

# Indian Units in East Africa, 1915-1918

## Introduction

In the articles *On some of the Indian units that took part in the Battle of Tanga, November 1914, Parts 1-5* and *On the Indian Expeditionary Force C in East Africa, 1914* I have dealt with the Indian units that were sent to East Africa in the autumn 1914 and subsequently formed the backbone of the Indian Army's contribution to the forces there.

Over the next five years, the units were supplemented by or replaced by other units. These units are discussed in more detail in this article, which thus completes my small study of this part of the Indian Army's participation in the First World War, which throughout the war included well over 47,000 men.

## 17th Cavalry

The regiment should, cf. Source 4, have had the number 13, as it was very unlucky during the newer part of its life. Whenever there was a prospect of active service, accidents and illnesses got in the way. It is also one of the only cavalry regiments in the Indian Army that cannot adorn itself with a long series of banners commemorating its past greatness.



*Indian Cavalry.* Drawn by AC Lovett, 1910.

Postcard from the National Army Museum, London.

The 37th Lancers, with which the regiment was amalgamated in 1922, were not much better off. Together, the regiments can display the banners: Afghanistan, 1879-80 (17th Cavalry) and Afghanistan, 1919 (both regiments).

From the left you can see:

1. 5th Cavalry

2. 23rd Cavalry (Frontier Force) 3. 17th Cavalry 4. 26th King George's Own Light Cavalry 5. 11th King Edward's Own Lancers (Probyn's Horse) 6. 4th Cavalry, Dafadar (*Jyt Sikh*) 7. 16th Cavalry, Jemadar (*Jyt*)

(*Dafadar = sergeant [in the cavalry]; Jemadar = lieutenant*).

### 17th Cavalry - Historical summary



*Regimental Badge -*

*15th Lancers, 1940.*

From Source 3.

1857 - The Muttra Horse

1857 - The Muttra Police Corps

1858 - The Rohilkhand Auxiliary Police Levy

1859 - Robart's Horse

1861 - 17th Regiment of Bengal Cavalry 1882-1885

The regiment was disbanded. 1885 - 17th

Regiment of Bengal Cavalry 1900 - 17th Regiment

of Bengal Lancers 1901 - 17th Bengal Lancers

1903 - 17th Cavalry 1922 - 15th

Lancers - after

amalgamation of 17th Cavalry and 37th Lancers

### 1914 - At war, and yet...

In 1914, the regiment was supposed to be part of the Indian Expeditionary Force A (France), but unfortunately one of the squadron's horses was diagnosed with illness. A squadron of the 27th Light Cavalry was soon able to replace it and the regiment continued its preparations.



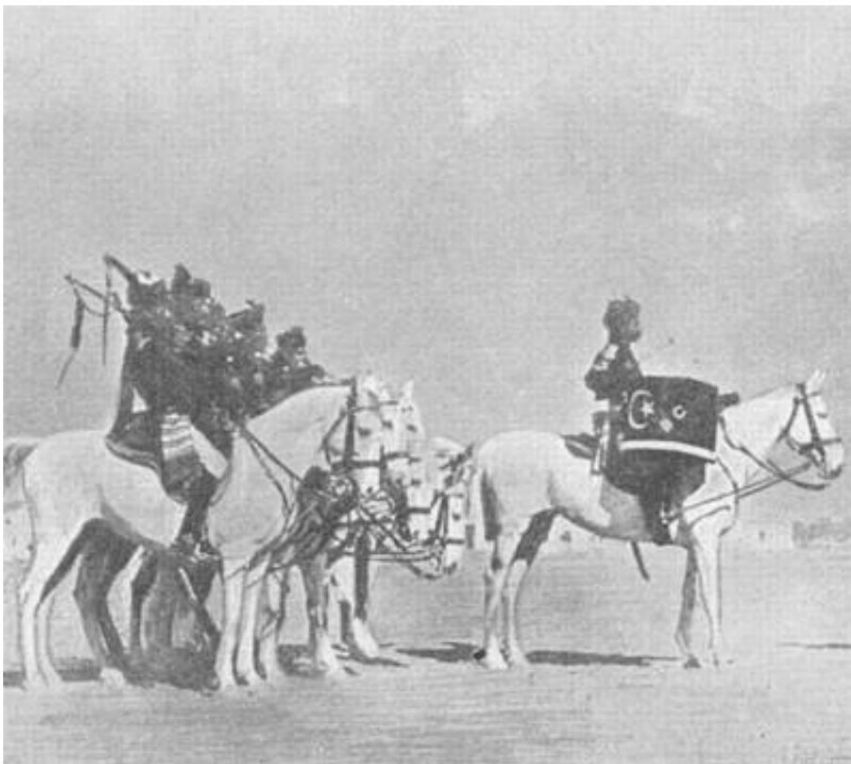
*Charge of the Bengal Lancers, ca. 1915.*

From a simultaneous postcard.

