

**1925 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE**  
**2nd Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY**

**SUMMARY OF SECOND BATTALION DIARY.**

*January 1.*—A Proclamation Parade was held in Rawalpindi.

*January 4.*—The Regiment marched from Rawalpindi to Rewat preparatory to taking part in the 13th Brigade Group Manoeuvres in the Salt Range.

*January 11.*—The Regiment arrived at Khewra.

*January 14.*—Mountain Warfare Manoeuvres began.

*January 19.*—Manoeuvres ended.

*January 21.*—The Regiment returned to Rawalpindi from Khewra by train.

*January 24.*—Lieut.-Colonel W. H. M. Freestun, C.M.G., D.S.O., joined the Regiment and assumed command.

*January 30.*—Colonel-Commandant H. L. Knight, C.M.G., D.S.O., commanding the 12th Indian Infantry Brigade, carried out the annual inspection.

*February 11.*—Major-General Sir L. R. Vaughan, L.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., commanding Rawalpindi District, inspected the Regiment.

*February 12.*—The Advance Party proceeded to Razmak.

*February 18.*—The Regiment left Rawalpindi for Razmak.

*February 19.*—The Regiment arrived at Mari-Indus, and half the Regiment proceeded to Bannu.

*February 21.*—The remainder proceeded to Bannu.

*February 23.*—The Regiment marched to Saidgi.

*February 24.*—The Regiment marched to Idak.

*February 25.*—The Regiment marched to Thai.

*February 26.*—The Regiment marched to Damdil.

*February 27.*—The Regiment marched to Razani.

*February 28.*—The Regiment arrived at Razmak and took over from the 1st Battalion the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

*March 1.*—Lieut. E. C. Richards took over the duties of Adjutant from Lieut. W. A. R. Ames, whose tenure of that appointment expired on February 28.

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*March 4.*—Information received that Lieut. R D Winsloe had been permitted to resign his commission and had been appointed to a commission in the Regular Army Reserve of Officers, with effect from January 31, 1925.

*March 10.* —The Regiment as part of the Brigade Column opened the road downstream (near Sector).

*March 15.*—A Regimental Rifle Meeting was held which included intersection and platoon competitions. .

*March 16.* —Information received that 2nd Lieut. C. L. C. Ward had been posted to the Regiment on first appointment.

*March 18.*—The Regiment, as part of the Brigade Column opened the road downstream.

*March 19.*—An order was issued that cap badges would not be worn on manoeuvre parades whilst in Waziristan.

*March 23.*—Report received from Crocus Piquet that the wire had been cut during the night. A Very Light was fired, but it was impossible to see the target in time.

*March 26.*—The Commanding Officer delivered a lecture on the “Theory of Rifle Fire” to prospective candidates for N.C.O.'s examination.

*March 27.*—Lecture and Demonstration of Cooperation with artillery by the *119th* Pack Battery, R.A.

2nd Lieut. C. L. C. Ward reported his arrival and was posted to B Company.

*March 29.*—Lieut. W. A. R. Ames granted nine months' leave to the United Kingdom, with effect from April 19, 1925 or date of availing.

*March 30.*—No. 5377687, Pte. Nurdin, of A Company, was accidentally shot by the sentry at Duncan's Piquet. A message was received at 9 p.m., stating that this soldier had been shot, and an ambulance was sent with a Khassadar escort, but he died on the way back.

*March 31.*—A Memorial Service was held on the Football Ground for the late Commander-in-Chief, General Lord Rawlinson of Trent, G.C.B.,G.C.S.L, G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G.

*April 1.*—A Regimental system of messing came into force. Waziristan Concessions, including free rations for Officers and private servants, and extra messing allowance for other ranks, take effect from this date.

*April 2.*—The funeral of the late Pte. Nurdin took place at 10 a.m.

*April 8.*—The Regiment as part of the Brigade Column opened the road downstream.

*April 11.*—A Proclamation Parade was held to proclaim the Acting Viceroy. The Regiment was represented by 100 rank and file of C Company and both Colours.

