Their encouragement to Gulab Singh's nephew (Dhyan Singh's second son) to stage a rebellion in his *jagir* at Jasrota was an attempt to divide the ruling family against itself and open the way to increased British influence in Jammu and Kashmir State. The nephew, Jawahar Singh, appealed to the British at Lahore for restitution of as much as one-half of the area of the state and, while the case was under discussion, Gulab Singh sent his army under Colonels Hari Chand and Bijay Singh to reduce the rebel's strongholds. Gulab Singh's representative, Diwan Jwala Saha, went to Lahore to plead the Maharaja's case and although the British had initially favoured Jawahar Singh of Jasrota, when they discovered that he was in correspondence with the Afghans, (the contemporary threat to British India) they closed the matter and took Jawahar Singh into custody.

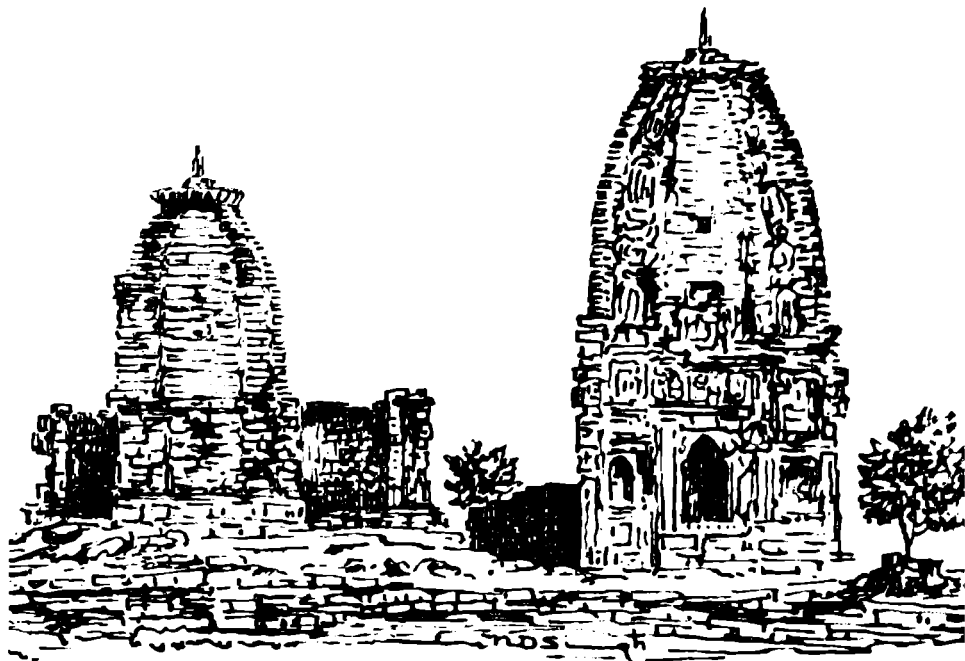
This encounter was Gulab Singh's last political and military venture, for in February 1856, he installed his son, Ranbir Singh, as the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir State and went into semi-retirement. The British, on their part, ceased their intrigues in Jammu and Kashmir with the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857. Gulab Singh continued to advise his son on the affairs of state and, realizing that the security and continuity of their rule could only be guaranteed if the British remained in power in India, was most insistent that the Jammu and Kashmir Army support the British

in any way possible during the rebellion. Diwan Jwala Saha represented Jammu and Kashmir State at Rawalpindi and offered all his resources to the British. When military and financial help were requested, Maharaja Ranbir Singh and Diwan Hari Chand marched with 2000 infantry, 200 Cavalry and 6 artillery pieces to aid the British in the siege of Delhi.

The force came under the political charge of Lt Col R.C. Lawrence at Jullundur on 21 August 1857 and by means of forced marches of 20 miles a day, reached Delhi by 8 September. A detachment of 500 infantry and two guns was located at Kasauli to keep open communications between Simla, Karnal and the Delhi camp. The remainder of the force provided working parties for trench digging and took part in the assault on Kishan Ganj on 14 September. Overwhelmed by enemy forces, the attack was halted; but on the next day, an enemy counter-attack was repulsed. In these engagements a large number of Jammu and Kashmir troops were killed or wounded but their efforts succeeded at least in siphoning pressure from other areas of the city. After the fall of Delhi, the Jammu and Kashmir contingent assisted in the protection of Kabul Gate and Mori Bastion as well as in the resettlement and disarming of Rohtak District. In addition, the main element of the contingent marched 90 miles in three days to assist in the attack and capture of Jhajjar fort. The Jammu and Kashmir force returned to Jammu in April, having suffered heavy losses including Diwan Hari Chand who was killed in action just outside Delhi. In appreciation of the services rendered by the Kashmir army, the Government of India offered the Maharaja an *ilaqua* in the province of Oudh. The offer, however, was declined.

The death of Gulab Singh in August 1857 brought Maharaja Ranbir Singh back to Kashmir but did not significantly change either the external or internal policies of the state.

Gulab Singh had not been the selfish, despotic ruler that Kashmir had known on so many occasions in the past; he was shrewd and, no doubt, self-seeking—but he also had the good fortune to exercise these traits in ways which are remembered as predominantly beneficial for his people and subjects. His peaceful administration and his army's extraordinary expeditions beyond the state borders brought pride and prosperity to Kashmir. Gulab Singh must also be credited with wisdom and foresight in that as his own health deteriorated he began to groom his son to take over the administration of the state.



KIRMACHI

5

Maharaja Ranbir Singh

THE ACCESSION of Maharaja Ranbir Singh to the *gadi* of Kashmir precipitated no crises in government and the transition between rulers proceeded smoothly. Before the commencement of his rule in Jammu and Kashmir, Ranbir Singh, the only surviving son of Gulab Singh, had gained experience in administration as a close confidant of his father. Born in 1829, Ranbir Singh was trained for soldiering from his youth and joined his father in several campaigns. His education was scant but his keen memory, acute intelligence, strength of character and mannerly bearing contributed to his popularity as a ruler and his ability and confidence as a soldier and commander. At the age of fourteen, he was married to the daughter of Raja Bijay Singh of Seeba and three years later took over the administration of Jammu, after Gulab Singh had acquired Kashmir State.

After his father's death, Ranbir Singh made no drastic changes in the administration of Jammu and Kashmir but concentrated on improving economic conditions in the still-impooverished state.

Progress was slow because Ranbir Singh's deputies and officials did not share their ruler's enthusiasm for reform and blatantly continued to exploit the people.

Ranbir Singh's first concern was with land tax reform. The system of land tenure in the Valley had been inequitable and riddled with corrupt practices; the system of revenue collection was so ruthless that agriculturalists preferred to leave cultivable land barren than face the rigours of tax payment. The Maharaja proposed assessment at fixed amounts but no sooner was this procedure introduced than the collectors succeeded in finding other methods of perpetuating their extortion. In one case, when local discontent was rampant, Ranbir Singh toured the countryside to mollify his subjects. The cause of the grievances—excessive taxation—was remedied when the collectors were forced to return to each man the sum unjustly collected. But in the next season the assessors again proceeded to harass the farmers : no permanent check could be levied against them.

The severe famine of 1878–79 focussed wide attention on agricultural conditions in Kashmir and Maharaja Ranbir Singh was held to blame for the disaster by the ever-critical British. However, after an enquiry into the matter, he was exonerated and the blame laid on unpredictable weather conditions and the notorious corruption of local officials.

Excessive rain from October 1877 to January 1878 had ruined the autumn harvest. Had it been reaped in time, it would have been saved but the prevailing revenue system required that the harvest be assessed before gathering and the crops rotted in the fields. With no new crops available, the officials hastily opened government shops selling supplies at low rates—but failed to keep any seed or fodder reserves. Animals died of starvation while junior officials created panic by periodic village searches. The spring crop also failed due to excessive rains and as much as three-fifths of the population of the Valley is believed to have died from starvation or disease. Those who attempted to emigrate to the Punjab were stopped by border guards as no one was then allowed to leave the Valley without official permission. (At the end of 1878 this regulation, known as *rahdari*, was abolished by the Maharaja but by then few had survived who could make the arduous journey.)

For his part, the Maharaja did make sincere efforts to aid his stricken subjects. The grain he imported from the Punjab, however, was sold by his deputies at exorbitant rates and whatever money he spent in ameliorating the distresses mainly went in providing profit for his officials.

Ranbir Singh also devoted much attention to administrative reforms in the government of the state. He set up three main departments: the revenue, the civil and the military—with the intention that each should have a clearly defined area of operation. Additional subdivisions were established for civil and revenue administration and the judicial system was reorganized with a penal code along the lines of Macaulay's code in British India. Courts of appeal were set up in Jammu and Srinagar and about thirty lower courts operated in other areas of the state. The Maharaja himself often presided over cases; both he and the established courts were easily accessible to the people.

In spite of much official corruption, the crime rate was low because of the still-fresh memory of Gulab Singh's ruthless executions. Steps were also taken to control kidnapping and infanticide.

Trade and commerce, the traditional mainstays of the Kashmir economy, were encouraged by Ranbir Singh and transportation and communication facilities were improved. New roads were constructed and five lakhs of rupees were spent on repairing existing routes. Construction began on a cart road connecting Srinagar with Rawalpindi as well as a pony-track between Jammu and the Valley. Telegraph and postal services were instituted and new commodities appeared in the state to expand the scope of trade. New agricultural products were introduced and wine-making was encouraged. Experimental tea gardens were laid out, silk-worm was imported from China and distributed in villages, and iron and coal mines were opened in some parts of Jammu. Trade with British India increased significantly after customs duties were reduced.

In spite of these reforms, the traditional shawl industry went into serious decline from which it never recovered. Notwithstanding the reforms instituted by Gulab Singh, the plight of the 27,000 weavers continued to be hopeless. Forced to pay high taxes and prohibited from changing masters, the destitute weavers finally marched on the governor's residence seeking his aid. However, the head of the shawl department, Pandit Rajakak Dhar, misrepresented the weavers' case and fearing insurrection, the governor called upon the army to disperse the crowd and in the process many weavers were killed.

The Maharaja's attention came to focus on the matter by 1868 when he remitted a portion of the weavers' tax. Three years later when the demand for shawls had fallen off sharply due to unstable conditions in the European market during the Franco-Prussian War

of 1870-71, Ranbir Singh also reduced the quota of grain each weaver had to purchase from the state. When the industry failed to revive, the Maharaja abolished the weavers' tax completely and retained only a small duty on the export of shawls.

During Maharaja Ranbir Singh's rule, Kashmir revived some of its literary traditions and was again a focal point for scholars and artists. Several schools were opened in Jammu and Srinagar and in some of the smaller towns. One visitor to Kashmir in 1875, George Buhler, recorded a visit to a school with the Maharaja during which Ranbir Singh himself examined the students and discussed their subjects in an informed and interested way. That school, the chief educational institution in Kashmir, had a Sanskrit College in which poetry, grammar and philosophy were taught. There were Persian classes, a school of industry and mathematics classes (in geometry and algebra) according to a Dogra translation of the *Lilavati*.

The Maharaja also donated generously to educational institutions outside Kashmir: one lakh rupees was given to the newly founded Punjab University and he became the University's first Fellow. Donations were also made to Sanskrit institutions in Benaras. The Raghunath Temple at Jammu, constructed shortly after the accession of the Maharaja, became a centre of religious research and study. A Sanskrit college library containing over five thousand volumes and a translation bureau were built and many Sanskrit and Persian books were translated into Dogri, Hindi and Urdu. Sanskrit texts written in the *Sarada* script of Kashmir were transcribed into the *Devanagari*. Maharaja Ranbir Singh also established the first printing press in Kashmir, the Vidya Vilas Press. The Maharaja made a serious attempt to open for his subjects the texts and scriptures of the two main religious communities in Kashmir and to provide translations for ancient historical and philosophical works to uplift the level of scholarship and education in his state.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh did not share his father's aggressive and adventuresome spirit in external expeditions and while he staunchly defended the areas under the Jammu and Kashmir *raj*, he did not encourage far-flung invasions. His proclivity was underscored by the British intervention in the area and their desire to restrain any further expansion by the Kashmir ruler into territory they now considered sensitive in their relations with Russia, China and Afghanistan. Nonetheless, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, in attempting

to consolidate his rule in immediately adjacent regions was forced, in 1860, to renew the conflict in Gilgit.

Gaur Rehman, the ruler of Yasin and Punial who had driven the Dogras out of Gilgit in 1852, had died in 1856 and Ranbir Singh had to reassert his influence in the area. Under the command of Colonel (later General) Devi Singh Narainia, a force of 3,000 Dogras including the *Raghunath* (3 JAK), the *Fateh Shibji* (4 JAK) and the *Rudra Shibnath* (9 JAK), was despatched to cross the Indus River and enter Gilgit in 1860. The strong fortifications Gaur Rehman had built were confidently attacked by the Dogras and, without their inspiring leader, the Dards' resistance crumbled. When a cannon ball hit the door of the fort, killing the *Wazir*, the Dards fled the area and the Dogras occupied the fort and the region in the name of Maharaja Ranbir Singh.

Colonel Devi Singh continued the advance into Yasin. Instead of garrisoning his men in this distant province, Devi Singh preferred to install a local as governor (chosen by Ranbir Singh). Azmat Shah was nominated but as soon as the Dogras returned to Gilgit, the Yasinis overthrew him and he sought protection in Gilgit. In Punial, the local chieftain, Raja Isa Bagdur, who had fled to Kashmir when Gaur Rehman annexed Punial to Yasin, was reinstated by Devi Singh as a tributary of Kashmir. He was also given the Valley of Ishkoman, previously part of Yasin which leads northward from Gakju.

With Gilgit and Punial under control, Maharaja Ranbir Singh enjoyed three years of respite from border conflicts. But by 1863 the Dards had begun harassing and looting merchants who traversed the routes between Gilgit and Badakshan through Yasin. In 1863, Ranbir Singh sent a punitive expedition from Gilgit to Yasin under the command of Colonel (later General) Hoshiara, a bold and vigorous leader. At first little opposition was encountered; the Yasinis had collected at Marorikot, another day's march up the valley. The Dogras advanced; the Yasinis emerged to engage them and were decisively defeated. The survivors, including Gaur Rehman's son, Mulk Aman, fled to the hills or to the fort, where the Dogras followed and annihilated them. With their defeat the Yasinis accepted the suzerainty of Kashmir and the Dogra force again returned to Gilgit.

In spite of the presence of Maharaja Ranbir Singh's forces in Gilgit, however, conditions in the frontier region remained unstable. The Yasins were no sooner subdued than the people of Hunza

began harassing the trade caravans which passed through Hunza *en route* to and from the Pamirs. In 1866, when a Dogra force was to be sent into Hunza, the permission of the ruler of neighbouring Nagar was sought and received for the Dogras to pass through this region in the approach to the inaccessible Hunza. The Dogras advanced on the Nagar side of the river until they reached a point opposite to and within gun shot of one of the Hunza forts. They halted and while plans were being made for crossing the river, which at that point runs between steep and forbidding cliffs, the ruler of Nagar broke off his alliance with the Dogras. Finding themselves vulnerable, the Dogras immediately withdrew to Gilgit, thus giving their enemies confidence and hope of success.

An alliance of the frontier Rajas was concluded by *Wazir* Rahmat of Yasin and headed by Iman-ul-Mulk, the Mehtar of Chitral. Their forces, augmented by those from various mountain states, invaded Gilgit, taking most of the Dogra forts *en route*—Gakuj and Bubar among them. However, the fort of Sher, garrisoned by one hundred Dogra soldiers and commanded by Raja Isa Bagdur, held out and in doing so posed a threat to the invaders. So long as the fort held out, the main force could not proceed further. The enemy column perforce had to take an alternate, dangerous and unexplored mountain route into Gilgit. When Gilgit fort was finally attacked, the Dogras had amassed sufficient supplies and provisions and were able to repulse the attack, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. Before Iman-ul-Mulk's alliance could re-organize, information about the invasion reached Srinagar and reinforcements under *Wazir* Zorawar and Colonel Bijay Singh were despatched. They proceeded first to Bunji, which they took with little opposition. As word of their arrival spread, the Mehtar of Chitral and his allies dispersed in fear and fled to their respective territories.

In September 1866, a punitive expedition was sent into Darel to pursue the invaders. The main body was under Zorawar and Bijay Singh as it advanced by the Nanpura ravine, while another column under Bakshi Radha Krishan proceeded up a side valley from Singal. The main body met little opposition from Mulk Iman of Yasin, who had come to the aid of the Darelis and who had taken up a defensive position at a place where a ravine enters the main Darel valley. Colonel Bijay Singh, an experienced commander, scaled the walls of the ravine and surprised the enemy in his own positions. The Darelis fled and the Dogra pursuit continued after

two days when both columns had joined up. They advanced well into the heart of Darel, meeting no opposition from the people. The Dogras stayed for a week in Darel during which negotiations were held with the elders of the community. Thereafter the Dogras withdrew with guarantees of peace in the region.

In 1867, Mulk Iman again attacked Bubar, a Dogra fort in Punial. The Dogra garrison defended itself well, making occasional sallies outside the fort. With the arrival of a relief column from Gilgit under Bakshi Radha Krishan, the attacking Yasnīs withdrew and thenceforth refrained from making incursions into Maharaja Ranbir Singh's territory.

A decade of conflict ended in 1870 with agreements and treaties between the Rajas of Hunza and Nagar and Maharaja Ranbir Singh. The persistence of the Dogra forces in quelling disturbances and implementing the policy of the Jammu and Kashmir government had persuaded the mountain chiefs to come to terms with the Maharaja. The Raja of Nagar gave a guarantee of safety for trade and commerce between Gilgit and Nagar and left hostages at Gilgit as a guarantee of good conduct and the regular payment of tribute. As a feudatory of the state he received an annual subsidy. The Raja of Hunza gave a similar undertaking and was granted a subsidy of Rs 2,000 a year. Instead of transferring the fort at Chaprot to Maharaja Ranbir Singh, he agreed to send its revenue to the Jammu and Kashmir treasury annually.

Although Ranbir Singh had forsaken ambitions of empire, as a keen and cogent politician he was informed about and interested in the contemporary affairs of Central Asia. His reign witnessed the expansion of Tsarist Russia as far as the settlements at Tashkent (1865) and Samarkand (1868), the second Anglo-Afghan War (1879) and the British mission to Yarkand in Western China. Nestled in the middle of this vital region, Maharaja Ranbir Singh decided to make his own investigations into controversial Central Asia and, in 1864, despatched Kadir Joo and Mian Salab Singh to Yarkand on a diplomatic mission. A military officer, Soba Khan Bandooki, went to study the military dispositions of the Chinese in Central Asia and upon his return submitted a comprehensive report of his findings. This document along with information from other missions—and spies—provoked the Maharaja into asking the British for permission to send a military force to Yarkand and Kashghar to attempt to incorporate these two cities and the adjacent territory into his state.

Political and military conditions in the Central Asian area were considered unstable and so, in 1865, Ranbir Singh despatched a small force across the Karakoram Pass with orders to occupy the country as far as Shadula, about three days' march beyond Karakoram Pass. They were to build and garrison a fort there. During the summers of 1865 and 1866, the fort was supplied and manned by forces of Jammu and Kashmir State. (They withdrew in winter because of the severity of the climate.) However, having accomplished this enterprise, Maharaja Ranbir Singh was forced to recant when the British lodged a strong protest and refused to permit him to occupy the regions. Although this adventure was foiled, Ranbir Singh continued to send emissaries and agents to Central Asia and Persia. Mehta Sher Singh, a charming and daring officer of the government, travelled in Central Asia in 1866-67 and kept a revealing diary of his observations and encounters which he presented to the Maharaja. The same year Mohammed Khan Kishtwar, another officer, submitted a report based on a similar journey. However, no further attempts were made by Maharaja Ranbir Singh to extend his control into Central Asia and as British pressure on him increased, he surrendered more and more of Jammu and Kashmir's sovereignty in external affairs.

The initial attempt by the British to station a Resident in Kashmir was repulsed outright by Gulab Singh in 1848, soon after Kashmir had come under Dogra rule. Since then relations between the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir and the British wavered, each knowing that the other held certain guarantees for his well-being and yet each unwilling to give in. Nevertheless, in 1870, Ranbir Singh had been persuaded to appoint Mr. Drew as his commissioner in Ladakh and in 1871, Mr. Johnson. In 1873, when the proposal to appoint a Resident was renewed, Maharaja Ranbir Singh again argued that as there was no provision in the Treaty of Amritsar for the appointment of a British Resident, such a move would be illegal and a violation of the Treaty. In spite of their ardent desire to have a representative close to the scene of the Maharaja's activities as well as the Russian border, the British refrained from alienating the strategically situated state of Kashmir and, for the time being, withdrew their proposal. The British knew that the Maharaja was held in high esteem by the states of Central Asia and most of the communications from that region to the British were delivered through the Kashmir government. One of these proved to be very significant : the arrival of the first envoy from Yaqub Beg of Yarkand

at the Maharaja's court in 1872. Ranbir Singh directed the representative to the British Viceroy and after several consultations and exchanges, it was agreed that a British party headed by Douglas Forsythe would be allowed to approach Yaqub Beg to negotiate trade arrangements.

The British sought the cooperation of the Kashmir government in organizing the Forsythe mission with the implication that it was a joint effort with potential benefits for both parties. The Maharaja's government thus took charge of supplying all provisions and portage—numbering over sixteen hundred horses and yaks and nearly seven thousand porters. However, when the mission returned, the terms presented by the British were somewhat one-sided. Maharaja Ranbir Singh was urged to accept a commercial treaty with the British government in 1873 according to which a British Joint Commissioner was appointed to Leh to look after the upkeep of the road and welfare of travellers to Central Asia. The Maharaja could not thereafter levy any toll or duty on goods sent from British India or abroad to Central Asia and from Central Asia to any Indian or outside area (although, in return, goods imported into the State from British India were also without duty). He had to pay Rs 5,000 for road repairs and ever thereafter make annual contributions for repairs and for rest houses *en route*. British, Indian or Central Asian nationals could openly sell supplies and provide portage businesses at any point on the route without payment of rent to Kashmir and any interference by the Kashmir government was prohibited. Rules for the maintenance of law and order and administration of justice were drawn up and the British were empowered to carry out survey operations with the help of deputed officials of the Maharaja's government. With this treaty the British effectively and peacefully usurped all political and commercial power in Central Asia including Western China and Tibet and the prestige and influence of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir in the region suffered greatly. (In compensation for so many concessions, the Maharaja won the confidence of the British as well as a gift from Queen Victoria—the first steam-boat to appear in Kashmir, a replica of a Royal Naval steam-launch.)

Maharaja Ranbir Singh's new association with the British soon led him into another conflict in the northwest, this time in Chitral—where his former foe, Imam-ul-Mulk, the Mehtar, had exerted his influence. The British were poised for war with the Afghans and sought to isolate the area (because the Russians were known to have

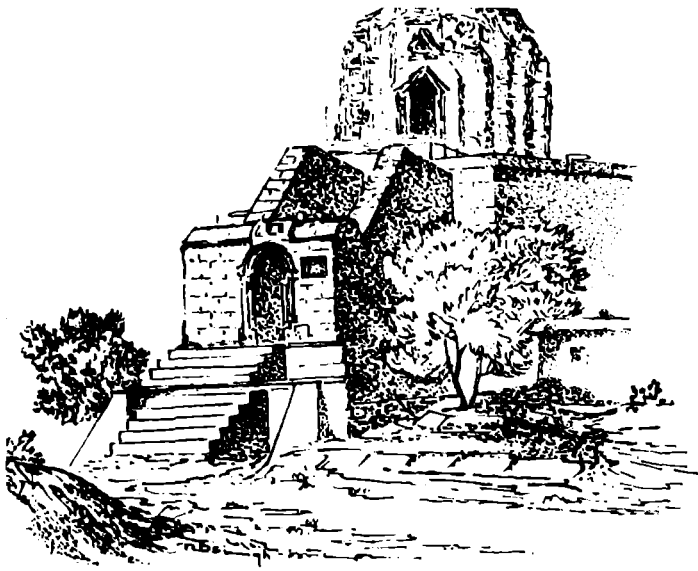
sent agents into the area to explore the possibilities of further territorial acquisitions and also because the Afghans were exerting pressure on Imam-ul-Mulk in the hope of annexing his territory.) To counter these moves, the British wished to extend protection to Chitral but were geographically incapable of doing so. So they prevailed upon Maharaja Ranbir Singh, who was certainly agreeable, to defend Chitral against an Afghan invasion and to extend suzerainty over it.

Negotiations opened between representatives of Imam-ul-Mulk and Ranbir Singh and in the resulting treaty of 1898, Chitral agreed to accept Kashmir as suzerain and to pay an annual token tribute. The Jammu and Kashmir government had to pay an annual subsidy of Rs 12,000 to Chitral. This idyllic arrangement could not long survive and soon Imam-ul-Mulk was defaulting on his obligations. In the ensuing military action, the Dogra forces defeated Chitral and some of the small territories formerly subject to Imam-ul-Mulk were transferred to Kashmir—Koh-Ghizer and Ishkoman among them. While this engagement allowed Maharaja Ranbir Singh to achieve a victory over his one-time adversary, it further distressed the British. Unable fully to trust Maharaja Ranbir Singh, and jealous of his influence in the northwest frontier, the British, in 1877, appointed Captain John Biddulph as Officer on Special Duty at Gilgit on the pretext of requiring a closer check on Russian intervention in the region. The Officer on Special Duty was specifically charged with maintaining good relations with the frontier states, obtaining intelligence reports and guiding, the Jammu and Kashmir State forces in the event of hostilities.

Until this time political relations between Kashmir and British India had been conducted through the Punjab Government. As early as in 1872 a mixed court of British and state officials had been set up to preside over civil suits involving British and state subjects. As British encroachments continued, Maharaja Ranbir Singh was not deceived but he was wise enough to acknowledge that the British did indeed have the power and acumen to deal with the turbulent and vital area.

In spite of the concessions made to the British in the latter half of his reign, Maharaja Ranbir Singh conducted the affairs of state in Jammu and Kashmir with dedication to his subjects and with pride in his own traditions. His careful and diligent attention to conditions in the state brought great improvement in educational and medical facilities and his reasoned approach to conflict helped

calm religious turmoil. Muslims were allowed full freedom in the practice of their religion and when Muslim sects rioted against each other, Maharaja Ranbir Singh intervened to restore harmony. His personal life was orderly and rational and he was not a victim of excesses. Foreign visitors to Srinagar recorded scenes of the Maharaja daily conducting public audiences with lively rapport with his subjects. At the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh in Jammu on September 15, 1885, his son, Pratap Singh ascended the *gadi* of Jammu and Kashmir in the peaceful manner that had come to characterize the rule of the Dogra dynasty.



SHANKARACHARYA

6

Maharaja Partap Singh : The Raising of Imperial Service Troops

THE ACCESSION of Maharaja Pratap Singh to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir may in itself have been peacefully accomplished but his reign proved to be one of turmoil and conflict, primarily in the area of British-Kashmir relations. While the forty years of his rule saw the institution of reforms and the inauguration of modern amenities in Jammu and Kashmir, the state was temporarily subjected to virtual domination by the British. Then, too, a variety of revolts and threats along the northwest frontier engaged the Jammu and Kashmir army—then consisting of the *Raghupratap* (1 JAK Infantry), the Bodyguard (2 JAK Rifles), the *Raghunath* (3 JAK Rifles), the *Fateh Shibji* (4 JAK Rifles) and the *Suraj Gorkha* (5 JAK Infantry) as well as mountain artillery and cavalry units—throughout the decade 1890–1900. Sovereignty was ultimately restored to the Maharaja and the latter part of Pratap Singh's reign was distinguished by the effective role played by the Jammu and Kashmir Forces in their services during World War I and by the Maharaja's benevolent administration of the state.

Maharaja Pratap Singh was born in Riasi in 1850 and was educated in Dogri, Sanskrit, Persian and English and had a general knowledge of law, science and medicine. His experience in government began at an early age as his father, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, had groomed him for rulership by allowing him to hear the petitions of their subjects and pass judgments and orders (in consultation with the elders of the court).

His knowledge of the mechanics of government, such as they were at court, was good and he had grasped the nuances of political administration in the state. His first major assignment came in 1881 when the Viceroy of India visited Kashmir. Pratap Singh was sent to meet the Viceroy at the border and to conduct his tour. In this and other tasks Pratap Singh performed admirably, showing his gift for administration and coordination. However, his physical appearance tended to detract from his other qualities as he was short and thin and wore an oversized turban, the overall effect giving little indication of his robustness of mind and spirit.

When Pratap Singh became Maharaja in 1885, the region of the northwest had assumed considerable significance in the eyes of British policy-makers in England and in India. Russia had continued her advance eastward, which the British perceived as a threat to India. Then Lord Dufferin, the new Viceroy, had to contend with the problem of demarcating the northern frontier between Afghanistan and Russia. During the negotiations over the disputed boundary, there occurred a serious incident which threatened to bring England and Russia to war: the Panjdeh Incident. The Russians attacked and overwhelmed the Afghan garrison at Panjdeh, greatly incensing the British, but the matter was resolved without recourse to hostilities. However, the immediate—and long-range—effects of the incident were felt in Jammu and Kashmir, over which the British had decided for reasons of their own security to exercise more direct political control.

During the preceding forty years, attempts had been made to station representatives, residents and officers in Jammu and Kashmir and its neighbouring regions, ostensibly to aid British nationals travelling in the area but actually for the purpose of gathering information on the northwest frontier and the reactions of the Kashmir government to any untoward situation therein. With the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, the British took the opportunity of the transition period to commence execution of a pre-conceived plan to further their influence in Kashmir: the Officer on Special

Duty in Srinagar was thereupon made the British Resident.*

Among other powers wielded by the Resident were judicial ones: the mixed court was abolished and the Resident given powers to decide civil cases. Shortly after Maharaja Pratap Singh's accession, Lord Dufferin wrote to him urging that he introduce certain administrative reforms and accept the British Resident in good faith as an aid to these reforms. Pratap Singh reacted strongly in protest against this encroachment on his sovereignty and wrote to the Viceroy:

I do not hesitate to admit that the existing state of affairs in Kashmir urgently requires the introduction of substantial reforms in the administration of the country but I beg to assure you that nothing will be spared on my part to prove beyond any possibility of doubt that it is my ambition to make my country a well governed state in alliance with the Government of India.

The Maharaja's protest was fruitless and Sir Oliver St. John was designated the first Resident in Kashmir. It was his successor, however, Mr C. Plowden, who started the proceedings which ultimately led to the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh. The new Resident, who arrived in March 1888, allied himself with one of the Maharaja's brothers and reported to the Viceroy that the Maharaja was incompetent and incapable of implementing any administrative reforms. In addition, forged letters were circulated misrepresenting the Maharaja's domestic and foreign policies. At this juncture, however, Indian-owned newspapers in India came to the support of the Maharaja and created sufficient public interest in the matter to prevent the British from attempting to depose the Maharaja and to annex Kashmir.

Nevertheless, in March 1889, the British Resident presented an Edict of Resignation to the Maharaja by which he was to resign in favour of a Council of Regency of which his brother, Raja Amar Singh, would be President. With no alternative, Maharaja Pratap Singh complied and, on 18th April, 1889, the Government of Kashmir passed into the Council's hand, subject to the control of the British Resident. The members of the Council were appointed by the Government of India and held individual responsibility of

*One year previously, in a letter of 7 April, 1884 to the Secretary of State for India, the Government of India had stated that the establishment of a Residency in Kashmir "was a measure which may be called for, not merely by the need for assisting and supervising administrative reforms but also by the increasing importance to the Government of India of watching events beyond the northwest frontier of India."

their own departments under the direction of the Resident whose authority was final in all matters. And while loudly proclaiming their intention to root out corruption and disorder in the State and to establish prosperous and stable government, the Government of India and the British government were subject to criticism by their own people for using these excuses to hide their primary objective of obtaining control of Kashmir to secure their northwest frontier. Of special significance in the frontier was Gilgit, where the British had succeeded in posting an Officer on Special Duty in 1877.

The British continued to usurp the rights of Jammu and Kashmir State in their establishment of the Gilgit Agency in 1889, which included Hunza, Nagar, Punial, Yasin, Koh-Ghizer and Ishkoman. The earlier Officer on Special Duty, whose post was allowed to fall vacant in 1881, had been an acknowledged intelligence officer, wielding no authority in political or civil administration—which remained in the hands of the Jammu and Kashmir Government. However, the Government of India, in a note to the Secretary of State for India, now stated that, “the advance of Russia up to the frontiers of Afghanistan and the great development of her military resources in Asia has admittedly increased the necessity for strengthening our line of defence.” In consequence, the new Political Agency was endowed with complete authority in the civil, military and political administration of the district. Thus did the British officers serving in Gilgit become administrators. These steps were easily and deliberately accomplished, without wide publicity, because of the greatly increased powers of the British Resident in Kashmir.

In the same period a plan was under consideration by the Government of India for the establishment of the Imperial Service Troops. Only a short time before the Government had looked with suspicion and even fear upon the armies maintained by the rulers of Indian states; Lord Napier had had serious qualms about the threat arising from the possibility of these armies combining against the British. However, Lord Dufferin conceived the plan of developing these state forces so that they could be of use to the Government of India. In December 1888, before he handed over the viceroyalty to his successor, Lord Lansdowne, he announced an agreement on a plan under which the states which had particularly “good fighting material . . . (would) raise a portion of the army to such a pitch of general efficiency as will make them fit to go into action side by

side with Imperial troops.” It was envisaged that the maintenance of these forces would be on an entirely voluntary basis, that the troops would be recruited from the people of the states and they would be officered by Indians. The large, cumbersome armies maintained by the rulers could thus be reduced in size to small compact bodies of well-trained, highly disciplined men who would be regularly paid and who would be liable to serve outside their states should the need arise. The Government of India offered to modernise the weapons and equipment and to send British officers to the states to train the men, to ensure uniformity with the British Indian army.

Jammu and Kashmir State provided the largest contingent of Imperial Service Troops, constituting a mixed brigade at Jammu Cantonment: one squadron of Kashmir Lancers, First and Second Jammu and Kashmir Mountain Batteries, grouped together into the Imperial Service Artillery, and the *Raghupratap*, the Bodyguard and the *Raghnath* infantry battalions.

Because of its commitments along a vast international frontier, the Jammu and Kashmir force had considerably more experience than other state forces, particularly in frontier, mountain and tribal warfare. The Jammu and Kashmir Army, for example, were the only state forces which contributed to the Imperial Service Artillery. The composition of the Jammu and Kashmir (JAK) contingent of Imperial Service Troops included Gorkhas although they, technically, were not “people of the state”. They were allowed to continue, however, as they had been employed in the JAK Army since the middle of the nineteenth century. (In addition, Purbias and Pathans were recruited into the JAK force until the Imperial Service Troops were formed. Thereafter, they ceased to be enlisted and were replaced by Dogras, Sikhs and Muslims from Kashmir.)

The Gorkhas were originally enlisted primarily in the *Suraj Gorkha* battalion (present 5 JAK Rifles) raised in 1849 at Jammu. Later, this unit became all Dogra and the Gorkhas enlisted in the Bodyguard and the *Raghnath* (2 JAK Rifles and 3 JAK Rifles) battalions. These two units were designated for service in Gilgit as part of the Imperial Service Troops. The Gilgit brigade served on a rotation basis: one infantry battalion and one mountain battery from the force allotted to the Imperial Service Troops maintained the garrison at Gilgit.

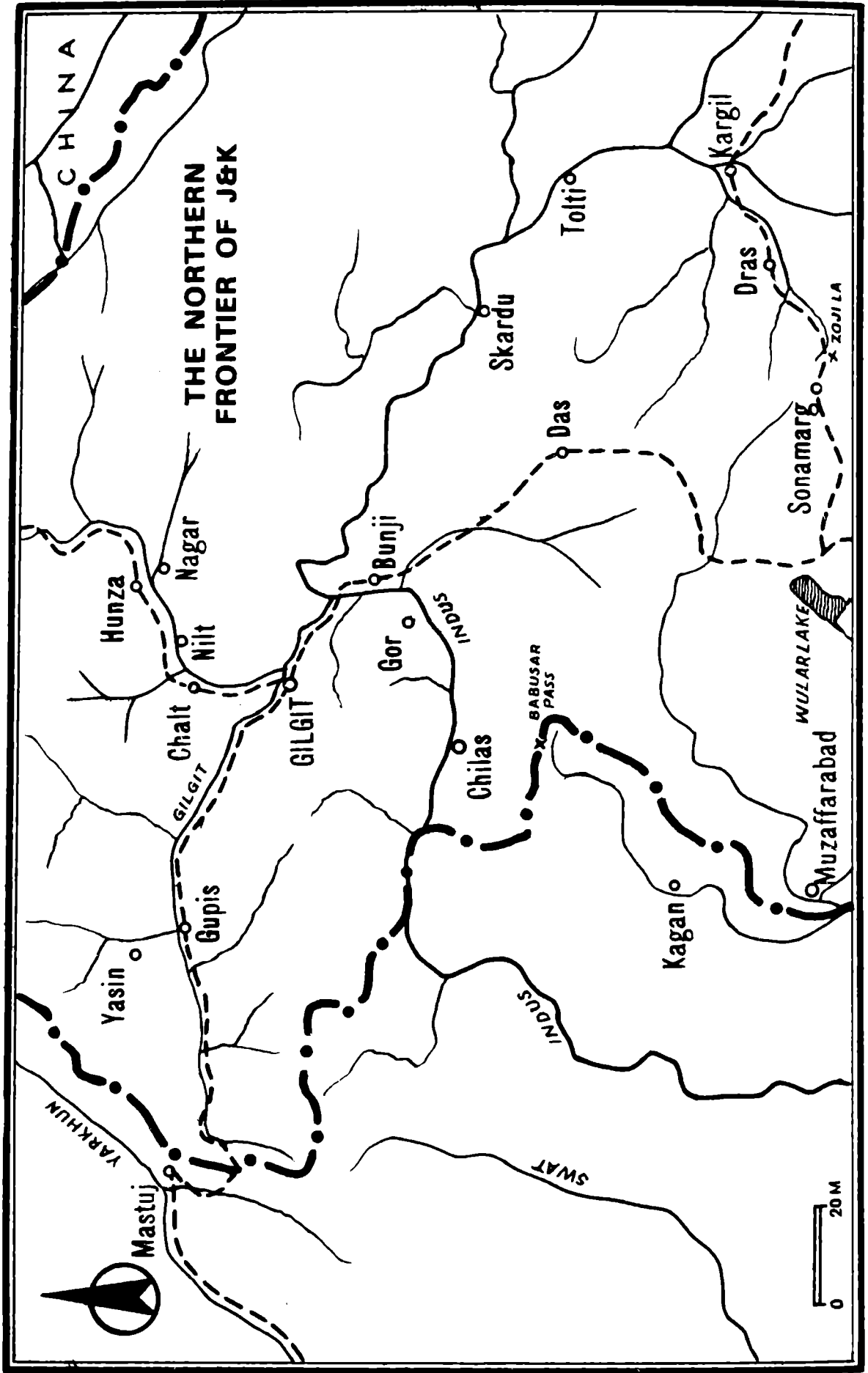
In addition, there remained at Jammu a regular brigade consisting of the Bodyguard Cavalry Regiment (now disbanded) and Horse

Artillery (now disbanded), the *Fateh Shibji* (4 JAK Rifles), the *Suraj Gorkha* (5 JAK Rifles), the *Rudra Shibnath* (9 JAK Rifles) and the Sappers and Miners. Kashmir Brigade consisted of units serving in Srinagar, Ladakh and Skardu. These units were provided on a rotation basis for a period of two years by Jammu Brigade.

On 1 January, 1890, 4 JAK and 5 Kashmir Light Infantry were added to the Imperial Service Troops. 4 JAK then consisted of three companies of Dogras and three companies of Gorkhas armed with the short Snider rifles issued in 1889. 5 Light Infantry was composed of two companies of Dogras, two companies of Gorkhas and two companies of Jammu Muslims. They were armed with the old, long Snider rifles presented to the state in 1877. In 1896, by order of the Council of Regency, 3 JAK and 6 Kashmir Light Infantry were disbanded and the strength of 1 and 2 JAK increased accordingly. The cavalry was reduced from two squadrons to one and changes were made in the Sappers and Miners.

Upon assumption of duties as the British Political Agent in Gilgit, Captain A.G. Durand wrote a revealing letter in September 1889 to the Resident in Srinagar regarding the ill-equipped troops already stationed there. Salaries were in arrears for years and paid only when treasury allotments were despatched from Srinagar; the uniforms were worn out and in tatters. It was to counter such difficulties that the Imperial Service Troops were organised; and when the contingent from Jammu Cantonment arrived in Gilgit the garrison there was substantially strengthened. By 1894, the British Agent in Gilgit, Mr Bruce, was able to report that the Imperial Service Troops in Gilgit had become an efficient force and "the Dogra officers were very keen and loyal. They were well-fed and disciplined and active."

Maintenance of a substantial force in the Gilgit region necessitated the improvement of transportation and communication between that outpost and the rest of the state. A road suitable for pack ponies and mules linking Gilgit and the Kashmir Valley was constructed and a telegraph line connected Gilgit with Army Headquarters in India and the Resident in Srinagar. The Gilgit Transport Service, partly government owned, was established to provide food and ammunition to Gilgit and to keep the Burzil Pass open all the year round. While these measures resulted in the improvement of Gilgit's position, unusually heavy purchases of foodstuffs in Kashmir created shortages. At the same time, many agricultural labourers were requisitioned for portage service at nominal wages—leaving their agricultural lands untended.



The object of this intensive build-up in Gilgit was to secure the British position in the north-west and to maintain stability on the frontier with a field force in operations against the Black Mountain tribes. Two 3-pr brass guns with ninety-six men, one company of Sappers and Miners with 160 men, the *Ragbir* and *Brij Raj* infantry units with 500 men each, twenty-seven cavalymen and various other details, in total 1,314, under the command of Major General Indar Singh, were despatched from Jammu. The infantry was armed with Enfield rifles and the Sappers with Kashmir-made carbines. The cavalry had no fire-arms. The JAK force was located in the Chhattar plain to prevent any tribes from joining the opposition on Black Mountain. Captain Pollard, who was on Special Service with the JAK force, highly commended the officers and men of the JAK Army for their hardiness, stamina and cooperation.

Within a year of the reorganisation of Gilgit's defences, the area was threatened by the unruly leaders of Hunza and Nagar whose territories extended to just south of the Russian border. In 1885, the Kashmir garrisons in the frontier forts of Chaprot and Chalt were attacked but when Captain Durand, the Political Agent in Gilgit, visited Hunza and Nagar in 1889, the chiefs made an apparent submission. However, in May 1891, he received word that UZR Khan, the eldest son of the ruler of Nagar, had murdered his two younger brothers. While this in itself did not affect the situation on the frontier, subsequent reports that UZR Khan was now collecting his forces and preparing for an attack on Chaprot and Chalt, put the Agency on the alert.

The state of Nagar and its neighbour, Hunza, had accepted the suzerainty of the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir State, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, but their inaccessibility and traditionally unorthodox policies precluded firm control by the Kashmir ruler. Although populated by the same clan, professing the same religion and speaking the same language, Hunza and Nagar were persistent rivals and would unite only in the face of an alien threat. Isolated by vast mountain ranges which encircle the states, the people of Hunza and Nagar maintained their independence with occasional submission to the rulers of Gilgit and later Kashmir—but with little alteration in their local customs. The two states, separated by a river which flows 600 feet wide between cliffs three hundred feet high, were ruled by princes of the same family. Of the two, Hunza was the more important state. Cultivation, severely limited by the scarcity of arable land, was confined to the area just below

Hunza fort, $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide. The area, at an altitude of over 8,000 feet, was well irrigated and studded with villages which enjoyed an agreeable climate. Northward lay scattered patches of cultivation decreasing in productivity with the rise in altitude; forests were also scarce on the steep mountain slopes.

Unable to rely on their own resources, the people of Hunza had for centuries survived by plundering the many caravans crossing the passes between Central Asia and India. Hunza controlled the vital passes leading to the Pamirs and had developed a fearful reputation among the merchants who traversed the area. Slave trade was another lucrative business in Hunza as the area to the north was unpopulated. The rulers of Hunza themselves organised their pillaging and kidnapping; and even directed the people in its execution. The state was reasonably prosperous and the inhabitants active, energetic, brave and aggressive.

By contrast, the adjacent state of Nagar was more docile. Cultivation was extensive and irrigation facilities widespread. Forest and crop production was good and rich grazing land was available. Satisfied within their own borders, the people of Nagar were less aggressive than those of Hunza, more sedate and less warlike. The only outlet of the state was the Gilgit River to the south and it was on this that Nagar depended for the transportation of such commodities as salt, sugar, and cotton cloth.

In 1891, it appeared to the British Agent in Gilgit that the states of Hunza and Nagar were taking advantage of the Russian threat in the north to achieve their own ends. Accordingly, the threatened outposts of Chaprot and Chalt were immediately re-inforced by 200 men of the Bodyguard Regiment with arms and rations from Gilgit. The Commander of the JAK force was General Suran Chand.

The march to Chaprot and Chalt was tedious: the Gilgit River was in flood, 150 yards wide. The pack mules were made to swim across while supplies were transported by rope bridge and a raft was made on which the guns crossed. Raja Akbar Khan of Punial, also a tributary of the Kashmir ruler, despatched his levies to augment the JAK forces, a portion of which was sent to seize Charchar Parri, an awkward cliff position on the Gilgit side of Chalt. Where roads were precarious, the Kashmir Sappers and Miners under Major Gohal Chand rapidly constructed tracks six feet wide, facilitating the march to Chalt where the attack was anticipated.

Uzr Khan, collecting his forces at Nilt eight miles further on, was dismayed by the rapid advance of the JAK forces. His failure

to attack provided the JAK force with ample time to improve its defences. A good mule track was made between Gilgit and the furthest post of Chalt on the Hunza-Nagar frontier. Ultimately, Uzr Khan sent his representatives to Chalt with a peace proposal which averted the conflict for the moment. The region was, however, too sensitive to be abandoned and JAK forces remained in the area.

Within a few weeks, Capt Durand was again plagued by rumours, this time of a more serious nature: a large Russian force was said to have massed on the Pamirs with the intention of entering Hunza at the invitation of the ruler. The Gilgit officials understood that the rulers of both Hunza and Nagar were favourably disposed to the Russians. As a security measure, a punitive expedition was organised and Chalt fort was further reinforced.

In October 1891, a letter was sent to the rulers of Hunza and Nagar informing them that it was necessary for their safety and that of Jammu and Kashmir for them to allow the JAK force free access to their territories in order to fortify the frontier and especially to build a military road through Hunza and Nagar. The rulers were informed that there would be no interference in their internal affairs but that should they object to this proposal, road construction would proceed in any case under the protection of JAK troops.

These and subsequent communications with Hunza and Nagar were fruitless. The frontier states used the time to equip vast numbers of tribesmen for an attack on Chalt and other forts on the borders. When a spy was captured by the Gilgit forces near Nomal, valuable information was collected regarding the dispositions of the attacking force. Consequently, an Indian Army detachment of 5 Gorkha Rifles and two guns of Hazara Mountain Battery was moved to Chalt by the British Agent, Capt Durand.

By the end of November 1891, the combined JAK-Indian Army garrison at Chalt consisted of 257 men of *Raghupratap*, 404 men of the Bodyguard Regiment, 188 men of 5 Gorkha Rifles, 28 men of 20 Punjab Infantry and two 7-pr guns of 4 Hazara Mountain Battery. On 29 November, an ultimatum was sent to the Raja of Hunza, Safdar Ali Khan, and the Raja of Nagar, Uzr Khan, who were positioned with their respective forces at Mayun and Nilt, eight miles from Chalt. They were given three days to end the crisis, but on the second day the envoy returned on foot—after he had been robbed of his horse, insulted and threatened with death—to inform the Gilgit Agency that the rebellious Rajas were intent upon battle. On the afternoon of 1 December, 1891, a force consisting

of 1 JAK Mountain Battery and 1 and 2 JAK infantry battalions, crossed the Hunza River above Chalt on a temporary bridge hastily constructed by the Kashmir Sappers and Miners. The force, now inside enemy territory, advanced on the Nagar side of the river, which was easier to negotiate and by which the Nilt Fort could be reached in one march. (The fort of Mayun on the Hunza side of the river, although the same distance as Nilt on the map, was further by road and the last mile of the approach lay under precipitous cliffs which could neither be secured by a small force nor by-passed.) It was essential to reach Nilt rapidly since the road ran several hundred feet above the river for many miles and there was no access to water. The force advanced unopposed although the path had been cut away in places. When the force approached Nilt and Mayun forts at midday, the defenders rapidly took positions inside the forts and in the *sangars* on the hills behind.

The forts in this area were generally square with towers erected at the corners and with walls ten to fifteen feet thick. The general construction was of stone and mud strengthened by timber. The high towers were more flimsy and could often be loosened by bombardment until they toppled.

The height of the fort and the precipitous cliffs on which it stood necessitated considerable manoeuvring by the Indian troops. While the artillery commenced bombardment, especially of the towers, the infantry worked its way to within 250 yards of the fort. Enemy fire was heavy but misdirected as they could not locate the attackers' positions. When it was clear that artillery fire could not destroy the towers, a storming party of infantry lunged forward towards the fort's main gate. Although under heavy fire from the enemy positions in the *sangars*, the party forced open a small door in the fort's entry passage and the Sappers prepared gun cotton charges for blowing the gate. The first fuse failed to ignite and as the second was being lighted, the enemy commenced a heavy barrage of fire. However, the gate was blown and the storming party rushed in, engaging in hand to hand combat while the remainder of the Gilgit force swept into the fort. The battle lasted only twenty minutes and Nilt Fort was in the possession of the Gilgit force. The *Wazir* of Nagar had been killed in the struggle but other leaders managed to escape. The remainder were taken prisoner and the flags captured.

It was by then too late to continue the advance that day. Next morning, when the force prepared to do so, it found that the descent

path leading to the ravine had been cut away during the night and there was no passable route free from enemy fire. Within Nilt fort there was sufficient food and water; and the enemy, holding defensive positions across the Nilt nullah, showed no indication of trying to recapture the fort. Nevertheless, the Indian force could not maintain itself indefinitely in Nilt and various courses were tried without success. When an attempt to capture Mayun fort was made, the advance party found the fort strongly fortified and impossible to approach and the attempt was abandoned. Nor was it feasible to move troops against the intensive enemy fire on the riverbed and even if they survived that, the climb up the cliffs to the enemy stronghold was formidable. A third possibility was to climb the cliffs opposite Nilt and deliver a frontal assault. Reconnaissance parties were repeatedly despatched to explore the cliffs but found the steep sides and well dispersed enemy serious impediments to advance. However, before hope was abandoned, Sepoy Nagda of the Bodyguard Regiment came forward with a proposal: he suggested that it might be possible to scale the cliffs on the opposite side under cover of supporting fire. On 16 December, with a party of twelve men, he was permitted to ascend the Nilt nullah which separated the two forces but before they could proceed further, the enemy spotted them and opened fire: so they had to withdraw. The next night Nagda set out alone to reconnoitre another route, climbing unobserved to the foot of the enemy's *sangars*. He returned convinced of the feasibility of the approach and a second plan of attack was then adopted.

Eighteen days after the capture of Nilt fort, it was decided to storm the enemy position in daylight under cover of heavy fire from the Indian position. Nagda pointed out that the cliffs on the enemy side fell away abruptly and in such a way that the nullah bed immediately below was dead ground to them. On the night of 19 December, at 10.00 pm, 100 men of the Bodyguard Regiment moved down the nullah to the foot of the cliff where they were to scale the feature; they remained hidden until daylight. At day-break on 20 December, heavy fire was concentrated on the enemy positions approximately 500 yards away. The fire was so accurate and persistent that the enemy returned only intermittent shots which soon ceased. Thirty minutes after the bombardment began, the cliff party commenced its climb of 1,200 feet. The enemy remained unaware of its presence until it was nearly at the top. As they reached the summit, the climbers made a dash forward to the *sangars*, charging

with the bayonet, and captured the *sangars*. Sepoy Nagda rushed into one of the enemy positions and fought singlehanded until he captured it and killed all the defenders. The enemy held out staunchly at first but quickly perceived that he had been outflanked and the position was untenable. The tribesmen bolted and fled in panic suffering considerable losses in men and material, while the Gilgit forces counted only four wounded.

The Gilgit force rested at Nilt for a few days, luxuriating in its victory—which was mainly attributable to the initiative and courage of Sepoy Nagda. This obscure soldier was awarded the Indian Order of Merit for his exploits and later rose to the rank of Subedar.

The Nagar forces were greatly demoralised as they had relied heavily on the impregnability of these defences. After the defeat at Nilt, they retreated deep into Nagar, but were pursued by the Indian forces. The *Raghupratap* battalion, as the advance guard, crossed to Thol, cleared the enemy defences on the way and shot or bayoneted the few Nagar soldiers who remained. The pursuit continued to Nagar when a message was received from the Raja, UZR Khan, that he was anxious to come to terms.

UZR Khan surrendered unconditionally on 26 December, 1891. Messages were also received from the elders of Hunza offering complete submission and stating that the Raja of Hunza, Safdar Ali Khan, had fled with some of his followers across the Hindu-Kush into Chinese Turkestan. Hunza surrendered formally on 22 December, 1891 and the populace turned over all its weapons to the Indian force. The next day, a party of 100 men of the Bodyguard Regiment was sent in pursuit of the Raja of Hunza. On 30 December, Misghar, the northernmost point of British influence, was reached. Here, just south of the passes of the Hindu-Kush, the Bodyguard learned that the Raja and his party had crossed the Killik Pass into the Pamirs. On 1 January, 1892, the party returned and joined the main force at Hunza. About 700 soldiers of the *Raghupratap*, the Bodyguard and the artillery detachment under Commandant Hazara Singh were left to man the forts in Hunza and Nagar. In recognition of the fine efforts of the JAK force, the Maharaja presented a bronze medallion to all those who participated in the Hunza-Nagar expedition.

With the Rajas of Hunza and Nagar again powerless, the British government, through Capt. Durand, appointed governors of these states by a formal instrument issued in the name of Maharaja Pratap Singh. By the terms of this agreement, the state of Jammu and

Kashmir and the Political Agent in Gilgit had practically unlimited rights of intervention in the external and internal affairs of the region. While the exercise of this control lay primarily with the British and was principally for the advancement of their interests on the Northwest Frontier, the financial and material support for this control came mostly from the resources of Jammu and Kashmir State. This support included the maintenance of the Agency and state troops at Gilgit as well as the building of roads, dispensaries, schools and other administrative establishments. In return, the state received a fraction of the meagre revenue of the area.

South of the states of Hunza and Nagar was the belligerent state of Chilas straddling the Indus River as it flows westwards out of Gilgit. No sooner had the JAK forces and their British overlords settled matters in the far north than a deputation arrived in Kashmir from Gor, a tiny state north of Chilas and often threatened by the Chilasis' aggressiveness. In fact, there were three small states north of the Indus in the Chilas region. Gor, the smallest, Darel and Tangir—and they had periodically suffered in the Chilasi raids between Astor and Kashmir proper. In the 1850's, as recounted earlier, Gulab Singh's forces had attacked Chilas and forced its surrender; the Chilasis had accepted the suzerainty of Kashmir State but had not renounced their belligerency. Of the three threatened states, Tangir was a tributary of Yasin and thus tied to Kashmir through Yasin's dependence on Kashmir, while Darel had in 1866 submitted to the Kashmir *darbar*, paid yearly tribute and sent hostages to the ruler. Gor, already a tributary of Kashmir, was but a group of village forts perched thousands of feet above the Indus near Bunji. Docile people, they shrank from involvement in any conflict and chose to align themselves openly with Kashmir. In response to their call for help, a detachment of 50 men of the Body-guard and Pūnyali levies were despatched to Gor.

Chilasi reaction to the move was immediate. As the JAK forces reached the Chilasi border, they were attacked. In retaliation, Chilas was burned; but the JAK force was then besieged in a village fort at Thalpen.

Simultaneously, Chitral was under attack by Umra Khan of Jandul and Chitral fort was seriously threatened. Although there were strong JAK garrisons at Gilgit (4 JAK) and Bunji, forty miles from Thalpen, only a small detachment could be spared to reinforce the relatively minor action in the Indus Valley. The difficulty of the terrain further deterred the commanders from parting with their

precious forces. Animals could not negotiate the narrow defiles, so all available men in Gilgit and Skardu were collected to carry supplies—both rations and ammunition.

The attacks on the JAK force besieged in Thalpen fort continued for several days and included one vigorous assault by some thousands of tribesmen. However, the JAK force held its position and then sallied out of the fort with about 80 men and routed the enemy. By then, the small group of reinforcements from Gilgit began to arrive and it soon distinguished itself by clearing a force ten times its own size from a near-by hill at the point of the bayonet. The JAK force then installed itself in Chilas, shifted the lines of communication to the more accessible south and was reinforced by 300 men of the Bodyguard. A line of posts was then established between Bunji and Chilas and the Kashmir government was committed to retaining control over the turbulent area.

In February, 1893, however, it was learned that a vast uprising of the tribes of the Indus Valley was being planned and organised, including large detachments from the neighbouring valley of Kohistan. The forces of Darel, Tangir and Chilas also planned to join in the concerted attack on the Chilas fort.

It was not long before the first move was made by the enemy. The tribesmen mounted a determined surprise attack on Chilas Fort one night—but they were quickly repulsed and then pursued into the village. However, the tribesmen managed to halt the JAK pursuit, and when two men were killed and an officer wounded the party withdrew. At 8.30 the next morning, a force of 150 men attacked the village in which the enemy was strongly entrenched and heavy fighting continued until midday when the force again withdrew. Three officers, the Adjutant, Nain Singh, Subedar Man Singh and Subedar Bir Singh, and 22 men had been killed and one officer, Jemadar Nathoo, and 25 men wounded. Sporadic fire continued throughout the day but no further attack was mounted. By the next morning, the enemy withdrew from the village, leaving 120 men dead.

Chilas was then reinforced with more infantry and two guns of 1 JAK Mountain Battery. Its position on the flank of the Gilgit-Kashmir Road made it of considerable strategic importance and it effectively barred the way to any incursions from the west.

The Bodyguard Regiment (2 JAK Rifles) was highly commended for its work in this operation and Lieut Moberly, a British officer present at the action, stated, "I have only the highest praise for the

sepoys of Bodyguard Regiment in the garrison here who showed the greatest courage and behaved splendidly throughout." Subsequently, Jemadar Gan Singh and six sepoy of the regiment were awarded the Indian Order of Merit Class III for gallantry in this operation.

Of far more serious proportions, however, were the events then taking place in Chitral. In the 1870's, at the suggestion of the British, Maharaja Ranbir Singh had entered into a treaty with the Mehtar of Chitral, Imam-ul-Mulk, by which Chitral acknowledged Kashmir's suzerainty and paid annual tribute. The area had assumed great importance because of its position at the extreme north of Kashmir, bordering on Afghanistan and close to Russia.

Imam-ul-Mulk was a strong and astute ruler and had welded his state from a number of smaller feuding tribes. After his death in late August 1892, the relative stability of his reign was shattered by a long and complicated power struggle. The eldest son, Nizam-ul-Mulk, was serving as governor of Yasin at the time of the rulers' death; so the second son, Afzul-ul-Mulk, seized power, murdered his many brothers who threatened his rule and set off for Yasin to eliminate the last contender. Nizam-ul-Mulk fled to Gilgit after a feeble fight and Afzul-ul-Mulk returned to Chitral, proclaimed himself Mehtar and was recognised by the Government of Kashmir. Within two months, however, his uncle, Sher Afzal, who after an unsuccessful attempt to seize power from his brother earlier, had been exiled to Afghanistan, returned to Chitral, massed considerable support and appeared outside Chitral Fort with his force. Unaware of the danger without, Afzal went to investigate the crowd at the gate and was murdered. Sher Afzal proclaimed himself Mehtar and was accepted by the people of Chitral. The Jammu and Kashmir government, however, did not recognise Sher Afzal's rule and in anticipation of conflict, moved 250 men, two guns and 100 levies to Yasin to strengthen western Gilgit and Yasin.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, finally mustering up courage, set out for Chitral from his refuge in Gilgit. As he entered Chitral, he easily amassed support, including a force of 1,200 sent by Sher Afzal to repulse him, and quickly captured two forts. Sher Afzal fled back into Afghanistan and Nizam-ul-Mulk became the Mehtar of Chitral and was recognised by the Government of Kashmir. Unfortunately, on 1 January, 1895, this reliable ally was murdered by his step-brother, Amir-ul-Mulk, and the Kashmir government again sought to counter any conflict by reinforcing the fort at Mastuj with 100 men—part of

4 JAK and 6 Kashmir Light Infantry—and Ghizr with 200 men. The garrison at Chitral—320 men of 4 JAK under General Baj Singh and 100 British soldiers under Capt C.P. Campbell—prepared its defence and augmented its supplies.

At this juncture, the adventuresome Umra Khan, chief of Jandal state just south of Chitral, invaded his neighbour's state ostensibly to support Amir-ul-Mulk but actually in the hope of annexing Chitral to his own territory—which had been founded by just such opportunist ventures. With 3,000 men, Umra Khan crossed the snow-laden 10,000 foot Lowarai Pass and at first was effectively opposed by the Chitralis. However, lacking resolute leadership, they soon succumbed and Umra Khan quickly captured the important fort in southern Chitral, Kila Drosh, making it the base for future operations. In late February, 1895, Sher Afzal reappeared from Afghanistan and aligned himself with Umra Khan at Kila Drosh. This alliance drew immediate support from the local population and, aided by the invading army, Sher Afzal marched on Chitral Fort where the JAK and British forces were now positioned.

On 3 March, 1895, at about 4.30 in the afternoon, General Baj Singh received information that Sher Afzal was approaching Chitral with a large force. A party of 200 men of 4 JAK was despatched on reconnaissance to the numerous small villages in the cultivated area that extends some three miles down the valley. The men scattered and the main party ultimately encountered enemy forces outside a village. The enemy possessed overwhelming numerical superiority, better arms (Martini-Henry and Snider rifles) and were in well-prepared defensive positions. On the other hand, lack of covering fire, little natural protection in the area and lack of communications between the small parties made the Kashmiris' positions precarious; notwithstanding, a frontal attack with fixed bayonets was ordered but when the commander, General Baj Singh, and Major Bhikran Singh were both killed, the attempt was abandoned. General Baj Singh had been a brave and gallant soldier, always anxious to be in the front line but his bravado in this action deprived his men of an effective commander. The JAK forces gradually withdrew to the fort after enemy fire had claimed the lives of two officers and 22 other ranks. Twenty-eight other ranks were wounded. Subedar Badrinar Singh Silwal (later Major) and twelve other ranks were awarded the Indian Order of Merit for this action.