Bad luck was out once more, and with a suspected outbreak of the highly contagious equine disease snive 1) (*English: glanders*), the regiment had to be replaced by the 29th Lancers (Deccan Horse) 2). Deeply disappointed, the regiment remained in its garrison, Allahabad.

Over the next few months, virtually all of the regiment's officers and the majority of the men were transferred to units serving at the front, where they best represented their regiment.

Regarding the motif, it should be noted that it is probably not from East Africa, but rather from the Western Front.



*Mounted Bagpipe Corps, 17th Cavalry.*

From Source 3.

For a period (which?) the regiment could field something as remarkable as a mounted one

bagpipe corps. Several Indian infantry regiments, e.g. *The 17th Infantry (The Loyal Regiment)* and *40th Pathans*, also had bagpipe corps, and the Scottish influence that started the idea carries on into today's Indian and Pakistani armies, as well as the Gurkha regiments of the British Army. As far as is known, however, *the 17th Cavalry's Mounted Bagpipe Corps* was the only one of its kind.

The regiment, which recruited exclusively *Punjabi Muslims* and Pathans, was one of the few all-Muslim regiments in the Indian Army. The pre-1922 regimental insignia was a star and crescent, on top of two crossed lances.

In the photograph of the mounted bagpipe corps, you can see some of the symbols on the timpani fan.

### **At the front - East Africa 1915-1917**

In January 1915 General Wapshare asked for reinforcements from India and a squadron of the 17th Cavalry together with the 130th Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles) (mentioned later) was sent to East Africa. The units arrived in Mombasa in February 1915, with the squadron sent to the area around Longido, while the battalion was sent to Voi.



*Indian Cavalry in East Africa* [3](#).

Cavalry had been specially requested so that patrols could be made in the open country around Longido, near Kilimanjaro.

The squadron consisted of *Pathans* [4](#), who are quite rough people from the areas on both sides of the North-West Frontier.

is not named in the source, but I assume it is the unit, 25th Cavalry, as far as 17th Cavalry, as the replacing Unit I know was not equipped with lances.

Large parts of East Africa are not suitable for the use of horses, but in the relatively open areas around Kilimanjaro



it goes fairly well. As the fighting moves south, tsetse flies, fever and a particular African horse sickness take their toll on horses and men alike; at one point the squadron can muster exactly 30 combat-ready men.

Despite the difficulties, the squadron does well as a reconnaissance unit and takes part in numerous smaller skirmishes. After August 1916 the squadron was no longer in the front line and was sent home to India in January 1917.

As the regiment was not represented by more than one squadron, the effort could not be credited in the form of a banner, but one of the skirmishes has left its mark in history...

### **The skirmish at Nagaseni, 6 February 1916**

At the beginning of 1916, a mobile force was concentrated in the area around Kilimanjaro, with the aim of preparing the capture of Longido, which was occupied on 21 January 1916. The force numbered approximately 600 men.

#### **The mobile force:**

The squadron of the 17th Cavalry  
East African Mounted Rifles

29th Punjabis

27th Mountain Battery (fire kanoner)

No. 1 Company, Faridkot Sappers and Miners A

number of scouts from the South African Mounted Brigade.

From the German side, there were only smaller forces in the area, i.a. various mounted forces, and it is also one that at Nagaseni [5](#)) 6 February 1916 surprises a patrol from the 17th Cavalry while it is resting, secluded.

The area is overgrown with man-high grass, through which a German force of approx. 200 men to surprise the patrol, whose two English officers - Captain Duberley [6](#)) and Lieutenant Mowdsley - immediately take up the fight together with a small force of 9 men. Meanwhile, the rest - under the command of Lieutenant (*Jemadar*) Wazir Khan - manage to retreat. The rearguard is lost - the two English officers fall and the others are wounded or captured.

One of the wounded, Lance Corporal (*Lance Daffadar*) Khan Sahib, who was wounded in one leg, manages to stay hidden until the German force has withdrawn. Leaning on his lance, he searches back towards his own lines a good 50 km away. After six days of hardships, and almost without water, the corporal manages to get back, bringing his rifle and 100 cartridges. Quite a trip!

Both Lieutenant Khan and Lance Corporal Sahib are awarded the Indian Medal of Valor, Indian Order of Merit [7](#)).

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### **25th Cavalry (Frontier Force)**



*25th Cavalry.*

Drawn by AC Lovett, 1910.

Reproduced from a plate seen for sale at MILPRINTS.

Source 3 describes the soldier as a *Pathan*, belonging to *the Bangash* tribe.

I assume the three angles on the soldier's left forearm are *good conduct stripes*.