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*April 12.*—Easter Sunday. Divine Service was not held on account of fighting breaking out between Mahsuds and Wazirs near the Lower Camp. B and D Companies and 1 Sub-section of Machine Guns were sent out at 10.30 a.m. After some hesitation both Mahsuds and Wazirs withdrew.

The Regiment was detailed to find two new piquets which were garrisoned by C Company.

*April 15.*—The Regiment as part of the Brigade Column opened the road downstream. During the retirement there was much delay in the withdrawal of Peacock Piquet, who stated that they could not see the new Regimental Flag. The piquet was finally recalled by the Company Commander who rode over. On leaving the piquet position 4 shots were fired from the ridge behind. No one was hit.

*April 23.*—The Regiment (less B Company) opened the road downstream.

*April 24.*—The Regiment (less B and C Companies) formed part of a Column operating towards Spinkamar to erect boundary cairns.

*May 9.*—Lieut.-Colonel W, H. M. Freestun, C.M.G., D.S.O., assumed command of the 7th Indian Infantry Brigade.

Major G. E. Whittall, M.C., took over command of the Regiment.

*May 14.*—Major W. G. Tolson, M.C., took over command of the Regiment.

*May 17.*—The Regiment stood by from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., on account of fighting taking place between Mahsuds and Wazirs.

*May 18.*—Fighting broke out between the Mahsuds and Wazirs, between the Mahsud and Wazir Serais, at about 6.15 p.m. The Alarm sounded and the Regiment (less A Company) paraded and doubled to No. 3 Gate, where the 119th Pack Battery was shelling both Mahsuds and Wazirs impartially. A Sub-section of the Regiment's Vickers Guns was brought into action and opened fire. The Regiment then moved to No.1 Gate, and at about 7 p.m. moved out to clear the ground. This was carried out at 7.40 p.m., and the Regiment returned to camp.

Number of casualties, 2 slightly wounded; 1 N.C.O. being hit by a splintered stone in the forehead and 1 man being knocked over by a ricochet. 1,264 rounds of S.A.A. were fired.

Major G. E. Whittall, M.C., took over the duties of D.A.A.G. Rawalpindi District on May 16.

*May 20.*—The Regiment (less B Company) opened the road downstream. It was very hot and there were several cases of heat exhaustion.

*May 22.*—West White Ridge Piquet was handed over to the 1-2nd Gurkha Rifles; Scrub Piquet was taken over from the 3-11th Sikhs.

Duncan's Piquet was fired on during the night but there were no casualties.

*May 25.*—The Regiment formed part of a Column operating up the Sirdar Algad Nullah to Mamu China to leave a party of coolies at the water piquet.

Duncan's and Reading Piquets handed over to the 4-1st Punjab Regiment.

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*May 26.*—On the night of the 24th, Crocus Piquet was attacked and the wire cut. Duncan's and Toc Piquets were also fired at but there were no casualties. B Company opened the road as far as the Shora Nullah to escort some Mahsud Maliks.

*May 27.*—Reservoir Piquet taken over from the 4-1st Punjab Regiment. Information received that Captain G. F. Plowden, M.C., would be cross-posted to the 43rd Light Infantry from date of joining to fill an existing vacancy, and would sail by the first available public opportunity in the trooping season 1925-1926 (W.O. Letter No. P/433/3 A.G.2 (O) dated April 24, 1925).

*May 29.*—The Regiment as part of the Brigade Column opened the road as far as Nairobi. Harper's Column passed through. Left camp at 6 a.m. and returned at 6.30 p.m. No shots fired.

*May 30.*—Narakai I and II Piquets handed over to the 3-11th Sikhs. Pte. Winter of A Company, wounded in the thigh during road protection duties. General Skeen interviewed all Officers. No. 5376694, Pte. Day, died of dysentery.

*May 31.*—Funeral of the late Pte. Day.

*June 3.*—The King's Birthday. There was no parade and the day was as far as possible observed as a holiday, but there were only about 3 platoons not on duty.

