

# Some of the Indian units that took part in the Battle of Tanga, November 1914, Part 2

## Imperial Service Brigade (Indian Expeditionary Force B)

When the Expeditionary Corps was set up, there was a shortage of units from the regular Indian Army, and it was therefore decided to assemble a brigade from the units that the local regents had made available to the Indian government (under the Imperial Service scheme; from 1922 : *Indian State Forces*); one regular battalion was spared for the brigade.

*Chef:* Brigadier-General M.J. Tighe

*Stabsofficerer:* Major

F.S. Keen (Brigade-Major)

Captain R.H. Waller (Staff-Captain)

13th Rajputs (The Shekhawati Regiment) (of the Regular Indian Army) (*Lieutenant-Colonel HW Codrington*) 2nd

Kashmir Rifles (*Lieutenant-Colonel Raghbir Singh 1*) 3rd Kashmir Rifles (en half battalion)

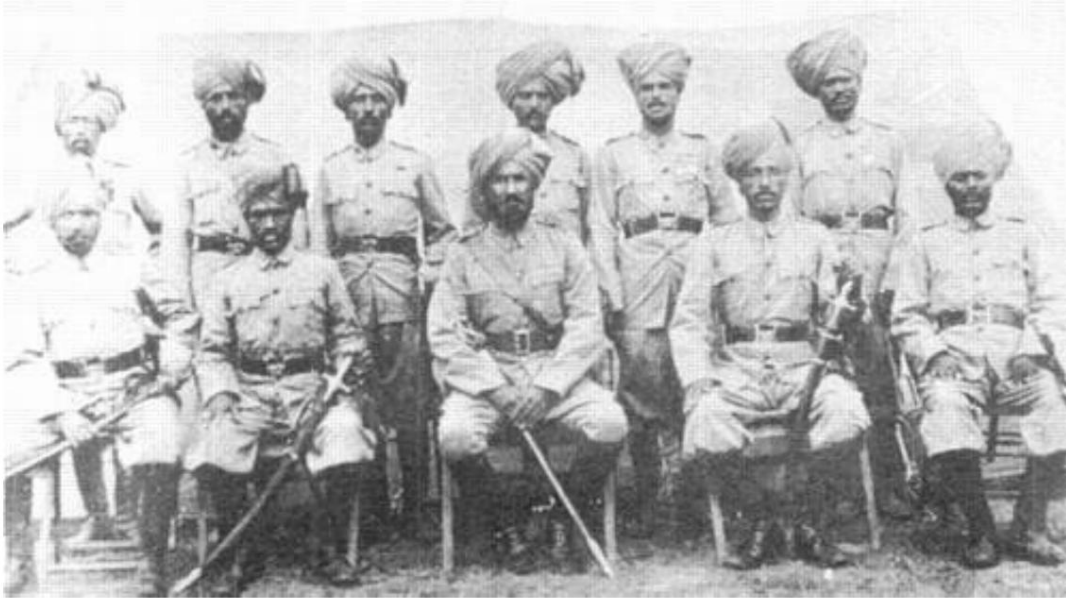
(*Major Gandarb Singh 2*) 3rd Gwalior Infantry (en half battalion) (*Lieutenant-Colonel Ganpatrao*

*Nimbalkar*)

**Table 1: Strength figures - Imperial Service Brigade** (Source 1)

Pr. 1. november 1914	Brigadestab Signaldeling 13th		Rajputs	2nd	3rd	3rd	Total
				Kashmir	Kashmir	Gwalior	
	4	1	13	2	1	1	22
English officers	1	12					13
English non-commissioned officers and privates			17	22	13	16	68
Indian officers		15	736	708	363	362	2.184
Indian NCOs and Privates							
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>2.287</b>

Helpers						
	12	15	3	3	2	35
Mule						
		2				2
Machine guns						



*Officers of the 2nd Kashmir Rifles, c. 1900* [3](#)\_\_

The Kashmir Rifles in particular proved to be good soldiers, but as a whole the brigade must be said to be unevenly composed.

As can be seen from Table 1, there were only a few English officers in the Imperial Service units that were under the command of their own officers.

