Appendix

Interview transcripts (arranged alphabetically, to correspond with the chapter order)

EX DIBL. UNIV. EDI

Reverend George Fateh Din

Recorded on Saturday 28th February 1998

SA1998.39

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Revd. G.F.D.** represents the Reverend George Fateh Din.

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston it's Saturday the twenty-eighth of February and I'm talking to Reverend Fateh Din in Gujrat. So can you tell me a little bit first about your life briefly before you were a Catechist what you were doing?

Revd. G.F.D. : My full name is George Fateh Din I belongs to a very small village that is near Daska name is [Wahsaalke] and from my childhood my mother put this thing in my mind that I am the only son of nine sisters brother of nine sisters so my mother put this thing in my mind very strongly that she asked me pray for me to God and God give me to her according to his prayers and she omitted to Lord for my services that I may be a Pastor and serve the Church. She belongs to [*chak*] number three seven one Martinpur, Youngsonabad so she know the benefit of the education and she very much interested to give me education but after my primary education she became ill very seriously and my father is a farmer so very hard to my father to fulfill the needs of and requirements of my mother's disease as well as the family food and other things so when a missionary Reverend C. Chirnside he and Reverend B. M. [Dul Amal] he was a national pastor of Daska and Reverend Charlie Chirnside was the Missionary District Superintendent in Daska so they both were on district tour to my village that is about five miles from Daska where our Scotch mission had quarter and mission boarding school and mission school Scotch Mission High School Daska. Charlie Chirnside was also manager of that hostel that school so when he came to know about my education he asked my father and mother send him to hostel and I will take care of him so thanks Lord two three years a very small part of my fees were met by parents' work paying but after that they were not happy to send me hostel and they want to keep me back but Mr. Charlie Chirnside was the person who forced me my parents and he forcefully keep me in hostel and I think that was the grace of God, God put the burden on the heart of Charlie Chirnside so he loved me very much he take care of me and paid my full expenses of my hostel and my school and everything so when I was about class eight a team came from Kohat they called that Gospel Team one of the American missionaries Ringer he was called to be a Pathan mission missionary and the other are Pakistani Daniel Bakhsh and B.U. Khokar and some others air force retired person so they preached the Gospel of the hostel students so that time I commit myself to the Lord and I gave my life to Lord Jesus and I have an experience of new birth and I except Lord Jesus Christ my personal saviour and God's assurance that I am son of God and on that kind of special class arranged by

Charlie Chirnside who help us this class those who have accepted Lord Jesus Christ personally as a special class so he help us to grow in a Christian life but after my Matriculation examination I think that the pastor life the pastor ministry is not a very helpful or a healthy one so I want to I don't want to join being a pastor so I ran away from my home and went to Islamabad and Rawalpindi and joined Balfour Beatty Company that was American company in Wah factory so I worked there. After one year maybe about one year Indian missionary Reverend Abdul Haq the father of Akbar Haq who is the who was the member of Billy Graham Association his father he was a Muslim convert he came to Pakistan from India and have a open air meetings different places and when I came to know that he's in Rawalpindi Gordon College that was American missionary United Presbyterian and Gordon College Jubilee Hall there was a meeting and Reverend Abdul Haq was the speaker so I came from Wah factory and joined that and actually after the caring of Reverend C. Chirnside I was fully confidence on my life that God wants me and he was using me abundantly in the Christian families for Evangelism and for other sources so I was satisfied okay according to my mother's commitment I am doing something for the Lord so it's enough being a lay person and I have a some fellowship as you are mentioned brother Orr so these kind of people I have a fellowship in and I know him since then brother Orr because he used came for a [brother?] assembly in Rawalpindi also and some Bible study lesson so I was very much in confidence that I was doing something for the Lord so it's okay so when Abdul Haq preached and he was preaching about ministry so he was preaching about Jonah that God sent him because God gave him a commission that you have to go for this purpose to my former master with my message to [Nanawah] but he was not willing to go he go another direction and God have a one big fish in his scheme in that see so when he was disobeyed the Lord and God ship and gave fare for it God put him into trouble and he went into belly of fish so he was preaching that here are someone who has a ministry and he was not obeying God so if he will not obey God in this sense maybe he will be in trouble and God use that kind of method and then he will come back return, so I understand and I think this person is directly hitting me and I thanks Lord God touched my heart and my heart was broken and I was weeping in the Hall and Lord forgive me I am that person who has disobeyed you who has disobeyed my mother who has disobeyed my missionary who loved me very much forgive me so then that time I decided myself that according to my mother's will according to the will of my missionary I commit myself Lord now personally that this is my desire that I become a pastor and work if I think that our pastors are not doing well I shouldn't do like that that I am not able to do so I will not if I think and that was in my mind that pastors are not doing well they are just seeking money and collecting offerings like that so from that time I commit myself I will do what God wants and go the straight path the right way so I went back to my factory and my site engineer was working with me and I was a electrical department he was a Catholic American Mr. [Magean] and when I went back the next day and I ask him I don't want to remain in this factory I want to give resignation and give me my money what daily wages I was working on daily wages basis so he was very upset he was, 'What's wrong with you?' because he loved me very

much and wherever he asked we have gather filing something and like that and he was very happy and he invited supervisor and my charge electrician and all other departmental persons, 'Check him, what's wrong with him, maybe he's mad something wrong in his mind help him' so they tried to keep me in sense I said, 'No I am in sense no problem with me', they're saying, 'People like people wants this factory a job and you're leaving' I said, 'I'm not leaving, God forced me to leave this place' but they couldn't understand what kind of I am talking 'God forced you?', 'Yes I am God forcing me so I'm leaving I will be no more with you'. Three or four days they put me in this trouble trying trying trying again and again so at the end I said, 'I am leaving if you're not giving me my account and whatever I have I work for a month and if you're not willing I'm going' and then they understand that he will be no more with us so he made my accounts settle and give me money that I've already earned according to daily basis so then I came directly to Charlie Chirnside and Charlie Chirnside was so excited and very happy and said, 'I was praying praying praying for a long time for you so what's wrong with you because this was the will of your mother this was my desire and I know God wants you and God gives you a ministry [?]' then I explained the whole story and then he said after two or three something after two or three month there will be a Register Board meeting this is no time for meeting next Board meeting will be after two or three month and then I will put your application to the Board. I said, 'Okay' so I went back again to Rawalpindi and joined this kind of fellowship and Professor Daniel Bakhsh he is in Rawal.. he is in Lahore now and that time who was the man who helped me find God when he was Air Force from Gospel team and that time he was bursar for Gordon College so he helped me to keep two or three month in their library as a keeping book in order and dole system library numbers on books like that okay two or three month I spent there and again I got invitation of for candidate for ministry there at Jalapur Jattan where father William is living you went that house (**J.W. :** Yes) so that is the place where I was able to pay me interview as a candidate for ministry because Doctor C. Skinner was Medical Superintendent of the Shillok hospital he was also elder and he was the chairman of Evangelistic Board so in that home that house my interview was taken place as a candidate for ministry so I worked two three years as a candidate for ministry first station was in Wazirabad and from that time Kenneth Anderson was my first missionary [with the one national ministry Pastor Mengamal] so these was my in charge and Kenneth Anderson he was with me with people of nomadic like this (**Revd. G.F.D.** points to a plaque commemorating his work with nomadic peoples in Pakistan) so from that time I am love too much with these people like gypsy they don't have houses and shelters like village and I start work there so after I started this ministry in 1960 so '61 '62 '63 and after that one year I was transferred to Jalapur Jattan where you went that was in my first second transfer as a catechist so then I got married there actually this wife she's a second wife the mother of my children she died she was a nurse in that hospital and from that time we accept each other because she has this quality to worship early in the morning and she was give this [?] why are the birds are singing before me so before birds sing she was praying and this was also my habit before sun come up sunset (*sic.*) would I praying and singing to the Lord and I start preaching in

the early in the morning on loudspeaker in Jalapur Jattan so for this reason we accept each other that we so God blessed me and from Jalapur Jattan I went to seminary on '63

J.W. : Is that in Gujranwala?

Revd. G.F.D. : Gujranwala 1963 I entered in Gujranwala Theological seminary and '63 graduated from [? a Licentiate in Theology] on that time now that is the B-t-h Batchelor in Theology so I got that so since then I was first transferred after seminary is [Khrotasaidah] and Ken Anderson again my District Superintendent he was transferred from Wazirabad to Sialkot as chaplain of Murray College and Professor of Murray College and also as missionary of Sialkot so I work there after one year and then I got ordination in [Khrotasaidah] on that time it was after integration scheme it was Church Council and we are united with Lahore Church Committee in I don't know Lahore Council are part of the United Presbyterian Church Reformed Presbyterian Church, Reformed, so then for after one year I transferred another place that is in [?] east of Gujrat [Malkhwal] so after '67 ah '67 I was transferred I was transferred to [Malkhwal] and then '69 I was transferred to Youngsonabad that is a Christian village and eight nine eight full nine first July I was transferred Youngsonabad 1969 and first July 1979 I was transferred here in Gujrat up till now I am here working as a pastor as a District Superintendent as our Chairman when District Board as our Secretary when it is District Board and other many capacity. Now I am working as Bishop Commissary because Bishop is away he is in England maybe middle of March he will be there so on his absence I am doing his job once a week I used to go to Diocesian office sit there and rest of the work I enjoy it my parish work and other so we have a different kind of ministry and this I learn from Reverend Charlie Chirnside when he was our missionary he called us as a student and go to bazaar and open air meetings in the bazaar, bazaar evangelism so that kind of ministry still I have in my mind so God helping me so three time a year go to D.C. office and got permission for loudspeaker and he gave us a written permission and we go to bazaar preaching and literature distribution and now I am I can say patron of St. Andrew Brotherhood the Reverend Aslaam Khan started here so we have our converts we look after them one family in district [Mundikhowadee] people think it's difficult it's true it's very difficult but God helping us and one convert we send St. Andrew's Brotherhood Lahore there Aslaam Khawaz now he's gone he's passed away with the Lord and some other person [Judge Amazadee] is there so God is using me different way different part of Pakistan. I was also a member of [Lazaad] Committee when it was in Hungary Western, Eastern Europe so I was as a member of thank Lord now I am also member of A.D. 2000 Pakistan as a city co-ordinator.

J.W. : Right how, it might be difficult to put into words but how central do you think that relationship was that you had with people like Charlie Chirnside and Ken Anderson and these people during your life and your work?

Revd. G.F.D. : This is God's grace that I can't say I can be like Charlie Chirnside and like Anderson but I learn from them to love our congregation member needy persons so I try my best to love them to help them to help their education because through these person God help me as education so if they will not help me I may not be able to sit here so for this reason I'm trying I can't say that I am able to minister my people like them but I'm trying and for this reason (**J.W.** That's all you can do just try your best) and for this reason I started two kinds of education centre here one is the near the Mission compound called and help all children those are their parents are not able to send them school because they have mostly they are sweeper they got up early in the morning and went back went to the places for job and came back about nine and that time school time is over and one education centre I started in Church compound God provided us a building through MNA and we have a building but unfortunately parents still are not quite co-operation with this kind of ministry. Charlie Chirnside helped me because my parents wants me to education for this reason but here in this days some parents are not they still in this advanced time they are still not feeling that their children are in need. Another thing is that we have one paid teacher two are volunteers so volunteers they don't have time for being free whenever they have a time they join and when they have their own priorities they are not coming so unfortunately for one year we have support from our friend Ken Anderson and Duncan but after that we don't have support for that teacher so when we asked children go home and bring some fees to help feed this qualified teacher so if they went back they are not coming back to the school so this was the lack of funds I am not successful in this part of my ministry but this was my [?] when that Church of Pakistan specially Sialkot Diocese because the Church of Scotland send their views that they are not supporting for an evangelistic board so they make decision that you can sell this property and make endowment fund and then you can help in your ministry as a Diocese make a Diocese an endowment fund so on that place where you have seen our Cathedral School the people those were on front local pastor and other person they decided to got large share so thanks Lord on '78 when it was not fully decided I came here and first of all I object that you can't sell that land and it was a very bad time for me because authorities are wants to sell this and I was put a strong step and congregation was in this favour that it should not be sold so I changed this decision I said, 'If you want to sold it go back where main missionary house is' so that is back side so this is front side on the road if we will make a school or any institution it is nice so then they came to think this minutes and on that time this about happened about twenty years back so now they sold whole land where man house mission where Charlie Chirnside was living where Ken Anderson was living Young was living all other missionaries was living so this is house was built by the Woman Guild of Church of Scotland and this was the lady mission house where I'm living so I keep that place so now I'm very happy although it's not for poor children but it's one kind of sign of our

Christian witness that this is a Christian School Cathedral School under the management of Sialkot Diocese so I am I'm happy and I hope as our education board was decided that when we've got money from this project then maybe we are able to help the poor children for their education maybe sometime this vision will be maybe come true this dream will become true. (**J.W.** Let's hope so) I'm not sure about that I can't claim that I'm doing on these lines what Charlie Chirnside and Anderson was doing but I am trying what I have learned it is keep it is in my mind that I want to do something according to their lines.

J.W. : Right thank you.

Revd. G.F.D. : Thank you very much.

(Tape is switched off).

Interview with Mrs. Andrea Holland
Thursday 31st July 1997
SA1997.97

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, and **Mrs H** represents Mrs. Andrea Holland

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston, it's Wednesday, no Thursday the thirty-first of July and I'm recording Mrs. Holland at her home in Edinburgh. Okay Mrs. Holland if I can ask you first where and when you were born please ?