*June 7.*—A Column consisting of the 52nd Light Infantry, 3-11th Sikhs, 2-12th F.F. Regiment (Sikhs), 1-2nd K.E.O. Gurkha Rifles and technical troops moved out at 5 a.m. to destroy Mamu Sar Kot. The Regiment was in reserve. The Kot was blown up at 11.45 a.m. and the Regiment was back in camp by 12.30 p.m.

*June 17.*—The Regiment (less A and B Companies) opened the road downstream as far as Tauda China village, returning to camp at 12 noon.

*June 18.*—Waterloo Day. A Gymkhana was held on the Aerodrome.

*June 26.*—The Regiment (less A Company) opened the road downstream.

*June 30.*—The Regiment (less A Company) opened the road downstream.

*July 4.*—A Rifle Meeting was held.

*July 8.*—Information received that Lieut. R. H. Coad, M.M., had been granted a "pass" certificate and 2nd place at the Army School of Education, Belgaum.

*July 12.*—Divine Service held in the Cinema.

*July 14.*—The Regiment (less D Company) opened the road downstream.

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*August 15.*—Lieut, and Adjutant E. C. Richards proceeded on four months' leave to the United Kingdom.

Captain C. B. Crawford took over the duties of Acting Adjutant.

*August 28.*—A column consisting of the Regiment and the 3-11th Sikhs reconnoitred the hills from Bare Patch to Green Dome.

*August 31.*—Lieut. J. A. Theobalds took over the duties of Acting Adjutant from Captain C. B. Crawford.

*September 2.*—Death of 2nd Lieut. D. M. O'Connor, due to a gunshot wound.

*September 7.*—Information received that Captain T. E. Withington, A.F.C., and Captain E. A. Smith, M.C., had qualified at the Small Arms School, Pachmarhi.

*September 8.*—Information received that Lieut. R. T. Conant had qualified at the Machine Gun School, Ahmednagar.

*September 14.*—The Regiment carried out a reconnaissance to Bare Patch and back by the Mir Ali Zawar Nullah. The Director of Military Training accompanied the Regiment.

*September 20.*—The Razmak Horse Show was held. A Regimental Sub-section of Vickers' Guns won 1st prize for turn-out.

*September 21.*—A Brigade Tactical Exercise without troops was held.

*September 28.*—Lieut. R. H. Coad, M.M., proceeded to Belgaum to take up the appointment of Adjutant and Quartermaster at the School of Education.

*September 30.*—A Brigade Ceremonial Parade was held, the salute being taken by Colonel-Commandant O. C. Borrett.

*October 8.*—The Razmak Column carried out a field firing scheme in the neighbourhood of Horseshoe Ridge. The Regiment was right attacking battalion.

*October 9.*—Yesterday's operations were continued.

One Gurkha Rifleman was killed by an explosion representing the demolition of a village. The three pack batteries and section of six-inch howitzers gave some very accurate covering fire.

*October 11.*—A Regimental Rifle Meeting was held on Bakshi Range.

*October 12.*—The Regiment and the 1-2nd Gurkha Rifles opened the road downstream as far as Machine Gun Ridge, the Regiment piqueting the 2nd Sector.

*October 30.*—Lieut. W. T. Yeoman and 34 other ranks left for Chakrata as an Advance Party.

Lieut. W. T. Yeoman took over the duties of Station Staff Officer and Executive Officer on arrival.

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*November 9.*—Information received that 2nd Lieut. F. T. Horan had been posted to the Regiment on first appointment.

*November 11.*—Armistice Day. A Parade was held, the salute being taken by General Sir Claude Jacob, the Army Commander. The District Commander was also present. The finals of the Sports were held in the afternoon, the Razmak Inter-Company (British Units) Cup being won by the Headquarter Wing, B Company being 2nd.

*November 12.*—Information received that Captain K. Horan had been posted to the Regiment from the 43rd Light Infantry.

*November 13.*—The Regiment carried out a reconnaissance to Bare Patch and back by the Mir Ali Zawar Nullah. Two Officers of the 2-1st Gurkha Rifles and 1 Officer and 10 other ranks of the 1-6th Rajputana Rifles accompanied the Regiment.