Source 4 mentions that the regiment carried the banner East Africa, 1917. It is further stated that the regiment took part in skirmishes at Nahungo and Chingwea and the pursuit of the German forces to the border between German and Portuguese East Africa.

The campaign in the southern part of German East Africa took place in areas heavily infested with tsetse flies, which quickly put an end to further efforts by the cavalry.

The regiment was awarded the East Africa 1917 ribbon for its efforts.



*Regimentsmærke*  
*Sam Browne's Cavalry*  
*(12th Frontier Force).*  
From Source 3.

### **25th Cavalry (Frontier Force) - Historical Summary**

1849 - 5th Regiment of Punjab Cavalry

1851 - 5th Regiment of Cavalry, Punjab Irregular Force

1865 - 5th Regiment of Cavalry, Punjab Frontier Force

1901 - 5th Punjab Cavalry

1903 - 25th Cavalry (Frontier Force)

1922 - 12th Cavalry (Frontier Force) - efter sammenlægning af 22nd Sam Browne's Cavalry (Frontier Force) and 25th Cavalry (Frontier Force)

### **5th Light Infantry**

At the start of the war, the battalion (815 men) was garrisoned in Singapore, where on 15 February 1915, at 15:30, subversive elements revolted and occupied their barracks, Alexandra Barracks. The rebellion was supported by approx. 100 men from the Malay States Guides Mule Battery.



>

*5th Light Infantry and 6th Jat Light Infantry. 5*  
Reproduced from a plate seen for sale at MILPRINTS.

The rebellion was put down within days and 126 soldiers identified as the ringleaders of the rebellion were court-martialed. 37 were sentenced to death and 41 deported for life, while the rest were sentenced to prison terms of varying lengths. The reason for the rebellion was allegedly rumors that the battalion was to be sent to the Middle East and deployed against Turkish (= Muslim) soldiers.

The rest of the battalion subsequently made themselves available for war service - anywhere - in order to thereby remove the stain of the rebellion from the battalion's otherwise good name.

The battalion was then sent to the front in the German colony of Cameroon, where it served well. After this campaign, the battalion was sent to East Africa, where it landed at Mombasa on 4 March 1916. Whether the battalion was still under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Martin, who was in command at the time of the rebellion, or whether he was replaced, my sources report nothing.

From the left you can see:

1. Havildar (*Musalman Rajput*)
2. Havildar (*Jat*).

The battalion at that time numbered 9 English officers, 9 Indian officers and 508 Indian non-commissioned officers and privates. The combat experiences from Cameroon and the excellent service in East Africa, meant that confidence in the battalion was restored.





Regimental badge -  
th 5 Light Infantry 8). \_

### 5<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry - Historical Summary

1803 - 2nd Battalion, 21st Bengal Native Infantry 1824  
- 42nd Bengal Native Infantry 1843 -  
42nd Bengal Native (Light) Infantry 1861 - 5th  
Bengal Native (Light) Infantry 1903 - 5th Light  
Infantry 1922 - Regimentet  
blev nedlagt.

As part of the reorganization of the Indian Army after the First World War, the regiment was disbanded in 1922, and thus was not included in the official distribution of ribbons in 1925–26. Whether the rebellion in Singapore had any influence on this particular regiment being selected for disbandment is not known.