An unintended consequence of this was shown during the attack on Tanga on 4 November 1914, where language problems between the expeditionary corps' English battalion - 2nd Bn. The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment - and the two battalions from Kashmir made it difficult to coordinate efforts at company and platoon level.

The situation was not improved by the fact that the senior British officer of the Kashmir Rifles, Major CG Ames (52nd Sikhs), was badly wounded. He lost consciousness but was brought back to consciousness when he was stung by bees. A boat from the S/S BHARATA brings him out to this vessel, which is the link between the *28th Mountain Battery* and land referred to in [Part 1](#).



*Soldiers of the Kashmir Rifles 2nd Bn. Loyal North Lancashire Regiment in battle with German askaris at Tanga, 1914.*

Painted by Martin Frost (1875-1927), The Battle of Tanga, 1914 (Wikipedia).

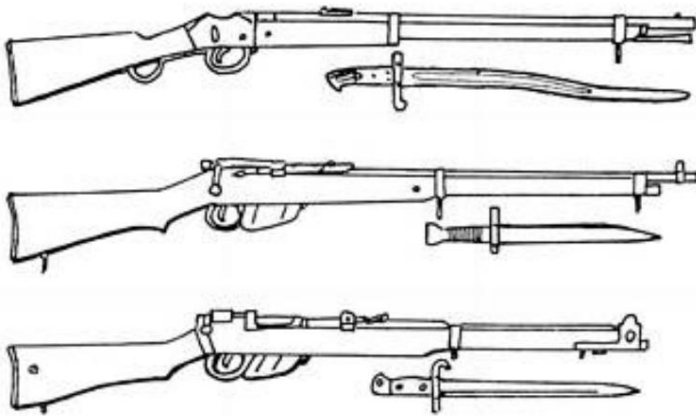
**Table 2: Caste affiliation - Imperial Service Brigade (Source 1)**

Pr. 1. november 1914	13th Rajputs	2nd Kashmir	3rd Kashmir	3rd Gwalior
<i>Punjabi Musalmans</i>	23	255	192	23
<i>Hindustani Musalmans</i>	15			4
<i>Rajputana Muslims</i>				60
<i>Dogra</i>		102	184	
<i>Gurkhas</i>	23	358		
<i>Hindu Rajputs</i>	685			164
<i>Ahirs</i>				11
<i>Mahrattas</i>				26

<i>Brahmins</i>				60
	7	15		30
<i>Others, various</i>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>378</b>

The highly varied composition of the 3rd Gwalior Infantry is remarkable, and would probably not occur in the regular Indian army, where the various castes were sought to be brought together in companies, or at least in platoons.

Before the campaign in East Africa, the Kashmir Rifles were equipped with rifles of an even older model than the regular Indian units, namely the Martini-Henry rifle from 1871, and immediately before the departure from India were equipped with the same Lee-Enfield rifles as the other Indian units used.



*Rifle of the Martini-Henry type, from 1871.*  
 From *British Infantry Regiments, 1660-1914* by AH Bowling, Almark Publications, London 1970, ISBN 0-85524-001-6

It is not reported whether the soldiers from Kashmir had the same problems getting used to the new weapons as several of the other newly equipped units. The sources do not say anything about the situation with the 3rd Gwalior Infantry, but in general the Imperial Service units were worse equipped than the regular units, and they generally lacked, among other things, revolvers for the Indian officers and field telephones. As for machine guns, only the 13th Rajputs had machine guns at their disposal.

**Table 3: Casualties - Imperial Service Brigade (Source 1)**

Tab	13th Rajputs		2nd Kashmir Rifles	
	Fallen	Wounded	Total	Total
English officers	2	6	8	1

Indian officers	2	4	6	-	2	2
	48	34	82	14	24	38
Indian NCOs and Privates						
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>41</b>

#### 3rd Kashmir Rifles 3rd Gwalior Infantry \*)

#### Fallen Wounded Total Fallen Wounded Total

<b>Tab</b>						
	-	-	-	-	-	-
English officers						
	-	2	2	-	-	-
Indian officers						
	3	16	19	1	1	2
Indian NCOs and Privates						
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

\*) 3rd Gwalior Infantry was guarding the bridgehead on C Beach, which explains their few casualties.