*November 30.*—A Company of the 2-1st Gurkha Rifles were sniped in the Shora Nullah. A Section of C Company which was a piquet in the vicinity covered their withdrawal.

*December 3.*—A Mahsud and Wazir Jirga which was being held outside the camp was shot up by Mahsud " badmashes " and a Wazir killed. Fighting took place on a small scale, and a Battery was turned on to them. Both sides eventually withdrew, the Wazirs having suffered more casualties.

*December 16.*—2nd Lieut. F. T. Horan joined on first appointment and was posted to C Company.

*December 31.*—Major L. Tunnard rejoined from sick leave in the United Kingdom. Captain K. Horan joined the Regiment on posting from the 43rd.

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**SECOND BATTALION LETTER, 1925.**

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

1925 found us still in Rawalpindi and on the verge of manoeuvres. The usual Proclamation Parade had barely finished when, we set forth for the Salt Range where we were to do Training in Mountain Warfare. Eagle had previously reconnoitred the road and succeeded in making the Advance Party of Quartermaster-Sergeants march about 10 miles farther than the Regiment by taking a short cut. The remarks of the party about short cuts in general, and Eagle's in particular, would have made a bargee blush. Sergeant Fry also distinguished himself by taking a left turn instead of a right and walking for about 15 miles before he discovered he was going in the wrong direction. He finally arrived about 2 a.m., dead beat.

Manoeuvres proved to be very realistic, with piquets, perimeter camps, and a very efficient enemy who harried the rear-guard and sniped the camp at night.

In view of the short time before our move to Razmak, Whittall managed to get permission for the Regiment to come back in style in a special train.

Soon after our return we were able to welcome Colonel Freestun who arrived to take over command.

The remaining three weeks were spent in packing up and handing in all our surplus baggage to the store which had been allotted to us in Victoria Barracks, and on February 16 we set out for the frontier prepared for the worst. Bannu was left behind on the 23rd, and we started the 70-mile-odd march to Razmak. I think everyone imagined that we should be sniped every night, if not by day as well, but rather to our disappointment (?) not a shot was fired.

The Berkshires seemed very pleased to see us, handed over in record time, and set out for Lahore as hard as they could go. Razmak proved to be not nearly so black as it had been painted, and everyone settled down full of keenness. Life was very strenuous at first, as the Column was out and there was only one other regiment in camp. There were a large number of permanent piquets to garrison and a very long perimeter to be defended, and in addition the road had to be opened downstream twice a week to supply the Column.

Razmak itself is situated right on the boundary between Mahsud and Wazir country, and the plateau of Razmak itself is much coveted by the Mahsud for its good grazing, and is consequently a source of much friction. The slightest incident leads to war between the two tribes and usually takes place just outside the camp, generally ending in the troops setting out to stop the dog fight. Both sides are shelled as a first measure by a Pack Battery. This only seems to encourage the combatants, so a regiment goes out to a flank and puts down a belt of fire between the opposing sides, gradually widening it out until they are out of range of each other. On one occasion the Colonel was walking back from the Range quite peacefully when he found himself in No-Mans Land. He at first tried to appear unconcerned, but as the bullets were getting closer and closer he came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour. He did 100 yards in record time and hurled himself on to his face in the first available cover, a hole in the ground, only to discover it was already tenanted by a decomposed donkey. Anything was better than that, and one more short rush carried him out of the effective beaten zone.



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There was a certain amount of tribal activity round the farther piquets in May. Duncan's, Crocus, and Toc all had their share of sniping and wire cutting, but no damage was done and our only casualty was one man who was accidentally shot by the sentry at Duncan's as he ran into the piquet at night.

Far worse than the activity of the tribesman is the activity of the Waziristan flea. He is more numerous than the sand on the seashore, and his agility is incredible. The dogs were black with them; they got into all clothes and bedding and we spent day and night scratching.

Stephens went off to Ladakh for three months in the summer and succeeded in getting two Ovis Ammon and several other heads, while Eagle, Horley, and Whittall all went to Kashmir at various times and returned with barasingh, ibex, and bear.