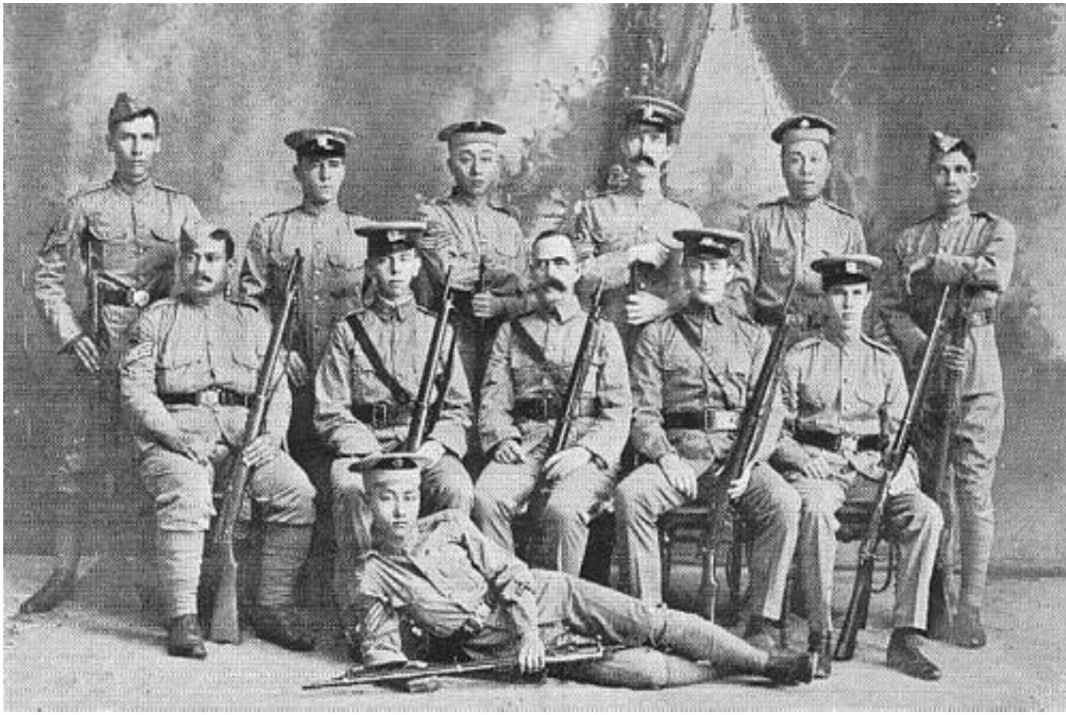
### The rebellion in Singapore

The Singapore Rebellion has been the subject of more in-depth treatment in a series of books published from the 1980s, when the official papers were released. The article Singapore Mutiny 1915 (Roll of Honour) summarizes the events, although without further details of the source, and mentions, among other things, the units that participated in the suppression.

The units consisted of a mixture of local units and armed civilians, supported by British (from the gunboat HMS CADMUS), French (from the cruiser MONTCALM), Russian and Japanese marines and marines,

as well as 1/4 Rangoon.

<sup>th</sup> King's Shropshire Light Infantry 9), who had been called up from



*Members of the Singapore Volunteer Corps, 1908.*

From Source 7, where the soldiers' names are also found in the original caption.

The local units included the Singapore Volunteer Corps, which experienced its first active effort in this regard.

The corps' subdivisions were i.a. Singapore Volunteer Infantry, Singapore Volunteer Artillery and Singapore Royal Engineers (Volunteers), all represented in the photograph.



*Regimentsmærke*

*Singapore Volunteer Corps.*

From Source 7.

Soldiers from the Singapore Volunteer Corps excelled, among other things, during the recapture of Alexandra Barracks.

My sources do not state casualty figures for the rebel forces, on the loyal side there were English casualties: 33 military and 14 civilians dead and wounded; French casualties: 1 wounded; Russian casualties: 3 wounded.



*Banners of the Singapore Volunteer Corps.*  
From Source 7.

The military units in Singapore are an interesting topic in themselves, but a closer treatment is beyond the scope of this article.

Information about the Singapore Volunteer Corps can be found e.g. on Terry Foenander's website (Source 7), which contains a large number of photographs and other information about Singapore's military units [10](#).

The above photograph and the drawings of the tabs are reproduced from the official history of the corps - *A History of the Singapore Volunteer Corps, 1854-1937* by Captain TM Winsley, Government Printing Office, Singapore 1938.

## The Ghadar movement

The Ghadar or Ghadr (=Urdu for rebellion or revolution) movement is one of the early moves for India's independence and became the cornerstone of a rebel movement that actively fought for its cause. The movement was founded in the early 1900s, i.a. of Indians who had studied in America and Canada. When the First World War broke out, the movement declared war on England. It wanted to take advantage of the situation in every way, and made contacts with Germany and later Turkey.

Religion was a burning issue, and how would Muslim soldiers react to orders to fight the Turkish army, i.e. Muslim against Muslim? The Ghadar movement did its part to promote discontent among Muslim soldiers, but generally there were no major problems. Certain considerations were taken from the leadership of the Indian Army, e.g. ensured that Muslim companies of the 29th Infantry Brigade sent to Gallipoli remained in Egypt, so that any religious conflicts could be avoided.

The Ghadar movement chose 21 February 1915 as the day of an uprising in the Indian Punjab province.

The English intelligence service came up with the date, which was instead brought forward to 19 February, but this date was also leaked. Before the rebellion could be launched, the ringleaders were arrested and later sentenced to severe punishments. At a special court, 291 trials were conducted, resulting in 42 death sentences, 114 deportations for life, 93 prison terms of varying lengths and 42 acquittals.



*Sardar Kartar Singh "Sarabha".*  
From Sikhpoint.com.

Parts of certain military units sympathized with the cause, just as a number of the movement's members had signed up for the army in order to acquire weapons, but generally the units remained calm. Only in 5 peaceful protests Light Infantry it came to open mutiny, while apparently in certain regiments there was more against being sent to the Middle East.

It is not a topic that the usual sources of Indian military history make much of, even if the issue is mentioned peripherally.