Then commenced a forty-seven day siege of Chitral fort. The British Political Agent at Gilgit, Sir George Robertson, was among

the besieged, as he had been on tour of Chitral at the time. News of the rout of the JAK force reached Srinagar and Calcutta by 7 March, 1895, and plans were made for operations against Umra Khan from Gilgit and Peshawar. Communications with Chitral Fort being severed and the line of retreat of the JAK forces cut, all possible speed in effecting relief was essential. On 14 March a message was sent to Umra Khan directing him to withdraw from Chitral at once, failing which, by 1 April, he would be attacked.

The Government of India ordered the mobilisation of 1 Division under Major General Sir Robert Low in Peshawar but even before they could move it was learned that a JAK detachment *en route* to Chitral had been slaughtered with one officer and 56 men (out of a total of 71) killed. In addition, in the fighting at Reshum on 7 March, a small party of 4 JAK under Subedar Dharam Singh was surrounded and annihilated while defending a position. Commendation for the fine efforts of this JAK force were later forwarded to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir by the British officer present, Lieut S.M. Edwardes. Finally, communication with the JAK force in the Mastuj fort were severed.

The counter-attack called for 1 Division, some 15,000 strong and including all supporting arms, to move as quickly as possible from the south and attack Umra Khan from the rear. Simultaneously, a force was to move from Gilgit in a wide circle through Mastuj and enter Chitral from the north-east. Lieut-Colonel J.G. Kelly, the officer commanding 32 Pioneers and the senior military officer in Gilgit District, was placed in command of the operations in the Gilgit area. He had the entire Gilgit garrison at his disposal but was reluctant to move with the whole force as many small states in the region had only recently been subdued and the possibility of widespread revolt was great. Three thousand men were therefore positioned in the frontier regions, the bulk of which consisted of three battalions of Kashmir infantry (4 JAK; 5 and 6 Kashmir Light Infantry) of 600 men each and 1 JAK Mountain Battery. Colonel Kelly limited his own column to a force of 400 men, which included elements of 4 JAK and 2 guns of 1 JAK Mountain Battery (7 prs) and set out on 23 March, 1895 for Chitral across a rugged and dangerous route.

Along much of the 220-mile route from Gilgit to Chitral, which crosses some passes as high as 12,400 feet, local tribes and states were in rebellion and threatened the passage of the column. It was learned, too, that Mastuj was now under siege. The physical hard-

ships for the men were many; tracks and paths were dangerously narrow, transport was scarce and the men moved without tents. As they progressed, snow severely impeded their movement and since the mules could not negotiate the deep snow, the men volunteered to carry the weapons themselves. A party of some forty men of 4 JAK assisted in this effort across the treacherous Sandhur Pass. Snow-blindness, bitter cold, exhaustion and lack of water combined to make this an almost unendurable march.

The column reached the first village, Laspur, inside enemy territory in the first week of April, to the surprise of the Chitralis who never expected the JAK force to cross the high passes in winter. Orders to the column directed it to entrench itself in Laspur in anticipation of possible attack and then to attempt to open communications with the besieged fort at Mastuj, two marches below Laspur.

On the evening of 5 April, a short reconnaissance indicated the presence of a small body of enemy but additional reconnaissance the next day up to Gasht, twelve miles away, found most of the villages deserted and no enemy resistance. Some thirty local people and twelve ponies were enlisted by the reconnaissance patrol to serve as porters. The column moved to Gasht two days later and planned to attack the enemy in his position at Chakalwat a few miles below. Chakalwat was virtually impregnable—a position commanding the heights of the valley from which boulders could be hurled at the attackers and below which *sangars* had been constructed.

On 9 April, at 10.30 in the morning, the JAK column advanced to attack this position. Hunza levies had earlier been sent up the high hills on the left bank of the river to out-flank the enemy's right and attack in the rear. The Punyalis were sent up on the right bank to threaten the enemy positioned among the boulders. The enemy's defences consisted of a line of *sangars* blocking the roads from the river; his right flank was protected by a glacial area and a ring of *sangars*. The valley road was interspersed with *nullahs*, obstructed by boulders and otherwise devoid of any protection from the direct line of fire from the *sangars* and boulder-avalanches.

This formidable position was attacked by 280 men of the Jammu and Kashmir infantry supported by two guns of the Kashmir Mountain Battery and the Kashmir Sappers and Miners (as well as fifty levies who attacked with the Sappers and Miners). The JAK plan was to silence the *sangars* on the right with artillery fire while

the infantry infiltrated the other *sangars* and the levies attacked from the flanks. The guns opened up at a range of 825 yards with well-directed fire which dislodged the enemy—so that the infantry could advance as planned. Driven from his position, the enemy, about 500 strong, streamed out into the valley and fled. The JAK column pursued them to the next village and then halted to reorganise. Four men had been wounded against an estimate of sixty enemy dead and wounded.

Mastuj Fort, the JAK column's next objective *en route* to Chitral, was reached in the evening. The garrison which included JAK troops, joyfully greeted the column after an eighteen day siege. After a two day halt at Mastuj, during which supply and transport arrangements were made and reconnaissance carried out, it was decided to attack the strong Chitrali position at Nisa Gol, a few miles below Mastuj.

Nisa Gol, a *nullah* 200 to 300 feet deep and 40 to 50 yards wide, in a plain rimmed with steep forbidding mountains, was considered by generations of Chitralis to be their strongest defensive position. Only one path led across the *nullah* and that of course had been cut away by the defenders. *Sangars* had been erected and covered with timber and stones and men were positioned to hurl boulders down the side of the hill. About 1,500 Chitralis had collected there under Mohammed Isa.

The JAK force, was now reinforced by the Mastuj garrison and consisted of 482 infantry, two guns, 34 Sappers and Miners and 100 Hunza and Punyali levies. The JAK plan called for the advance party to traverse the plain which the enemy's position bisected, move up on the right and thence attack the enemy *sangars*, while the remainder of the force followed. The main *sangars* along the banks of the ravine were the next objective while the levies were to make their way towards the enemy's left.

On 13 April, at 7.00 in the morning, the advance commenced; two companies led the advance while the guns, at 500 yard range, pounded the *sangar* walls and temporarily silenced enemy fire. The guns advanced to 275 yards from the enemy's main position while the infantry continued its close-range fire. The *sangars* along the ravine as far as 1,200 yards were also shelled. At this point the JAK troops discovered an obscure goat-track on one side of the ravine and with the aid of the Sappers' scaling ladders and ropes, a reasonable path was constructed descending into the *nullah*.

The force lowered itself into the ravine and a party of fifteen

quickly scaled the opposite side, emerging simultaneously with the levies who had approached the enemy's left. The arrival of this attacking force completely surprised the enemy, who thereupon rapidly abandoned his positions. Although a company of the JAK force was sent in pursuit, the enemy escaped towards Drasan. Nevertheless, the JAK forces earned the high praise of the column's commanding officer, Colonel Kelly, who commended their steadiness and bravery during the two-hour battle and noted that their fire discipline was excellent. The men of 1 JAK Mountain Battery were especially commended for their accurate fire, composure in battle and maintenance of equipment. It was estimated that about sixty Chitralis had been killed and over 100 wounded against the JAK loss of three killed and nine wounded.

The column continued its march along the road to Chitral and on the next day, 14 April, marched to Drasan hoping to engage the enemy again. Drasan fort was abandoned, however, and the JAK force continued its march across the rugged country. On 19 April, when the column was only one march away from Chitral Fort, news was received that the siege had finally been lifted. On the afternoon of 20 April, the force finally reached their objective. The forces of Umra Khan which they expected to engage had been withdrawn from Chitral to impede the progress of 1 Division from Peshawar. (The Chitralis were defeated by that force at the battle of Malakand).

With the defeat of Umra Khan, the conflict in Chitral ended. The JAK relief column under Colonel Kelly earned praise and appreciation from no less a personage than Queen Victoria herself as well as the Commander-in-Chief in India, who particularly noted the extraordinary achievement in crossing the deep snows with heavy equipment. The Government of India granted six months' pay of rank to all officers and men who participated in the expedition. Twenty-four class II Orders of Merit and one II Class were issued by the Government of India as awards to the JAK force personnel.

Since British interest and influence in the northern reaches of India had grown to such large proportions in the latter part of the nineteenth century, British officers and men had involved themselves in undertakings which would otherwise have been solely the affairs of Jammu and Kashmir State—and reciprocally, JAK forces more and more frequently formed a part of British endeavours in the still-turbulent northwest frontier areas. Colonel Kelly's

Gilgit column was one example; again, in 1897-98, in the British Tirah Expedition in the region of Peshawar, a JAK detachment—this time 1 JAK Mountain Battery—played a significant part.

The highlands of Tirah, south and west of Peshawar, were the home of two Pathan tribes—the Afridis and the Orakzais. The Afridis occupied the northern regions of Tirah and were a turbulent people numbering about 30,000 fighting men armed with accurate long-range fire-arms. The area was actually not then within the Indian frontier but for many years the tribes were subsidised by the British government to prevent them from raiding Indian territory; and the Khyber Pass had been for some time policed and garrisoned by Afridi irregulars known as the Khyber Rifles. The Orakzais, on the other hand, inhabited the southern end of Tirah, numbered only 20,000 fighting men and were considerably less aggressive than the Afridis. The British had established a number of posts within their region after an uprising there in 1891. The western part of Tirah was the home of a third tribe, the Chamkanis, unrelated to either of the other two.

Throughout July and August 1897, without provocation, the Afridis had begun a series of raids against British outposts including one attack at Shabkadar fort west of Peshawar in the Khyber Pass defile, overwhelming the Khyber Rifles and persuading them to join their clansmen. By agreement with the Afridis, the Orakzais also commenced a series of raids from the south and, by mid-September, were poised for attacks on three British mountain forts in the Samana Range. When they had been repulsed, the British government organised an expeditionary force under Lieut General Sir W. Lockhart, Commander-in-Chief designate, to pursue the raiders and subdue them. 1 JAK Mountain Battery left Jammu on 8 October, 1897 to form part of this force, which chose Kohat as its headquarters. It was hoped that by marching through Orakzai territory first, this tribe would be made to capitulate, leaving the Afridis unaided in their rebellion.

Little was known of the interior of Tirah but it was anticipated that after the march through the Orakzai region, the expeditionary force would face an enemy stronghold at the Sempagha Pass, one of the main gateways to Tirah. While two subsidiary columns and a reserve brigade were to be held in readiness, the main column would advance into Tirah with eight battalions of British infantry, twelve battalions of Indian infantry and six mountain batteries of which one was to be 1 JAK Mountain Battery (commanded by

Subedar—later Major General—Khajoor Singh). The approximate strength was 19,000 men with thirty-six guns. As the expeditionary force assembled for attack, the tribal headmen met in early October 1897 to re-affirm their alliance and swear that any tribe which made a separate peace with the British would be cursed as an enemy of Islam. They then deployed themselves in strength at the Sempagha Pass and other tactical features to await the attack.

On 18 October at 4.00 am, a small column of Scottish troops was despatched from the concentration point, Shinwari, to clear some Orakzai tribesmen in the neighbourhood and to reconnoitre the area. A brigade column supported by 1 JAK Mountain Battery moved out but found the heights it was to attack infested with enemy and dotted with *sangars* which commanded the tracks. The column commander nevertheless boldly prepared to attack, positioning two guns of 1 JAK Mountain Battery facing the enemy while the infantry moved around the heights to surprise him. The attempt was successful and although the column suffered nineteen casualties, the enemy abandoned his position on the crest of the heights. As the column withdrew to Shinwari, however, it was harassed by remnants of the enemy still in the area.

On 20 October, the main body of the expeditionary force commenced its advance before daybreak. Faced with great numbers of enemy along the heights, the commander decided to put in a brigade attack supported by three batteries, including 1 JAK Mountain Battery. Until midday, the infantry had little success in gaining ground. A heavy artillery concentration was then asked for, after which the infantry made an astounding dash to the base of the enemy-occupied cliffs. They then made their way up the steep track to the dismay of the tribesmen, who had considered this one of their strongest positions. The enemy fled leaving the whole Samana Range to the expeditionary force—but only after 200 casualties had been inflicted.

The expeditionary force continued its advance, meeting little opposition apart from occasional sniper harassment at night. However, as the force neared the vital Sempagha Pass, enemy opposition increased. Expecting heavy resistance from the tribesmen, the expeditionary force planned an elaborate attack before dawn but was disappointed when the enemy began evacuating his forward positions after the first artillery barrage. The guns moved up gradually and as the enemy pulled out, the infantry occupied their positions on the heights. The expeditionary force pursued the enemy through

the prosperous but now deserted valley towards the main pass leading into Afridi Tirah. Once again extensive plans were made in anticipation of resistance from these notorious tribesmen but again the expeditionary force was surprised at how easily the defenders backed down. They did not seem to have the will for frontal battle.

The expeditionary force then moved down into the lush Maidan Valley though transport was impeded by the bad condition of the track. Taking advantage of the slow moving animals, the Afridis attacked and carried off 200 kit-bags one day and 1,00,000 rounds of ammunition, some rifles and 350 kit-bags the next day. While the expeditionary force camped and replenished its supplies from the large stocks in the valley, they were fired upon regularly by the tribesmen. But peace was in the offing, because a *jirga* of the Orakzais had arrived in the camp on 11 November and at a *darbar* the next day, the British government's demands were presented to the headman of that tribe and to most of the Afridi clans. By 27 November, the tribes had paid the fines imposed and peace was established. Only a few clans resisted the accords and further measures was taken against them.

As the expeditionary force advanced further to subdue the remaining clans, enemy sniping harassed it. In retaliation the force destroyed many fortifications and some houses in the area.

Another column was despatched to the region of the third tribe, the Chamkanis, who resisted fiercely for two days. By 2 December, they also were subdued. By the end of December, the force returned to Peshawar although some clans still had not accepted peace.

From Peshawar, operations were undertaken against the Afridis in the Khyber Pass region which was reoccupied between 22 and 26 December.

On 21 January, 1898, when the tribes had still not paid their fines, a new punitive force was created of which 1 JAK Mountain Battery again formed a part. Gradually, the still rebellious Afridi clans came to terms and by 3 April the last of these paid its fine in rifles and cash and the Tirah campaign ended. The combined force in the area was then redesignated the Khyber Force and greatly reduced in size: 1 JAK Mountain Battery returned to Jammu by the end of April 1898. It had suffered no casualties in action although seventeen members had been injured otherwise. The commander of the battery, Subedar Khajoor Singh, was awarded the Order of British India Class II and the unit was warmly praised for its performance in support of British and Indian forces.

During this decade of considerable military activity in regions adjacent to Jammu and Kashmir State, events were gradually moving towards the restoration of Maharaja Pratap Singh's powers as ruler of the State. The original British motives for deposing him had largely disappeared—Gilgit and other northwest frontier areas were now effectively under their surveillance—and at the same time JAK forces had served the Imperial interests loyally and effectively. Accordingly, in 1891, the Maharaja was appointed President of the Council of Regency, which the British had created in 1889 to advise the British Resident when they forced the Maharaja to abdicate. Then, in 1893, Queen Victoria bestowed on the Maharaja the Order of Grand Commander of the Star of India. During the investiture ceremony, the Resident generously complimented the Maharaja on his "loyalty" and "present good government." However, in spite of all this the Maharaja remained merely a figurehead—and though he continued to appeal to the British government, full restoration of power was denied him. In 1896, a minor change in the Rules of Business of the Council was effected by which he could review the Council's work and refer any decision back to it if he did not concur. It was not until the next decade, that the Maharaja was able to make further progress in regaining his sovereignty.

Perhaps of greater significance to the people of Jammu and Kashmir were the economic developments during the decade 1890-1900. The presence of British administrators in the state had served to improve many conditions that had for generations been ignored. The British officials overhauled such institutions as the old land revenue system, the *begar*, road construction policies, health, sanitation and education—and laid the foundation for modern development of the state in the twentieth century.

Sir Walter Lawrence assumed the mammoth task of organising an effective and just land settlement in 1889. Previous attempts at such measures had invariably bogged down in local corruption and government mismanagement. The primary collector, the *patwari*, kept no accurate accounts, held no maps and adjusted the tax according to the importance of the land-holder. In addition to land tax and *rasum* (a payment made by the village to the officials) commodities such as silk, saffron violets, wood, hemp, tobacco and paper were a state monopoly. The army was often ordered to supervise and coerce the farmers in tilling the land; and, at harvest time, also took liberally of the produce. The combination of resistant officials at various levels threatened to impede Sir Walter Law-

rence's progress but by 1893 the following settlement had been made and by 1912 it was in operation throughout the state :

1. The state demand was fixed for fourteen years.
2. Payment in cash was substituted for payment in kind.
3. Use of force in collecting revenue was abolished.
4. *Begar* was to be abolished gradually.
5. Occupancy rights were conferred on cultivators in undisputed lands.
6. Permanent but non-alienable hereditary rights were granted to those who accepted the first assessment.
7. All land was valued on the basis of produce, previous collection and possibility of irrigation.
8. *Rasum* and other exactions were abolished and rents and liabilities of cultivators were defined.
9. The state share of revenue was fixed at thirty *per cent* of the gross produce.

When this settlement came into effect, Maharaja Pratap Singh wrote off arrears in land revenue amounting to Rs 31 lakhs and fresh taxation records were started. Export duties were abolished along with many other petty levies and cesses and the Government practice of buying ghee, wool, horses and other necessities directly from the cultivators at nominal rates was terminated.

The *begar* system of forced labour was an ancient evil for the Kashmiris. Human portage to remote regions of the state to which animal transport was impossible had long been a necessity but the system's abuses increased until there were often so many villagers in forced labour that farms lay unattended for months on end. Previous attempts by Maharaja Gulab Singh to control *begar* bore little fruit but in 1891 the state government, at the persistence of the British Resident, decided to abolish the system. To prevent the total collapse of the transport system, however, *begar* in modified form was allowed to continue until a viable state transport system developed. Under Sir Walter Lawrence's direction, requisition of forced labour for government officials was immediately abolished and unpaid portage to Gilgit was ended. The State Council then framed elaborate regulations for control of the labour required for portage of commodities within the state; and on 18 April, 1891, it was decreed that an additional tax of one anna in Kashmir and half an anna in Jammu for every rupee of land revenue paid by cultivators would be levied to meet the cost of a transport department and a force of 1,000 labourers and 200 ponies on permanent employment at Rs 5 per month.

Complete abolition of *begar* was not to come until the twentieth century, but associated with its decline was the improvement in roads and transport facilities. In the absence of usable roads, wheeled transport had not developed beyond the simplest of trollies. Now, with British strategic interest in the area at its peak, the need arose for pliable roads for use by troops in the event of a Russian threat. British firms augmented by local labourers completed between 1880 and 1890 a substantial cart road down the Jhelum Valley linking Srinagar with Rawalpindi, the nearest railhead, 200 miles away. The Sialkot-Jammu railroad was opened in 1890. Telegraph lines originally erected during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign were extended throughout the Valley and into Gilgit and Ladakh. Later, telephone connections between Jammu and Srinagar were also established.

As transportation and communication improved the numbers of annual visitors and tourists to the state increased. Attempts by Europeans to purchase land and settle in Kashmir were successfully opposed by the Maharaja and this led, strangely enough, to the development of the houseboat, now a landmark in the state. Unable to find suitable accommodation in Kashmir, visitors delighted to live in indigenous *doongas* transformed into comfortable floating cottages.

Measures to improve health and sanitation were also undertaken, especially after a series of cholera epidemics which ravaged the state between 1890 and 1910. Vaccination against smallpox was first introduced in 1894 and hospitals were opened in Srinagar and Jammu. Later, hospitals and dispensaries were built all over the state, while in Srinagar efforts were seriously undertaken to control epidemics by providing piped water, widening and paving the streets, building latrines and organising public sanitation works. Several irrigation canals were constructed in both Jammu and Kashmir, tanks were built and electric lines for power and lighting to factories and workshops were erected. A canal for diverting flood waters was dug and dredging operations for removal of silt begun.

Reforms were introduced in government administration. Monthly payment of state officials' salaries was introduced in place of semi-annual or annual payment. Relatives of army deserters were no longer held accountable for the soldier's disloyalty. Leaves, pensions and other benefits were introduced for public service officers along with reorganisation of the accounts system.

As conditions improved in the state, the population of the Valley

and Muzaffarabad rose from 8,00,000 in the first census in 1891 to 1,400,000 in 1921. However, the increase in numbers did not reflect a corresponding increase in the actual administrative role of the Kashmiri people : with the establishment of the State Council in 1889, the court language changed from Persian to Urdu and most of the state officers were replaced by Punjabis who quickly slipped into the openings provided by the state. The only antidote for the situation was education but throughout the 1890's only minimal progress was made in providing Kashmiris with the training and language required to compete with the Punjabis. The Mission School, opened by an Englishman in 1881, continued to provide education according to the university syllabus in English and the State School (originally started by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1874) added English to its Sanskrit and Persian education and began to follow university procedures. Two technical schools, about fifty secondary schools and over 600 primary schools were opened. By the end of the decade, greater numbers of Kashmiris were ready to assume the positions held by the Punjabis but even the Maharaja's representation to the British government that the Kashmiris be given employment failed to dislodge the entrenched officials.

With the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Jammu and Kashmir State began to benefit more directly from the reforms initiated by the British and in the first two decades in both domestic and foreign activities development were appreciable.

The Jammu and Kashmir Army was quiescent until the outbreak of World War I with the exception of the participation of NCOs and men of the Kashmir Lancers, the Bodyguard Cavalry and Horses Artillery with the British in the Boer War in South Africa between 1900 and 1902. In their commendation to the JAK force the despatches stated : "Lord Kitchener appreciates the good work done by the NCOs and men of the Kashmir army during the last two and one-half years' campaign in South Africa."

The JAK Army also participated in certain ceremonial activities. In June 1902, six officers and eight NCOs with twelve sepoy were sent to England to take part in the Coronation ceremony for Edward VII. They represented JAK Army Headquarters, 1 JAK Infantry, 2 JAK Rifles, 1 JAK Mountain Battery and the Kashmir Lancers. In 1906, during a visit to Jammu of the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Imperial Service Troops furnished the guard of honour and various guards and escorts. Salutes were fired from the Imperial

Service Battery and the Horse Artillery attached to the "regular troops" of the State Forces.

A second mountain battery along with a depot for the supply of trained recruits, ordnance and pack mules was raised in April 1902. In the first decade of the twentieth century intensive training was carried out under the direction of British officers in line with that of troops in the rest of India. Maharaja Pratap Singh's brother, Raja Amar Singh, was the Commander-in-Chief of the State Forces and took great interest in the welfare of the troops and the progress of their training. The JAK forces were then grouped as follows: Imperial Service Troops with headquarters at Jammu and Gilgit and detachments in Srinagar; the local service troops called themselves the Regulars, with headquarters at Jammu and Srinagar and detachments at Skardu, Ladakh and Muzaffarabad. Jammu and Kashmir State still maintained the largest body of Imperial Service Troops of any princely state and was the only one with an Imperial Service Artillery.

The Regular forces were composed of the Bodyguard Cavalry, the Horse Artillery, one garrison battery, three infantry battalions, four companies of Sappers and Miners and a brass band. The total strength of the State Forces was 6,283 of which 3,370 were Imperial Service Troops.

The Imperial Service Troops were posted at Satwari cantonment near Jammu. Two infantry battalions and a garrison battery were at Srinagar. They were armed with Lee Metford rifles and the Regular troops with Enfield-Sniders. The mountain batteries were equipped with 2.5 inch guns and the cavalry was armed with lances and carbines. Permanent posts were constructed for the state's garrisons on the frontier with the following strength :

Gilgit : one infantry brigade, a mountain battery of four guns,
two companies of Sappers and Miners

Astore, Bunji and Chilas : one infantry battalion

Leh, Skardu : one infantry battalion.

These units were turned over every two years by fresh troops from the brigades in Jammu and Srinagar.

Maharaja Pratap Singh established a Cadet School in 1906. Most of the students were sons of officers or soldiers and several were sent to train with regiments of the Indian Army before joining their State Force units. This training and background prepared them for rapid advancement through NCO ranks and commissioned appointments on to field ranks, which the British officers advising

the JAK forces had felt was the weakest part of the Kashmir army.

The personal status of the Maharaja improved considerably after 1900. Stable relations with Afghanistan and the creation by Lord Curzon of the North West Frontier Province, whose defence was the responsibility of Peshawar (no longer Calcutta) along with general peace along the northern borders, encouraged the British further to liberalise their attitude towards the Maharaja. In 1905, the State Council was abolished and its powers of administration conferred on the Maharaja by Lord Curzon. The Maharaja was to be assisted by a Chief Minister and Ministers of Revenue, Home and Justice. The work of these three was subject to scrutiny and approval by the Chief Minister and the Maharaja, but all orders were to be sent to the British Resident for approval. The Resident's power was still undiminished as the functioning of government required that his advice be followed when offered, that the budget be prepared and passed in consultation with him, that no resolution of the former State Council be abrogated or modified without his approval and that appointments of ministers and other important officials be made in concurrence with the Government of India. Revenue settlement and the departments of forests and public works were also under the charge of British officers "on loan" to the State.

In the State itself, there were four chief executive officers: the Governor of Jammu, the Governor of Kashmir, the *Wazir Wazarat* of Gilgit and the *Wazir Wazarat* of Ladakh. In Jammu, there were five districts each with a *Wazir Wazarat* whose monthly salary was Rs. 250. Below him were *tehsildars* and sub-divisional officers who exercised revenue, civil and criminal jurisdiction. The seat of power, however, was in the *tehsil*.

The Maharaja continued to press for full restoration of sovereignty and after the creditable performance of the JAK forces with the British Army in overseas operations during World War I, he had a substantial lever on which to press. When, on 18 September, 1920, Maharaja Pratap Singh applied to the Viceroy for full restoration, the British insisted that the Maharaja continue to consult with the Resident on all frontier matters and administrative changes. The Maharaja acquiesced and in March 1921, Lord Chelmsford restored full powers to him in a *darbar* held in Jammu. Plans by the Maharaja to institute a legislative assembly along with an executive council were forestalled by internal disorder in the state. However, an Executive Council of five members with the Maharaja as President, was established in January 1924. The members held portfolios at

the pleasure of the Maharaja and while they passed administrative orders, he retained the veto power. The Council continued to function until Maharaja Pratap Singh's death in September 1925.

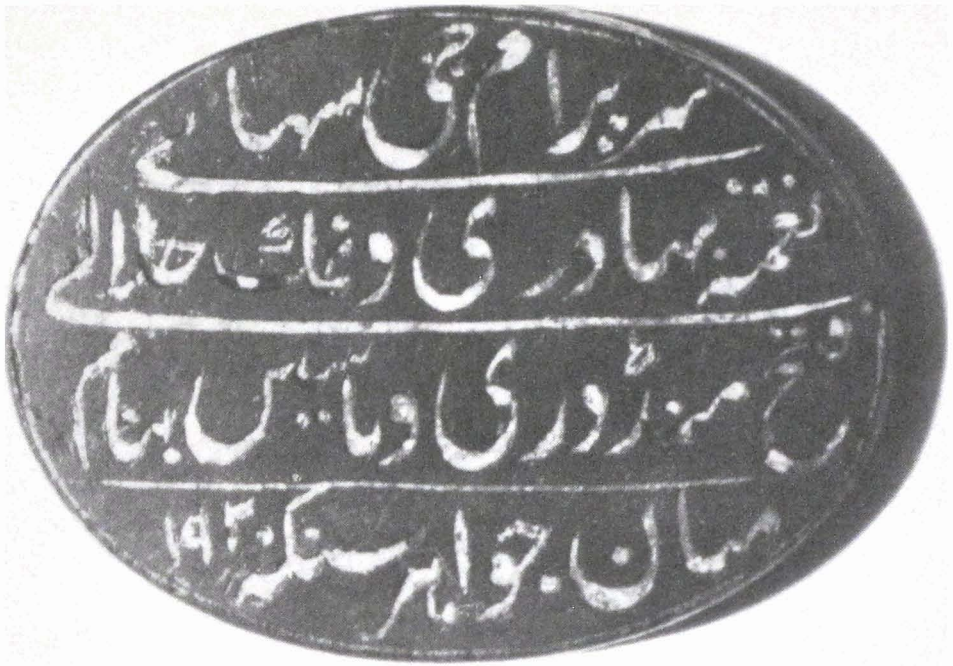
The *begar* system also underwent further reforms: in 1906 the monthly remuneration was increased to Rs 8 and forced labour was abandoned as transport workers were coming forward voluntarily. By 1920, the transport system had grown sufficiently so that *begar* could be abolished completely. This was due in part to the completion of additional roads in the state, especially a cart road over the Banihal Pass linking Srinagar with Jammu. This enterprise was undertaken by one of the Maharaja's able ministers in 1913 with an eye to reviving the trade between Jammu and the Valley, which had declined badly after other routes were opened. After its completion in 1915, the road remained a private possession of the Maharaja: a special permit was required of those who used it until 1922, when the Maharaja ordered it to be opened to the public.

Less successful among the development programmes of the early twentieth century was the plan for flood control. Serious floods in 1893 and 1903, which inundated vast areas of Srinagar, persuaded the British Resident, Sir Luis Dave, to undertake flood control schemes. Elaborate plans were made mainly based on the ancient concept of widening the Jhelum river from the Wular Lake to Baramula. The digging was to be done by electrical dredgers run by electricity produced at a power plant at Mahura. The machinery for dredging and generating electricity was ordered from the United States in 1905 and 1906 and the Mahura power house, which later was to supply electricity to Srinagar, was completed in 1907, making it the second hydro-electric project in India. Dredging began in 1908 and by 1912 over 6,000 acres had been reclaimed and given to farmers. However, in the absence of floods during the ensuing years, the state began to look upon the operation as a waste of money and the effort was abandoned in 1917. The ancient practice of constructing bunds was again resorted to.

Other development and reform programmes included food rationing, development of sericulture and mining industries and development of horticulture. The rapid rise in population led to food shortages by the end of the second decade of this century and the government resorted to the uninspired system of collecting a part of land revenue in kind and distributing it to the city population at a low rate of interest. The plan had two objectives: it advanced cash to the farmer for payment of land revenue and it sold the

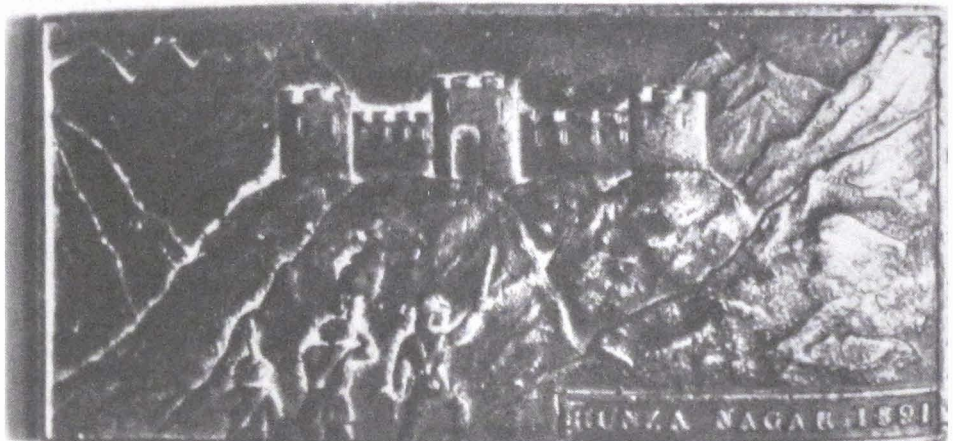


Maharaja Ranbir Singh



Medallion issued by Maharaja Gulab Singh for bravery and loyal service in Gilgit and Chilas, 1854

Plaque issued by Maharaja Ranbir Singh for operations in Hunzanagar, 1891





Baltistan Medal



Chitral Medal



Maharaja Pratap Singh

produce at a nominal profit. Storage facilities were built in Srinagar for the grain and a card system was devised to ensure just distribution each month. The measures were under the Food Control Department which functioned effectively for many years.

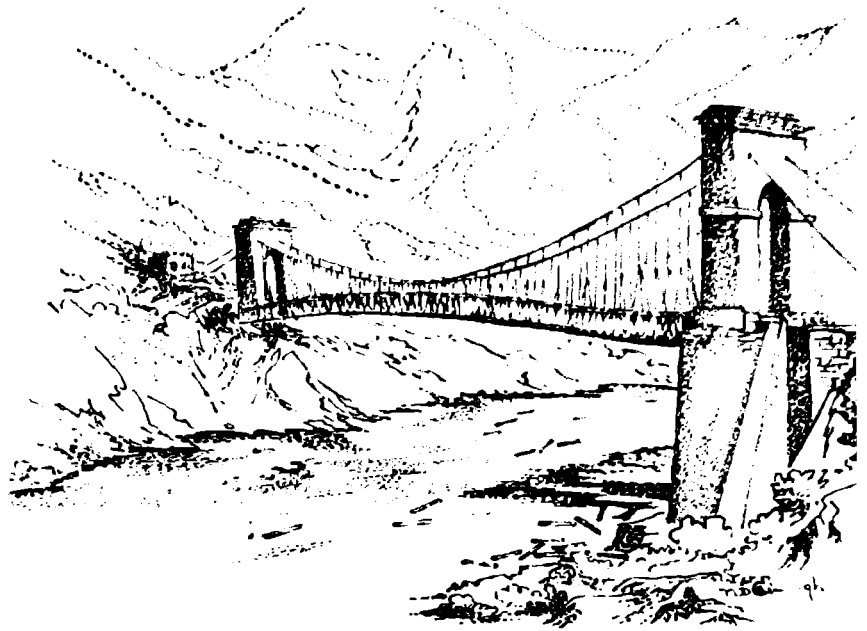
The solution to the recurrent poverty in the state, however, could only be found in diversification of occupation and—with the development of industry—an increase in trade. Sericulture, which had been known in the Valley for centuries, experienced a revival during Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign. Silk worms were often reared by individuals at home, but in the hope of establishing the industry on a commercial basis mulberry seeds were imported from Italy and France and a factory was opened in 1907. By 1921 over 55,000 Kashmiris were involved in the silk industry, producing more than one lakh kilograms of raw silk annually.

European interest in investment and ownership in Jammu and Kashmir continued to increase, especially in view of the British administrative presence and the stability of the state. However, the Maharaja was chary of granting concessions to outsiders and when an English firm applied for mining and power rights, he discouraged it. He had published a set of complex mining rules and then proceeded to set up the Kashmir Department of Mining for survey and prospecting in the state.

European persistence also pushed fruit growing in Kashmir to great heights of expertise and profit. French traders in the Valley first noted the scope for growing grapes and viniculture but when this proved unprofitable for want of efficient transportation to the rest of India, attention was turned to growing other varieties of fruit. By the 1880's, stocks were collected and a state nursery inaugurated. In 1907, the Department of Agriculture and Horticulture was established and from 1908 onwards, a Kashmir representative joined the Board of Agriculture of the Government of India. The further development of the fruit industry handsomely increased Kashmir's export trade and revenue.

While some progress was made in the expansion of the Jammu and Kashmir economy, social and educational development lagged sadly. Punjabis still controlled most of the administrative positions. As late as 1912 attempts to define state subjects as those who had obtained permission from the Maharaja's government to own land in Kashmir failed to protect the Kashmiris because almost anyone could procure the permission. With the opening of a college in Srinagar in 1905 and in Jammu in 1908, through the efforts of

Dr Annie Besant, many more qualified Kashmiris demanded positions within their own state government. Finally in 1925, the Maharaja decreed that vacancies on the Executive Council would be filled only by Kashmiris and recruitment for other government posts would be only among subjects of the state.



OLD RAMBAN BRIDGE

7

The First World War 1914–18

IN THE limited field of foreign affairs, the most outstanding event of Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign was the participation of several units of the JAK force with the British forces in Africa and the Middle East during World War I.

It had been hoped in 1914 that even if war was declared in Europe neutrality in the colonies, especially in Africa, could be maintained. The Berlin Conference of 1884–85 had favoured neutrality but not confirmed it. However, when, on 23 August, 1914, the Germans approached the Allies with the proposal that the area be neutralised, the Allies refused and the conflict was extended to the African continent.

To meet the need for additional troops, three battalions of Imperial Service Troops were required by the British for service overseas. Since the other states had also made contributions to the quota, a troop of JAK Horsed Cavalry under Jemadar (later Major, IDSM) Hazra Singh and one and a half JAK infantry battalions were mobilised in August 1914—2 JAK Infantry (50% Gorkha and

50% Muslim) and half of 3 JAK (50% Hindu Dogra and 50% Muslim) under Lieut-Colonel Raghbir Singh and Lieut-Colonel Durga Singh Bahadur respectively. The total strength was 1,174. Two troops of the Kashmir Imperial Service Lancers were also mobilised and despatched to Egypt in February 1915. One troop was attached to Patiala Lancers and one to Mysore Lancers and they served with those regiments throughout the war in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Palestine. In addition, 1 JAK Infantry, 1 JAK Mountain Battery and the rest of 3 JAK were placed at the disposal of the British by the Maharaja for future deployment. All the overseas forces were armed with Lee-Enfield short rifles by the Government of India. In preparation for their service abroad, 2 JAK and 3 JAK moved to Ferozepore for special training and equipping by the Special Service Officers attached to the units. The strength was brought up to 1,070 each.

When an Indian Expeditionary Force, including 1 JAK Mountain Battery, 2 JAK and 3 JAK, embarked at Karachi and arrived in Mombasa, British East Africa, on 27 September 1914, it marked the first occasion on which Indian armed forces had served abroad in such strength and in organised units. This was to be a rigorous experience for the Indian troops as they faced a modern army, new weaponry, unaccustomed surroundings and hard climatic conditions.

The area of operations, German East Africa, was the largest German colony—wedged between British East Africa to the north and Portuguese East Africa to the south. The coastal strip is low, hot and damp, the bush country is nearly waterless; but the interior tableland is reasonably comfortable and fertile. Few roads had been built but the Germans had completed a Central Railway across the region in February 1914.

German military strength in the colony was about 30,000 with 60 guns and 80 machine guns. The German Commander-in-Chief, General von Lettow Vorbeck, had divided his force in three parts: the principal one in the northeast, the second in the northwest and the third in the southeast near British Nyasaland.

The British were reluctant to attempt a conquest of German East Africa until additional support had been mustered. They nevertheless initiated hostilities on 8 August, 1914, by sending two cruisers to bombard the German East African port of Dar-es-Salaam. Much German property was damaged and in retaliation, a week later, the Germans captured the British settlement at Taveta, the main approach from British East Africa into German East Africa.

GERMAN EAST AFRICA



They then established a strong outpost on Mount Longido as a northern defence for the Kilimanjaro area. A series of raids then began on the Uganda railroad, less than 80 miles within British East Africa. The Germans next threatened Mombasa; the arrival of JAK forces in September was none too soon to defend this rail-head and port from the anticipated German land and sea attack.

A German force of 1,500 moved northward, taking the border town of Venga, and attacked an Indian position in a mangrove swamp. After heavy fighting, they were repulsed. At the same time, a German cruiser was forced to take refuge from British warships. On 8 October, 1914, another German attack was repelled; several other engagements during the month resulted in heavy casualties to them and kept them at bay. The British then decided on a sweeping operation to clear the Germans from the border areas, from Kilimanjaro to Tanga on the coast.

In their first major offensive action in East Africa the Indian forces were to seize Tanga while other troops assaulted Kilimanjaro. Both operations failed. German Intelligence learned about the Tanga mission soon enough to reinforce the town and when a small Indian force landed south of Tanga on 2 November, 1914, it was staunchly resisted and had to retire. On 4 November, at 11.00 am, the attack by the Indian army was renewed but again heavy firing outside the town held the force off. The Germans had cleverly laid canes and wires in the bush which when stepped upon signalled the Indians' position to the German artillery by moving flags. These devices were also designed to draw the lids from beehives, so that many of the Indian troops were painfully stung as they stumbled through the bush. Nonetheless, the troops persisted in their attack, took two lines of enemy trenches and succeeded in entering the town. Fire from houses in the built-up area was so severe, however, that the troops were withdrawn, with 2 JAK and 3 JAK acting as rearguard, re-embarked and returned to Mombasa. Total casualties suffered during this operation were 795. In spite of the failure of the mission, 2 JAK and 3 JAK had conducted themselves well in the assault and retreat and their efforts earned them the commendation of the GOC and several acts of gallantry distinguished the officers and men. Lieut-Colonel Durga Singh Bahadur, officer commanding 3 JAK, was awarded the Indian Order of Merit Class I for his vigorous leadership. One sepoy, Devi Singh, a soldier with only one year's service, earned laurels for his courageous response when he noticed some of his comrades falling from shots

in the rear. He went back, located two enemy snipers up a tree and killed them. Havildar Madhoo, too, in the fighting in the town, displayed extraordinary zeal in rushing a house full of enemy troops and killing six of them with his bayonet.

After the Tanga debacle, 2 JAK moved from Mombasa to Khazi and 3 JAK was sent to Voi. In January 1915, 2 JAK joined Brigadier-General Tighe's Tanga force which acquitted itself well by clearing most of the British territory of enemy infiltrators. On 2 January, 1915, Jasin, a port two miles south of the frontier, was captured and the whole Uмба Valley seized. Jasin was then garrisoned by a small party of 2 JAK which successfully repulsed a German counter-attack on 12 January. However, when the Germans attacked in force on 18 January, the 2 JAK garrison fought determinedly until their ammunition was exhausted and their commander, Lieut-Colonel Raghbir Singh, killed. Lieut-Colonel Raghbir Singh was considered an outstanding leader both in training and in battle. A strict disciplinarian, he was energetic yet unassuming, courteous and kind. Lieut-Colonel Haider Ali took over command of 2 JAK for the remainder of its stay in Africa.

3 JAK, which had been manoeuvring further west, even as far as Lake Victoria, was recalled to assist in the relief of the Jasin garrison. The relief column, however, could not break through the enemy opposition and Jasin reverted to German control—and with it, Tanga. The troops who were defending Jasin were taken prisoner and the Germans again consolidated their frontier positions, increased their raids on the railway line and strengthened their hold on Taveta.

The remainder of 2 JAK and 3 JAK were held at Mombasa awaiting reinforcements from Jammu to replace the prisoners and casualties at Jasin and Tanga. Large numbers of officers and men succumbed to the adverse climate and debilitating diseases: at one point 605 officers and men were sent back to Jammu for replacement. While awaiting reinforcements, the remainder were engaged in patrolling the railroad line between Mombasa and Victoria-Nyanza which was subject to frequent enemy attacks. 3 JAK suffered so many casualties from malaria that the battalion was sent to Nairobi for one month—for refitting and convalescence. The battalion then proceeded to Tsavo for railroad protection duties, where each man was responsible for approximately four hundred yards of the track. 3 JAK was thus engaged until February 1916 and earned high recommendation from its formation commanders upon completion of its duty. The British continued their naval activity against the

Germans—bombarding the coast and ultimately instituting a formal blockade. And, as reinforcements continued to arrive in British East Africa, plans were formulated for a massive offensive against the German colony.

On 19 February, 1915, a new commander, General Smuts, arrived in Mombasa and took command from General Tighe. His first task was planning the assault on German East Africa: a frontal attack would be made on Taveta with the main force while the cavalry brigade supported by field artillery and some infantry made a wide turning movement around the enemy's left, among the lower northern foothills of Kilimanjaro.

The main attack was successful: on 7 March the enemy retreated from his forward positions and then abandoned Taveta. Although he did not retreat in the anticipated direction, the enemy was eventually ejected from British territory and General Smuts continued his advance, to occupy favourable terrain before the rainy season. Once this was secured, attention was turned to expelling the Germans from their western positions in the Pare Mountains. Here, the enemy was well-fortified, well-supplied. 1 East African Division, of which 2 JAK formed a part, was chosen to move directly towards the enemy positions while the remainder of the Division was to follow the rail line controlled by the enemy and another group was to move around to his rear.

The first units of the Division moved out on 23 May, 1915, with 2 JAK as the advance guard. The advance was unopposed by the Germans but greatly impeded by thick bush, lack of water and the tse-tse fly. Days were very hot and the nights uncomfortably cold. As the column proceeded, word was received that the enemy was withdrawing from some of his positions in the Pare Mountains. During the next two days the column, with 2 JAK again as advance guard, contacted enemy patrols, engaged in light skirmishes and took a few prisoners. The enemy withdrawal, however, outpaced the British force's advance and the march continued through inhospitable terrain until the Pare Mountains were finally reached on 29 May. Enemy guns, including naval guns which had been removed from German cruisers, shelled the column's positions until dusk; then throughout the night snipers continued the harassment. In the morning the column launched its attack and although the enemy resisted, 2 JAK machine-gun fire ultimately forced him to withdraw.

In spite of its occasional combat successes, the British column was beset with great logistical difficulties: malaria and dysentery

had claimed a high toll, transportation for the evacuation of the sick and wounded was scarce, the long march had extended the lines of communications and rations were low. The column halted for a week to reorganise, but by 6 June the enemy had again been contacted and the column moved to intercept him in his retreat from the British force moving down the railway line. The Germans continued to withdraw and the summer seat of the German colonial government fell to the British. In rapid pursuit, the column crossed hot, barren, rugged terrain but kept in contact with the enemy's rear.

2 JAK and a mountain battery were given the task of advancing in search of the South African column, a part of 1 East African Division, and securing the road over which it would pass. The battalion set out with three days' rations. During the first two days it encountered neither the enemy nor the South African column—in spite of continuous marching through desolate tracts, then forested hills and deep ravines. Unexpectedly, word was received of a German concentration at the Lukigara River and in the surrounding mountains. 2 JAK was immediately despatched in that direction by a circuitous route while the rest of the main column proceeded along the direct approach, in order to keep the enemy's attention diverted from 2 JAK's surprise move from the flank. When the enemy opened up with his guns, the column replied only sporadically—until 2 JAK was positioned for the assault. Although delayed by rugged terrain and unable fully to cover the enemy's rear, 2 JAK succeeded in surprising the enemy, decimating a German company and capturing weapons, many prisoners and a banner depicting the German eagle—which is still in the possession of the battalion. At the end of the battle many German casualties were counted and prisoners captured.

The column remained here for a month until news came that the South African force was clearing the enemy to the west and was ready to collaborate with the column in squeezing out the 3,000 enemy troops entrenched in the mountains between their respective positions. The column proceeded to dislodge the Germans from the main valley and mountain reaches by 11 August and then, with 2 JAK as advance guard, took up the pursuit. The column suffered over 120 casualties but the enemy was completely routed. The South African column also moved swiftly, pushing the Germans southwards across the Central Railroad. On 3 September, Dar-es-Salaam fell to the British and by late September the German force was cut off from the sea. During their relentless pursuit, the British

force had to be reorganised and refitted because as many as 12,000 had been evacuated due to malaria and dysentery between June and September.

The arc of advance was too wide to be effectively held and in the next three months the Germans took advantage of this weakness to harass the British. Nevertheless, the pursuit continued relentlessly and on 1 January 1916, a concerted attack was made on the eastern portion of the German line. The enemy withdrew without giving battle but his rear was continually engaged and by late January when the rains broke, a considerable portion of the eastern area had been occupied. Thereafter, the rains virtually halted all movement and again the troops were visited by outbreaks of malaria, pneumonia and dysentery.

On 30 May, 1916, about the time of the end of the rainy season, General Van Deventer took over command from General Smuts. In the next five months the enemy was driven further westwards, making occasional strong stands but gradually falling back.

By then the Germans had been completely cleared from the northwest. A Belgian force now joined the British to help clear the Central Railroad area. The converging Allied forces cut the Germans in two : the main body under General von Lettow Vorbeck had been forced out of the southern hills and fiercely engaged on 15 and 18 November. Three hundred and seventy-six Germans and 1,100 of the local askaris were taken prisoner. And, on 21 November, 1 Brigade pursued the Germans until they fled across the border into Portuguese East Africa. By 1 December, 1916, German East Africa was declared cleared of all enemy.

A period of rest and reorganisation followed before the JAK troops sailed back to India in mid-1917. Upon arrival at Jammu Tawi Railroad Station, the force was enthusiastically welcomed by the towns-people and the government granted a special award of Rs 25 to each man. The Governor-General had, in 1915, bestowed awards on four officers and seven men of 2 and 3 JAK and in addition, in 1917, the following awards were announced : II Class Indian Order of Merit to Havildars Atta Ulla and Nanbir, Sepoys Hafiz Ali and Rahim Ali, 2 JAK, and Lance Naik Devi Singh, 3 JAK ; and the Indian Distinguished Service Medal to Jemadar Ram Bahadur, Havildar Harku and Lance Naik Indru, 3 JAK. Lieut-Colonel Haider Ali, officer commanding 2 JAK, was awarded the Russian Order of St Stanislaus Class III with sword ; and two sepoy, Hafiz Ali and Rahim Ali, of 2 JAK, were awarded the Order of St

George, Class IV. The following year, Lieut-Colonel Haider Ali was awarded the CIE and OBI (Order of British India) and the title of *Sirdar Bahadur* Class I. Sub-Assistant Surgeon, Mohammed Din, 2 JAK, was awarded the OBI and the title of *Khan Bahadur* Class II. Major Sansar Singh, 3 JAK, received the French *Croix de Guerre*, Lance Havildar Ballu, the Medal for Military Valour, Major Durga Datt (Medical Officer), the OBI and the title *Sirdar Bahadur* Class II.

The day following their arrival in Jammu, 2 JAK marched through the main bazaar of the city displaying its war trophies—including a machine-gun which had been captured from the Germans in East Africa. These trophies are still with 2 JAK.

1 Kashmir Pack Battery was despatched to East Africa in November 1916 under the command of Major Dharam Singh. The battery gave support to the forces operating in the Rufigi River area and, in February 1917, at Mikalinso. The battery was in constant action from March to November 1917 and suffered heavily from malaria and dysentery. Almost all the mules were lost due to illness. The battery returned to Jammu in March 1918.

3 JAK, after a period of rest and reorganisation, was sent to the Middle East in March 1918 to join 1 JAK which had arrived in the area in early 1918 under the command of Lieut-Colonel Ishari Singh. In early April 1918, a large portion of the British troops in Palestine was transferred to the Western Front in France. 1 JAK and 3 JAK were among the Indian troops which replaced the British forces and formed part of 10 Division and 75 Division respectively. British policy in Palestine called for a defensive attitude until the situation in Europe had stabilised.

The Middle East, strategically important to the Allies and the British, especially because of the vital Suez Canal, is difficult terrain in which to conduct operations. East of the Canal lies the vast Sinai peninsula, a desert area with a barren rocky plateau in the centre, sand dunes along the northern coastal belt and a mass of rocky mountains to the south. Temperatures soar on summer days while winter nights and sandstorms are equally uncomfortable; water is scarce in all areas although sudden rains can make dry beds into dangerous torrents. Adjacent to the Sinai in 1914 lay Palestine, a territory of the Turkish Empire. Here the terrain was only slightly more favourable: two mountain ranges on either side of the River Jordan divide the area, the eastern one sloping to the eastern desert on one side, while the western range falls steeply into

the Mediterranean. The Jordan Valley runs between the mountains and two great depressions cross the area from east to west. Further to the north lies Syria (including the Lebanon) at that time also in the Turkish empire. The physical features of Palestine continue into Syria, a narrow coastal strip, a double ridge of mountains which run north and south through what is now called the Lebanon—and, between them, a fertile valley. There are more areas of open level ground in Syria, however, than in Palestine; the water supply is less difficult and the land more fertile.

Britain's interests in the Middle East stemmed from her dependence on the Suez Canal as the vital channel of trade and communication with the Indian Empire and her Asian and East African colonies. Since 1882, Britain had exercised virtual control over the Canal Zone. Although Egypt was traditionally under the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey, when relations between Turkey and Britain began to deteriorate in mid-1914, Egypt was induced to issue a declaration of alliance which amounted to a declaration of war against Britain's enemies.

On 18 December, 1914, Britain declared a protectorate over Egypt and pledged to accept full responsibility for her defence which in this case meant primarily the defence of the Suez Canal. The Canal is just under one hundred miles long from Port Said on the Mediterranean to the port of Suez at its southern end and is 65 to 100 yards wide and 34 feet deep. A sweet water canal and a railroad line ran parallel to the Canal, thus enhancing its strategic value.

The defence of the Canal was entrusted to 10 Indian Division of which 1 JAK formed a part. The main defences were constructed on the west bank while the low lying region to the east of the Canal was inundated. Fortified posts dotted the east side but communication was scanty.

By January 1915 the Turks had amassed 20,000 men and ten batteries of artillery for the march on the Canal and late in January they commenced their raids. Their main objective was Ismailia, a city located on the Great Bitter lake about mid-way along the Canal. The attack was made on 3 February with the use of pontoons and rafts but was repulsed. After a second abortive attempt, the Turks withdrew.

Thereafter, additional defences were constructed along the Canal: the railroad was made double track, pipe lines and roads were laid, trenches were dug and wired. The defence line now lay 11,000 yards east of the Canal and was strongly fortified. In April 1915,

the Turks attempted another raid but were forced to retreat. By the end of the year, the British had extended the rail line across the Canal to within striking distance of the Turkish position at El Arish. An attack was launched but the Turks withdrew and El Arish was occupied. By January 1916 the Turks had been driven from Egyptian territory. Poised on the border of the Turkish Empire, the British halted to consolidate their offensive.

By the end of March 1917, a force was assembled in Palestine under General Murray to strike at the Turkish main force at Gaza, a small township situated two miles inland from the Mediterranean coast and surrounded by clumps of thick cactus hedges ten feet high and five yards wide—a considerable obstacle for both infantry and cavalry. Perched on and around a small hill, Gaza was well-protected by sand dunes on the west and a ridge along the east. The attack was launched on 26 March; while the Allied advance went well in the face of natural and man-made obstacles and managed to push into the northern outskirts of Gaza, the attack had to be called off at night for want of water. Three weeks later, another attack—this time a frontal attack against positions which had been much strengthened—was mounted but this too failed and resulted in heavy Allied casualties. General Murray was relieved of his command as a result of these two costly defeats.

At the end of June 1917, General Allenby took over command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and at once outlined a new plan for the capture of Gaza. Instead of a frontal attack his plan envisaged the turning of the Gaza defences by an attack through Beersheba.

By the end of October some 40,000 Allied troops were in position to attack Beersheba. The attack went in on October 31; by the next afternoon, in spite of strong resistance by the Turks, Beersheba had fallen and by 7 November the Allies had reached Gaza. They found the Turks in rapid retreat and the town was immediately taken. The retreating Turkish army was soon divided and disorganised by the advancing Allies under General Allenby. Jerusalem was his next major objective but as Turkish opposition was still formidable, three weeks were allowed for reinforcements and the extension of lines of communication.

The attack on Jerusalem commenced at dawn on 8 December and although enemy resistance was not overwhelming, rugged ground and bad weather slowed down the advance. However, the Turks were quickly demoralised as their positions fell and by nightfall they had fled, leaving Jerusalem to the Allies.

Allenby's forces halted in Jerusalem. They had outrun their lines of communication and a period of consolidation was necessary. In April 1918 many of the British troops left for the Western Front in France; consequently, extensive training had to be carried out from May to September 1918 to prepare new reinforcements for further operations in the area.

General Allenby's next plan was to break through the Turkish Eighth Army on the coast while providing sufficient deception to convince the enemy that the attack was coming on their left flank—that is, east of the Jordan. Movement along the coast was concealed while great activity was simulated on the eastern flank in the Jordan Valley, where the Turkish Seventh Army was positioned. Dummy camps were erected to indicate troop build-up and sleighs were drawn through the dust to create the impression of extensive movement. When the concentration on the coast was completed, the Allies had 44,000 men and 383 guns to the Turks' unsuspecting 8,000 men and 130 guns.

3 JAK, under Lieut-Colonel Durga Singh, had by then been fully incorporated in 232 Brigade of 75 Division (XXI Corps) and was, with 1 JAK (with 30 Brigade in 10 Division of XX Corps) ready for the pre-dawn attack on 19 September 1918. XXI Corps moved first as 232 Brigade swept through the enemy's front line trenches meeting little opposition and taking more than one hundred prisoners. The next objective was more strongly held and the brigade could not make any progress until 3 JAK, the brigade reserve, was ordered to reinforce the assaulting forces. The enemy was then thrown back.

On 19 September, when it was determined that XXI Corps' progress was on schedule, XX Corps was ordered to launch its attack on the right. 30 Brigade concentrated close to the front line, poised for rapid advance. At seven fortyfive in the evening, the artillery opened fire to cover the noise of deployment and the infantry took up the advance, supported by machine guns and trench mortars. Enemy resistance was stubborn, but the leading units were reinforced and finally a bayonet charge broke the defenders.

The Allies kept up their assaults as the enemy succumbed to confusion and despair and then relentlessly pursued the disorganised retreat. The infantry units succeeded admirably in surprising the Turkish Eighth Army and clearing the way for the cavalry. Moving rapidly, the cavalry units reached their objectives and also surprised the enemy. By the evening of 20 September, 36 hours after the start

of the battle, both Turkish armies had been decisively defeated, their retreat cut by the cavalry and their lines of communication broken. The infantry moved on to block the routes leading east to the Jordan Valley. Thereafter, effective resistance by the Turks ended and thousands of prisoners were taken.

On 26 September the cavalry advanced on Damascus which was taken on 1 October. Over 20,000 weary, diseased and dispirited prisoners were collected at Damascus. The infantry continued its advance up the coastline, capturing Haifa and Beirut and finally moving on towards Aleppo. On 25 October the Turks withdrew from Aleppo and the Allies entered the city the next morning. On 31 October the Turks, thoroughly demoralised by their rapid defeat, signed an armistice which not only ended the conflict in the Palestine area but also took them out of the war completely.

At the end of 1918 the troops in Palestine and Syria were moved to Egypt preparatory to their repatriation. In March 1919 1 JAK Infantry and 3 JAK Rifles returned to Jammu, where a lavish reception was given them at the Jammu Tawi station and in the city. A parade was held at Satwari Cantonment on 6 March and inspected by the Maharaja and the British Resident. All those who served abroad were awarded a special *inam* of Rs 25 and officers were allowed a fifty per cent pay increase. The men were granted Indian Army rates of pay for the period of service abroad and 114 *jagirs* or *jagir inams* were granted for distinguished service. The commanding officer of 1 JAK, Lieut-Colonel Ishari Singh, was awarded the Order of Merit Class II, with the title of *Sirdar Bahadur*; the second-in-command of the battalion, Major Onkar Singh, was awarded the Order of British India Class II. *Jangi Inams* were awarded to the commanding officer, the second-in-command, two subedars (Rovel Singh and Shiv Ram), two Havildars (Mansa Ram and Mall), two naiks (Chuni Lal and Guran Dutta) and one Sepoy (Sarwan). The battalion also won two Indian Order of Merit awards, two Indian Distinguished Service Medals and five Indian Meritorious Service Medals. Two Turkish guns were captured which were later presented to the battalion as war trophies.

In addition, in 1919, 2 JAK and 3 JAK each were awarded three Meritorious Service Medals—to Havildar Ali Akbar, Naik Teju and Sepoy Mohammed Akram of 2 JAK; and Quartermaster Havildar Dal Bahadur, Naik Karbir and Sepoy Shiv Ram of 3 JAK. Silver badges were issued to men who had been on active service abroad and gold braid was given as a mark of distinction for the wounded.

Retired officers and men were allowed to wear the latter on ordinary dress. Among other concessions granted to service personnel by the Maharaja were these :

Free passage for relatives to visit sick and wounded men of the Kashmir Imperial Service units in military hospitals in India;
Cash allowance in lieu of rations to men of the Imperial Service units serving in State territory outside the Gilgit Agency;
Increased bonus of Rs 50 for each recruit.

In all, during the war, 31,000 men of the Jammu and Kashmir State Forces were placed at the disposal of the British government and over a crore of rupees was spent in the war effort by the Jammu and Kashmir State government. The following battle honours were won by the Jammu and Kashmir State Forces :

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|--|------------------|
| 1 | JAK Pack Battery | <i>Nayangoa, East Africa</i> | 1916-18 |
| 1 | JAK Infantry | <i>Megiddo, Nablus, Palestine</i> | 1918 |
| 2 | JAK Infantry | <i>Kilimanjaro, Behobeho, East Africa</i> | 1914-17 |
| 3 | JAK Infantry | <i>Kilimanjaro, Behobeho, Megiddo, Sharon, Palestine</i> | 1914-17
1918. |

The organisation and administration of the JAK Forces underwent certain modifications as a result of its participation in the war. Among these changes were :

1. Transfer to Kashmir Imperial Service Troops of 300 selected men from other units in the State Forces for reinforcement.
2. Maintenance of the depots of the regular units at the cost of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir instead of the Government of India.
3. Re-enlistment of officers and men pensioned or discharged at their own request with the pay and allowances they were drawing at their discharge.
4. Doubling of the amount of rewards to recruits.
5. Continuance of pay and allowances to men reported missing or prisoner of war and of allotments to their families.
6. Grant of half-pay as pension to families of officers and men killed in action or died of wounds; also grant of wound and injury pensions.

7. Writing off of all monies due from men reported killed in action or died of wounds.
8. Grant of extra allowance to families of soldiers serving abroad and free issue of firewood to them.

In addition, since JAK Forces still garrisoned the outposts on a rotation basis, another battalion over 900 strong was raised during the war—2/2 JAK—to take 2 JAK's turn in Gilgit in relief of 1 JAK Infantry which was designated for overseas duty. As a matter of interest, 2/2 JAK (or Kashmir Rifles, as it was then called), was raised by Lieut-Colonel Janak Singh (later, Major-General, CIE, Army and Revenue Minister) the father of the first Colonel of the Regiment.

Upon return from service overseas, 1 JAK Mountain Battery was posted at Satwari; No 2 Mountain Battery was at Gilgit. Three companies of 2/2 JAK at Gilgit were relieved by men of 2 JAK and much of the year was spent in refitting the units, training and improving the health of those weakened by service abroad.