At Razmak we have shot all through the season on an average of once a week, with a Company of Gurkhas to beat and for protective purposes. The bag was never very large but we had a lot of fun and a certain amount of much needed exercise.

The Regiment managed to get polo started on the aerodrome, but when it was a going concern the Club took it over much to our disgust.

Our racing enthusiast, Plowden, was instrumental in starting racing here, and two very successful meetings were held, some photos of which appeared in the "Sporting and Dramatic."

Several Mahsud and Wazir races took place, the only condition being that jockeys should ride unarmed.

Some rather desultory training has been carried out in November and December, duties and various other factors permitting, but proper training is almost impossible here, and there will be a lot of headway to make up when we get to Chakrata.

Christmas on the whole was an enormous success.

A Company lost the draw and gallantly found all duties on Christmas and Boxing Days, while the rest of us celebrated. Regimental Headquarters had rather a "wet" time as there were no fewer than twelve messes. The Brigade Photographer, who wears an armband inscribed B.F., very tactlessly took a photo of the Colonel as he came out of the last room, and rumour has it that the negative was so blurred that it was not worth printing.

Waziristan weather, of which we had heard so much, has been very kind to us, and we have been having glorious sunny days and cold, frosty nights. What January and February have in store for us remains to be seen.

A large number of officers went home on leave during the year and returned all the better for it.



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Plowden has left us for the 43rd, while we have got Horan and Colvill in exchange. Ward and Horan minor both joined us on first appointment. Coad has at last found a really good billet at the School of Education, Belgaum, as Adjutant and Quartermaster. The death of O'Connor was very sad and cast a gloom over the Mess.

A large number of officers have attended courses during the year, leaving the Regiment very short handed, and we have had rather bad luck as several only escaped getting "Distinguished" by a very narrow margin. Withington passed for promotion, and is well up in sanitation. He now proposes to leave us for France where he says he is going to study the language (?).

We are all looking forward to Chakrata which from all accounts is a very pleasant spot with lots of shooting, a little polo, and the prospect of spending the winter in Dehra Dun with our friends the 2nd Gurkhas, who leave here about three weeks before we do.

I don't think the Foresters need be afraid of not getting a welcome from us here when they arrive to take over in March. They will find very different conditions from those which we found on arrival. All officers and men are now in quarters, and there are dining halls, institutes, ablution rooms, and an Officers' Mess. When we arrived barely half the men could be squeezed into quarters, and the officers and all the remainder were in tents. Our next letter will, I hope, be written under more pleasant conditions.

Yours, 52ND.

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**MANOEUVRES IN INDIA, 1925.**

THIS article will be more a description of the life we lead on manoeuvres than an account of the military operations.

Although stationed in Rawal Pindi, we belonged to Colonel Herdon's 13th Indian Infantry Brigade, with Headquarters at Jhelum.

We left Rawal Pindi on January 4, and commenced a series of very pleasant marches to the manoeuvre area in the Punjab Salt Hills.

Except for the 8th Pack Battery we were by ourselves, and marching on roads unsuitable for cars; so none of the Pindi War Lords felt inclined to worry us.

Although very cold the weather was fine, transport worked well, and after similar experience last year the men were remarkably efficient at pitching and striking camp, packing and loading, and all the other points which make for comfort and neatness in camp.

The day's routine on the march down varied very slightly:—

Rouse, 7 a.m.

Packing, 7.15 a.m.

Loading, 7.30 a.m.

Breakfast, 8 a.m.

Companies ready to move off at 8.45 a.m.

On long marches we halted at about 11 a.m. for men to drum up and animals (except camels) to unload, water, and feed.

To some of us this was very reminiscent of marching in France, especially as the road was lined with tall trees like the French roads.

By starting early and not halting the camels usually arrived in camp at about the same time as the Regiment, and it took a very short time for the men to unload and pitch camp. I often think that it would amaze a civilian to see a Regiment arriving on a camping ground and unload and pitch camp.

In less than half an hour a well-organized canvas town has sprung up and the men look as if they had lived there for weeks.

Furthermore, I think he would be equally amazed to see the speed with which a regiment strikes camp and packs up and all traces of a camp disappear.