## The brigade commanders

The Commander of the Imperial Service Brigade, Brigadier Michael Tighe [4](#)), was transferred in 1885 from *The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)* to *the Indian Staff Corps* [5](#)). He then served until 1913, when he was retired as lieutenant colonel and commander of [the](#) 56th Punjabi Rifles.

Over the years he had acquired combat experience from several campaigns in Southeast Asia and from East Africa (in 1896 and 1898-99).

At the outbreak of war, he immediately returned to India, where he was appointed brigadier-general in September 1914. He is described as an open and well-liked person who was at his best in the front line.



*Brigadegeneralerne Michael Tighe (Imperial Service Brigade) og Richard Wapshare 27th (Bangalore) Infantry*

*Brigade.*  
From Source 4.

The commander of the 27th (Bangalore) Brigade, Brigadier Richard Wapshare, was almost his opposite. As a young officer he had served during the Burma Campaign (1886-88), but had not since seen combat. From 1903 to 1910 he commanded the 30th Lancers (Gordon's Horse) and in 1912 was appointed commander of the *27th (Bangalore) Infantry Brigade*.

Richard Wapshare seems to have valued more a comfortable life in the bosom of the family than a more outgoing and active life. Although well-liked by his subordinates, he did not command respect, but appeared nervous and detail-oriented.

Neither Michael Tighe nor Richard Wapshare had apparently done anything special to keep up with military developments, which was not uncommon in the officer corps of the period.

Source 4 does not state when the photograph of the two brigadier generals was taken, but Michael Tighe's civilian attire may suggest that it was taken immediately before his re-entry into the army and appointment as brigadier general.

## **Sea transport**

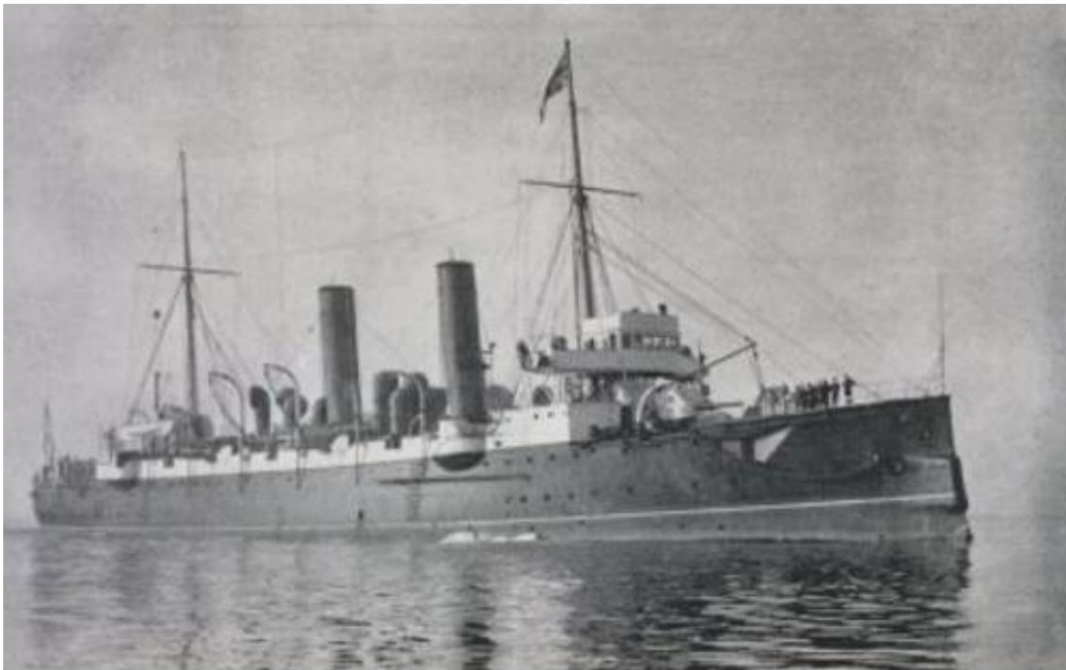
Brigadier Tighe assembled his Imperial Service Brigade at Deolali [6](#) six days before it was shipped from Bombay, and some training of the units was undertaken. A similar activity did not befall the 27th (Bangalore) Brigade, where General Wapshare first saw his two newly added battalions - the 63rd Palamcottah Light Infantry and the 98th Infantry - the day before departure. Whether the reason for this difference is to be sought in the personalities of the two generals, or whether it is due to other causes, is not known.