Mrs. H. : In Edinburgh 1911.

J.W. : Right and how about your husband when was he born ?

Mrs. H. : He was also born in 1911 and he was also born in Edinburgh.

J.W. : Oh right, I see, right and can you tell me a little bit about your childhood was that here in Edinburgh ?

Mrs. H. : Yes, oh yes I was brought up in Edinburgh and I went to St. George's School and then went to the University and it was at the University that I met my husband.

J.W. : Right and what did you study at university.

Mrs. H. : Geography.

J.W. : Right and what was your husband studying at university ?

Mrs. H. : He was medicine.

J.W. : Medicine of course, silly question, and so you say you met your husband at university ..

Mrs. H. : Well we both belonged to an organisation called the Student Christian Movement.

J.W. : And what was, can you tell me a little more about that ?

Mrs. H. : Well it was a group of students both male and female but we had both separate in those days there was a men's section and a women's section and we did the very rare thing of having a joint study group we were studying a man called Hook who'd written a book called 'The Kingdom of God'. It was a religious organisation but interdenominational very much.

J.W. : Right okay, so how was it then to jump a little perhaps that you came out of university what did you do once you'd finished university ?

Mrs. H. : Well I did three years as a travelling secretary for this organisation the Student Christian Movement and in the women's colleges in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh and I just used to go around and encourage then to start up groups and I sometimes led study groups and so on.

J.W. : Right and what about your husband what did he do ?

Mrs. H. : Well he of course was doing medicine which of course ..

J.W. : Took a little bit longer.

Mrs. H. : A year more than me and within he did a six months surgical job in Stirling and then he went to Quetta.

J.W. : Right.

Mrs. H. : Which was much to quick after his graduation but the idea was that his father was a very good teacher so he would go to Quetta and he would learn from his father in the Quetta Mission Hospital.

J.W. : Oh I see.

Mrs. H. : But of course unfortunately within three weeks the earthquake came , so he didn't see his father again for a long time but well when I say he didn't see but his father soon went home to Britain and he went off to Peshawar and he did his winter there and came back to Quetta and helped them get the new hospital that Sir Henry had raised the money to get built in Quetta.

J.W. : So when was it that you first went out ?

Mrs. H. : Well I didn't go out until two years later.

J.W. : Right.

Mrs. H. : It was '35 that he went out and I went out '37.

J.W. : And I am right in thinking you were married out in .. ?

Mrs. H. : We were married out in Quetta.

J.W. : In Quetta.

Mrs. H. : In the temporary church there.

J.W. : Because I saw today in the picture the Scottish Church being dynamited.

Mrs. H. : Oh yes, that's right unsafe after the earthquake. Okay so let me ask you obviously I think you'd received quite a lot of information about Quetta and that part of the world from your husband and from his background but other than that what else did you know about India and that part of the world before you went there ?

Mrs. H. : I mean I knew the basic sort of thing one studied in the Geography lectures but one most of it I just gleaned from Harry and his family because they had been brought up there as children out there through the Great War the First War.

J.W. : Cause your husband did he come back to school at all ?

Mrs. H. : He came back to school at the end of the War.

J.W. : That's right so can you remember the journey out at all ?

Mrs. H. : Yes I remember the journey out.

J.W. : How did you ... ?

Well it was by boat of course in those days. It was quite fun I shared with a lady I knew quite well and another one who I therefore got to know three of us in a cabin and there were various other people in the ship we knew.

J.W. : And where did you .. ?

Mrs. H. : I landed in Bombay I spent a night with an ex colleague from the Student Christian Movement who was then at Wilson College, Bombay and then I went up by the little local boat to Karachi where Harry met me he came out with the pilot and we met on board ship, and they were meanwhile at this eye clinic this was January 1937 and they were working at this eye clinic which they did annually at a place called Shikapur in Sind so we went there.

J.W. : Right and can you remember your sort of first impression when you .. ?

Mrs. H. : (laughs) Yes very strange. I arrived in the middle of the night and we got on a *tānigā*, do you know what a *tānigā* is ?

J.W. : Yes I know *tānigās* only too well.

Mrs. H. : So we went on *tānigās* to this house all in the dark and I was put into this room, an enormous room, and there was a curtain across there and it wasn't until the morning that I realised there was a lady sleeping on the other side of the curtain then the surprising thing that happened was when a gentleman knocked on the door and brought in the tea we didn't have gentlemen servants in this country. Anyway it was all great fun.

J.W. : Right and so you went to Shikapur. How long were you there before you .. ?

Mrs. H. : Oh not very long I don't think I can really remember. I went up to Peshawar where I was supposed to learn from the lady, the wife of the doctor there how to be a good missionary's wife but I had quite a fun time there.

J.W. : So did you .. ?

Mrs. H. : She didn't really teach me anything at all. She said to begin with I can't teach you anything at all I've got a private income I've got my own car I'm not a typical missionary's wife.

1 (laughs)So how about then presumably you just picked things up as you went along then ?

Mrs. H. : Yes that's right.

J.W. : And what about the language for example ?

Mrs. H. : Well I tried to learn the language but I'm a very poor language scholar.

J.W. : So am I, I'm afraid I'm trying just now to learn. So what shall we ... ?

Mrs. H. : Well they were back in Quetta by the end of March so then I joined up and I was there for a week before we were married.

J.W. : And so let me think, what about the general work that your husband did, can you describe that a little I've read in the book but what would his routine be say on most days ?

Mrs. H. : Well you see we had a week's honeymoon and then we came back to Quetta and then we were told, 'No you've to go to Bannu' which is a much more primitive station and there he had a men's hospital and a women's hospital and there was a lady doctor in charge of the women's hospital and there was a young, I suppose not really much younger than himself, male doctor. Anyway they worked these two hospitals, strange thing was that there was a sort of war going on, on the Frontier, a man called the Faqir of Ipi ... .

J.W. : Oh yes.

Mrs. H. : Was doing nasty things so we had to go and sleep on the sisters' roof so a guard could go round about and not have to have two guards one on each bungalow (laughs) oh it was a really very odd situation.

J.W. : So how long were you in Bannu ?

Mrs. H. : Oh that was a year.

J.W. : And so there ..

Mrs. H. : During that year we had a marvellous holiday in Kashmir.

J.W. : Right okay, on the houseboats ?

Mrs. H. : Trekking, well we trekked across one valley and then across into another valley and then we finished up on a houseboat for a week.

J.W. : And so who else apart from the other doctor and yourself what other staff were there at the hospital there in Bannu, did you have .. ?

Mrs. H. : Well there was this Danish sister who helped on the wom ... , who was in charge well I suppose she did men's side as well and then there were the hospital staff but they were Pakistanis.

J.W. : And that was a Mission hospital then was it. Did the, was that where the Starrs worked ?

Mrs. H. : Who ?

J.W. : Vernon Starr.

Mrs. H. : Well that was earlier and that was in Peshawar .

J.W. : I see, I got confused.

Mrs. H. : Yes he was the doctor in Peshawar and his wife we knew well and we knew her in this country too.

J.W. : And so you were at Bannu and then what happened after that ?

Mrs. H. : Well after a year we went back to Quetta.

J.W. : Quetta right. Now just to talk a little about the details of your life and this sort of thing say in the routine of a day would you do, I know that's a very general question?

Mrs. H. : Well I suppose you would talk to the cook you told him what you wanted to eat and he would have to get those things and if your language was adequate that was quite good, but there was occasion when I told him that I wanted melon as a dessert. Unfortunately a melon is a *kabooza* and a pigeon is a *kaboota* (**J.W.** laughs) and so there was a nice little pigeon hanging up and no melon.

J.W. : Yes I had similar problems and so talking of that and speaking to the cook what sort of diet did you all eat while you were there, was it a sort of .. ?

Mrs. H. : No we ate mostly because we ate on our own, it was mostly an English diet really.

J.W. : Right okay, and so that of course being in Quetta the foodstuffs and the stores would be there being a big ..

Mrs. H. : Yes it was more but you had a cook and he knew how to cook English food I suppose.

J.W. : Now one thing that comes through very strongly in Sir Henry's book and just reading in general is about how integrated he was and how well known he was ..

Mrs. H. : Yes.

J.W. : Among the Baluchis and these people. How did that come about I mean how would you describe that, how did that come about ?

Mrs. H. : Well he had been there this is about '35, '37 now I'm talking about. He had been there since 1900 he was a very sociable person and he liked to play tennis and he was a very keen Mason and the Masons in Quetta were of all religions so that he met the leaders of the Sikh community, the Muslim community and the very wealthy people.

J.W. : Parsis ?

Mrs. H. : Parsis, that's right, and the Parsis and he had some very good friends among them, and then he also belonged to a thing called the Officer's Christian Union so he got to know some of the young officers and sometimes their wives were interested and they used to come and help what we called roll pills and make up things, you know, because you didn't used to get things in little packets like they do now, so they used to help prepare things in the dispensary.

J.W. : Right okay .. .

Mrs. H. : So he got to know all sorts of people.

J.W. : And also would you say the medical work that opened a lot of doors obviously ?

Mrs. H. : Well of course that was a very good hospital and he became very well known Sir Henry Holland, for his eye work so lots of people who might have gone to the military hospital or the civil hospital would come to him for their eyes if they had cataracts or that sort of thing and he went a way up he went to Swat operated on the Wali.

J.W. : Oh yes I remember seeing that in the book.

Mrs. H. : And he went to Afghanistan and operated on the King and so that he became quite widely known. He also represented the Church and the Hospital in Quetta on various medical and Church committees so that he went down to Lahore and met the people there and so on.

J.W. : Right, and so let me just look at my notes there. Ah, so you were there in Quetta through the '30's then?

Mrs. H. : Oh this was '38.

J.W. : Right, and then with the War what happened ?

Mrs. H. : Right '39 you see they began to talk about the War and I suppose it was '39 or '40 that Harry joined up and his brother had meanwhile come out and got married but they came out on the last boat through the Suez canal so they were rather new and all and they were anyway sent off to Kashmir. The trouble was really with the War coming it was very difficult to get recruits so they were short staffed in all these hospitals that was why we went to Bannu to take somebody's leave and his brother Ronnie went to Kashmir, and soon, but where had we got to ? Yes Harry joined up and he did a year in Quetta with the Army, training I think, he was training field ambulances, something like

that, and then he was with a unit, casualty clearing unit which departed from Quetta in 1940, and I was at the same time invited to go and lecture in Kinnaird College in Lahore because unfortunately their Geography professor had had a riding accident and broken her neck and died very suddenly and of course they could not get anybody out from home and their own students weren't sufficiently qualified to take on a teaching job so I went to Lahore with two children and two dogs and lived in the staff house and it was very pleasant indeed and Harry set off on one of these military trains I knew they were vaguely going to Madras, but it was just at the time when Singapore fell, and I hadn't a clue whether they had got to Singapore or not until we finally got something from Rangoon saying, 'Safe crossing', it wasn't at all clear where he'd got to, but nevertheless he'd got to Rangoon about the same time that the Japs started bombing, so the government had all gone, the lunatic asylum had been opened up and everybody and all the poor people were allowed to wander about so Harry's unit were told they could use the you, lunatic asylum so they found themselves feeding these people as well as their own troops and eventually they got on a boat and went up the Irriwaddy taking all the passengers all the wounded they could.

J.W. : Right, so he, he then was in Burma subsequently ?

Mrs. H. : So he was in Burma in this what they called the Lost Army the Forgotten Unit you see I mean nobody they had no air cover but they were told well they did two trips up the Irriwaddy to Mandalay and off loaded their patients and came down and got more you see they had had that awful Sitang crossing I don't know if that comes in to your history of the War but the Japs chased our troops back to the Sitang which is one river east of the Irriwaddy and our chaps were trying to get away and some imbecile blew up the bridge while they were still on the wrong side so there were an awful lot of casualties anyway that was all part of the job I suppose.

J.W. : Right and so when was it that your husband came back from Burma ?

Mrs. H. : He came back he, they took their second lot of patients up and they were told to scupper their boat and to walk and the instructions from General Slim were you've got to try and arrive in Imphal in sufficient order to set up a hospital there, so they had two hundred miles to walk and their only means of transport were bullock carts so to start with the commanding officer got a kick on the knee and had to be flown home so Harry found himself in charge of a unit and so they did they walked and finally got to Imphal and set up a hospital which grew and grew and grew, you know, they inhabited the little hospital there, and the school and the giant temple and all sorts of things just because so many of the patients had malaria.

J.W. : Yes I've spoken to a number of Indian Army officers who .. .

Mrs. H. : Yes well they had to walk through something called the [Kaboor] Forest which was absolutely known for its malaria mosquitoes, but they took a few days to come out with the fever, so they got mostly to Imphal and just collapsed.

J.W. : So how long was your husband at Imphal at the hospital there?

Mrs. H. : Well he was I don't know exactly how long.

J.W. : Well, just vaguely.

Mrs. H. : Well I suppose he was there most of a year, and once he'd got rid of most of these patients no probably less than that and then he came home on leave course it was a very long way down the Brahmaputra across India to the Sind to the Indus and then up to Quetta. However he did get there.

J.W. : And so how long was his leave then ?

Mrs. H. : Oh just quite a short time and then he went down and joined a unit somewhere near Poona somewhere like that.

J.W. : So he was with that .. .