Most of the officers took guns, but found little or no opportunity for using them on the march down.

On January 4, we marched to Riwat (13 miles); there is a large ruined fort here.

On January 5, we marched to Mandra (9 miles) and passed a large mound called the "Topee," where Alexander the Great's horse is supposed to be buried.

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On January 6, we left the Grand Trunk Road and had a bitterly cold march along the old Sialkote Road to Jatli (14 miles).

The inhabitants seemed very pleased to see us and said that we were the first British Regiment to camp here since 1896.

On January 7, we rested at Jatli.

It was very cold all day. The officers played bridge and poker, the sergeants played Slippery Sam, and the men played house.

Sgt.-Major Smith nearly lost his life for suggesting a Regimental cross-country run.

A certain warrant-officer spread a good (if untrue) story that the Regiment camped here on the march to Delhi during the Mutiny.

After being howled down he tried to substantiate it by saying that he had fished up Bugler Hawthorne's mouthpiece from the well!

On January 8, we marched to Dhudial (12 miles) and camped in a ploughed field.

It looked as if we were going to have a dirty night but after very slight rain all clouds blew over.

On January 9, we marched to Chakwal (14 miles); this place, which is a large native agricultural town, was decorated with flags.

We thought how nice it was of them to receive us like this, but soon found out it was all got up for the Deputy Commissioner who was staying here on his tour.

However, a "burra-din" had been arranged, and the leading citizens of the town asked us to a tea party with the Deputy Commissioner.

We saw some very amusing tent pegging on country ponies.

The competitors galloped down a very narrow lane of spectators, the whole business being extraordinarily dangerous.

After tea some ram fighting was provided for our amusement.

The rams charge each other and their heads meet with the devil of a crash, which almost gives one a headache to watch.

Some of the rams were conscientious objectors and refused to fight; my sympathies were entirely with them.

On January 10, we marched to Dhok Talian (14 miles) into the foot of the Salt Hills.

The road here became very rough and steep, and it was a great relief to get the last camel into camp. Some of the bullock carts stuck hopelessly.

Sergeant Fry provided the amusing event of the day; owing to sore feet he obtained permission to leave Chakwal at 4 a.m. with the sergeants' mess bullock-wagon containing the beer and food.

After taking the wrong turning he wandered for 27 miles over the country and got into camp late at night.

On January 11, we had a very hard march to the Brigade perimeter camp at Khewrah (17 miles).

At Choa Saidan Shah all cart transport had to be converted to pack transport because the road was too bad. This meant a very careful band-obast on the part of Clare.

The march through the Salt Hills was through magnificent country, but the last 4 miles of the march was a very steep descent into the plains on a rough road, which was very hard on the camels who were completely exhausted by the end of it.

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However, they all struggled in all right.

The old Oont may be a nasty stinking brute but he is also a very gallant worker.

Our entry into the camp coincided with that of other troops, which meant very long and trying delays before we could move in.

On arrival we found we had to build a perimeter camp on the most atrocious piece of rough ground that can be imagined. The ground was the site of an old cemetery, very stony and in parts rather bony.

The perimeter had to be spitlocked before the camp could be pitched and how companies managed to get their tents up on such ground was rather surprising.

All animals (except camels) were piqueted inside the perimeter, and officers had to sleep in their company lines.

It soon became dark and we "stood to," after which we had a conference to discuss the morrow's work.

We retired to bed with the hope that active service conditions will never be quite as uncomfortable as these were.

On January 11, the manoeuvres commenced.

The Brigade group consisted of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the 4-19th Hyderabad Regiment, the 4-2nd Punjab Regiment, the 8th Pack Battery, and a company of Madras Sappers and Miners.

The enemy was formed by the 26th Punjab Regiment.

Work consisted entirely of Mountain Warfare under the instruction of Colonel Herdon, the great specialist in this kind of fighting.

Colonel Herdon arranged everything to be as realistic as possible.

Operations started with the Brigade group in a perimeter camp at Khewrah and at war with a tribe known as the "Haws Haws" (represented by the 26th Punjab Regiment dressed as hillmen) inhabiting the Salt Hills.