The Imperial Service Brigade was divided into four transport vessels.

Unit	Transport vessel
13th Rajputs	S/S PENTAKOTA
2nd Kashmir Rifles	S/S KHOSRU
3rd Kashmir Rifles	S/S BARJORA
3rd Gwalior Infantry	

A fourth vessel - S/S KARMALA - transported the brigade staff and the signal division, as well as virtually all staff units in the Expeditionary Corps, in addition to the 2nd Bn. Loyal North Lancashire Regiment.

This concentration seems peculiar all the while that they made themselves very vulnerable if something were to happen to S/S KARMALA. The threat from i.a. the German light cruiser SMS Königsberg was latent, but apparently it has relied on its escort - the battleship HMS Goliath and RIMS Hardinge 7 (ship type unknown). Conversely, the possibilities for providing free transport capacity have hardly been unlimited.



*H.M.S. Fox.*

Fra Battleships and Cruisers.

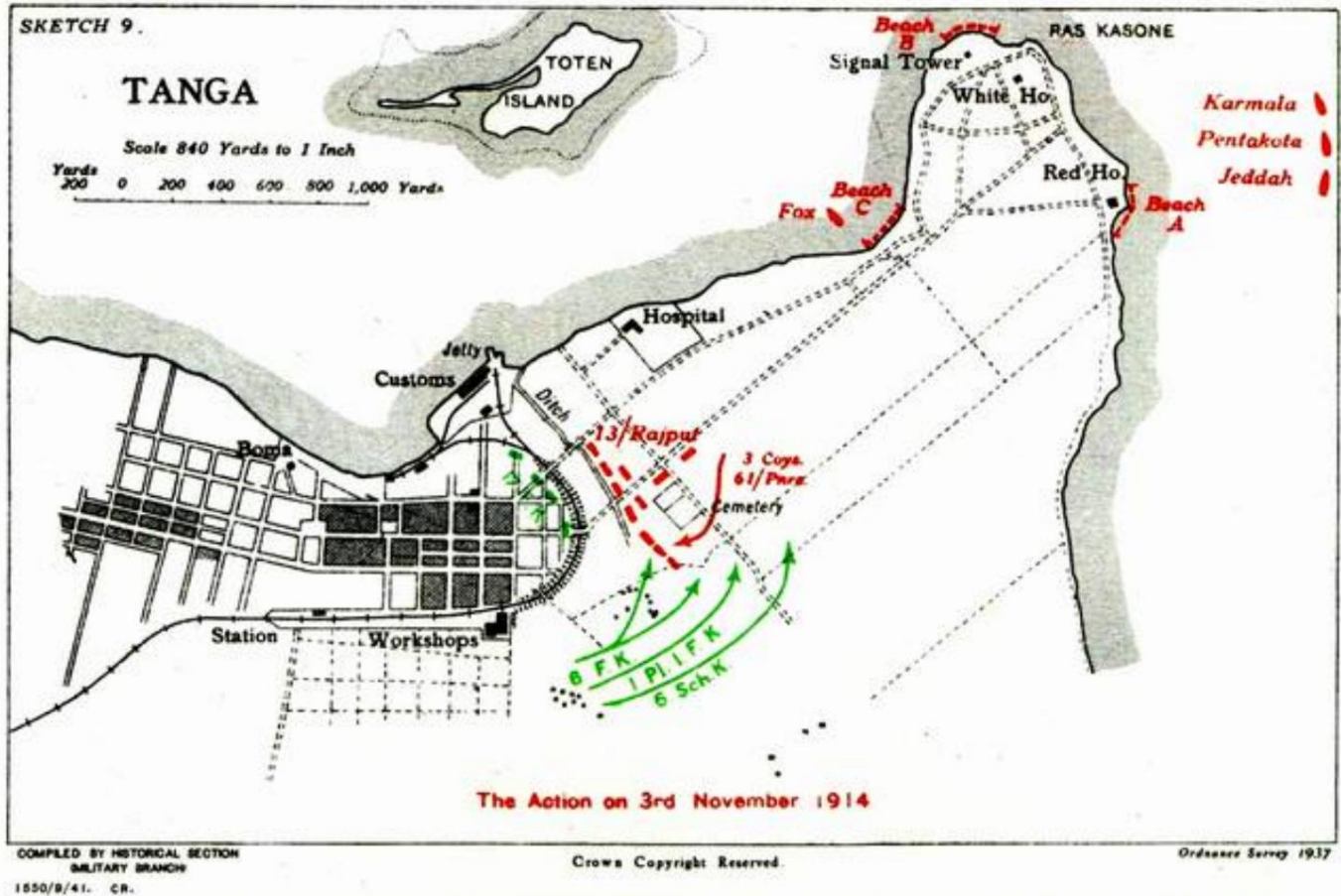
Once in Mombasa, HMS Fox takes over the onward escort to Tanga, as HMS Goliath suffers engine damage.