If you are interested in more detailed information, I can refer you to the article *The Ghadar Movement* by Harbans Singh (*The encyclopedia of Sikhism*), from which the above summary comes.

Sardar Kartar Singh "Sarabha" was one of the revolutionaries; he was sentenced to death on 13 September 1915, then hanged on 16 November 1915. The source for the image contains additional information about the Ghadar movement and about Sardar Kartar Singh.

### **17th Infantry (The Loyal Regiment)**



*17th Infantry (The Loyal Regiment), 1913.*  
From a roughly contemporaneous postcard,  
published by Gale & Polden;  
the artist's signature cannot be deciphered.

One of the units sent as reinforcements from India was the 17th Infantry, nicknamed The Loyal Regiment, dating from the post-Indian Mutiny era.

Unfortunately, there is not much information available about this unit either. Source 1 mentions the battalion in a list of units guarding the Uganda Railway in March-April 1916, i.a. together with the half-battalion from Bharatpur (see *On the Indian Expeditionary Force C in East Africa, 1914*).

The reverse of the postcard shows the following brief history:

*A famous Bengal Infantry Regiment who gained their proud title in the dark days of the Indian Mutiny, and have enhanced their reputation many times since. They fought with British troops in Egypt and the Sudan. They have a parade uniform of scarlet and white.*

The regiment was disbanded in 1922, and was thus not included in the official distribution of ribbons in 1925-26.





Regimentsmærke

17th Infantry (The Loyal Regiment) 11). [\\_\\_\\_](#)

### 17th Infantry (The Loyal Regiment) - Historisk resume

1858 - Loyal Purbiyah Regiment (Dannet af loyale elementer fra 3rd, 36th og 61st Bengal Native Infantry) 1861 - 21st

Bengal Native Infantry 1861 - 17th

Bengal Native Infantry 1864 - 17th

(Loyal Purbeah) Regiment, Bengal Native Infantry 1902 - 17th

Musalman Rajput Infantry (The Loyal Regiment) 1903 - 17th Infantry

(The Loyal Regiment)

1922 - The regiment was disbanded.

### 30th Punjabis



*30th Punjabis og 20th Duke of Cambridge's Own Punjabis.*

Drawn by AC Lowett, 1910.

Reproduced from a plate seen for sale at MILPRINTS.

The 30th Punjabis consisted of the following personnel groups:

- 4 companies *Sikhs* -
- 2 companies *Dogras* - 2
- companies *Punjabi Musalmans*.

The battalion arrived in East Africa in December 1916.

Source 4 mentions the following curious incident from the battlefield: At one point the battalion had to cross a river. There was a large herd of hippopotamuses here, and these had to be chased away with raised bayonets before the battalion could continue its advance.

Bataljonen bar together with 33rd Punjabis fanebåndene: Behobeho, Narungombe, Nyangao, East Arica, 1917-18.

From the left you can see:

1. 30th Punjabis, Sepoy (menig), *Awan (Punjabi Musalman)* 2.
- 20th Duke of Cambridge's Own Punjabis, Lance-naik (under-corporal), *Malikdin Khel (Afridi)*.



*Regimentsmærke -*

*30th Punjabis [12](#)*

### **30th Punjabis - Historical summary**

1857 - 22nd Regiment of Punjab Infantry  
1861 - 34th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry 1861  
- 30th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry 1864 -  
30th (Punjab) Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry 1885 - 30th  
(Punjab) Regiment of Bengal Infantry 1901 - 30th  
Punjab Infantry 1903 - 30th  
Punjabis 1922 - 1st  
Battalion, 16th Punjab Regiment.

## 33rd Punjabis



*33rd Punjabis*. Drawn by AC Lowett, 1910.  
From a postcard in the "Our Indian Armies"  
series, A. & C. Black, London, from c. 1920.

See also [The Indian Army 1910-1940 - About the Infantry, Part 2](#).

The battalion arrived in East Africa in May 1916.

The battalion was accompanied by 30th Punjabi battalions: Behobeho, Narungombe, Nyangao, East Arica, 1917-18.



*Regimentsmærke*

- 33rd Punjabis [13](#)).

### **33rd Punjabis - Historical Summary**

1857 - The Allahabad Levy

1861 - 37th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry

1861 - 33rd Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry

1864 - 33rd (Allahabad) Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry

1885 - 33rd Regiment of Bengal Infantry

1890 - 33rd (Punjabi) Regiment of Bengal Infantry

1901 - 33rd Punjab Infantry

1903 - 33rd Punjabis

1922 - 3rd Battalion, 16th Punjab Regiment.

### **40th Pathans**





*40th Pathans*. Drawn by AC Lovett, 1910.  
Reproduced from a plate seen for sale at MILPRINTS.