Before either the British Indian Army or the JAK State Forces could be fully reorganised, political upheavals, tribal unrest and frontier engagements with Afghanistan called for immediate attention. After the murder of the Afghan ruler, Habibullah, in February 1919, a power struggle ensued, upon which the successful contender, Amanullah Khan, chose to divert attention from his own role in the upheaval by preparing for a frontier attack on India. He sought and won the support of the belligerent Pathan tribesmen in the Northwest Frontier Province and by April 1919, the Afghan army was poised on the Khyber Pass near the Kurram Valley.

During a tour of the border area, ostensibly a routine visit, the Afghan Commander-in-Chief visited the Indian side on a reconnaissance for his own troops. In early May they occupied these positions, thousands of tribesmen poured into Indian territory crying "Jihad" and spread their forces in varying concentrations all along the border from Badakshan opposite Chitral in the north to South Baluchistan. On 6 May the Indian government ordered general mobilisation and moved up an Indian Army force from Peshawar to dislodge the enemy from his newly occupied territory.

2 JAK Mountain Battery and a brigade of JAK Forces (Imperial Service Troops) then posted at Gilgit, were placed on alert and moved to Chitral, Yasin and Darkot in case Chitral was threatened. The Maharaja sanctioned a fifty per cent pay increase to officers and

granted Indian rates of pay to the men as long as they were in the field. The attacks on Chitral, however, were on a limited scale and easily repulsed without reinforcement. Subsequently 1 JAK Infantry was mobilised at a strength of 821 combatants and left Satwari on 10 June 1919 for Abbotabad. On 3 July the Battalion proceeded to join the Kohat-Kurram Force and served mainly near Thal as part of 47 Brigade, ready to counter any incursion there. The battalion returned to Jammu on 6 May, 1920.

1 JAK Mountain Battery had left Jammu for Abbotabad on 15 June, 1919, and formed part of the East Persia Force to repulse any Afghan attack from that side but no threat arose. The battery returned to Jammu at the end of November 1920 with high commendation for its perseverance in the face of climatic and geographical difficulties. Within a month of initiating his adventures, the new Afghan ruler asked for an armistice, which was signed on 3 June bringing the Third Afghan war to a conclusion. All ranks taking part in these operations were awarded the Indian General Service Medal with the clasp "Afghanistan, 1919" by the Government of India.

With the easing of tensions on the borders and no demands on the Imperial Service Troops for foreign service, the JAK Force underwent a period of significant reorganisation between 1921 and 1924. In the process, 4 JAK, originally 100% Dogra was converted to 50% Dogra and 50% Muslim (1923). In 1921, 5 JAK, *Suraj Gorkha*, originally raised in 1849, was reorganised as first line reserve troops on an eight company basis under the name 6 JAK *Suraj Gorkha*. In 1925, the battalion under Lieut-Colonel Shiv Ram moved to Gilgit where it served until 1928 when Lieut-Colonel Prasad Singh took over as commanding officer. With the intention of raising the general level of efficiency and increasing the uniformity throughout the Force, the rank of general was abolished and those of lieutenant and captain were created (up to then a State Commissioned officer joined with the starting rank of Major). The Horse Artillery and Sappers and Miners were disbanded and certain forts abandoned. A training battalion was planned and the pay and allowances of the men were revised. Three commands were delineated: Kashmir Area, Jammu Area and Gilgit Area. The Imperial Service Troops were designated as first line troops and the Regular Force as first line reserve troops. When further changes were made, however, this distinction was abolished and the whole force was put on Class A basis and placed in the circle of the Military Adviser, Punjab State Forces.

The Chief of Staff for the JAK Force was a British officer lent to the State. Army Headquarters organisation was simple enough— as follows :

ARMY HEADQUARTERS

Colonel on the Staff (Full Colonel)	General Staff Officer (Full Colonel)	Quartermaster- Adjutant General (Full Colonel)
Director Remounts and Farms (Full Colonel)	Colonel Commandant Jammu	Colonel Comman- dant Kashmir

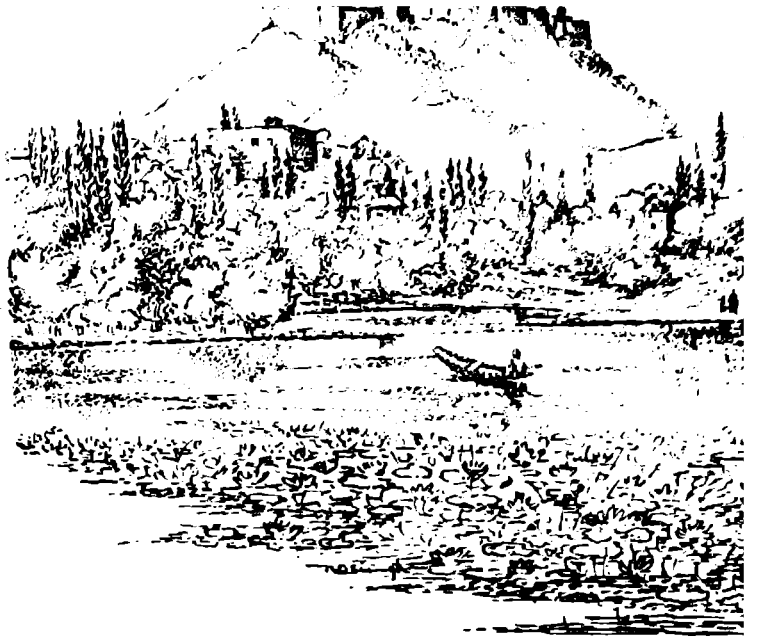
The commands posted in Jammu cantonment and Srinagar cantonment consisted of two composite brigades each of three infantry battalions, one battery mountain artillery and one animal transport company (mules) and other ancillary troops. Army Headquarters, Army Training School and the regiment of horsed cavalry moved with the Maharaja between Srinagar and Jammu every six months. The subordinate staff of Army Headquarters was made up of civilian clerks on a common cadre.

In addition, there was a Central Training Battalion at Satwari. For arms, equipment and ammunition the Force was dependent on Indian arsenals. Two battalions of Pioneers and Temple Guards were introduced into the JAK Force; the Pioneers were to be used during peace time road communication especially in the inaccessible and impassable regions of the state. 6 JAK Pioneers, raised in 1928, later became 6 JAK Rifles. Its original composition was 50% Hindu Dogras and 50% Muslims. A British major was attached to the commanding officer, Lieut-Colonel Abdul Rehman Khan Afridi, to assist in the training of the new unit. A dozen NCOs and one JCO were borrowed from 4 Hazara Pioneers (Indian Army) to serve as instructors. The unit was detailed on contract work to construct the Udampur-Ramnagar road and was trained in bridging as well as road construction. After one year, the unit moved to Jammu cantonment for station duties.

All in all, the Jammu and Kashmir Force was increased by five hundred men to meet the requirements of maintaining a sufficient force to ensure internal peace and security and to deal with any political agitation, to maintain the necessary force in Gilgit and

other frontier areas and to render assistance to the British government on demand.

The concern of the Maharaja's government for additional forces to deal with internal security grew out of the gradually increasing number of clashes between the state's Hindu and Muslim communities. For centuries Kashmir had been ravaged by ruthless invasions or cruel governments but now the most tragic destruction was about to tear into Kashmiri life as the people were pitted against each other in communal struggle. With the death of Maharaja Pratap Singh in September 1925, a benevolent and sympathetic rule came to an end. The Maharaja's popularity, accessibility and sense of justice were widely acknowledged and while he hesitated to entertain radical demands for democratic government, the prosperity and peace of his reign provided a favourable climate for the education and development of the Kashmiri people.



FORT HARI PARBAT, SRINAGAR

8

Maharaja Hari Singh : The Second World War

MAHARAJA PRATAP Singh died leaving no male heir and the *gadi* of Jammu and Kashmir passed to his nephew, Hari Singh. Born in 1895, the young prince had received his education under the tutelage of the British at Mayo College, Ajmer, and the Imperial Cadet College, Dehra Dun. His tenure as Commander-in-Chief of the State Forces began in 1915 and during World War I he was responsible for training and equipping the units which served abroad.

Raja Hari Singh's experience in politics began after the restoration of Maharaja Pratap Singh's powers in 1922, when he was appointed Senior Member of the State Council to advise the Maharaja. During this apprenticeship, his principal contribution to state administration was an attempt to mitigate the chronic food shortages in the state; this, and his advocacy of the appointment of state subjects to administrative posts as well as his communal impartiality, secured for him the trust and affection of the people. His *Raj Tilak* ceremony, marking his assumption of power, was held in Jammu in March 1926.

In the administration of Jammu and Kashmir State Government, the Executive Council, which was created in 1924, continued with the same membership under the new Maharaja. However, among the modifications he made was the abolition of the Senior Member of the Council—so that he himself thereafter presided over the Council and the Senior Member, Mr G.E.C. Wakefield, became State Secretary instead. The office of Foreign Member was changed to Foreign Secretary. In addition, an Army Council with an Army Minister, Chief of the Military Staff and Colonel of the Staff was established and Colonel Rai Bahadur Janak Singh, the Revenue Minister, became the Army Minister with the rank of Major General. Lieut-Colonel RD Alexander continued as Chief of the Military Staff. Army Headquarters Staff was reorganised mainly in terms of merging related offices and eliminating superfluous sections.

Among Maharaja Hari Singh's first acts was the promulgation of the Agriculturists Relief Regulation which released the farmer from the stranglehold of the moneylender. He also introduced the Compulsory Primary Education Act and the Prevention of Infant Marriage Act, which made it unlawful to contract marriages for boys under 18 and girls under 14 years of age. The state was also beginning to benefit from the adoption of a regular accounts system, an improved revenue system, more reasonable customs and excise duties, extension of irrigation facilities and the hydro-electric plants at Jammu and Mahura and expansion of the cooperative credit movement.

The new Maharaja enforced his long-held conviction that state subjects should be favoured in appointments for government positions. He found it more difficult, however, to assert his authority *vis-a-vis* the British in Gilgit. Even when Maharaja Pratap Singh's full powers had been restored, control of Gilgit had remained in the hands of the British Political Agent. Gilgit *Wazarat*, II or the settled area, was ruled by the Maharaja's government but the Agency continued to be administered by the Political Agent appointed by the British.

Maharaja Hari Singh entered into correspondence with the British Government in India insisting on the abolition of the Gilgit Agency. The British Resident in Kashmir agreed that the Political Agency should be abolished but suggested that a Political Officer be lent to Kashmir as Governor of Gilgit to conduct political relations on behalf of the Government of India and the Government of Kashmir. However, he conceded that the officer should be placed under the jurisdiction of the state government and not of the Government

of India. Further negotiations on this proposal were, however, curtailed by communal disorders and the proposal was withdrawn.

British interest in Gilgit continued to be as persistent as it was when the Agency was created in 1889 and Maharaja Hari Singh failed to make any progress in his demands. In 1935, he finally withdrew his own administrative machinery from the *Wazarat* and handed it over with the Gilgit Agency to the British on a sixty year lease. In the document signed on 29 March 1935 by the Maharaja and the Resident, Colonel L.E. Lang, the Viceroy and Governor General of India was authorised to assume the civil and military government of the *Wazarat* of Gilgit although the territory would continue to be included within Jammu and Kashmir State, which would retain its rights to mining in the area.

Poverty, very high taxes, a trade depression which smothered local handicrafts and widespread unemployment were among the seething discontents of the people. The state's Muslim majority had only recently evinced interest in education and jealousies quickly arose between the few Muslim graduates and their Hindu counterparts who had more experience and who had traditionally filled government posts. Those Kashmiri Muslims who had studied outside the state (mostly at Aligarh Muslim University) returned full of zeal and ambition for their community's position in Kashmir. Their solidarity sought the backing of the masses and they enjoyed at least the tacit support of the Resident.

Other factors were also at work in giving expression to the people's discontent : Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement in India set an example for conducting a campaign against unjust rule and although publication of newspapers was still restricted by the state, wide circulation of journals from India carried the news into Kashmir of the activities of the Congress and its quest for democratic reforms. Ironically, the few words Maharaja Hari Singh did speak on contemporary political affairs at the Round Table Conference in London in 1930 unfortunately caused the British to doubt his loyalty. His statement on behalf of the Princes of India included the passage "As Indians and loyal to the land whence we derive our birth and infant nurture, we stand as solidly as the rest of our countrymen for our land's enjoyment of a position of honour and equality in the British Commonwealth of Nations." In the hope of limiting the Maharaja's political aspirations, the British encouraged the agitators in Kashmir with material support. From outside the state came literature which railed against the Hindu ruler and a campaign

against the government was initiated by enthusiastic young Muslims after attending a session of the All Kashmir Muslim Conference held in Lahore in 1930.

With this background of discontent, outbreaks of communal violence were inevitable. During the trial of a Muslim charged by the state with sedition, a crowd of four to five thousand staged violent demonstrations outside the court. The police opened fire, killing twenty-one. The Muslim population became highly incensed and proceeded to wreak their vengeance on local Hindus. With the spread of communal rioting, the Maharaja ordered the JAK Body-guard Cavalry to restore order. For a time communal tension eased and attempts were made by the two communities to achieve a more just rule in the state.

Maharaja Hari Singh's political discomfitures continued to bedevil affairs in Kashmir. The committee he appointed to enquire into the riots was boycotted by Muslims who suspected its impartiality. A demand then came from the Viceroy for the inclusion of a Muslim judge on the committee; the Maharaja refused to comply. He also dismissed his English Prime Minister and appointed Raja Hari Krishen Kaul in his place. The new Prime Minister urged the forging of an understanding with the leaders of the opposition. After negotiations with the Muslims it was agreed to release all political prisoners and to withdraw the charges against them in return for which the Muslims would suspend their agitation. The more zealous young Muslims, however, rejected this agreement and new violence erupted—this time, however, bi-partisan in spirit and directed against the government. In a move to stabilise the situation and exercise authority, the British government insisted that the Maharaja accept the following terms at twenty-four hours' notice :

1. Definite steps to remedy the alleged Muslim grievances;
2. Enquiry by a British officer into the demands of Muslims;
3. A European ICS officer to be appointed Prime Minister.

Maharaja Hari Singh yielded, retracted his regulations, freed the prisoners and promised to create a commission to examine the grievances of the people. Before these measures could be effected, however, fresh communal rioting broke out in Jammu and Mirpur and, unable to cope with the disturbances, the state government appealed to the British to send one company of British troops to Mirpur and two companies to Jammu to restore order. The British willingly complied and within a week peace was re-established.

Maharaja Hari Singh proceeded to fulfil his promises and on

12 November, 1931, Sir B.J. Glancy was appointed Chairman of a committee consisting of one Hindu and two Muslims, one each from Jammu and Kashmir to consider the expressed grievances of the people. Although the representative of the Jammu Hindus resigned shortly thereafter, the Commission succeeded in framing a report which called for :

1. Establishment of reasonable qualifications for appointment to government posts.
2. Effective measures to prevent neglect of any one community.
3. The grant of proprietary rights in respect of all land of which ownership is retained by the State and right of occupancy is enjoyed by private persons.
4. Abolition of certain taxes.
5. Promotion of industry to relieve unemployment.

When the question of exploring and allievating grievances was originally broached, it was taken for granted that these were Muslim grievances against a Hindu ruling *elite*. However, as political activity became more widespread in the state, the population as a whole became aware of the need for reforms and improvements in living conditions. Communal agitation thus subsided by the middle of 1932 and, when the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was organised in October 1932, its first President, Sheikh Abdullah, declared that progress would be possible only in the wake of amicable relations among the various communities. Thus, in spite of the communal ring to its name and its predominance of Muslim members, the Conference had as its policy cooperation between Hindus and Muslims. Another factor in reducing communal tension was the new responsibility of the British in the Administration of Jammu and Kashmir State. Having secured the position they wanted in Gilgit, they no longer tried to coerce or manipulate the Maharaja by instigating or encouraging various communal activities. And, as virtual rulers, they naturally refrained from arousing one community against the other. In spite of these developments, two communal organisations did spring up in Kashmir—both Muslim—one in Jammu and one in the Kashmir Valley. They refused to co-operate with Sheikh Abdullah's Muslim Conference and later worked assiduously for Muslim supremacy in Kashmir.

Although conditions in the state had improved, the Muslim Conference soon began to agitate for a more representative government and in March 1933 launched a Civil Disobedience Movement. When government action failed to quell the disturbances, the

Maharaja appointed a Constitutional Reforms Committee, again under Sir B.J. Glancy's chairmanship. The Committee recommended the establishment of a Legislative Assembly to be elected by a restricted franchise and empowered only to recommend action. In the first election in 1934, the Muslim Conference captured 19 out of 21 seats allotted to Muslims. Only village and district headmen, priests, title holders, retired officers, doctors, lawyers and those who had passed the Middle School exam could vote. Women were excluded as their participation would have, according to the Committee, "increased the administrative difficulties." These voters representing only 3 *per cent* of the population, were to choose 33 members of the Assembly to be known as the *Praja Sabha*. The remaining 42 members were nominated.

The limited functions of the *Praja Sabha* included asking questions in the House, moving resolutions, introducing bills and discussing the state budget. Both the Prime Minister and the Maharaja reviewed the work of the *Praja Sabha* and if the legislators failed to implement the policies they desired, the Maharaja himself could declare a bill enacted. Furthermore, the *Praja Sabha* had no authority over the Maharaja's privy purse, the state forces or the provisions of the Constitution Act. However, while the actual functioning of the *Praja Sabha* was severely restricted, the House did provide experience in parliamentary practice, served as a meeting ground for popular leaders and helped awaken the people to contemporary issues. Freedom of speech and the press, permitted by the Maharaja at the recommendation of the Glancy Commission in 1932, further encouraged the exchange of views and publicity of affairs of state. But perhaps the most outstanding outcome of the *Praja Sabha* was the gradual broadening of the base of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. The policies of the Conference slowly evolved to include demands for a democratic government and fundamental rights for all citizens of the state along the lines of a "national movement."

In early 1936 the appointment of Sir N. Gopaldaswami Aiyangar, a confirmed nationalist, to succeed Colonel Colvin as Prime Minister of Kashmir was hailed as a step forward. Throughout the next two years, in public demonstrations and speeches, the leaders of the Muslim Conference and well-known members of the Hindu and Sikh communities loudly proclaimed the desirability of forming a united organisation to seek "freedom from irresponsible rule" and the establishment of democratic government in Jammu and Kashmir.

In June 1938, the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference passed a resolution recommending that all people "irrespective of caste, creed or religion" be allowed to join the Conference. In August, members of twelve different political parties issued a demand for political and social change in the state and responsible government under the Maharaja. In 1939 the Muslim Conference accepted these proposals, thenceforth transforming itself into the National Conference. A bloc of dissidents objected to the "integration" of the Conference and remained aloof, later to be incorporated in India's Muslim League.

The first session of the new National Conference was held in October 1939. A resolution was passed demanding a legislature composed entirely of members elected by adult franchise based on a joint electorate with reserved seats for minorities. The legislature was to have control over the budget except for military expenditure and certain foreign and political items. The resolution was not implemented by the Maharaja's government but continued to be, throughout World War II, the basis of National Conference policy. The Maharaja did, however, make some minor concessions in 1939: seven additional seats in the *Praja Sabha* were made open to elections but these were largely confined to landed classes and held little advantage for the masses.

After the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, relations between Maharaja Hari Singh and the British again grew very close. They supported his attempts to restrain popular agitation within the state and he contributed generously of his army to aid the British in the various theatres of war. The National Conference busied itself in administration and distribution of foodstuffs, fuel and other essentials within the state to curb black-marketing and profiteering. This role won it wide support from all sections of the population and helped to bolster its image as the principal protagonist against the Maharaja's rule. At the same time, the state government established Provincial Advisory Boards in both Jammu and Kashmir provinces to supervise equitable distribution of goods. These boards were composed of official and non-official members in equal numbers. Food was subsidised by the government and supplied to the poor at prices lower than market rates.

Although only two battalions of the Jammu and Kashmir State Forces, 2 JAK and 4 JAK, actually served in overseas theatres, all the other battalions continued their training with a view to possible overseas service and fulfilled their obligations, manning the border

posts of the state and aiding the British forces in North West Frontier duties. During the 1930's various steps had been taken to improve the training and organisation of the JAK Army with special emphasis on training of officers who could read and understand military manuals in English and attend courses at Indian Army schools of instruction and the Indian Military Academy. The practice was started of sending probationary officers to the Indian Army for one year's training. Two companies of a training battalion were raised in November 1936, one company of Hindu Dogras, the other of Muslim Dogras.

In 1937, with the cessation of the trans-Indus portion of the Gilgit Agency, 4 JAK Infantry had been withdrawn along with medical personnel serving in Gilgit. Improvements in administration of cantonments were outlined that year and a programme of construction of accommodation begun.

In 1938, a revised schedule for pay and conditions of service of cadets was published and a wing for the training of cadets was added to the Jammu and Kashmir Army Training School. A grant was made for frontier allowances to officers and increased ration allowances to all ranks serving on the frontier. The Bodyguard Cavalry was reorganised and, to conform with the practice in British India and other states, the designation of the artillery was changed from brigade to regiment (23 December, 1938). It was decided that no "lent officers" from the Indian Army were to be employed in JAK Army Headquarters but that Special Service Officers of the rank of Major and below would be seconded from the Indian Army to JAK battalions. In 1942, a hospital corps was formed and organised in conformance with the Indian Army Hospital Corps.

Jammu and Kashmir Mountain Battery units were integrated with the Indian Army in 1943. The Artillery Regiment had consisted of one regiment of three mountain batteries (3.7 inch howitzers) and a Regimental Headquarters. There was also a small training centre. 1 and 2 Mountain Batteries were absorbed during World War II into the Indian Army. 3 Mountain Battery was disbanded during the war and its guns sent to the Rawalpindi arsenal. (Both 1 and 2 Mountain Batteries went to Pakistan after partition but the present Jammu and Kashmir Mountain Battery was re-raised as 1 JAK Mountain Battery on 22 January, 1948.)

As recruitment increased during the war, the standard of physical fitness was raised. A special family allowance of Rs 6 per month was granted to families of men serving outside the state. By 1944 the

Army Training School had been reorganised with a permanent staff under a lieutenant-colonel. The Maharaja also granted various increases in pay and allowances to personnel on Crown service outside the state as well as to those on duty in Jammu and Kashmir.

At the end of World War I, 1 JAK had been converted to 37/38 Dogra Regiment. The skeleton battalion, which included all officers and JCOs and a few men, returned to Kashmir and concentrated at Badami Bagh Cantonment in Srinagar. The battalion was then brought up to full strength and its companies posted to Gilgit, Ladakh and other border regions. Although 1 JAK did not serve outside the state during World War II, it had been designated as a re-inforcement battalion for those engaged in operations.

In 1930, the *Suraj Gorkha* battalion (5JAK) was under command of Lieut-Colonel (later Brigadier) Rehamtullah Khan. Part of the unit proceeded to Karnath on protection duties for two months. In 1931 the battalion was commanded by Lieut-Colonel Joginder Singh and carried out internal security duties at such places as Srinagar, Anant Nag, Shopyan, Sopur and Handwara during the communal disturbances in the Valley. Later that year, the battalion moved to Jammu with Lieut-Colonel Milkha Singh as Officer Commanding and Major Narsingh Dev as second-in-command. The battalion's task was again internal security, this time in Jammu province—in Jammu city, Mirpur, Naoshera, Poonch, Mendhar and Jhangar. During an outbreak of communal violence, serious clashes occurred between the troops and the local population and ultimately a large segment of the Hindu population was shifted to Mirpur. In 1932 the battalion was redesignated 5 JAK Light Infantry and served in Jammu in 1934, in Naoshera under Lieut-Colonel Ram Singh in 1935–36, in Srinagar in 1936 and in Bunji and Skardu in 1939. Among its duties on the frontier was the protection of state frontiers from raiding tribesmen. During World War II, 5JAK Light Infantry remained in the state, serving in 1942 at Naoshera and, in 1945–46, sent companies to Ladakh and Bunji.

6 JAK had been posted in Jammu under Lieut-Colonel Rajinder Singh, with Major A.M. Khan as second-in-command. Up to 1938 the battalion carried out normal training and station duties until it was ordered to Srinagar to relieve 4 JAK which was mobilising for overseas service. In addition to local station duties, the battalion was required to provide frontier garrisons in Leh and Skardu. In 1939 Lieut-Colonel Rajinder Singh was appointed GSO 1 JAK Army Headquarters and Lieut-Colonel Ali Akbar Khan became

the Commanding Officer of the battalion. A company under Capt Hira Nand Dubey took over the Leh post and a platoon under JCO Mohd Hussain was despatched to Skardu to man that post. The normal practice of annual relief of frontier garrisons was suspended during World War II due to the shortage of troops in the state: thus it was not until 1941 that B Company under Major AM Khan relieved Capt Hira Nand in Leh. Although the battalion did not serve overseas during World War II, an interesting incident occurred on the northern borders during its tenure there.

After the retirement of Lieut-Colonel Ali Akbar Khan, Major Abdul Majid Khan became the Commanding Officer of 6 JAK and in 1942 was promoted to the rank of Lieut-Colonel. Soon thereafter, he was summoned to JAK Army Headquarters at Srinagar and informed by the General Staff Officer, Brig Rajinder Singh, that Intelligence reports indicated that a threat of armed oppression was developing on the borders of Ladakh. The information available was vague and Lieut-Colonel AM Khan was given no maps and no communication equipment to assist him in his journey to the region to carry out investigations there. On 15 July 1942, Colonel AM Khan and a column from 6 JAK set out on the twenty day march from Srinagar to Leh, which was manned by B company. When local civilian authorities at Leh expressed their inability to supplement the Intelligence reports already received, Colonel Khan, on 8 August, resumed the march towards Demchok, on the Tibet border. Chushul was reached after six days and a halt was called to rest and replenish supplies. Unconfirmed reports by local inhabitants indicated that a caravan of six to seven thousand people was headed for the Kashmir border, after reportedly having overpowered the Tibetan garrison at Gartok. Their nationality was not known but it was believed that they had modern rifles and light automatics and were mounted on ponies. Colonel Khan continued his advance, intending to meet the caravan and halt it at the border. He reached Demchok five days later, prepared defences, set up piquets and sent out patrols. Reports from the local population and refugees indicated that the caravan members were ruthless, brutal invaders, news which caused consternation within the small JAK force as re-inforcement and supplies were unavailable and they had no communication with their base.

On 1 September the engagement between the JAK forces and the scouts of the hostile caravan commenced. Riflemen from the caravan had moved up the hillside to cut off the JAK piquet from

the main camp. Colonel Khan ordered his bren-gunner to open fire. Taken by surprise they quickly retreated. He then deployed three rifle sections on the high ground covering his camp. The hostiles then began forming up for a frontal assault, emerging in waves from behind a sandy mound opposite the JAK position. The JAK troops opened up with rifles and brens and by 3 pm had driven the invaders back towards their ponies. Colonel Khan then ordered fire to be directed on the ponies; this had the desired effect and by 5 pm the engagement was over, the enemy leaving five dead and three wounded in the area. The JAK force suffered no casualty. The caravan was then identified as Kazaks from Uramchi in the Soviet Union.

That night Colonel Khan learned from a local *lama* that another attack was being planned by the Kazaks. Accordingly, he led his men to a ridge eight miles forward of the camp, which obviously came as a surprise to the enemy when they put in their attack in the morning. In less than half an hour, the mounted riflemen were in retreat leaving three dead. Thereafter their ardour diminished and on September 4, the leaders from the caravan rode to the JAK position carrying white flags. Colonel Khan parleyed with them and informed the civil authorities at Leh of the development. The *Wazir Wazarat* arrived at Demchok and negotiated with the caravan leaders who agreed to be disarmed. Their arms totalled seven hundred rifles, twelve light machine guns, three revolvers and several thousand rounds of small arms ammunition. The JAK column then escorted the caravan to Srinagar, thus completing its strange adventure on the Indo-Tibetan border.

7 JAK was raised during the expansion and development of the JAK forces, on 9 March, 1932, at Jammu—and consisted of fifty *per cent* Kangra Dogras and fifty *per cent* Jat Sikhs. By May 1941, the battalion was brought up to strength and mobilised and it left Jammu for Havelian on 10 June, 1941, to serve with the Indian Army. From Havelian, the battalion, under the command of Lieut-Colonel Chattar Singh, marched to Abbotabad and then to Bakarial Camp on 13 June. The battalion took over from 6/12 Frontier Force Regiment and formed part of 14 Indian Infantry Brigade. A period of intensive training at platoon, company and battalion levels ensued, with numerous lectures and tactical exercises without troops on mountain warfare. Training culminated in an attack exercise on an enemy supply dump. The divisional commander, Major General Wakely, who planned the exercise, was much pleased with 7 JAK's efforts.

In response to the tribal unrest encouraged by the notorious *Faqir* of Ipi, in the Northwest Frontier Province, 7 JAK left Bakarial Camp on 22 September, arriving at Damdil on 26 September. "Road opening" was the principal responsibility of the Damdil Garrison and 7 JAK was given the task of protecting the Asadkhal Sector of the Bannu-Razmak Road.

On 6 October, 1941, the battalion with attached troops left Damdil at 6:30 in the morning to open the Asadkhal Sector. B Company with a section of medium machine guns captured the first ridge and C Company passed through to secure positions on "VK Hill", "Sausage" and "Pimple"—battalion headquarters being established on the latter. D Company under Second-Lieutenant Amar Singh moved up to secure "Lizard Ridge" but as it crossed the intervening "Khaisora Ridge", enemy fire from the ridge itself and surrounding areas halted the movement and wounded one NCO in the leg. Supporting medium machine gun and artillery fire was brought down on the enemy positions and finally D Company captured "Lizard Ridge", though it could not dislodge the enemy from the neighbouring features. Additional enemy movement below the ridge compelled D Company to call for air support from "Isha Corner" near Bannu. Air strafing finally dispersed the enemy and D company consolidated its position. In this operation, Naik Naranjan Singh was hit in the chest but continued to command his Lewis Gun section for three hours before he was forcibly evacuated. He was later awarded the Indian Distinguished Service Medal for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in action. Sepoy Dalip Singh took command of the section and displayed considerable presence of mind as he kept the gun in action throughout the engagement. Another wounded NCO, Teja Singh, was evacuated with Naranjan Singh to Bannu Military Hospital.

Simultaneous to D company's struggle for "Lizard Ridge", B company made an attempt to occupy the ridge adjacent to its original position. It encountered heavy resistance but succeeded in capturing the objective. It then became apparent that the aircraft which had provided the air support had force-landed near the Khaisora River. Capt Sohan Singh Pathania, commanding B company's newest piquet, set out at once towards the aircraft with a rifle section and a nursing orderly. They were fired upon *en route* but reached the aircraft and took up positions while first aid was administered to the injured crew. B company covered the rescue operations from the ridge, silenced the enemy guns and within

twenty minutes after the arrival of the GSO 1 Waziristan Division, Razmak, and a staff officer, the crew was evacuated and the aircraft destroyed. Capt Pathania and his section returned to their piquet. Thereafter, having succeeded in clearing the area of enemy, the troops evacuated the piquets in the afternoon while the Royal Indian Air Force again covered their movements.

7 JAK left Damdil on 16 January, 1942, and arrived at Thal on 20 January. Here the battalion carried out routine training and held regimental training cadres. During this period, Sepoy Basakha Singh distinguished himself by rescuing a fellow sepoy of 6/10 Baluch Regiment who was swept down three hundred yards in the swift current of the Kurram River while bathing. In March and April 1942 the battalion carried out intensive training, arranged lectures and tactical exercises with troops for officers and JCOs and in June culminated its training with an exercise (battalion in attack) with Thal Brigade under Brig Ross. 7 JAK's performance as advance guard in the exercise was considered so exemplary by the Brigade Commander that the battalion was excused from additional exercise duties. After the exercise the battalion carried out routine duties in Brigade Headquarters and then moved to a defence camp on the Thal-Parachinar Road to construct defences. In the latter part of July, the battalion returned to Thal for further training until September 1942, when it moved to Kohat. Along with its excellence in professional activities, the battalion distinguished itself in sports.

In November 1942 a serious uprising broke out in Sind and 7 JAK was despatched to serve there in the Binny Brigade under Brig Debutt. The Hurs, a turbulent tribe, were in revolt against local authority and had been raiding villages in the area. 7 JAK arrived in eastern Sind and was dispersed over a wide area. Companies were to carry out independent operations against the tribesmen, including intensive patrolling and organised raids.

Among the operations carried out by 7 JAK was a raid on 3 December by A Company on a village where some tribesmen had taken refuge. The village was encircled, a search conducted and a party of seven men, twenty women and twenty-two children were rounded up and handed over to the local police. Ambushes were also laid by the companies of 7 JAK and additional hostiles were killed or captured. Night patrols also succeeded in encircling the Hur tribals at their camping grounds and in one case over two hundred men and six hundred women and children were rounded up. These operations continued until early January 1943 and the

battalion and the officer commanding were warmly congratulated for a job well done. The officer commanding received a commendation card for the good work of the unit. Messages of congratulations were received from the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and the Chief of the Military Staff JAK Forces, Major General HL Scott.

In January 1943 7 JAK returned to Kohat and carried out routine duties and training in river crossing operations until the end of February 1943.

The battalion moved to Bannu in April 1944, later to Mir Ali and then to Razmak, where it served in road-opening operations in severe cold and deep snow until January 1945, when orders were received for the unit's disbandment.

7 JAK was earmarked for disbandment because sufficient recruits were not available to fill the vacancies in the battalion. The battalion was then composed of Kangra Rajputs and Jat Sikhs and the absorption of these classes from British India in Indian Army units had created a manpower shortage. The battalion was to be disbanded under the supervision of the Indian Army and accordingly moved to Dina Camp near Jhelum in January 1945. A large number of other ranks opted to serve with the Indian Army and the remainder returned to JAK state to join other units of the Regiment.

8 JAK was raised at Jammu Cantonment on 10 February, 1940, by Lieut-Colonel Jaswant Singh, at first on a skeleton basis—with only two rifle companies and a small headquarters company. The class composition of the new battalion was entirely Dogra Rajputs. Within a few months the battalion was brought up to full strength. By the end of the year it was engaged in mountain warfare training and re-organised on the C-4 establishment. Throughout 1941 the battalion remained in Jammu carrying out station duties. In December Lieut-Colonel Faqir Singh took over as Commanding Officer. In August 1942 it was moved to Srinagar to relieve 3 JAK and in March 1943 it relieved 3 JAK—this time in Naoshera and at frontier posts in Leh, Skardu and Bunji. B and D companies under the command of Capt Wakil Singh manned the frontier posts while headquarters and A and C companies were concentrated in Naoshera for training.

In September 1943, A and C companies were ordered to move to Bagh to put down an agitation against cow-slaughter. After law and order were restored the companies returned to base. By the end of the year, Lieut-Colonel Devi Singh took over as officer commanding. In April 1944 the battalion was detailed to relieve

1 JAK in Srinagar and the two companies stationed on the frontier were relieved by August 1944 so that the whole unit could concentrate in Srinagar. From there the battalion was sent on mountain warfare training to Khundro, forty miles east of Srinagar, under the second-in-command, Major Maluk Singh, for about three months. Throughout 1945 the battalion remained in Srinagar doing station duties and battalion training.

9 JAK was raised at Satwari (Jammu) on 13 March, 1940, by Lieut-Colonel Dhanatar Singh. The unit consisted of Dogra Rajputs. After eighteen months training at Udhampur, in March 1942, the battalion moved under the command of Lieut-Colonel Krishan Singh to Pir Badesar for advanced training in mountain warfare. Additional training in signals, mortars and intelligence was carried out and though the unit gradually came up to strength in men, there were severe war-time shortages of equipment and clothing. In July 1942 the battalion was placed at the disposal of the British Government and in August was mobilised for service under the Crown.

On 28 August, 1942, 9 JAK arrived in Kohat in the Northwest Frontier and after a month's stay there, during which intensive training in mountain warfare was carried out, the battalion moved to Thal in the Kurram Valley to join Thal Brigade. For the next eighteen months the unit was engaged in the usual frontier surveillance and training.

On 16 April 1944 9 JAK moved to Wana in South Waziristan where it was allotted the same role as in Thal. Local tribesmen had been quiet since the outbreak of World War II but road protection and road piquets were necessary to prevent sniping and ambushes during the normal bi-weekly movement of troops and supplies on the Manzai-Wana Road. In both Thal and Wana 9 JAK participated in demonstrations of various aspects of frontier warfare. During its three-year stay in the Northwest Frontier, the battalion was engaged by the tribals only twice.

In February 1945, 9 JAK was selected for mobilisation for service on the Burma front. A number of officers and other ranks attended jungle warfare camps and centres for preliminary training and the Commanding Officer, Lieut-Colonel Ram Lall, proceeded to Central Burma (Meiktila Sector) in May 1945 and remained attached to 4 JAK until the end of war. The Japanese surrender precluded the rest of the battalion's serving overseas and 9 JAK remained in Wana until September 1945. On its departure from the Frontier

for Jammu on 30 September, the battalion was commended by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, North West Army, Lieut-General H Finnis.

The battalion proceeded to Srinagar where it was welcomed personally by Maharaja Hari Singh. It rested for one week in the Valley before moving to Jhangar in Mirpur District for internal security duties. The battalion remained in this area until October 1946 and then returned to Srinagar.

So much for the services of JAK forces in India. As for active service in operational theatres of the war, two JAK battalions—the Second and the Fourth—proceeded overseas to take part in operations. The Second served in the Middle East and the Fourth in Burma.

On the outbreak of the war, 2 JAK, then fifty *per cent* Gorkha and fifty *per cent* Muslim, was the first battalion to leave the state for service under the Crown. In mid-January 1940 the unit left Jammu for Lahore under the command of Lieut-Colonel Khuda Baksh (with Major NS Rawat as second-in-command) for three months intensive training with the Indian Army. In June 1940 the battalion was ordered to move to Wana in the Northwest Frontier Province to participate in operations against the tribesmen instigated by the *Faqir* of Ipi.

It will be recalled that during the earlier years of the war the Northwest Frontier of India had assumed strategic significance because of a resurrection of the age-old Russian bogey. The British government had appreciated in 1940 that because of the war in Europe the USSR might take advantage of the involvement of European powers in the conflict to move into Central Asia—even as far as Afghanistan. Defences were hurriedly ordered all along the Frontier, facing westwards—and troop strengths increased. 2 JAK was part of this build-up. However, this “threat” subsided after the German invasion of Russia in June 1941—and operations reverted to normal on the Frontier. The only operation 2 JAK took part in during the period of the alert was normal road protection duties. On 24 July 1940 the unit saw a short, sharp action when it was fired upon by a force of about a hundred tribesmen. However, the enemy was repulsed by fire from unit piquets and the supporting fire from a section of mountain guns.

2 JAK remained in Wana for two and a half years and then moved to Bannu in December 1942, where it joined Bannu Brigade at Siti Camp for routine piquet duties. The unit had suffered its first casualty in Wana and at Bannu Sepoy Gaus Mohammed was

killed by a sniper's bullet. In March 1943, 2 JAK moved to Landi Kotal Brigade and took over the defence of Bara Fort in the Khyber Pass. The following November the unit moved to Shargai for four months and then returned to Landi Kotal until orders were received to mobilise for overseas service.

On 13 August 1944, 2 JAK left Landi Kotal by military special and embarked on HMIS *Islami* at Karachi on 19 August for the Middle East. The voyage to Basra was uneventful though uncomfortably hot. The unit reached Basra on 24 August, remained for two days in the transit camp and then moved to Shaiba for a fortnight of acclimatisation. The battalion was there inspected by Lt Gen Sir Arthur Smith, GOC-in-C Persia and Iraq Force ("Pai" Force) and instructed on its role—which was to be protection of a railway line in Iran—between Bandar Shahpur and Teheran.

This region had assumed strategic importance for the Allies for several reasons: firstly, access to oil supplies had to be maintained for the successful prosecution of the war; secondly, the railway line running north-to-south through Iran was a major supply route for Allied aid to the Soviet Union; and, thirdly, a large number of German nationals were residing in Iran (as many as 2,000) whose roles as *agents provocateurs* could not be discounted. Evidence indicated that they had already succeeded in enlisting the support of some of Iran's more remote tribal communities. As the Middle East assumed greater importance to the Allied effort, additional forces were assembled and divided into two separate commands—one to control the general administration of ports, depots and communications and the other to deal with internal security and local administration of lines of communication.

In mid-September 1944, 2 JAK moved from Iraq to Dorud in Iran, and relieved the Dogra machine-gun battalion in the railroad sector, Andimashk-Keshwar. This sixty-seven mile long sector was manned by thirty-nine posts and divided into company areas at Masu, Telezung, Tangi Punge and Tangi Hafter. Mobile columns were to carry out intensive patrolling in their assigned sections, to defend the railroad line from sabotage and disruption. The trans-Iranian Railroad was then 866 miles long and traversed some exceedingly difficult terrain: mountains, narrow gorges and long tunnels.

It was often difficult to construct defensive positions and in many cases venturesome tribals sallied forth to loot and raid the supply trains. They would board running trains and loot bags of sugar,

tea and rice as well as other commodities. The sector allotted to 2 JAK included an area of precipitous rocky hills with a torrential stream at the base. There were many tunnels, some over a mile long and so narrow that guard posts could be established only at the entrance. Patrolling along the track inside the tunnels was hazardous and accounted for the loss of three men in six months. Besides, the region was the home of two rival tribes, the Lurs (with two thousand rifles) on the western side of the railroad line and the Bakhtiaries (with five thousand rifles) on the east. Many of their arms had been supplied by the Germans and the Lurs had learned the use of explosives, thus further threatening the rail line. Throughout its tenure 2 JAK was frequently sniped at by the tribals. On 18 October, 1944, one patrol under Lance Naik Jai Singh was fired upon by a tribal party as it carried off stolen goods to its village. The patrol engaged the tribesmen, routed the raiders and recovered the loot.

It was necessary to maintain cordial relations with Americans, Russians and Iranians—who were all operating in various sectors in the area. It was found that the negligence of the Russian guards on trains encouraged tribal attacks, which in turn evoked the indiscriminate Russian response of firing upon enemy and ally alike. However, 2 JAK acquitted itself well in this delicate matter and when Maharaja Hari Singh visited the battalion on 16 November, 1944, on a week's visit, he expressed his satisfaction with the work done by awarding a week's pay to all officers and men of the battalion.

On 24 November, 1944, 2 JAK was temporarily relieved by 2 Hyderabad Infantry so that the unit could proceed to Andinesh and join 24 Independent Infantry Brigade Group for a period of training in modern mechanised warfare. Tactical exercises were held in which the battalion was used as the demonstration unit for advance to contact, launching of an attack against entrenched tribesmen and consolidation of a captured position. The battalion completed its training by the end of March 1945 and resumed its railroad protection duties. On 5 July, 1945, this sector was handed over to the Persian Army and the battalion prepared to move to Syria.

2 JAK reached Damascus on 31 July and relieved 1 Loyals on 4 August. The battalion's main responsibility was the protection of French residents and property in the city as the Syrians had become increasingly anti-French. There had been a number of demonstrations, creating an internal security problem. In addition, 2 JAK

was ordered to undertake long-range patrols in the desert.

The battalion remained in Syria for five months and was involved in such tasks as : escorting French personnel and stores out of Syria ; maintaining a company at Palmyra to guard French property ; sending patrols to various towns and cities as a demonstration of effective British presence in the region ; and instructing the Syrian police force in the use of three-inch mortars, drill, physical training and guard mounting. The local commander, Colonel FRM Morgan, and the GOC British troops in North Levant, Major General GA Pilleau, commended 2 JAK for its fine performance and recommended that the battalion remain in the area until the end of the withdrawal of British troops.

After the termination of hostilities, the battalion prepared to leave for India. On 28 December, 1945, the unit left Damascus for Port Tewfik on the Suez and eventually sailed on the *Regina-del-Pacifico* on 16 January, 1946, disembarking at Bombay on 25 January, 1946. Maharaja Hari Singh visited the battalion on board ship on its arrival and His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, India, sent congratulations to the battalion.

On 30 January, 1946, after five years of service outside the state, the battalion arrived in Jammu and was warmly welcomed by Jammu garrison. The unit was allowed a period of leave before resuming local duties and regular training.

4 JAK was the only other JAK battalion to serve overseas during World War II. When mobilisation orders were received in July 1940, the battalion was stationed in Naoshera. Its composition was fifty *per cent* Dogras and fifty *per cent* Muslims.

On 22 July the battalion proceeded to Thal in the Northwest Frontier Province where it carried out extensive training in frontier warfare for two months. The unit then moved to Dehra Dun for additional training but by December 1940 the battalion returned to the Frontier and formed part of 4 Indian Brigade, whose main responsibility was road-opening duties. The battalion carried out its duties competently. On 19 January, 1941, the battalion returned to Dehra Dun for three months for advanced training at battalion and brigade levels under field conditions. In April 1941, the unit again moved to the Northwest Frontier to Damdil, to assist the Tochi Scouts in maintaining peace in the area. The *Faqir* of Ipi had been active in this area too, inciting local tribes to harass military convoys throughout Waziristan. A number of Tochi Scout posts had been surrounded and cut off by tribesmen and 4 JAK assisted in relief

operations during its nine month stay in Damdil. Two casualties were suffered by the battalion.

In January 1942, the battalion moved to Jhelum and then, at the end of March, to Landi Kotal—where it remained until May, engaged in improving the defences of the Khyber Pass as part of the general effort to strengthen British defences against a possible Russian offensive. In May 1942 4 JAK moved to Peshawar for a period of intensive training under the new Commanding Officer, Lieut-Colonel NS Rawat. While at Peshawar, the Duke of Gloucester visited the battalion.

The unit was reorganised on Provisional War Establishment (Mixed Transport) and left Peshawar on 11 March, 1942, for Fort Sandeman. In June 1942, the battalion participated in the Zhob Brigade Column and acquitted itself well; in October it moved to Lorelai where it supplied a demonstration company to the Staff College, Quetta, and a demonstration platoon to the District Battle School.

By this time 4 JAK was considered highly efficient in frontier warfare, battle drill and marksmanship. The Special Service Officer (SSO) attached to the battalion, Lieut-Colonel Andrew MC, reported to Army Headquarters that the battalion was so well trained and officered that it no longer needed a SSO. 4 JAK became the only Indian State Force battalion to serve without a SSO.

In early 1944, 4 JAK was earmarked for operations on the Burma front against the Japanese and received orders to move eastwards. The Japanese occupation of Burma—at the end of their long series of Southeast Asian conquests—posed a serious threat to the eastern region of India and an invasion of Manipur was expected.

4 JAK arrived at the Jungle Warfare Training Centre at Raiwala, near Dehra Dun, at the end of March 1944, for four weeks intensive training. In April the battalion moved to Ranchi for additional training (and some exciting *shikar* in the jungles). The battalion joined brigade and division tactical exercises including infantry-tank cooperation. On 22 September the battalion left Ranchi and joined 5 Indian Infantry Division at milestone 133 on the Imphal-Tiddim Road. On October 9 it was allotted to 9 Indian Infantry Brigade which was moving east for the reconquest of Burma.

Up till then the British advance had been along the Manipur River, which flows south through a narrow valley flanked by high hills. At the point where the river alters its course stands a high tableland on which Tiddim is perched. The road up to Tiddim

was known as the "Chocolate Staircase" and was a treacherous winding road usually reduced to muddy slime by the monsoon. Beyond Tiddim the road ran east to "Vital Corner" and then south to Kennedy Peak and Fort White. The Division marched forward on a wide front, pushing back pockets of Japanese still holding out north of Tiddim. Both men and vehicles were impeded in the climb by the impassable roads but as they continued their advance, the Japanese position became untenable and on 17 October the Japanese withdrew from Tiddim and fell back on Fort White and Kalemyo.

The forward troops of 5 Division drove the Japanese from their positions near Kennedy Peak while the United States Air Force bombers "softened" the main positions at Kennedy Peak and "Vital Corner". The objective of the Division's advance was now a feature just south of Fort White. The leading brigade was to occupy "Vital Corner" with two battalions while the third battalion was to block the track leading east from Kennedy Peak to prevent the enemy's withdrawal. On 22 October 9 Indian Infantry Brigade, of which 4 JAK formed a part, was ordered to advance along the road from "Vital Corner" to a point just short of Pt 8225, where it could link up with another unit. Aerial bombardment, daily skirmishes and ambushes continued.

On 29 October 4 JAK, during one of its patrol actions from milestone 4, made contact with a strong defensive position of the enemy. By 3 November 1944 reconnaissance and preliminary bombardment had been completed and 4 JAK was ordered to clear Kennedy Peak and Fort White. On 4 November the battalion assembled between milestones 14 and 15 to begin the assault on the strongly fortified peak. 'A' Company under Major Dina Nath advanced along the Imphal-Bishenpur-Burma Road and cleared the northern shoulder of Kennedy Peak while the main position was overrun in a dawn attack by B company under Major GS Dutta. Dual purpose anti-aircraft/anti-tank guns were captured by A company (now displayed at the JAK Centre as war trophies.) D company then pushed ahead and caught up with the retreating Japanese near "Elephant", where heavy fighting ensued. The enemy, about sixty strong, were strongly entrenched in prepared positions, armed with machine guns, light automatics and grenade dischargers. Two attempts by the company to outflank the enemy position were repulsed. The Japanese counter-attacked but were driven back. The next morning, 5 November, the company resumed its offensive

preceded by aerial and artillery bombardment. D company then occupied the objective and C company took over the pursuit role. D company took positions on all the forward features, incurring fire from small parties of Japanese with 75 mm guns. However, enemy counter-attacks were repulsed and by dawn on 7 November, the objective—pt 8225—was occupied.

On the evening of 7 November, after reaching pt 8225, Major Dina Nath of A company received orders to capture Fort White by the next morning. The company less two platoons marched through the night as *Hurricane* bombers pounded the enemy position. By first light on 8 November, A company occupied Fort White and reported its capture. On hearing A company advance the Japanese hurriedly withdrew, only minutes before the final assault. The battalion thereafter concentrated in this area and came into brigade reserve.

In the capture of Kennedy Peak D company suffered three other ranks killed and three wounded and A and C companies each had one other rank wounded.

Before the capture of Kennedy Peak, Lieut Benares Dev was ordered to lead a long-range patrol behind enemy lines in the Kennedy Peak area. It performed its task well, collecting and relaying vital information of Japanese positions, including the location of a 75 mm gun which was engaged by Indian artillery and silenced. On 5 November, after the fall of Kennedy Peak, Lieut Benares Dev with a fighting patrol of platoon strength was again ordered to operate in the rear of the Japanese in the Kennedy Peak-Fort White area, with special instructions to intercept the Japanese while withdrawing. The patrol operated for three days behind the lines and engaged several groups of retreating enemy along jungle tracks. Lieut Benares Dev was later awarded the Military Cross for his courageous leadership and operations in difficult terrain.

On 10 November 1944, 4 JAK received the following congratulatory message for its work in this operation :

Personal from Bde Comd following message received from Div Comd after capture Kennedy Peak-Fort White area. "Army Commander very pleased with success of operations. Sends congratulations to all troops engaged in very fine piece of work." I wish to thank all commanders and troops of 9 Bde Gp for their loyal cooperation in bringing about this victory.

5 Indian Infantry Division continued its advance in spite of difficult terrain and determined Japanese resistance. The Division's

initial success in driving the Japanese from their strong positions and clearing fifteen miles of road in five days propelled their advance to Kalemyo, which had been abandoned by the Japanese. Kalemyo was entered on 13 November. The Japanese 33 Division had conducted its withdrawal without being encircled or annihilated, though losses in men and equipment were heavy. By then, however, with the exception of small pockets in the Kalemyo-Kalewa area, they had been pushed back across the Chindwin.

On 17 November, 4 JAK established its base near the village of Tukkiyan and was assigned the role of mopping up stray Japanese parties in the area south of Kalemyo. The battalion patrolled the region and in several small skirmishes inflicted over twenty-five casualties on the enemy and itself suffered three killed. An airstrip was constructed in the area so that by early December 4 JAK along with the rest of 5 Division was flown out to Imphal for a period of rest. On 17 December Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Commander of Southeast Asia Command, visited 5 Indian Infantry Division and later sent a message to the Officer Commanding 4 JAK : "I was impressed by the representatives I saw of 4 Battalion, Jammu and Kashmir Army, and was glad to have such a good account of them from your General."

In early 1945, 4 JAK moved to Jorhat with the Division and carried out intensive training in various aspects of open warfare and river-crossing. Before the training was completed orders were received for further operations in Burma which were to begin in the spring of 1945. In early March, 9 Brigade was flown in to support 17 Division which had captured the vital communications centre of Meiktila. 4 JAK moved by road to Palel on 12 March and on 16 March was flown into Meiktila. The airstrip was under constant fire as the Japanese persevered in attempts to recapture it.

The battalion was positioned in defended boxes. The role of the brigade was to hold these boxes in the defence of the airfield while 17 Division continued its sweep against the enemy. The brigade organised sallies with strong infantry and tank columns along the roads and engaged the enemy daily during the month of March 1945. Among the significant engagements in which 4 JAK participated were the following :

When, on the afternoon of 18 March, an Allied plane force-landed in the fields, a platoon of 4 JAK under Jem Gopal Singh Manhas was detailed to protect the aircraft. The Japanese made several unsuccessful attempts to destroy the plane but Jem Gopal Singh,

despite the loss of two of his section commanders, held on stoutly till the plane was towed to safety.

On 21 March B company, under Lieut Harnam Singh, accompanied by a forward observation officer, was ordered to proceed on an independent mission to establish a road block at milestone 342 on the Rangoon-Wundwin Road. During the advance the company was shelled by an enemy 75 mm gun and one other rank was wounded; L/Nk Nag Singh carried the casualty on his back for over four hundred yards under continuous shelling. As soon as the company's digging was completed at milestone 342, the enemy was seen infiltrating through a gap in the road block and put in a counter-attack. Heavy fighting ensued and the enemy surrounded the company position but under Lieut Harnam Singh's exemplary leadership and courage, the company held out for eight days, isolated from the rest of the battalion and subjected to constant enemy fire and harrassment. The Japanese made four attacks on the position, one of which was supported by three tankettes. All these assaults were repulsed; the *M 9 A 1* anti-tank launcher was used most effectively against the tankettes. On 25 March, at 6 am, a patrol from B company under Nk Bhagat Singh ambushed a small party of Japanese escorting two bullock carts of rations for their unit. The Japanese withdrew leaving behind two dead, an automatic gun, two rifles, the two bullock carts and a supply of badly needed rations. The main force of the battalion finally broke through to B company on 28 March. Lieut Harnam Singh was awarded the MC for this splendid performance.

On the night of 22/23 March C company was holding the forward-most defended locality in a defensive box south of Meiktila. At about 2230 hours the enemy approached the forward platoon positions. The platoons stood to but held fire until the enemy closed in. The forward platoons opened fire but the Japanese, despite heavy losses, continued to advance in waves; some even entered the position and closed in for hand-to-hand fighting. The assault continued all night but 4 JAK suffered only two killed and four wounded as against 257 enemy dead and succeeded in repulsing the assault by dawn.

L/Nk Hakim Din was in command of a detached post on one of the approaches to the town. Enemy bombing killed both his light machine gunners just as the enemy was about to enter his position. Hakim Din rushed to one of the silenced gun positions and opened heavy fire to halt the enemy attack. When his ammunition was

exhausted, he continued to engage the enemy with hand grenades until he himself was killed by an enemy grenade. His gallantry prevented the Japanese from overrunning the post and contributed to the repulse of the enemy in that assault.

At the same time, another platoon was under attack. Sepoy Ilam Din was number one of the 2 inch mortar detachment. He kept up incessant mortar fire on the enemy until he ran out of ammunition. Then, on his own initiative, he undertook the task of keeping the section posts of his platoon supplied with small arms ammunition. At one stage he detected a group of the enemy attempting to cut the perimeter wire and lobbed a grenade at them, killing two and driving off the rest. He himself was killed and when his body was recovered the next morning, his right hand was still clutching a grenade.

By the end of March, 17 Indian Division had succeeded in driving the Japanese from their main positions in the Meiktila area and the whole region north and west of the town was cleared. 5 Indian Division then took up the pursuit. 9 Brigade moved to Tatkan and 4 JAK occupied a defensive box. Within a day, however, orders were received to push forward along the railway line parallel to the main road. Supported by *Sherman* tanks and a battery of 4 Mountain Regiment, the forward elements of 9 Brigade entered Pysin on 25 April without serious resistance. The Division's other two brigades, 123 and 161, also rolled on unimpeded.

By this time Rangoon had been recaptured and the Japanese were facing defeat in Burma. Their only route of withdrawal was over the eastern frontier of Burma, across the Sittang River or through Moulmein. 5 Division was ordered to proceed to the area to prevent the enemy from escaping across the main road south of Pegu. On 1 May, 4 JAK was flown to Pegu where it was to operate in the Pegu-Yomas against Japanese retreating in the direction of Prome.

The area was generally hilly and covered with thick clumps of bamboo which made patrolling difficult. On 3 May a fighting patrol of platoon strength under Jem Dharam Singh discovered a party of twenty-five Japanese near Waw on the west bank of the Sittang. The patrol attempted to encircle the enemy but when additional Japanese were spotted they signalled for re-inforcements. Elements of A company arrived within thirty minutes and an attack was launched. The enemy fled, leaving twenty-six dead and a great quantity of equipment, including a medium machine gun.

Sepoy Romal Singh, the leading scout, had located the enemy position in the bamboo thicket and, at the very start of the attack, sighted the Japanese machine gun. At fifteen yards range he shot the gunner and continued crawling towards the enemy position until he himself was killed. The gun was later captured and brought back to Kashmir as a battalion war trophy. Sub Duni Chand, A Company second-in-command, also displayed conspicuous courage and initiative in this engagement.

At the end of May 1945, 4 JAK moved to Magwe and came under the command of 505 District. The battalion was employed in road protection duties—with detachments at Pakokku, Chauk, Yenanyung, Allenmyo and Thayetmyo. Mobile columns were often despatched into the interior to intercept small Japanese parties and to curb the exploits of local dacoits who were taking advantage of the unsettled conditions in the region to loot and plunder. Flag marches were also undertaken in the Thayetmyo and Allenmyo district to curb the activities of the Burma “National” Army. Many of the members of that unit were captured and large quantities of war material were recovered by these columns from local inhabitants.

On 15 September, 1945, after the end of hostilities, 4 JAK received orders to return to Jammu and was warmly seen off by the GOC 505 District, Major General AHJ Snelling, with this message: “On leaving the District, we thank you for the magnificent work you have done while here and the excellent results achieved. On returning to your own country, we wish you all good fortune and ever greater triumphs. Good-bye and good luck to you all.”

The battalion left Magwe on 30 September and arrived in Jammu on 15 October where it was enthusiastically received by Maharaja Hari Singh, the staff of Army Headquarters and officers and other ranks of the Jammu Brigade after five years of service outside the state. The battalion earned the following awards during its overseas service: OBE-2; MBE-1; MC-5; IDSM-3; OBI Class I—1; OBI Class II—1. The Maharaja awarded fifteen days bonus pay to all officers and other ranks of the unit and within a week of its return, the battalion was sent on leave. Later, routine garrison duties and training were resumed. The war’s end was celebrated throughout the state with public holidays, thanksgiving services, garden parties for service personnel at the Maharaja’s residence and the distribution of sweets to children.

After the return to the state of all units of the Jammu and Kashmir

State Forces after World War II, frontier and station duties were again evenly divided among all the battalions. Rates of pay of cadets and recruits were increased and six garrison police companies were raised.

In 1946-47 units of the JAK Forces were deployed as follows : 1 JAK was dispersed with A company at Palandari, B company at Hajira, C company at Bagh and D company at Srinagar. Battalion headquarters was at Poonch. After its tenure in Iran, 2 JAK had been posted in the state and on 16 June, 1947, two companies, D (a Muslim company under Capt Mohd Hussain) and B (a Gorkha company under Lieut Raghbir Singh) moved from Jammu Cantonment to Kotli to relieve two companies of 6 JAK. 5 JAK, between August and November 1947, was under the command of Lieut-Colonel Kirpal Singh with headquarters at Jammu Cantonment. One company was posted near the Pandorian Rest House on Ranbir Canal, fourteen miles south of Jammu, watching the influx of refugees from Pakistan to Duali Kathar. One company was in the Mawa area south of Samba on the old Jammu-Samba-Kathua Road. The third company was at Suchetgarh barrier on the Sialkot-Jammu Road and the fourth was at Marin, in Kathua District. Headquarters company was at Arnia and was formed into a company post. Thus, just before the outbreak of Pakistan hostilities, 5 JAK manned an area from the Ujh River to the Chenab in platoons and section posts strung out along the border. 7 JAK, which had been disbanded in 1945, was re-raised on 5 May, 1947, by Lieut-Colonel Devi Singh and consisted of two Gorkha companies, one each from 2 and 3 JAK, and one newly formed Kangra Rajput company. The battalion concentrated in Srinagar to deal with local disturbances. 8 JAK, in Srinagar, was detailed for duties in aid to civil power from June to December 1946, particularly during the "Quit Kashmir" agitation in the Valley. In April 1947 the battalion, under Lieut-Colonel Devi Singh, moved to Muzaffarabad District to relieve 9 JAK. The battalion was deployed throughout the area with A company under Capt Dev Raj Kotwal at Ramkot, B company under Capt Wakil Singh at Ghori-Bhatticka, C company under Capt Kirpal Singh at Kohala and the rest of the battalion and headquarters at Domel. Defences were constructed and extensive patrolling was carried out with the aim of controlling local unrest resulting from communal disturbances. The battalion also assisted in the evacuation of refugees from Hazara District. In May 1947, Lieut-Colonel Devi Singh handed over command of

8 JAK to Lieut-Colonel Maluk Singh. 4 JAK relieved 8 JAK in the area in July 1947 and 8 JAK moved to Srinagar. 9 JAK, garrisoning Domel between December 1946 and March 1947, was located in Badami Bagh, Srinagar, and remained there until 27 August, 1947, when, due to the threat to Rawalkot-Poonch, the battalion was moved to that region under command of Lieut-Colonel Ram Lall. Battalion Headquarters with A and B companies were at Rawalkot while C company under Major Somant Singh was at Tain; D company less one platoon, under Major Parkash Chand Katoch was at Thorar, and one platoon D company under Lieut Jagdish Singh at Mang. The role of the battalion was to control refugee movement across the state border and to assist in maintaining internal security in the area. Thus, throughout 1946-47 the units of the Jammu and Kashmir State Forces were employed increasingly in the region adjacent to what would become the new nation of Pakistan in August 1947.