*The 61st King George's Own Pioneers* (discussed in Part 1) were provided in support of the brigade, with a view to furnishing the Expeditionary Corps base area.

# Landing

the 61st Brigade were landed on the first day of the operation, 3 November 1914, and while the Pioneers advance towards Tanga (see Part 1), the units from Kashmir and Gwalior (landed around 16:00) take up positions on the Ras Kasone peninsula, between A and B Beach.

<sup>2</sup><sup>nd</sup> Kashmir Rifles has the northern sector (B BEACH), with a forward posting on C BEACH. 2nd Bn. The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment occupies the night between D and D+1 the southern sector (A BEACH), while the composite battalion ( $\frac{1}{2}$ /3rd Kashmir Rifles and  $\frac{1}{2}$ /3rd Gwalior Infantry) is positioned in the centre. Two companies of the 13th Rajputs are at A BEACH, with the remaining companies of the 61st Pioneers unloading supplies.



Situation map - Tanga, 3 November 1914 (D-Day).

From Source 1.

## 13th Rajputs (The Shekhawati Regiment)





*Regimentsmærke - 13th Rajputs (The Shekhawati Regiment).*  
From Source 2.

## Historical summary

1835: Infantry of the Shekhawattee Brigade  
1847: The Shekhawattee Battalion

1861: 14th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry 1861: 13th  
Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry 1884: 13th (Shekhawati  
Regiment) Bengal Native Infantry 1885: 13th (Shekhawati Regiment)  
Bengal Infantry 1897: 13th (Shekhawati Regiment) Rajput Bengal  
Infantry 1903: 13th Rajputs (The Shekhawati Regiment) 1922: 10th  
Battalion, 6th Rajputana Rifles

See also The Indian Army 1910-1940 - About the Infantry, Part 1 where the regiment is mentioned.

Shekhawati is a desert-like area in northeastern India; the population is described as brave, self-sacrificing and hard-working [8](#)).

On 31 July 1915, the 13th Rajputs, after six months of action in Uganda, are reported to be so badly afflicted with disease that the battalion is largely incapacitated; the battalion doctor reports in November 1915 that 95% of the soldiers must have a three-month treatment against malaria. Sources 1 and 3 do not provide any further information about the battalion's action in East Africa and the First World War respectively, but it is likely that it was withdrawn to India for redeployment.

The 13th Rajputs were awarded the Ribbon: East Africa, 1914.



## Rajput Regiments.

Drawn by AC Lovett, 1910. Postcard from the National Army Museum, London.

From left:

(*Havildar* = sergeant; *subadar* = captain, *bhisti* = water carrier).

Water carriers are some of the many civilian helpers that form part of an Indian unit.

1) 13th Rajputs (The Shekhawati Regiment)

2) 7th Duke of Connaught's Own Rajputs, Havildar 3)

16th Rajputs (The Lucknow Regiment), Subadar

4) *Bhisti* (der serverer vand for figur 8) 5) 8th Rajputs 6)

4th Prince Albert Victor's Rajputs 7)

11th Rajputs 8)

2nd Queen's Own Rajput Light Infantry

The description of the plate in *Armies of India* by Major AC Lovett and Major GF MacMunn, Adam and Charles Black, London 1911, does not mention Figure 6, which is here identified by Indian Army (The British Empire).