The battalion was the only battalion in the Indian Army to consist entirely of Pathners. The battalion was nicknamed the Forty Thieves, after its number, *and* Major Graves, who founded the battalion, was not surprisingly nicknamed Ali Baba.

The units of the Frontier Force were traditionally nicknamed *piffers*, which dates from 1851, when the local troops on the North West Frontier were called the Punjab Irregular Force (PIF).

The designation, which in 1865 became Punjab Frontier Force, to be shortened to Frontier Force in 1903, lives on in today's Pakistan Army.

See [40th Pathans \(British Empire\)](#) for a more detailed description of the individual personnel groups. The soldier in the drawing is an *Afridi*.

In 1914, the battalion consisted of the following personnel groups:

- 2 companies *Orakzais*
- 2 companies *Dogras*
- 2 companies *Punjabi Musalmans*
- 1 company *Afridis*



- 1 company *Yusufzais*.



*Regimentsmærke* -

40th Pathans [14](#)).

### **40th Pathans - Historical Summary**

1858 - The Shahjehanpur Levy

1861 - 44th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry 1861

- 40th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry 1864 - 40th

(Shahjehanpur) Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry 1885 - 40th

(Shahjehanpur) Regiment of Bengal Infantry 1890 - 40th

(Baluch) Regiment of Bengal Infantry 1892 - 40th

(Pathan) Regiment of Bengal Infantry 1901 - 40th

Punjab Infantry 1903 - 40th

Pathans 1922 - 5th

Battalion, 14th Punjab Regiment

See more about the regiment's inmate in i.a. World War I in 14th Punjab Regiment (Pakistan Military Consortium).

The battalion was assigned to banner-banding Narungombe and East Africa 1916-18.

See also The Indian Army 1910-1940 - About the Infantry, Part 2.

### **57th (Wilde's) Rifles (Frontier Force)**



*Punjab Frontier Force*. Drawn by AC Lowett, 1910.  
Postcard from the National Army Museum, London.

In 1914, the battalion consisted of the following personnel groups:

- 2 companies *Sikhs* - 2
- companies *Dogras* - 2
- companies *Punjabi Musalmans* - 2
- companies *Afridi Pathans*.

The battalion was sent from Egypt to East Africa to relieve the 29th Punjabis (see *On the Indian Expeditionary Force C in East Africa, 1914*), but the 101st Grenadiers (see *On some of the Indian units which took part in the Battle of Tanga, November 1914, Part 3*) was replaced instead.

The battalion arrived at Mombasa on 12 July 1916, and at Korogwe on the 18th of the same month.

The battalion was awarded the banner: East Africa, 1916-18.

From the left you can see:

1. 57th (Wilde's) Rifles (Frontier Force), Naik (Corporal) (*Adam Khel Afridi*).
2. 53rd Sikhs (Frontier Force), Subadar (Lieutenant) (*Sagri Khattak*).



*Regimentsmærke*

*57th (Wilde's) Rifles  
(Frontier Force) [15](#).*

### **57th (Wilde's) Rifles (Frontier Force) - Historical Summary**

- 1849 - 4th Regiment of Punjab Infantry
- 1851 - 4th Regiment of Infantry, Punjab Irregular Force
- 1865 - 4th Regiment of Infantry, Punjab Frontier Force
- 1901 - 1st Punjab Infantry
- 1903 - 57th (Wilde's) Rifles (Frontier Force)
- 1922 - 4th Battalion, 13th Frontier Force Rifles (Wilde's)

The Afridi tribe [16](#) is referred to as a warlike population group that inhabits the areas on both sides of the North-West Frontier, and during the regular battles in the border areas, Indian and English units often crossed blades with various clans of the Afridi tribe.

The Adam Khel clan, who inhabit the area around the Kohat Pass on the Northwest Frontier, were (are) talented traders. Originally, the main occupation was the sale and transport of salt, but in the 1890s they settled on the manufacture of weapons. Despite only having access to primitive lathes, it is possible to produce faithful replicas of firearms of all kinds. The copies are exact down to the serial number and are in principle indistinguishable from the originals.

In return for an agreement that the Adam Khel clan would protect the mountain pass, the Indian government turned a blind eye to arms production and the area had a kind of autonomous status, which is still valid in today's Pakistan. It requires a special permit - and armed guards - to travel through the area, where the manufacture and sale of weapons is still a major industry.

### **Regiments from Baluchistan**



*127th Queen Mary's Own Baluch Light Infantry.*  
Drawn by AC Lowett, 1910.  
Postcard from the National Army Museum, London.

Three battalions of the later 10th Baluch Regiment served in East Africa:

- 127th Queen Mary's Own Baluch Light Infantry - from September 1917 to February 1918 -
- 129th Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis - from January 1916 to September 1917 -
- 130th King George's Own Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles) - from February 1915 to September 1917

10th Baluch Regiment bar fanebåndene: Kilimanjaro, Behobeho, East Africa, 1915-1918.