During the war years political activity had continued in Kashmir. The National Conference kept up its agitation for a more democratic government in the state and placed special emphasis on the supervision of commodities and food stuffs in short supply to prevent black-marketing and hoarding. People's Food Committees were formed, through which the National Conference distributed food, fuel and other essentials—thereby circumventing the governmental bureaucracy. In 1944 the National Conference adopted as its goal a programme of "socialistic pattern of society". The plan covered agriculture, industry, transportation, distribution, utility services, currency and finance and was based on "the democratic principles of responsible government with the elective principle applied from the local *panchayat* to the Legislative Assembly." The main objective of the National Conference during this period was improvement of the political structure and government administration of the state. However, as political agitation in India and especially competition between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League grew, Kashmir was drawn into Indian politics. Mohammed Ali Jinnah visited Kashmir in early 1944 and attempted to revive the Muslim Conference—which had faded but not vanished. His speeches called for Muslims to fight for their rights under the banner of the Muslim Conference. His appeal on communal grounds failed—as did a similar one by the Hindu Maha Sabha leader VD Savarkar who, the following winter, visited Kashmir and attempted to propagate the virtues of a Hindu State. The National Conference, realising that

its strength lay in the unity of Hindus and Muslims against what it considered an archaic monarchy, strove to suppress communal differences.

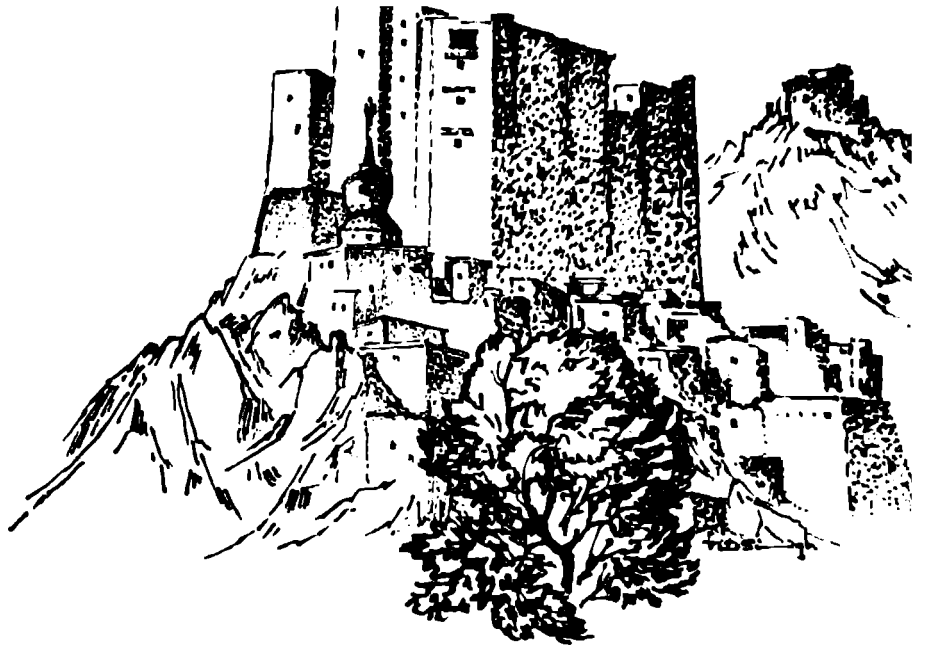
In the summer of 1945, at a session of the National Conference at Sopur, representatives from many Indian states joined in the deliberations on wresting political control from the princely autocracies. Maulana Azad and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, among other Congress leaders, attended the session.

During World War II, when its troops were actively supporting the British in several theatres, the State Government had enjoyed unimpeded autonomy. The British refrained from any interference in the state and when the Prime Minister, N. Gopaldaswami Aiyangar, resigned, the Maharaja himself appointed the successor: Raja Sir Maharaj Singh. In contrast to the rigid but orderly government of Aiyangar, the new one (as also its successors under Colonel Sir KN Haksar and Sir RN Rau) were ineffective. No initiative was taken in meeting the increasing demands of the people or in grappling with the many social and economic problems of the state. Finally, in the summer of 1945, Ram Chandra Kak became Prime Minister. Although Kak proved to be an oppressive and unpopular administrator, he did ultimately succeed in including two popular members on the Council of Ministers. Although the Maharaja had agreed in 1944 to the proposal to admit two men chosen from the elected membership of the *Praja Sabha*, nothing was done to implement this small step towards more popular rule until Ram Chandra Kak became Prime Minister. The National Conference selected its nominee for the post but finding the opposition and indifference of the appointed ministers overwhelming and unable to function effectively even in his own department, he resigned on 17 March 1946. This disappointment led the National Conference to launch its "Quit Kashmir" movement in May 1946 aimed at transfer of power from the ruler to the people. The state authorities immediately arrested the leaders of the movement and attempted to suppress further political agitation. Two National Conference leaders, Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed and Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq, quickly left Kashmir to direct the movement from outside the state.

In early 1947 the British government announced its intention of completing the transfer of power by August 1947 and later outlined the plan for partitioning the sub-continent into two nations. Jinnah continued to push for the support of Kashmiri Muslims but the National Conference remained firmly anti-communal.

Mahatma Gandhi visited Kashmir in July 1947 and, characteristically, refused to comment on which religious group predominated at his gatherings. In August the Maharaja dismissed Ram Chandra Kak as Prime Minister replacing him by a former revenue minister, Major General Janak Singh, a move enthusiastically greeted by the Kashmiri people after Ram Chandra Kak's oppressive administration.

When India and Pakistan came into being as independent dominions on 15 August, 1947, British paramountcy in the princely states lapsed—each state free to enter into permanent or temporary relationship with either dominion. Maharaja Hari Singh, however, was reluctant to commit himself immediately. He concluded a Standstill Agreement with Pakistan under the terms of which postal and telegraph facilities in J&K State were placed under Pakistan's control and imports of wheat, cloth, petrol and other essential commodities from West Punjab were to continue as in the past. His Highness' Government offered to enter into a similar Standstill Agreement with the Dominion of India but before detailed negotiations could start the invasion by Pakistani tribesmen had begun.



LEH FORT

9

Border Raids and Communal Conspiracies 1946–47

ACTIVE SERVICE in various theatres of World War II provided the finishing touches for the graduation process of the Jammu and Kashmir Army. By the time its units returned home after 1945, they could take their place alongside any regiment of the Commonwealth armies. Indeed, in the short span of a hundred years or so of their existence, they had acquired military traditions and experience that were almost unique in the world. Under General Zorawar Singh the Dogra Army had fought long and sustained operations on the “Roof of the World”—from southern Sinkiang to western Tibet, from Gilgit and Hunza to the barren valley of the Indus at Skardu and Leh. And they had operated in those arctic conditions—at heights of 15,000 ft and more, in summer and winter—without the benefit of modern techniques and equipment that facilitate “High Altitude Warfare” in this present age. During two world wars they had fought in jungle and swamp, in the deserts and scrub-lands of Africa; they had defeated in battle some of the

most formidable and renowned of warriors—Germans, Turks, Japanese and the fanatical tribesmen of the Frontier. They had braved the rigours of battle with equal fortitude whether in the service of their Sikh overlords, their Dogra ruler or the British Crown. As state forces they were never among the favoured ones when weapons or equipment were handed out, yet their battle-worth was never held in question.

Albeit, their biggest trial and their bitterest campaign still lay ahead. Instead of rest and rehabilitation after the rigours of a world war, they were to find themselves caught up in the political and internecine upheavals that engulfed the Indian sub-continent at the time of Partition. And, isolated from the outside world by political barriers raised by ambitious rulers, without even the guidance of competent higher direction, they faced alone the fanatical fury of a genocidal enemy—and in that vallant process saved for the Union of India the most precious parts of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Because the Maharaja had refused to sign the Instrument of Accession by 15 August, 1947, Kashmir existed virtually as an independent state for about two and a half months after India and Pakistan gained their independence. Economically, administratively and even militarily, Jammu and Kashmir had always held closer ties with North-west India (later part of Pakistan) than with East Punjab or Delhi. For these reasons, there was very little liaison between New Delhi and J&K during that period. As far as the state army was concerned, the old branch of Military Adviser-in-Chief in Army Headquarters had been wound up—and no direct or even indirect link existed between the Headquarters at Srinagar and Army Headquarters, New Delhi. Thus, no war diary or other record of the state forces was kept at New Delhi; there was no channel of direct communication. (Logistically, the J&K forces were mainly dependent upon Rawalpindi arsenal). It was for this reason that the Indian Army—and India as a whole—remained largely ignorant of the tremendous stresses and strains to which the J&K forces were subject for a period of months before the actual invasion by tribesmen.

As Lieut-General L.P. Sen has narrated in his book *Slender Was the Threat*, in early October an intercept-message was received by the Military Intelligence at Army Headquarters New Delhi regarding a battle involving Gorkhas at places called “Sensa” and “Owen”, but no action could be taken for several days (not

even to send the information to the Defence Ministry) because nobody could discover where Sensa or Owen was. It was even doubted whether these places existed at all—because the Survey of India *Compendium of Place Names* did not include them. It was not until “Poonch” began to figure in these messages that it was realised that some sort of a minor war was being fought on the borders of J&K and Pakistan. It is little wonder that the story of that pre-invasion period and of the heroic resistance of the J&K state forces has never before been adequately recorded. Even at the present time, it is not often realised that when the Indian Army intervened in Kashmir (at the end of October 1947) the state forces had already been fighting border operations for more than three months, fighting against heavy odds, large-scale treachery and an almost total lack of direction from or even communication with their headquarters and their government.

In certain cases, battalions and companies were reduced to fighting rear-guard actions with just ten rounds of ammunition left in each man’s pocket, no supplies and no hope of reinforcements. In other instances, the treachery of their erstwhile Muslim colleagues had been on such a vast and diabolic scale that—as at Muzaffarabad—a whole battalion ceased to be effective as an operational unit after the first, stunning stab-in-the-back. In these circumstances, some units suffered greatly in morale and management—and it was easy to sneer at their plight when they were suddenly contrasted with fresh Indian Army troops flown in from Delhi. It is only in retrospect, when the full story of their operational endeavours and achievements from July to the end of October became known, that the sneers changed to sympathy and salutation.

During the post-war period, the state forces of Kashmir were organised into Army Headquarters and four infantry brigades. Army Headquarters was located at Srinagar, at Badami Bagh Cantonment, and was directly under His Highness the Maharaja—though in all day-to-day affairs executive control was exercised by the Chief of Staff, Major General H.L. Scott, a British Officer. General Scott had been pressing for his release for some time and it is possible that his heart was not in his work—he was probably pro-Pakistani as were many British Officers. This has given rise to doubts regarding his loyalty to the State, but of that there is no evidence; on the contrary on 22nd September General Scott submitted to the Maharaja a note on the deteriorating situation on the state boundaries (as mentioned later) but not all his suggestions

were acted upon. Two days later, on relief by Brigadier Rajinder Singh, he left the state by road to Rawalpindi.

Policy decisions and executive orders were issued under "H.H. Command Orders," which till then had mainly been concerned with administrative and organisational matters or internal security problems. There was virtually no general staff, so that neither J&K Army Headquarters nor any of the four brigades were organised to function in operational roles. His Highness' decisions were usually based on the Chief of Staff's recommendations, following informal discussions at Army Headquarters at the briefing conference every morning. These instructions were conveyed to the four brigade headquarters as well as to the other outstations on the Army Headquarters wireless net.

The dispositions of the units of the J&K forces on 4 October, 1947, was :

Jammu Brigade

Brigade Headquarters—Jammu Cantt.

JAK Training Battalion—Jammu Cantt.

5 JAK (sub-units spread out from Kathua to Bhimber along the southern border).

Bodyguard Cavalry less one squadron—Jammu Cantt.

Kashmir Brigade

Brigade Headquarters—Badami Bagh Cantt, Srinagar.

JAK Training School—Badami Bagh Cantt.

One Squadron Bodyguard Cavalry—Badami Bagh Cantt.

4 JAK less two companies—Domel

(one company at Kohala; one company at Keren, north of Tithwal).

6 JAK less two companies—Bunji

(one company HQ and two platoons at Leh; one company HQ and two platoons at Skardu; two platoons at Kargil).

7 JAK less two companies at Srinagar (later moved to Poonch Brigade).

Mirpur Brigade

Brigade Headquarters—Dharamsala Jhangar.

2 JAK—Naoshera (with outposts on the border).

3 JAK—Mirpur (with outposts on the border).

*Poonch Brigade**

Force Headquarters—Poonch.

1 JAK—Spread out in Bagh area.

8 JAK—Poonch (elements of two companies at Srinagar).

9 JAK—Spread out in Rawalakot area.

Two companies of 7 JAK.

(It is to be noted that the class composition of 2 JAK was half Gorkha and half Muslim; 4 JAK was half Hindu and half Muslim; 6 JAK was half Sikh and half Muslim).

The total post-war strength of the state forces at that time being only twelve thousand or so, it had been decided to raise a number of Garrison Police companies in order to provide security along the 500-mile border with Pakistan. A number of companies were raised from among Gorkha, Kangra Rajput and Sikh ex-servicemen besides Jammu Dogras—and they were armed from ancient stocks of Snyder rifles, or Martin-Henries or even Ferozepore muzzle-loaders. By August, 1946, these companies had been posted in small outposts all along the Punjab border. Tribal incursions from across the border had already started on a minor scale and these companies were soon engaged in ceaseless operations to repel the invaders.

The system of inter-communication was almost entirely by telephone or telegraph—a fact that was to prove a great handicap when the trouble started and hostiles and pro-hostile elements in the state cut almost all the telephone lines in the border areas. The only internal wireless network consisted of direct links between Kashmir Army Headquarters in Srinagar and twelve out-stations: Skardu, Domel, Poonch, Rawalkot, Bagh, Ramkot, Chirala, Bhimber, Mirpur, Jhangar, Naoshera and Jammu. The sets in use were the Second World War *WS* 19 sets and in the event they functioned adequately. As for external communications, the J&K Post and Telegraph lines linked the state with the West Punjab (later Pakistan) system. In addition, there was a direct wireless link between Kashmir Army Headquarters and Northern Command Headquarters at Rawalpindi. As for India, the only direct link with Kashmir was between a wireless detachment at Srinagar Airfield and Willingdon aerodrome in New Delhi.

*The old Mirpur-Poonch Brigade was split into two parts—and eventually two brigades were formed. At this time, in actual fact, Poonch was still an “Area” with a “Force Headquarters.”

Road and rail communications between Kashmir and the rest of India were such that after Partition the state was linked only with Pakistan. The main road link was from Srinagar through the Jhelum gorge to Domel, where the road bifurcated—one branch going south to Kohala, crossing over the Jhelum, then on to Murree and Rawalpindi; the other crossing the Jhelum at Domel, then through Manshera, Abbottabad and Wah. In the south, a railway and road linked Jammu to Sialkot. The only direct link between Jammu and what was later the state of East Punjab in India was a fair-weather tonga-track from Jammu via Samba, Kathua and Madhopur to Pathankot. It was intersected by numerous unbridged tributaries of the Ravi which had to be crossed by ferries or overfords. Parts of this road were used by motor buses plying from Pathankot—but it was a through road link only in the sense that very light motor traffic could, with difficulty, get through from Pathankot to Jammu in the dry season.

The southern border of Jammu province ran through the flat Punjab plains and did not follow any natural obstacle. On the western side, fortunately, the border ran along the Jhelum River, which was an effective obstacle. There were only three bridges between Domel and the southern end—and a number of ferries at various points.

Srinagar and Jammu were linked internally by two metalled roads—one via Uri, Poonch and Naoshera and the other via the Banihal Pass and Udhampur. The latter was the shorter of the two and of a higher weight classification but because of the long hill section and the fact that from December to April the Banihal Pass was snowbound, the western link was of greater military significance within the state.

There were two fairweather airstrips in the state—one at Srinagar and the other at Jammu—which were designed to take only the private light aircraft of the Maharaja. They were not used by any scheduled airlines and therefore not equipped with navigational aids or refuelling facilities.

Although there was no external Intelligence service in the state, short-range information from across the border was readily available. For long-range Intelligence the state government was entirely dependent on the government of Punjab (and, later, Pakistan) and Headquarters Northern Command in Rawalpindi; and since there was obvious collusion, or at least some form of a tacit understanding, between Northern Command and the government of

Pakistan to maintain close security cover over all the preparations by the tribesmen—collection and marshalling of vehicles, drawing of arms and ammunition from arsenals and similar activities at Rawalpindi, Abbottabad and other places—the J&K government at no time prior to the invasion anticipated wholesale organised aggression. From August onwards there had been many instances of armed *jathas* from the Pakistan side of the border raiding, looting and burning villages in J&K territory—often assisted by armed Pakistani police and troops: but Srinagar naively assumed that these were spontaneous acts of communal vengeance and not a part of Pakistan national policy. In fact on several occasions reports of incidents were sent to the government of Pakistan with the request that they curb the activities of local malcontents living near the border.

It is now evident that not only were the border raids permitted (and even assisted) by local authorities but also that there existed a centrally inspired grand design in the pattern and timing of the larger raids—the aim being to keep up military pressure along the border over a period of months in order to draw out the J&K state forces and force them to split up into penny-packet outposts along the border. At the same time, the economic blockade imposed on Kashmir coupled with the refusal of Northern Command in Rawalpindi to continue supplies of arms, ammunition and petrol to the J&K Army (which was one of the terms of the Standstill Agreement) served further to hamstring the mobility and efficacy of the state forces.

The most crippling handicap, however, was the total absence of information regarding the plans and intentions of the newly formed Pakistan government and the activities of the tribesmen. It must be remembered that even the Government of India was completely unaware of what was brewing in Pakistan. As General Sen has written in his book, when he took over the Military Intelligence Directorate he found that all previous documents and other material had been destroyed by the British—who had of course not permitted any Indians in the Directorate before Partition. Thus there was no network of agents, information channels, means of communication or procedures for sifting and collation of information—and without these it was impossible to gain long range information from another country. In the event, Pakistan was able to complete all the preparations including subversion of numerous Muslim officials of J&K state as also British personnel like Major Brown of Gilgit—and

to concentrate tens of thousands of tribesmen in hundreds of motor lorries on the Abbottabad–Muzaffarabad road without the Kashmir government knowing anything about it till almost the eve of invasion.

Communal massacres in the border areas of Jammu and the Punjab had started in the early autumn of 1946, shortly after Mr Jinnah's "Direct Action" drive and the resulting riots in Bengal and other parts of India. There was a brutal attack by Muslims of the Black Mountains area of Hazara District in which many Hindu villagers were killed and many others had fled. An Indian Army column known as *Oghi Column* operated in this area till the situation was restored to normalcy by the middle of January 1947. Then in March, after the Khizar Hayat Ministry fell in Lahore, riots broke out all over the Punjab. It was then that the large-scale influx of Hindu and Sikh refugees began. Streams of fleeing villagers crossed the Jhelum into Mirpur and Poonch districts—causing panic among the non-Muslim elements inhabiting the villages on the state side of the border. (See map on p. 244).

At the end of April H.H. the Maharaja paid a week's visit to the disturbed areas of Mirpur, Jhangar and Poonch including some of the outposts. This had a temporary settling effect on the border inhabitants which lasted till August. However, after 14 August (Independence Day in Pakistan) violent communal disturbances broke out in the adjoining districts of Jhelum and Gujarat—and the influx of refugees began anew. This was in fact when the "war" really can be said to have started because the Pakistani grand design was in operation—to draw out the JAK battalions to the outposts in preparation for the invasion of the Valley by tribesmen from the Frontier. Numerous major and minor raids were mounted, as described in later chapters—to serve the overall aim. At the same time, an organised political campaign was set in motion to inflame the border inhabitants of Pakistan and J&K state with anti-Indian and communal propaganda.

The main danger zone was the Mirpur-Poonch-Naoshera area. The nature of the thrust was armed infiltration across the Jhelum coupled with smuggling of rifles and grenades from Pakistan. The trouble began with communal riots on the West Punjab pattern during which many thousands of Hindus were massacred, their houses looted and burnt, and their women abducted and raped. Some local Muslims were already too willing to join the affray, others were persuaded and even forced to join and the situation

finally took the form of an armed rebellion on a small scale. As Mr Joseph Karbal has written in his book *Danger in Kashmir* :

Ever since the Maharaja failed to meet the time limit of accession the Pakistan Government pursued a policy of coercing him into accession to Pakistan. It (the Indian Government) accused the Pakistani authorities of arousing feelings of communal hatred and giving support to acts of terrorism in Kashmir. Agents and religious leaders were sent from Pakistan to various parts of Kashmir to incite the Muslim population against Sikhs and Hindus. Raids were reportedly organised from Pakistan's West Punjab into Jammu province, villages were burnt and non-muslims murdered and robbed.

Furthermore, according to Indian statements, Pakistan applied an economic blockade to Kashmir to coerce her into accession. She refused to honour her obligations towards Kashmir agreed upon in the Standstill Agreement and cut the country off from its supply of gasoline, wheat, salt, kerosene oil, cloth and also ammunition. The postal system did not work, savings and postal bank accounts were tied up, postal cheque certificates were not cashed and cheques on West Punjab banks were not honoured.

The most sinister part of Pakistan's campaign against J&K state, however, was the widespread fifth-column activity that was started—presumably after the Dominion of Pakistan was established as an independent state. Not only were *agents provocateurs* introduced into all the border areas to incite the Muslim population, but also a well organised and widespread plot to subvert the Muslim elements in government service—particularly military personnel. The J&K forces had a proportion of Muslim officers, most of whom had rendered loyal and sterling service to the state and on whom complete trust had been placed not only by the administration but also by their brother officers. But these were troubled times, when stresses and strains of religious propaganda assumed critical proportions. Some among the Muslim officers continued to render loyal service, but there were many who had begun to plan acts of treachery and betrayal that were to deal a crippling blow to the defence of the state. Some precautionary measures were indeed taken but there was so much opposition to them from senior officers themselves that in the event the success of the subversion campaign almost turned the scale—particularly in the Kashmir Valley sector.

There was a period of lull in the infiltration activities from late September to the first week of October during which incidents on the border died down. This may have been caused by the fact that

many of the border piquets had been reinforced—at the expense of centralised reserves—but a more likely reason was that this period coincided with Pakistan's programme of organising and training the raiders who would soon invade the state. They were then deployed along the whole western border of the state—the main concentration of tribesmen from the North-West Frontier Province being along the two roads that led to Domel.

Maj Gen H.L. Scott submitted a note to the Maharaja on 22 September on the overall military situation in the state, saying :

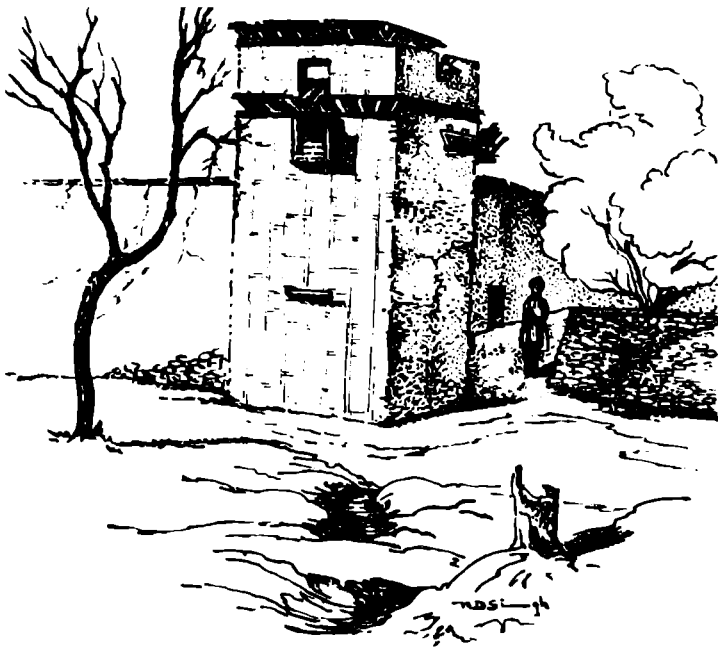
A survey of recent tendencies and events leaves little doubt that the Muslim Conference leaders intend to push forward their policy of union of the State with Pakistan by force if necessary. It is clear that in this respect they are finding ready support and assistance in the districts of Hazara and Rawalpindi. There can be little doubt that a close alliance is intended if not already formed between Conference leaders and the excited fanatical agitators across the state border to the west. The recent risings in the Bagh Tehsil of Poonch constitutes first fruits of this alliance.

On the southern border of the State the Muslims have massacred, driven out and looted the Sikhs and Hindus. The former having thus acquired a taste for massacre and loot are likely to be ready for fresh adventures. Even more dangerous than these are the many thousands of Muslim refugees that have passed into the districts of Jhelum, Gujrat and Sialkot from the east. These have lost much and no doubt are prepared to recoup themselves at the expense of anyone they are in a position to attack. Revenge and fanaticism must be equally strong motives. There are few indications that the Pakistani authorities are making efforts to restrain their people. In fact the contrary may be said to be true. There can be little doubt that the Pak police and troops are not reliable.

General Scott also recommended that two companies of Gorkhas, or an equivalent detachment, from 4 JAK be located at Garhi on the Domel-Srinagar route or at Dulai between Domel and Kohala. The only action taken on this was the movement of two companies of 7 JAK from Poonch to the area of Garhi. The General had also urged the formation of a reserve—because 9 JAK, which had been in reserve in Srinagar, had already been moved to Poonch. However, the government could find no troops to create a reserve and a vacuum was left in Srinagar. As stated earlier, Maj Gen Scott then relinquished his appointment and left the state via Rawalpindi for England. Brig Rajinder Singh became the officiating Chief of staff.

J&K Army Headquarters utilised the period of lull in trying to reorganise the forces in order to meet the unending demands from the battalions deployed on the border. These units were augmented by the disbanding of certain auxiliary units and by sending the personnel thus rendered surplus to battalions low in manpower.

Pakistani organisers of the invasion had promised the tribal participants ample opportunity to loot, murder and rape as reward for their services. Their plan was to keep the penny-packet posts all along the border fully occupied, while the main thrust was made along the road to Srinagar. Accordingly, in the first week of October, thousands of armed tribals and border inhabitants from Pakistan, stiffened by Pakistan Army regular personnel in civilian guise, moved rapidly inside J&K borders and attacked border posts. On 6 October all border posts from Kathua to the Jhelum on the southern sector were attacked by well-armed raiders in great strength. On the western front also, there was a sudden increase in raiders' activities in the second week of October. The stage was being carefully set for the *coup de grace*.



A TOWER OF A CHITRAL FORT

10

Hostilities on the Jhelum Front : Mirpur—Kotli—Naoshera—Rajouri

THE INVASION of J&K territory by armed Pakistanis started long before the main drive for Srinagar in the third week of October. The earliest hostilities took place on the Jhelum front, where thousands of Sikh and Hindu refugees were being driven across the river from the Pakistan districts of Rawalpindi and Jhelum, chased by large armed groups—many of whom were in Pakistani Army uniforms. The aim of these organised groups was two-fold—to continue to harass, loot and kill the fleeing refugees; and to conduct a propaganda campaign among the disaffected local Muslims on the J&K side of the border. Armed hostilities in this sector can therefore be said to have started as early as in mid-July, though major incidents did not take place till mid-August.

In November 1946 Lieut-Colonel Chattar Singh took over command of 9 JAK from Lieut-Colonel Ram Lal, at Jhangar. He was also made officiating commander of Mirpur Brigade, which controlled the whole area of Mirpur District. There were then two

other battalions stationed in the area—1 JAK at Poonch and 6 JAK at Naoshera. Thus the three sectors—Poonch, Naoshera and Mirpur—each had an infantry battalion. In addition, there was a cavalry squadron at Bhimber and a Garrison Police (GP) company each at Jhangar and Mirpur.

Soon after Colonel Chattar Singh's arrival at Jhangar, riots broke out in the Oghi area of the Black Mountains in Hazara District (subsequently in Pakistan) the border of which marches with that of Muzaffarabad District of Kashmir. The Muslim tribes made a determined and brutal attack on the Hindus and Sikhs living in the area and drove them away from the Black Mountains—killing many hundreds and looting all Hindu property. An Indian Army column was sent to patrol the area and the situation was restored in January 1947, but by then many non-muslim inhabitants had either been killed or had crossed into neighbouring Kashmir.

General Scott visited Mirpur Brigade HQ during this period. He discussed the border situation with Colonel Chattar Singh as also measures to be taken to prevent communal repercussions in the area. All posts were alerted and constant patrolling of likely trouble spots was ordered.

The next crisis came as a result of the fall of the Khizar Hayat Ministry in the Punjab in March 1947. There was rioting in all the major cities of the Punjab—from Jullundur and Amritsar to Multan, Murree and Rawalpindi. Daily reports were received of murder, arson and looting of Sikh and Hindu villages west of the Jhelum—and soon thereafter streams of refugees began to cross over the Hill-Begam ferry, pouring into Mirpur District. When Colonel Chattar Singh visited the post in that area, he noticed that the Muslim troops (belonging to Mirpur tribes such as Chib, Jesab and Gabhar) were getting very restive and not always willing to obey the orders of their company commander, Capt Din Mohamed (a Khoja from Punch). They did not seem to relish the task of receiving and succouring the non-Muslim refugees from across the Jhelum—and would point with ill-concealed glee to the heavy columns of black smoke across the river where their co-religionists were on the rampage.

Similar communal tension was noticeable in some of the other areas the Colonel visited shortly thereafter—Bhimber, Saligram, Owen Pattan and Lachman Pattan, as also at Rawalakot. There was no doubt that Muslim troops had been subverted—and were not as reliable as they had been in the past.

His Highness The Maharaja, accompanied by General Scott, visited the area from 21 to 25 April. He arrived from Akhnur by car and in turn visited posts at Jafley, Chichian, Hill, Mirpur, Jhangar, Pandar, Kotli, Hajira and Rawalakot. His informal manner, sometimes staying the night with the troops at a forward post, and his commanding presence had a heartening effect on the Brigade—at least on the Dogra troops.

On 30 July, 2 JAK (under Major Shiv Ram) relieved 6 JAK at Naoshera, taking over the forward posts at Kotli, Sensa, Saligram and Owen Pattan. (6 JAK subsequently moved to Gilgit). On 11 August Colonel Chattar Singh was promoted to brigadier's rank: on the same day, General Janak Singh took over as Prime Minister of the State from RC Kak who was retired.

Trouble brewed up again just after Independence Day, 15 August, 1947, when the two independent dominions of India and Pakistan came into being. The whole border from Chichian to Manawar became sensitive due to the massacres of non-Muslims in the adjoining Pakistani districts of Gujerat and Jhelum. Another wave of Sikh and Hindu refugees began to cross over into Kashmir state.

This was when J&K Army Headquarters noticed the first signs of an organised propaganda conducted by Pakistan *agents provocateurs* to incite Muslim troops and Muslim inhabitants of Mirpur District and other areas. Posters began to appear on walls, leaflets were distributed; there were gatherings in mosques—all inciting communal hatred and anti-state passion.

The first major "guerilla" incident occurred in Bagh tehsil on 27 August, when Jemadar Khurd Singh and four state force signallers were kidnapped by a Muslim crowd, bound hand and foot and thrown into the Mahal river. Two were drowned but the other two managed to swim downstream and save themselves.

Two days later, the Sikh *gurdwara* at Ali Beg was threatened by a big Muslim gathering: in spite of the fact that a Gorkha platoon under Capt Bhagwan Singh (from Jatley post) was detailed for the protection of the *gurdwara*, one of the priests left for Jhangar. Confidence in the army's ability to safeguard life and property was inevitably falling. Brigadier Chattar Singh asked for two battalions to be sent as reinforcements to his brigade—but of course he never got them. By then most troops had already been committed to the border—which was, of course, the Pakistani design. The law and order situation deteriorated rapidly during the next two or three weeks.

In the third week of September Lieut-Colonel Abdul Hamid Khan took over 2 JAK at Naoshera and Lieut-Colonel Puran Singh Thapa 3 JAK in Poonch.

By then troops at all posts were heavily committed to internal security and refugee escort duties. Local Muslims were openly preaching *jihad* and organising looting and burning operations wherever Sikh and Hindu communities could be found unprotected. The civil administration was virtually defunct: *tehsildars* could not move out into their areas and village headmen had ceased to send in reports. Even military posts sometimes had no knowledge of what was happening in neighbouring army subunits—because all communication was by Forest Service telephone lines; no lateral links existed.

About 15 August, on the Mirpur front, more troops were sent out to help Hindus and Sikhs seeking refuge into state territory from different places from the Punjab. They helped people from Dina, Jhelum, Kharian, Daulatnagar, Jalalpur and Tanda, so that by 1st September, 1947, the following border posts were manned in addition to garrisons at *tehsil* and district headquarters:

(a) Along the Jhelum River:

Owen Pattan	two platoons from 2 JAK
Saligram	one platoon from 2 JAK
Hill Begam	a company less one platoon 3 JAK
Mangla Fort	one platoon 3 JAK
Chechian	a company less one platoon 3 JAK

(b) Along the Chechian—Bhimber Road:

Jatley-Alibeg	one platoon 3 JAK
Bhimber	one squadron bodyguard Cavalry less two troops
Padar	one troop cavalry
Munawar	one troop cavalry.

(c) District and *tehsil* Garrisons:

Mirpur	a battalion less two companies 3 JAK
Naoshera	a battalion less three companies 2 JAK
Rajouri	One company 2 JAK
Kotli	One company less one Platoon 2 JAK
Ban Bridge	One platoon 2 JAK
Sensa	One company less two platoons 2 JAK (two platoons from this company were at Owen Pattan).

At the end of September at Bagh a large gathering of Muslim fanatics began a campaign of looting, raping and arson. 9 JAK had to be detailed to move there under Colonel Ram Lal but the situation continued to deteriorate. Meanwhile troops at Chirala, Thorar and Kohala were heavily attacked by armed gangs from across the border—and 8 JAK had to be sent from Srinagar to reinforce the garrisons.

Thus, three crack Dogra battalions of the JAK State Forces were tied down in the Poonch area—leaving no reserve units in either Srinagar or Jammu. The dispositions of the eight battalions (the 7th had not yet been re-raised) were as follows: three in the Poonch area and one each at Mirpur, Naoshera-Kotli, Domel, Jammu border and Bunji (northern Kashmir battalion)—strung out in an arc along the borders, leaving the heartland vulnerable.

At this stage the three battalions in Poonch were placed under command of Lieut-Colonel Krishan Singh, leaving Brigadier Chattar Singh solely responsible for Mirpur District. Mirpur Brigade had 2 JAK (half Gorkhas and half Muslims) 3 JAK (half Gorkhas and half Dogras) and ancillary troops—signallers, animal and motor transport subunits.

In the face of increasing pressure from armed gangs from the Pakistan *tehsils* of Murree, Kahuta and Gujjarkhan, Poonch Brigade decided to withdraw the border posts at Saligram and Owen Pattan to Sensa. The first phase, the withdrawal of Saligram piquet to Owen Pattan, was barely completed on the night of 5/6 October when 500 hostiles, clad either in olive green Pakistan Army uniforms or in the distinctive *mazri* shirts of the tribesmen, and armed with bren guns and rifles, attacked Owen post. After several assaults had been launched, the enemy asked the post—which consisted of two Gorkha platoons of 2 JAK—to surrender, but under the leadership of Subedar Dhan Bahadur the Gorkhas stuck it out, beating back numerous assaults throughout the night. The garrison commander at Sensa sent out a platoon of Muslims to cover the withdrawal of Owen post—but the Muslim platoon defected and joined the enemy. This spelt the doom of the Gorkha platoons at Owen; by early morning the hostiles swarmed over the post, slaughtering most of the men and taking a few prisoner.

Conflicting reports of the fall of Owen garrison reached Kotli on 9 October; Capt Mohd Hussain was sent immediately with a platoon of D Company from Kotli to Sensa to contact Lieut Raghbir Singh to ascertain the real situation. When he reached close to Sensa on

the evening of 10 October he met some stragglers from Owen Pattan who informed him that Owen post was still fighting in the fort. Sporadic fighting was also going on at Sensa where a garrison of two platoons of B Company was surrounded by an overwhelming hostile force. Capt Hussain succeeded in extricating the beleaguered garrison. The force pulled out and managed to reach Tharochhi Fort, 22 miles west of Jhangar, on 10 October. Tharochhi Fort was previously manned by fort guards whose role was to protect state property such as gunpowder, magazines, muzzle-loaders and other equipment. There was also a signal communication station manned by 2 JAK signallers. Lieut Raghbir Singh fell back on the fort. The fort was an important point from which to exercise vigilance and control over the surrounding areas, which were inhabited by the unruly tribes of Chibs, Manghrabs and Nasma Rajputs. The fort had been of strategic value since it was first occupied by Maharaja Gulab Singh.

On the night of 11/12 October a strong column of two companies of 2 JAK—A Coy (Gorkhas) from Naoshera under Capt Prem Singh and C Coy, a Muslim company from Rajouri, under Captain Rahmat Ullah Khan (under the overall command of Lieut Colonel Abdul Hamid Khan) was ordered to recapture Sensa and then proceed to Owen. On the way the column encountered opposition but managed to overcome it and proceeded on its way. In the early hours of 12 October the column met the enemy in the area of the Dak Bungalow. Sensa was stormed; the enemy fled leaving behind some Gorkha prisoners they had taken at Owen Pattan. Sensa was then reoccupied but opposition from the enemy continued.

The column did not make any appreciable headway in their efforts to reach Owen because of heavy enemy concentrations *en route*. After two days fierce fighting, the column fell back on Tharochhi. On the night of 15/16 October a large party of raiders invested Tharochhi Fort and launched several attacks supported by 3 in mortars and medium machine guns (MMGs). Although the attacks were repulsed for a whole day, it was decided to abandon the fort when enemy pressure did not relent. On the night of 16/17 October the garrison started to slip out of the fort when counter-orders were received that the fort should be held at all costs. After further fighting for a day and a half the fort was recaptured. Colonel Hamid Khan had fallen sick by this time and had been evacuated to Naoshera on 16 October; Captain Rahmat Ullah Khan was left in command of the garrison at Tharochhi.

On 21 October the main force garrisoning Tharochhi was ordered to withdraw to Jhangar leaving two Gorkha platoons of B Company, under the command of Lieut Raghubir Singh, to garrison Tharochhi. The column under Captain Rahmat Ullah Khan moved back, encountering some opposition at Juna about 15 miles west of Jhangar. It could not make any appreciable headway in the face of heavy enemy concentrations. No communication existed between the column and brigade headquarters at Jhangar because the only wireless set had been left behind at Tharochhi fort. On 25 October one wounded Gorkha soldier managed to escape to Jhangar over the hills and informed Jhangar Brigade HQ that the column was held up at Juna and heavily-engaged by the enemy.

Brigadier Chattar Singh was most anxious that the column should reach Jhangar. So on the morning of 26 October a force consisting of two platoons (Gorkhas) of A Company 3 JAK, with rations and ammunition, was despatched under Major Nasrullah Khan (Brigade Major of HQ Mirpur Brigade) with orders to extricate the column at Juna, proceed with it to Tharochhi fort to deliver rations and ammunitions to the garrison there and then to return with the column to Jhangar.

On arrival at Juna, Major Nasrullah Khan took command of the column. In the evening he called a meeting of Muslim officers and JCOs. The Muslim company was on perimeter duty and the Gorkhas were ordered to go and rest. During the night, the Muslim officers, JCOs and ORs fell on the sleeping Gorkhas and murdered all but two Gorkha subedars and about 30 ORs who managed to escape. These survivors fled to Jhangar to relate the incident, including the atrocity committed on Captain Prem Singh, the Gorkha Company Commander, who was led into a hut and strangled to death by the Muslim officers of his own battalion.

The next day Major Nasrullah Khan led the Muslim troops to Tharochhi fort. The Gorkhas in the fort, unaware of the murders perpetrated the previous night, received the relief column joyfully. However, that night the Gorkha garrison at Tharochhi was also murdered; Captain Raghubir Singh Thapa was bestially tortured to death. Thus Tharochhi fell into the hands of the enemy.

The enemy then launched a heavy attack on Jhangar camp itself. The camp was filled with thousands of Hindu and Sikh refugees. There were only two weak companies (one duty platoon from A Company of 3 JAK, one company of 5 JAK, two platoons of a Garrison Police company, one section MMGs and one 3 in mortar with limited

ammunition) to defend the camp. There were no rations in camp and the line of communication between Jhangar and Jammu was blocked. The Jhangar-Kotli and Jhangar-Mirpur roads were also blocked. On 29 October, Bhimber fell after a heavy attack by tanks and mechanised vehicles; and Rajouri, which was defended by one strong Gorkha platoon of 2 JAK (A Company) and one strong platoon of Dogras (GP Company) from the Jhangar camp, fell on 11 November.

Jhangar is situated on the Jammu-Mirpur road. In days of peace, it had been selected as a camp-site mainly for administrative reasons and because of its good climate and adequate water supply. It was not a tactically suitable site—a rugged valley intersected by a number of ravines and nullahs and surrounded by scrub-covered hills overlooking the encampment. The defences were planned in three rings around the camp—the outer ring of piquets; the outer defensive perimeter; and the inner or close perimeter built around various fighting groups. The latter was manned entirely by non-combatant personnel such as clerks, drivers, signallers, orderlies and ex-service-men from among the refugees.

The enemy attacked the piquets almost daily. On two occasions the key “A” piquet was almost captured by the enemy but was saved only by the gallantry of the men of 5 JAK in hand-to-hand fighting within the piquet perimeter.

Jhangar garrison held on for many months. One of the main reasons for its successful defence was vigorous and offensive patrolling. On one occasion a patrol supported by a section of medium machine guns inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy (60 killed). Thereafter the enemy was wary of this section of MMGs and never dared to press the attacks rigorously. Consequently the garrison held on until the arrival of 50 Indian Para Brigade under Brigadier Paranjpe on 19 November, 1947.

Meanwhile the attack on the 2 JAK post of Owen Pattan on 6 October had threatened the town of Kotli; a platoon of 3 JAK was hurriedly despatched under Lieut Ishri Singh from Mirpur to reinforce the garrison at Kotli consisting of 3 JAK, which had been posted in Mirpur since March 1947. In September 1947 the disposition of the battalion was as under: Battalion Headquarters at Mirpur, 123 miles west of Jammu and connected with it by a fair-weather road; A Company less 2 platoons at battalion headquarters; one platoon at Jhangar, one platoon at Mangla Fort (10 miles south west of Mirpur) on the River Jhelum. Mangla Fort is situated at

Upper Jhelum Canal headworks and commands the river bank and the approaches to the headworks. B Company less one platoon was located at Hill (18 miles from Mirpur) on the Jhelum with the aim of preventing the crossing of unauthorised persons. A platoon less one section was at Dadiyal (11 miles from Mirpur and 7 miles from Hill) with the task of protecting the town; one section at Chaomukh (9 miles from Hill and two miles from Dadiyal)—task : to protect the ferry on Poonch River and to serve as a base of supply for rations and other stores for troops located at Hill and Dadiyal. C Company was at headquarters, in reserve; D Company less one platoon was at Chechian (15 miles from Mirpur) where there was a customs post, a ferry crossing and a trade centre—task : to prevent entry into the state of persons not having entry permits. One platoon was at Ali Beg (9 miles from Chechian and 19 miles from Mirpur)—task : to protect the main road and the valuable property of the *gurdwara* there.

On 24 September two despatch riders of 3 JAK, riflemen Hakumat Singh Salathia and Ishar Dass, were ambushed by the enemy while returning from Chechian. A reconnaissance party in a vehicle was sent and the dead body of Hakumat Singh was found near Phala Gala, a pass about from 4 miles from Mirpur. His body was cut to pieces but Rfn Ishar Dass was still alive. After this incident the *dak* was sent in vehicles with a section as escort.

No other incident of note occurred until early October when one platoon of C Company under Lieut Ishri Singh, with one detachment of 3 in mortars and one section MMG, and the platoon commander, Jemadar Badri Nath, were sent to reinforce Kotli. They reached Kotli on 11 October and by 15 October information reached them that Sarsawa village, about six miles north of Kotli on the Kotli-Palandri mule-track, had been heavily attacked by raiders and the Hindu inhabitants massacred. Lieut Ishri Singh was then ordered to move with his platoon (27 men) towards Sarsawa to rescue the remaining civilians. He had gone three miles when, as the party crossed a nullah, it was ambushed. Twentyfour persons, including Jemadar Badri Nath, were killed and only Lieut Ishri Singh, Nk Chandar Bahadur and Rfn Dhan Singh were able, though seriously wounded, to hide in the mountains and make their way back to Kotli two days later. Lieut Ishri Singh lost an eye as a result of his wounds and Nk Chandar Bahadur died of wounds in Jammu hospital. Hav Harak Bahadur was taken prisoner (and repatriated on 25 May, 1949).

At that time Brigadier Chattar Singh was visiting 3 JAK at Mirpur. When news was received of the fate of Lieut Ishri Singh's platoon, the Brigadier immediately rushed to Kotli with a detachment of 3 in mortars and a section of MMGs to reinforce Kotli, which was now clearly threatened by the raiders. At Ban bridge the Brigadier met stiff opposition from the strongly entrenched enemy on the high ground to the right of the nullah. A running fight ensued and in the encounter, one officer and three other ranks and the Brigadier were wounded, the fight having raged for a whole day and night.

At dusk on 22 October the enemy launched a fierce attack in heavy rain but this was repulsed. The next morning, a concerted attack by one composite company made up of the duty platoon of 3 JAK, the duty platoon of 2 JAK, a GP platoon under Lieut Lakh Ram of 3 JAK from Jhangar and one company of 9 JAK under Captain Arjun Dass (from Kotli) was mounted from the directions of Jhangar and Kotli, which severely mauled the enemy while the JAK forces suffered only 5 killed, 11 wounded and 7 missing believed killed. However, the threat to Kotli continued, as did that to the small 3 JAK garrisons strung out along border posts and check points in the Mirpur area.

On 17 October, simultaneous to attacks on other points, the raiders launched a concerted attack on Chechian, Ali Beg, Dadiyal, Hill and Mangla. The enemy commenced by 3 in mortar shelling of Chechian, which was garrisoned by D Company 3 JAK less one platoon, and of the platoon post at Ali Beg. The shelling continued throughout the day and on the night of 17/18 October the enemy manoeuvred to the rear of the post and subjected the garrison to continuous small arms fire. Because the lines of communication and supply were unreliable, it was considered doubtful whether the posts could be held; so the outposts of Chechian and Ali Beg were ordered to withdraw to Mirpur bringing with them the Hindu and Sikh civilians of the area. Major Ram Saran Karki, OC D Company, managed to extricate the whole company and the refugees safely.

Also on 17 October, the section of B Company 3 JAK at Chaomukh, B Company at Hill and one of B Company's platoons at Dadiyal were attacked in strength. All roads and tracks were blocked and vehicular traffic was suspended. In view of the overwhelming pressure of the enemy, the force was ordered to concentrate at Dadiyal, on which the enemy now turned all his attention, subjecting it to mortar and light automatic fire. B Company was sur-

rounded by the enemy estimated to be three companies strong (regulars and tribesmen). The company resisted successive enemy attacks for five days with no communication with battalion headquarters at Mirpur, with neither food nor rest and with all withdrawal routes blocked. Heavy firing could be heard from Dadiyal in Mirpur, so two columns were despatched to relieve Dadiyal—one on October 21 and one on the 23rd, but neither was able to break through the enemy blockades. Finally, on 24 October, Major Ram Saran Karki volunteered to go out himself to relieve the garrison at Dadiyal. He collected a number of volunteers from different companies and made up his force to about a company, with which he left Mirpur at 2.00 am on the morning of 25 October.

Meanwhile, in Dadiyal, the commander of the garrison, Major Kirpal Singh, felt that as ammunition was practically exhausted and there seemed to be no hope of reinforcement, the company should attempt to break through the enemy lines and make for Mirpur. A platoon was left behind to engage the enemy while the rest of the company slipped away. When they had rendezvoused at a point about half a mile down the track leading out of Dadiyal, they crossed the Poonch River. The enemy was not aware of this withdrawal till they were across the river, but by daybreak the enemy had made contact with the company's rear guard. However, by 7.00 am on 25 October Major Karki's relief column identified the B Company column as their own men; a bugle call was sounded and B Company responded by disclosing their identity. The two columns joined up, fought their way to Mirpur and reached headquarters by 10.00 am on 25 October. In the Dadiyal engagement, JAK losses were two killed (ORs) eleven wounded and two taken prisoner (repatriated in May 1950). The enemy suffered over 100 killed and many more wounded. L/Nk Munshi Ram and Rfn Gauri Shankar each snatched one service rifle from the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting. About 1,000 rounds of 303 ammunition were also captured.

After the withdrawal of troops from Chechian and Dadiyal, two platoons—one of A Company under Subedar Hari Chand and one of C Company under Jemadar Govind Singh—were positioned at Phala-da-gala, one on each side of the pass to maintain visual communication between the outpost at Mangla Mai and battalion headquarters at Mirpur. Both platoons were under continuous fire from enemy located on the surroundings ridges. Mangla was garrisoned by one platoon of A Company 3 JAK, under command

of Jemadar Khajoor Singh, with orders to hold Mangla Fort at all costs. The fort as well as the posts were under continuous fire from 20 October to 4 November, 1947.

On 4 November the vehicle which supplied cooked food to the picquets at Phala-da-gala was ambushed one mile short of the pass, the wooden bridge over the stream destroyed by the raiders. Capt Kalyan Singh had been sent with the vehicle on this run as the presence of hostiles in the neighbourhood was known. When firing was heard in Mirpur, Major Kirpal Singh, with a company column, moved to the scene of the ambush. Fighting continued for seven hours, after which the enemy finally withdrew into the hills and the ambushed party was extricated. Both picquets were ordered to withdraw and join the column returning to Mirpur. They reached Mirpur by 2.00 am that evening. Nk Sita Ram and L/Nk Ishar Dass and six ORs were killed in this action and nine ORs wounded.

During this operation Rfn Chandu Ram showed great courage and heroism. He was No 1 on the bren gun of No 1 Section of 6 platoon of B Company. As they advanced in great numbers along the flank which this platoon was covering, he inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. He continued firing his bren though wounded in the chest six times. When he could not hold the position any longer, he crawled back with the help of the No 2 of his gun. First aid was given and he was later evacuated to Mirpur where he was treated; he survived, only to be invalidated out of the service.

The withdrawal of the picquets near Phala-da-gala meant that the only communication with Mangla fort was lost. Enemy pressure at Mirpur also began to increase as more regular Pakistani troops were brought in, supported by artillery and 3 in mortars. Several attempts to contact the platoon at Mangla fort were made in vain. In the fort there was a temple dedicated to the goddess Durga (which incidentally is the deity of the Regiment and hence their war cry *Durga Mata Ki Jai*) and a *gurdwara*; in addition, the headworks of the Upper Jhelum Canal were also located in Mangla. From 18 October the garrison (one platoon of A Company, 3 JAK) was subjected to constant enemy fire. On 7 November an elderly woman sought admission to the fort. She claimed that Mirpur city had fallen to the hostiles and many civilians including her family had been slain. She carried two letters, one to Jem Khajoor Singh, the other to *Zaildar* Girdhari Lal, one of the 52 civilians in the fort, one written in English and the other in Urdu by one Captain Mohamed Azam, a JAK State Force officer, asking the garrison commander to surrender. The messages were ignored.

Mangla garrison was under the command of Jem Khajoor Singh with 6 NCOs, 24 ORs and a cook from 3 JAK. In addition there was Hav Ishar Singh and three ORs of the fort establishment, besides about 50 civilians who had taken refuge in the fort. The ammunition supply was low but there was an ample supply of gunpowder and a stock of muzzle-loaders of ancient vintage. The commander decided to use these by firing through them a charge of pebbles. They certainly created a great noise and the pebbles flew in all directions up to a hundred yards. However, the short supply of rations was the crucial factor. Besides, the ponds in the fort had dried up and it was only at night that small parties could venture out of the fort to fetch drinking water from the river. (The enemy had an MMG trained on the water point and four civilians had been killed drawing water).

By 25 November the enemy had surrounded the fort and sealed the withdrawal routes. They bombarded it with 3 in and 2 in mortars. The occasional overflights of the Royal Indian Air Force, which had strafed the enemy positions earlier, had ceased. An attempt to break through to Mirpur on the night of 23/24 November was foiled when a volunteer break-out party consisting of L/Nk Hari Singh, Rfn Baij Nath, Rfn Saran Singh and Rfn Ramlal (a member of the fort guard) was spotted. Two were captured and killed and two, L/Nk Hari Singh and Rfn Baij Nath, managed to return to the fort after hiding from the enemy for two days and nights.

The garrison held out in this hopeless condition for one month and twenty days. On 24 December, the enemy intensified its fire and brought up 6-pounder anti-tank guns. These blew the gate of the fort and opened up the front wall. The commander instructed his men to destroy all weapons in the fort and to attempt to break out. However, the enemy surrounded them, forced them back into the fort and kept them there for 20 days during which they were subjected to torture. Later they were taken to Ali Beg and put in the *gurdwara* with about 3,600 Hindu refugees. Havildar Jamit Singh and Nk Ram Dass tried to escape but were re-captured and tortured to death. The refugees remained at Ali Beg for five months after which the Red Cross intervened and repatriated 2,800 survivors. The rest had succumbed to torture or starvation (the ration scale was two *chapaties* per day). Young women were kept in a separate building at Govindpur where they were better fed but shamefully molested by enemy officers. After a ten-month stay at Ali Beg the JAK state force prisoners were transferred to Attock, and repatriated on 25 May, 1949.

The rest of 3 JAK at Mirpur was subjected to increased enemy pressure. A perimeter three miles long enclosed the city; there was an outpost about 900 yards away from the perimeter. Pakistani regular troops stiffened by hostiles and local Muslims with artillery and 3 in mortars, kept up an incessant attack on the city. In the intense fire many civilians were killed and much of the city destroyed. All available men were organised into a volunteer unit to help in patrolling and maintaining order in the city. They were armed with whatever was available—guns, spears, axes, *lathis*.

On 6 November the enemy attacked the outpost located in the city jail. Reinforcements were sent and the attack was repulsed, but when attacked again on 8 November in company strength, the post had to be withdrawn. The enemy occupied the post and 3 JAK lost two ORs killed and two wounded. Estimates of enemy casualties were 50 killed and 25 wounded. Once in occupation of this post, the enemy could harrass and attack Mirpur city. Ammunition was low and requests for reinforcements from Jammu Brigade Headquarters and Mirpur-Poonch Brigade Headquarters were fruitless, though both promised to send aid. It was hoped that the Indian Army, which had by then arrived in Jammu, would be able to render some assistance—but that hope also had to be abandoned.

The enemy strength appeared to be about two infantry battalions. They continued to bring in reinforcements from Jhelum, which was only 25 miles away and linked with a good road. Attempts were made to confuse the defenders and convince them that it was JAK reinforcements that had arrived. When these ruses failed, they resumed heavy shelling with mortars and field artillery. There were many JAK personnel and civilian casualties. On 12 November the RIAF strafed and bombed enemy positions. This reduced the pressure on Mirpur for that day but had no lasting effect. Day attacks by the enemy diminished but night attacks intensified. The next Air Force overflight on 14 November dropped ammunition for the JAK force but 60 *per cent* of it was rendered useless on impact with the ground. When ammunition was dropped on 19 November, including 3 in and 2 in mortar bombs and 25,000 rounds small arms ammunition, it arrived intact. However, even this aid soon proved to be of little help as enemy determination was strong and their attacks relentless. On the night of 20/21 November a heavy attack came in at the south-west corner of the city, where troops were under the command of Captain Parmodh Singh, 3

JAK, and Lieut Kishan Singh, 5 JAK (he had come to Mirpur in early October, with one platoon of ex-servicemen). The enemy that night broke the perimeter and hand-to-hand fighting ensued. Although the enemy was repulsed, 48 ORs were killed and 52 wounded. In addition to this new threat, communication with headquarters at Dharamsala-Jhangar ceased when the sole wireless set went out of commission. As Air Force sorties diminished, enemy activity increased. Fighting continued on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th November. A battalion of the enemy succeeded in over-running the city, setting fire to civilian houses. A great toll was taken of the enemy, but they were in such numbers that they finally overwhelmed the city defences.

Twice on 24 November RIAF planes flew overhead and the SOS sign was displayed. Ammunition was virtually exhausted; the enemy was in the city; the civilian population was in panic. Eventually, a meeting of senior military and civilian officials was called and it was decided to abandon the city. The military was to escort the civilian population to safety.

Unfortunately rumours about the decision spread through the city. Some interpreted it to mean that the military was abandoning the civilian population; many in despair took their own lives and those of their womenfolk. Of the 18,000 civilians, about 3,000 were incapable of making the journey out. By about 10.00 am on 25 November, the column of refugees with its JAK escort began its trek towards Jhangar. A rear-guard company was left behind to engage the enemy; in addition, two Air Force fighter planes bombed enemy positions and prevented him from pursuing the column. The retreating column was more than five miles long and moved slowly because of the many women and children and the elderly.

That evening, about 9.00 pm, near Kas Gumma, the column encountered an enemy position and was heavily fired upon. In panic, many civilians broke ranks and scattered and control became difficult. When the column moved ahead again, about 2,000 members were missing. It was decided to move across country, as the main road was heavily picqueted by the enemy. The column, now grown to 8 miles long, lost its way and had to rely on two Muslim guides who were made to lead the way at the point of the bayonet. To prevent enemy sniping, the guides were ordered to shout to the enemy picquets that the column was one of Pakistanis heading for Jhangar. To a great extent the ruse succeeded but the guides proved treacherous in the end—and by next morning, the column had

again lost its way. It now stretched for about 10 miles and many of the women and children could not walk because of physical weakness due to lack of food and water. The column was broken up and the troops were detailed to escort small batches of refugees in mini-columns.

The presence of the Air Force overhead helped to mitigate enemy harassment; one plane would cover the column until relieved by another. However, on 26 November the rearguard commanded by Major Ram Saran Karki was heavily engaged throughout the day. In that action, Major Karki, Captain Parmodh Singh, Capt PN Kanwar, Lieut Kishan Singh and Subedar Major Saran Dass were all killed, together with 15 other ranks. That afternoon an elderly and kindly looking Muslim was recruited to serve as guide. At first he thought the column was Pakistani but even after recognising it as JAK, he was reasonably co-operative. He disclosed enemy positions ahead, as a result of which the column changed route; he finally brought the column to the outskirts of Jhangar, from where he was allowed to go his way.

The column, now 12 miles long, reached the outskirts of Jhangar about 7.00 pm on 26 November. Brigadier Chattar Singh dispatched parties carrying cooked food to the women and children. The tail of the column did not reach Jhangar till the morning of 28 November.

On 26 November, 1947, 50 Para Brigade also returned from Kotli with a few thousand refugees. The refugees from Kotli, Mirpur and Jhangar were formed into a single column which, escorted by the remnants of 2 JAK, 3 JAK and B & D companies of 9 JAK, left Jhangar on 29 November. At Naoshera thousands of more refugees joined the column, bringing the total of the refugees to about 20,000, spread over 14 miles. About 100 civilian vehicles aided in the transport of the elderly, the sick and the women and children. They reached Jammu on 3 December where they reported the desertion of the Muslim company of 2 JAK less one platoon at Beripattan on 1 December.

On arrival at Jammu Cantonment, 2 and 3 JAK were re-organised and re-equipped. 2 JAK was despatched in early January 1948 to Beripattan for duty with the Indian Army under command of Lieut-Colonel Shiv Ram and the composition of the battalion was changed to 50 *per cent* Gorkhas and 50 *per cent* Dogras.

On arrival at Jammu, B and D Companies of 9 JAK, with elements of Headquarters company, were given the task of defending

Jammu town and the Palace area. In February 1948 D company under Major Arjun Das was placed under command of 268 Infantry Brigade (Indian Army) and sent as reinforcement to Riasi garrison. In April it was sent to Ramsu on the Jammu-Kashmir Road, where it was given the task of guarding the line of communication from Digdol to Banihal.

Reverting to the operations in the Kotli area, simultaneous with the fall of Mirpur, the threat to Kotli increased after the fall of the outposts in the surrounding area. In reply to urgent requests for reinforcements to be sent, two companies of 9 JAK (B and D companies under Captain Ram Prakash and Captain Arjun Das) were quickly despatched from Rawalakot to Kotli. Kotli was at that time garrisoned by B company and one platoon of A company of 2 JAK (all Gorkhas) under Lieut-Colonel Shiv Ram Silwal. After a forced march of 35 miles, they reached Kotli on 17 October. (These were the two companies which attempted the relief of three outposts along the Jhelum—Thorar, Tain and Mang—and then escorted refugees to Hajira, as related in a later chapter.) Their first task, after establishing picquets and posts in and around Kotli, was to proceed to Sarsawa to retrieve the dead bodies of a patrol of 3 JAK which had been ambushed there. It took two days to extricate the bodies. Fighting continued throughout these attempts and 9 JAK suffered many casualties in dead and wounded.

Kotli is situated on a fair-weather road between Mirpur and Poonch. It was a prosperous town, consisting predominantly of Hindu traders. Soon after the arrival of 9 JAK, about 300 hostiles occupied all the heights around the town and subjected it to incessant small arms fire. B and D companies tried to establish contact with Poonch but failed. They were also cut off from Jhangar. A Muslim platoon commanded by Jemadar Abdul Rashid (of D company under Lieut Sardar Ali) posted on a tactical feature called Mandi Post about 1 miles from Kotli, defected to the enemy. The enemy ring around the town tightened. They had by then brought up MMGs, 2 in and 3 in mortars and continued to receive large reinforcements till their strength was about 4,000.