## Kashmir Rifles



*Regimental badge (contemporary)*

*The Jammu and Kashmir Rifles.*

Fra Badges of Military Units from India (The Brooker Collection, Digger History).

Kashmir was the Indian state that provided the most forces to the Indian government, including three infantry battalions and 1 mountain battery.

Today's Indian regiment *The Jammu and Kashmir Rifles* can trace its history back to 1821, when the Maharaja of Kashmir established his first military units. In 1957, The Kashmir Rifles became part of the regular Indian Army, under the name The Jammu and Kashmir Regiment, which in 1963 became The Jammu and Kashmir Rifles.

<sup>2</sup><sup>nd</sup> Kashmir Rifles was under the command of Lt. Col. Raghubir Singh, but the name of the commander of rd Kashmir Rifles 1914, and briefly gained <sup>is</sup> not available. The battalions take part in the attack on Tanga 4th half-battalion from 3 November a foothold in the town (see Part 1).

After Tanga, the battalions are deployed in English East Africa, where they, among other things, patrolling parts of the railway line from Mombasa to Kisumu (on Lake Victoria), Uganda Railroad 9) badly plagued by German

railway sabotage. A combat patrol is usually approx. 100 men, including machine guns, so it can both make an actual attack, but also withstand a large German patrol. Smaller patrols could be down to a single man. While carrying out the latter type of duty, a *sepoy* of the 3rd Kashmir Rifles had the ill fate of being attacked and killed by a lion on 14th December 1915!



*The Kashmir Rifles, Jemadar (Lieutenant), c. 1910.*  
Card No. 40 in British and American Tobacco's *Indian Army*  
*Regiments cigarette card series*, issued 1912;  
reprinted 2000.

<sup>2</sup><sup>nd</sup> The Kashmir Rifles suffered heavy losses during the later action in East Africa, i.a. at Jassin in January 1915. Read more about these battles in the article [The Battle for Jassin, 18 -19 January 1915](#) by Dennis L. Bishop and Holger Dobold (By Jingo!).

The two Kashmir battalions are awarded the banners: Kilimanjaro, Behobeho, East Africa, 1914-17.

The pennants are continued by the present day Jammu and Kashmir Rifles. It may be added that *1 Kashmir Mountain Battery* -<sup>st</sup>See [The Indian Army - On mountain batteries, 1890-1940](#) - was awarded the Nyangao and East Africa banners 1916-18.

After participating in the campaign in East Africa, the 3rd Kashmir Rifles is sent to Egypt, and then on to Palestine, where from the summer of 1918 the battalion is part of the 30th Brigade/10th Division. The 1st Kashmir Rifles arrived from India and were also part of the 232nd Brigade/75th Division from the summer of 1918 [10](#)).

### <sup>3</sup><sup>rd</sup> Gwalior Infantry

Gwalior [11](#)) was an independent state (approx. 65,000 km<sup>2</sup>), located in the northern part of central India (Central Indian Agency), with approx. 2.9 inhabitants (1901). In 1914, the Maharaja's army consisted of approx. 11,000 men, of which *the Imperial Service units* [12](#)) included three lancer regiments, two infantry battalions and a training unit; the other units were *Local Forces*.



[Gwalior's rigsvåben 13\).](#)

The badge is believed to have been included in the battalion's badge.

### Historical summary (Source 6)

1885: 3rd Battalion, Infantry

1901: 3rd Gwalior Infantry

1901: 3rd Gwalior Infantry (Maharaja Scindia's Own Gwalior Battalion)

1904: *Imperial Service* unit

The Indian General Staff report of 1911 describes the Gwalior army as quite good, but equipped with weapons of an older model.

The battalion, which consisted of eight companies, organized into four double companies, of which a half-battalion (two double companies), under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Ganpatrao Nimbalkar, was part of Expeditionary Corps B. Of the 16 officers, cf. Table 1, two were doctors.