From the left you can see:

1. Sepoy (*Brahni*)
2. Sepoy (*Baluch, Dera Ghasi Khan*)
3. Subadar-Major (major/kaptajn) (*Beluch of Khelat*)
4. Sepoy (*Punjabi Musalman*).

The gala uniform of the Baluch regiments was characterized by green uniform jackets and red trousers.



*Regimentsmärke*

127th Queen Mary's Own  
Baluch Light Infantry [17](#)

### **127th Baluchis - Historisk resume**

1844 - Balooch Battalion  
1846 - 1st Baluch Battalion  
1858 - 1st Baluch Extra Battalion  
1859 - 1st Baluch Regiment  
1871 - 27th Bombay Native (Light) Infantry  
1888 - 27th (1st Baluch Battalion) Bombay Light Infantry  
1901 - 27th Baluch Light Infantry  
1903 - 127th Queen Mary's Own Baluch Light Infantry  
1922 - 3rd (Queen Mary's Own) Battalion, 10th Baluch Regiment

### **129th Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis**

The sources refer to an incident from the Kilimanjaro area where a sergeant from the 129th Baluchis volunteered to carry out a stealth patrol to investigate whether there was an enemy post at Kisangire.

The sergeant was able to state that this was the case, while when the report was received with some skepticism, the sergeant repeated his patrol and returned with a report that he had shot the officer, a corporal, a sentinel and a hornblower - the rest would not wait (on being identified)"... And here, Sahib, is the officer's pistol, the post's rifle, the corporal's insignia, and the bugler's bugle!"

This colorful version of the story comes from Source 4.



*Regimental badge*



129th Duke of Connaught's Own  
Baluchis 18).

### 129th Baluchis - Historisk resume

1846 - 2nd Baluch Battalion  
1858 - 2nd Baluch Extra Battalion of Bombay Native Infantry  
1859 - 2nd Bombay Baluch Regiment  
1861 - 29th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry  
1883 - 29th (Duke of Connaught's Own) Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry  
1888 - 29th (Duke of Connaught's Own) Regiment of Bombay Infantry  
1903 - 129th Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis  
1922 - 4th Battalion (Duke of Connaught's Own), 10th Baluch Regiment

### 130th King George's Own Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles)

During the mobilization in Rangoon, two of the battalion's companies were disbanded for insubordination. The battalion was originally assigned to fight against the Turks in Mesopotamia, which provoked open rebellion among the battalion's soldiers from the *Mahsud* tribe. Two companies were disbanded and replaced by soldiers from the 46th Punjabis.



*Officers of the 30th Baluch Infantry, c. 1901.*  
From Source 8.

Source 9 additionally states that an Indian officer and a non-commissioned officer were executed for disobedience, while the remaining 200 rebels were sentenced to forced labor of varying lengths.

*Mashud* soldiers from the 129th Baluchis distinguished themselves in France and East Africa, where religious differences played no role, and the soldiers gained a reputation for being good at patrol duty and as sharpshooters, cf. the mention of the sergeant.

### 130th Baluchis - Historical summary



### Regimentsmærke

130th King George's

Own Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles) 19). [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)

1858 - 1st Regiment, Jacob's Rifles

1861 - 30th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry (Jacob's Rifles) 1881 -

30th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry (3rd Belooch Battalion) 1885 - 30th

Regiment of Bombay Infantry (3rd Belooch Battalion) 1895 - 30th Regiment

of Bombay Infantry (3rd Baluch Battalion) 1901 - 30th Baluch Infantry

1903 - 130th Baluchis 1906 -

130th Prince of Wales's

Own Baluchis 1910 - 130th Prince of Wales's Own

Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles) 1910 - 130th King George's Own Baluchis

(Jacob's Rifles) 1922 - 5th Battalion (King George's Own), 10th

Baluch Regiment

Information about the 129th and 130th Baluchis' efforts in East Africa can be found in, among other things, the official reports (*despatches*) to the British government from General Smuts, who was commander-in-chief in East Africa from February 1916 to January 1917.

1. Operations to March 1916 20)
2. Operations to September 1916 3.
- Operations to January 1917

### Sources

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- 17th Cavalry and 25th Cavalry (Landforces of Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth).
3. *Armies of India* by Major AC Lovett (illustrations) and Major GF MacMunn (text), Adam and Charles Black, London 1911.
4. *India's Army* af Donovan Jackson, Purnell and Sons, London 1940.
5. Captain Vernon Conrad Duberley (Cardington - Roll of Honour, Bedfordshire Family History Society).
6. *The Army of India and Its Evolution - An Official Report* published in Calcutta 1924 and reprinted by Picton Publishing, Chippenham/Wiltshire 1992, ISBN 0-948251-69-9.
7. Singapore Volunteer Corps (Terry Foenander).
8. *Uniforms of the Baluch Regiments* af R.G. Harris og R.J. Marrion, Military Modelling, september and October 1979.
9. *History of the Baloch Regiment 1820-1939* af Major-General Rafiuddin Ahmed, The Baloch Regimental Centre, Abbottabad 1998, ISBN 1-84342-222-0.