On the night of 16/17 November an attack by about 3,500 hostiles was mounted on Kotli, supported by MMGs and mortar fire from the east and the west simultaneously. The enemy broke through the defences on the eastern side of the town, set fire to houses, and killed many civilians. Panic spread, there was hand-to-hand fighting in the streets and great confusion. But the stout defenders held

their own, killing many of the enemy at bayonet point. Finally, in the early morning, the hostiles withdrew, leaving over 200 dead. JAK casualties, including civilians, were 84 killed and wounded. Part of the credit for the successful defence of Kotli goes to Colonel Baldev Singh Pathainia, then the State Revenue Minister, who was present in the town on an inspection tour. A former officer of the JAK State Force, Colonel Pathania gave the garrison the moral support they needed and helped to reassure the civilian population. He was wounded in this battle.

This was a significant achievement by the JAK garrison, because ammunition was very low as were medical supplies and rations and there was little hope of reinforcement.

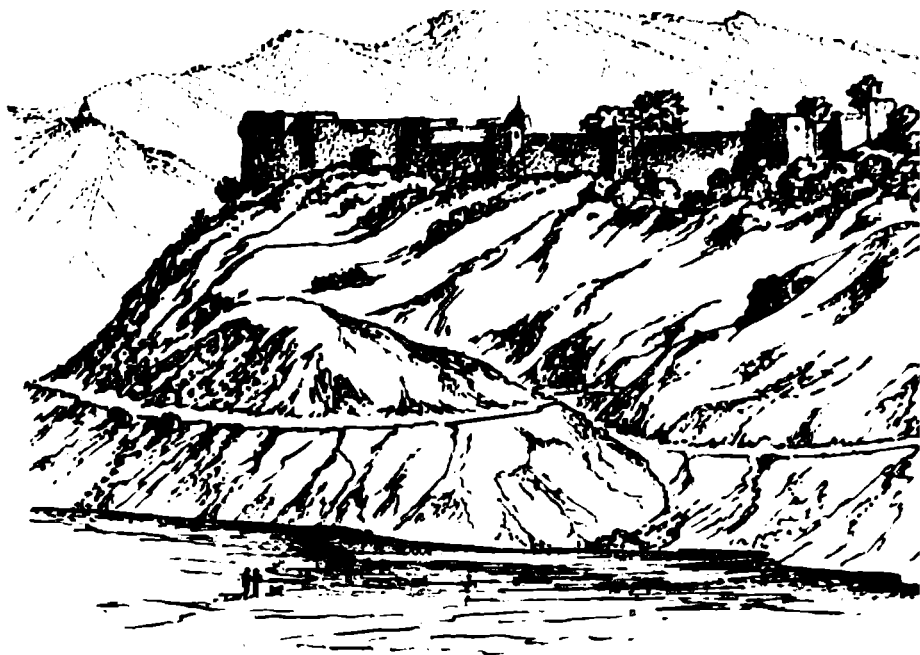
On 19 November Indian Army troops arrived in Jhangar (50 Para Brigade under Brigadier Paranjpe). The next day they moved out to Kotli, accompanied by Brigadier Chattar Singh and one company of state forces. During this march (of 24 miles) many road blocks had to be cleared against stiff opposition. The column arrived in Kotli on 27 November and relieved the JAK garrison there after a six week siege. Thereafter, along with over 9,000 refugees, the relief column and the garrison withdrew to Jhangar on 28 November and thence to Jammu.

Other towns and outposts in this sector were also lost to the raiders during the months of October and November. Beripattan, a vital link on the Jammu-Mirpur-Poonch road was a small town at a ferry crossing on the Tawi river. A bridge across the Tawi had existed for many years but had recently collapsed and not been reconstructed. Beripattan was garrisoned by a platoon of Garrison Police under Jem Mejra Singh. On 10 November, hostiles launched a heavy attack on Beripattan and though the platoon put up strong resistance, the enemy overwhelmed them after four hours of fighting; every man of the platoon died fighting. A truck convoy of four vehicles unaware of the fall of Beripattan, drove into the ferry point and was ambushed. On receipt of this news, two platoons (from battalion headquarters) of 2 JAK were quickly despatched to Beripattan from Naoshera under Major Angrez Singh to reinforce the guard at the crossing points. The column met opposition at Sial village beyond Naoshera but proceeded to Beripattan; however, they arrived long after the convoy had been looted and the guard killed. They returned to Naoshera that evening just in time to relieve the town from a heavy enemy attack.

Rajouri was garrisoned by a platoon of 2 JAK under Subedar

Major Bhim Singh (No 3 platoon of A company) and one platoon of a Dogra GP company. This old town, some miles to the north of Naoshera had been a trade centre from the Mughal days and had a predominantly Hindu business community. In October the town was invested by hostiles who were joined by many local Muslims; the attacks continued for days until the garrison's ammunition was exhausted. Rajouri eventually fell to the enemy on 11 November, and the town was looted and plundered. Major Angrez Singh with two platoons from the Training Battalion in Jammu assisted the 2 JAK garrison in the evacuation of the inhabitants and succeeded in rescuing many thousands. Subedar Major Bhim Singh was killed in this operation.

It was not until the Indian Army arrived that Rajouri was recaptured from the enemy. But before then events in the Kashmir Valley sector had turned everyone's attention to the most critical operation of all—the defence of the capital, Srinagar.



BAHU FORT

11

Invasion of the Valley

DOMEL is situated on the south bank of the Jhelum River at its confluence with the River Kishenganga. At Domel the Jhelum, from its north-westerly direction as it rushes down the Uri gorge, suddenly takes a 300-degree swing and flows southwards towards the plains of West Punjab, marking the boundary between J&K and Pakistan. The main road from Srinagar, which follows the south bank of the Jhelum, crosses over to the north bank at the Domel bridge, then goes two miles north to Muzaffarabad, where it crosses to the west bank of the Kishenganga—and on to Garhi Habibullah Khan, Mansehra and Abbotabad in Pakistan. The southern fork of the road from Srinagar travels south from Domel along the east bank of the Jhelum for about twenty miles to Barsala before crossing over to Pakistan by the Kohala bridge.

4 JAK Infantry was disposed for the defence of the Muzaffarabad-Domel area. This unit, as has been related, had served in Burma during the Second World War, and was considered to be one of the crack units of the Indian State Forces. The commanding officer

was Lieut-Colonel Narain Singh, a Jammu Dogra and an officer with a fierce pride in the battalion in which he had served for so long.

The class composition of the battalion was half Dogra Hindu and half Poonch Muslim. Its dispositions were :

Battalion Headquarters at Domel.

A Company (Dogra Hindus—Company Commander Lieut Labh Singh) and one platoon of B Company (also Dogras) on the southern fork of the road, in the Barsala-Kohala bridge area.

C Company (Muslims—Company Commander Capt Mohammed Azam Khan) at Lohar Gali and Ramkot on the Abbotabad road.

D Company (Muslims—Company Commander Capt Gazanfar Ali Shah) at Domel, with one platoon at Ghori (eight miles north, along the Kishenganga) and one platoon at Dhub.

B Company (Dogras—Company Commander Capt Prabhat Singh) was away at Kupwara in the north-west corner of Kashmir Valley, with one platoon at Keran and a company of Garrison Police (Muslims) at Tithwal.

Two (mixed) platoons were formed from Headquarters Company and located at Bhattika (west of Ghori) and Kotli (a village in the small salient of state territory on the west bank of the Jhelum just south of Domel).

The tasks given to the battalion were; to assist the civil government in maintaining law and order; to check infiltration of lawless elements from Pakistan; and to be on its guard against any possible threat of aggression from across the border.

There had been no serious incursions across the border in the Muzaffarabad-Domel area, such as happened in Poonch and Mirpur; hence 4 JAK were not on “operational alert”. In fact Army Headquarters in Srinagar was more concerned about the ominous portents on this front than was the Commanding Officer of 4 JAK. As early as 15 October, batches of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Abbotabad and Mansehra had brought news that a large force of Pakistani tribesmen, numbering over 6,000 (mainly Afridis and Waziris) had concentrated in the Abbotabad-Mansehra area with the avowed intent of invading the Valley. But Colonel Narain Singh, when assured by his Muslim company commander at Lohar Gali that these were merely alarmist rumours and that there was no evidence of any concentration of tribesmen, chose to believe his own officer rather than refugee rumours—and ignored the warnings.

Army Headquarters, on the other hand, had received Intelligence that Muslim officers and men manning the forward defences on the Mansehra road were congregating in mosques ostensibly for prayers but more likely for secret *rendezvous* with enemy agents. An attempt by Army Headquarters to verify these reports brought a stinging reply from Colonel Narain Singh, who stated that he had known his Muslim officers and men for many years and had complete confidence in them. When it was suggested that Muslim elements in the battalion might, under some pretext, be withdrawn to Srinagar during this crucial period and replaced by Dogras, he said that this would be a grievous insult to the unit and he would not countenance it in any circumstances.

Loyalty to one's command and to one's subordinates is a highly valued quality in any army. Lieut-Colonel Narain Singh had it in abundant measure, but unfortunately he failed to temper it with caution and circumspection—which security of his country demanded at that juncture. Although thousands upon thousands of Muslim subjects of the state served the government loyally and steadfastly, the possibility of defections (or even hesitation on the part of Muslim troops to take armed action against their co-religionists from Pakistan) must have occurred to all thinking people of the state—particularly in the case of Poonch Muslims, upon whom the impact of communal passion had been so marked. Colonel Narain Singh obstinately refused to admit of any such possibility—for which he and his battalion were to pay a heavy price.

Muslim officers and men of 4 JAK had, in fact, been in league with the enemy for weeks (and in the event, they defected to a man). Detailed information regarding strengths and dispositions of the garrisons at Domel and Muzaffarabad had been passed on to the Pakistanis. Then, during the night of 21/22 October, when an army of tribesmen crossed the border into Kashmir territory, guides from C Company in Lohar Gali led them to Muzaffarabad and Domel, where the troops—not being on the alert because of the supposed security provided by the deployed forward companies—were sleeping in their barracks.

By the early hours of the 22nd raiders estimated to number 5,000, armed with rifles, bren guns, mortars and grenades, crossed the border. While some of them occupied the prepared defensive positions of the battalion, the remainder swarmed upon the inhabitants of Muzaffarabad and Domel, killing, raping, looting, and burning. The main target was of course the non-Muslim population

but no one not in league with the enemy was spared—and looting and raping was indiscriminate. Aided by their Muslim allies from 4 JAK, they attacked the battalion's quarter guard and carried out a massacre of the garrison. Capt Ram Singh, the Adjutant, was killed while trying to organise the defence of the quarter guard.

Only where actual defensive positions were occupied was any effective resistance offered. The medium machine-gun section of 8 JAK (which had been left behind in Muzaffarabad when 8 JAK had passed through *en route* from Srinagar to Chirala three weeks earlier) was located on a piece of high ground in the area north of the city. This section, under the command of Havildar Bishen Singh, gave a good account of itself. Throughout the 22nd it was attacked several times; not only did it hold out, but it kept up incessant harassing fire on all visible targets and inflicted heavy casualties on the looters. By evening, however, it was clear that the city was disintegrating in front of them. Bazaars and houses were in flames and a thick pall of smoke covered the centre of the city. Women were being raped in the streets and their children trampled to death. When Havildar Nar Singh Dev, a straggler who had managed to escape from Domel to Muzaffarabad, brought news of the ransacking of Domel, Bishen Singh knew that there was no hope of holding out much longer. As night fell, he could clearly see the headlights of a mile-long convoy snaking its way down the road from Pakistan, the vehicles almost nose-to-tail. At midnight he gave the order to pull out and led his section and a large column of refugees towards the hills to the north. The troops manhandled their machine guns and eventually brought them back—via Tithwal, the Nastachun Pass and Sopur—to Srinagar.

The platoon of Headquarters Company located at Bhattika was the victim of the worst piece of recorded treachery that day. Although they were not themselves under attack, Subedar Hukma Singh could hear sounds of firing from the direction of Muzaffarabad—and as the morning wore on he could see clouds of smoke rising above the city. He attempted to contact Battalion Headquarters by telephone and helio but got no answer. His colleague, Subedar Mir Waz, in command of the platoon at Ghori, rang up and urgently asked for help as the post—he said—was under attack. However, Subedar Hukma Singh was less gullible than others and replied that he could not spare any men for a relief attempt. Most of the Muslims of his platoon deserted that night.

Throughout that day and the next the platoon was left alone—

with still no word from the battalion. On the evening of the 23rd, over five hundred enemy—including deserters from the picquet itself—surrounded the post and began to subject it to mortar and automatic fire. The fire-fight lasted till well into the dark, after which the enemy withdrew into the surrounding hills, leaving 7 dead. By then however the ammunition of the platoon was nearly exhausted and the Subedar decided to withdraw from the post and try to reach Battalion Headquarters.

At midnight the Bhattika post pulled out quietly and began to work its way westwards towards Ghori along a track. During the withdrawal a Muslim signaller, Sepoy Lal Din, slipped away from the column—and probably went across to Ghori to inform Subedar Waz about the Bhattika platoon's plight and location.

Towards the early morning the column was surrounded and heavily engaged; among the enemy were some former colleagues from Subedar Waz's platoon. The platoon fought back but when the last round of ammunition was expended, Subedar Hukma Singh had no option but to surrender to the enemy. The prisoners were marched to the river, stripped down to their underwear, lined up on the river bank and shot in cold blood. Only one sepoy, Sansar Singh, escaped by plunging headlong into the torrential stream—from which he finally managed to emerge on the far bank a mile downstream and make his way towards the Srinagar road.

Another of 4 JAK's outposts, the one at Kotli on the west bank of the Jhelum about four miles south-west of Domel, consisted of Naik Sant Ram and eight men. By 8.00 am on the 22nd, having heard the sounds of firing but unable to get any information from headquarters on the wireless, Sant Ram had collected the Hindu and Sikh inhabitants of the village (previously issued with muzzle-loaders) to bolster his defences. Soon the post was surrounded by a large body of raiders and hostile villagers—and two attacks were launched on the position, both successfully repulsed.

The fighting continued for three hours and it was only when ammunition begun to run low that Sant Ram withdrew the post. After a series of running battles they reached the Jhelum which they crossed by the suspension foot-bridge and quickly dismantled it after the last of the refugees had crossed. However, their troubles were not by any means over; when they begun to move up towards Domel they came up against bands of hostiles coming south from Domel. Unable to offer battle or manoeuvre (because of the large number of women and children by then with the column) Sant

Ram decided upon a new escape route—westward through the hills and forests to Garhi, which they reached at 2.00 am on 23 October. Soon thereafter they encountered Brigadier Rajinder Singh's relief column from Srinagar rushing up towards Domel. After despatching the refugees eastwards along the road, Naik Sant Ram and his men joined up with the relief column.

Not everywhere, however, was the enemy allowed to have his own way. On the southern front, in the Barsala-Kohala area, Lieut Labh Singh with his company of Dogras, a handful of garrison police and some stalwarts from among the Sikh and Hindu villagers not only carried out several local offensive operations inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy but captured several prisoners and sizeable stocks of arms and ammunition. He was also able to extricate his force after a week-long withdrawal operation—and led them, together with several thousand refugees, to the safety of Bagh, where he joined up with Lieut-Colonel Maluk Singh of 8 JAK and his assortment of sub-units of the JAK Regiment. 'A' Company's story is worth recording in detail.

It was not until 2.30 pm on the 22nd that A Company first received official intimation of the calamity that had befallen the garrison at Muzaffarabad. A signaller from Battalion Headquarters passed a wireless message about the surprise attack by the tribesmen and the subsequent slaughter, but was unable to indicate if there were any orders for A Company from the CO. This was the only message received by A Company. For the next three days there was comparative quiet on the A Company front—but an ominous lack of traffic over the battalion wireless net.

After the sacking of Muzaffarabad and Domel, the enemy headquarters (manned by Pakistani Army personnel) pushed a large force of tribesmen mounted in buses and lorries, up the Jhelum gorge road towards Srinagar, leaving a smaller force which, with the cooperation of agents from the local Muslim population, embarked upon a systematic campaign of murder, loot and arson among the Sikh and Hindu communities of the rural areas of Muzaffarabad District. But A Company was not to know about this state of affairs for another three days.

On the evening of 24 October, a British brigadier and a lieutenant-colonel, both of the Pakistan Army, came to Kohala post and sent for Labh Singh. They told him that six thousand tribesmen were on the rampage in the Valley, that they had already ransacked Baramulla, that the Maharaja and his government had fled and—

while making a pretence of dissociating the Pakistan Army from this outrage they asked him to surrender all weapons except personal arms and be taken into custody for safe escort to Rawalpindi. Labh Singh refused the "offer". "A Dogra soldier," he told them, "would prefer to die fighting than to seek Pakistan's protection."

As they were leaving, Jemadar Suraj Prakash (who had accompanied his company commander to the meeting) said to the British brigadier, "Good-bye, Sir. We shall meet again if we live." The brigadier frowned and said, "You won't live, Sahib. Take it from me."

When Lieut Labh Singh returned from the meeting and told his subordinate commanders about the interview, they unanimously supported him in his stand and said that they were prepared to lay down their lives fighting rather than surrender to Pakistan or to British officers in its pay.

At 8.30 pm on the same evening, a convoy of lorries with their headlights blazing was seen coming down the Murree road to Kohala. 'A' Company's detachment at the bridge reported that troops in uniform had debussed at Kohala. Shortly thereafter, information received from local Sikh and Hindu villagers indicated that a large party of raiders was operating from the north against Barsala, sacking villages and driving the refugees southwards. In the early morning of the 25th, reports were received from villages south of Kohala bridge that raiders had worked their way round to the south and were burning and looting non-Muslim houses. Labh Singh realised that an attempt was being made to establish a ring round A Company's area—the raiders to the north, east and south and Pakistani troops to the west (on Kohala bridge and across the Jhelum).

Later in the morning, they received the worst news of all—the fall of Domel, the treachery of their Muslim colleagues and the massacre of its inhabitants. They also learned from three Garrison Police personnel who had escaped from Domel that the Commanding Officer, Colonel Narain Singh, while attempting to escape southwards towards Kohala with a small party of GPC personnel had been ambushed and killed the day before.

Labh Singh realised that no useful purpose would be served by the continued presence of his company in that area; on the contrary unless he broke through the tightening ring that was being drawn around him, his company would be the victim of a plot between

the Pakistan Army at Kohala and the raiders from Domel to liquidate the Barsala force.

Labh Singh therefore decided to abandon his positions at last light that evening and to begin withdrawing south-westwards in the direction of Poonch and issued orders to that effect. However, at 10.30 am he received news from No 4 Platoon at Bagla, two miles to the north-east of the bridge, that a large number of refugees had been driven to that village by parties of raiders advancing from the north—who were preparing to attack the village. Without hesitation, Labh Singh despatched No 2 Platoon from the main company position to reinforce No 4 Platoon (from B Company—Jamedar Romal Singh). The enemy strength to the north continued to build up—and at mid-day the Company Commander decided to concentrate his whole force to deal with the threat at Bagla. By 5.30 pm this move was completed. Unfortunately, the enemy was in occupation of the Topa Ridge overlooking the village as also the Dana Gali feature. The extrication of the refugees from Bagla could not be contemplated as long as the heights were held by the enemy; Labh Singh therefore decided to launch a dawn attack next morning to capture these dominating heights.

Platoon commanders were collected at night and verbal orders issued for the attack. No 4 Platoon (B Company) and No 1 Platoon were to attack Topa Ridge, supported by a section of GPC. No 2 Platoon was to capture Dana Gali.

The troops began to move up for the attack at 2.15 am. They crept up the slopes silently, guided by the men of the GPC (ex-servicemen from the Indian Army) and reached the crest just as dawn was breaking. They found the enemy, exhausted after their day's work of looting and burning and least expecting an offensive operation, fast asleep under their quilts, with just one unwary sentry warming himself at a brightly burning fire.

Nk Makhan Singh of the GPC, who was the leading guide for No 4 Platoon crept up to the sentry and decapitated him with one stroke of his sword. At the same time grenades were thrown into the midst of the sleeping enemy and then the leading section went in with bayonets fixed and rifles firing from the hip. Within a few minutes Topa Ridge was in A Company's hands.

No 2 Platoon did not have it quite so easy—for in their case the enemy had been alerted. However, after the 3 in mortar had been brought up to support the assault, Dana Gali was also captured.

'A' Company's casualties were one *naik* of the GPC and 5 refugees

(used as guides) wounded. As against this the total haul made by A Company was one wounded Pakistani VCO (JCO) and 8 riflemen (in uniform), about 8,000 rounds of 303 ammunition (which was to come in very handy) and 21 hand grenades. A number of "tak-dums" (Pathan-made rifles) were also captured—and those were issued to Sikh refugees to guard the refugee column.

When questioned, the captured Subedar said that he was a pensioner from the Baluch Regiment. He had joined a volunteer force called "Muslim League National Guards". He had been called up some weeks previously, placed in charge of 300 men (mixed Pathans and Punjabi and Kashmiri Muslims) issued arms and ammunition by the Pakistani Army and sent in to Kashmir in the wake of the invading hordes of tribesmen.

When the whole of Labh Singh's command was collected at one place it was found that the refugees alone totalled about three thousand. As there was still some sniping from nearby heights, they were organised into a column and moved some miles north-eastwards to Awera village, where they were rested for the night.

Early in the morning information was received that there was a large collection of refugees at nearby Mandhri village, who were expecting to be attacked by a gang of raiders. Labh Singh dispatched a small party ahead and, after organising the long column of refugees under his "command", marched off for Mandhri, which he reached at 2.30 pm, much to the relief and joy of the three thousand more refugees gathered there. It was decided to spend the night of 27 October at Mandhri.

Next morning, at a conference of refugee leaders, Labh Singh was told that the route from Mandhri to Bagh was blocked by a strong raiders' post at Chikar, where the previous GPC had been located. The Muslim members of the company had slaughtered all the non-Muslims—and then established a post of their own with the help of the tribesmen.

The refugees now numbered over six thousand. They had been living off the land for three or four days—often unfed for long periods. The plight of the women, children and aged was particularly bad—especially as very few had adequate clothing for the cold of the nights spent in those hills. The only feasible route of withdrawal was through the Chikar area to Bagh: and Labh Singh boldly took the decision to fight his way through Chikar to the south.

There followed three days of constant harassment, local attacks to clear hill features of snipers and counter-attacks against ambush

parties. A number of casualties were suffered both by the troops and by the refugees, but by resolute action the column fought its way past the Chikar area and by the early morning of 29 October, had reached the last high ridge before Bagh—the Nanga Pir—about 8 miles to the north of Bagh.

When the leading troops reached the top, they began to cook their first hot meal in days—while waiting for the long refugee column to close in. A few local sheep and goats grazing on the hill-sides were promptly commandeered for the pot. Before the detachment could get down to their meal, however, they saw two parties of enemy, in uniform, closing in on them from opposite directions on the ridge.

The refugee column had begun to arrive and the enemy started firing indiscriminately into their midst with rifles and light machine guns. The 3 in mortar detachment promptly went into action: the enemy were pushed back but took up positions behind cover and kept up sniping fire. On two occasions the Dogras put in counter-attacks to drive the enemy off the ridge or out of range. The exchange of fire continued till nightfall—by which time the company had suffered two NCO's killed and one wounded and 8 or 10 refugees wounded. As night fell the enemy closed in again: during the night they put in two attacks both of which were repulsed after hand-to-hand fighting.

At 4.00 am the platoon commanders and refugee leaders were summoned to Company Headquarters. The JCOs reported that very little ammunition was left. It was apparent that the enemy would continue to tighten their ring as more and more raiders joined them: without sufficient ammunition it would be fatal for the troops protecting the large refugee column to continue to remain in the area; a break-out was imperative.

It is bitter and tragic to record that even as the conference was still being held, discussing ways and means of saving the refugees, a rumour was spread by some of them that the ammunition had finished and that the army personnel were planning to slip away, leaving the civilians to their fate. Panic spread through the refugees like wildfire. Some of the Sikhs became desperate and before anyone could stop them they began killing their own women, particularly young girls, to prevent them from the bestial atrocities of the Pakistani tribesmen. By the time the troops received this information and rushed to stop these cruel acts, some three to four hundred had been put to death.

Labh Singh decided that the only reasonable course open to him was to break through the ring southwards and hope to surprise the enemy sufficiently to unbalance him. The last thing the tribesmen expected was for this bedraggled band of soldiery—and bedraggled they certainly looked, even the Dogras of 4 JAK—to launch an offensive.

It must be remembered that the troops were nearing the point of exhaustion. None had had a square meal since leaving Barsala : and now their ammunition was nearly exhausted. Nevertheless, Labh Singh was determined to make one last desperate effort. He decided to destroy all his mortars, as their ammunition was exhausted : in any case not a single man among the refugees was fit enough to assist in carrying the equipment. As for his own troops, every man was required to be deployed for the attack and for the protection of the column of refugees.

At 8.00 pm on the morning of the 30th, with their war-cries on their lips, about 60 men of A Company backed by a large *jatha* of Sikhs made a charge straight at the enemy. One platoon's machine guns gave what little supporting fire it could—but they need not have worried. The enemy ran in a mad scramble down the wooded slopes, leaving behind some dead—as well as six Pathan rifles, one 303 (with a JAK number) and some ammunition. JAK casualties were two killed and two wounded : a number of Sikh refugees were also killed.

As soon as they saw the enemy running away the refugees broke harbour and began to move down the ridge towards Bagh. Absolute confusion reigned for a while—but the troops did not try to stem the rush. Instead Labh Singh quickly organised a rear-guard with three platoons deployed along three sides of the ridge—because he knew that the enemy would soon return to harass the refugees.

Nor was he mistaken. By 11.00 pm the rear-guard was engaged by the raiders. As the platoons began to leap-frog backwards to catch up with the last of the withdrawing column, they were constantly attacked and sniped—and sometimes ambushed. However, by dint of skilful control and determined fighting, the Dogras held off the enemy and continued their rearward movement. By 3.00 pm that afternoon they had reached village of Bani Pasari, which was known to be only 3 miles from Bagh.

Here they met a man wearing a Sikh beard who brought one Mohamed Yaqub to the Company Commander and introduced him as the village *lambardar*—supposedly a loyal servant of the state

who had helped Hindus and Sikhs escape to Bagh. They both asserted that though there had been many of the Maharaja's troops in Bagh till a day or so ago, they had heard no firing from or seen any signs of activity there since then. They had also heard rumours that the troops had pulled back to Rawalakot. When further questioned, the *lambardar* said that in fact Bagh was full of Pathans.

It was growing dark by then but as the plight of the refugees was pitiable, especially the wounded and the sick, Labh Singh had perforce to stay the night in the village. He called for a conference of his subordinate commanders at 10.00 pm, but unbeknown to him, the *lambardar* and his companion, who had been distributing stocks of flour from the village among the refugees, had also told them that if they collected some money and gave it to the leader of the Pathans, they would be given safe passage to Bagh. Desperate and demoralised, the leaders of the refugees agreed. Two thousand rupees were collected and one of the refugee leaders crossed over to the enemy and handed over the amount. On being questioned by the Pathans about the state of the Dogra troops, the refugee leader told them all that he knew—particularly about the rumours that the ammunition had finished, that many of them had deserted and therefore the force consisted of not more than 40 or 50 unarmed personnel—most of them having thrown away their weapons.

This news put new heart into the Pathan. They surrounded the harbour area in the early hours of the 31st and at day-break fired a few rounds into the village; then the leader of the Pathans came inside the perimeter followed by about 30 of his men, shouting for the Maharaja's soldiers to surrender. He could not see the defensive positions concealed in the bushes and thickets.

Labh Singh's orderly started the shooting by putting a bullet neatly between the Pathan leader's eyes. On this signal a hail of bullets tore into the gang of raiders—and soon there was not one left standing. At the same time Jemadar Suraj Prakash and his No 2 Platoon charged towards the main body of the enemy, who took to their heels—leaving behind an uncounted number of dead and wounded.

Just at this moment a detachment of Dogra troops from Bagh garrison appeared from across the fields—and a cheer went up around the camp. Colonel Maluk Singh, having received information of Labh Singh's column, had sent out a party to make contact and escort it to Bagh.

Labh Singh's column reached Bagh at 2.30 pm on 31 October.

In Bagh A Company 4 JAK joined Bagh garrison, which consisted of:

Lieut-Colonel Maluk Singh, CO of 8 JAK, and two officers—Capt Sunit Singh Pathania and Lieut Mahattam Singh; two companies of 8 JAK; and two companies of 7 JAK (Major Amar Nath Sharma, Capt L.D. Silwar and Capt Dalbir Singh). This garrison finally reached Poonch on 6 November.

At Poonch, Lieut Labh Singh's detachment together with two companies each from 7 JAK and 9 JAK came under command of Major A.N. Lakhanpal—the officiating CO of 9 JAK. In February, 1948, this valiant detachment was evacuated to Jammu to form the nucleus for the re-raising of 4 JAK.

* * * *

At JAK Army Headquarters in Srinagar, the first news of the invasion was received mid-morning of 22nd October, when Colonel Narain Singh of 4 JAK spoke over the wireless to Capt Nasib Singh, a staff officer at Army Headquarters, and informed him that a large force of tribesmen had crossed into J&K territory early that morning, attacked Muzaffarabad and then set about looting and burning the city. An hour later, another message was received to the effect that the Officers' Mess was under fire and that because of heavy enemy sniping the quarter guard had been isolated and the men could not reach it to draw their arms.

There was another period of silence; thereafter, in the early afternoon the 4 JAK wireless set opened up for the last time: "The CO has gone towards the lines—we are being fired at from all directions—I am going to destroy my set." There was no further contact with 4 JAK.

Capt Nasib Singh had kept the Chief of Staff, Brigadier Rajinder Singh, and Lieut-Colonel KS Katoch, MC, (Indian Army) Military Adviser to the JAK Army, informed about the situation on the Muzaffarabad front. The Chief of Staff, in his turn, had passed on all available information to the Maharaja and had discussed possible courses of action with the latter.

In the afternoon, when no further information was forthcoming, Capt Nasib Singh, with an escort of 5 men, was despatched up the road to Muzaffarabad. When he reached Uri, however, he received a telephone message directing him to return to Baramulla. At Baramulla, Chowdry Faizullah, the *Wazir*, told him that the Chief of Staff was anxious to speak to him on the telephone. Brig Rajinder Singh, when contacted, told Nasib that the Maharaja had directed

him to stop the raiders—and he was leaving immediately for Baramulla, where Nasib was to await him.

In Srinagar, the Maharaja had sent for Brig Rajinder Singh shortly after Nasib's departure, and told him that he had opened informal negotiations with New Delhi regarding accession to India and had requested troops to be sent to help defend Srinagar. His Highness was in uniform, and ordered the Chief of Staff to organise a reinforcement column which he would personally lead into battle to stop the enemy's advance. It was after some argument—and only upon Brig Rajinder Singh's assurance that he would go forward himself—that the ruler was dissuaded from his resolve. He directed Brig Rajinder Singh to collect all the combatant personnel he could find in Badami Bagh Cantonment and set out for the front : his task would be "to hold the enemy on the Muzaffarabad-Uri road until the arrival of Indian troops."

A force of some 100 officers and men was collected from the various details in Badami Bagh Cantonment—two platoons from 8 JAK and one from 1 JAK, a few personnel from 7 JAK (who had been on line of communication duties between Kohala and Baramulla) a few personnel from the JAK Training School (students and staff) a detachment of 3 in mortars (8 JAK) and a medium machine gun.

Brig Rajinder Singh and his force left Srinagar at 6.30 pm in civilian buses and trucks and after a brief halt at Baramulla to contact the civil authorities, reached Uri at midnight. Uri was very tense and Rajinder Singh straightaway made some defensive dispositions in order to restore a measure of confidence among the inhabitants.

Early next morning, while the main body began to organise the defence of Uri, a small force of about two platoons under Capt Prithi Singh was sent forward to make contact with the enemy. Near Chakothi the column met Subedar Munshi Ram and three men of 4 JAK. They had escaped from Domel, the Subedar being lightly wounded. They confirmed the fall of Domel, but were unable to give any information regarding the CO or any other officer—nor how the enemy had succeeded in breaking through the defences at Lohargali and Ramkot.

As the column moved on towards Raghi (twelve miles short of Domel) they began to meet a stream of refugees fleeing from Muzaffarabad and Domel. Half a mile short of Garhi, hearing the sound of firing ahead, Prithi Singh issued orders for the column to debus and to move tactically. Hardly had they done so when a

bus was seen coming up the road from the direction of Garhi. On sighting Prithi Singh's column, the bus halted and tribesmen were seen pouring out of the vehicle—while other buses soon came round the bend of the road.

Without hesitation the leading troops engaged the hostiles with fire. Although taken by surprise, the enemy soon deployed off the road and began to return the fire. At the end of about two hours, one other rank had been killed and Prithi Singh himself wounded. As there was a danger of the enemy working round behind him, Prithi Singh withdrew his force some six miles to take up a position at the village of Hatain. However, the enemy followed up quickly and Prithi Singh decided to break contact and make for Uri to rejoin the main body.

It was not long before the JAK force at Uri realised that the enemy intended to by-pass the Uri position by crossing the Jhelum over the foot-bridge at Garhi and then move down the track that runs along the north bank of the river. At the same time, a large number of them were climbing up the mountainside to the south and proceeding along the Pir Kanthi ridge to launch an attack down the slopes towards Uri. The enemy strength was estimated to be about 5,000.

Back in Uri, it had been decided to hold a defensive position at the bend just east of the hamlet, where the road was defladed from snipers on the higher slopes. The enemy did not put in an attack on the defensive position during the night but some tribesmen entered the village. Screams from the inhabitants and sounds of firing had indicated that the village was being sacked. Unfortunately, there was nothing the small force could have done about it without jeopardising the defence of the road.

In the morning, Rajinder Singh went back to Baramulla to telephone Srinagar. He spoke to Brigadier Faqir Singh, Commander of Srinagar Brigade, passed him whatever information was available and asked for reinforcements. Brigadier Faqir Singh promised to send another 70 or 80 men, including a section of medium machine guns and a 3 in mortar detachment. Rajinder Singh then returned to Uri.

Meanwhile, the Maharaja had taken over personal command of Army Headquarters in Srinagar. He sent for Capt Jwala Singh of 1 JAK and told him to collect what troops he could find in Badami Bagh barracks and proceed immediately towards Uri with a written message for the Chief of Staff which read :

Brigadier Rajendrasingh is commanded to hold the enemy at Uri at all costs and to the last man. Reinforcement is sent with Capt Jwalasingh. If Brigadier Rajendrasingh is not contacted, Captain Jwala Singh is commanded to hold the enemy at all costs and to the last man. He will do his best to contact Brigadier Rajinder Singh.

Captain Jwala Singh, with reinforcements consisting of men from 8 JAK, a detachment of 3 in mortar and a section of medium machine guns, left Srinagar at 1.00 am and reached Uri at 3.00 am on 24 October.

At Uri, the enemy seemed to be all around the JAK defensive position. So precarious was the situation that Brigadier Rajinder Singh decided to blow the steel-girder bridge just ahead of the forward defences. The only demolition stores that Capt Nasib Singh had brought with him were some gun-cotton slabs, a few sticks of dynamite and five anti-tank mines. It was a sturdy bridge and it took the Pioneer personnel of the force 2 hours to prepare a suitable demolition plan. However, finally the job was done—and after setting off the charge there was a yawning gap on the far side of the bridge sufficient to prevent a vehicular column crossing over without major repairs.

While alternative positions were being sited, sounds of heavy firing were heard from the direction of Chakothi, six miles away; within the space of one hour, the enemy had concentrated against them and was pressing heavily on their positions. The enemy column, nearly a thousand strong, and equipped with modern weapons, launched several attacks on the defences of the garrison under the covering fire of 3 in and 2 in mortars and supported by medium machine guns. They attacked in wave after wave, only to be mowed down by the deadly fire of the defenders' medium machine guns. After about two hours, the enemy fell back, having suffered considerable casualties. In the late afternoon the enemy launched another heavy and a well organised attack with redoubled vigour; this was barely contained.

The enemy seemed to be everywhere—on the ridge, along the slopes, across the river and on the main road between Chakothi and Uri. The defences were not thick enough to prevent infiltration during the night, so a decision was taken to break contact and fall back on Mahura and establish a fresh defensive position there. Although this entailed disobeying his ruler's orders, Rajinder Singh had no alternative. Uri could easily be surrounded and cut off, so it was no longer prudent to hang on there. Moreover, the

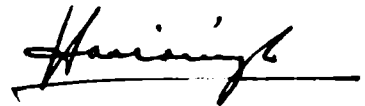


Maharaja Hari Singh

MILITARY DEPARTMENT

ARMY ORDER

Brigadier Rajendrasingh is commanded to hold the enemy at Uri at all costs and to the last man. Reinforcement is sent with Capt. Jawalasingh. If Brigadier Rajendrasingh is not contacted, Capt. Jawalasingh is commanded to hold the enemy at all costs and to the last man. He will do his best to contact Brigadier Rajendrasingh.



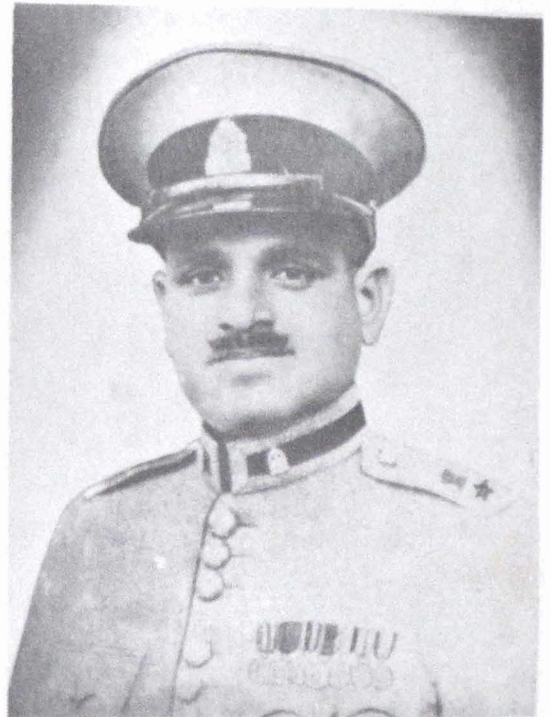
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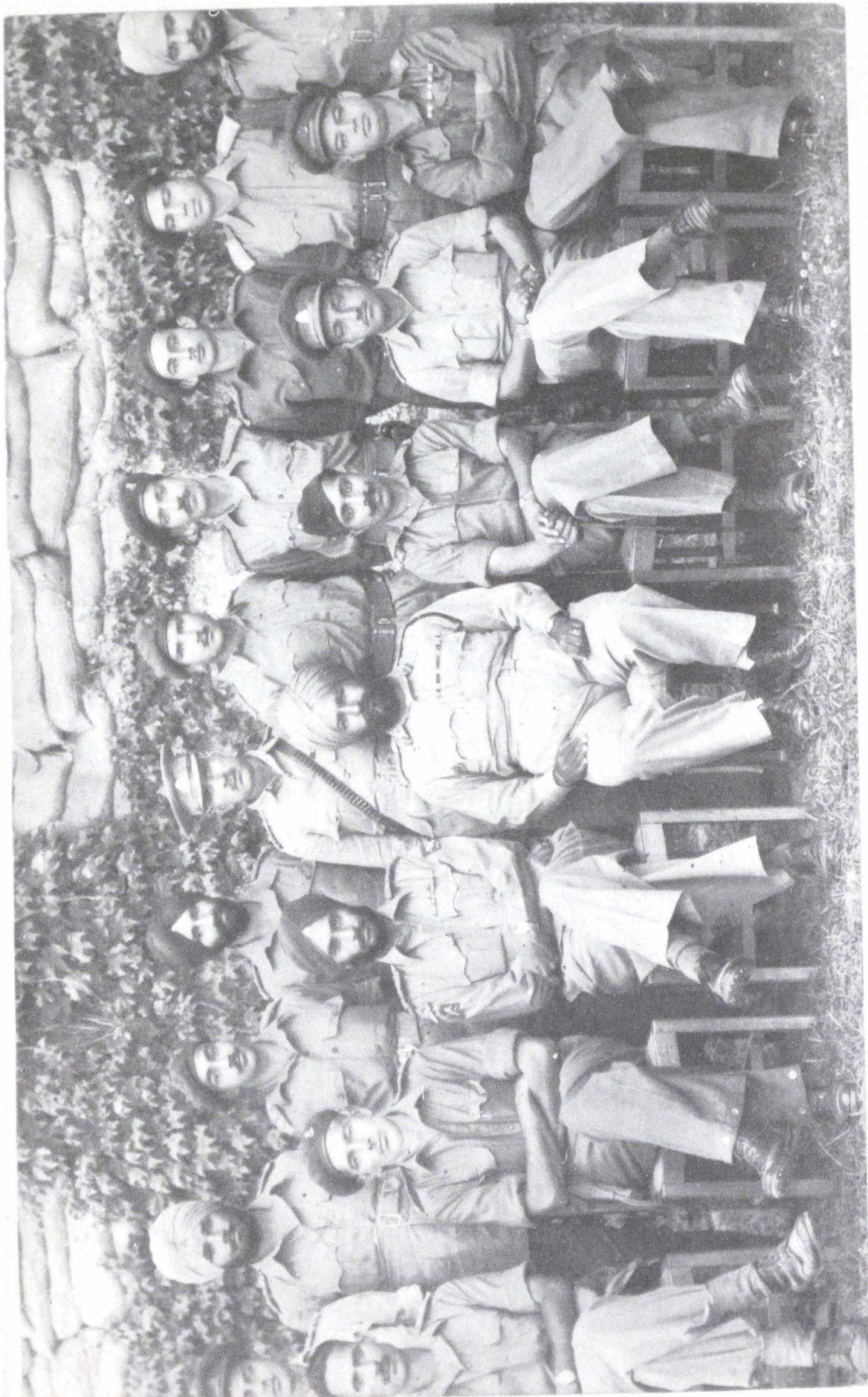
Brigadier Rajendra Singh



Major-General Janak Singh



Lieut-General Narain Singh



JAK force had fulfilled its one cardinal function at Uri: it had blown the steel-girder bridge at the eastern exit of the hamlet. The enemy's motor convoy would be halted here till this bridge could be repaired—a task for engineers equipped with bridge-building stores. It eventually transpired that the destruction of this bridge more than any other action saved Srinagar, because the main embussed column of tribesmen refused to go on without their vehicles as they would have nothing in which to carry back their promised loot. So the whole force of tribesmen halted at Uri till the bridge was repaired, gaining for the J&K government a precious two days to negotiate for the intervention of the Indian Army.

The withdrawing troops reached Mahura at 10.00 pm. The staff at the Power House there, thinking that it was an enemy column approaching, put the plant out of action thus cutting off the power supply to Srinagar and the Valley.

The JAK column quickly got down to preparing the defences; at midnight a welcome reinforcement of two detachments of 3 in mortars and the medium machine guns section of 5 JAK arrived from Srinagar—just in time to go into action against the first attack by the enemy at 7.00 am.

The main body of the enemy had halted at Uri; it was the column of tribesmen who had moved on foot along the track north of the river—and crossed over the foot-bridge at Mahura—which attacked the JAK force. The attack was repulsed, though the force suffered some casualties—including Capt Nasib Singh and Subedar Rasila Ram of 7 JAK, who were both wounded.

By mid-day it became obvious that the enemy, finding frontal assault too costly, had decided to work round to the rear of the JAK force, establish road blocks and thus cut off its line of withdrawal. Accordingly they used the track north of the Jhelum to bypass the defences and then cross to the southern side by the two foot bridges over the Jhelum near Rampur and Boniar.

At 2.30 pm Brigadier Rajinder Singh ordered Jwala Singh to take a small demolition party with him and destroy the two bridges. This task was completed by 4.30 pm—but by then a number of enemy pockets had infiltrated into the hills and spurs overlooking the stretch of road between Mahura and Rampur. The decision was, therefore, taken to withdraw the JAK force to Rampur while it was still light and to organise a fresh defensive position there.

After careful reconnaissance defences were sited near the Pathar

ruins at Rampur, trenches were hastily dug and the perimeter occupied by 9.00 pm. The night passed uneventfully but the men got little rest because waist high walls had to be constructed around each trench—*sangar* fashion—as protection against sniping by the enemy occupying spurs and ridges overlooking the defences. This kept the men busy most of the night.

As soon as it was light the enemy began firing from all the slopes overlooking the defences. Groups of tribesmen could be seen scattered over the hillside; the JAK 3 in mortars went into action picking up targets easily. The firing grew in intensity as the morning progressed but so effective was the mortar and machine gun fire of the defenders that the enemy was given no chance to form up for an assault.

The firefight continued all day but the casualties were not heavy—one other rank killed, two wounded and one missing. Meanwhile, patrol reports indicated that the enemy was again resorting to outflanking tactics, establishing road blocks in the rear by felling trees across the road.

There were nine trucks and buses with the defenders and it was obvious that if they were to be pulled back to the next bound an attempt would have to be made to rush the road blocks as soon as it got dark. The Brigadier accordingly issued orders for a withdrawal to the Seri ridge just west of Baramulla.

The withdrawal was to have started at 10.30 pm but by the time the perimeter positions were abandoned and the men arranged tactically in vehicle groups, it was past midnight. At 1.00 am the leading vehicle moved off. Enemy fire started as soon as the convoy passed through Rampur village: the road was well covered by small arms fire from the ridges.

Troops from the two leading vehicles had been detailed to clear the trees from the road under cover of automatic fire from the next two vehicles. The first road block was cleared without any casualty but at the second near Diwan Mandir, the leading driver was hit. This caused the whole convoy to be halted nose to tail, making an easy target for the enemy. Capt Jwala Singh rushed up to the front of the convoy, only to find that the drivers of the first three vehicles had by then been killed. He had the vehicles pushed to one side and succeeded in clearing a way for the remainder. By then he also had been hit: he climbed on the first vehicle to break through the road block and made for the Seri position.

When he halted at Seri, Jwala Singh discovered that only four

vehicles had been able to get past the road block—and the Brigadier's was not among them. Most of the men in the vehicles were either dead or wounded and it was no longer feasible to occupy a defensive position. He therefore decided to pull back to Baramulla and thence to Srinagar.

Brigadier Rajinder Singh was mortally wounded at the second road block. The driver of his vehicle having been killed, his men carried him on their backs for some distance, but realising that evacuation to Barmulla was out of the question—and would only endanger his men—he ordered them to hide him under a culvert and to make their own way to Baramulla as best as they could.

That was the last that was heard of the gallant Brigadier. With a handful of men he had conducted an operation that effectively stopped an overwhelmingly superior enemy for long enough to enable Indian troops to be flown in to Kashmir and thus save Srinagar. Baramulla, alas, was sacked—its women raped, men put to the sword and all moveable property looted: but Srinagar was spared that fate because of the high degree of leadership and courage displayed by Brigadier Rajinder Singh. For his devotion to duty and gallantry he was posthumously awarded the *Maha Vir Chakra*, thus becoming the first recipient of a Union of India gallantry award.

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On 24 October, members of the so-called Azad Kashmir Government that had moved into Kashmir territory behind the raiding tribesmen issued a statement purporting to be from the "Provisional Government of Kashmir" claiming rule over most of the state. The main aim of the tribesmen and other raiders, however, was a mixture of communal vengeance and the search for loot and women. In this process, they sacked and burned all villages in their path—often irrespective of religious allegiance.

Reports reaching Srinagar were confused and contradictory. It was clear, however, that a sizeable invasion was in progress and that Srinagar was in imminent danger. Near panic prevailed in the city; Hindus and Sikhs began their fearful exodus south and over the Banihal Pass to Jammu. On October 24, the raiders captured the power house at Mahura, putting the city of Srinagar in darkness. It was under these conditions that the Maharaja sent his final desperate appeal for aid to the Government of India.

Meanwhile, the first firm indication of armed incursions into Kashmir from Pakistani territory reached the Commander-in-Chief

of the Indian Army on 24 October. On that day, news was received of the fall of Muzaffarabad.

As a result of the Maharaja's appeal, the commanders of the Indian armed forces were directed, on the morning of 24 October, "to examine and prepare plans for sending troops to Kashmir by air and road." During the afternoon of the same day, staff officers of the army and air force accompanied Mr VP Menon (Adviser to the States Ministry) on a flight to Srinagar to consult with the Kashmir government and the military headquarters. At the same time, orders were issued to an infantry battalion to prepare itself to be flown, at short notice, to Srinagar.

The Indian Defence Committee met on the morning of 25 October, under the chairmanship of the Governor General, Lord Mountbatten, to consider the Maharaja's plea for help. Considering further information from Kashmir a prerequisite to intervention, the Committee alerted the Indian Army, but took no action pending word from Mr Menon at Srinagar (who on arrival there had found that the information available in Srinagar was little better than that reaching Delhi). Mr Menon was able to learn little more than that the commander of the Kashmiri troops had promised to hold the raiders as long as possible from reaching the opening into the Kashmir Valley at Baramulla. He urged the Maharaja to depart at once by road to Jammu and planned to leave himself the following morning. He was awakened in the night, however, by the Prime Minister of Kashmir with rumours that the raiders had infiltrated into Srinagar and the advice that they all leave immediately. Mr Menon, left for New Delhi in the first light of the morning.

At a meeting of the Indian Defence Committee later in the morning of October 26, Lord Mountbatten pressed the view that India could legally move troops into Kashmir only if Kashmir acceded to India. Mr Menon was consequently sent again but this time to Jammu, where he obtained the accession of the Maharaja and an agreement that Sheikh Abdullah would "carry the responsibilities in this emergency with...his Prime Minister." That same evening the Defence Committee decided, after long discussion, to accept the accession, and to send in an infantry battalion by air the following morning. The task given to the military unit was "to secure the airfield in Srinagar, to render assistance to the Government of Kashmir in maintaining law and order in Srinagar and, if possible to drive away any tribesmen who might have entered the city."

The only reinforcements the J&K state force had received prior to the outbreak of hostilities, had been from Patiala state. A request from Maharaja Hari Singh for military aid had been met by the ruler of Patiala with the despatch of an infantry battalion to Jammu (presumably to replace the local garrison which had mostly been sent forward to the Mirpur-Poonch area) and a mountain battery, which had been sent up to the Kashmir Valley.

The first contingent of Indian Army troops, consisting of 1st Battalion the Sikh Regiment (Lieut-Colonel DR Rai) landed at Srinagar airfield at 9.30 am on 27 October.

JAK Headquarters were unable to inform Lieut-Colonel Rai exactly how far the enemy had reached though they assured him that they had not yet taken Baramulla. Lieut-Colonel Rai decided to move his battalion up to Baramulla, leaving a small detachment behind at the airfield for its protection. An assortment of buses and trucks had been provided by the JAK Headquarters and the Emergency Government of Kashmir. The battalion was embussed and moved towards Baramulla, 34 miles from Srinagar.

When he reached the hills just east of Baramulla, Colonel Rai met some elements of JAK forces including a detachment of the Bodyguard cavalry. They had taken up positions on the hillside—and from them he learned that the raiders had already reached Baramulla—and were even then burning, looting, raping and killing in the city. The Colonel first disposed his battalion in a defensive position on the hillside, then, taking a strong escort, he went forward towards the town to reconnoitre.

Some elements of the enemy, however, had already by-passed the town and reached the eastern side of Baramulla—and Colonel Rai's party came under fire, suffering some casualties. At the same time, a large body of raiders began to work its way round to the flanks of his battalion's defensive position on the hill, the movement supported by accurate covering fire. The Colonel realised that this was no tribal rabble but an organised body of raiders armed with medium and light machine guns as well as mortars and grenades—and quite obviously operating in units and sub-units under commanders who knew something of modern tactics.

Colonel Rai, aware of the danger of being encircled and cut off, decided to withdraw to the hills west of Pattan village some ten miles back along the road. It was while withdrawing with his battalion that the gallant Colonel was struck down by a raider's bullet.

The CO's death caused a certain amount of dismay and disor-

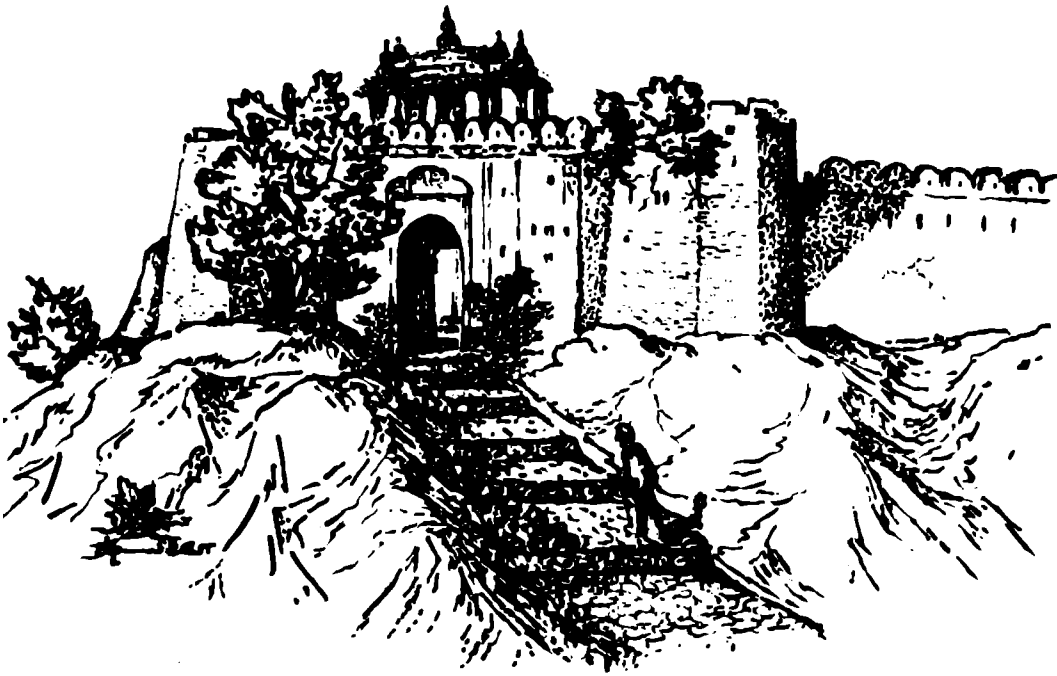
ganisation in the battalion because he had been killed before he could give clear orders regarding further action. The men were hastily embussed and taken back to Srinagar airfield, where fortunately the second-in-command, Major Sampuran Singh, met them and led them all the 17 miles back to Pattan. Here he established the battalion in a strong defensive position on the hills commanding the road.

It has been argued in certain quarters that Colonel Rai exceeded his orders by moving his battalion forward from the airfield to Baramulla. This criticism is absolutely unjustified: no CO worthy of his command should be tied down by a loosely worded directive given to him nearly a thousand kilometers from the scene of battle and that at a time when information of the enemy was virtually non-existent. Colonel Rai's resourcefulness in siezing the chance of forestalling the enemy at Baramulla was the action of a first class professional—and had he been in time he would have saved the inhabitants of that beautiful and peaceful village from the extreme savagery, mass raping and destruction that was visited upon it by the Pakistani raiders. The bestiality displayed by them on dealing with the nuns of the Baramulla Convent was repeated everywhere; few women—Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, young or old—escaped that terrible desecration. But his gamble failed—at least as far as Baramulla is concerned. And even Srinagar might have fallen if the Pathans had shown a little more guts and determination.

As General Sen has written in his book, *Slender was the Thread*, the Pathan has in the past quite undeservedly enjoyed a reputation as a fighting man. As he rightly points out, the tribesman's physical appearance—tall, powerfully built, hawklike features—and the *reclame* that goes with stories of tribal warfare on the Frontier have created a false impression about him. Those who have served with him know that he is in fact remarkably craven—and will fight only by trickery and treachery, seldom face to face with an enemy who stands up to him.

The existence of one solitary battalion defensive position at Pattan was too much for the 5,000 or more tribesmen and other Pakistanis concentrated at Baramulla and on the road behind it. They did not put in an attack that night—nor at any other time: had they done so, they would most likely have overrun the newly arrived battalion and been in Srinagar by next morning. Instead, they spread out over the countryside—burning, looting and raping in the villages. By the time they had crept round by wide flanking movements

towards Srinagar, it was too late. Brigadier L.P. Sen had arrived in the Valley with 161 Infantry Brigade. With three understrength battalions he held Srinagar against the Pathan hordes and eventually pushed them back along the road to Muzaffarabad.



GUMAT GATE

12

The Defence of Poonch

POONCH WAS a *jagir* of J&K State, ruled in internal matters by its own Maharaja, subject to the overall direction of the State Government. The *jagir* is situated in the south-west of the state, between the Pir Panjal Range and the Jhelum River. The latter formed the frontier between it and the original British Indian district of Rawalpindi. On all other sides it is bounded by other districts of J&K. It is a land of tangled hills and forests at the foothills of the Himalayan Range. The valleys are about 3,000 feet above sea level with the ridges rising to a general level of 6,000 feet, but to 14,000 feet in the Pir Panjal Range. (See map at back end-papers).

The town itself lies on the north bank of the Poonch river, just east of its junction with the Batar Nala, at an elevation of 3,400 feet but dominated by a ring of peaks—the highest of which is the feature lying to the north of the town, rising precipitantly to 7,700 feet.

In 1947, a fair-weather road from Uri, over the Haji Pir Pass (8,600 ft) connected Poonch with the Srinagar-Domel road—and was considered to be the main access. Another fair-weather road

led into Poonch from Jammu, via Akhnur, Naoshera, Jhangar and Kotli. (The road from Rajouri via Suran Kot and Krishan Ghati was not constructed till after the war). From Pakistan access to the Poonch area was by means of two foot-bridges—one just west of Palandari and the other to the south-east, at Lachman Pattan—and four ferries.

The inhabitants of Poonch District were predominantly Muslim. From mid-1946 onwards they were known to have established links with the Muslim League in Rawalpindi and its rural branches along the Jhelum. Disaffection among the Poonchi Muslims had been rife for many years: in particular they considered themselves overburdened with taxes—the School Tax, the Road Tax, the Cleanliness Tax and others which had continued to be levied for the past century. In fact throughout the history of Kashmir this region had always been the worst administered—whether as an independent state or as a tributary of the Srinagar ruler.

Poonch “Brigade” Headquarters was commanded by Lieut-Colonel (later Brigadier) Krishan Singh. The units under his command at the beginning of October 1947 were:

1 JAK less one company (Lieut-Colonel Hira Nand Dubey)

8 JAK less elements from two companies (Lieut-Colonel Maluk Singh)

9 JAK less elements of two companies—(Lieut-Colonel Ram Lal)

Two companies of 7 JAK

One company from the Animal Transport (AT) Regiment

One company of Garrison Police (GPC)

1 JAK had a detachment at Bagh. The two detached companies of 7 JAK were at Chirala (south of Kohala). 9 JAK had also been sent to Bagh Tehsil to deal with the troubles that had flared up in that fanatically Muslim area.

8 JAK was, at the end of September, located in Srinagar. When pressure from infiltrators from across the Jhelum greatly increased in mid-September the battalion received orders to move to the Poonch area for deployment along the river. On 20 September A Company (Capt Devraj Kotwal) moved via the Haji Pir Pass and was sent to Lachhman Pattan, where it relieved a company of 1 JAK (Capt Prithi Singh) which was defending the suspension bridge with a view to preventing the entry of armed infiltrators from Pakistan. (Capt Prithi Singh's company, upon relief, was sent back to Srinagar just in time to take part in Brig Rajinder

Singh's operation for the defence of Uri.) B Company 8 JAK reached Poonch on 2 October but was not sent on to its objective, Palandari, because of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Poonch itself.

Battalion Headquarters and C and D companies of 8 JAK remained in Srinagar till 1 October, when an alarming report was received from Chirala that the two companies of 7 JAK located there had been surrounded by a strongly armed hostile column and were being shelled by mortar fire. Immediate reinforcements were asked for and it was decided to send the remainder of 8 JAK.

8 JAK column moved out from Srinagar under Lieut-Colonel Maluk Singh on 3 October (C Company—Capt Kirpal Singh; D Company—Capt Mahattam Singh). The task given to it was to move to Chirala and assist in the withdrawal of the garrison there to Rawalakot via Bagh.

8 JAK reached Domel the same evening: from here they were to march to their objective. They sought the assistance of 4 JAK in procuring civil transport to carry the mortars and medium machine guns and their ammunition—but without success. The machine guns (and a platoon from C Company) were therefore left behind: the mortars were carried by the men. The column had no wireless set and only two signalling lamps.

At 10.00 am on 4 October the column reached the village of Hill and stopped to cook a meal there. No enemy resistance had so far been encountered but the march had been tedious. One platoon of 4 JAK was in Hill but was unable to give any information about the enemy in the area. Nonetheless, hostile activity in the area had been significant and many villages had recently been burned, forcing as many as 250 refugees to gather in Hill. These refugees joined the 8 JAK column as it proceeded to Chirala on the afternoon of 4 October.

The first village the column approached was completely deserted which aroused suspicion; the column thereafter moved tactically—divided into advance guard, main body and rear guard. No enemy was encountered until the column reached the Salian defile; here heavy enemy fire was brought to bear on the column from all directions and the advance was halted. C Company under Capt Kirpal Singh attacked a spur in the column's line of march and occupied it, driving out the enemy, who fled leaving two dead. Identification of their bodies indicated that the hostiles were North-West Frontier tribesmen and Punjabi Muslims from Murree. The column was unable to advance further that day as the enemy was holding positions in the village of Salian.

The next morning, 5 October, an attack was launched on the village by D Company and the advance route was reopened. By 11.00 am the village was cleared of snipers and the column halted to reorganise and prepare a meal before continuing the advance to Chirala at 6.00 pm.

The route was most insecure; almost every ridge, hill-top and bend in the track was in enemy hands or under fire. Obstacles and road blocks had to be cleared and the column was only three miles from Chirala at the village of Sessar when it again came under heavy fire. It took cover until dark and then C Company again put in a spirited attack to clear the route. C and D Companies each suffered one dead in this encounter; the enemy unluckily managed to inflict considerable casualties on the transport mules, resulting in a substantial portion of the dry rations being abandoned and 3 in mortars distributed among the column members for transport man pack. It was estimated that the enemy suffered 49 casualties in killed and wounded in this engagement.

At this stage Major Khajoor Singh of 1 JAK, commander of Bagh garrison, was ordered to move forward to Chirala to contact 8 JAK and offer assistance. However, heavy enemy resistance prevented Major Khajoor Singh's relief column from proceeding beyond Arja and they were forced to withdraw to Bagh.

8 JAK reached Chirala at 5.00 am on 6 October—not a minute too early, as the garrison there had completely exhausted its rations and ammunition. Orders were received the next day for the whole force to pull back to Bagh.