Mrs. H. : He was still with the Army.

J.W. : Till the War finished ?

Mrs. H. : Well he wasn't quite, he was with this unit, oh they did quite a lot of training in places around, Ranchi was one of them and then they went up back up to Kohima which is near Imphal and they were settling in there and they were getting organised for going back into Burma when Sir Henry, Harry's father who knew Auchinleck the General Commander, and said we're absolutely desperate for doctors. They had taken the really good surgeon from Peshawar and sent him a way down to Vellore in South India and allright Auchinleck agreed that these hospitals were quite valuable from keeping peace among the Frontier people and so Harry was called up and sort of said, 'Have you been complaining?', 'No', 'I've got a letter from Commander-in-Chief to say you've to go home'. He was furious he didn't want to go at all he'd just got his unit well organised, however he had to do that, he came back and he went to Peshawar I presume.

J.W. : And so can you .. .

Mrs. H. : I was stuck in Lahore.

J.W. : Still teaching in .. ?

Mrs. H. : With three children by this time.

J.W. : So how long was your husband in Peshawar, can you remember vaguely ?

Mrs. H. : Well he must have been there that winter because we were up in Quetta by the summer I remember him coming up and he had Bell's Palsy which means that half your face in paralysed and one eye was a way down here and his mouth was a away down here, and he looked absolutely ghastly, and he had developed that just before he left Peshawar so that it had got worse in the train. However he recovered eventually although he still had a funny side to his face.

J.W. : And, no, what, let me see.. .

Mrs. H. : Anyway so then, well, then we worked in Quetta, oh that's right we used to do Quetta in the summer and either Bannu or Peshawar in the winter so we were perpetually moving.

J.W. : And did you find that very unsettling or did you get into the rhythm ?

Mrs. H. : Well the silly thing is, was once the War was on you didn't think about going home, you knew you were there for the duration and so you just accepted all these peculiarities, and you did your best, and officially when you moved from one mission to another furniture was provided. I mean you had furnished accommodation, very peculiar furniture sometimes, but nevertheless, anyway it just, you just sort of accepted it really, and the children and the children they were very lucky, they went to a school in Peshawar in the winter and then they went because there was (*sic*) so many wives in Quetta who was left what we used to call the abandoned wives cause their husbands were away and they set up a little school in Quetta, so these kids started with a school in Lahore in winter and then they went to Quetta in the summer, I mean school when you're only five or six that's just fun.

J.W. : And so doing that sort of alternation how long did that sort of go on for ?

Mrs. H. : Must have gone on for about most of three years because we didn't come home till about '46.

J.W. : To Scotland ?

Mrs. H. : Well it was sometimes to Peshawar and we had a year in Bannu and we were back up in Quetta ..

J.W. : Sorry, when you, but when you said you came home, do you mean back to ... ?

Mrs. H. : Oh we came back to Britain in 1946.

J.W. : And how long were you back in Britain for at that stage ?

Mrs. H. : well I went out with the youngest child in the autumn of '48, but Harry had meanwhile gone out in '47 at the time of Partition or shortly after there was a sort of S-O-S from the Governor of the Punjab for young doctors, or any doctors, particularly Christian doctors to go and help out with these awful groups you know, what are they called [*kauflas*] of refugees coming, Muslims from India and Hindus from Pakistan, and he responded and there were one or two Americans (the doorbell rings, and **Mrs. H.** answers it).

J.W. : So you husband was out at Partition helping with the situation then ?

Mrs. H. : Yes, he went out I suppose it must have been September and he got back I suppose just in time for Christmas.

J.W. : And do you remember him talking about that at all, what was that like ?

Mrs. H. : Oh yes he talked about it and I've got one or two quite, I'm trying to do his memoirs and I've got so far, there's quite a good account of an interview he had with the British Council I think, or, and with the C.M.S. talking about what it was like.

J.W. : Very unsettling I would imagine, but, so, you, let me now place myself here, so you were both out there eventually ?

Mrs. H. : Yes well, I went out by boat, no sorry, Harry went out by boat in the autumn of '48, and I went out by air after Christmas, having had Christmas with the children and got the two older ones organised with their grandparents and with holidays and that sort of thing.

J.W. : So that, sorry.

Mrs. H. : So we joined up again in the January 1949.

Mrs. H. : And that was back again in Quetta was it ?

Mrs. H. : I think it was, no I went to Lahore, I went to Kinnaird, they were still short, and he went to Peshawar, so that once more in another place and separated and so on.

J.W. : And you were both sort of based in these places, you weren't ... ?

Mrs. H. : Just for the winter really.

J.W. : Oh right.

Mrs. H. : Then for the summer we both went to Quetta.

J.W. : Right okay, you've been all over all the time. So how long were you based in those places vaguely ?

Mrs. H. : Well we were, I'm saying '46, well finally we came home in '42, in '52.

J.W. : '52, yeah, and ... .

Mrs. H. : And then we decided to get the family home in order to be educated.

J.W. : Right, and so what were you doing while you were at home in Scotland ?

Mrs. H. : (laughs) I did some supply teaching, but Harry was invited by the General Secretary of the C.M.S. to try to do something about training not missionaries but other people who were going overseas.

J.W. : Right okay.

Mrs. H. : And he did, I mean he spent about three months going round in circles asking all sorts of people questions and in touch with the Colonial Office and Crown Agents and these various people to send people abroad and finally they started having courses and that was based in Farnham in Surrey.

J.W. : Right, oh yes.

Mrs. H. : There was a big house called Moor Park where we had things for about four years and meanwhile Farnham Castle was empty and after a bit it was suggested that we should see what we could do about using that and of course and of course that meant approaching the Church Commissioners and so on, but eventually it must have been about '60, 1960 we moved into Farnham Castle and it's still there.

J.W. : That's the Overseas ...

Mrs. H. : It's called the something for Overseas Briefing, International School for Overseas Briefing or something like that.

J.W. : I can probably, you know, I can, that's not a problem.

Mrs. H. : They started it just as Oversaes Service and then they decided that got too mixed up with government because we were not government.

J.W. : And so can you tell me a bit about the work that you did there?

Mrs. H. : Well we were there for ten years. I did the house keeping, but when we were at Moor Park thses first four years we didn't have to do the house keeping they organised that and we as it were paid rent to them. The Nuffield Trust had come up with money that helped with that then when we went to the Castle we had to do our own housekeeping of course and Harry in all cases was involved in the courses particualrly the courses for the East but even in the Africa courses he was to do the first meeting and the last meeting and that sort of thing and then there were gradually more staff came and joined, people with expert knowledge of West Africa, of East Africa, of the Carribean and so on.

J.W. : So it was generally training people.

Mrs. H. : Training people for going overseas.

J.W. : What it would be like and what it's like to work in these different cultures.

Mrs. H. : Like an adult [?] yes that's right the training courses lasted for five dyas and they learned about the politics and the culture and the religion and so on and when they brought their wives we used to have special sort of sessions for wives so they could sort of ask questions for example it worked very well.

J.W. : So that was for ten years.

Mrs. H. : Well we left in 1964.

J.W. : Right and was that back to Pakistan again?

Mrs. H. : Yes.

J.W. : Right and the same work down in Quetta?

Mrs. H. : Where did we go? '64 yes '64 we went to Quetta and because he felt he was very out of touch his brother was in charge and Sir Henry had retired by this time, his brother was in charge so Harry worked with him that first year and then he went to Peshawar and again it was this Peshawar in the winter and Quetta in the summer but meanwhile we did two trips to England because first of all the two elder boys decided to get married in 1966 and we, but of course we had no leave due to us so we had to try and

find our cheapest way of getting home and the cheapest way was to go via Aeroflot through Russia it was great fun.

J.W. : Yes.

Mrs. H. : Twenty-four hours in Moscow and home we got. Coming back was another matter. The Aeroflot was late getting to London do they had to put us up in a hotel for the night and when we got on it they said, 'Oh well, we're overbooked, would you mind going first class?' and we said, 'Oh no not at all' so we went first class it was very nice but by the time we g Moscow we'd missed our connection so we waited but we always managed when we had to wait to persuade Aeroflot that we were their responsibility and therefore they put us up and gave us cheques, coupons for meals and so on, so we had a very good time, we went to the opera, we saw all the museum places and so on.

J.W. : How wonderful.

Mrs. H. : And eventually we got a plane that was going on to Tashkent but when we'd sat a long time in the airport they said, 'Oh no, the plane's not going to Tashkent there's been an earthquake, so we had another three days in Moscow so we had the cheapest week in an international city that I've ever known and we went to the opera and we went to the ballet and we went to a working church as well as these museums, churches and so on, it was great fun and finally we got back, they really couldn't understand how we were a week late getting back to Pakistan.

J.W. : So then that was through the 60s?

Mrs. H. : That was till '69 and we, he, Harry finally retired in '71.

J.W. : '71 right, and then you finally came back to Scotland?

Mrs. H. : Yes.

J.W. : Now how was it when your husband came to retiring and this sort of thing was there a sort of regret that he was retiring or ... ?

Mrs. H. : Well we were never quite sure whether he really, well we were retiring at that particular, we were due leave anyway. We thought we might come back another time and we never did and there was an Indian doctor took over in Peshawar by that time and there was an English doctor who was very keen on mental health work so the two of them were sort of in charge there I think.

J.W. : Right in fact I've just seen a couple of things here that I've sort of missed out. While you were out just in general over all the years you were out in what is now

Pakistan did you keep much contact with the people at home would you write letters and that sort of thing?

Mrs. H. : Oh yes.

J.W. : And was that very important to do that? Did you need to?

Mrs. H. : Oh yes I think so, I mean to start with you did your weekly letter because the mail went on such and such a day but of course more recently there were air mails and Harry's parents, well his father died during the last time we were out there but his mother was there, my parents were both dead but there were lots of friends, brothers, sisters and so on, oh yes we did quite a lot of letter writing.

J.W. : Right and what about you, I think you sounded so busy that I wonder if you had any time for leisure, so what sort of thing would you do leisure wise?

Mrs. H. : Well in Quetta we played tennis and there was a big swimming pool at the Staff college we used to go up there. In Quetta we had a tennis court at the bottom of the garden but there was also tennis at the club we played there and in Bannu I remember playing golf. I can't remember what we did in Peshawar I think we mostly went for walks there it was a very nice place Peshawar there was a nice golf course, we weren't playing golf but we used to take Peter my little boy and of course while we were in Peshawar I taught him so the mornings were mostly taken up with that by the thing they called the R-N-E-U the Parents' National Educational Union which is an organisation that specialises in people who are teaching abroad and sends out syllabuses and you send back work and you get it graded and so on, so that's what we did.

J.W. : Right now, this is quite a vague question but how about, obviously you're Scottish, how about your sort of Scottish identity while you were there, did you, were there many other Scots?

Mrs. H. : No I think we were more British than Scottish yes I think so.

Because other Scots I've talked to they had their sort of Scottish identity while they were there.

Mrs. H. : Well we didn't have a, I mean I know when my brother went to Africa the Caledionian Society was very important but we didn't have that but we did have, what was this group I think they were doctors who had qualified in Britain and I think there were quite a lot of them at the big hospital in Peshawar and we used to meet with them and among them there were quite a lot who had been educated in Edinburgh.

J.W. : Of course, yes, and presumably there were fellow Scots just among the British people who you ...

Mrs. H. : Oh these were Pakistanis mostly you see who'd been educated in Edinburgh. There is a Pakistani doctor in Livingston now who was a house surgeon under Harry and he's a very good friend.

J.W. : Oh right, interesting, I see, and sorry to jump to keep on jumping chronologically ...

Mrs. H. : No no, that's all right doesn't matter at all.

J.W. : But when we'd come back in early 70s, what happened, how was it settling back into life in this .. ?

Mrs. H. : Well we were, we had all the time kept the flat in Edinburgh which my mother had bought in 1929 and we had let it from time to time and then that last bit when we were abroad our two sons doing medicine and two nieces doing secretarial and two other girls there were six of them shared that flat so that it was so that when we came home we came home to a family house and the boys were all at school by that time but came home for holidays. we had to put them in boarding schools because we never knew when we were coming and going.

J.W. : Sure, sure, but, and when you came back in the 70s what sort of things were you doing then?

Mrs. H. : well for the first year Harry got a job with what's called, as a trained, because he'd been such a time away from the Health Service in fact the Health Service hadn't been invented when he first went out so he had to learn about that, so he found out and he kept on coming across papers that said, 'The young doctor will do so-and-so' well he was sixty by this time so eventually he had to say, 'What is the age limit for the young doctor?' and nobody could find an age limit for the young doctor so he did his year as a trainee with a very nice Dr. Gaitskill who's become a good friend, and after that he joined, he, one of the people who had shared nights with that group but had never moved into their premises he had his own consulting room in Northumberland Street, and harry joined him part-time, they said he must stop working so hard because he had had two heart attacks so Harry went in part-time with him.

J.W. : So presumably with your husband doing that sort of work kept him busy enough and active enough so that the change, because it would seem quite a big change from all the life out in ...

Mrs. H. : Yes yes, it was, it was a big change in many ways but it was, we knew Edinburgh, we had lots of friends in Edinburgh we had our families within reach, and we settld in fairly easily.

J.W. : Right, so even with the sort of jump it wasn't a very unsettling experience, and how about today, in the present day, do you still keep contacts with, I mean you've talked you mentioned people that you know from times in the past, do you still have a sort of strong feeling of contact and affinity with that part of Pakistan?

