

THE FINE AND SCARCE AFGHANISTAN, 1878 TO AN INDIAN ARMY OFFICER OF THE 14TH BENGAL LANCERS, A REGIMENT THAT ALONG WITH THE 9TH LANCERS TOOK PART IN THE FAMED CHARGE AT KILLA KAZI



AFGHANISTAN, 1878-80, 2 CLASPS, CHARASIA, KABUL 'JEMR. BULDEO SING 14TH B. LANCERS'

Risaldar-Major Buldeo Sing, Sardar Bahadur, O.B.I., joined the Indian Army on 1 December 1870, and was Commissioned Jemadar with the 14th Bengal Lancers (Murray's Jat Lancers) on 1 May 1879, and took part in the Second Afghan War, his regiment distinguishing itself during the campaign, notably for the part they played during the charge at Killa Kazi.

Note; Jemadar was the lowest rank of viceroy's commissioned officer and equivalent to 2nd Lieutenant in the British Army.

THE 14TH BENGAL LANCERS DURING THE AFGHAN WAR

Having fought in a skirmish and captured a hostile village on 30 September 1879, the 14th Bengal Lancers participated in the action at Charasia on 6 October, being engaged on the right of the attack, and in the right rear, and in the subsequent cavalry pursuit of the enemy which resulted in the capture

of 72 pieces of artillery.

And when the enemy marched on Kabul that December, Murray's Jat Lancers took a prominent part in all the engagements that followed, not least in gallantly attempting to protect our guns in the action at Killa Kazi in the Chardeh Valley on the 11th, when they repeatedly charged large masses of enemy Infantry at a cost of some ten casualties, among them Lieutenant O.E. Forbes, who sustained multiple sword cuts, and Jemadar Gopal Sing, who also died of his wounds and was awarded the 3rd class I.O.M. In his history, *The Second Afghan War*, Colonel H. B. Hanna refers to the 'Disaster of the Eleventh of December' in detail and, more specifically, to the 14th Bengal Lancers:

'Whether the cavalry understood the urgency of the need which sent them to destruction, or not, they accepted the part assigned them with noble alacrity. Splendidly led by Colonel Cleland, a Squadron of 9th Lancers, supported by the 14th Bengal Lancers, rode straight into the seething, raging sea of armed men, while Gough's Troop of the former regiment sought to confuse the enemy by a flank attack. Received with a terrific discharge of musketry, clouds of dust and smoke quickly hid the devoted band from the eyes of anxious spectators; then, out of those clouds, horses were seen to come galloping back, some riderless, some with riders swaying in their saddles. Among the wounded were the gallant Cleland, his bridle arm badly sabred, a bullet in his stomach, and young Hearsey, shot through the lungs, who fell to the ground dead, as his horse stopped short.'



And in the subsequent retreat that involved the crossing of a watercourse and flight through the narrow streets of the village of Baghwana, further casualties were inflicted, the Rev. J. W. Adams of the Bengal Ecclesiastical Department winning a V.C.:

'Most of those in the open got safely over [the watercourse]; some, well mounted, cleared the channel at a bound; others fell into it and had great difficulty in gaining a footing on the further side; a few were shot down in the very act of leaping; but those in the village, jammed together in the narrow street, with Mahomed Jan's men swarming at their heels, and the villagers firing down upon them from the roofs of the houses, in their frantic haste pushed each other into the water, where, struggling and floundering, they destroyed their own and their comrades' chances of escape. There were noble exceptions to this panic spirit. Here and there a man saved his friend, or stood by him to the death. Sir Charles Wolseley got Cleland in a dhoolie; Lieutenant E. Hardy of the Horse Artillery refused to leave

a wounded subaltern, young Forbes of the 14th Bengal Lancers, who had been confided to his care, and the two died together. The Rev. J. W. Adams, Military Chaplain to the Force, pulled no less than three men out of the watercourse, two of them when the enemy were within a few yards of him, and would have paid for his devotion with his life, if a Staff Officer, dashing by, had not seen his danger and taken him up behind him on his horse ... Those who failed to get over the watercourse were killed by the Afghans, who, brandishing their weapons and howling like wolves closing in on their prey, swept through the village, murdering the wounded, and stripping and mutilating the dead.'

From that terrible day until the final defeat of the Afghans, Buldeo Sing and his Regiment were almost incessantly under arms, *'in the open plain, mounted, by day, and on the walls of the Behmaru Ridge, on foot, by night'*, one N.C.O. and three men once performing a gallant feat by climbing down the walls one night to get news to Brigadier-General Gough's force.

Buldeo Singh, whose entitlement to the Afghanistan Medal 1878-80, with 2 clasps, is confirmed by contemporary Indian Army Lists, was advanced to Ressaidar in March 1885, to Risaldar in March 1895 and to Risaldar-Major in August 1901. And in January 1903 he was appointed to the 1st class of the Order of British India with accompanying title of Sardar Bahadur. He would appear to have been placed on the retired list during the course of 1905



Condition *suspension claw tightened, edge bruise, otherwise good very fine* Ex D.N.W. 2003 (£1000)