The move to Bagh commenced at 8.00 am on the 8th. About 200 refugees came out with the column but very soon hundreds of others who had fled the villages and were hiding in the jungles came pouring down the hillside. As the main track was constantly under sniping fire, the column commander decided to move by a less known though more circuitous route to Arja. The column halted for the night at Riavla village. Casualties on the first day's march included one officer (Capt Mahattam Singh) one JCO and four other ranks wounded.

The column reached Arja on 9 October but had to fight its way through a ring of enemy piquets to enter the village. Thereafter, it was decided to move only during the night in order to minimise casualties among the refugees. Bagh was reached on 10 October.

The garrison of Bagh, under Major Khajoor Singh's command, consisted of C Company 1 JAK and an *ad hoc* company raised

from among the local Hindu and Sikh inhabitants. On 12 October Major Khajoor Singh was ordered to take C Company 1 JAK and C Company of 8 JAK to Rawalakot. (They subsequently moved to Poonch a few days later when Rawalakot fell to the enemy). Thereafter, the garrison at Bagh consisted of two companies each from 7 and 8 JAK and the *ad hoc* company—all placed under command of Colonel Maluk Singh. It was this garrison that Labh Singh and his force (from 4 JAK) had joined on 31 October.

Bagh is a picturesque township situated on the right bank of the Muhl River at an elevation of 3,400 ft, surrounded by thickly forested peaks ranging from 5,000 to 8,000 ft. The population of about 5,000 consisted mainly of Hindus and Sikhs, while the surrounding area was populated predominantly by Muslims. A pony track connected Bagh with Kohala to the west and Poonch to the south-east.

Since mid-October the JAK piquets around Bagh had been under constant attack by local armed bands and though they had held out staunchly, the garrison had been completely isolated as no movement could take place in or out of Bagh. At the same time, there had been a great influx of refugees from the surrounding villages. This had created a critical maintenance problem—because within a short period the civil authorities ran out of stocks of food and medicine. After repeated requests to Srinagar for further supplies, a message was received on 19 October that ammunition, medicine and supplies would be sent to Bagh from Chakothi on the 21st—and casualties evacuated. There was great rejoicing amongst the garrison at this news—but when they heard over the wireless on the 22nd morning that Muzaffarabad and Domel had been attacked, the mood of elation died down as suddenly as it had started. That evening a further message was received from Srinagar that left the beleaguered garrison in no doubt about its future: “No arms, ammunition supplies possible. Strong enemy between Chakothi and Garhi. Fight to the last man and last round.”

By then there was only pouch ammunition left. Messages were sent to Srinagar asking for an ammunition drop but the reply came that this was impracticable—because when an ammunition drop of 300 rounds had been attempted by a light aircraft at Rawalakot the previous day, only about half was found to be usable—and the aircraft had been damaged by hostile fire.

Colonel Maluk Singh re-organised the piquets, decreasing their number but increasing the strength of each. After 28 October pressure on the outposts and piquets increased considerably—and

ammunition began to run short. Gradually, some of them had to fall back on others, joining up with each other to pool their remaining ammunition. On 7 November a vigorous attack brought elements of the enemy to within 700 yards of the perimeter. At this stage orders were given to abandon Bagh : the withdrawal began the same evening.

There were about 20,000 refugees in Bagh and it was decided that the only route of withdrawal for them if they were not be shot up would be via the Toli Pir Pass. The advance guard set out at 8.00 pm and crept up to the top of the pass where it fortunately surprised the enemy. The tribesmen were either killed or pushed down the far side of the pass—and the long column was able to negotiate it without mishap. The enemy engaged the rearguard persistently but the column slowly and safely made its way to the village of Kholi Draman by mid-afternoon on the 8th. By 10.00 am the next morning the column was in Poonch.

Although there had been some casualties among the refugees the column was lucky to have got off so lightly. The men, in some cases, were down to their last five rounds—and had the enemy in Toli Pir proved stubborn, the column would have been in serious difficulties.

Another battalion that had been sent from Srinagar to the Poonch area during those trying days was 9 JAK. They also were sent out in penny-packets to the border.

9 JAK (Commanding Officer Lieut-Colonel Ram Lal) was sent from Badami Bagh Cantonment to Poonch in late September and thence forward as under :

Battalion headquarters with A and B Companies to Rawalakot
C Company (Major Somant Singh) to Tain

D Company less one platoon (Major Prakash Chand Katoch)
to Thorar

One platoon D Company (Lieut Jagdish Singh) to Mang.

After some days of sniping and minor fire-fights, the situation became more lively on 5 October, when there was a marked increase in enemy activity. On the 6th a concerted attack was launched by the enemy on most of the border posts. The outposts of Thorar, Tain and Mang were particularly heavily engaged—by hostile groups who had crossed the Jhelum in boats, rafts and inflated skins.

The 9 JAK posts defended themselves well, repulsed the attacks and inflicted many casualties on the enemy. However, JAK casual-

ties were also high (Major Prakash Katoch was among the wounded) and since the enemy then decided to surround Thorar and Mang and besiege the JAK garrisons, the CO at Rawalakot decided to reinforce his forward posts.

The main strength of the enemy was apparently at Thorar, so the column that left Rawalakot for Thorar was commanded by Lieut-Colonel Ram Lal himself and consisted of:

B Company 9 JAK

Support and Headquarters companies, 9 JAK

A Company 1 JAK (Capt Vakil Singh) from Palandari.

On the way the CO withdrew C Company from Tain to strengthen his column and made straight for Thorar. After two days of heavy fighting the column managed to break through the enemy rings, first at Thorar and then at Mang. It was found that these garrisons had already finished their rations—and had suffered quite high casualties, 13 dead and 27 wounded. In view of the ammunition and ration situation, and the fact that there were by then over 5,000 refugees at Thorar, Colonel Ram Lal decided to withdraw all military personnel and refugees to Rawalakot.

The garrison at Rawalakot had been a sort of collecting house of sub-units from all over the border. On 12 October Major Khajoor Singh and his company had joined it from Bagh. 'A' Company of 8 JAK (Capt Kotwal) which had originally been sent to Lachhman Pattan and had been pushed out of there by enemy pressure, had then gone to Palandari where it joined A Company 1 JAK—and finally found its way to Rawalakot. Lastly, C Company 8 JAK (Capt Kripal Singh) had also arrived from Bagh. ('A' Company 8 JAK had since then been sent back to Hajira to strengthen the garrison there).

On the night of 19/20 October, while Colonel Ram Lal's column was still out, the enemy launched a well-planned attack on Rawalakot. The assault was supported by accurate 3 in mortar fire—and also by medium machine guns. The attack was repulsed but casualties had been heavy—and much ammunition had been expended. The plight of the garrison would have been serious had Colonel Ram Lal and his Thorar column not returned in the nick of time. Colonel Ram Lal appreciated the situation and, in view of the critical ammunition and supplies situation and the swelling numbers of refugees, decided to withdraw his force to Poonch.

According to his plan the withdrawal was to be carried out in two phases. On 27 October a column from 9 JAK (commanded

by Major Amarnath Lakhanpal) consisting of B and D companies (Majors Ram Prakash and Arjun Dass) and B Company 8 JAK left Rawalakot with 3,000 refugees for Hajira. Their task was to deliver the refugees to the Hajira garrison, collect ammunition and supplies and bring them back to Rawalakot. However, when the column got to Hajira, there was quite a battle going on, the post (A Company 8 JAK and a platoon from 1 JAK) being engaged by fire from all round the perimeter. The situation eased with the arrival of the Rawalakot column and the refugees were herded into the perimeter area.

Present in Hajira was Lieut-Colonel Shiv Ram Silwal, who had been sent forward by Army Headquarters to take over command of 9 JAK from Ram Lal. He had been unable to move forward from Hajira because of the operational situation—but he now assumed command of the 9 JAK column and, virtually, of the battalion.

In the meantime, the situation at Rawalakot had suddenly taken a bad turn. Colonel Silwal, at Hajira, received information of a heavy attack on Rawalakot and an urgent demand for the return of the column. Without waiting to collect supplies the column set off for Rawalakot. However, the enemy had obviously anticipated this move and were determined to prevent the link up. They set up ambushes on the way and continuously harassed the column by fire—so that it took all of three days and nights (much of it without food and water) for the column to fight its way through to Rawalakot.

It was apparent that Rawalakot could not hold out much longer without supplies and ammunition. Daily rations for the men were down to half a *chapati* per day; as for ammunition, some posts actually had to send out raiding parties at night to fight for ammunition from enemy posts and patrols. On 5 November a Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF) fighter aircraft free-dropped 1,000 rounds of ammunition, but only about 600 could be retrieved—and of them more than half had been damaged beyond use. It was decided to abandon Rawalakot and to fall back on Poonch.

Since the enemy had dug in strongly on the track to Hajira, (because they obviously expected the Rawalakot column to withdraw to Hajira) Lieut-Colonel Silwal decided to move to Poonch via the Toli Pir pass. Rawalakot was abandoned on the night of 9/10 November: the column included about 6,000 refugees, 30 stretcher cases of badly wounded personnel (both military and civilian) and a large number of walking sick and wounded. The enemy soon closed in for a kill but though the column was very

slow moving, the advance guard and rearguard elements fought valiantly and finally brought the column back to Poonch. Even so, there were more than 40 casualties among the refugees during the withdrawal—many of them women and children.

Thereafter the only posts holding out forward of Poonch were Hajira and Madarpur, and quite naturally the enemy began to converge on them. The JAK garrison at Hajira consisted of a mixed bag of sub-units under the command of Capt Vakil Singh of 1 JAK—total strength about two companies. The garrison at Madarpur consisted of one platoon 8 JAK (Jemadar Jaimal Singh). On the night of 13/14 November a strong column was sent out from Poonch to extricate these two garrisons; this was successfully accomplished by 15 November.

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So long as the JAK outposts to the west had held out, Poonch town and surroundings had remained relatively peaceful. Brigade Headquarters was located there but most of the troops were out on border or outposts duties—leaving only odd sub-units from the battalions and elements of the GPC for local protection. Because of this paucity of troops, no regular piquet-based defence could be organised till the battalions began to fall back on Poonch.

The civil administration was functioning smoothly under the Poonch *Wazir*, Pandit Bhim Sain, and a Superintendent of Police. The population of Poonch was about 10,000: the supplies situation was satisfactory; although the town had been cut off from Srinagar and Jammu after the fall of Haji Pir Pass and Kotli respectively, there were sufficient stocks in the town to last some months.

All this changed suddenly when the strongholds of the JAK forces at Palandari, Bagh, Rawalakot and other places began to fall one by one. By the time Hajira and Madarpur posts were withdrawn, the influx of refugees had swelled the civilian population to 40,000—a four-fold increase. Existing stocks of food were no longer sufficient—they would not last for more than two or three weeks at the most, even on reduced scales, because the army also had to be catered for. (The strength of the Poonch garrison had increased by nearly four battalions, and none of them had brought any rations). To top it all, the raiders began to close in on Poonch, occupying the heights surrounding the town.

Thus began the defence of Poonch which lasted sixteen months, one of the most gallant efforts of the JAK forces. Everywhere else the war was being fought mainly by Indian Army troops; only at

Poonch did the garrison consist of predominantly state forces. The command of the brigade later devolved on the Indian Army; and two infantry battalions—1 (Para) Kumaon (Lieut-Colonel Pritam Singh) and 3/9 Gorkha Rifles (Lieut-Colonel DK Palit)—joined the garrison, but the JAK battalions continued to play a crucial role in the defence of Poonch.

The garrison of Poonch, in early November, consisted of:

Headquarters Poonch Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Krishan Singh (of JAK State Forces)

1 JAK Infantry less one company, commanded by Lieut-Colonel H.N. Dubey

8 JAK Infantry, commanded by Lieut-Colonel Maluk Singh

9 JAK Infantry, commanded by Lieut-Colonel Amarnath Lakhanpal

'A' Company plus one platoon of B Company, 4 JAK Infantry commanded by Lieut Labh Singh

Two companies of 7 JAK Infantry, commanded by Major Amarnath Sharma.

One company of the AT Regiment (SF)

One company of Garrison Police

The first task was to establish piquets on the surrounding heights—though at first only the lower hills immediately overlooking the town were occupied. This was, of course, a mistake; later, when the enemy occupied the dominating heights, each of their positions had to be attacked and captured in order to establish an effective ring of defensive piquets.

On 12 November, 161 Indian Infantry Brigade (Brig LP Sen) captured Uri—having pushed the enemy all the way back from the gates of Srinagar. It was then decided by the newly established JAK Force Headquarters in Jammu (Major General Kalwant Singh of the Indian Army) that 161 Brigade would effect a link-up with the Poonch garrison—via the Haji Pir Pass—leave one Indian infantry battalion in Poonch and then return to Uri, from where it would continue to exercise command over Poonch Brigade.

161 Brigade set out from Uri on the morning of 20 November and, after some *contretemps* on the way, crossed the Haji Pir Pass during the night. By the next morning it was approaching Poonch. Unfortunately, bad staff work somewhere up the line of command resulted in a near disaster. No one had bothered to inform Poonch Brigade of the projected operation by 161 Brigade, so that when, during the night of 20/21 November, the JAK detachment guarding

a wooden bridge across the Batar Nullah some 11 miles north of the town saw a number of lights on Haji Pir Pass, they assumed that it was the enemy concentrating for an attack on Poonch. They hastily set fire to the bridge and withdrew to Poonch. The result of this hasty action was that 1 Para Kumaon had to march into Poonch without its transport (except for three *jeeps*, which had been winched down the vertical nullah bank and then manhandled across the dry bed).

Before returning to Uri, Brig Sen appointed Lieut-Colonel Pritam Singh commander of Poonch Brigade. Quite naturally he wished to make one commander responsible for the defence of Poonch—and since Indian army forces could not be placed under command of a state force officer, Brig Krishan Singh readily accepted the fact that he would have to stand down. Pritam Singh was granted local rank of Brigadier (subsequently confirmed to acting rank). The command of 1 (Para) Kumaon developed on the second-in-command, Major Dharam Singh.

The immediate tasks that faced Poonch Brigade were, operationally, to expand the ring of piquets around the town and, logistically, to arrange for ammunition and supplies to be flown in. The necessity for widening the ring of piquets was that enemy 3 in mortars had to be pushed back—out of range of the inhabited areas. (In fact, this became a continually expanding undertaking: when the enemy brought up mountain guns, our piquets had to be pushed out across the Batar Nullah and beyond—and when, eventually, Pakistani Army field guns were sent up to shell the airfield, the ring of piquets had to be widened once again).

The logistical problem was even more serious. The Brigade was by then strong enough to withstand any scale of attack the enemy could launch: but unless more ammunition was available and the besieged population kept fed, the garrison could not hope to hold out, however strong in manpower.

Brigadier Pritam Singh set about constructing an airstrip in the area of the JAK Force barracks by the Batar Nullah, about a mile west of Poonch Fort. Thousands of refugees volunteered to work with the troops—and in just over a fortnight, on 12 December, Air Vice Marshal Mukherjee (subsequently Chief of Air Staff) and Air Commodore Mehr Singh landed there in a *Beechcraft*. In another ten days the strip was taking *Dakota* (C-47) transport aircraft.

For the first time in nearly two months, Poonch was again acces-

sible to the rest of the country. This was a great morale booster for the inhabitants—especially as the badly wounded or seriously ill among them could then be evacuated to Jammu. However, there was no great easing of the supply situation. It must be remembered that the airstrip was merely a fairweather runway some 700 yards long constructed by demolishing some barracks, connecting a couple of football fields and filling a rocky nullah bed. At one end was a 30 foot drop to the bed of the Batar : at the other a 10 foot embankment. *Dakotas* are known to have scraped the heap of dust on the top of the embankment when coming in to land and then just pulled up short of the cliff so that the pilot could see in front of him not the runway but a panoramic view of the rushing waters of the Batar. As for the surface of the runway, it became dangerously slippery in places and boggy in others after the lightest shower—and showers are not infrequent in those mountainous regions. For all these reasons it was lucky if aircraft could land on the Poonch strip three days in the week, even in the comparatively dry winter season. And since not more than one or two *Dakotas* could normally be spared for the Poonch run, the average weekly tonnage that could be ferried was about 30–40; together with air-dropped supplies (on days when the airstrip was red but the weather clear) this came to an average of about 50–60 tons per week—against a minimum weekly requirement of about 50 tons of supplies for the civilian population, 15 tons of supplies for the military garrison (at half-rations) and about 15 tons of ammunition and stores (at half “contact” rates)—a total of about 80 tons.

The Brigade Commander decided, therefore, that the garrison would have to fend for itself as far as foodgrains were concerned. Thus was conceived the first of a series of “grain operations”—operational raids on surrounding villages (which had been occupied by tribesmen or other Pakistani raiders) with the object of procuring grain. A company or two of infantry, accompanied by 200–300 or so refugees (to act as guides and porters) would set out at dusk, attack the target village and throw back the enemy—then carry away the stocks of grain that were to be found in abundance in the more prosperous dwellings. Often the actual owners of the houses would be with the refugee party—and would point out all the worthwhile stocks. The column, laden with grain, would return by early morning.

Within a few days of the first aircraft touching down on the Poonch airstrip, the enemy had brought his 3 in mortars forward—located

them in the re-entrants on the southern bank of the Poonch River, south-west of the bridge—and begun to shell the airfield. They would time the barrage so that the shells would begin to burst just as the aircraft was about to land. On the 15th a *Dakota* was damaged by mortar fire in this way.

The very next day two companies of JAK troops—A Company 9 JAK (Capt Jagdish Singh) and C Company 8 JAK (Capt Kirpal Singh) were sent out to establish a piquet on the lower slopes of the 5508 feature. This was successfully done—and thereafter there was no more 3 in mortar fire on the airstrip.

The next feature on which a piquet was to be established was pt 5425, a dominating height about a mile and a half to the north-east of the Fort still held strongly by the enemy. This task was allotted to 1 JAK. Capt Sewa Nath (OC C Company) led a column consisting of B Company (Subedar Kharood Singh Slathia) and C Company for the operation. The column left Poonch town at 11.00 pm, crept along a nullah bed to the village of Dokui and climbed up a wooded spur. They reached the top without alerting the enemy and then went in with the bayonet. The enemy were about 90 strong and offered spirited resistance. After some hand-to-hand fighting the position was captured—with 11 prisoners. Over 30 enemy lay dead on the feature—but many other bodies of dead and wounded had been taken away when they withdrew. 1 JAK casualties were 1 JCO and three men killed—4 men wounded.

3/9 Gorkha Rifles had begun flying into Poonch in the third week of December. By mid-January the induction of the battalion was completed.

One of the first tasks given to the Gorkhas was to extend the ring of piquets across the Batar Nullah, where the enemy was strongly installed on the long north-south ridge that finally ended on the Poonch River some two miles west of the junction of the Poonch and Batar rivers.

Colonel Palit decided to capture the highest point of the ridge first and then move down the ridge, clearing the three or four enemy piquets. Colonel Hira Nand Dubey, with two companies of 1 JAK, was to demonstrate against the southern end of the ridge as a deception measure. The total strength of the enemy along the whole ridge was estimated to be about five platoons.

The attack met with initial success: the central height was in the Gorkhas' hands by midnight 17/18 February. Before first light one more enemy position down the ridge had been captured—all

without loss. At dawn, however, it was discovered that the "highest" point captured was in fact a classical "next ridge" error. About 200 tribesmen ensconced on a slightly higher post to the west of the ridge, put in an attack, which was supported by accurate machine gun fire. The attack was repulsed but both in the fighting and from subsequent sniping, the Gorkhas suffered a large number of casualties—one officer, one JCO and 12 other ranks killed and two JCOs and 20 other ranks wounded.

1 JAK cooperated excellently at the southern end of the ridge, Colonel Dubey putting in an attack and capturing the southern tip. The Gorkhas put in another attack that evening, after the "next ridge" had been strafed by a *Spitfire* of the RIAF—the first time that air power was used in the ground support role in Poonch. By the morning of 19 February the whole ridge (renamed "Gorkha Ridge") was in the garrison's hands and two permanent piquets were established.

By the end of February ration stocks were running low. By this time some 5,000 refugees had been evacuated in returning aircraft but even so there still were over 30,000 mouths to feed. (The Army gladly shared its rations with the civilians—often parading with them under Brigadier Pritam Singh's orders to share the horse-meal gruel that was served by the troops in certain parts of the town.) As the "grain operations" brought in only two or three tons at a time, the Brigadier decided upon an ambitious "harvesting operation."

Some four miles south-east of Poonch and across the river a long flat ridge runs southwards from the river climbing up to the heights of Khanetar Gali. From Poonch town the ridge could be seen, covered by large fields of ripening corn—ready for winter harvesting. The Brigade Commander decided that rather than let the enemy reap the harvest, the refugees of Poonch should benefit from the bounties of Khanetar Ridge.

On the night of 1/2 March, 8 JAK (A and C companies) supported by a company from 1 Kumaon crossed over the Poonch River bridge and then crept along the lower slopes towards the Bainch nullah. The route from there upwards was so steep and rugged that the mules carrying the 3 in mortars and medium machine gun equipment had to be left behind. Colonel Maluk Singh himself acted as guide, moving with the leading company. The company of 1 Kumaon left the main column at that stage and climbed up a separate spur—to be able to help extricate 8 JAK and the refugee porters should a running fight ensue at first light.

The enemy, however, were on those hills in strength—Intelligence of which had been lacking. By 4.00 am both columns were engaged in heavy fighting—and though the enemy were chased from the ridge, they had withdrawn further up the spur whence they kept up constant mortar and machine gun fire. By first light, however, two additional platoons (D Company 8 JAK) had been rushed up from Poonch—and the enemy were finally routed from the whole spur. Over 30 enemy dead were counted.

The last phase of the operation was the capture of Khanetar village, which was carried out by two companies of 8 JAK (C and D) under Major Angrez Singh. The enemy were well dug in and had medium machine guns. They held out for most of the day but when the 8 JAK companies put in a night attack at 8.00 pm they were forced to withdraw.

Major Angrez Singh ordered the destruction of all enemy bunkers and ammunition dumps. When that was completed the refugee column that had followed up behind the two companies was escorted out to Khanetar ridge to harvest the grain. Although the enemy kept up harassing and sniper fire, the harvesting operation was completed with only two JAK other ranks being slightly wounded by snipers. The total amount of grain collected was about six tons.

On 17 March evening there was an unusually heavy attack on No 9 piquet. The enemy began by shelling the piquet with 3.7 in hows and 3 in mortars. A total of about 200 bombs were dropped which, in the logistical circumstances under which the Poonch operations were being conducted, was an unexpectedly heavy barrage. However, there was only one casualty as the men in the piquet had dug themselves in with care. Shortly after 8.00 pm about 100 tribesmen who had crept up to the outer wire under cover of darkness, put in an attack but this was easily repulsed. Three subsequent attempts to rush the outer wire were also repulsed. The piquet commander, Capt Dewan Singh of 1 JAK, remained cool and personally controlled the fire of the forward platoons. He subsequently earned a mention in despatches for this action.

The next offensive operation, to widen the circle of piquets, was undertaken in mid-April when it was decided to push No 10 piquet out further west, towards pt 5724, a notorious enemy hide-out. The enemy used to conduct raids towards Poonch town from this ridge and once or twice had sent snipers down to harass Brigade Headquarters (which was located in Moti Mahal Palace).

As all battalions were then manning piquets, a composite battalion

had to be formed for this task—consisting of companies from 1, 8 and 9 JAK battalions: Colonel Hira Nand Dubey was given command of the force.

The feature to be captured was occupied by about 150 enemy and well defended with anti-personnel mines and booby-traps. The JAK troops had to put in three attacks before the enemy could be driven off and the height occupied. The JAK losses were heavy—one JCO (Jemadar Sarda Ram, posthumously awarded the *Vir Chakra*) and 14 other ranks killed, two officers (Colonel Dubey and Capt Balwant Singh) and 19 men wounded. The capture of this height, however, was a tactical landmark for thereafter no enemy infiltrators ventured down those slopes towards Poonch town.

The command and control structure in J&K was reorganised on 1 May, 1948. On General Kulwant Singh's departure to take over as Chief of the General Staff in Delhi, HQ JAK Force was abolished and in its place two separate divisional headquarters were raised—Jammu Division (Major General Atma Singh) to be responsible for operations south of the Pir Panjal; and Srinagar Division (Major General KS Thimayya) for operations in the Valley and all areas north of the Pir Panjal. Poonch Brigade, which had been operating directly under command of JAK Force since late December 1947, was placed under command of Srinagar Division—though after a few weeks this was found to be an unsatisfactory arrangement (because logistically Poonch was dependent on Jammu airfield) and Poonch Brigade was transferred to Jammu Division. In the meantime, Poonch Brigade had been re-named 101 Brigade (and later still, 168 Brigade).

One of the most spirited actions in Poonch took place on the night of 17/18 May, when 3/9 Gorkha Rifles put in a battalion attack on pt 4036. The ridge was estimated to have been held by about a company of regular Pakistani troops—though in the event it was found that over 250 enemy were deployed in the area. After a nine mile night march the Gorkhas under Colonel Palit began their silent assault up the ridge. Enemy positions were encountered after the first five hundred feet and a running battle ensued. By the time the Gorkhas had reached the top, three successive lines of enemy posts had to be taken at bayonet point. Casualties were unexpectedly heavy (one officer, one JCO and 13 men killed and over 30 wounded—including the CO, Colonel Palit). Next morning, while the wounded were being evacuated, a strong enemy counter-

attack was repulsed, but some of the tribesmen took up positions on the lower slopes to the south—where their sniping pinned down the stretcher bearers carrying the wounded.

That evening, therefore, Colonel Maluk Singh was ordered to put in an attack and dislodge the enemy from that spur. 8 JAK with two companies (A and B) set out at 6.00 pm—reaching the assembly area by midnight. Here guides from the 3/9th led the JAK troops to the starting line—and the assault went in at 3.00 am on the 19th May. Complete surprise was achieved : the enemy had not expected such prompt reaction from Poonch garrison. The tribesmen bolted down the far side of the hill, leaving behind three dead. Brig Pritam Singh, who had also come up to the feature behind 8 JAK, had brought a company of Kumaonis with him. He personally escorted the wounded back to Poonch—a six hour march down hill and across the fast-flowing waters of the Batar Nullah. By 6.00 am next morning all the wounded were lined up on the air strip, still on their stretchers, waiting evacuation by air.

No 8 piquet was thereafter established on the peak captured by the Gorkhas. Colonel Palit was later awarded the *Vir Chakra* for this action.

By then the position of Poonch Brigade had become absolutely secure. The ammunition and supply situation had vastly improved—and more than 10,000 refugees had been evacuated by air during the past five months. The Brigade Commander next began to look for opportunities to make minor sorties from the Poonch “keep”. The first such operation was undertaken on 14 June, when a column consisting of two companies of 8 JAK and one company of 1 Kumaon did a sweeping movement in the Suran Valley to the south, near Mendhar. The main purpose was to establish contact with 2 Punjab from Rajouri, which had come up to meet the 168 Brigade column. This was successfully accomplished on 15 May—the first overland contact with the outside world after nine months of seige. The very next day 1 JAK was ordered to establish two extra piquets—on pts 6005 and 5508 on the long ridge that divides Poonch from Mendhar.

In June 1948 came the first big operation in which 168 Brigade moved out as a formation—a far cry from the days when even battalion-size operations had to be mounted by composite units. Unfortunately, it soon became obvious that the Brigade had bitten off more than it could chew : after nine months of a static command and control system, the Brigade was not fully ready for a “mobile” operation as a field formation.

The aim of the operation was to mount a diversionary offensive over the Toli Pir Pass towards Bagh in order to divert the enemy's attention from 161 Brigade's projected drive down the Jhelum gorge to capture Chakothi and Domel. The Brigade column consisted of three infantry battalions less two companies supported by a section of mountain guns and a section of medium machine guns.

The track to Bagh takes off from the Poonch-Haji Pir road about 10 miles north of Poonch, crosses the Batar Nullah (where the bridge had been prematurely blown last November); it then enters a narrow valley which leads up to the Toli Pir. The valley is completely dominated by a long high ridge running south-east to north-east. Pt 7819 on this ridge was to be the first objective, the Pass itself the second.

The column moved out on the morning of 26 June; by 2.00 pm the southern end of the ridge had been cleared of the enemy and pt 7819 occupied. The rest of the Brigade was either in the nullah bed or occupying hill features to the right, waiting for orders to advance on Toli Pir. Brigade Headquarters, however, was moving up the 7819 ridge, taking one mountain gun with it. At this point the enemy put in a strong counter-attack supported by mortar and machine gun fire.

Command was temporarily lost—as also control because no formal operation orders had been issued. The result was that no battalion knew for sure what were going to be the future movements of the others.

3/9 Gorkha Rifles was heavily attacked for over two hours. The Commanding Officer having been evacuated to Delhi after being wounded in the pt 4036 battle, the battalion was under the command of Major Fitzgerald for whom this was the first time out in action. When it looked as though the leading company might be overrun, he asked for reinforcements from one of the battalions down below. Not receiving any reply from Brigade Headquarters, he ordered his battalion to withdraw.

This was an unfortunate decision, because once 7819 ridge was strongly occupied by the enemy there was no question of going for Toli Pir Pass. A full-scale brigade attack would have to be mounted for the recapture of pt 7819, and there was neither the time nor the resources. Reluctantly, the Brigade took up a defensive position in the nullah and, next day, went back to Poonch.

On the night of 15/16 July, at 5.00 pm, piquet No 12 (Serian piquet) was heavily attacked by the enemy in a desperate attempt

to break the line of the ring of piquets on the key heights across the Batar nullah. Although the attack was beaten back, the enemy succeeded in occupying a small feature about 50 yards from the perimeter, from where they began to snipe at any movement within the piquet.

As it began to get dark the piquet commander, Capt Kripal Singh, sent a small party under Subedar Krishen Singh to rush the enemy-held feature. They went in silently with the bayonet and caught the enemy off guard. Although the Subedar and one other rank, Sepoy Dina Ditta, were killed (both later received posthumous awards of the *Vir Chakra*) the feature was soon cleared.

Towards the third week of August a Hindu refugee from enemy occupied territory escaped to Poonch—bringing information of an impending attack in strength with the aim of breaking through No 8 piquet and then making a raid on Poonch town itself. He said that the enemy strength gathered in the area to the north-west of No 8 piquet was about 6,800 and that they had brought up “long-barrelled guns” on camels.

Number 8 piquet was ordered to build over-head protection for the trenches to withstand 25-pounder shells. The piquet was reinforced by an extra platoon. Sure enough, on 27 August at 3.30 am the enemy opened up on the piquet with 25 prs and 3 in mortars. After a short bombardment about 600 tribesmen attacked the piquet, supported by two anti-tank guns being used in a bunker-busting role. By day break the attackers had come up so close to the perimeter that hand grenades were being exchanged between the adversaries. However, the defenders kept up a continuous stream of fire and by 8.00 pm the enemy began to withdraw, picking up their dead and wounded as they scurried away; JAK casualties were one other rank killed, 13 wounded.

By this time a battalion of JAK Militia (11 JAK Militia) had been raised from among the Hindu and Sikh refugees in Poonch. The Commanding Officer was Lieut-Colonel KD Pachnanda. Their first big operation was the capture of pt 7416 to the north-east of Poonch town.

In the second fortnight of October the enemy had brought up a 4.2 in mortar to the area of pt 7416 (a dominating height to the north-east of Poonch) from where he kept up incessant harassing fire on the garrison, on Poonch town and on the airfield. Brigadier Pritam Singh decided to establish a piquet on pt 7416. A three-column operation was mounted—Column 1 under Colonel Khajoor

Singh, consisting of 1 JAK and one company 11 JAK Militia, was to capture pt 7702, a peak about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the north of pt 7416. Column 2, under Colonel Maluk Singh, consisting of 8 JAK (less one company) and one militia company, was to go for pt 7416 and jungle ridge to its east; Column 3, under Colonel Pachnanda, consisting of 11 Militia Battalion (less two companies) and one company of 9 JAK, was to occupy the village of Naban (mid-way between pts 7702 and 7416 and slightly to the west) to protect the left flank of Columns 1 and 2.

Column 1 found its objective unoccupied and met no resistance. Column 2 had to fight a stiff battle when once it got up into the hills and was twice forced to change its route. The enemy maintained a rear-guard action all the way up to pt 7416. When the column at last put in its attack, shortly after midnight, it came under medium machine gun fire and 3 in mortar shelling. However, the enemy were only in company strength and were soon running down the reverse slopes. They made one feeble counter-attack, which was easily repulsed. By 3.00 am the piquet was firmly established. The enemy 4.2 in mortar was captured together with a large quantity of rations and ammunition.

Column 3 encountered little resistance but A company of 9 JAK which was with this column strayed on to a mine-field. 5 other ranks were killed and six wounded, a most unfortunate *contretemps* in an otherwise eminently successful operation.

By the middle of October the siege of Poonch had lasted nearly a year. The main reason no determined link-up operation could be mounted was that the road-links from both Srinagar and Haji Pir Pass to the north and Kotli on the Jammu road were firmly in enemy hands. Meanwhile the enemy build-up in the Bagh and Hajira areas was beginning to pose quite a threat—so that both for operational and logistical reasons it was becoming increasingly necessary to force a link between Poonch and the Indian Army formation in Rajouri.

Actually, in June an operation had been mounted to effect a meeting between Poonch and Rajouri forces. 19 Infantry Brigade had established a firm base at Thana Mandi and from there sent up 1/2 Punjab to Surankot. 1 Kumaon had set out from Poonch up the Suran River (as the Poonch River, westwards from the confluence at Poonch, is called). Contact between the two columns was made at 11.00 am on 17 June, after which the two battalions combined to make one amalgamated force and mounted an operation to capture

Mendhar (about 10 miles west of Surankot) which they completed by 4.00 am on the 20th. Thence the force returned to Poonch over the Sakh Pir Pass and the 6005 feature. Poonch garrison continued to be isolated from Rajouri and Jammu, but at least the brigade had been reinforced by an Indian Army infantry battalion.

The air transport cooperation during this exercise is worthy of record. When 1 Kumaon had fought its way to Potha on the way to the meeting point at Surankot, it had suffered a number of casualties, including two very seriously wounded. At Potha a tiny airstrip was constructed by the men of the battalion by levelling out fields of maize and an *Auster* aircraft of the artillery Air Observation Flight was called up to make an emergency landing—which it did and which carried the two seriously wounded back to Jammu hospital. Again, at Surankot, another *Auster* landed in the wheat fields and evacuated casualties.

By late October it became essential to force a permanent link with Poonch Brigade. Intelligence and air reconnaissance reports indicated that by then the enemy had built up their strength in the Thana Mandi area (astride the Rajouri-Poonch route) to two infantry battalions. The push from the south would therefore have to be undertaken by two infantry brigades; and for this purpose 5 Indian Infantry Brigade was sent up from Jammu to join the garrison at Rajouri by 20 October.

In the preliminary phase of *Operation Easy*, as the link-up with Poonch was code-named, 19 Indian Infantry Brigade captured Pir Badesar, one of the features dominating Thana Mandi. In the next phase, 5 Brigade captured Pir Kalewa, the other dominating height above Thana Mandi. The enemy thereafter thinned out of the village and the stage was set for the next phase of the operation, the capture of Bhimbar Gali and the advance on Mendhar.

With aircraft of the RIAF cooperating in the close support role and with the help of tanks and artillery, Bhimbar Gali was secured on 9 November. From there the move to Mendhar and the Topa feature presented no problem—and 5 Brigade moved north over the hills to keep its rendezvous with Poonch Brigade.

Meanwhile, the battle plans of Poonch Brigade for this link-up operation were equally elaborate, even if they lacked the tank and artillery support that the brigades from Rajouri enjoyed. In order to break the enemy encirclement of Poonch and to facilitate the link-up, two consecutive operations were mounted from Poonch in the last week of November, both undertaken entirely by JAK units, to

capture the dominating ridge that forms the southern rim of the "Punch Bowl".

This ridge, called the Krishna Ghati Ridge, separates the Poonch and Mendhar districts. It was strongly held by the enemy between pt 4665 to the west and pt 5508 (Krishna Ghati). Further east, there were enemy piquets on pts 6005 and 6180 (north of Khanetar). Dani Na Pir, pt 6796, lay at the eastern extremity of this line of piquets but was not thought to be occupied.

The first operation, *Operation Krishna Ghati*, was mounted on 19 November with the aim of capturing the eastern end of the ridge—from Dani Na Pir to Krishna Ghati.

In the first phase, 1 JAK (less two companies) with 8 JAK Militia (also less two companies) under command, was to capture Pir Marghat Ghazi and exploit to Dani Na Pir. In the second phase, 8 JAK (less one company) with 11 JAK Militia (less two companies) under command, was to go for pts 6180, 6005 and 5508 (Krishna Ghati).

The first column, under Colonel Khajoor Singh of 1 JAK, started off from the assembly area at 5.00 pm on 19 November, with C Company (Capt Sewa Nath) leading. Just after nightfall, when the leading company was approaching Marghat, it stumbled into a herd of sheep and goats settled for the night on the hillside. The alarm was given, dogs began to bark and very soon enemy fire opened up. With great presence of mind the leading scouts shouted "Apna admi—fire band karo."* This subterfuge had some effect, for the fire died down—and C company charged in with the bayonet. The enemy soon recovered from the surprise and put up a stiff resistance. In the hand-to-hand battle that ensued in the dark, the company suffered 21 wounded, including the Company Commander Captain Sewa Nath, but the momentum of the assault was unbroken. The first position taken, the second company passed through—and by 4.30 am Dani Na Pir (which was supposed to be unoccupied by the enemy) had been captured.

It was on this piquet that the two brigade commanders met on 20 November—Brigadier Pritam Singh from Poonch and Brigadier Yadunath Singh from Rajouri—to symbolise the link-up.

Meanwhile, Column 2 under Colonel Maluk Singh, took off from the assembly area at 7.00 pm and occupied pt 6160 without a fight at 3.00 am. Their second objective, pt 6005, was found to be held by about 200 Pathans.

*"Own troops—stop firing."

The leading company, under Capt Jadish Singh, came under heavy fire as it approached pt 6005. But the young Captain reacted very promptly; calling for artillery fire from the troop of 25 prs in Poonch (all the artillery support that could be had) he ordered the charge. The going was very difficult, uphill and rocky, but the Dogra war cry was on everyone's lips as the company fought over successive lines of enemy trenches—winkling the Pathan out with bayonet and shot. By 1.30 am pt 6005 had been taken, an action which earned the gallant captain a *Vir Chakra*. He had routed 200 Pathans with just one depleted company. The enemy was estimated to have suffered about 30 casualties : four bodies were found in the trenches.

The advance was resumed. Krishna Ghati was held by 80–100 Pathans, but there was no fight left in them and they fled, leaving behind 3 dead. By 4.30 am the whole ridge from Dani Na Pir to Krishna Ghati had been secured.

The next operation was carried out four days later by almost exactly the same units. The aim of this operation, called *Op Salotri*, was to extend the line of piquets westwards from Krishna Ghati to pts 5024 abd 4665, so that the whole length of the ridge from opposite the enemy stronghold of Madarpur (9 miles east of Hajira) to Dani Na Pir overlooking Khanetar Ridge would be in JAK hands. The necessity for this was that the projected jeep track to link Rajouri with Poonch was to cross the ridge at Krishna Ghati.

The first phase of the operation, the capture of Salotri village by 8 JAK (less one company) under Colonel Maluk Singh, involved quite a firefight. The leading scout, Sepoy Nanak Chand, unexpectedly encountered an enemy bunker and was promptly asked for the password. Without hesitating he hazarded : "Imdad". Unfortunately he did not get away with it. The enemy sentry threw a hand grenade at him but luckily it rolled down the hillside. The light machine gun sited in the bunker opened up. It was a bright moonlit night but the enemy was firing high as Nanak Chand could see from the tracers whizzing by overhead. He rushed up the hill, bent double, and threw himself flat on his face in front of the enemy bunker. Reaching out with his hand he grabbed the barrel of the machine gun and pulled it away from the enemy, scorching his palm on the overheated barrel. He then lobbed a grenade into the bunker.

By then the whole ridge seemed to have opened up on the Dogra column—but none of it was effective. Colonel Maluk Singh ordered the two leading companies to go into the village with the bayonet—

and then continue to the top of Salotri ridge. This was carried out promptly and by 2.00 am the success signal went up from the top of the ridge. The total losses in this action were 6 other ranks wounded. Sepoy Nanak Chand earned a mention in despatches.

In the second phase, 11 JAK Militia captured pt 5204 without a fight—though they had to fight to clear a neighbouring feature for the consolidation phase. By late morning of 25 November, 1 JAK passed through the other two positions already captured and occupied pt 4665.

The whole Salotri ridge was now occupied by JAK troops and within a few days work commenced on the Poonch-Rajouri link-up road. Between then and the Cease Fire on 1st January there was no other major engagement.

Thus was Poonch saved for the Indian Union and its thousands of inhabitants spared the fate that befell the unfortunates who had faced the bestiality of the Pakistani army and tribesmen in the western villages and townships. It had been a near run thing. When the first state force troops had begun to trickle back from Bagh, Rawalakot and Hajira, with barely five or ten rounds of ammunition left in their pockets and no reserves of rations or other supplies, few could have predicted that Poonch—separated from the nearest Indian Army forces by more than 30 miles of hostile territory—would be able to hold out. For nearly a month the state forces and the inhabitants fought a desperate struggle against a strong and well armed enemy—repulsing numerous raids and even organised attacks. They were forced to subsist on a starvation scale of rations—a few ounces of gruel or *chapati* per day, occasionally forced by the brigade staff to eat horse meat for sustenance. But the indomitable courage of the officers and men of the state forces, who never ceased fighting for their beloved hills, kept the enemy at bay. And later, when the Indian Army had built up strength, the *camaraderie* that sprang up between the Dogras of the state forces, the refugees and local inhabitants and the Indian Army, knit them into a gallant team which turned the tide of battle in this sector. Today, the Regiment of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles carries on its Colour the battle honour “Poonch” most proudly of all.



OLD FORT SKARDU

13

The High Himalayan Front

THROUGHOUT THE period of the Dogra *raj*, the security of its northern frontier was considered pivotal to the state of Jammu and Kashmir and, subsequently, to the entire nation. For this reason the British felt compelled to assume strategic responsibility for the region. The events in Gilgit in 1947, the gallant defence of Skardu from February to August 1948, the initial loss of Kargil in the spring of that year, the treachery of some balanced by the steadfast courage of others, were all to have far reaching effects on the future history of the state.

The northern front of the J&K operations was comprised of the areas of Gilgit, Bunji, Skardu, Kargil and Ladakh. The Indus river winds its way through much of the region. The valley of the Indus, a tableland at an average altitude of 10,000 feet, is flanked by the Karakoram Range to the north and the Himalayas to the south. Towns, few and far between, are important centres of communication. Gilgit, headquarters of the Gilgit Agency, commanded

control of the mountain passes to the NWFP and Central Asia. Skardu and Kargil were along the route to Leh.

Gilgit Agency, leased to the British in 1935 for a sixty year period by the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, was a focal point of British military and political influence. A wireless station installed in Gilgit, an all-weather airstrip suitable for heavy aircraft, and good roads linking the Agency with the NWFP made possible the use of relatively sophisticated modes of transport and communication. The Gilgit Scouts, approximately 600 strong, raised and officered by the British, were well trained, armed and equipped. They were particularly well-grounded in the intricacies of guerilla warfare. Their mandate was the maintenance of the internal security of the Agency, formation of the first line of defence in the event of hostilities and prevention of border infiltration.

Just prior to independence the British relinquished control over Gilgit which, in August 1947, came once again into the domain of J&K. Brigadier Ghansara Singh, appointed Governor of Gilgit by the Maharaja, left his previous posting in Srinagar Army Headquarters and flew to Gilgit at the end of July to assume the governorship and oversee the transfer of administrative control. Unfortunately, the job was impressive only from the titular point of view: the Prime Minister of J&K, Ram Chandra Kak, had objected to the Maharaja's choice of governor; Major General H.L. Scott, then Chief of Staff in Srinagar, was unsupportive from the start; and the British officers of the Gilgit Agency, all of whom had opted to serve in Pakistan, were actively hostile.

The British, by their sudden relinquishment of the Agency, had brought the administrative machinery of Gilgit to a standstill. Brigadier Ghansara Singh requested that Raja Noor Ali Khan, Revenue Assistant in Astore, and Capt Durga Singh, D Company Commander of 5 JAK at Rattoo, join him in Gilgit and assist in the transfer of power.

The truculent attitude of the British officers was in part due to the fact that for over a decade the Agency and the Gilgit Scouts had been administered from Peshawar. Their loyalties favoured Pakistan and they had no intention of vowing allegiance to the Maharaja of Kashmir. The Gilgit Scouts and civil employees presented Brigadier Ghansara Singh with a long and unreasonable list of demands. Either these were met or they threatened an *en masse* departure for Pakistan. General Scott, who had accompanied Brigadier Ghansara Singh to Gilgit for the turnover, assured the

petitioners that their demands would be met—thus greatly undermining the authority of the new governor.

Despite the cooperation of some of the Rajas and Mirs of the area and the support of the local populace, the Governor's position was untenable: those employees of the Agency not actually striking were following an organised policy of non-cooperation; the Srinagar government made no decisions concerning the plans and direction of the Agency, posted no additional administrative officers to Gilgit, and neglected to authorise Brigadier Ghansara Singh's control over the Agency budget. The British officers had spent or distributed all the controlled stores of sugar, oil and cloth; the one wireless set in Gilgit, the only rapid communication with Srinagar, was controlled by Peshawar. The new regime in Gilgit was in no position to withstand any challenge to its authority.

In early August 1947, there had been an abortive revolution against the Raja of Yasin. Colonel Bacon, the British Political Agent, imprisoned the leaders of the rebellion. The petition by 3,000 citizens of Yasin to Brigadier Ghansara Singh for the release of those imprisoned was the first test of the governor's power. The intricate relations between the various Rajas and Mirs of the area were, to say the least, complicated. The Mehtar of Chitral supported the uprising against the Raja of Yasin in hopes of replacing the Raja with one of his own relatives. To this end the Mehtar sent numerous cables to the Maharaja asking his intervention in the matter. Although there was no monopoly of virtue on either side of the issue, Brigadier Ghansara Singh saw the potential instability for the new administration in the deposition of the Raja and despite the threats of the Mehtar of Chitral he gave his support to the ruler of Yasin. With the aid of the Raja of Puniyal the new Governor was able to settle the matter without resort to force and keep, for a time, the peace of the area.

6 JAK (less A and C companies) under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Abdul Majid Khan, headquartered at Bunji, had recently relieved 5 JAK. The composition of 6 JAK at the time was 50 *per cent* Sikh, 50 *per cent* Muslim. The Sikh element of the battalion, recently formed, was weakened by a substantial number of recruits not yet proficient in weaponry. The officers were Captains Ihsan Ali, Hussan Khan, Mohammed Khan and Baldev Singh, Lieutenants Raghunath Singh and Sukh Dev. The battalion was responsible for the security of the northern frontier of the state, exclusive of the Gilgit Agency, between Bunji and Leh. The disposition of the batta-

lion in August 1947, was as follows :

A Company, less two platoons, plus one platoon B Company (Sikhs) at Leh (Major Sher Jung Thapa); two platoons (Sikhs) at Kargil (Capt Ganga Singh).

B Company, less one platoon, plus one platoon C Company and Battalion Headquarters at Bunji.

C Company, less two platoons, at Skardu (Muslims)—two officers, one JCO, 57 ORs (Captains Nek Alam and Krishan Singh).

D Company (Muslims) at Bunji (Capt Hussan Khan).

The defection of parts of 4 JAK at Domel and Muzaffarabad and the uprising in Yasin spawned rumours of an impending invasion of Gilgit by Swat and Chitral. Brigadier Ghansara Singh, assured of the support of the Rajas and Mirs of the surrounding territories, but dubious of the loyalty of the Muslim company of 6 JAK at Bunji, opted to rely solely on the Scouts for the defence of Gilgit. Major W.A. Brown, commanding the Gilgit Scouts, and his officers, Captains Matheson, Mohammed Sayeed and Lieutenant Haider, were headquartered in Gilgit. The two British officers had been retained by the J&K government though, clearly, their allegiance lay elsewhere.

In the climate of mounting tension of October 1947, the extent of the disaffection of the Scouts became obvious to Brigadier Ghansara Singh. He felt caught between Scylla and Charybdis—to face death at the hands of the Scouts or those of the Kashmir Muslims of 6 JAK. The former seemed preferable or, at any rate, potentially less barbaric. On 30 October, however, the Brigadier did order Lieut-Colonel Abdul Majid Khan to proceed immediately to Gilgit with as large a force as possible. Lieut-Colonel Khan, ill, was unable to leave Bunji but, in good faith, despatched Captains Hassan Khan and Ishan Ali with D Company. These officers left their troops *en route*, at Pari, arrived in Gilgit on the morning of 31 October and joined forces with Major Brown of the Scouts.

On the night of 31 October, at 11.30 pm, Major Brown with Lieut Haider Khan and approximately 100 Scouts surrounded the Governor's residence. For the first hour the besiegers were content merely to return the random fire from within the residence where Brigadier Ghansara Singh, his orderly and driver were manning their posts. Thereafter, the residence was subjected to more earnest destruction by a bout of light machine gun fire followed by intermittent firing for the rest of the night.

The following morning, the seriousness of his intent effectively demonstrated, Major Brown sent a delegation of two Hindu officials, the *Naib Tehsildar* and the police inspector, to the Governor with an ultimatum: either the governor should surrender within the next fifteen minutes or all non-Muslims in the area would be massacred. With the additional persuasion of Raja Noor Ali Khan, Brigadier Ghansara Singh assented. The *coup*, organised and carried out by Major Brown and the Scouts on behalf of Pakistani authorities, reflected no change in the loyalty of either the people of Gilgit or the Rajas and Mirs of the area.

Major Brown was now *de facto* governor of Gilgit. The flag of Pakistan was ceremonially raised on 3 November and all state officials were required to salute it. Brigadier Ghansara Singh, under arrest, was clearly not an honoured guest at the occasion. On that day the Brigadier was requested to sign a telegram to the J&K government stating that control of Gilgit had been handed over to the government of Pakistan. Should the Brigadier refuse to sign, massacre of non-Muslims was again threatened. The *de jure* Governor objected to signing on the compelling grounds that Gilgit had not been 'handed over' but 'taken over'. Lieut-Colonel Abdul Majid Khan, himself a prisoner, urged the Brigadier to sign in order to avoid the threatened atrocities.

It must be noted that the British officers, while politically committed to Pakistan and quite prepared to do anything to achieve their aims, were not motivated by communal hatred. The defecting Muslim officers of the state forces, however, felt strongly that every non-Muslim should either be forcibly converted or shot. Both of these methods of eradication of the non-Muslim were liberally applied during this anarchic period. The abduction of young women, no novelty in the history of conquest, recurred. Capt Mohammed Khan married, at pistol point, the daughter of a Kashmiri pundit and many daughters of Astore and Bunji suffered similar or less ceremonious fates. Lieut Haider Ali, presumably in a gesture of gallant bravado, was thrice moved to volunteer to shoot Brigadier Ghansara Singh himself. Fortunately he was deterred by public opinion.

During this period Major Brown ordered Capt Matheson, his second in command then at Chilas, to occupy Astore—thus blocking the line of retreat of the Sikh (B) company, 6 JAK, from Bunji. Simultaneously, Major Brown with his Scouts and Capt Hussan with the defecting Muslims of 6 JAK attacked Bunji from the north

and overran a Sikh outpost at Janglot. One of the other ranks escaped and crossed the Indus to inform the garrison. The Sikh company fell back on Astore where Capt Matheson and his Scouts lay in wait for them. Flanked by Brown and Matheson the company attempted retreat into the hills. After a snow-tortured, provisionless fortnight they surrendered at Bunji and were taken prisoner.

The Pakistani administration of Gilgit Agency began officially in the third week of November with the arrival of Sardar Mohammed Alam from Peshawar. At that time the total value of the Agency treasury, the *Toshkhana* and other stores was approximately thirty lakhs of rupees. Regular air service between Gilgit and Peshawar was resumed and an influx of Pakistani civil and military personnel began. A recruitment drive resulted in the enlistment of 2,000 local inhabitants who were subsequently armed, trained and equipped. Small arms and artillery pieces arrived from Pakistan and preparations for further territorial acquisitions were begun.

Brigadier Ghansara Singh was confined for three months to a dimly-lit room, without sanitary facilities, in the Indian Officers' Quarters of the Gilgit Scouts Lines. His belongings had been thoroughly searched and returned to him after the confiscation of arms, ammunition and, curiously, his new fishing rod. He was allowed no books or papers. His orderlies were permitted to bring him food, cooked by his own cook, twice daily; but the rations were hardly sumptuous. He was required to pay for the fuel necessary to heat his quarters during the bitter winter of the region—a financial consideration made more difficult due to his uncleared, pending back pay. At the end of this period he was moved to somewhat more habitable quarters, given bathing facilities and permitted cigarettes. Still later, due to his failing health, milk and vegetables were added to his rations and he was allowed to walk in the compound and correspond with his family. Brigadier Ghansara Singh was eventually taken to Pakistan and released at Suchetgarh on 15 January, 1949.

Gilgit and Bunji under control, Pakistani attention focussed on the other small garrisons of 6 JAK along the northern frontier: Skardu, Kargil and Leh. These garrisons were under the overall command of Lieut-Colonel Sher Jang Thapa, headquartered at Leh. The subversive propaganda efforts of hostile agents had found fertile ground in the largely Muslim populace of Skardu. Of the five Rajas of Skardu Tehsil—Rundu, Khaplu, Shigar, Karmang and Skardu—at least one, Rundu, was openly pro-Pakistan. The

leanings of the others were unclear. Since Leh, with its predominantly Buddhist population was considered more secure than Skardu, Army Headquarters in Srinagar ordered Lieut-Colonel Thapa to proceed to Skardu with all available force that could be spared from Leh and Kargil. Colonel Thapa left Leh on 23 November, 1947, and arrived in Skardu on 3 December with a total strength of two officers, two JCOs, and 75 ORs of whom three were Muslim wireless operators. *En route* to Skardu, a *Harvard* aircraft, presumably a hostile on reconnaissance, was spotted. (See map on p 243.)

Skardu, first captured by General Zorawar Singh in 1834, was the headquarters of a *tehsil* in the district of Ladakh. At an altitude of 7,500 feet it is located in a small valley divided by the river Indus. The area to the north of the river is fairly level but infertile and uninhabited. Skardu, on the southern bank of the Indus, is surrounded by military posts and the offices of the civil administration. High mountains enclose the valley on three sides and winter snows cover many of the tracks. Overlooking the town and commanding the area is an oval-based hill, pt 8853, accessible only from the north and southwest. Skardu fort, located halfway up the eastern slope, is hidden from pt 8853 by a knoll.

On arrival, Colonel Thapa found the situation in Skardu unpromising. The community, Muslim except for a handful of Hindu and Sikh traders, politically reflected its religious persuasion. The *Wazir Wazirat* Amar Nath had held a meeting of the five Rajas to remind them of their allegiance to the J&K Government and to ascertain to what extent each could or would be of assistance in providing rations for the imminently arriving troops. The meeting was not attended by Rondu who was said, even then, to be in contact with Gilgit, urging an early attack on Skardu and promising his full cooperation. The loyalty of some of Colonel Thapa's own troops while not at that time in open doubt was clearly strained: Capt Nek Alam of C Company had intercepted and forwarded to Army Headquarters, Srinagar, two letters from Capt Hussan Khan (a defector, it will be remembered, in Gilgit) urging the Muslim troops at Skardu to take and hold the garrison until the arrival of support from Gilgit. On 4 December the Captain, on local information, proceeded to a nearby village and rescued four Sikh survivors from Bunji (B Company). The remainder of the company still alive had been taken, as prisoners, to Gilgit.

Extensive reconnaissance of the area indicated that a winter attack from Gilgit and Bunji could come only via Rondu. In antici-

pation of attack from this direction, Colonel Thapa established two outposts of a platoon each on either side of the Indus at Tsari, 20 miles northwest of Skardu. The Muslim platoon, commanded by Capt Nek Alam, was on the far side of the river and the Sikh platoon, under Capt Krishan Singh, on the near side.

Thapa had also urgently requested reinforcements from Srinagar—necessary if he was to hold what he considered an untenable position in Skardu. His advice that the garrison and civil administration be withdrawn to Kargil was rejected by Srinagar—despite the fact that they were unable to send any reinforcements, all available troops having been despatched to Poonch.

Srinagar Headquarters, determined to utilise every cubic foot of manpower, hastily assembled a Skardu relief column of two companies composed of orderlies, bandsmen and storemen. Commanded by Capt Prabhat Singh, the column, about 90 strong but minimally equipped, left Srinagar on 13 January, 1948, and covered the first 25 miles to Kangan by bus. The remaining 200 miles to Skardu, for pedestrian traverse only, were beset with the perils and discomforts of high altitude, snow and a chronic insufficiency of porters. Frostbite, trenchfoot, insomnia and breathlessness added to the dubious delights of the march.

In order to lessen the number of porters required, the column moved in small groups. The route, track-less in winter, was impeded by numerous ridges and nullahs and the column advanced through the snows, frequently without benefit of guides. One swirling snow-storm so blinded the troops and obscured the line of march that each man was obliged to step into the tracks of the man ahead to find his way. Several cases of frostbite had to be left behind at Dras and the column was obliged to rest three days at Kargil. Kargil-Skardu was relatively easier than the previous stage; the route was not snow-bound and ponies and yaks lightened the loads of the men. The six-stage march—Olthing Thang, Bagicha, Tolti, Parkutta, Gol, Skardu—was, however, slowed by blown bridges, fortunately reparable. The advance was desolate—wires down, villages deserted. The first group of the column reached Skardu on 10 February. Anticipating, perhaps, a short rest, they arrived just in time for the first attack which occurred that night.

The garrison was surprised by the enemy, approximately 600 strong, during the night of February 10/11. The initial attack, not well supported by fire, was quickly repulsed. It was, however, renewed with bren guns, mortar and medium machine gun support

but the garrison, now 130 strong, fought gallantly; approximately six hours later the enemy withdrew leaving one wounded, who was taken prisoner, and one dead. In addition to the prisoner (and undoubtedly of greater value) were the arms and ammunition left by the retreating forces: one medium machine gun, four rifles, one 2 in mortar and several boxes of various types of ammunition. Led by Captains Ihsan Ali, Mohammed Khan (both formerly of 6 JAK) and Lieut Babar Khan (Gilgit Scouts) the attackers, not content with a purely military objective, looted Skardu and killed many of the civil officials including *Wazir Wazirat* Amar Nath. During the night the Muslims in the fort, 31 ORs as well as the three wireless operators, defected. Fortunately the commanding officer had kept the wireless set in his possession and his experience as a brigade signals officers amply qualified him for its operation.

After the battle it was learned that Capt Krishan Singh's platoon at Tsari had been overwhelmed by the hostiles. Those Sikhs not killed in the fray, including the Captain, were taken prisoner and subsequently murdered. The other (Muslim) platoon at Tsari under Capt Nek Alam defected at this time. The local people had prevented news of these events from reaching Skardu before the attack on the garrison was launched.

The second reinforcement group, 70 strong, commanded by Capt Ajit Singh, arrived on 13 February, and the third, of equal strength, on 15 February. The strength of the garrison, now approximately 285, was still vastly inferior to that of the enemy, particularly in light of the latter's easy access to additional troops. Pt 8853, vital to the defence of Skardu garrison, could not be occupied for want of manpower and patrolling activity was restricted to a five mile radius. The situation was modestly alleviated when Srinagar authorised raising a labour platoon in Skardu with rations and pay commensurate to those of the state forces. Also, Colonel Thapa economised the demands on his men by organising local, non-Muslim youths to carry water and rations to the piquets. The death of the local civil administrator had further imperilled the situation of the refugees (229 non-Muslim, 19 Muslim). The former were taken into the fort, the latter kept in the perimeter. The commanding officer, in daily reports to Srinagar, urgently requested more troops. Playing for time, the garrison confined its activities to the previously defined perimeters. Hostile occupation of, and opening firing from pt 8853 on the night of 14-15 February exacerbated the difficulties but there was no active engagement until 24 February when a

patrol of platoon strength was ambushed by two enemy platoons; two ORs were critically wounded.

Srinagar, responding to Skardu's dire need for reinforcement, despatched, on 16 February, a column under the command of Brigadier Faqir Singh, which crossed Zoji La under the severest winter conditions. The column, three platoons of infantry (including elements of 7 JAK), two medium machine guns, two 2 in mortars and a wireless set (which became inoperable due to climatic conditions, thus severing contact with Srinagar or Skardu) reached Kargil safely. On 8 March the column, further reinforced in Kargil by one platoon of A Company, 6 JAK, set out for Skardu. Progress was slowed both by cold and the hazardous route—a narrow cliff track with a steep drop to the Indus below. On 17 March, when it was ten miles out of Skardu, the column came under small arms fire from the surrounding ridges. The firing continued throughout the day, killing 32 and wounding many others—Brigadier Faqir Singh, with facial and shoulder wounds, among them. At nightfall the column retreated and 24 hours later reached Totli. After an overnight stop it returned to Kargil where limited medical facilities were available. Srinagar, on receipt of a message from Kargil through Leh, ordered the Brigadier to return for medical care after delegating his command to Major Coutts, the Special Officer from the Indian Army attached to the column.

Although the Skardu garrison had correctly interpreted the movement of sizeable enemy detachments towards Gol as potential interceptions of the relief column, JAK Army Headquarters at Srinagar rejected the garrison's request for an air strike. Ultimately, Colonel Thapa, informed of the imminent (18 March) arrival of Brigadier Faqir Singh's column, despatched two weak platoons to meet the column at Gol. Arrived there, however, they learned of the Brigadier's retreat. Morale on the return to Skardu was not raised by a narrowly escaped ambush and a running battle with the enemy for the last five miles of the march.

The enemy, gratified by its success in repulsing the relief column, reinforced and amply supplied and equipped, renewed attacks on the Skardu garrison. The besieged inmates of the fort, including refugees, numbered approximately 800 and were subsisting on rations calculated to supply 80 men through the month of August. Additional rations available from the local bazaar and the vacated homes of refugees did little to ameliorate the situation and the daily ration was reduced to three *chhataks* of *atta*, half a *chhatak* of *dhal* and no *ghee*.