Mrs. H. : On Pakistan not really very much because, well, the doctor in charge in Quetta who we used to keep up with died very suddenly you know, Pakistani doctor, we never kept up with the Pakistani doctor in charge he was a very queer chap and on the whole not very much really now it's such a long time.

J.W. : Simply because the people you've known ...

Mrs. H. : I mean they've either died, or I'm trying to think ...

J.W. : Do you know who runs the hospital in Quetta now?

Mrs. H. : Well it's something different, I'm not very good I keep saying I must try to find out more about it. I think the C.M.S. have more or less given it up and handed it over to something called the Team Mission which is mostly American I think.

J.W. : No, I haven't heard of it.

Mrs. H. : No, well i don't, I'm afraid I'm just very ignorant.

J.W. : so, I mean, as you say the links ...

Mrs. H. : the last time we went out to Quetta which we did for a short time was 1986 when we went out for the centenary and there were lots of people there that we knew then but we've really lost touch with it since.

J.W. : Yep, times move on, don't they? I, well, I can't think of, I think that's asked pretty much, let me just, anything else I can think of, yes, I think that's everything. can you think of anything else that springs to mind as we've been talking, any other things that you remember from any time?

Mrs. H. : Well, I mean one could amplify a lot of what I've said, you, but, you know, all, I've just said it quickly but I don't think there's anything terribly obvious.

J.W. : Right, oh now, let me, I've just seen something here. I've read something, I've seen, was your husband ordained?

Mrs. H. : Yes.

J.W. : When was that?

Mrs. H. : In 1965 when we went out or '66, '65 perhaps, he had always been aware particularly when we'd been in Bannu that there was never any priest for the Anglican congregation that spoke Pushtu, you see in all the Frontier the Punjabis who come and work there, they speak Punjabi, but the local people speak Pushtu as in Mardan.

J.W. : Yep that's right, I remember.

Mrs. H. : and Harry was always very good at languages and so he felt that he could contribute more because he was always being asked to take services, they had no resident priest in Bannu, but he couldn't take communion and so he thought it would be a good idea to get ordained and at that time there was an English, he was the last English bishop of Lahore and he was first of all ordained deacon and then he came up to Peshawar and about four Pakistanis and Harry (loud crash) - that's something coming through the letterbox - were ordained in Peshawar. We didn't stay that long after that but I mean yes he did, he very often took the English speaking service because the local priest didn't speak very good English but they used to take it in turns to take services but when we came back to this country he became what is called a non stipendiary priest, he was a doctor, but he helped down in a church down St. Philip's down in Logie Green Road I don't suppose you know it at all but it was near where we lived, but for the last twelve years we'd been living out at west Linton, and he used to help out there.

J.W. : Oh yes, I know it, it's lovely out there., and so you're saying he was ordained and it was the Pushtu speaking ...

Mrs. H. : That was what initiated his idea that he should get ordained, but he had always been interested, he'd read a lot of biblical and theological books oh and of course he did in 19 in 1952, '53, it was then that he took a year's training at Coates Hall which is the Episcopal or was in those days the Episcopal training college of the Episcopal Church, but when he had completed that training he didn't get ordained because he was doing this overseas service thing and they didn't want an ordained person it wax civilian and so on so he had thought of it quite a long time before.

J.W. : I was just thinking with these Pushtu speaking people they were Pathans, presumably locals, were they?

Mrs. H. : Yes.

J.W. : Did they encounter quite a lot of problems in that part of the world?

Mrs. H. : Oh if they converted it was a very bad do, yes. there was a very nice man who was determined to become a Christian and he had a lot of nice talks with Harry and he admired him very much, and no he must be ordained, and he went away, it was near Peshawar, he went down to Lahore, he got ordained, and so after he got back they murdered him.

J.W. : yea, I've heard a few stories like that, it's a great shame. So in many ways your husband being ordained it was almost like a support network for those people in the sort of support ...

Mrs. H. : Well that's right.

J.W. : But in general there wasn't that sort of hostility to him with the medical work and that sort of thing?

Mrs. H. : Yes, that's quite right there was no hostility no, in those days anyway.

J.W. : Right, well I think that's everything I can think of just now. Thank you very much.

Mrs. H. : Are you sure? Well I hope you've got something.

J.W. : No, I have, I've got plenty I'm sure, I'll just ...

Tape was switched off.

Dr. D. Najmuddin
Interviewed on 24th February 1998
SA1998.39

The sound quality of the tape is poor due to excessive traffic noise from outwith the school. **J.W.** represents Jeremy Weston, **Dr. N.** Represents Dr. Najmuddin, and **Mrs. N.** Represents Mrs. Najmuddin.

Dr. N. : [**J.W.** had asked Dr. Najmuddin about the founding of the school, and he related how Miss Joan MacDonald] ... and an Indian lady called Miss Singha, S-I-N-G-H-A, they got together and opened this school in 1933 and basically it started off with [just one hundred and fifty children] and so on and among my sisters was one of those pupils and [we had some of them] that's about three years on [they had] girl scouts girl guides kind of thing but [?] very small it's like a [?] and it has grown at one stage to a school where there were more than a thousand children but I owned it my family has owned it after my mother my sister and I owned this is a joint thing but my sister and I bought out the shares which were donated by her children and I was away for years and years because I was in service I'd been an ambassador and all sorts of things all over the place and when we came back I realised that I couldn't really well for one thing I had nothing to do I remember saying you might as well run it as well as you can try to improve it and then we came back slowly we had we reduced the number of children to about maybe six hundred and fifty or so the idea being that it's too crowded it's in a crowded part of the city as you see it wasn't like this you see when I was young this area was beautiful like the Upper Mall the [Jinnah Plaza] the other parks of course there are remnants of these parks even now but the [industry] the slum has sort of taken over it's commercialised the property's becoming more expensive more and more people are buying shops and things like that and so it's not the same on the other hand we I think continue to provide a good sound education at a moderate fee to people of these area they're not very rich people who've got fancy you'll see schools advertised here that have got wall to wall carpeting and everything you're likely to see this quite silly of course because no-one rears a child in Pakistan accustomed to wall to wall carpeting and air conditioning but such institutions exist and they charge a lot of money but we're the opposite we train a young child to grow up in a simple poor developing country atmosphere and over the years this school has produced some very outstanding people like the present prime Minister Nawaz Sharif he has studies here for a few years his younger brother Shahbaz Sharif did his Matric, Matric is our school leaving certificate he did his Matric from here and there should be teachers who've seen both of them I think that you know the teachers come and go a lot of other very important people for instance in the present Secretary General of ['sark' an abbreviation?] Dr. Naim Hasaab he's an ambassador by rank and a Ph.D. he studied here [Nahir Abdul] is one of our famous singers of Pakistan she studied here Usman Pir Zada his wife these are all outstanding sort of people in the field of arts *et cetera* a very famous artist Dr. Ajaz Anwar has studied here in the field of I don't know whether you're interested in Lahore at all you can go and buy his cards [?] beautiful views of the older Lahore ... .

J.W. I think I've seen some.

Dr. N. : Now he studied here also so we are trying to avoid this and we're trying to continue that things become more and more difficult because the area is changing. At the same time for those people who live here it is it's a good school to come from.

J.W. : Can I just ask you ... .

Dr. N. Oh yes.

J.W. : Sorry when the school first started was it just for Christian students or for all students?

Dr. N. : It was not for Christian students in fact there were more religions than there are no I'm sure you see [? Dr. Najmuddin read from the back of a photograph to illustrate this point] First one is called [Bahms] second is called [Mullah] they both Hindus Miss [?] then Miss Macdonald [Jamil] was a Christian friend of mine then there's somebody called Ali or [?] hyphen [?] there were at least three or four religions at that time Sikh, Hindu, Christian and Muslim in that picture of '36. Today of course I don't think we have that more than maybe two or three Christian children and they are ones from daughters and sons of our Christian teachers because we allow them to we give them free tuition because they come through the fact of teaching here their children can study so now [?] at that time and even to know the teaching staff and the student body is mostly Muslim now because you see now this time how it's coming around so that is the difference now. Miss Macdonald I have no idea as to her links back home but after she sold this to my mother which must have been in about somewhere in the '40's probably '42 '43 she and Miss Singha who left and settled in a place called Lucknow , Lucknow you must have heard of India and when she became very old you see she was unmarried and one of the problems of being married in later age is that there's no-one who's no kids around no husband or wife or no other relatives and she was all alone in India and she I do recall she wrote a rather pathetic letter that she's getting very old and people were coming and just taking away furniture from her small home and she wrote a letter to me here saying that could you do something about it at that time I was in the police but I couldn't assume rank in India you see ... .

J.W. : Yes of course.

Dr. N. : It would be a terrible problem but I don't know what I wrote to her but basically this is about as much as I recall of her except that since personally I remember that since she was my godmother every birthday she would turn up there would be the photograph there would be the gifts things like that since I studied here she must have been making a very careful balance between fondness for me as a boy, child and my being a student because only once in my entire life I stood first in class and I went in front of her very proudly and she said, 'Yes, but equal to another' and

she was the two people who stood took she made it very clear although I thought (laughs) I've never done it again so she was that type of correct ... .

J.W. : Very fair.

Dr. N. : Type of lady and she did I know for a fact have connection with other education for instance at that time Kinnaird College was formerly Kinnaird School I had seen one group photograph in which my mother was there my mother was a student at Kinnaird College Miss Macdonald was there and some other Kinnaird students were there only Kinnaird students so she would have had some close link with that college.

J.W. : Right so Kinnaird College then was a school initially for ...

Dr. N. : Initially, initially Kinnaird College was a school which probably taught up to F.A. and now even if you go to Kinnaird today they won't know these things because I'm on the Board of Governors at Kinnaird and they put out a brochure saying that it's only fifty somehting years old which is wrong it's much older than that I know for a fact because my mother studied there.

J.W. : Yes and I know too in terms of what I've read .

Dr. N. : So you see I forgot to tell them and it's wrong you can't you can't project an institution by saying it's younger than it is the older the better sort of thing. Now I don't really know too much about what Miss Macdonald's contribution would have been I don't know I could say off hand that she must have been a religious person because my own parents were very religious and so she because they selected her she must have been a person who was probably very in Christianity *et cetera* she wasn't [very hardline] she must have been a good proper practising Christian beyond that I don't think I can help you.

J.W. : No you've helped me a great deal just with the information you've given me. Was there so what was the you've already said it was a sort of multi faith school if you like. Was there much Christian input in the say the assembly and this sort of thing or did they try and cater for ... ?

Dr. N. : Ah yes look at that time because the British were ruling that was then India the in the assembly all these things it was totally Christian . Now the Christians nowadays we are in a minority we get pushed around but we forget that in those days the Bible would be read out you see and there would not you see and there would be in Catholic schools the Catholic system was taught and in all schools it's not to be fair I mean if you were going to give a modern context you see but that was then that was the ruler and the ruled so they said, 'All right you come to our schools you are to learn this' it was a simple as that.

J.W. : Do you remember did students mind that do you think being taught that?

Dr. N. : No I don't think students minded it because students probably didn't know too much about it ... .

J.W. : Yes they didn't really care.

Dr. N. : There was one good friend of mine who died recently he was very senior in the police also and he used to always tell me that I used to get up that Sister so-and-so Mother so-and-so would say, 'Ah look he knows his catechism better than anybody else good Muslim boy he knows much more than you Christians' so we used to tease him and so that was of course right back but these were probably much better liberal background families who would accept these standards and perhaps in the back of their heads they had to accept that, 'Ah they're rulers so we shouldn't argue too much' let's be honest I mean this must have been a fact ... .

J.W. : Yes of course.

Dr. N. : But it was accepted at that time there would not have been any arguments. Today it is the opposite again there are not too many arguments my children have been through school and they have learned Islamiat and they did very well because it's one of the easiest subjects it is it's like so that is roughly what I recall of the religious aspect of it . There was no attempt to impose the Christian faith there was no attempt to convert people it was a very fair [policy] but at the same time the moral lesson there would be something based on Christianity simple as that. We were much leaning much more towards Christianity than say modern America United States where you know that they have this argument that , 'Ah we are secular and you can't teach' so there was much more it was much more stronger than that the situation for Christianity.

J.W. : And let's think maybe we can talk a bit about the school today. How many students do you have here now?

Dr. N. : About 650 (six fifty) ish or so.

J.W. : And is that a normal sort of size for most schools like this here?

Dr. N. : I would say that our building is inadequate for that but the pressure is such you know we already we claim to be thirty-eight per cent literate but actually I don't think that that figure is correct either so we this is as long as we we need to do a lot I mean countries like Sri Lanka *et cetera* are up to a hundred per cent literacy that's where we're left behind and so there's a great pressure for admission and to get people in but basically I think for a school this size we shouldn't really have more than about three hundred pupils this is what I think would be proper three hundred four hundred .

J.W. :And you've said how your sort of area is very much local you're educating children from this part of Lahore. Is there do you have a lot of applications for places does the name and the prestige of the school?

Dr. N. : Yes you have alot of applications but basically from people in this surrounding area one must recognise that a large number of schools very good schools have opened up very very expensive and the [new age of ?] Pakistani and the average Pakistani who will now prefer to go for something expensive that's air conditioned it's just I mean that's the world now you've got a lot of schools I forget how you pronounce it ['shoe-flat'?] or something like that and they charge a tremendous amount of money and I went there once just to look at things and all the boys are wearing what's that Rolex [Oysters?] and things like that to school and coming to school in fancy cars so there's that a pressure for that education also and maybe it's better I cannot say because maybe that's the type of thing that's linked directly to Harvard and MIT and Oxford that's possible.