The other half-battalion remained in Gwalior as personnel replacement. To compensate for losses, 3 officers, two doctors, 210 non-commissioned officers and privates and 10 helpers were sent to East Africa during the war.

The half battalion embarks from Bombay on board the S/S BARJORA along with the half battalion of the 3rd Kashmir Rifles. During the operation at Tanga, the half-battalion carries out guard duties, i.a. at the three beaches, where on November 4, 1914, they have the thankless task of trying to keep order of hordes of Indian helpers and African porters who are frantically searching for the boats as the Expeditionary Force begins its retreat.

After Tanga, the half-battalion continued to be deployed on guard duty until December 1914, when the battalion returned to India, arriving at Gwalior on 31 December 1914.

The 3rd Gwalior Infantry was awarded the banner: East Africa, 1914-17. (Source 6)

The second *Imperial Service* infantry battalion - 4th Gwalior Infantry (Maharaja Bahadur's Own Battalion) - took part in the Palestine Campaign, as part of the 20th (Indian) Infantry Brigade/Chaytor's Force [14\).](#)

### Sources

1. *History of the Great War, Military Operations East Africa, Volume I, August 1914 - September 1916* by Second Lieutenant Charles Hordern, HSMO, London 1941. (Can be borrowed from the Royal Garrison Library.)

- th 2. — Rajputs (The Shekhawati Regiment) og The Jammu and Kashmir Rifles (The British Empire).  
 13 3. *India's Army* af Donovan Jackson, Purnell and Sons, London 1940.  
 4. *The Battle of Tanga 1914* af Ross Anderson, Tempus Publishing Ltd., Stroud, Gloucestershire 2002, ISBN 0-7524-2349-5.  
 5. *The British-Indian Army 1860-1914* af Peter Duckers, Shire Books, Princes Risborough / Buckinghamshire 2003, ISBN 0-7478-0550-4.  
 6. *Armies of the Indian Princely States - Volume I: An Historical Overview* af Richard Head og Tony McClenaghan, The Military Press, Milton Keynes/Buckinghamshire, 1998. ISBN 0-85420-070-3.



*Drummers and horn players from one of the infantry battalions from Kashmir, c. 1900.*

Per Finsted

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**To note:**

- 1) Fell 18 January 1915 at Jasin. Tanga (Jasin) Memorial (Commonwealth War Graves Commission).
- 2) Maybe only company manager. Fell 26 December 1915 near the town of Voi.
- 3) From Military Modelling, February 1979, where the image was linked to a reply to a reader's letter.
- 4) Lieutenant General Michael Tighe (1864-1925) (Liddell Hart Center for Military Archives)
- 5) In the period 1861-1903, an English officer was not transferred directly to a regiment, but to the *Indian Staff Corps* - there was a kind of personnel pool from which they then applied for vacant positions at the regiments. From 1903 an officer was employed directly by a regiment, initially on probation. (Source 6)
- 5) An educational area approx. 160 km northeast of Bombay. See Deolali (Wikipedia)
- 7) RIMS = Royal Indian Marine Ships. The Indian Navy (Wikipedia).
- 8) Shekhawati (Wikipedia).
- 9) See *The Man-eaters of Tsavo and other East African adventures* by John Henry Patterson, who helped complete parts of the railway line. John Henry Patterson later became commander of The Zion Mule Corps, see *The Zion Mule Corps* (1915) and *The Jewish Legion* (1917-1918).

10) See f.eks. Order-of-Battle of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, september 1918 (Historical Military Organization)

11) See List of Indian Princely States (Wikipedia).

12) A drawing of 2<sup>nd</sup> *The Alijah Gwalior Lancers* are reproduced on the plate *Imperial Service Troops* in my article *The Indian Army - On Training Units of the First World War, Part 1*, which also mentions *the Gwalior Transport Corps*, deployed in France (1914-15).

13) See Gwalior (Royal and Ruling Houses of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas).

14) Read more about Chaytor's Force in *About the British West Indies Regiment during the First World War*; also touched upon in *On The Zion Mule Corps (1915)* and *The Jewish Legion (1917-1918)*.