In a further attempt to reinforce the garrison, A and B Companies of 7 JAK, commanded respectively by Captains Davinder Singh and Durga Singh, were ordered to Skardu. At Kargil these companies joined forces with Major Coutts and the remnants of the previous relief column and advanced to Parkutta where they awaited reinforcements from 5 JAK.

In March, 1948, 5 JAK, previously posted on the Jammu-Pakistan border, was ordered to Srinagar for the relief of Skardu. Elements of the battalion were detained at Ransu and Banihal to guard the Jammu-Srinagar road. The rest of the battalion, commanded by Lieut-Colonel Kripal Singh, was airlifted to Srinagar whence B Company proceeded on foot to Parkutta. Capt Tajram Thakur, commanding D Company as well as a platoon from A Company also moved to join the others but was held up near Parkutta by the enemy, well entrenched on both sides of the Indus. On 31 March the Skardu reinforcements grouped at Parkutta under Major Coutts were designated *Biscuit Column*.

The remainder of 5 JAK moved in platoon groups from Srinagar to Totli. When Lieut-Colonel Kripal Singh reached Bagicha he encountered Lieut-Colonel Sampuran Bachan Singh, the Indian Army adviser to *Biscuit Column*, and learned that the latter had been recalled to his unit. At Totli Colonel Kripal Singh took command of *Biscuit Column* on Major Coutts' return to establish headquarters at Kargil. At this point some of the column, moving in small groups, were still in the vicinity of Kargil, others well on the road to Skardu.

The Raja at Totli pledged his loyalty, promised his co-operation and alleviated both the loads of the men and the concerns of the commanding officer by providing 400 porters and assuring the advancing troops of the absence of enemy in strength in the area. On 10 May the column, composed of Battalion Headquarters and three support platoons (signals, mortars and medium machine gun respectively) advanced without incident as far as Mirpigund, where, rounding a large bend in the river, it came under heavy small arms and mortar fire from enemy well entrenched on the far (eastern) side of the river. The porters, as was their wont on such occasions, promptly dropped their loads and disappeared. Urgent requests for reinforcement from 7 JAK column at Parkutta were unavailing : that column was also resisting an attack of approximately battalion strength and, without a wireless set, was unable to communicate its plight either to Battalion headquarters or other 5 JAK units.

The attack on Parkutta was, however, repulsed and, on receipt of a cipher message from Battalion Tactical headquarters, this column destroyed its heavy equipment, abandoned position and, at the cost of 20 casualties, fought through to Colonel Kripal Singh's column. On 16 May, the Parkutta troops reached Mirpigund, which had been the scene of six days's heavy action before enemy attacks abated.

The enemy, numerically far superior, was better able to absorb its large number of casualties than was 5 JAK for whom the small number of eight wounded represented an appreciable loss. Further advance was impossible not only due to heavy fire from the heights but also because ammunition could not be replenished; because most of the villages were deserted, neither rations nor porters could be procured. In any case, even when available the porters were of questionable value: true, the absence of their services hindered rapid or efficient movement but the enemy had already achieved that aim; their unreliability in battle had frequently been demonstrated and, largely Muslim and pro-Pakistan in sympathy, they were a valuable source of information to the enemy concerning troops' strengths and movements. (It was rumoured that the brother of the Raja of Shigar, posing as a porter, had regularly been able to pass on both information and ammunition). After an understandably pessimistic assessment of the situation the commanding officer requested Lieut-Colonel Prithvi Chand, at Leh, to send his ponies and Buddhist porters to Kargil. The day they arrived Kargil was attacked and some of the porters were killed in the ensuing fighting.

On or about 14 May, 1948, the 5 and 7 JAK column fell back on Totli where it heard news of the fall of Kargil (9-10 May) and received orders from Srinagar to recapture the town. In preparation for the attack on Kargil all of *Biscuit Column* further withdrew to Olthing Thang where it destroyed its heavy equipment, the wireless and those arms too heavy to be carried without porters. The column then began the march towards Bagicha, travelling cross-country to avoid the more frequented tracks patrolled by the enemy. Despite this precaution the enemy, informed of the column's movement by the locals, was able to subject it to frequent harrassment. At 2.00 pm, 19 May, *Biscuit Column* closed in on the apparently deserted village of Kharmang where it was suddenly and effectively ambushed by automatic and mortar fire. The column, pinned down at close range, was unable to return fire and, at the end of the battle, had lost 60 men dead, and an equal number of wounded. Later

that evening the encircled column under cover of darkness, successfully broke through the enemy lines and headed for Bagicha which it reached (minus three platoons who had taken a different route through the hills) at 3.00 am on 20 May.

The column, not unnaturally low in morale, depleted in strength and without (the abandoned) heavy equipment, was in no position to attack Kargil. Colonel Kripal Singh decided to by-pass Kargil and proceed to Dras. Once again, to avoid enemy engagement it left the main tracks and travelled through the mountains. Without rations it subsisted on *sattu* and once lost its way in a blinding snow-storm. On 23 May *Biscuit Column* arrived at Tohunwas and found there twelve stragglers from the missing three platoons. The remainder had either been killed or wounded in the close enemy chase that followed the breakthrough at Kharmang. At Kinyal and Matuyal (reached 25 May) minimal rations were at least obtainable from the villagers.

With the intent of crossing the Shingo River by footbridge, the column arrived, 27 May, at Franshot and found itself trapped; the bridge had been destroyed beyond immediate means of repair and there was no nearby fordable crossing point. The appearance of an enemy platoon halted, for the time, all attempts to cross the river. The following evening a section of troops, ferried across the river to begin bridge repairs from the other side, was mowed down by enemy fire. With the arrival of enemy reinforcements and intensified action the attempts at bridge repair were abandoned and the column moved upstream to Gultari, site of a cradle bridge. The bridge at Gultari, reached on the morning of 29 May, proved safe for the passage of A and B Companies, 7 JAK, as well as 15 men of 5 JAK before it collapsed, sending three ORs to their death in the torrent beneath. The column, now effectively divided, proceeded on separate lines of march to Dras : those who had crossed the Shingo advanced over the 14,300 foot altitude of Marpo La; the others, commanded by Colonel Kirpal Singh, crossed Kuroghal Gali at 13,647 feet. The march, steep, dark, and further complicated by snows so heavy that no fire could be lit during a halt, was a double ordeal for men deprived for days of rest and food. The crossing of the pass was achieved at the cost of 39 lives before that portion of the column reached Badoab on 3 June.

The inhabitants of this Muslim village not only gave food to the troops but accurately warned them of an enemy ambush at a track junction beyond the village. With the aid of village guides the

ambushing forces were themselves attacked and routed. Resuming the advance, Colonel Kirpal Singh's column again became lost and underwent a hostile rearguard attack. Having reached the limits of physical endurance, the column gratefully accepted the succour of Indian Army forces on their arrival at Sonamarg on the evening of 7 June.

The two companies of 7 JAK which had succeeded in crossing the cradle bridge were, with the exception of those few who survived a harrowing mountain escape, less fortunate. Unable to locate tracks, constantly under enemy fire from the heights, they reached Dras only to find it occupied by the enemy. After 24 hours of nearly continuous firing most of the men, without means or strength for escape, ammunition exhausted, had little fight left in them and were taken prisoner. Srinagar learned of their fate from the few who managed to slip away and cross the mountains.

To go back to Kargil, by the end of April the garrison there had been drastically reduced; in effect it consisted of just one platoon of 7 JAK, commanded by Capt Lachhman Dass Silwal, and twelve wounded or sick in the dispensary. In early May there were several enemy attacks on the garrison which were repulsed—but, clearly, Capt Silwal and his men were in no position to withstand a sustained attack.

On the night of 9–10 May the enemy put in a stronger attack—this time supported by 3 in mortar fire. The garrison held on for 24 hours but on the next night, hopelessly outnumbered, it broke contact with the hostiles by stealing out over the mountains, accompanied by the Hindu civil officials, and made for Kokarnag.

As for Dras, garrisoned by two platoons of C Company, 5 JAK, it had been attacked on the morning of 10 May. The enemy, who would appear to have felt particularly vigorous on that date, opened fire on the garrison which, despite heavy casualties, had gallantly resisted repeated heavy attacks for over three weeks. Cut telephone wires prevented communication with Machoi where one mixed company was defending Zoji La. With no reinforcement available and ammunition and rations almost exhausted, it was decided to abandon Dras and fall back on Machoi. The garrison, after breaking through the encircling enemy lines, was followed and attacked at Pindras, six miles from Dras. The ensuing engagement, on a hill overlooking the town, lasted for an hour and a half before the enemy withdrew. However, renewed attacks during the next two days ultimately exhausted the column's fire power. The commanding

officer, Capt Kashmir Singh, his JCOs and the majority of the ORs had been killed in the fighting. Forty survivors attempted escape through the hills but were eventually captured. Enemy attention then switched to Skardu.

The fall of Kargil and Dras ended all hopes of ever reinforcing the besieged garrison of Skardu, where the JAK forces had, for more than three months past, resisted almost incessant attacks. Enemy strength had been amply augmented while, within the fort, sickness, malnutrition and inadequate medical supplies had all taken their toll. In order to conserve the rapidly dwindling supplies of ammunition, the men of the garrison were ordered to shoot only to kill. On 14 March a JAK ambush inflicted heavy casualties on a hostile patrol but heavy fire from the enemy-occupied pt 8853 consistently prevented the garrison from consolidating any occasional gains. Despite their discouraging situation the men and officers of the garrison were courageously determined and had made a carefully thought out plan of defence. The fire-plan was well conceived, the defensive positions tactically utilised for maximum benefit and double-roof construction made bunkers impenetrable by mortar fire.

On March 28, 1948, at 3.00 am, the enemy had launched his first really determined attack with heavy fire from pt 8853. Repulsed, the attack was renewed full-scale several hours later and heavy fighting continued throughout the day. That evening the enemy withdrew from all the piquets except "School" and "Raja" respectively, commanded by Captains Ajit Singh and Jem Priar Singh. These piquets successfully resisted continued enemy pressure during the night until a garrison counter-attack at dawn forced the enemy back. The garrison's loss during this action was four dead and ten wounded as against twenty enemy dead.

"School" piquet, a key defence point and once again the focal point of hostile attention on 7 April, repulsed a three day attack despite being cut off from the garrison. Capt Ajit Singh, commanding the piquet, was awarded the *Vir Chakra* for his part in the action. During this attack the enemy was able, at one point, to approach within twenty yards of the principal JAK position. The garrison, now more vulnerable than ever, not only suffered chronic shortage of ammunition but was limited to an area of 1500 by 600 yards, confronting enemy positions at 50 yard distance from each piquet. A new tactic now directed against the garrison—systematic infiltration through gaps in the perimeter—was countered by stepped-up night patrolling.

On 16 May, after Kargil and Dras had fallen, Srinagar cabled orders for the Skardu garrison and refugees to withdraw to Olthing Thang, carrying the maximum possible load of arms and ammunition, ultimately to assist in the recapture of Kargil :

First. Enemy pressure on Skardu and L of C between Skardu Kargil increased considerably recently. Enemy attacked and captured Kargil 12 May. Enemy now reported Bod Karbu with intention advancing to Leh. Second. Garrisons at Skardu Parkutta Totli and other places on L of C Kargil will temporarily withdraw from above places as early as possible and conc at Olthing Thang NJ 1804 with a view to recapture Kargil. Third. Withdrawal will be carried out as follows. A. Skardu. Garrison to fight its way back to Othing Thang as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to bring back all arms ammunition and civ population. Arms ammunition and equipment which cannot be brought will be destroyed. Parkutta and Totli. Comd 5 KI will make every endeavour to withdraw Parkutta Grn to Totli. Whole Grn will then fight its way to Olthing Thang and establish firm base there. Efiorts will be made to contact Lt Col Sampuram Bachan Singh and Maj Coutts and help conc their detachments at Olthing Thang. Arms and equipment which cannot be brought will be destroyed.

Colonel Thapa objected strenuously to the proposal :

Though message not clear due to some mistakes probably in transmission I gather intention is to withdraw and conc at Olthing Thang with a view to recapture Kargil. May I bring to your kind notice. One. Two days after we were attacked in Skardu we said we could not hold Skardu and then it was easy to withdraw as enemy had not occupied line of withdrawal and plenty transport available. JAK forces ordered to hold to last man last round. Two. We are holding for more than three months. Are left with no mortar ammunition and other ammunition practically exhausted. With that we have to fight back about 80 miles route all held by enemy in well prepared positions and having all supporting weapons with plenty ammunition Three. We have eight wounded stretcher cases. In addition some indoor patients and male and female and young all unfit to move. No coolies to evacuate above. Four. Two routes open for us to follow one through Gol-Parkutta and second via Satpura. Both very strongly held by enemy in great depth. Simply impossible to pass through. If moved then 50 percent casualty of troops and not less than 80 percent refugees certain. Five. Not a single coolie for ration etc. Six. There are no troops at Kargil Olthing Thang Bagicha. Major Coutts etc having reached Leh. Troops at Totli Parkutta are one strong battalion and have not been able to clear opposition and reach here. We are hardly two companies with no mortar ammunition and cannot fight back such

a long distance all vital points held by enemy. Seventh. Troops from Srinagar could come much quicker than collection of scattered garrisons here and recapture Kargil. If SF troops not available IA troops be pushed. Suggest and request. A. Ammunition be dropped immediately. B. More troops be pushed from Srinagar to recapture Kargil. C. Troops in Totli area may not be withdrawn. D. If our withdrawal is imperative suggest troops at Totli Parkutta be pushed here and we all fall back collectively. Lastly to avoid disaster of this garrison and refugees request you please reconsider your orders.

Divisional Headquarters at Srinagar acceded to this request and orders for the withdrawal were cancelled—and decided instead to stock up the Skardu garrison. However, air drops from Srinagar failed to ameliorate the position: the fighter aircraft employed for the drops had only a limited transport capacity for rations and ammunition and the dropping zone was so narrow that many of the supplies fell into enemy hands. On 2 June the enemy suffered heavy casualties from a strafing attack on pt 8853 by two IAF *Tempests*. The attack, while of minimal tactical value, was at least cheering to the men of the garrison, demoralised by malnutrition, malaria, dysentery and bleak prospects.

On 17 June Sepoy Amar Nath, captured by the enemy at Parkutta, approached the garrison bearing a white flag and a message to Colonel Thapa signed by Colonel Shahzada Mata-ul-Mulk, commander, Azad Central Forces, Skardu. Though quite properly rejected by the garrison, the message suggested compelling reasons for surrender, assured benevolent conduct and promised good treatment to the surrendering forces:

1. All attempts to relieve your garrison by Brigadier Faqir Singh, Lieut-Colonel Kripal Singh and Sampuran Bachan Singh have resulted in absolute failure resulting in numerous killed and prisoners taken.
2. You have done your duty as every soldier should do. Now that it is clear that no relief can reach you in this mountainous area there is no doubt about the ultimate fate of your garrison and I am quite determined about it. It is no use to carry on a struggle which will result in your annihilation.
3. I therefore advise you to lay down arms and I take full responsibility to give protection to one and all. You must believe me and trust me as I am not only a soldier but also possess royal blood. I have given instructions to my officers and men that anyone approaching with a white flag will not be fired at but taken into safe custody.

4. Lastly as a proof of my goodwill I wish to inform you that not a single non-Muslim property has been looted or damaged and uptil now they carry on their business as if nothing at all had happened. I, therefore, advise you again to lay down arms and thus save your lives. An officer should accompany back the white flag if you consider my words sincere and honest.

By mid-August the garrison was no longer in any shape to offer significant resistance to attack. Heavy enemy artillery fire on 12 August was followed by the successful advance of two companies as far as the garrison bunkers, where hand-to-hand fighting took place. The attack, eventually repulsed, depleted the last resources of garrison energies and ammunition. On 14 August, 1948, outnumbered five to one, the last box of reserve ammunition used, the garrison surrendered.

Enemy revenge for more than six months of resistance was frightful. Mass murder and rape followed the garrison's surrender and the 40 non-Muslim refugees were among the first to be killed. In the prevailing atmosphere of panic many of the women within the garrison committed suicide. All of the Sikhs were put to the sword: Capt Ganga Singh, A Company, 6 JAK was tied and shot. Survivors of this holocaust were taken prisoner and remained in Attock Fort until repatriation in May, 1950. Lieut-Colonel Thapa was awarded the *Maha Vir Chakra* for leadership displayed during the prolonged and heroic resistance by the Skardu garrison.

As a result of the fall of Skardu and Kargil, the Valley of Kashmir was threatened from the north as well as the east; what is more, the only line of communication between Srinagar and Leh, over the Zoji La and through Kargil, was disrupted. Failing rapid reinforcements, it would be only a matter of months before the enemy could walk into Leh.

Leh is the capital of Ladakh, a remote northwestern province of J&K which lies along the Upper Indus Valley between the Karakoram and the Himalayan Ranges. It occupies about 30,000 square miles of territory and is one of the highest inhabited areas in the world. The commercial and strategic importance of Leh arose from its situation at the meeting of the old Central Asian Highway from Sinkiang to Kashmir and the Lhasa-Kashmir caravan route. The population was about 10,000, mostly Buddhist but with an admixture of Muslims.

War came as a bewilderment to this isolated region. Colonel

Thapa had left 33 men of A Company 6 JAK to garrison this vast area when he set out for Skardu in November 1947. From this strength garrisons had to be provided for Leh, Khalsi and the Nubra Valley to the north which made just about one strong section of troops at each place.

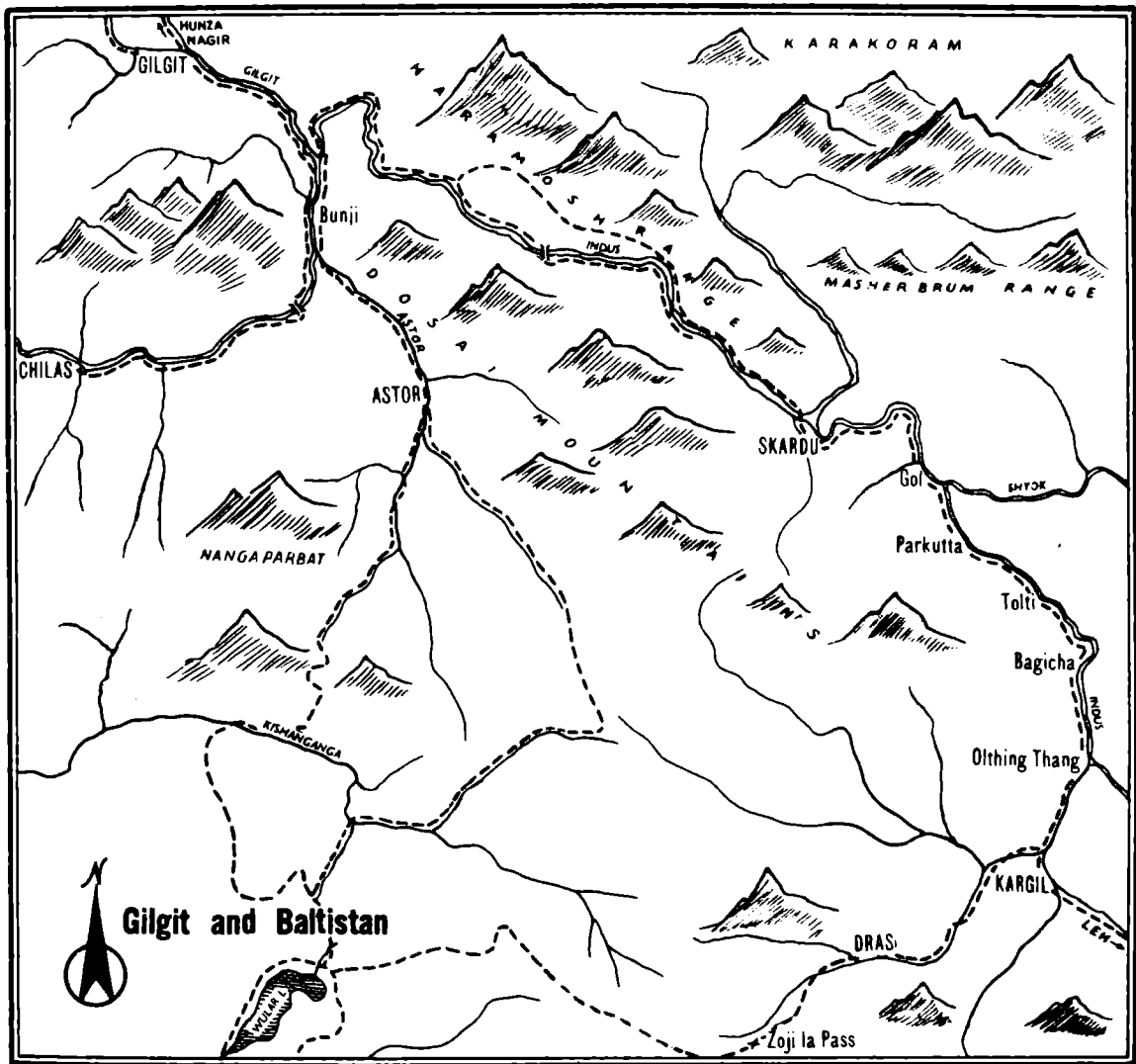
There was an enemy attempt at infiltration into Ladakh during January 1948. Urgent messages sent to Srinagar requesting reinforcements resulted in the despatch of a column of two weak platoons, totalling 60 men, to Leh under Capt Badri Singh. This small, ill-equipped column left Srinagar on 14 February and crossed the formidable Zoji La in the dead of winter—where snows over 40 feet deep have been known. They reached Leh without mishap in early March—and were sent to reinforce the garrisons at Khalsi and Nubra.

The enemy had sent a small advance party from Kargil on the same day they had begun their attacks. This party encountered one of the JAK patrols near Khalsi and, after a short engagement, lost three dead. On 14 May the garrison at Nubra was attacked—the first major action. The battle lasted for a day and a night before the enemy eventually withdrew. JAK casualties were one killed and one wounded.

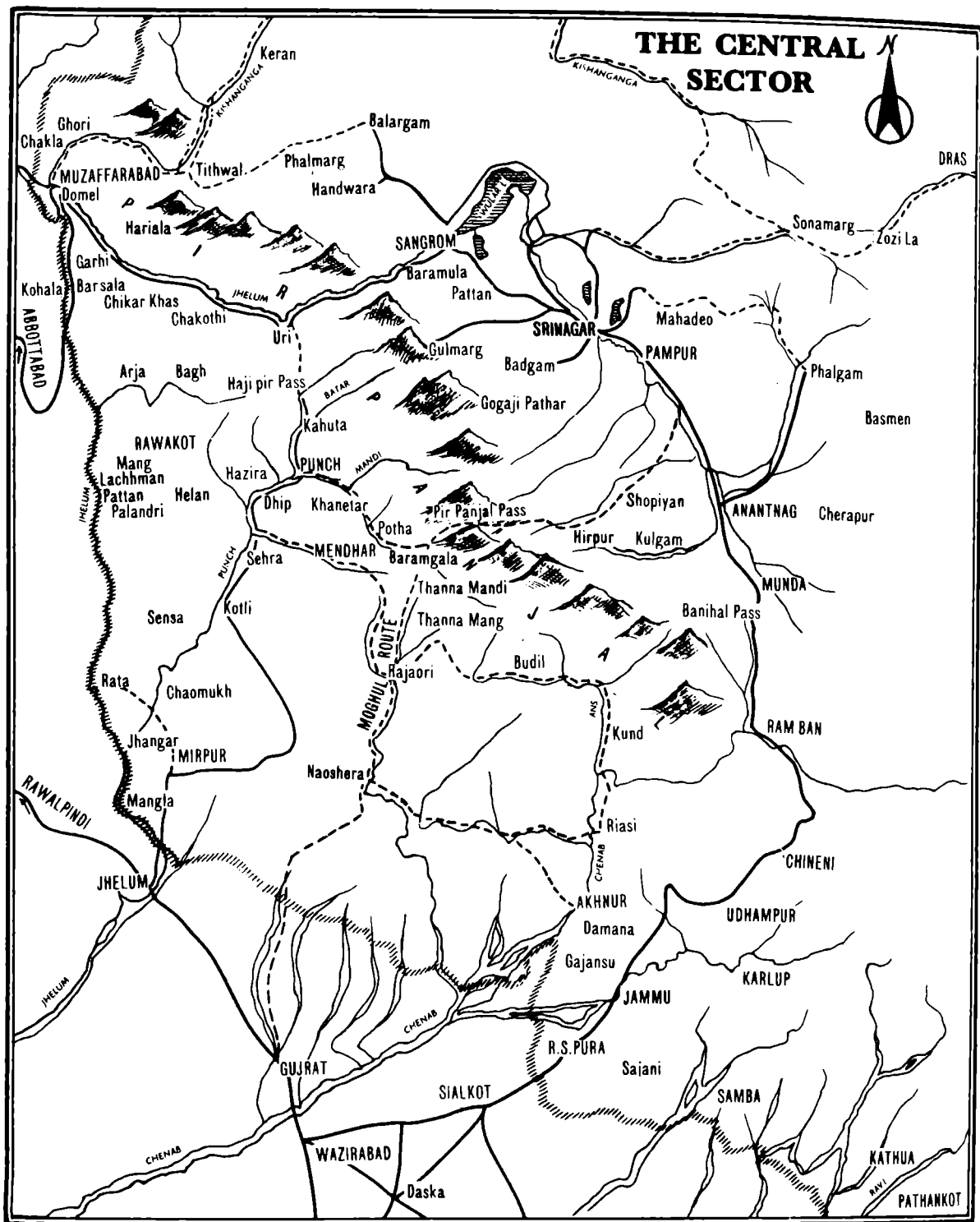
Soon after the fall of Kargil General Thimayya, GOC at Srinagar, flew into Leh with his Air Adviser to make a reconnaissance of the area. He decided to fly in a company of Indian Army Gorkhas while another battalion of Gorkhas, 2/8 Gorkha Rifles, was despatched on foot from India over the route that lies across the Outer and Mid-Himalayan Ranges.

Thus the defence of Leh passed into the hands of the Indian Army. Eventually a whole brigade of the enemy concentrated against Leh; but by then Colonel Parab of 2/8 GR had been appointed Military Governor of Leh and had organised the defences well. Not only did the garrison resist all enemy attempts during the summer months to capture the monastery capital, by early November it was able to mount an offensive that pushed them back with heavy losses all the way to Khalsi.

From Khalsi Leh Brigade sent up a column to link up with 77 Para Brigade which was advancing from Srinagar over the Zoji La to attack Kargil. The two columns met at Kargil after its recapture. Thereafter the threat from the north was no longer a major concern.



THE CENTRAL SECTOR





JAMMU, THE CITY OF TEMPLES

14

Operations in the Southern and Central Sectors

THE FOUR major areas of operations in the J&K campaign were: the Chhamb-Jhangar-Rajouri front in the south; Poonch; Kashmir valley including the Jhelum valley and Tithwal; and the Skardu-Kargil-Leh area in the north. There were, however, a number of other areas where critical battles were fought though at a lower intensity and mainly against irregular enemy forces. JAK units fought in most of these actions and played a particularly important role in the safeguarding of the southern border of Jammu, which marches with that of Pakistan from west of Pathankot to the Chenab at Akhnur.

The southern border of Jammu province had been relatively peaceful till early October. From 6 October, however, the whole length of the border from Akhnur to Kathua became the scene of raids by Pakistan Army personnel and local armed villagers. These incursions continued for the next 14 months but, unlike those on the west, they were neither well planned nor coordinated—

and generally followed a pattern of hit-and-run raids by Pakistani gangs armed with rifles, bren guns and light automatics and penetrating 5 to 10 miles into the state. Their aim was to create confusion by indiscriminate burning of villages, looting towns, molesting and killing civilians and retreating into Pakistan before troops of JAK army could deal with them.

At that time, 5 JAK was posted in this area under Major Kripal Singh, reinforced by recruits of JAK Regimental Centre and a few companies of garrison police. Battalion Headquarters was at Jammu while headquarters company was in the Arnia area, distributed in posts along the border. The area was divided into three sectors: Ujh-Hiranagar; Ramgarh-Babiya; Ranbisinghpura-Akh-nur. Each sector was manned by a company of 5 JAK. Detailed dispositions were:

One company in Pandorian Rest House area on the Ranbir Canal, 14 miles south of Jammu.

One company in the Mawa area of Samba on the Jammu-Samba-Kathua Road.

One company at the Suchetgarh barrier on the Sialkot-Jammu Road.

One company at Madhin south of Hiranagar in Kathua District.

One company of garrison police was stationed in Kathua and another at Ramgarh; recruits from the Regimental Centre who had less than 6 months training were organised into a company and located at Suchetgarh on the Sialkot-Jammu road.

On the night of 5/6 October the post at Babiya, manned by a weak Gorkha GP platoon, was attacked by the enemy in company strength. The fighting lasted about three hours and when the position became untenable the platoon withdrew suffering two casualties. The next morning a counter-attack was launched in company strength. The position was stormed and after hand-to-hand fighting the enemy fled back into Pakistan.

In mid-November a GP platoon post at Devigarh was invested by over 500 armed hostiles. After several attempts the enemy succeeded in breaking through the defences of the post. Meanwhile, two platoons of D Company from Arnia were despatched to relieve the garrison. When engaged from the rear the enemy fled leaving many casualties.

Also in November 1947, over 1,000 raiders swooped down on Gajensu, a village eleven miles north-west of Jammu. They set fire to the houses, killed many of the civilian population and looted

the village. A platoon from C company was despatched from Akalpur but as the enemy was in much greater numerical superiority, the platoon was pinned down. Reinforcements arrived from Jammu in the evening but by then Gajensu and the surrounding villages had been burned and looted, women abducted and many villagers killed. On the arrival of reinforcements the hostiles withdrew.

Bhimber and Munawar to the west of Akhnur were within the area of responsibility of a squadron of JAK Bodyguard cavalry. The hostiles attacked this area on the night of 18/19 October and again on 27 October—on the second occasion supported by tanks. Although the squadron of cavalry repulsed the initial attacks, renewed pressure from the enemy made its position untenable and the horsed squadron along with the civilian population had to withdraw to Sunderbani.

In Jammu proper, bereft of troops since the start of hostilities, the remnants of 3 JAK (after they had trickled in with the Jhangar–Mirpur column) were a welcome reinforcement. The battalion badly needed re-equipping, re-arming and re-organising and this was carried out as best as possible in the circumstances. JAK Training Battalion provided a number of trained and partially trained recruits and within 15 days the battalion was ready to go into action again.

The situation south of Jammu continued to be precarious; raids were being carried out by the hostiles as deep as 10-12 miles into state territory. The civilian population, many murdered, its property destroyed, women abducted, had lost all confidence in the administration. 3 JAK was assigned two objectives in this region: firstly, to restore the confidence of the civilian population, and secondly, to protect the line of communication which ran from Kathua to Jammu, within 3 to 7 miles of the border. Battalion Headquarters was established at Ranbirsinghpura, 10 miles south of Jammu on the Jammu–Sialkot road, and sub-units deployed along the border as follows:

- 'A' Company with one detachment 3 in mortar in village Madhin, 40 miles east of Jammu, under Captain Kalyan Singh.
- B Company with one detachment 3 in mortar in Arnia village, 20 miles south of Jammu, under Major Kripal Singh.
- C company with one detachment 3 in mortar in Badihal Brahmanan border, 15 miles south west of Jammu, under Captain Dwarka Nath.
- D company with one detachment 3 in mortar in Ramgarh Kherare

village, 25 miles south-east of Jammu, under Captain Lekh Ram.

The battalion was thus distributed over approximately 50 miles of the border. It had to maintain constant alert as not only were there innumerable small-scale raids by parties of 10 to 12 Pakistanis infiltrating across the border in search of women and loot, but a number of organised attacks were also being made on 3 JAK posts, particularly during January, 1948.

Among the main actions of 1948 were :

On 13 January at 4.00 pm an enemy force about one battalion strong, with an equal number of civilians armed with swords, axes and spears, attacked C Company position at Badihal. Under cover of light machine gun fire, the enemy attempted to rush the company position. The Company Commander, Lieut Dwarka Nath, urged his men to continue fighting until the enemy had been repulsed; the engagement lasted until 4.00 am, the enemy suffering heavy casualties.

On 15 January at 6.00 pm a party of raiders approximately two companies strong attacked D Company position at Ramgarh with the intention of looting the villages to the north. Company Commander Lekh Ram effectively blocked the enemy's advance and eventually made him withdraw; D Company suffered no casualties.

On 18 January at about 7.00 pm, approximately two companies of the enemy and about 400 armed Pakistani nationals attacked B Company position with the intention of diverting the Company's attention while they looted the nearby villages. The enemy approached to within 200–300 yards of the position undetected, opened fire and put in an assault. They were repulsed but they kept up harassing fire from a distance until two platoons of JAK Militia under Jem Punjab Singh arrived at 1.00 am and attacked the enemy from a flank. The enemy withdrew leaving three dead.

On 31 January, 3 JAK was relieved from border duties by a battalion of the Indian Army and concentrated at Jammu Cantonment with the responsibility of manning the outer defences of the city. The battalion remained there till 21 February, when it was ordered to move to Riasi. Lieut-Colonel Puran Singh Thapa was the Commanding Officer and Major Kripal Singh the second-in-command.

Riasi is a small riverine town on the Chenab some 25 miles north of Akhnur. After the fall of Rajouri, parties of tribesmen—stiffened by a sprinkling of regular Pakistan Army officers and NCOs—had

pushed eastwards into Riasi District with the object of inciting the predominantly Muslim population of the area. In this they had succeeded only too well: by the end of February all the Hindus and Sikhs of the district had been either killed or driven away and the area north of the Chenab occupied by the enemy as far as Budil and up to the Pir Panjal Range, thus constituting a direct threat to the Jammu-Banihal road between Ramban and Ramsu.

3 JAK's task was to occupy Riasi and clear enemy pockets on the hill features north of the Chenab. On 18 March, B and D companies were ordered to capture hill features Chalad and Kund respectively, where the enemy strength was estimated at one company each.

Supported by a section of 3 in mortars and one detachment of machine guns, B Company launched a dawn attack on Chalad. After offering stiff resistance the enemy withdrew, leaving 8 dead, while JAK casualties were two ORs wounded (L/NK Hari Dass and Sepoy Lal Chand). After the capture of Chalad D Company followed the enemy to Kund without allowing him any respite and the feature was captured that night without difficulty. The two companies then took up permanent positions on these features.

Battalion Tactical Headquarters was moved up to this vicinity, as the enemy had concentrated on Lapri Hill; enemy sniping at Tactical Headquarters was frequent, from Gazan Hill which overlooked it. To end this nuisance one platoon of D Company was despatched on 25 March to establish a piquet on Gazan Hill; the enemy were also trying to establish a piquet there but withdrew in the face of the JAK advance.

On 15 April, 3 JAK commenced its attack on Lapri Hill, a feature 10,000 ft high and covered with snow even in April. Enemy positions were dug in but lacked depth. The plan of 3 JAK was to attack in two phases: in the first, the southern half of Lapri would be captured by B Company supported by three detachments of 2 in mortars and one section of medium machine gun; in the second, the northern half of the hill would be taken by A Company with the same support. The intended surprise of the attack was lost when one of the platoons, moving up to secure a feature on the axis of advance, bumped into an enemy platoon. Nonetheless, the attack proceeded according to plan and after eight hours fighting Lapri was captured. 37 enemy dead were found while JAK casualties were 6 ORs of B Company wounded and Sepoy Anant Ram of A Company killed. Among the many rations and stores captured was a grey goat which was adopted by the Battalion as a mascot and named Lapri.

Two days after the capture of Lapri, a Muslim *lambardar* of Budhan brought to Battalion Headquarters 30 Hindus whom he had given protection. At the risk of his own safety he had saved these Hindus from the raiders. This seemed to set an example of communal cooperation. A few days later, the Gujjars of the area brought about 300 Hindus to Tactical Headquarters. All these refugees were then helped to return to their villages.

After the loss of Lapri the enemy fell back on the Saldar-Kalwa-Mahor feature. This long feature runs north-south; the JAK forces were separated from the enemy only by the Plassu nullah which was fordable at that time of the year. After Battalion Tactical Headquarters had moved to Kund, the attack on the Saldar-Kalwa-Mahor feature was planned as follows: all three enemy positions were to be attacked simultaneously by one company each: A Company at Saldar; B Company at Kalwa and D Company at Mahor—each supported by one detachment of 3 in mortars and one detachment of machine guns.

The advance commenced at 6.00 am on 20 May with 1,300 porters carrying ammunition and supplies. A and B Companies captured their objectives without resistance by 6.00 pm the same day but D Company encountered heavy resistance from Dada, a high feature overlooking the axis of advance of the company, where the enemy had a platoon. D Company finally charged the position and Dada was captured by 2.00 pm 21 May and was secured by 7.00 pm, when the enemy withdrew without opposition. The company commanders, Captains Bhagwan Singh Bisht, Kalyan Singh Salathia and Lekh Ram Sharma displayed great leadership and endurance in these operations.

3 JAK was then disposed as under:

Unit Administrative Box	.....	Riasi
Rear Headquarters	.....	Arnas
Tactical Headquarters	.....	Kund
'A' Company less two platoons	.....	Ghorgali
one platoon	.....	Saldar
one platoon	.....	Ranjati
B Company	.....	Kalwa
C Company less two platoons	.....	Gari
one platoon	.....	Gabbar
one platoon	.....	Kangar
D Company	.....	Mohar
One platoon of Militia at Chan under Jemadar Jagat Ram.		

One platoon of Militia at Ranjati, under Havildar Jagat Ram.

The battalion was manning a front of about 20 miles; all supplies used to come from Riasi over a suspension bridge at Kanthan over River Chenab.

On 24 May the enemy about one company strong ambushed one of C Company's patrols. Sepoy Kishan Bahadur was killed in this engagement; enemy casualties were 3 killed, identified as Pakistani regular troops. On 28 May, C Company with attached troops and one platoon of Militia captured Sethai after 5 hours fighting. Enemy casualties were 27 killed: these were also identified as Pak troops and deserters from JAK State Forces.

In May and June an action took place near Kataji. On 29 May, 3 JAK troops at Saldar had noticed large movements towards Mutgala and Gul. On 5 June an attack was launched at Chulene ridge where the enemy position was heavily fired upon. On 8 June the enemy fired at the JAK piquet at Ranjati; on 16 June Jem Bhagat Singh with one platoon was sent to ascertain the enemy strength at Kataji; it was established to be two companies.

On 23 June the enemy approached the Ranjati piquet and directed heavy fire at the JAK positions but no casualties were sustained. The enemy was spread over the whole area, holding many Hindus as prisoners; however, in some cases, as that of Haji Kohm Khan, Muslims were harbouring Hindus and passing information to JAK forces about strengths and dispositions of enemy troops. To eliminate the threat from Kataji, A Company with one platoon of B Company, one platoon of Militia and one section of 3 in mortars was ordered to attack this feature on 9 July. The position was captured after heavy fighting; while enemy casualties were established at 50 killed and 25 wounded, no JAK casualties were sustained. 'A' Company remained at Kataji. The front of the Battalion now extended 35 miles long and fire and sniping continued daily.

By the end of September, Indian Army troops at Rajouri indicated to 3 JAK that the enemy was planning a large-scale attack on Kataji to capture Ramban bridge over the Chenab on the Jammu-Srinagar road. On 9 October at about 6.00 am, the enemy in large numbers (about two companies with 2,000 armed civilians) advanced to within 600 yards of the JAK positions. Successive assaults were made by the enemy and in the ten hours of fighting that ensued, many JAK casualties were sustained, one post being overrun in the process. Finally, however, the attack was beaten back.

C Company troops were constantly threatened and harassed by the

enemy occupying Malkhumba height but the position was too well fortified to be attacked by a single company. Thus on 24 October a conference was held and it was decided that all companies would contribute some troops to the attack. Detachments from all companies, each about two sections strong, joined C Company under Major Kripal Singh for the attack on 27 October. One platoon Militia under Jemadar Jagat Ram also joined the force. A dawn attack was launched against the enemy on Malkhumba and after some close-quarter fighting the feature was captured, with enemy casualties established at 50 killed and 25 wounded. Sepoy Kishna of A Company 9 Militia was killed; Rifleman Dhan Bahadur C Company and Sepoy Basantu of 9 Militia were wounded.

On the same day another attack was put in, this time on Khandi Dhar. The enemy was driven out, having suffered 15 killed and 15 wounded; Rifleman Chander Bahadur of D Company was killed.

After withdrawal from Malkhumba, the enemy established himself at Chauru Sira, overlooking another JAK position. Troops from all companies were again detailed to assist C Company in the capture of this position. This operation was successfully carried out on 12 November. JAK casualties were Jemadar Hans Raj of the Militia killed and Lieut Sonit Singh and two ORs of the Militia, Rifleman Dil Bahadur and Rifleman Man Bahadur of 3 JAK wounded.

Although 3 JAK (with two companies of 13 J&K Militia, which had come under command by then) controlled most of the territory south of the Gulabgarh Nullah, the important area of Budil and surrounding villages were still in enemy hands. Budil was known to be the headquarters of the enemy force in the area—consisting of two battalions (raised largely from local inhabitants) and an estimated 4,000 civilians armed with an assortment of weapons ranging from muzzle-loaders to spears and axes.

At a conference held in the first week of June by Major General Atma Singh, GOC Jammu Division, the decision was taken to mount an operation for the capture of Budil. Lieut-Colonel Bhagwan Singh, commander of Jammu Brigade of the JAK state forces, was placed in overall command of the operation, which was to commence on 24 November. As a preliminary move, B and D Companies of 3 JAK moved ahead on 18 November to occupy positions in the area of Sar, 5 miles from Mohar.

Colonel Bhagwan Singh and his brigade major (Major Ishar Dass) arrived at Battalion Headquarters of 3 JAK on 22 November, bringing with them a 3 in mortar platoon (under command of

Jemadar Dharam Singh of the JAK Infantry Training Centre) which is all the support that Jammu Brigade could spare for the operation. The Colonel discovered to his amazement that the battalion was strung out on a semi-circular front stretching for about 40 miles—with 8–10 mile gaps between company positions. And this was to be the assault line for the operation!

However, nothing daunted, Colonel Bhagwan Singh placed the commanding officer of the battalion in charge of the right flank and himself went to the company position (C Company) nearest Budil. Colonel Thapa, from his location about 15 miles away to the right flank, was to make the first move—advancing towards Budil and capturing villages to the east of Budil. In the event, the right flank was held up, so Colonel Bhagwan Singh launched C Company on 24 November—supported by a mortar platoon and a machine gun platoon. Tuli, a village five miles short of Budil, was taken at bayonet point, the enemy surprised by the weight of supporting fire. On 25th morning, C Company entered Budil and after “stray fighting here and there” the village was cleared of enemy. In this operation only one JAK OR was wounded while 12 enemy dead were found in the village including a Pak Army Havildar Major.

The Muslim inhabitants, who had all fled to the hills, were coaxed back to their homes by sending out liaison patrols to the surrounding countryside. Within a few days most of them had been resettled and thereafter peace reigned in the area—one of the rare success stories in this internecine war of communal hatreds.

Another consequence of the occupation of Riasi district by hostiles and rebels was the interesting Shopiyan episode in the Valley, in which the Bodyguard Cavalry and 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8 JAK Rifles were involved, albeit in small detachments.

In early December, 1947, a batch of Hindu and Sikh refugees, who had fled from the Baramgala and Budil areas, crossed over the Pir Panjal and Budil Pir passes and arrived at Shopiyan. They reported that the passes were in hostile hands—information which caused no little concern to Srinagar Brigade Headquarters.

The Pir Panjal route was the traditional entry into Kashmir Valley from the earliest times till the end of the nineteenth century. The old Moghul route, by which the elephant caravans of the Emperors of Delhi made their annual migration to Kashmir, had lain through Bhimber, Sadabad, Naoshera, Rajouri, Thana Mandi, Baramgala, Pir Panjal Pass (11,400), Aliabad Sarai, Sokh Sarai, Hirpur and Shopiyan to Srinagar. The news that the hostiles were

on the Pir Panjal Range was therefore alarming. With Rajouri and Thana Mandi in enemy hands, the danger of raiding parties crossing the Pir Panjal with a view to cutting the Banihal—Srinagar road became grave indeed.

In mid-December a composite company, consisting of a platoon each from 1, 7 and 8 JAK under Captain Prithi Singh, was sent to guard the Pir Panjal and Budil Pir approaches. Company headquarters, with one platoon, was established at Shopiyan and a platoon each at Hirpur (on the Moghul route) and at Hanjipur (on the Budil route).

For the next two months, patrols sent out by the company to the southern slopes of the snow-covered Pir Panjal Range reported no enemy activity—but by early March, when the snow began to melt on the lower slopes, the Pir Panjal route again posed a threat. (Budil Pir Pass was 3,000 feet higher and would not be easily negotiable till mid-July or even later). The Shopiyan force was therefore reinforced by a squadron of Bodyguard Cavalry from the Sialkot border. The composite company was pushed further up the Pir Panjal track to Dubjan; the Bodyguard squadron remained at Shopiyan.

On 12 May a patrol from the Dubjan company, while on its way to Aliabad Sarai (10,000 feet) was ambushed at the outskirts of the villages. Six riflemen were killed and one taken prisoner. The hostiles tied the prisoner's arms to his sides and threw him into the Rambiana nullah—but he had a providential escape and managed to rejoin his company after four days. This incident was the first indication that the hostiles had crossed the Pass in strength and had taken up positions east of the Pir Panjal Range.

At the end of June the Dubjan company was reinforced by a section of medium machine guns from 4 JAK and ordered to capture Aliabad. The snow-line had by then receded to above 10,000 feet. On the night of 1/2 July, the company moved up and occupied the heights surrounding the village. In the morning the JAK force opened fire on the enemy positions in the village and later went in with the bayonet. By evening they had captured Aliabad, where they found two enemy dead and thirteen wounded. Patrols pushed out to the Pir Panjal Pass reported the Pass unoccupied. By 6 July the company had occupied the Pass.

On 9 July information was received from a Kashmiri villager that the enemy had collected a strong force at Poshiana, a village 5 miles down the western slope of the range, and was planning to

attack the JAK post on the Pass. By 11 July hostile movement could be seen on the hill feature immediately south of the Pass. However, no attack developed though for the next few days the enemy kept up harassing and sniping fire. Their intention, obviously, was to surround the JAK post, cut its supply line and prevent rations and ammunition from being replenished.

On 14 July a maintenance column of 68 pony-loads, escorted by a dismounted sabre troop from the Bodyguard squadron and a section of machine guns under Capt Khajoor Singh, left Shopiyan for the Pass. The column reached Aliabad on 15 July without meeting opposition; thereafter they had to fight their way up and break through the hostile ring to reach the JAK post on the Pass. The company at Pir Panjal got rations, ammunition and meat-on-hoof that day after having been on half-rations for several days.

Next morning at 2.00 am a mixed column of cavalry and infantry troops about two platoons strong moved out under Capt Khajoor Singh to lay an ambush along the western slopes of the Pass. However, before long they bumped into an enemy camp where about 15 hostiles were eating their pre-dawn meal (it being the month of *Ramzan*) and puffing at a *huqqa*. The JAK column closed in but the enemy made good their escape—leaving one dead. Some ammunition and a number of grenades were captured.

On 19 July it was the enemy's turn to take the offensive. A large party of hostiles occupied the feature north of the Pass—and directed heavy fire on the JAK force, which lost one dead and one wounded. The enemy maintained harassing and sniping fire for the next four days. On 24 July a two-platoon attack was launched on the enemy post and the feature re-captured, the hostiles having fled leaving one dead and seven wounded. A platoon picquet was established on the feature under Jemadar Dharam Singh.

The enemy next turned his attention to the line of communication of the JAK post. A party of hostiles occupied a dominating feature called Hastivanj overlooking Aliabad, thus ensuring that no supply column could be sent to the Pass.

The post on the Pass was rationed up to 30 July only. On 26 July Kashmir Brigade Headquarters arranged for a supply column to be sent up, escorted by two companies of 5 JAK under Major Nischant Singh. However, by then the hostiles on Hastivanj feature had been reinforced—and the two escorting companies could not dislodge them. On 30 July the enemy spread out even further south, occupying the heights around Dubjan—so that the two JAK compa-

nies had to move out northwards—off the track—thus exposing Shopiyan to danger.

Meanwhile, the garrison on the Pass had to go on half-rations again : and by 4 August, only *dal* and tea were left. Patrols were sent out to try and buy or otherwise collect some rations—and one party did manage to buy some maize from Poshiana village and to “capture” three goats.

By 7 August the hostiles had concentrated one battalion (the First Haidari Battalion of the so-called “Azad Kashmiri” Force) on the Pass and brought up 3 in mortars. On 8 August, at 8.00 pm, they put in an attack in strength against the main JAK post. The defenders held their fire till the enemy was within 150 yards and then opened up with everything they had got. When the enemy retreated, scores of bodies clad in *mazri* and khaki littered the hill-side.

The enemy, however, did not give up. They put in two more assaults that morning—each meeting with deadly and disciplined fire from the JAK troops. When the enemy withdrew for the last time, 47 bodies could be counted lying in the immediate vicinity of the perimeter defences.

The plight of the defenders, however, had by then become serious. Not only were they without rations, but their ammunition had also been all but exhausted. There was no wireless set with the post—and the line to Dubjan had been cut. In fact they had been out of touch with their rear headquarters for more than a week. In the circumstances, it was obvious that they could not hold out much longer and it was decided to abandon the Pass and withdraw to Dubjan that night.

The plan was that the main post would be abandoned first, the troops assembling at Post No 2 (south of the Pass) commanded by Jemadar Dharam Singh. From there the whole force would withdraw by bounds, platoons leap-frogging back turn by turn.

The main post began pulling back after dark. They managed to reach No 2 Post without their move being detected by the enemy. At No 2 post, however, they faced a *contretemps* : Jemadar Dharam Singh had been wounded in the thigh, the bone smashed by a burst from a machine gun. There were three walking wounded who could be helped down the hill, but to carry a lying patient down a steep snow-covered slope in the dark, without a stretcher, posed a problem. An improvised stretcher was made out of tent-poles and two blankets sewn together—and somehow the Jemadar was painfully carried downhill. The progress was slow : by 2.00 am the column had barely

covered a mile and a half from the Pass. Since it would soon be light, the Jemadar was made to sit on a pony in order to quicken the pace: it must have been sheer torture for him to do so but, supported as he was on either side by men of his platoon, the column made better time thereafter.

The hostiles must have discovered by then that the JAK garrison had abandoned their positions, because as it began to get light the column came under heavy fire from the enemy further up the hillside. However, the machine guns gave the leap-frogging columns excellent covering fire. The withdrawal continued throughout the day: at last light the enemy pressure ceased and the column made it safely back to the Dubjan area. Their casualties were nine killed, four wounded and two frost-bite cases.

By this time GOC Srinagar Division had realised that the Pir Panjal operation was beyond the limited resources of Kashmir Brigade. Accordingly, this sector was taken over by Srinagar Division, which then sent an Indian Army battalion (3/9 Jat) and the remainder of 5 JAK to the Shopiyan area. In early September this force moved up along the Moghul route and, after brushing aside minor resistance, occupied the Pass. The enemy did not venture across the Pir Panjal Range thereafter.

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In as much as no official history of the operations in J&K State has yet been published, this chronicle has been able to record only the major actions in which JAK battalions took the leading part and fought as state forces. There were, however, many other battles in which units and sub-units of JAK battalions fought under Indian Army formations—as at Tithwal; on the line of gullies to the north of the Lolab Valley; and on other fronts. The full story of those actions will have to await such time as war diaries and records are made available.

The end of the operations ushered in a new era for Jammu and Kashmir, which changed from being an independent princely state of British India to a state of the Union of India, albeit with special status. It was obvious that the future of the J&K State Forces would also have to be decided in accordance with the new political circumstances.

Even while the JAK state forces were conducting operations on various fronts throughout the state, JAK Army Headquarters had been actively considering the problem of the future of the

state army. Colonel KS Katoch, the Military Adviser loaned from the Indian Army (and, subsequently the Regiment's first Colonel) prepared a paper in mid-1948 suggesting that the old organisation of the Maharaja's army was no longer suitable because it consisted mainly of infantry, with virtually no supporting arms. The three brigades could not function operationally as field formations. Besides, because of the lack of a border defence force, it was the infantry units which were inevitably split up and sent in small packets to man forward posts or patrol the border—thus laying themselves open to defeat in detail. Colonel Katoch recommended that the future state army consist of a division of three operational brigades, complete with supporting arms, and a separate border defence force of lightly equipped troops trained and organised for deployment along the border.

Events on the international front, however, were moving fast. After the Cease-Fire it became obvious that the Kashmir question would bog down in the United Nations Organisation for years and half the state would remain more or less indefinitely under Pakistan occupation. Moreover, it was evident that the Cease-Fire would not remove the threat of aggression and that the responsibility for the security of the state would have to be taken over by the Indian Army. In the circumstances it was inevitable that the JAK army would eventually be integrated with the Indian Army.

In mid-1948, the pay and allowances of the JAK state forces had been taken over as a Government of India responsibility: and it was assumed that integration would soon follow—especially as in 1950 JAK battalions began to be posted to stations in India (the main purpose being to give them a chance of serving in a peace station).

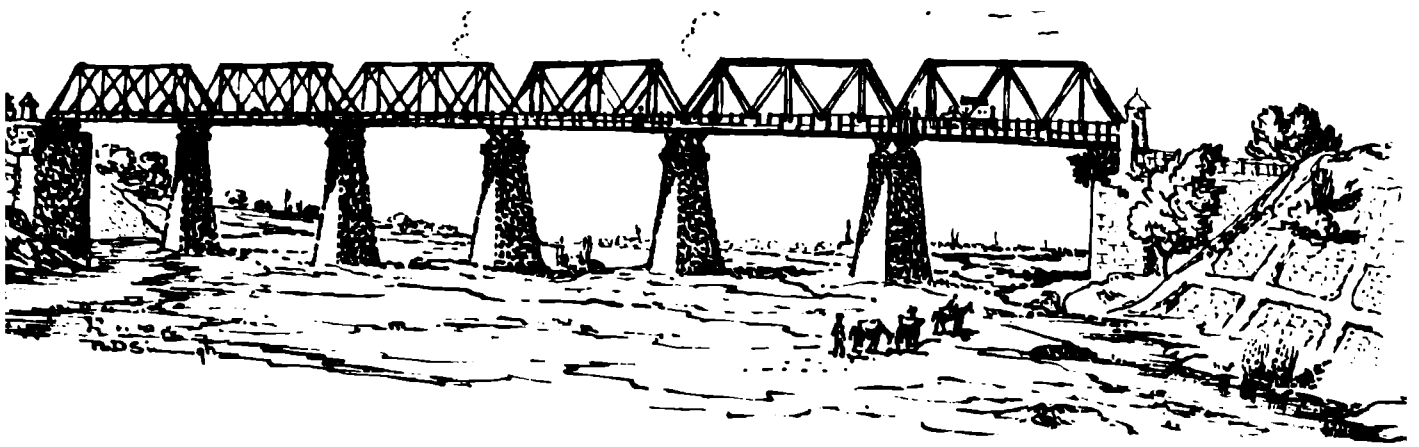
There was a degree of uncertainty and anxiety among officers and men of the state units because there was much speculation regarding terms and conditions of transfer. However, in the event, the JAK Army received better terms than any other state forces—and there were very few cases of disgruntlement. (JAK officers, for example, were not required to appear before a Services Selection Board and virtually every officer was accepted for transfer to the Indian Army). Battalions of the JAK Infantry were integrated into the Indian Army in January 1957, as recorded in the *Epilogue* to this history.

With integration ended the Regiment's saga of service rendered to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The *Fateh Shibji* (now 4 JAK) was raised by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1836, the 9th battalion

by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1940. In the intervening hundred odd years the fame of the Regiment was established in an almost continuous series of campaigns—on battlefields spread over Asia, Europe and Africa.

The association of the J&K state forces with the Indian Army and the Army in India started in 1888 with Lord Dufferin's announcement of a plan for the reorganisation of selected elements of the armies of the Indian princely states for service alongside the "Imperial Forces". Many state forces contributed to this scheme but the Jammu and Kashmir forces were always in the forefront of the contribution. A strong rapport was established between the JAK forces and Imperial troops—in campaigns in Gilgit and the northern territories, in the North-West Frontier Province and during two world wars. Finally, during the Kashmir operations of 1947-48, when the battalions of the Maharaja's army fought side by side with the Army of the new Dominion of India, the bond was sealed. Alone of all the princely state forces of India the battalions of Jammu and Kashmir were integrated into the Army of independent India and transferred *en bloc* as a Regiment—amalgamating the traditions of princely India, Imperial India and free India.

Today the Indian Army stands enriched by the influx of a Regiment that has brought with it, to add to the territorial traditions of the Indian Army, the traditions of Jammu and Kashmir Arms.



TAWI BRIDGE

Epilogue

The Post-War Years 1948–1970

THE CEASE-FIRE in Kashmir brought a much needed respite to the Jammu and Kashmir State Forces. Although most units remained deployed for their operational tasks, peace-time routine slowly returned—regular training cadres were started, officers and men were sent on long leave and administration gradually returned to normal.

The war against the tribesmen and the Pakistan Army had cost the JAK forces dearly. The State Forces lost over ten *per cent* of its strength in killed and wounded. In the infantry battalions, casualty ratios varied between 25 and 80 *per cent*. 4 and 6 JAK lost so heavily that only scattered platoons or companies escaped annihilation.

Even after the Cease-Fire the situation on the southern border remained tense and incidents of varying magnitude occurred frequently. As late as June 1950, 1 JAK, while deployed in the Suchetgarh sector of the Jammu-Sialkot road, was involved in a major patrol clash that resulted in the loss of six lives. A platoon patrol under Capt Harmir Singh, while on routine duty on the border, was fired upon by a Pakistan Army post across the border. The patrol took up a defensive position and returned the fire. When the Pakistanis, in company strength, began to close in and

encircle Capt Harmir Singh's platoon, he decided to withdraw to higher ground. In the process Harmir Singh was wounded in the chest and legs and died before he could be evacuated. Five other ranks were also killed in this action.

In 1951 the battalions on the border at last began to be relieved by Indian Army units or JAK units from rest areas. This period was one of some disquietude in the Regiment because of the uncertainty of its future. Three battalions, 5, 6 and 8 JAK, were disbanded; the others were not quite sure what would be their fate—disbandment, continuance as state forces or transfer to the Indian Army.

Memorials and commemoration ceremonies for those who had been killed in the operations were held in various parts of the state. *Chinaldori Day* was observed on 24 July, 1951, for those who had died in that sector. The ceremony was attended by the GOC Srinagar (redesignated 19) Division, Major General Mahadeo Singh DSO, and representatives of formations and units in the Valley. 3 JAK constructed a memorial to Brigadier Rajinder Singh, who had fought and died so gallantly in the crucial delaying action on the Uri road in October 1947.

By the mid-1950's units of the JAK State Forces were being posted to stations outside the state. 1 JAK served at Yol Camp, Pathankot and Gurdaspur between 1953 and 1958 before returning to J&K State. 9 JAK served in Nasirabad, Lucknow, Calcutta and Chaubatia. 7 JAK was sent on training to Jodhpur in 1953. A more serious assignment was 4 JAK's encounter with the Pakistanis while on collective training near Ferozepore in early 1956. In March the battalion under Lieut-Colonel Vakil Singh was ordered to relieve 7 Border Scouts guarding the Hussainiwala Headworks. This area was in dispute between India and Pakistan and it was feared that hostilities would ensue.

In early 1947 the Radcliffe Commission had been established to deal with disputes arising out of the partition of both Punjab and Bengal. According to the decision of the Commission, the Hussainiwala Headworks on the Sutlej River and the area immediately around the Bund and the bank on the Pakistan side were allotted to India. A stretch of land four hundred yards long and thirty yards wide, known as Bela, extends along the right Bund of the Headworks; the area belonged to India but the Bund was under dispute although the responsibility for repairs and maintenance fell to India. In 1955, when heavy flooding destroyed part of the

right guide-wall of the Headworks, Indian engineers undertook to repair the damage. The Pakistani border troops, however, prohibited them from lifting soil from the Bela to repair the Bund, maintaining that as long as the Bund was in dispute, so was the Bela.

Pakistani harrassment succeeded in terminating the repair work entirely. The civil authorities became alarmed and requested protection from the army. 4 JAK was deployed in the area and by early March had commenced intensive patrolling; they also improved the defences to protect the engineers and labourers on the Headworks.

The battalion took the initiative on 9 March when two companies under Capts Ajit Singh Vr C and Hoshnak Singh occupied the Bela on the far side of the river in a move which clearly surprised the Pakistanis. The Bund, which dominated the Bela, was left untouched because an agreement had been reached between India and Pakistan that the disputed area would not be occupied by troops of either side and would be patrolled jointly, if at all.

When B and C companies had occupied the Bela feature the battalion became overly stretched out on the ground and positioned in areas that were not mutually supporting. The Pakistanis reinforced their position with an infantry brigade, a regiment of field artillery and a squadron of medium armour. On the night of 18/19 March, at about 9.00 pm, they launched a surprise attack with two battalions on both 4 JAK positions. They first occupied the Bund and then moved towards the Bela. Light machine gun fire was directed at the JAK troops in the Bela who were in the unenviable position of being without fire support, unable to manoeuvre and backed up against the Sutlej River in the rear. Hand-to-hand fighting ensued on the perimeter of the position and the attack was held. Thereafter the Pakistanis withdrew and the two JAK companies on the Bela launched an attack on the Bund. The attack was arrested by the Pakistanis and no further advance was possible. A Pak machine gun swept the entire Bela, making replenishment of ammunition and evacuation of casualties at the ferry point impossible. However, Lance-Naik Sunder Singh volunteered to silence the machine gun. Armed with six grenades he crawled about one hundred yards over the bullet swept area and then over fifty yards of Pakistani territory until he was close enough to throw the grenades. Not content with killing the three machine gun crew members Sunder Singh dashed to the gun nest, captured the

weapon along with two magazine boxes and fourteen gun magazines. With the machine gun silenced, the JAK troops were able to occupy the area and dislodge the enemy from the Bund. Sunder Singh was awarded the *Ashoka Chakra Class I* for this action.