J.W. :Yes yes I can see that myself yea. Let's think you were saying you're on the Board of Governors at Kinnaird College ... .

Dr. N. : [?].

J.W. : When did Kinnaird go from being if you know from being a school to the because it's now higher ...?

Dr. N. : That is very difficult for me to say I have a lot of photographs and family albums where some would say Kinnaird School but in fact these are in Islamabad in fact I don't really know where they are cause I realise that I at least care for them because my mother's in them but the next generation they don't even recognise my mother so I so you know they don't now occupy a very important part of our life anymore I'm reconciled to the fact so I couldn't give you that fact but I think Kinnaird itself might give you that date.

J.W. :What level do they teach now then at what level are they teaching at Kinnaird?

Dr. N. : At Kinnaird? They teach up to the basically Batchelors is what they teach and then they also have Masters students and at that level there's a link with the University whereyou are a member of the College but basically you attend University classes. In addition Kinnaird has moved recently into the computer field they're doing that type of teaching there are, some special courses for ladies they are even into small things like talking English I don't know it's quite, TFL something about it's like the it is a course on conversational English as far as I understand they'll do things of this type also (**J.W.** :TEFL) No not TEFL, TEFL is an American thing you know but this is very close to it it's the same sort of thing they have courses like that also in the evening but the basic core of Kinnaird is teaching girls from Matric or A-Levels, er, O-Levels a Batchelors degree and then beyond that some to Masters they

have even gone in to basically I think they've gone into French courses too maybe a Masters in that I'm not a hundred per cent sure of that.

J.W. : And I've heard Kinnaird is a prestigious place it has ..

Dr. N. : Yes Kinnaird has a ... .

J.W. : A reputation.

Dr. N. : It has great prestige it became later on but back then in the church but that's not Scottish but er .

J.W. : It's difficult to tell I mean it could be Scottish .

Dr. N. : To us ... .

J.W. : Or even for me ... .

Dr. N. : You see we've got an M-C or something and a Mc something then your mind you then Khan and a Pathan you see mind .

J.W. : In fact that reminds me of something I was asking Sarkis last night. When I was walking here yesterday I see there's a Maclagan school just down the road. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Dr. N. : Maclagan Lady Maclagan I don't know anything about Lady Maclagan because my aunt this used to be a government school probably still is and maybe Lady Maclagan was somebody in government or the wife of somebody like the Governor or somebody and the institution was named after her it's continued to be called that for a long time and it's my aunt who was in government service was the Principal of that she's dead now long time ago so that's not now but I don't know if I can tell you very much about it except it's right across the corner but that also has come as this part of Lahore was sort of getting eaten up by the Old City and the commercial district so I don't think education has too much of a future here we ultimately have to shift probably you know [to a] place [?].

J.W. : Where would you shift to?

Dr. N. : Oh well I don't know I'm not thinking of when but ideally speaking generally it's thought that if you move you have of course that's not true if you've ever seen [Al Aza] University which is the oldest university probably in the world in Cairo it's in a dump [Al Aza] university you don't look like it] just like this doesn't look like a school that doesn't look like a university so what you teach them is different to what the surroundings are but generally people in our type of situation are shifting away into well the suburbs almost buying cheaper land so they have

more space so that is one way of doing it I don't know I've never thought of that basically

J.W. : Because you'd have to start right from scratch wouldn't you?

Dr. N. : No it's a very difficult thing one way or the other then again you are letting down those people who are perhaps not very rich who are middle class and belong to this area and who need education so in that point of view ... .

J.W. : So it's in the two isn't it?

Dr. N. : You can't just walk away because you wanted cleaner surroundings .

J.W. : Yea right well (Tape is paused, **Dr. N.** Describes his work in narcotics control, and Mrs. Najmuddin comes in)

Mrs. N. : I think you have to talk to Miss , Mrs. Phailbus.

Dr. N. : The principal.

Mrs. N. : The principal of Kinnaird College.

Dr. N. : She might know about it.

Mrs. N. : But Kinnaird College was started by a Miss Kinnaird who was again a Scots lady and she started it in another part of Lahore it started as Kinnaird High School it still exists and then they upgraded it to a college it used to be on a road called Lake Road Kinnaird College was on Lake Road, my mother used to be one of the students there when she was a young lady. Then they shipped it out to this area it was a beautiful place just like Aitchison College you'll find Kinnaird College very lovely and we have had I went to Kinnaird for a short while too and there have been missionary ladies from Scotland and from the United States and Britain throughout this illustrious life it's been a wonderful educational institution.

J.W. :I've found some records in Scotland you were saying there was...

Mrs. N. : There was a Miss McNair ... .

J.W. : Yes Isabel McNair I remember.

Mrs. N. : You'll find she died just recently about three years ago three or four years ago I think and she was looked after by Miss Mangat Rai, Miss Mangat Rai was the Principal of Kinnaird College for a very long time and she served it served this institution and she retired she settled in Scotland where Miss McNair was a very feeble lady and so she looked after her and Miss Mangat Rai died in Scotland too about three years ago she was Professor at the College when my mother was a young

lady and Dilshad's aunt Mrs. Najmuddin, [Milal] Najmuddin she was a contemporary of Miss Mangat Rai and they all served Kinnaird College you'll find it fascinating if you meet Mrs. Phailbus because she can give you all the historical details and you can find them in her archives in the College.

J.W. : I'd like to do that yes you've been very helpful thank you.

Tape is stopped.

Miss Nicol
Recorded on Friday, 27th February 1998
SA1998.39

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Miss N.** Represents Miss C. Nicol.

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston I'm recording Miss Nicols (*sic.*) in Sialkot and it's Friday the twenty-seventh of February 1998. If you could tell me first about your life before you came to Pakistan what you ...?

Miss N. : Well I was a teacher in Fife and I had always been going to be a missionary and when I had been at university I had been a friend of the Overseas Church which keeps you in touch with missionaries and things (Miss Nicol addresses a member of staff in Urdu) and I had more or less been brought up under the influence of an aunt who wanted to be a missionary in the nineteen teens and with being the oldest girl in a big family had never been free to go and she came and helped my mother when I was born and helped to bring us up and brought me up more or less that I would be a missionary in her place and I did when I was teaching in Fife I did come to decide that maybe Fife was a big enough mission field for me (laughs) and that I didn't need to go to go anywhere else. Then I was asked just out of the blue to look out for I was going to kirk week in Dundee and I was asked to look out for this Indian minister and to look after him. Now I was asked to do this by somebody I didn't know and however and the first person I met in Dundee was the said Indian minister and but he was actually from Sialkot he was on he was in Jammu which is on the other side of the border so I spent the week in Dundee I had never been to Dundee in my life so we spent the week exploring it together in the free time we had and then the next week I was in this minister's house back in [Kessock] and so I took this minister home for the weekend and then we went to [Kessock] together and well before the end of that time he'd convinced me that if you're called to go to another country as a missionary it's not denying you know you're bound to feel that you're a missionary where you are as well, so then I applied to the Church of Scotland who wanted to send me to the top of Mount Kenya and I wasn't having it so I came to Pakistan. I also came I fought all the way until I wanted to be a woman's worker doing evangelistic work amongst women and Christian teaching and the people in Edinburgh were, 'Oh but you're a teacher and we want to send you as a teacher' and I said, 'No, no' so I had all this battle. The result was that in the end they appointed me to be a to work with the Bible teachers but I was really ready by then to do about anything the Church asked me which was just as well because when I came here the Church started to say, 'If we ask you to teach will you teach?' and so I was able to say yes without having any struggles.

J.W. : So when was it that you came here first here?

Miss N. : I came in 1961 February 1961 and I did language study.

J.W. : Where was that?

Miss N. : Here, here for two month and then in Murree in language school for four months and then just at the end of that I was asked I was told that there was a great emergency in the school for missionaries' children and so they were looking for lan.. even for language students so I ended up being house mothers to thirteen little boys up to December and then the school had been having staffing problems and some of the parents said if the boys were going to have another change of house mother in March they wouldn't send their children back so the school asked me to go back again at the beginning of March so I was there March April May again and then in language school until I did my exams at the end of August and then I started working in Gujrat which is where you're going with Fateh [?] and as the principal of the school because Christie Watson who was the missionary there had had to go home very suddenly and she'd gone in April and hadn't been replaced and so I replaced her at the end of September and I was there I enjoyed myself in Gujrat I had the school it wasn't a boarding school so there was lot's of time to do things with the Sunday school and the woman's fellowship and oh different things on different days of the week and then in 1969 the very senior person here was retiring and the Church transferred me here to take over from her so I cam here in the autumn of '69 still hoping that a Pakistani would be appointed to principal of the school and I wouldn't need to take over this big school here. However it didn't happen the Church just didn't want to do that so I had to allow myself to be appointed and so that was me and then in 1971 when the war broke out we all had to go the church quite naturally they had enough to look after themselves we're really a liability to them and they asked us to go when the British Embassy people were saying so we went. The war was almost finished before we went but that took all that time for the British Embassy to make arrangements ... .

J.W. : I remember the Scotts saying how they'd been evacuated too.

Miss N. : And now we arrived back in Edinburgh to be met by Willie Young and his wife who were on furlough and they (laughs), 'We're going back tomorrow we don't know why you've come back' so actually his wife didn't go but he did but what he did he went up into Afghanistan and then whenever the war finished he came down through Peshawar to Sialkot and we went back on the first plane at the end of January on the first plane to come back to Pakistan from England but in the meantime I was able to correspond with Willie Young and see if we could take this chance to get Miss [Vichta] the Pakistani person who was so who was quite ready to take over the school and so he did and so when I came back I handed over to her and then the government took over that later on that year took over all other schools and it was good because it meant that she was officially head of the school Miss Martin was headmistress but she was over government retiring age so she was retiring but because [Shirka] was principal she was head so she became the government headmistress and I was out of it anyway and it but it

also meant that we had good co-operation as to just what we did and what we didn't do what we gave to the government and what we didn't give I mean we gave everything that belonged to the school to the government and we had secured our hostel by building walls inside but we left enough room for the school to function properly because I mean we reckoned that after all it is the government's job to educate its people and we should co-operate with that. It didn't quite work out like that because the standard of education just went down and it's still very laid back it's very very bad but it meant then that I was free to look after the hostel which we kept under the Church and it's only for Christian girls always has been and the it also meant that we had to start sending them to different schools we couldn't get them all necessarily into our own school and we did this for years and then it became very expensive transport wise we had a bus doing two journeys ... .

J.W. : Oh I see right they weren't living there.

Miss N. : And we had six or seven *tānigās* ... .

J.W. : Oh goodness.

Miss N. : And so in the end we started teaching them ourselves and out of that this new school has grown which we're struggling to make a building and we have this new hostel which was money which had been set aside in Holland for the Church here really for a college boys' hostel but that also with nationalisation left us without a college so it was used they agreed to use it for the girls but for political reasons our contractor is not finishing it ... .

J.W. : Oh I see right.

Miss N. : It's very difficult.

J.W. : Right and is the work here the mission work here was it and is it just Church of Scotland or are there other missionaries from other ..?

Miss N. : Err no well the Church of Scotland had come to work in Sialkot in 1857 Thomas Hunter and just at the same time the American Presbyterian missionary Martin he also arrived in Sialkot and they had a mutual agreement to work in different parts of the city.

J.W. : Right and that's why you as you showed me you have the one part American U.P. and one part Church of Scotland.

Miss N. : Yes and the Americans also have a mission hospital here. Now the Scottish Presbyterian Church here became Sialkot Church Council when it became run by the

local people in 1953 and then in 1970 the Sialkot Church Council became part of the Church of Pakistan which is the American Methodist Church and the Anglican Church that came out of the Church of England and the Church of New Zealand and Australia and the Scandinavian Lutheran Churches and the Scottish Presbyterians, and the American Presbyterians Church did not join the Union so they're now the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan and we're part of the Church of Pakistan and the Church of Pakistan has eight dioceses and nine bishops.

J.W. : So where is the ... .

Miss N. : The extra bishop?

J.W. : The extra bishop?

Miss N. : The extra bishop is an area bishop for the Gulf and looks after the Pakistanis who work in the Gulf basically because the Pakistani Church in the Gulf would be a dreadful headache to the Bishop of Cyprus in whose area they come and I think they thought it was better to have a Pakistani bishop to look after them.

J.W. : And are the relations on a cordial basis do they work quite well between the Church of Pakistan and the Presbyterian Church?

Miss N. : Oh yes I mean our bishop here the Bishop of Sialkot actually came into the Church of Pakistan from the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan and quite a few of our ministers and elders and people have come and it really a lot depends on who you happen to be born and brought up which church you're a member of.

J.W. : Well of course yes.

Miss N. : And now of course in Sialkot you have that and you have all sorts of Apostolic churches and Brethren and Pentecostals and every sort of deviation and Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists .

J.W. : And with that wider Christian community it all works presumably quite well or ?

Miss N. : Yes it does on the whole and it means the pastors of the church they've got competition they have to work hard or people will go off their faith will go off to somebody else ...

J.W. : So it's quite invigorating for work in many ways.

Miss N. : Yes.

J.W. : I see right.