## Postscript - Diseases

The Indian soldiers in East Africa were generally very exposed to disease, which is partly due to the climate and partly to the lack of the special foodstuffs required by the various castes; soldiers from the Rajput population group are highlighted as particularly vulnerable. It was estimated that 10% of the soldiers were unfit for combat due to illness, but more often up to 20%. The number of sick people grew in 1916 and 1917, when the war moved further south in German East Africa.

As an example, the 129th Punjabis is given, which in March 1917 - although reinforced with fresh soldiers from India - numbered only 400 men, of whom 36% were sick. In May, the battalion numbered 50 active, after which it was reinforced again. The force grew to 500 men, but by November 1917 (when the battalion had returned to India) was down to 250 active soldiers. Of the 250 men who were thus dead, wounded or sick, only 100 can be attributed to losses as a result of battle.



*Indian Native Doctors, stationed at Hampton Court Palace, June 1902.*

From a contemporary postcard published by Raphael Tuck & Sons in the Our Indian Army series.

Source 1, from which the above information comes, further mentions that a special medical commission assessed the large number of patients. Among the most important causes are listed: malaria, shaking fever (jigger), other forms of fever, dysentery and lack of special foods. The commission further stated that the strenuous marches in the hot and sunny climate, during which the soldiers had to carry almost everything themselves (as mules could not be used either due to disease), contributed to disease.

From the end of 1917, virtually all Indian units were withdrawn from East Africa, after which native African soldiers made up the bulk of the units.

The military doctors were part of the Indian contingent that took part in the festivities for the coronation of Edward VII.

**To note:**

- 1) Snive (Dyrebrevkassen.dk)
- 2) It can be inferred from this that the 17th Cavalry should have been part of the Lucknow Cavalry Brigade of the 1st Indian Cavalry Division which arrived in France on 7 November 1914. (*A History of the British Cavalry 1816-1919, Volume 7: The Curragh Incident and the Western Front, 1914* by The Marquess of Anglesey, Leo Cooper, London 1996, ISBN 0-85052-437-7.)
- 3) From *Through Swamp and Forest: The British Campaigns in Africa*, Rankin Bros. Limited, Bristol (England), no year (circa 1918). The author's name is not available. The book is one available from the University of Wisconsin.
- 4) Se Pathans (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Edition, Online Encyclopaedia)
- 5) Source 5 uses the spelling Nagarsene, while the spelling Nagaseni comes from Source 1.
- 6) Captain Vernon Conrad Duberley(1886-1916). Officer in the Royal Artillery from 1904, transferred to the 17th Cavalry in 1910 and there appointed captain in 1913. Captain Duberley is described as one of the regiment's most promising officers who was appointed to undergo general staff training. An extract of a letter of condolence from the Commander-in-Chief in East Africa, General Sir Michael Tighe (who had meanwhile taken over command from General Wapshare), is reproduced in Source 5.
- 7) An order which - until 1911 - corresponded to the Victoria Cross, which from this year could also be awarded to Indian soldiers.
- 8) From 5<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry (The British Empire).
- 9) The unit is referred to in the article as 5<sup>th</sup> *Shropshire Territorials*, but a post in the Great War Forum mentions, that it is properly the 1/4 King's Shropshire Light Infantry, which was one of the Territorial Force battalions sent to the East to replace units of the Regular Army which were then sent to Europe.  
Se også The King's (Shropshire Light Infantry (The Long, Long Trail).
- 10) Se også Singapore Volunteer Corps and People's Defence Force, 1854 to Present day (Landforces of Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth).
- 11) Fra 17th The Loyal Regiment (The British Empire).
- 12) Fra 30th Punjabis (The British Empire).
- 13) Fra 33rd Punjabis (The British Empire).
- 14) Fra 40th Pathans (The British Empire).
- 15) Fra 57th (Wilde's) Rifles (Frontier Force) (The British Empire).
- 16) Se The History of the Great Pathans (North West Frontier Province History) og Darra Adam Khel (World Travel Guide).
- 17) Fra 127th Queen Mary's Own Baluch Light Infantry (The British Empire).
- 18) Fra 129th Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis (The British Empire).
- 19) Fra 130th King George's Own Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles) (The British Empire).
- 20) General Smut's reports can be found i.a. on the website The Long, Long Trail (Chris Baker).