As expected, the Pakistan Army soon launched a counter-attack on the Bund. Repeatedly repulsed, they suffered heavy casualties but continued to mount a series of assaults against the JAK positions. Eventually, in the early morning of 19 March, the Pakistani GOC, Major General Azam Khan, telephoned his Indian counterpart suggesting a Cease-Fire. At 10.00 am a flag meeting was held between the opposing sector commanders—Major General Gurbaksh Singh for India and Major General Mohd Azam Khan for Pakistan. The Cease-Fire came into effect at 11.00 am.

4 JAK had suffered four killed—Naik Baldev Singh and Sepoys Faqir Singh, Surjan Singh and Dharam Singh—and 24 wounded. The casualties they had inflicted on the Pakistanis however were considerably higher: a subsequent Intelligence report confirmed that they had lost 55 killed and over 220 wounded.

In addition to the material captured by Havildar Sunder Singh, 4 JAK captured one light machine gun, seven rifles, one sten gun and two ammunition boxes. In the fighting on the Bela, Naik Parshotam Singh and Sepoy Pritam Singh killed enemy guards in a surprise attack and were both awarded the *Sena Medal* for gallantry. Naik Mukhtiar Singh and Sepoy Janak Singh also inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy with hand grenades and were awarded the *Ashoka Chakra, Classes II and III*, respectively. 4 JAK was relieved on 20 March.

It would be appropriate at this juncture to record the process of integration of the JAK forces with the Indian Army and the subsequent formation of the Regiment of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles.

The normal procedure for state forces' integration was that certain selected units were transferred to the Indian Army and absorbed into the corresponding arms, corps and services: others were disbanded. Infantry battalions so transferred became part of existing Indian Army regiments and thus lost their original identity.

Fortunately for the JAK forces, their record in the 1947-48 war and, perhaps even more forcefully, the backing of General KS Thimayya, DSO, Chief of the Army Staff (who had been GOC Srinagar Division during the operations) persuaded the

Government of India to accept the proposal to transfer all the infantry battalions of the J&K state forces and form them into a new regiment of the Indian Army. Thus, 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9 JAK battalions were formed into The Jammu and Kashmir Regiment (later redesignated The Jammu and Kashmir Rifles) and took precedence as the junior regiment of Indian infantry (but senior to the regiments of Gorkha Rifles). In addition, the following formation headquarters and units were ordered to be integrated with the Indian Army: HQ 104 Infantry Brigade (Jammu); HQ 93 Infantry Brigade (Kashmir); 1 JAK Mountain Battery; 168 Infantry Brigade Signal Section (Kashmir); 268 Infantry Brigade Signal Section (Kashmir); JAK Training Centre; JAK Record Office; JAK Brass Band; 168 Infantry Brigade (Jammu) LAD Type I; and 268 Infantry Brigade (Kashmir) LAD Type I.

The following units and corps were disbanded and their personnel and equipment absorbed by the Indian Army: JAK Bodyguard Cavalry and Training Squadron; JAK Medical Corps; JAK Veterinary Corps; 1 (Kashmir) Independent Pioneer Company; and JAK Animal Transport Company.

All serving personnel of the units ordered to be integrated were given options either to volunteer for service in the regular Army or to terminate their services under their existing terms of service. The officers were originally required to be screened by Service Selection Boards but later, when it was decided that the integration would be carried out *en bloc*, all those volunteering and found physically fit were granted regular commission in the Indian Army.

The Regimental Centre was moved to Morar Cantonment in Gwalior in 1958. In 1960 Major-General KS Katoch MC was appointed Colonel of the Regiment. In 1962 Honorary Major General Dr Karan Singh, son of Maharaja Hari Singh and then Governor (*Sadar-i-Riasat*) of Kashmir, was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Regiment.

Among the roles played by the JAK battalions during times of natural calamities was 7 JAK's flood relief operation in 1957 at Shahdara Bund in Delhi. The battalion assisted in the evacuation of casualties, repairing the bund and patrolling the bund in boats.

In the late 1950s, two JAK battalions, 3 JAK and 7 JAK, served in Nagaland operations. 3 JAK proceeded to the Naga Hills in December 1957 and during its brief stay at Trek, established an administrative centre for aid to civil authorities. In January 1959, the battalion moved to Zakhama in relief of 2 Maratha and served

there for eighteen months. Along with patrols on the Dimapur Road, the unit participated in such operations as *Jhoom*, *Dhum Dhadakha*, *Hunt*, *Snafu I* and *II* and *Parbat*. In *Operation Parbat* Rfn Hans Raj earned an *Ashoka Chakra Class II*, awarded posthumously for his courageous action when on duty as a leading scout against the hostiles.

In the operations in which 3 JAK participated, four hostiles were killed, four wounded and 207 captured. Large numbers of arms were captured including 23 Japanese rifles, 54 muzzle-loading guns, 33 bayonets, 13 .303 rifles *Mark III* and over 40 other weapons. In mid-1960, when 3 JAK was positioned on the Assam-Nagaland border, Lieut Samar Singh Chandel was awarded the *Ashoka Chakra Class III* for gallantry during a sharp action against Naga hostiles. In addition to patrol duties, 3 JAK participated in aid to civil power to quell language riots in Assam. As a token of its appreciation, the Government of Assam presented a trophy to the battalion—a bronze rhinoceros. With the departure of 3 JAK from the Naga Hills to return to Ferozepore in October 1960, Major-General DC Misra, GOC 23 Infantry Division, sent a special message of appreciation for the battalion's fine performance in the difficult and delicate tasks allotted to it in the area.

7 JAK, then commanded by Lieut-Colonel Dina Nath, served in Nagaland from 1958 to 1960 and won a variety of awards and commendation cards. Among them were Major RM Sharma—*Kirti Chakra Class II*; Major Devi Singh—*Sena Medal*; Naik Suram Chand—*Sena Medal*; Capt Attar Singh—Army Chief's Commendation Card; and Jem Achhar Singh and UP/L/Naik AS Bahadur—Commendation Cards.

After 1960 battalions of the JAK Regiment were engaged more regularly outside the state and in operations with the Indian Army. 1 JAK served in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, from September 1961, to November 1962. 9 JAK, while posted in Dalhousie from June 1961, to August 1962, took part in Exercises *Thamlo* and *Dorah* and was highly commended for its performance. During the Goa operations in December 1961, 7 JAK was detailed as a reserve. 2 JAK was also moved into position in the Punjab from Palampur in early December 1961 and assigned the task of protecting the approach from Pakistan on the Kasur-Hariker Road. It was considered possible that Pakistan would commence hostilities in the Punjab during the Goa operations and as a precautionary measure, Operation *Dilroz* was planned by 5 Infantry Division. Although many

operational messages regarding movement of Pakistani troops were intercepted through December, 1961, there was no attempt by them to intervene. 2 JAK, although kept at operational readiness, was not engaged.

By 1962 Nagaland and NEFA formed a vital part of India's defence preparedness because of the confrontation with the Chinese. To augment the force deployed in NEFA, 2 JAK was sent to that front in April 1962, with the responsibility of maintaining the security of Subansiri Frontier Division. Initially 2 JAK was to defend Daporijo and Ziro landing grounds and to guard the approach to Limeking. 9 JAK, commanded by Lieut-Colonel Rachhpal Singh Jamwal, moved to Nagaland in August 1962 in aid to civil power in the operation known as *Raji*. During its tenure, the self-styled "Adjutant-Brigadier-General" Pukrove of the Naga Rebel Government was apprehended by a 9 JAK patrol. In another encounter with the hostiles, in October 1962, 9 JAK lost its second-in-command, Major Amar Nath Bakshi, who was killed in action.

Reports of Chinese incursions were received as early as in September 1962. Elements of 2 JAK were moved to Taksing and Limeking. Later the company at Taksing was ordered to withdraw for tactical reasons and to hold a position at Gelensenyak. By early November 2 JAK was receiving reports from civilians as well as from its own patrols that the Chinese were concentrating in the area of Gelensenyak. By 4 November Chinese forward elements had reached the area of Rio Bridge, three miles on the JAK side of Gelensenyak. On that day a 2 JAK patrol spotted the Chinese and fired on them inflicting three or four casualties. The Chinese returned fire but the JAK patrol suffered no casualties. Following this incident a protective patrol of platoon strength plus a section was located about two miles on the JAK side of Rio Bridge and remained there until the next encounter with the Chinese on 18 November.

In the meantime, other JAK units were being moved into NEFA as part of the general build-up in the region to counter the Chinese threat. 3 JAK had been in the Naga Hills when it was ordered to move to New Missamari on 15 November. The battalion was immediately sent into action. 1 JAK, which was at Mount Abu, was airlifted on 17 November to NEFA and concentrated at Teju from where it was ordered to move to Walong. D Company had moved to Derai when the Cease-Fire was declared on 23 November.

In the Gelesenyak sector, 2 JAK continued its normal patrolling in no-man's-land while the Chinese moved up a little further from

Rio Bridge after crossing the Subansiri River in the Gelensenyak area. On 18 November, at about 3 o' clock in the afternoon, the Chinese were seen advancing on the main track towards the protective patrol. When their forward elements, in strength about two hundred, came within range, the 2 JAK patrol fired on them with LMGs, 2 in mortars and rifles. Although surprised the enemy continued his advance. Chinese casualties were very heavy since most of those who persisted in the advance were easy targets. Seventy casualties were actually counted by JAK troops. The JAK patrol had to withdraw when its ammunition was exhausted; the firing had lasted fortyfive minutes and resulted in the loss of Havildar Shire Thapa, who took over a machine gun when the gun number one, Rfn Inder Singh, was wounded. After withdrawing the patrol concentrated at Ging, the next lay-back position. The next day two scouts reported that the enemy had again started firing at the patrol's earlier position; sporadic firing continued through the day and night while the Chinese evacuated their casualties.

By 20 November the Chinese had discovered that the JAK protective patrol had withdrawn; they advanced to a point one thousand yards ahead of Ging where they encountered the JAK position. The Chinese fired at the JAK position, which returned the fire and withdrew without any casualties. It was believed that the Chinese were being aided in their advance by local Tagins who informed them of the JAK positions and defences. The personnel of Assam Rifles who had been in Ging withdrew to Limeking and only one section of 2 JAK was kept in position about one thousand yards ahead of Limeking astride the track. The Chinese occupied Ging and kept advancing until fired on by the JAK section. Their advance was halted near Limeking where they were engaged by 3 in mortars and medium machine guns. As the Chinese continued to press on Limeking, orders for withdrawal were received from Headquarters 5 Infantry Brigade. Major Bishamber Singh planned an orderly withdrawal and ordered the destruction of stores and heavy equipment. Thinning out began on the evening of 20 November. By the early hours of 21 November the whole garrison had withdrawn from Limeking.

3 JAK, which had moved to NEFA from Dimapur at one day's notice, immediately went into action in *Operation Olympus* between 17 and 20 November. During the morning of 17 November the battalion was ordered to send an advance party to Headquarters 48 Infantry Brigade at Bomdila where orders were to be given

by the Brigade Commander. Arrived at Bomdila, Major Bhagat Singh and his party were ordered to occupy positions which had been recently vacated by 5 Guards. The party was split into two groups: twenty-five men under a JCO occupied "Pimple Hill" and "Monty's Bump" while another twenty-five with Major Bhagat Singh occupied the low ground which two companies of 5 Guards had vacated. At mid-day on 18 November Major Bhagat Singh's group was ordered to move up to the positions occupied by 1 Sikh Light Infantry to reinforce the defences on Bomdila Ridge; the advance party was to move up later. Unfortunately, they were not informed to that effect and later withdrew with the rest of 48 Infantry Brigade.

When Major Bhagat Singh and his party had advanced to within one hundred yards of the Sikh Light Infantry position, the Chinese opened fire on the Sikhs and Major Bhagat Singh's party had to crawl up to report to the Officer Commanding 1 Sikh LI. They were then ordered to occupy positions in which there were no bunkers or trenches and thus remained in the open throughout the engagement. For some time the Sikh position was also shelled by Indian artillery and mortars but fortunately this error was quickly corrected.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, as enemy pressure increased and the Chinese closed in on the Sikh position, the Sikh LI battalion began to withdraw. Major Bhagat Singh was not informed of the withdrawal and soon found that he and his men had been left alone on Bomdila Ridge. They immediately occupied the bunkers vacated by D Company 1 Sikh LI and continued to engage the enemy for forty minutes after the Sikh Battalion had withdrawn. When the enemy had occupied the Sikh LI bunkers and Indian artillery began shelling the position, Major Bhagat Singh and his party thought it prudent to withdraw. He again contacted the Officer Commanding 1 Sikh LI and was ordered to occupy "Pimple Hill" with 1 Sikh LI. Only two weak Sikh LI companies moved up but as they did not remain in position, the 3 JAK party was again left alone in the defensive position. The party remained there until midnight and then withdrew along a jungle path to Chaku, which was reached by mid-afternoon on 19 November. Major Bhagat Singh's party again took positions along with 1 Sikh LI and 6/8 GR.

The Chinese, however, followed up quickly and Chaku was surrounded and attacked a number of times during the night. The

Indian troops were forced to withdraw towards the foothills by dawn on 20 November. Thirty other ranks of the 3 JAK advance party were wounded.

While the advance party had been active in support of 1 Sikh LI, the main body of 3 JAK under Lieut-Colonel Gurdial Singh had left the harbour near Missamari after midnight on 17/18 November to move up to Bomdila in *Nissan* trucks. D Company and various non-essential elements were left in Missamari to join the battalion later. When the main body was about a mile short of Bomdila, shelling and firing was heard and the Commanding Officer ordered the battalion to debus and advance to Bomdila on foot. The unit marched up to Bomdila, where it occupied the positions vacated by 5 Guards. Although the major portion of 48 Infantry Brigade had withdrawn, the enemy had not yet occupied these positions and 3 JAK thus remained there on the night of 18/19 November. When no reinforcements were forthcoming, the unit withdrew.

Lieut-Colonel Gurdial Singh's force had moved only fifteen kilometres south of Bomdila near the Tenga Valley when it was ordered by the commander of 48 Infantry Brigade to occupy the nearby ridges. While reconnaissance was being carried out, the battalion was in the valley surrounded by high ground. Before the reconnaissance could be completed or orders given, however, the Chinese occupying the ridges opened fire on the battalion and started closing in on the unit from all sides. 3 JAK responded quickly and mortared the ridges from which the enemy was advancing. The battalion withdrew from Tenga Valley in small groups, control being decentralised down to section and platoon levels. The unit suffered major losses in this engagement which had lasted only thirty minutes. Nevertheless, there were many acts of gallantry, in particular the action of the RMO, Captain Brahm Dev, who distinguished himself when, after administering first aid to Second Lieut Pradesh Sinha ASC and a wounded sepoy, he took a rifle and kept up rapid fire on the advancing Chinese. When they had reached his position, he hurled a grenade at them and withdrew. Some elements of 3 JAK withdrew to Chaku by early morning 20 November but as Chaku was by then in enemy hands, an alternate route had to be found to continue the withdrawal.

D Company 3 JAK and the details left in Missamari by Lieut-Colonel Gurdial Singh had been formed into an *ad hoc* company commanded by Captain CM Goswami. On 19 November this company had been ordered to return to the foothills to organise

the reception of 3 JAK personnel who were trickling back from Bomdila and Tenga.

During the three days of *Operation Olympus*, 3 JAK suffered the following casualties: five officers missing; the Commanding Officer and 2nd Lieut B Sinha confirmed prisoners of war; three JCOs confirmed prisoners of war; eighty-two other ranks and eight NCsE missing. The rest of the battalion managed to find its way back to Missamari after several days of trekking over the difficult terrain.

9 JAK, which had been moved from Nagaland to the Indo-Bhutan border west of Missamari, saw no action but lent a hand in the reception of numerous stragglers from the 7 Brigade action on the Namka Chu, who had to escape southwards over the high ridges of the Bhutan Himalayas. Thereafter, 9 JAK, still under Colonel Rachpal Singh Jamwal, formed part of 23 Infantry Division in the same area—and remained there throughout the period 1962–65, attaining high proficiency in mountain warfare.

1 JAK, which had been in Walong during the Chinese aggression, was deployed in the Badaru area and remained there until February 1963 when it moved to Nagaland and concentrated at Kohima. The battalion operated first on the Burma border and then on the East Pakistan border. For two years the battalion was variously deployed throughout Nagaland and, in September 1965, was ordered to concentrate at Paneri in Assam.

During the Indo-Pak hostilities in 1965, when it was feared that the Chinese would renew their aggression in the east in support of their Pak allies, 1 JAK was given the task to move into Bhutan if that area were threatened. No threat developed but in December 1965 the battalion was ordered to launch an offensive on a Pakistani post which had infiltrated into the Dubri District of Assam. After the successful completion of the task, the battalion returned to Paneri in January 1966.

By 1963 the three Jammu and Kashmir Rifles battalions that had been disbanded after the 1947–48 operations—5 JAK, 6 JAK and 8 JAK—had been re-raised.

5 JAK was re-raised in February 1962 in Gwalior by Lieut-Colonel Harnam Singh MC. Throughout 1963 the battalion, after moving to Gargua and being raised to full strength, continued with its training. The battalion's Gorkha company was sent to the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun as a demonstration company and the battalion remained all Dogra thereafter. In October Lieut-Colonel Sukhdev Singh took command of the battalion

from Lieut-Colonel Harnam Singh MC, who was posted to the JAK Centre as Deputy Commandant.

6 JAK was re-raised in January 1963 in Gwalior by Major Jit Singh. Lieut-Colonel Mahel Singh took command of the unit on 17 April and the battalion was re-organised as an infantry battalion in a mountain division. In July the unit moved to Alhilal and then to Kashmir where it remained until the Indo-Pak conflict in 1965.

8 JAK was re-raised at Gwalior in October 1965 by Lieut-Colonel Prem Singh; the composition of the battalion remained all Dogra. Nine months after its raising 8 JAK moved to Damana near Jammu to relieve 3/8 GR. In the same period, August 1963 to October 1966, 7 JAK served in Ladakh under the command of Lieut-Colonel Punjab Singh Aithmia.

Although no unit of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles Regiment was directly involved in the Rann of Kutch operation (*Operation Ablaze*) in June 1965, on the Indo-Pak border in Gujarat, 5 JAK and 9 JAK were deployed in auxiliary positions in the event of additional moves by Pakistan in the Punjab. 5 JAK, then in Dhar-chula, received orders in early May 1965, to move to the Punjab and concentrated on the Jullundar-Kapurthala Road. Throughout May the battalion carried out reconnaissance of the Indo-Pak border. The battalion moved to Saugor in late July 1965.

9 JAK, which had moved to the Punjab from the Indo-Bhutan border, was placed in readiness during this period and deployed on Harike Bridge in June 1965 under Lieut-Colonel Ajit Singh VrC. When *Operation Ablaze* terminated, the battalion moved to Dagshai.

Within a month of the end of the conflict in Kutch it became clear that Pakistan had mounted a major guerilla offensive against Kashmir. Thousands of infiltrators had been trained, organised into tactical sub-units and placed under command of Pakistani Army officers. A well-planned campaign had been directed at subverting the Muslims of Kashmir and thus inciting the state to rebellion. In the ensuing operations in J&K three units of the Regiment served in XV Corps, then commanded by Lieut-General KS Katoch MC, Colonel of the Regiment, who was subsequently awarded the *Padma Bhushan*.

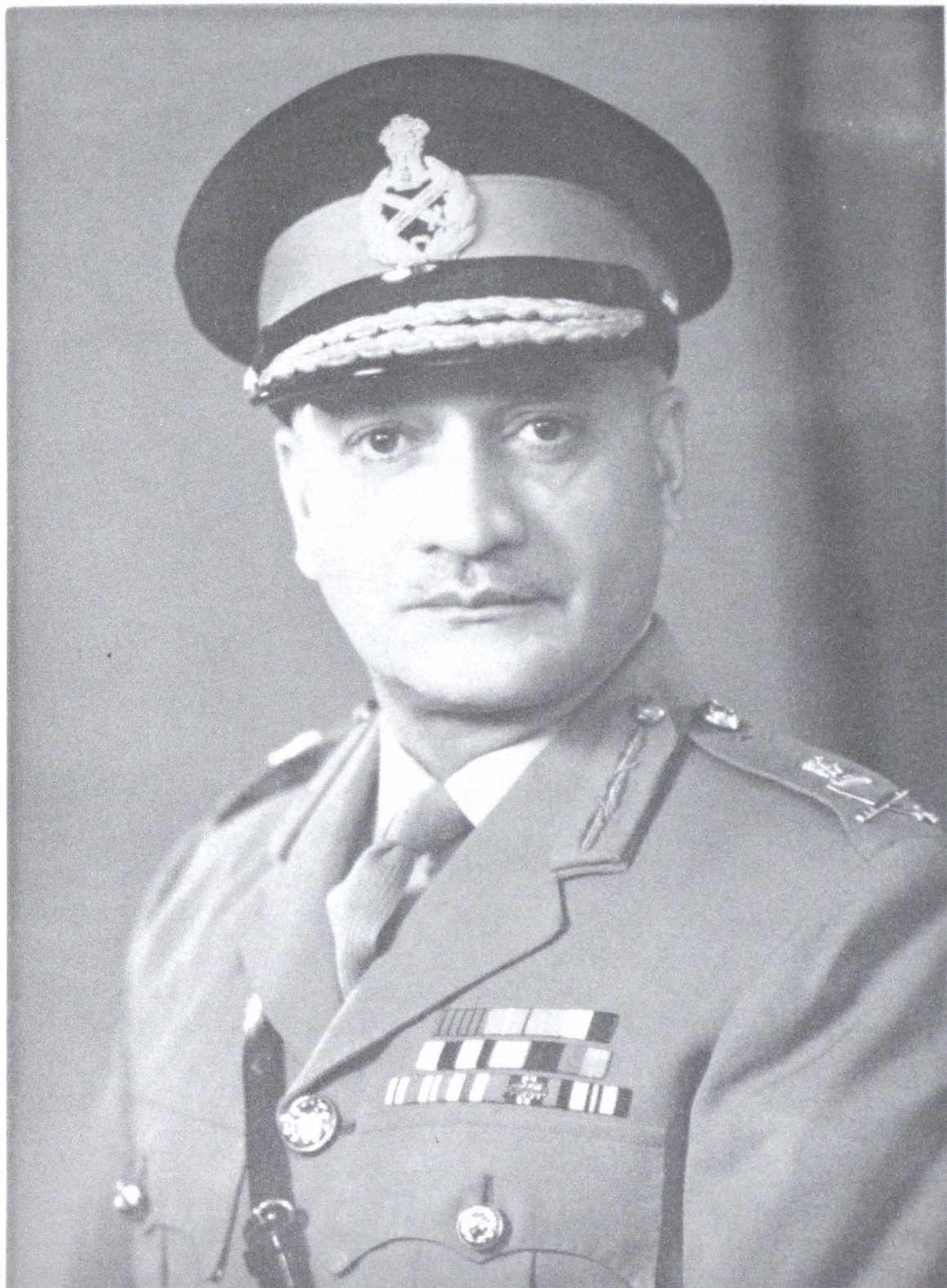
8 JAK, in July, moved from Jammu to relieve 3 Mahar in the Deva Sector and was deployed in border posts stretching over an area of about twenty miles. Before the handing and taking over procedures were completed the Pakistani infiltration began. When

the battalion was deployed in its new location, A Company, with a recoilless gun platoon and a platoon of C Company under Major SM Sharma, moved to Kalidhar. Captains KK Dhawan and A Tiwary accompanied the column and the party was deployed at three posts.

Information about infiltrating Pakistani *mujahids* was received by the posts on 6 August and the first clash occurred the next day when a section under Subedar Devi Singh moved out for protection of the Sunderbani road. Fire was exchanged between this section and a force of *mujahids* about a platoon strong. Rifleman Karnail Singh was killed but the infiltrators fled when fired upon. After this clash, a general alert was raised along the border and on the night of 7/8 August at about midnight 8 JAK Battalion Headquarters in Deva and other Headquarters in the brigade were raided. Attempts were then made to seal the border and ambushes ranging in strength from a section to a platoon were laid all along the Cease-Fire line.

The second clash occurred on 14 August at the same place. A route-protection party of platoon strength under Subedar Sansar Singh was ambushed by enemy infiltrators more than a company in strength under a major in the Pakistani regular army. Heavy fire was exchanged for forty-five minutes after which hand-to-hand fighting ensued on the ridge. A clean withdrawal could not be made as the infiltrators were following the party very closely. Subedar Sansar Singh then notified Major SM Sharma at Kalidhar by radio and a company of 6/5 GR was sent to assist in the extrication of the A Company platoon. With the help of an artillery barrage from Deva the Gorkha company and the 8 JAK party were able to move back to the Kalidhar post by evening. The infiltrators finally withdrew but not before the platoon had suffered one naik and two riflemen killed in the action.

The next morning, 15 August, Pakistan artillery began shelling most of the Kalidhar posts with medium guns and howitzers. 8 JAK battalion headquarters at Deva was also shelled and communication among the posts and with battalion headquarters was disrupted. One of the posts manned by A Company 8 JAK was attacked that evening by about two companies. When Captain KK Dhawan was wounded the post had to pull back. Two hours later another post was attacked by Pakistani companies but the A Company personnel there returned fire with 3 in mortars and medium machine guns and the enemy finally withdrew.



Lieut-General K.S. Katoch, MC, Colonel of the Regiment



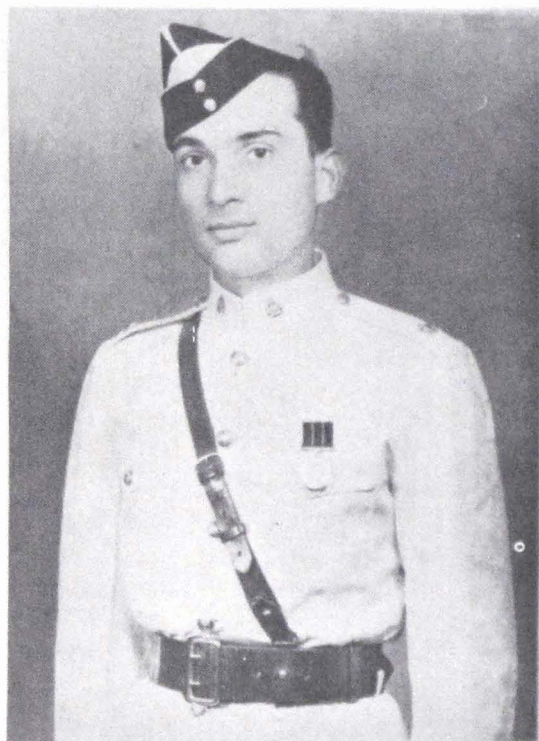
Honorary Major-General Dr Karan Singh, Honorary Colonel of the Regiment



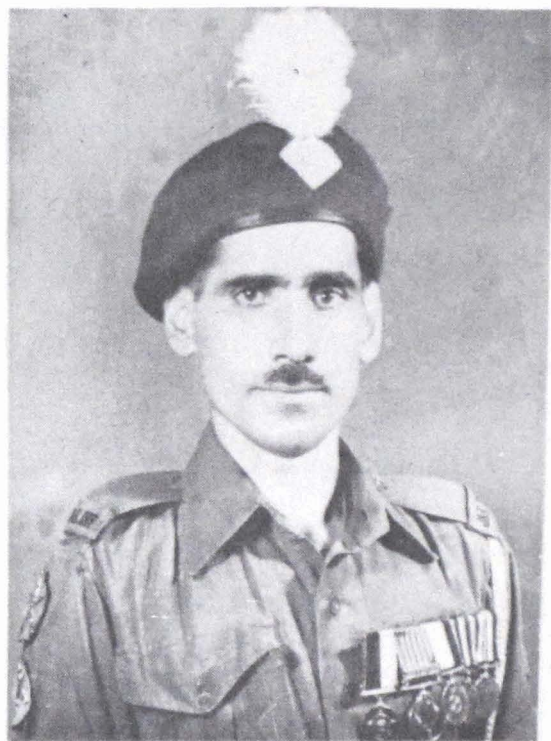
Havildar Sunder Singh *AC*



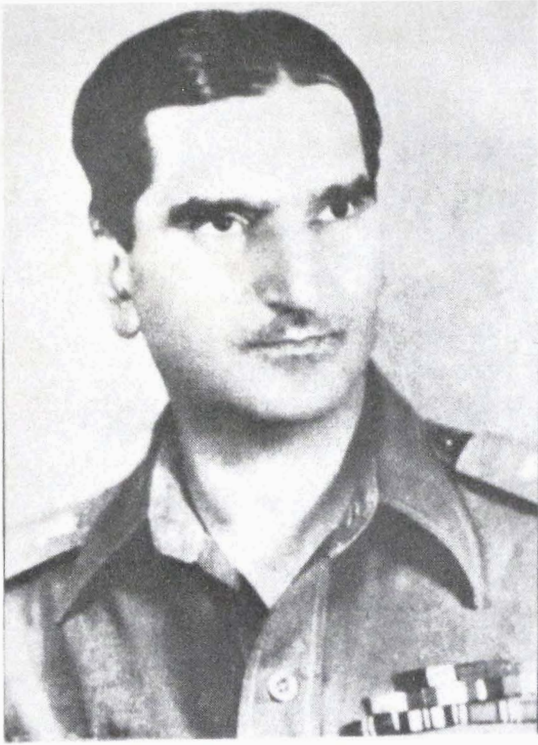
Capt R.S. Samial *VrC*



Second-Lieut
Raj Mohan Sharma, *Kirti Chakra*



Havildar Major Budhi Singh *VrC*



Lieut-Colonel Hira Nand Dubey *VrC*



Lieut-Colonel Benaras Dev *MC*



Subedar-Major (Honorary-Lieut)
Kanshi Singh *VrC*

Shelling continued throughout 16 August and on 17 August, after intensive shelling for the entire day, the Kalidhar post was attacked by more than two companies of Pakistani regulars and *mujahids*. Although they came within fifty yards of the post, the attack was repulsed and the bodies of four infiltrators were recovered from the wire fence. Three .303 rifles and some ammunition were picked up. In the engagement, a lance naik of A Company died. In one of the engagements, Major Balram Singh Jamwal, the second-in-command of the battalion, who refused to leave the forward piquet at the time of crisis, was killed by shelling.

By 28 August 6/5 GR had taken over the responsibility for the whole of the Khalidhar region and A Company rejoined the battalion at Samba to go into offensive operations in the Sialkot Sector. For their courageous actions in the battles at Kalidhar, Major SM Sharma, Naik Puran Singh and L/Naik Hans Raj were each awarded the *Vir Chakra*.

On 4 September, 8 JAK, as part of 168 Infantry Brigade, moved to Kotli Mian Di for operations in Sialkot. On 5 September, after the Commanding Officer had been briefed at Brigade Headquarters, the battalion moved up along the canal distributory. The Commanding Officer was briefed again on 6 September about the brigade attack on Anula, Bajriagarhi and Matowali, in the last of which 8 JAK was to attack in phase III of the operation. The battalion was kept at two hours notice for move to the assembly area.

On 7 September the movement order was received and by that night 8 JAK had secured a firm base at Devigarh for the brigade attack. The first two phases of the brigade attack were completed by dawn on 8 September and 8 JAK then commenced its attack on Matowali. A Company under Major SM Sharma led the assault followed by D, B and C companies. Recoilless guns provided anti-tank protection on the left flank by leap-frogging forward as the battalion advanced. By nine o'clock in the morning Matowali had been taken and enemy snipers on tree tops and in the fields were killed or driven from the area. Five enemy *mujahids* were killed and two NCOs of the Pakistan Corps of Engineers and one *mujahid* were taken prisoner. In addition, five .303 rifles with bayonets, three and a half boxes of ammunition and some notebooks were captured. The JAK casualties were one rifleman killed and one wounded.

8 JAK then took up defensive positions at Matowali astride the Maharajke-Sialkot Road. On 9 September four Pakistani Air Force

planes flew over the defensive area but did not attack. The next night the Pakistanis began shelling the 8 JAK position with medium guns from the direction of Sialkot and the fire continued until midday on 11 September. In the meantime, 8 JAK patrols cleared the neighbouring area and villages. The position continued to be fired upon through 12 September.

Plans were made at Brigade Headquarters to send one company to Kalarawanda. On the evening of 13 September, A Company under Major SM Sharma left Matowali for Kalarawanda which was secured after midnight on 13/14 September. By morning the company was deployed on the high ground with a troop of *Sherman* tanks of 18 Cavalry, one field and one medium artillery OP, two detachments of recoilless guns and one machine gun. The enemy began shelling the position at midnight but no attack developed. Meanwhile, the Commanding Officer of 8 JAK was given final instructions for 8 JAK's move to Kalarawanda which was scheduled for 14/15 September. However, by evening on 14 September the enemy had attacked the A Company position with tanks and the company had to withdraw. The Company Commander, Major Sharma, was killed and one JCO and five other ranks were wounded. Brigade Headquarters then outlined the plan for the recapture of Kalarawanda, which included a twenty-one minute fire plan in support of the attack and provision for recoilless guns to join up immediately after capture of the objective. A troops of tanks was to arrive by dawn on 15 September.

The recapture of Kalarawanda began with C Company's move under 2nd Lieut MS Bagga to secure the forming up place at eight o'clock in the evening on 14 September. The rest of the battalion then moved up and just before midnight supporting medium and field guns bombarded Kalarawanda. B and D companies led the midnight attack on Kalarawanda supported by the section of medium machine guns. Heavy shelling and the momentum of the 8 JAK advance dislodged the enemy and within forty minutes the high ground was retaken. Enemy medium guns immediately started shelling Kalarawanda but the battalion reorganised and dug in quickly. Within an hour the enemy was probing forward with two tank troops and an infantry battalion; as he moved in he was shelled by Indian Army's medium guns. The enemy infantry, unable to advance, was forced to retreat but the tanks continued shelling in conjunction with the artillery. Additional tanks were called for by 8 JAK from Brigade Headquarters and after their arrival the enemy broke contact by dawn.

During 16 September enemy shelling of 8 JAK positions continued and by afternoon the anticipated enemy counterattack was launched. This time the enemy was well supported with artillery and armour. Although heavy anti-tank fire was directed on the attackers, one troop of tanks manoeuvred unexpectedly through a sugar cane field southwest of 8 JAK's position and came within four hundred yards of the perimeter. One tank blew up over a mine and another was destroyed by a direct hit from a JAK recoilless gun. When the tank assault was halted the enemy infantry in extended formation began to advance, but JAK fire repulsed the attack. Even the enemy reserves were pushed back and by evening he had broken contact. A large amount of enemy arms and equipment was captured by 8 JAK including fifteen rifles, five sten guns, three light machine guns and two wireless sets. 8 JAK suffered five killed and sixty-one wounded. Thereafter the enemy ceased further attempts to assault or take Kalarawanda though shelling continued until the Cease Fire was announced.

With the declaration of the Cease Fire on 23 September at 0330 hours, the struggle for Kalarawanda ended. For this action, Major SM Sharma was awarded the *Vir Chakra* posthumously, Major AK Srivastava and Subedar Jhagar Singh were mentioned in despatches and Lieut-Colonel Prem Singh and one Subedar received the Army Chief's Commendation Cards. During the operations the battalion suffered a total of two officers and thirty-four other ranks killed; five officers, four JCOs and 107 other ranks wounded; and three JCOs and nineteen other ranks missing.

During the 1965 operations, 3 JAK was located in the Gurais Sector in Kashmir Valley, holding twenty-eight miles of the border against enemy infiltration. On the night of 5/6 August approximately two hundred infiltrators slipped through a gap between the 3 JAK and 6 Guards positions. An *ad hoc* company was sent out under Captain RS Sekhon to block the infiltrators' routes of withdrawal. This task was successfully accomplished and eight enemy *razakars* were captured.

On the night of 7/8 August infiltrators tried to destroy a bridge at Sonarwani in the rear of 3 JAK positions to cut off the battalion's supply lines. Enemy attempts to raid the battalion's rear headquarters, which was under the command of Subedar Harbans Lal, were repulsed and little damage was done to the Sonarwani Bridge. A raid was again attempted on the night of 16/17 August on the Khapri post held by a platoon of C Company. This raid and others in the vicinity were repulsed.

In late August, the Commanding Officer of 3 JAK, Lieut-Colonel Gulab Singh, was ordered by 268 Inf Bde to attack the enemy's post at Bhim. Rehearsals for the attack were carried out by A and C companies and Major AS Kanwar was placed in command of the operation. Captain SS Pathania was the officer commanding A Company and Capt RS Sekhon of C Company. On the night of 26/27 August heavy fire was directed at the enemy as the 3 JAK party began its advance; they charged the bunkers and captured half of the enemy post. With the arrival of enemy reinforcements, the JAK party's advance was halted. However, two enemy counter-attacks were repulsed that night but by seven o'clock the next morning enemy reinforcements of over 150 troops were brought up. By then the 3 JAK party's ammunition was exhausted and under orders of the Brigade Commander the two companies withdrew, having suffered nine killed and forty-six wounded. Captain SS Pathania was mentioned in despatches for his action in this engagement. No other major action was fought by the battalion thereafter and the Valley settled down to normalcy.

4 JAK under Lieut-Colonel Ram Singh moved from Sikkim to Saugor as part of 58 Infantry Brigade and was reorganised on modification 'P'. The battalion moved to the J&K theatre with the brigade and its first operation was an attack in the Sialkot Sector in September 1965. While the battalion was concentrated at the Madhopur Railway Station on 7 November, two Pakistani paratroopers were captured.

After 1 Armoured Division and 6 Mountain Division had launched an attack in the Sialkot Sector, 4 JAK, on the night of 9/10 September, crossed the Indo-Pak border at Charwa, West Pakistan, and was engaged in patrolling until 15 September. On 17 September, when the advance of 1 Armoured Division (43 Lorried Brigade) and 6 Mountain Division was held up outside Chawinda, 4 JAK as part of 58 Infantry Brigade concentrated near the Alhar Railroad Station and a night attack was organised for 18/19 September. By then the enemy had begun heavy and continuous shelling. When the attack began 4 JAK was under heavy fire but A Company, under the command of Captain Kuldip Chand, and D Company, under Major KB Patel, continued their advance and captured their objectives by early morning on 19 September. However, as the other units had failed to take their objectives, A and D companies of 4 JAK were isolated and had no means of communication with battalion headquarters or with each other. D Company was

soon forced to withdraw but A Company remained in position and when it did withdraw, it suffered heavy casualties. The battalion finally returned to Alhar but enemy artillery took a heavy toll and a number of vehicles were destroyed. Naib Subedar Khajoor Singh was killed by a direct hit.

The attack on Chawinda had failed and the enemy launched a counter-attack to re-capture Alhar Railroad Station, an important link in the Sialkot-Pasrur line. 58 Infantry Brigade Commander ordered C Company of 4 JAK to reinforce the defences of the railway station. Three attacks by Pakistan troops supported by a squadron of tanks were repulsed; Naik Om Prakash, a recoilless gun detachment commander, displayed great courage in chasing and destroying an enemy tank with an anti-tank launcher.

On the night of 20/21 September the battalion moved to Chobara to take up defensive positions. Enemy shelling continued to be heavy; a direct hit killed Capt P Roy (who had voluntarily left Army Headquarters to join his unit in action) and three other ranks. The battalion occupied defences at Chobara and remained there until February 1966. During the Indo-Pak operations the battalion suffered one officer, one JCO and fifteen other ranks killed and three officers, one JCO and thirty-four other ranks wounded.

5 JAK also served in Jammu and Kashmir and the border sectors. When the conflict started the battalion was at Saugor but by 6 September had been moved to Pathankot. From there the battalion moved in civilian vehicles with only essential elements to Madhopur. At first 5 JAK was deployed in the area of the Tawi River and Lakhampur for the defence of the Madhopur bridge and to round up enemy paratroopers. Before long, however, the battalion was relieved by 20 Rajput and was moved to Sibuchak, for the task of capturing and occupying Phillora, in conjunction with 35 Infantry Brigade.

On 8 September, as the battalion concentrated in the fields around Sibuchak, 4 Pakistani *Sabre* jets appeared, strafed the area and rocketted the loaded vehicles. Although Indian anti-aircraft gunners succeeded in hitting one of the planes, the ground situation became critical as the ammunition in the vehicles began to explode. Efforts were made to retrieve some of the equipment but in the process one JCO and three other ranks were killed and one JCO and seven other ranks wounded. Most of the mechanical transport and ammunition were lost but the battalion persevered in its advance to Mirzapur with pouch ammunition. *En route*, at Sabazpir, the unit took up

defensive positions, where the next day it was subjected to heavy enemy shelling in which one JCO was killed. Patrolling of the defensive position was carried out and the position strengthened as far as possible. However, enemy planes continued to strafe the area and enemy artillery from south of the position, although engaged by JAK fire and Indian artillery, could not be silenced. A patrol of company strength was then despatched to raid the enemy position and succeed in driving the Pakistanis out and capturing two jeeps and a large amount of equipment.

On the night of 12 September the battalion left Sabazpir and took up positions in Narsingh where it was subjected to further shelling. Orders were then received to continue the advance and by evening the battalion had concentrated at Gadgor where it dug in and commenced intensive patrolling. Throughout 15 and 16 September enemy air-strafting and artillery shelling continued and one NCO was killed. The patrols recovered three jeeps and two recoilless guns.

On 17 September, just as preparations began for an attack on Chawinda, the Commanding Officer, Lieut-Colonel Sukhdev Singh, was wounded by a splinter during a reconnaissance and evacuated. Major Suraj Singh took command of the battalion and on the night of 17/18 September 5 JAK moved up from Gadgor, carried out reconnaissance of routes from Alhar and commenced the attack on Chawinda, just after midnight on 19 September. While 5 JAK formed a part of 35 Infantry Brigade in this attack, 4 JAK was with 58 Infantry Brigade attacking from the opposite side.

In the assault on Chawinda, 5 JAK was subjected to heavy shelling but the momentum of attack was maintained and the objective was captured. As soon as the enemy re-organised, however, he counter-attacked with heavy armour and artillery and the Indian brigade had to withdraw to Alhar. For this operation, Captain RS Samiyal was awarded the *Vir Chakra* for gallantry. The battalion suffered one JCO and twenty-six other ranks wounded, two officers and five other ranks killed and one JCO and nine other ranks missing, believed killed. The officers killed were Major DB Subba and 2nd Lieut LS Chauhan, who, while attacking Chawinda, charged an enemy machine gun post where the enemy overpowered them. Medium machine guns, rifles and a large amount of ammunition were captured.

The battalion remained in Alhar for two days during which it came under continuous shelling resulting in one officer, one JCO

and five other ranks being killed and one JCO and eight other ranks wounded. When the battalion moved to the area west of Basran on 22 September, the shelling continued and again one officer and one JCO were wounded and two other ranks killed. After the announcement of the Cease-Fire on 23 September, 5 JAK remained in Basran patrolling the Cease-Fire zone and implementing the Cease-Fire obligations.

On 3 October Lieut-Colonel RS Pathania took command of the battalion. Patrolling continued and uncovered seventy-five anti-tank mines and forty-four anti-personnel mines in the Cease Fire zone. On 23 November a protective patrol of one officer and four other ranks under Major Puran Chander moved to Chakdeo Singh to investigate Pakistani activity in that area. In the resulting exchange of fire Major Puran Chand and one other rank were killed and two other ranks were wounded. The battalion remained in Basran until mid-December when, with the rest of the brigade, it moved to Hiranagar to counter anticipated Pakistani moves. Patrolling continued and the defensive position constructed at Basran was dismantled and captured enemy stores were turned over to the brigade. In February 1966 the battalion moved to Partapur near Meerut.

Already posted at Dagshai when hostilities between India and Pakistan commenced in early September 1965, 9 JAK was immediately moved to the Khem Karan front to attack Rohinala on 6 September on the Khem-Kasur axis. Elements of the battalion advanced under heavy fire and succeeded in silencing many enemy pill-boxes by lobbing grenades. A and C companies, under the overall command of Captain Diddi, remained in position on the Rohinala Bund in spite of heavy opposition, thus denying the enemy the use of the main Khem Karan-Kasur axis until 7 September. This delaying action allowed the rest of the Division time to pull back and reorganise its defences.

9 JAK suffered about one hundred casualties; Lieut Teja Singh won a *Vir Chakra*, the first to be awarded in the Division during this operation. The two companies were then ordered to fall back and were extricated with the help of the tanks of A Squadron of 9 Horse. The battalion then took up defensive positions in the area of Asal Uttar and participated with the brigade in repulsing attacks by Pakistan's 1 Armoured Division. On 12 September the battalion was again ordered to attack Khem Karan supported by armour, after 2 Mahar's day attack had failed to link up with 4 Sikh which

had moved into the area on the night of 11/12 September. 9 JAK's attack was led by Major Bhim Singh Jamwal with 150 men. The armour assault failed to make any progress against strong enemy defences and when the attacking infantry was near the objective the attack had to be called off. In this engagement the battalion suffered forty-seven casualties and in the whole operation, 186 casualties. Lieut-Colonel Goverdhan Singh Jamwal assumed command of the Battalion after the Khem Karan operations.

6 JAK and 7 JAK were also involved in the Indo-Pak conflict : 6 JAK moved from Kashmir Valley in early August and during the operations played a significant role in defending the Haji Pir Pass in the Uri Sector; 7 JAK, then posted in Ladakh, detailed B Company under Major KC Bhatia on convoy and road protection duties between Leh and Srinagar. Platoons of the company were deployed in search of infiltrators in the villages near Leh.

With the general withdrawal of troops from the zone of conflict in February and March 1966, many JAK battalions returned to the stations in which they had been serving and continued with their regular training and exercises. After its operations in East Pakistan in December 1965, 1 JAK returned to NEFA in March 1966, concentrated at Gachham and served in the area until March 1967, with the task of defending Bomdila. Although posted back to Jammu for two and a half years, by mid-1969 1 JAK was again in NEFA, concentrated at Sela.

In March 1966, 5 JAK pulled back from J&K operations and was sent to Meerut. In early 1967 the battalion participated in the famous *Exercise Betwa*. On two different occasions during the battalion's tenure in Meerut it was used in aid to civil power : the first time was in November, 1966, when the battalion moved to Delhi to assist in quelling anti-cow-slaughter riots; the second occasion, in April 1967, was during a strike by the police.

As hostile activity in Nagaland and the Mizo Hills increased in the late 1960's a number of JAK battalions were deployed in the area in operations against the rebels and on patrols on the Indo-Burma border. In early November 1967 5 JAK left Meerut for operations in Manipur against Naga hostiles. Battalion headquarters was established at Ukhrul and the unit was deployed at different posts in the area with the prime objective of sealing the international border with Burma in that area and arresting the movement of Naga rebels to and from China. The sixty miles of international border as well as the area within India had to be patrolled constantly

for long periods and on a self-contained basis. The battalion had also to acclimatise itself to the terrain, weather and counter-insurgency operations. In addition, there were administrative and supply difficulties in that battalion headquarters was road-maintained while the company posts were supplied by air. Roads were poor and men proceeding on leave had to march several days to the nearest transport head. However, in spite of the physical and operational difficulties, the battalion accomplished its task in the area: no hostile groups crossed the international border during its tenure in the region.

In February 1968, 5 JAK began a series of operations to liquidate hostile camps. On the first occasion a JAK column attacked and captured a post held by about one hundred hostiles. The hostiles' initial opposition was overcome in an exchange of fire and the JAK column suffered no casualties, captured hostiles being handed over to the civil police. The next action took place at Mariam where three Naga camps were located. It was a well-fortified post with trenches, firing positions, wire obstacles and a double perimeter in which the hostiles had stored a large number of weapons including 2 in mortars and light machine guns. The battalion attack at dawn on 6 March was planned in detail and as it was launched the hostiles fled. The post was turned over to the civil police. In early April a hostile camp in the Tamenglong area was captured after stiff resistance by the defenders. 5 JAK destroyed the camp, captured seven and killed one hostile without suffering casualties themselves. At the same time another company was searching the area of Khongjriong where many official documents, typewriters, cyclo-styling machines and other equipment were discovered. After a few more minor operations on the Kangpokbi-Churachandpur axis, the JAK companies returned to their posts. During these patrols five hostiles were apprehended.

In early May 1968, 5 JAK moved on foot from Ukhrul to the Enlarged Loop Area in the Mizo Hills and was deployed in various village areas. The battalion was responsible for approximately five hundred square miles including an international border with Burma extending to forty-five miles. Hostile activity was vigorous and posts were subject to constant sniping. The battalion proceeded to familiarise itself with the terrain, routes and possible hideouts of the hostiles. Movement and administration were impeded by the thick jungle and rainy weather. Attempts were made to win the support of the local population by gathering the inhabitants of

several villages and explaining to them the role of the army in maintaining peace in the area and improving their conditions. Good *rapport* was established between the villagers and the battalion. In October 1968 Lieut-Colonel RS Thakur took over command from Lieut-Colonel RS Pathania.

5 JAK's activities in the Mizo Hills consisted mainly of coordinated operations with other battalions of the brigade as well as independent patrolling and ambushing. In spite of the difficulties inherent in counter-insurgency operations the unit developed an effective intelligence net-work and captured thirty hostiles and about the same number of weapons, including automatics. The battalion lost no equipment or personnel in these encounters but one officer was killed in February 1969 while gathering information about hostile moves. On two different occasions in the Selam area JAK patrols were suddenly fired upon by overwhelming numbers of hostiles from dominating positions. The JAK columns, although inhibited by poor visibility, charged the Nagas, inflicted heavy casualties and recovered many weapons. Two JCOs were awarded the *Sena Medal* for courageous action in these encounters.

In conjunction with ferreting out hostiles in the area, 5 JAK participated in a social campaign to improve the living conditions of the people in the Mizo Hills. Villagers from twenty-three different villages were grouped into centres and posts were established at each centre. Initial resistance to the plan subsided as food and medical attention were freely distributed under army supervision. Large quantities of food supplies were air-dropped and distributed. Locally produced food was also controlled and this along with shifting villages and grouping the inhabitants substantially reduced hostile activity.

8 JAK also served in the Mizo Hills in counter-insurgency operations. At the conclusion of the Indo-Pak conflict the battalion withdrew, in late February 1966, from Pakistani territory to its permanent location in Jammu and Kashmir State where it remained until early 1969, carrying out training and patrolling the Pakistani border. During this period, Lieut-Colonel Puran Singh served as the Commanding Officer.

In January 1969, when 8 JAK moved to the Mizo Hills, it was located at Aijal to act as a general reserve for 61 Mountain Brigade. In early February the command of the battalion passed to Lieut-Colonel MM Chopra (ex-Marathas) from Lieut-Colonel PS Sumbria. The battalion was given six weeks of counter-insurgency

training in preparation for its role in the Mizo Hills. Hostile activity decreased appreciably later in the year but the battalion remained deployed to deal with any threat in the area.

As this history goes to press, accounts have been received about the Regiment's participation in the Indo-Pakistan war of December 1971. Battalions served with distinction on all the major fronts—but the security restrictions regarding these operations have not yet been lifted. The inclusion of these accounts will therefore have to await the expansion of the Regiment's history in the second edition.

APPENDIX I

Excerpts from Jammu and Kashmir Army List 1944

Commander-in-Chief

Lieut-General His Highness Raj Rajeshwar Maharaj Shri Maharaja Sir Harisingh Bahadur, Indar Mahindar, Sipar-i-Saltanat-i-Inglishia, GCSI, GCIE, KCVO, ADC, LLD.

* * * * *

1st INFANTRY

Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Saffron

Regiment Centre—Srinagar, Strength—813

ORGANISATION—Headquarters, H.Q. Coy, and 4 Rifle Companies. Raised at Jammu in S. 1930 (1873 A.D.) by Lieutenant General, His late Highness Maharaja Sir Pratap Singh Sahib Bahadur, GCSI, GCIE, GBE, LLD.

Reorganised as Imperial Service unit on 8 Company basis 1st January, 1899.

Reorganised on a 4 Company basis in 1921.

Reorganised as Indian States Forces on Indian Army Establishment in April 1923.

Reorganised on Indian Army Establishment in March 1932.

Reorganised on I.S.F. Inf. "Mixed" Battalion (Interim Organisation) Provisional War Establishment 1940.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport) Provincial War Establishment 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1943.

"HUNZA NAGAR, 1891", "MEGIDDO", "NABLUS", "PALESTINE 1918"
"3rd AFGHAN WAR 1919-20"

Composition—Hindu Dogras

Present Location : Manoeuvre Area

Colonel-in-Chief—H.H. Zubda-tul-Mulk Mahakhan Dewan Nawab Sir Taley Mohammad Khan, GCIE, KCVO (Nawab of Palanpur).

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2nd RIFLES

Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Rust

Regiment Centre—Jammu Cantonment; Strength—902

ORGANISATION—Headquarters, H.Q. Coy and 4 Rifle Companies.

Raised at Jammu in S. 1926 (1869 A.D.).

Reorganised as Imperial Service Troops on 8 Company basis 1st January 1890.

Reorganised on a 4 Company basis in 1921.

Reorganised as Indian States Forces on Indian Army Establishment in April 1923.

Reorganised on Indian Army Establishment in March 1932.

Reorganised on I.S.F. Inf. "Mixed" Battalion (Interim organisation) Provisional War Establishment 1940.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport), Provisional War Establishment, 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1943.

"HUNZA NAGAR 1891", "CHILAS, 1893", "KILIMANJARO"
"BEHOBEHO", "EAST AFRICA 1918-19"

Composition—Half Gorkhas and half Mohammedan Dogras

Present Location—British India

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3rd RIFLES

Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Purple Navy

Regiment Centre—Srinagar; Strength—813

ORGANISATION—Headquarters, H.Q. Coy and 4 Rifle Companies.

Raised at Jammu in S. 1913 (1856 A.D.).

Reorganised as Imperial Service unit on 1st January 1890.

Reorganised on a 4 Company basis in 1921.

Reorganised as Indian States Forces on Indian Army Establishment in April 1923.

Reorganised on Indian Army Establishment in March 1932.

Reorganised on I.S.F. Inf. "Mixed" Battalion (Interim organisation) Provisional War Establishment 1940.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport) Provisional War Establishment, 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1943.

"CHITRAL, 1895", "MEGIDDO", "SHARON", PALESTINE 1918"

"KILIMANJARO", "BEHOBEHO", "EAST AFRICA 1914-17"

Composition—Half Hindu Dogras and half Gorkhas

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4th INFANTRY

Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Peony Red

Regiment Centre—Jammu Cantonment, Strength—902

ORGANISATION—Headquarters, H.Q. Coy and 4 Rifle Companies.

Raised at Jammu in S. 1894 (1837 A.D.) formerly known as *Fateh Shibji* No. 8 and later as No. 7 Kashmir Infantry (*Fateh Shibji*). Organised on 6 Coy basis.

Reorganised as First Line Reserve Troops in March 1921, on 8 Company basis by amalgamation of No. 7 Kashmir Infantry (*Fateh Shibji*) and No. 9 Kashmir Infantry (*Rudhar Shib Nabh*) raised in S. 1915 (1858 A.D.).

Reorganised as a Pioneer Battalion on Indian Army Establishment in April 1923.

Reorganised as an Infantry Battalion on Indian Army Establishment in March 1932.

Reorganised on I.S.F. Inf "Mixed" Battalion (Interim organisation) Provisional War Establishment 1940.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport) Provisional War Establishment 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1943.

Composition—Half Hindu Dogras; half Mohammedan Dogras

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5th LIGHT INFANTRY

*Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Cossack Green**Regiment Centre—Jammu Cantonment; Strength—813**ORGANISATION—Headquarters, H.Q. Coy and 4 Rifle Companies.*Raised in S. 1906 (1849 A.D.) Formerly known as No. 3 Kashmir Rifles (*Suraj Gorkha*).Reorganised as First Line Reserve Troops in 1921, on 8 Company basis under the name of 6th Kashmir Reserve Rifles Battalion (The *Suraj Gorkha* Rifle Regiment).

Reorganised as Indian States Forces unit on Indian Army Establishment in April 1923.

Reorganised on Indian Army Establishment in March 1932.

Reorganised on I.S.F. Inf. "Mixed" Battalion (Interim Organisation) Provisional War Establishment, 1940.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport), Provisional War Establishment, 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1943.

Composition—Hindu Dogras

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6th INFANTRY

*Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Grass Green**Regiment Centre—Jammu Cantonment; Strength—813**ORGANISATION—Headquarters, H.Q. Coy and 4 Rifle Companies.*

Raised at Jammu in April 1923, by Lieutenant General His late Highness, Maharaja Sir Pratap Singh Sahib Bahadur, GSCI, GCIE, GBE, LLD.

Reorganised as a Pioneer Battalion on Indian Army Establishment in April 1923.

Reorganised as an Infantry Battalion on Indian Army Establishment in March 1932.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport), Provisional War Establishment, 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1943.

Composition—Half Hindu Dogras; half Mohammedan Dogras

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7th INFANTRY

*Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Maroon**Regiment Centre—Jammu; Strength—902**ORGANISATION—Headquarters, H.Q. Coy and 4 Companies.*

Raised at Jammu in March 1932 by Lieut-General His Highness Maharaja Sir Harisinghji Bahadur GCSI, GCIE, KCVO, ADC, LL.D. as an Indian States Forces unit on Indian Army Establishment.

Reorganised on Indian States Forces Infantry "Mixed Battalion (Interim Organisation) Provisional War Establishment 1940.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport) Provisional War Establishment, 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1943.

Composition—Half Jat Sikhs and half Kangra Rajputs

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8th INFANTRY

*Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Primrose**Regiment Centre—Srinagar-Kashmir; Strength—813*

ORGANISATION—Battalion Headquarters, H.Q. Coy and 4 Rifle Companies. Raised at Jammu on 10th February 1940, by Lieut General His Highness Maharaja Sir Harisinghji Bahadur, GCSI, GCIE, KCVO, ADC, LL.D. as an Indian States Forces unit on (half) Battalion basis, subsequently reorganised on Indian States Forces Infantry “Mixed” Battalion Interim Organisation Provisional War Establishment, 1940.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport), Provisional War Establishment, 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1942.

Composition—Rajput Dogras

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9th INFANTRY

*Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Navy blue**Regiment Centre—Jammu Cantonment; Strength—902*

ORGANISATION—Battalion Headquarters, H.Q. Coy and 4 Rifle Companies. Raised at Jammu on 13th March 1940, by Lieut General His Highness Maharaja Sir Harisinghji Bahadur, GCSI, GCIE, KCVO, ADC, LL.D. as an Indian States Forces unit on (half) battalion basis, subsequently reorganised on I.S.F. Infantry “Mixed” Battalion (Interim Organisation) Provisional War Establishment, 1940.

Reorganised on Indian Infantry Battalion (Mixed Transport) Provisional War Establishment, 1942.

Reorganised on War Establishment 1/29-C/2 in 1943.

Composition—Rajput Dogras

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INFANTRY TRAINING BATTALION

*Uniform—Khaki; Facings—Coffee**Regiment Centre—Jammu Cantonment; Strength—1969*

ORGANISATION—Headquarters and 6 Training Companies.

Raised at Jammu in March 1932, by Lieut-General His Highness Maharaja Sir Harisinghji Bahadur, GCSI, GCIE, KCVO, ADC, LL.D. as an Indian States Forces unit on H.Q. and 2 Training Company basis. Two active companies were subsequently added in the year 1936.

Reorganised on H.Q. and 6 training company basis in 1940–41.

Composition—Mixed

APPENDIX II

JAK Rifles (1971)

Colonel : Lieut-General KS Katoch, MC (Retd) 30 March, 1960.

Honorary Colonel : Hony Major-General His Highness Dr Karan Singh, 6 August, 1962.

* * * * *

REGIMENTAL CREST

The present crest has retained two items from the old state crest—the motto “Prashasta Ranvirta” and the *Surya* (sun) symbolic both of strength and of the *Suryavansi* descent of the ruling family of the Jammu Dogras. The crest is surmounted by the Ashoka capital.

REGIMENTAL DAY

13th April, *Zorawar Day*, is celebrated as the Regimental Day in memory of General Zorawar Singh.

BATTALION RAISING DAYS

1 JAK RIFLES	13 Apr 1873
2 JAK RIFLES	25 Apr 1869
3 JAK RIFLES	15 Apr 1856
4 JAK RIFLES	1837—Date and month not known.
5 JAK RIFLES	1849 or Sep 1961 (Re-raising Day).
6 JAK RIFLES	1 Jan 1963 Re-raising Day.
7 JAK RIFLES	9 Mar 1932
8 JAK RIFLES	10 Feb 1940
9 JAK RIFLES	1858 or Mar 1940 Re-raising Day.
10 JAK RIFLES	1 Oct 1964
11 JAK RIFLES	1 Jan 1965
12 JAK RIFLES	15 Jan 1966
13 JAK RIFLES	1 Oct 1966
14 JAK RIFLES	1 Jan 1967

REGIMENTAL MARCH PAST

Pipes and Drums :	“Highland Laddie”
Brass Band :	“Chal Shibbo Meriye”

REGIMENTAL BATTLE HONOURS

LADAKH 1834-40, BALTISTAN 1840, TIBET,
GILGIT 1860, YASIN 1863, DAREL 1866, HUNZANAGAR 1891,
CHILAS 1893, CHITRAL 1895, The Great War 1914-18 MEGIDDO, NAB-

LUS, KILIMANJARO, BEHO-BEHO, PALESTINE, SHARON, EAST
AFRICA,
THE 3rd AFGHAN WAR 1919-20,
World War 1939-45 KENNEDY PEAK, MEIKTILA,
J&K OPERATIONS 1947-48 POONCH-SKARDU.

APPENDIX III

Forts in J&K

The rulers of Kashmir have always relied heavily on the system of forts to provide security from external threat. From the end of the First World War, forts and fort guards were placed under command of a special officer at Army Headquarters of the rank of lieutenant-colonel (comparable to the *Dwarapati* of ancient history). This system was reorganised during the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh: Jammu and Srinagar fort commands were separated and the forts in each province were put under the command of the respective brigade majors at Brigade Headquarters. The personnel of the fort guards were taken mostly from disbanded J&K state force units or reservists.

Forts in Kashmir Province

Hari Parbat
Muzaffarabad
Soru
Skardu
Leh
Sharda

Forts in Jammu Province

Bahu
Mangla
Tharochi
Mangla Dai

Unmanned forts

Gajpat
Rajouri
Riasi
Salal
Dhian Garh
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Thihal

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