Miss N. : But it's sad because you have this huge Muslim community and then the Christians seem, appear to be all divided and you have the National Council of Churches in which we have the Church of Pakistan the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan and the Salvation Army and I think a few other odd bods which gives one sort of united base but it is it does cause problems with the Muslims to have so many...

J.W. : With the wider perceptions of the community.

Miss N. : ... and then of course the Roman Catholic Church is a very big church and it's not part of the Church of, the National Council of Churches and again you have a group within the National Council who would like them to come in and you have another group who don't want them to ... .

J.W. : Don't want them to.

Miss N. : And the Catholics are equally divided it is difficult but to have one united voice would be very effective. (**Miss N.** points to the roof of the School) The girls are washing their clothes and of course they like to put them at this end where they never get the sun and where they never dry but it means they can look out at the big wide world (laughs) they feel like prisoners.

J.W. : Do you have, what do you what ages are you teaching in the school here?

Miss N. : The school we have from nursery class up to tenth class which is school leaving.

J.W. : And are they taking Matric here or ?

Miss N. : Yes and in the hostel we have also girls who go to Government College right up to BA level we have three in the first year and two in third year and five or six in the final BA one in BSc. .

J.W. : Right okay let's think what else and how many approximately students do you have here?

Miss N. : Well in the school we have about seven hun.. just over seven hundred in the hostel we have two hundred and fifty.

J.W. : Right a lot of people to cater for to look after and with the is the new building is that going to be dealing with the same size are you hoping to expand or ?

Miss N. : Well we really well we really need more that the present building to cope with what we already have I mean at the moment we have six classrooms which we're using but I mean they don't have doors and windows and they just have bricks laid in the floor it's not plastered over or anything. I've had the walls plastered and whitewashed to make it light and decent looking. The ceiling's not done because the roof's not finished and now we've got them on to doing the roof today and we've just put other people on because the contractor's just not coming near us so it's very primitive and then we still have classes to take here and the Secondary School classes are also sitting in the hostel accommodation we've nowhere for them here. The primary we sit this down this road and in the little building down here but its roof is so unsafe that we've now stopped sitting in it.

J.W. : And how about I've read in missionary archives and I'm aware that certainly in the past missionaries would go back on furlough you have tours of churches. Does this still happen now do you visit?

Miss N. : Yea well we go we're supposed to go for four months every two years which to me is just ridiculous and I just don't do it.

J.W. : Because it's too long?

Miss N. : Yes it's too frequent and then too long in the present situation. I mean when I first came out we did five years and went home for a year but in those days you went by boat and it took three weeks on the boat and three weeks back and then you were a big big group of missionaries and you handed over to each other and looked after each others' work and nothing changed whereas now even if you go away for two or three months and come back things have changed .

J.W. : Presumably is that because there simply aren't the volume of missionaries anymore or?

Miss N. : Yea well I'm the only one in the Diocese that we have and the Church of Scotland has one other lady missionary in the Church of Scotland in Gujranwala forty miles away. She's in the United Bible Training Centre which is not a Church of Pakistan institution so she's independent and we have a couple in the seminary in Gujranwala which is a Presbyterian Church of Pakistan institution so they're also and we have the Sneddons in Mardan who are Church of Pakistan they're with the Church and all the other missionaries of the Church of Scotland are in Murree in the school for missionaries' children ... .

J.W. : Ah yea the Murree Christian School.

Miss N. : Which is again a different type of ..

J.W. : Right, work.

Miss N. : Aha.

J.W. : Right let me think, what about the future of the school.

Miss N. : This is of course what concerns because when you're working with women in this country and young women all the people on the boarding staff are my own former pupils now except one who's not here and we don't know whether she'll get back to us or not because she's retired from government service and she had spent all her life here in mission service and then was nationalised but her family at the moment are needing her and so she's not able to be here but the younger ones are they're all going to get married and go and so it's the turnover and people keep saying to me, 'Oh you must train somebody to take over you must train somebody to take over' and I sort of say, 'Well I'm training people all the time' but you can't train one person you know that this person will take over because ... .

J.W. : You put all your eggs into one basket.

Miss N. : That person just doesn't appear just like that and I feel when it's the time for me to go the right person will be there.

J.W. : Let's hope so.

Miss N. : I mean [Kauso] the matron as I said this morning from the time she was a little girl they old matron who has quite an old lady sort of had her hand on her as a she was just the right sort of person to be the future matron and when she left school she wasn't all that bright at school she didn't pass the Matric and but I sent her to Multan to do a nursery nurses training and she's excellent with small children.

J.W. : That's what you need isn't it?

Miss N. : She's excellent with people altogether and then from there she got experience in one of the hostels down there and then she was back home and she was working in a school and just when the old matron was ready to retire and her family were saying, 'Come to us come to us' of course this father came and said you know it is a problem her getting going to and from the job she's got can you think of anything for her and I said, 'Just send her' and you know she was just she was ready to come at the time when we needed her.

J.W. : So it's very much things fit into place don't they?

Miss N. : Things fit into place and I don't I mean in the church here so many things are planned and almost plotted is a word better than planned and whenever you mention a person or training up a person for a job you immediately create those for and those against.

J.W. : That's a shame isn't it?

Miss N. : Which is not a lot of the padres the senior padres say this hostel it'll run well the girls will be looked after so long as you're here and I say, 'That's rubbish' they say, 'Oh no' I say, 'Well if you say it won't run after I'm not here it's only because you won't let it run. You'll say put a Pakistani lady in and the minute she disagrees with you you'll say 'Out'. You can't do that with me', and they laugh and they know it's true cause they do it with each other but it does make a problem and if you get a married person here then there's always the problem of their children of relationships boys and girls and the people like Miss Martin whom you met this morning the old dedicated people who chose not to marry and spent their lives in very dedicated service well you don't get that kind of dedication now because I think fewer girls remain unmarried and they don't really expect to.

J.W. : It's a different attitude isn't it? And the same I suppose with the sort of metropole in Scotland there aren't so many people coming forward these days for the mission service either.

Miss N. : Yes.

J.W. : Oh well let's hope things work out .

Miss N. : But it is and the school and when you see what happens in the church every decision is made on political grounds and very unsuitable people are sometimes appointed.

(Tape is switched off)

Transcript of an interview with Dr. Marie Ogilvie
Thursday, 1st August, 1996.
SA1996.62

(The text that follows omits approximately five to ten minutes of recording, which was omitted due to a technological oversight on my part. The material covered at that stage concerned basic details of when Dr. Ogilvie and her parents were on the subcontinent. Having crosschecked these details at a later date via email, they are as follows.)

Dr. Ogilvie's father was the son of a minister from Dundee, and her mother was from Skye. Having trained as a surgeon, he went out to Poona (now Pune) in 1933. He subsequently moved to Tisri in 1935, and then went to Jalalpur in the Punjab in 1937. Dr. Ogilvie's mother had gone to Kalimpong as a teacher to the Church of Scotland Mission Girls School there in 1936. Dr. Ogilvie's parents met and married in Kalimpong in 1939. Dr. Ogilvie's parents returned to the U.K. from 1939-1946 because of the War. During this time they had three children, of whom Dr. Ogilvie is the eldest. Dr. Ogilvie then lived in what became West Pakistan until 1950. Her parents continued to work in Jalalpur until 1965.

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Dr. O.** represents Dr. Ogilvie

J.W. What do you recall of your, your parents' experiences with the people they were with, did, were they, was there ever any sort of hostility or anything like that from people, or did they like them, say because they were running medical facilities obviously, so ... ?

Dr. O. : It's difficult from a child's point of view ... .

J.W. Obviously.

Dr. O. : To remember. I can remember a lot more you know as I grew up as an adult of what it was like. I don't think hostility, no, I think people were very grateful for what was done for them medically, they used to come in large numbers for treatment and were very -I've cases full of letters from grateful patients and things that my father got. My mother when my brothers were older she started a school there and ran that and that was very important in the local community.

J.W. Do you know when that was, exactly, that she ?

Dr. O. : Oh it was after when she went back, after 1953 because when I was there she'd just had this very my sort of, my youngest brother was just born in 1950 so her hands were too full. It was later on.

J.W. Was she running that, who was she running that with, or was it entirely almost by herself?

Dr. O. : No she had a local woman to help her from the sort of Womens' Guild I think.

J.W. Okay, and you were saying earlier how it was a Scottish mission and how you know, do you think, I've read in certain books an idea of Scottish people somehow integrating better than other people, say English people for example. Do you think that there's an element of truth in that, or, can, I mean from your, obviously as a child it would ...

Dr. O. : Yes, I have no idea. The people that I saw from other countries that I saw including England, I mean most of the missionaries we knew were from Scotland, the other people I don't, I'm not, really, can't think of any English people. Some Canadians and Americans, I remember who were very friendly but weren't there for any length of time. Yes I think integration's not really quite what happened but it, you know, they were there to work and to serve and it was ...

J.W. Right, so you never noticed cause I've heard from other people that there was, they said and these were from other missionaries in fact that they certainly thought that the Scots were somehow differently perceived by the people there. In fact their example was compared to Americans. Do you think there was any ... ?

Dr. O. : I really can't say from my own experience, I'm afraid not.

J.W. Because you were so young at the time, difficult to say, no, that's fine. How about your parents and maybe yourself. Did they keep much contact with Scotland by letter or with the sort of networks, you know, the sort of missionary societies that were, say, supporting them?

Dr. O. : Oh yes indeed both with their families and friends but all missionaries they had patrons in this country, they still do, and they would write letters home describing their work and of course my father would have to make reports all the time to one-two-one George Street, the Headquarters of the Church of Scotland, the Foreign Mission Committee that sent them out to work, but they would certainly keep in contact with the local groups that were supporting them by letter and then when they came home on furlough they, I mean most of the year that they had on furlough was not holiday, it was deputation work. My father, I can remember later on when I was at school in Edinburgh, my father when he came home on furlough would have a short break with us but then he had to travel round speaking at meetings and raising support for, you know, they raised money for the new nurses' home and whatever he would talk at all this all the missionaries did that, and still do.

J.W. And how was it when you were at school here, how did you find that having been ... ?

Dr. O. : Personally I was very fortunate in that I was the eldest and so I was nearly ten when my parents went back and left, this was the eldest of us in this country and I suppose I was relatively independent at that stage. I mean it was a great wrench being separated from them and I can remember crying a lot the Christmas they went back and everything, but I coped with being I was at a boarding school there were two of us, two missionaries daughters who were at the age and we were given a scholarship that somebody had left in memory of his wife, but most of the missionary children were looked after in a special house for missionaries' children at Cunningham House I don't know if you've heard about that?

J.W. I haven't heard of that particular place, no.

Dr. O. : Well the Church of Scotland ran that for children like us who were at home for schooling and it was run during term time by there was a staff a matron and a cook and another assistant, very nice ladies and so brothers and sisters could live together there and during the holidays we went to stay with relatives. But not, you know, it wasn't so easy for everybody and my the younger children particularly, it was very, I mean a lot of them have not so happy memories of being, I don't think everybody's survived unscathed following separation, it was extremely hard for the parents as well.

J.W. Oh I should imagine.

Dr. O. : Yes.

J.W. And, but where would you go then during the holidays where would that ... ?

Dr. O. : Well, we, if, the shorter holidays Christmas and Easter we would I had a grandmother in Edinburgh and we would stay with her. The longer summer holidays we used to go up to Skye.

J.W. Oh lovely.

Dr. O. : My mother came from Skye and she had brothers there so we had a wonderful, we were looked after really well by our relatives up there.

J.W. Right and, err, how, I'm not sure if I've asked you already but how about the sort of physical conditions, sorry to bring you back from Scotland back to Pakistan, or what is now Pakistan, how did you find the physical life there?

Dr. O. : I don't remember finding it awkward. We had the prickly heat which seemed to be a problem every now and then and it was uncomfortable but and we had to be careful I mean I can see from the pictures that we wore the *topī*, the hat a lot if we were outside and I suspect and I remember playing in where there were fans. There was an electric fan and there was also the *pankhā* the big fans that were pulled by strings by hand so you had I don't know if we had those in the house we were lucky to have a fan there wasn't always electricity there was a generator for electricity so we probably were indoors in the hottest part of the day and obviously we had mosquito nets and everything like that. Where we were on the plains it was hot most of the time and of course just for the heat we had to go for the hottest weather up to the hills. I can remember snow once just one occasion and apparently it fell once during the night and we never saw it we were furious as children because they didn't wake us up we didn't know what snow was and it was gone by the morning. But I'm surprised now because I don't like the heat now at all now and I'm amazed how well I must have stood up to it as a child.

J.W. And did you notice from when you were obviously when you were very small you may not remember so much but did you notice any sort of change in that as you got older did you feel more able to adapt or ... ?

Dr. O. : I really don't know. I'm not aware of it having been a problem at the age I was out.

J.W. Okay, and right. What about, you were saying earlier that you were playing and you learnt things from you *mālī* and you had the staff in the house. can you tell me a little more about them, what you remember about them?

Dr. O. : Yes I know we had an *āyā* and I don't remember her very well. I suspect that she was busy particularly with the younger children and I probably escaped a bit more. There was a young a man called a bearer the man who served the meals and he was just a very young man called Sadiq I remember him very well a very pleasant young man, and well the *mālī* I remember very well because he looked after the gardens and my mother was a very keen gardener and it's quite difficult to garden there but he was very good and there was a lot of produce and everything. I'm afraid we used to go and steal some turnips and things like that that were nice but he also taught us some tricks and things. There were a lot of paraquets and he had a, we used to have, there were round baskets and he showed us how to trap birds and had this basket on its side and a stick holding it open and some grain or something to trap the birds and some long, long string and you were hidden round the corner, I can remember that, silly things like that.