Roughly, the plan of campaign was for the Brigade group to invade the enemy territory as far as Choa Saidan Shah (about 8 miles), burn a village and retire back to Khewrah.

This meant driving the enemy off the hills and establishing piquets on the heights along the road to Choah, to cover the advance of the Brigade.

On January 12, the Brigade covered the building and occupation of the first two piquets, one of which (Mosque Piquet) was occupied by Young-husband with No. 7 Platoon.

The remainder of the day was spent in straightening up the camp and building a perimeter wall.

On January 13, we drove the enemy off various hills and covered the building of another piquet.

On January 14, the Brigade group advanced into the enemy territory as far as Choah and built a perimeter camp.

Whittall commanded the rearguard with A and D Companies, and called in all the piquets as he passed them.

B and C Companies were with the main body.

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There were 696 camels in the column (besides mule transport) occupying a road space of about three miles, which gives an idea of what a large undertaking it is to move a Brigade group in Mountain Warfare.

The camp here was far more pleasantly situated than it was in the wilderness at Khewrah, lying in a valley surrounded by hills, all of which were piqueted to protect the camp

We found two of these piquets, Village Piquet and North Piquet, each consisting of 1 N.C.O. and 6 men with visual communication to the camp.

These piquets were relieved daily.

The piquets were attacked by night and everyone concerned combined to make the night hideous with shouting and firing rifles, Very lights, and Pack guns.

However, we took good care not to break the great Mountain Warfare principle that a piquet cannot be reinforced by night, so none of us caught colds getting out of bed.

On January 15, we rested and spent the day improving the camp.

On January 16, the Brigade group marched out and destroyed a village.

Our role consisted in piqueting the neighbouring heights, whilst the 4-19th Hyderabad Regiment entered the village and burnt and confiscated all the cattle and grain.

On January 17, the Brigade group carried out an attack.

We were in reserve and did nothing.

On January 18, the Brigade group fought their way back to Khewrah.

The system employed for protection on the march was known as the "Block System," which consisted in each Regiment being allotted a certain sector of the route to protect while the remainder of the Brigade marched through, after which the Regiment joined the tail of the column.

This system works very well if the country is fairly well known by the troops employed.

Thus ended the Brigade manoeuvres, which were a great success.

The lessons taught will be certainly useful to us if we get into any scraps in Razmak.

The enemy deserves full marks for making it all so much like "the real thing."

He wandered over the country behaving exactly like a band of angry Mahsuds, and lost no opportunity given to attack our piquets and flanks, etc. The mess staff deserve special praise for making us so comfortable. Somehow a meal was always ready soon after arrival in camp.

"Feed the brutes" is a very good motto to bear in mind to make for contentment in camp.

On long field days we had a "confidential documents" mule whose leader, with great personal bravery, always found his way to the front line at about lunch time.

The "documents" were soon dispatched with the aid of corkscrews. After some difficulty we managed to get a train to take us back to Rawal Pindi from Khewrah, but as the operations finished a day earlier than was expected we had to wait at Khewrah until the morning of the 20th. However, anything was better than walking back over the same ground to Rawal Pindi.

On January 19, Horley, Crawford, Richards, Ames, Stephens, and Conant, hacked over to Kala Kahar for three days' duck shooting where they had very good sport.

The first line transport moved back to Rawal Pindi by road with the 8th Pack Battery.

A party of us visited the local salt mine, one of the largest in the world, where the salt is quarried and mined out of the hill. It is well worth seeing.

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On January 20, after an early rouse, we manhandled all stores from the camp to the train, and moved off soon after 8 a.m.

The journey back to Rawal Pindi was very cold and uneventful, and as slow as all other journeys in troop trains, though tea at Llalamusa and Mandra certainly helped to make things better for the men. We arrived in Pindi at about 10.30 p.m., everyone was in barracks before midnight.

I forgot to mention that, on these manoeuvres, a lot of men completed their war training by tasting their first rum ration. No rum can be bad, but this was very disappointing stuff compared to S.R.D. we got during the war.

“OONT-WALLAH”