J.W. Right and did your parents keep the same staff most of the time you were there or did they ...?

Dr. O. : Yes there were, a lot of them were there for a long time yes.

J.W. Okay, and what about, do you remember the sort of things you ate, the diet you had when you were there?

Dr. O. : Oh yes very much local food I think and my mother had had a copy of Mrs. Beaton's and for special occasions this was I think I think it was Sadiq actually and not the cook who occasionally liked to really go to town and they really did, I mean they had a wonderful stuff called hare pudding which in fact is sponge sugar it must have been very difficult to make and again rarely ice cream made in one of these tins that if you turn round and round so that when there was a christening or something really special like that there was a lot of effort made to produce something and it was always out of Mrs. Beaton's cook book. That wouldn't be a local thing but we had plenty of, we ate chappattis and all the rest all the time.

J.W. Right and did you ever, for example would you ever have any any anything sent over from this country I know people would have say catalogues and that sort of thing people in other, that's, never anything like that you'd have?

Dr. O. : No I think missionaries certainly not ...

J.W. Yes I think that was more ...

Dr. O. : It was I think you, yes families with more money might. We were, we were there certainly were things sent out there for distributing for goods for distributing to the poor as it were and some of our clothes I think certainly came out of these boxes.

J.W. And how about the sort of did you notice say I suppose being that young when you were in Pakistan and the sort of the conditions of living the sort of everyday sanitation, hygiene, this sort of thing it would be normal to you what was there. Did you in retrospect find it, how can I put this, obviously when you, coming to this country the way that things are dealt with in those respects are different. Did you sort of look back in horror when you saw conditions here?

Dr. O. : No I don't think I mean as a child I think washing is something you don't worry about too much. I know I know one thing we did have problems with because we didn't, the local people have a, they clean their teeth with a special with a twig and we were encouraged to do it because I don't ever remember having a toothbrush or toothpaste and we had we had a nice sort of tin. I remember vaguely I can picture it it was where we washed, but I don't honestly remember the sanitation arrangements at all.

J.W. 'Cause I suppose you went the other way, people coming from here say to there might find it a little odd the conditions there whereas to go the other way is a different thing entirely. How about the sort of, we have we hear say about the club life and this

sort of thing I suppose missionaries as far as I know, and I've heard from missionaries once were not so involved in that sort of thing but you were saying earlier there was a sort of community spirit with the missionaries and they very much helped each other. How, was that their sort of social life?

Dr. O. : Yes indeed there wasn't much else I mean there was nowhere to go, there was no cinema theatre or dances or anything like that. We had a record player I remember a record player and I remember some of the records that we, I mean a hand cranked one and 'Toreador Song' I remember particularly well and one or two things like that which that's when I learned about them and I remember one dreadful occasion when somebody broke some of them but they would go out I mean the occasion these things got broken was because somebody was babysitting for us and my parents went into Gujerat the nearest town for some evening event where people were getting together but there wasn't a great deal of opportunity for much more than that.

J.W. Right and how about this, as a child what did you enjoy doing yourself did you ...

Dr. O. : Playing a lot I don't remember much just playing about it seems sounds daft. I liked reading a lot and I learned to read early so I suspect I read but I don't remember it.

J.W. Right, you, how about in the language ...

Dr. O. : Yes I did learn language I mean I'm told that I mean I can remember very little of it now but I'm told that I could speak it quite well and I even could write and read some of it. I have an old reader that I have with my writing in it but I don't I couldn't read it now. My father had to learn I mean they went to language school when they were out there and they certainly spoke it a lot but my father could actually read it and he would read from the Bible, the Scriptures, in Urdu.

J.W. Right, and did you, so do you remember that was formally taught to you was it, or did you just pick it up from the ...

Dr. O. : Well somebody must have sat down and taught me yes but I don't consciously remember that.

J.W. You don't consciously remember that. Okay, right, so when you came to coming home do you remember that and how you felt?

Dr. O. : Yes I remember that quite well because I was eight and a half then, and my mother was bringing the five children then, one was just a baby six months old home in advance of my father's furlough which was not to be for another year and we were in great excitement because we were coming home in an Argonaut Speedbird a B.O.A.C. plane before the days of jets and we'd been warned by another lady missionary who'd

been on one before that it was terribly cold on the plane so that you had to be very warm and I, my mother had me in a, it must have been thick corduroy green dress I remember it perfectly well and we roasted on the plane it was perfectly hot and everything. We went by train to Karachi and we flew from Karachi to London and we I can remember the journey and seeing the Alps and we stopped in Bahrain I remember as well, arriving in England, falling off the bus whatever bus was taking us from the airport to the station. I seem to have a habit of falling off things one way or another (laughter) yes.

J.W. Do you remember how you felt you would have known at some point I suppose before you left, how did you feel, do you remember how you felt about coming home?

Dr. O. : I remember the excitement and the business about what it would be like to go on and I suspect that it was more a thing of what it was like to go in an aeroplane, I really had no, I know that I had just didn't have any idea of what coming to Scotland was like at all.

J.W. And how did you find it say, well sorry to go back, do you remember at all the people that you mixed among, say the servants these sort of people, and also anybody you knew how did other people who were there who were staying feel about you all coming home, do you remember?

Dr. O. : I think Sadiq particular, the young lad was quite upset to see us going and cause my father was going to live there again for another year before he could come home but of course they were expecting at least some of us to go back though I'm pretty sure my parents' intention as it turned out was that the three of us would stay the three eldest would stay in Britain for school.

J.W. And how did you find it coming back on a sort of permanent basis to Scotland, how was that?

Dr. O. : Well it was exciting some of the bits I can remember 'cause you know we had lots of relatives we'd never I don't remember at all and cousins to meet and everything was strange. It was difficult going to a school in Edinburgh I hadn't really been to school and ended up in a school down in Leith, Hermitage Park School and I got the strap on the first because I didn't know mental arithmetic I had no idea what mental arithmetic I was nearly nine I didn't know what mental arithmetic was I'd never heard of it didn't know how to do it, things like that so there was things to get used to. But I mean the main problem came when my parents were to go back again and then ...

J.W. And, sorry, how soon was that when they ...

Dr. O. : Well, we came home in May 1950 and they went back in December 1952 when my father had been home for his year on furlough.

J.W. So that was quite a major ...

Dr. O. : That was that was a major wrench, yes, because the three eldest of us were being left in Scotland for schooling and a major wrench for them as well I suppose of course.

J.W. Were you were you in a boarding school?

Dr. O. : Yes, I had just started at school by then and my brother and sister next to me were in the Cunningham House, the house that the Church of Scotland ran for missionaries' children to live in during term time.

J.W. What was the school you were at?

Dr. O. : I was fortunate with another missionary girl of my own age two of us getting those scholarships somebody had left these two scholarships in memory of his wife who'd died and been at this school. It was Eskdale, doesn't exist any more school for ministers' daughters, College it used to be called so that it was principally for ministers' daughters but anybody could go to it and we were had, these scholarships were subsidised our parents wouldn't have normally sent me to a boarding school at all and my brother and sister went to the Merchant Company Schools, Daniel Stewarts and George Watsons.

J.W. So the majority of the other students with you, were they ministers' daughters from Scotland?

Dr. O. : Virtually, yes, yes.

J.W. So how did they, were you viewed as something a little bit different 'cause you'd been to all these places or ... ?

Dr. O. : Oh I don't I don't think so, I don't remember so. I don't know that I talked - well, yes, perhaps the, at the end at the end of the first, I was there for a term and the Christmas came and my parents were going away and I was you know, I cried a lot I remember just before they were due to go and everything and one of the other girls who actually was a day girl at this school the daughter of a minister in Edinburgh you know felt very sorry for me and you know and invited me home with her for Christmas for that year it was so nice and I was there for a few days with her family for Christmas.

J.W. Okay how about going have you ever been back yourself since then?

Dr. O. : I haven't been back. My two younger brothers had the opportunity to go back actually just before my parents came home because they were still at school and by then, this was 1965, the Church of Scotland arrangement was that if children were still at school they got the opportunity once to got out for a summer holiday as it were with their parents as it were with their parents so they got but we were at the University by then, we didn't get a chance, but I am hoping to go I'm trying to arrange a sabbatical to go out, not, perhaps, for the whole time to Pakistan because I'd like to go to South India, but to try and go when it's the centenary of the hospital.

J.W. Oh I hope that I hope that works out, and you were saying earlier that you'd been at the Mela recently. How about sort of links with sort of Pakistan here in the community. Do you feel a sort of affinity?

Dr. O. : Oh I feel, very much so. My parents of course though they came home my father was up had to retire for ill health in 1965 from his work out there though he worked in Edinburgh but they went back many years later they were taken back I 1985 by Pakistani friends and they had they were out there for six weeks and had a wonderful time and saw all the people and many of their old patients and the school wonderful pictures of it all they had a wonderful time. Because I was so young I hadn't kept up with people there on a personal basis though I know I keep up with many, well those missionaries who are left, there's not so many of them from that time now. But yes, I feel a real affinity with Asia generally rather than with Africa for instance and in fact I have I have two Pakistani colleagues at work whom I get on - one of those told me about the Mela she was very active in it and was taking part in a play though she in fact was born in Britain, she's a young girl and she works in my lab, and I have a Ph.D., well he's got his Ph.D. postdoctoral student who's from Pakistan so I ...

J.W. Right okay, I think that's about all the things I can think to ask just now but do you have anything else that you that that springs to mind that another ... ?

Dr. O. : Links with Pakistan I don't know.

J.W. Memories or anything that, 'cause they all tend to sort of fly into your head the same as my questions.

Dr. O. : Yes, it's difficult. I mean my parents obviously saw a great change in the, they had come home in 1965 actually at the time of the India Pakistan War about Kashmir and when they went back it's twenty years later in 1985 when there'd been a lot of changes in Jalalpur, the township where the hospital was had you know progressed a lot and they saw a lot of economic improvement in, the facilities for everybody improved a lot, that the condition was much better for the people there so they were pleased with what they saw.

J.W. So they had sort of quite a favourable impression when they went back they weren't sort of ...

Dr. O. : Fairly well as to the general level, that there was an improvement in what was available to people. I think they weren't they weren't so happy with the medical conditions, my father was concerned about what was happening medically for people what he felt more could be done on the health side yes. Unfortunately my parents are both dead for a few years now, so ... .

J.W. I'm sorry to hear that.

Dr. O. : They'd have been much better subjects for your interview.

J.W. Oh no, no, no, you've been you've been fascinating to talk to and I'm very glad for your time and thank you very much for everything.

The tape was switched off.

Interview with Mr. Robbie and Dr. Jean Orr
On Wednesday, 23rd November, 1994.
SA1995.08

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, **R.O.** represents Robbie Orr,

and **J.O.** represents Jean Orr.

J.W. : If I can start, just ask you to explain roughly when you were out in Pakistan and that sort of area of the world and for how long and these sorts of things.

R.O. : Well, this is Robbie Orr. We went out to Pakistan in 1951 as missionaries. we lived a couple of years in Lahore, 26 years in Multan and then the subsequent period switching between Multan in the winter and Baltistan, not Baluchistan, Baltistan where the Indus enters Pakistan in the extreme North-East. We officially retired in 1984 but since then we have gone back to Pakistan usually pretty well once a year for three months.

J.W. : Okay were there any family connections or connections you had prior to yourselves I mean any family connections with the area at all?

R.O. : No family connections precisely. My parents had hoped to engage in missionary work pretty well in that quadrant of India I mean the North West of India as it was then, but my father was killed at his work when my twin brother and I were very young so they never did make it to India, but in a sense one might say I suppose that our life work was the fulfillment in our generation of their vision.

J.W. : What did you, did you have any idea before you went out how things would be out there what were your, sort of, perceptions of the area before you went?

J.O. : Well I think we both had read a lot of missionary books about India, this was of course before Partition when we were young and so we had a little bit of idea of what the country was like and what sort of work missionaries did but I don't think it was very clear.

J.W. : Right so you how for instance might you so, 'cause we almost have this image of Pathans and people have sort of an almost of you like almost a stereotypical image of what they were like. Did you have impressions of how they would be, things you'd heard about them?

J.O. : I don't think we had, I can't remember any. Can you?

R.O. : No, I don't think so. I think that we that this was a part of the great unknown that we were quite happy to accept it as we might find it.

J.W. : What about other people that you knew, what were their sort of ... I mean in Scotland what were their sort of perceptions of you going out, how did they think of you going out? Did, sorry.

R.O. : Well, yes, my mother was very happy about it, a number of folks just thought that it was a silly notion, it would soon blow over. We were very warmly encouraged and supported by the churches that we moved among so there was this general mixture.

J.O. : The Christian churches we belonged to had a very real missionary vision as it were for the whole world and nobody discouraged us from wanting to go as missionaries to Pakistan.

J.W. : And did you feel yourselves that it was not only an opportunity for missionary work obviously but an opportunity for yourselves for, sort of, to see the world obviously and for, sort of, it would be self-development for you as individuals, did you have any notion of that or was your main ... ?

R.O. : I suppose there was that element in it but it certainly wasn't a major element, there was the, rather it was the sense of vocation, that this was the fulfillment of a call from God, there was the perception too that we were able-bodied folks, we'd had a reasonable education and we were free to do this kind of thing and there fore there was a duty upon us to spend our lives in a meaningful way and that was the meaningful way that we saw.

J.W. : How about before you left the area, did you have any sort of training at all, any language training or any vocational training for what you were going to do?

J.O. : Not as far as language was concerned. I had done my medical training, Robbie had done pharmacy and then some theological training, but that was it.

J.W. : So you therefore you picked the language up when you were there pretty much?

R.O. : Well 'picked up' is hardly the word. Language learning was taken very seriously. We had a very good tradition of language in our group. Our senior missionaries were probably the most fluent in the whole missionary community, and right from the beginning there was this tradition that for the first couple of years the great responsibility one has was to get language and to get it thoroughly.

J.O. : We studied hard almost full time for the first couple of years and there's a very good language school for missionaries which is held in the summer time up I the hills in Murree.

J.W. : Ah Murree, yes ... and when you went originally for the first time did you know you were going for a certain period of time or was it just because of the idea of a vocation were you going indefinitely?

J.O. : We went out with the idea that this was a lifetime's work and we were going to be there indefinitely unless anything unusual happened with illness or political or anything like that.

J.W. : Now people certainly in my own experience, people talk about things like 'culture shock' these days. Do you think that's a modern idea, or was it something that was current when you initially went out?

R.O. : Very much a modern idea. You didn't have 'culture shock' in those days. You might feel lonely or you might feel a yearning for ... the ...

J.O. : The hills of Scotland ...

R.O. : ... for the sea to see the sea again and green fields and things like that but we didn't think about 'culture shock' somehow, and we became totally immersed in an Urdu speaking environment, a Punjabi speaking environment and soon it became home to us in a very real sense.

J.W. : In terms of sort of physical practicalities did you take very much equipment and things out with you or was it very much that either they were supplied when you were there or you furnished things that you need out there?

J.O. : We pretty much took all the small things that we possessed with us because we were intending to set up our home there and to stay there, but that wasn't very much.

R.O. : We included bicycles.

J.O. : Yes that's right we took bicycles.

R.O. : We took out things like pressure lamps and mosquito nets ...

J.O. : Things we were advised to take and at that time in was quite difficult to buy things in Pakistan because it was very soon after Partition and most of the supplies had come from what became India and they weren't coming across the border, so it was quite difficult in the first place to get supplies of anything in Pakistan but over the years that changed very quickly.

J.W. : What was the, with your medical training obviously, what was the sort of medical preparation like, inoculations that sort of thing was that widespread?

J.O. : We had all that was advised, there's a lot more now, but at that time we had all that was advised and we took out malarial drugs and such like.

J.W. : How did you actually physically get out to the area, were you going by sea or ...?

R.O. : We sailed from we sailed from London to Bombay on [the name of the liner; indiscernible] a P&O liner which was on its first trip to Sydney, or Canberra or Australia anyhow, and so we transhipped at Bombay, a couple of days in Bombay, transhipped on to a rolling, flat-bottomed boat [boat's name; indiscernible] a couple of days to Karachi, and then up-country by train. A thousand miles to Lahore.

J.W. : That's quite some journey.

R.O. : Oh no, eight hundred miles, mustn't exaggerate too badly.

J.W. : When you arrived, were there other missionaries and British or European people where you were or were you fairly isolated initially?

J.O. : Well during the time in Lahore we were working, we were living and working in the United Christian Hospital which was a hospital which had been actually set up in a college at the time of Partition to deal with all the injuries and illness of people who were crossing over from India to Pakistan and it had been set up for that emergency but when the emergency was over they decided to keep this hospital going, but with different denominations of Christians working together in it and that was where we lived for the first two years while we were doing language studying, Robbie helped a bit in their pharmacy and I worked in the hospital doing ...

R.O. : I was mostly engaged in the publishing house ... in town.

J.O. : And we did language study in the winter time along with hospital work and we went up to Murree to the language school in summertime but there were a lot of overseas staff in that hospital and there also were quite a lot of other missionaries in the city of Lahore so during that two years we were very much amongst people.

R.O. : It was a good halfway house between West and East.

J.W. : So you were sort of in a system there?

J.O. : But then after two years we moved to Multan and we were entirely on our own there and we started from scratch as it were.

R.O. : It was a case of total immersion there in a local, South Punjabi situation.

J.O. : We had a little house with no electricity and no running water in the house which cost forty rupees a month.

J.W. : You wouldn't get that now.

J.O. : Which at today's rate that would be one pound a month.

R.O. : In those days there was about nine rupees a pound, so it was a bit over four pounds a month, at the hand pump.

J.W. : Did you find the climate particularly difficult when you changed to Multan because it's known for it's heat there?

R.O. : Yes it was terribly, terribly hot and it was worse then for two respects. One is we had no electricity. The other was that there was a great deal more desert then, a lot of ground was brought under the plough later it was irrigated but we had frequent, ferocious dust storms.

J.O. : It was a trying climate ... .

J.W. : Oh very much.

J.O. : To say the least.

J.W. : Moving moving slightly away from physical things like the climate, how did you, or how do you think in a sort of broader sense you can assimilate into a culture like that? Did you find that you assimilated fairly easily and sort of to what extent do you think you can ever assimilate into those sorts of cultures?

R.O. : Well I think that the Pakistani cultures the kinds that we have known in various areas, it's it's possible to assimilate to a fairly great extent and quite happily. The key to it of course is thorough language learning ... .

J.W. : Exactly.

R.O. : And then getting immersed as completely as possible. Now one big help to our assimilation was that we didn't live in a mission compound and we simply went out, looked at the housing available, rented a three-roomed bungalow, a three-roomed, semi-detached house in a big housing estate so we were there in right among our Pakistani neighbours, coming and going all the time and then it very quickly becomes home to you.

J.O. : But on the other hand I think that it's right to say that you never totally can understand Pakistani thinking and however much you try and however much you understand their language their ways of thinking are somewhat different to ours.

J.W. : How about by comparison say to Multan what about life on the Frontier when you were, say, in Peshawar and these places, and then up in Baltistan and these places, did you think for instance Pathan culture would be easier or harder to assimilate into?

R.O. : We didn't really experience Pathan culture in Peshawar- we have lived for a brief period in Kohat and in Tank, and of course in Quetta, which from the point of travel routes is a long, long way away, but the, the nature of the people is so different, so different. Punjabis I'm afraid are, although they may be initially easy to easy to get in among, there's an unfortunate tendency, there's a kind of inbuilt nuclear fission, and they're apt to to blow up suddenly. There's I think a good deal more of honour among Pathans than there is among Punjabis.

J.O. : And then latterly we went to Baltistan, the Balti people again are entirely different because they're related to Tibetans, and their nature, their language and their customs and everything's entirely different. That was another new culture that we had to get used to.

R.O. : And we were welcomed there in a way that we never were welcomed in any other, to a degree that we weren't welcomed in any other part of Pakistan, although it is a hundred per cent Muslim and yet from the very top, from the Rajahs and the political chiefs and the Chief Superintendent of Police, that kind of thing we had a most cordial welcome and were able to integrate in a quite astonishing way.

J.W. : What about in your time say Kohat and in Tank was there any hostility due to the fact that you were missionaries or Christian, or did the did the sort of Pathan hospitality

did that make a difference? Did you find that you were received on the basis of hospitality with their tribal tradition or were you not so well received?

J.O. : I would say that one of the main factors in all the places that we worked was the fact that I was doing medical work and you are accepted wherever you go because of the medical needs of the women and the children and so they put up with the Christian aspect of it and the preaching that goes along with it because they want medical help, and I think that would apply to every area that we've been in, in Pakistan and to some extent in Afghanistan too, where eye work, eye hospital work is one of the main things.

J.W. : Did you ever find for example, because I know I once or twice I would come across Muslims who seemed to certainly know the Bible a good deal better than I did, I would sometimes have Muslims who would literally quote chapter and verse to me and argue on very sort of theological terms. Did you ever come across Muslims such as those who were very well educated and able to sort, argue theologically and these sort of things?

R.O. : Oh yes, oh yes, there's a much more philosophical and religious bent to the mind of the folks there but you would find that very often that you were using words, the same word, Persian or Arabic words, the same words, but with quite different connotations. The same vocabulary, the same religious vocabulary of God and his prophets and his hand in the holy books of the revelation of faith, love, repentance- different words which are the vocabulary with which one works whether Christian or Muslim but you've got to be very careful because they may mean something quite different, quite different.

J.O. : Also there is the fact that many Muslim leaders actually go to, what do they call the Muslim colleges, and they're taught how to argue with Christians, they're taught you know what verses of the Bible to use in order to confute Christianity.

R.O. : That's especially the case with the Ahmadiya community, the Ahmadi were the principle opponents of the missionaries and of course they in the early 1970's they were declared non-Muslim and so they were to some extent discredited.

J.O. : But also, although it might seem that Muslims know their Bibles, they only know certain parts of the Bible that they have been taught by heart in order to argue with Christians, they don't know the whole Bible by any means.

J.W. : Something I've certainly read in various books written by, primarily by, Scottish people who are out in these areas they suggest an idea that Scottish people were able to get on better with the people in these areas than as opposed to English people for instance. Do you think there's an element of truth in that?

J.O. : Oh I'm sure there is and particularly comparing with the Americans. They don't like the Americans at all, and they do like the Scottish people.

R.O. : An interesting thing you know there used to be the Western banks out there, Barclays Bank, Lloyds Bank- we always banked with Lloyds in Lahore- and Lloyds always and only recruited Scots for their overseas branches certainly in the Indian

subcontinent. The English might say, 'Well, we know why that is- that the climate and the food in Scotland are so bad that anything, any change is for the better.' I believe that there may be something in that, traditionally, much less so nowadays, but traditionally we did have a more spartan lifestyle and therefore it was easier I think for for Scots from a more rugged environment to to fit in, I think, so and then there was also the fact that Scots could more easily get their tongues around the various sounds that one, the gutturals and the trills and this kind of thing and that helps you know.

J.W. : With, obviously, you were heavily involved in medical work but with your own health while you were there, did you, was that a major concern to you both sort of I suppose before and when you were there? Was it for instance did you have any serious medical problems or were ... ?

J.O. : Not really, I mean we had quite a number of medical problems but we got over them quite quickly. I mean we had malaria and hepatitis and dysentry of various kinds ...

R.O. : Jean had typhoid and was very ill.

J.O. : Oh yes, I had typhoid at one point, but we recovered quite quickly from them and just took them in our stride.

J.W. : ... With sort of basic living from day to day, sort of domestic scene, how did you manage on those terms? Did you have any servants at all or ... ?

J.O. : Yea, we had a cook, and I taught him how to cook and we ate a sort of mixture of sort of Western food and Pakistani food but of course when you visit Pakistani homes you eat whatever they put in front of you.

J.W. : Exactly.

J.O. : And you sometimes suffer for it.

R.O. : One period when we had, you know, our colleagues staying with us we had two servants, but we always enjoyed Sundays with no servants in the house, and although having servants was a necessity if one was to get on and accomplish a reasonable amount of work without having to go to the bazaar and do everything and clean ... we had some bad experiences but we had a very good servant, very faithful and that meant a lot to us.

J.W. : Were there sort of itinerant servants at all, *darzīs*, tailors these sorts of people?

R.O. : Oh no.

J.W. : None at all? ... What about sort of, say hygiene and sanitation and that sort of thing, did you presumably with the fact that you took illness in your stride, as it were, presumably those things weren't so much of a problem either, or did you ... ?

R.O. : Well, we didn't find that a great problem. We believed in the policy of building up an immunity so we didn't try to live in a sterile atmosphere by any means.

J.W. : What about any sort of social life you had were you ever say when you were in Lahore did you find yourself involved in clubs there, or was that more part of different peoples' scenes?

J.O. : Well, we didn't have much of a social life apart from other missionaries wherever we went, we had a few other friends we had a friend who had, who inherited a cotton factory in Khanewal and was a very keen naturalist and we would visit them every now and then because he wrote a book on the mammals of Pakistan and another one on the birds of Pakistan and we enjoyed talking with him, we still write letters to him.

J.W. : And presumably through mission work you would have a lot of social interaction with the people, with local people?

J.O. : Oh yes, we were quite often invited to homes of patients and of course I was doing along with the nurses who worked with me we were doing midwifery in the houses of the people so we were in and out of the houses a great deal. Robbie wasn't so much because he's a man, and you don't get into the homes the same of you're a man.

R.O. : I think in twenty-six years in Multan I was only once in a Muslim home.

J.W. : Really?

J.O. : Were you not in a *betək* ?

R.O. : Oh yes, I would be in a *betək*, that is the outside room where the men of the house would receive male visitors but you entered from the street and there was a door into the courtyard but you would never get through that door.

J.W. : ... Could you tell me, I'm sorry to have to ask you again but could you possibly tell me about the times you spent in the Swat Valley again, you were saying earlier?

R.O. : We were in the Swat Valley only on holiday, we did no work there.

J.O. : We always carried we always carried medicine and literature with us when we were on holiday.

R.O. : That's right as we did whenever we were on tech or on holiday but we had an old three-ton Bedford army truck which was converted to use as a mobile dispensary from which we did in the hot summer months to get out of Multan a bit, we did hospital camps west of the Indus, Jean did eye surgery in those camps, but we took we took that vehicle, or it took us up by, you know, by over by Malakand into into Swat and we carried everything with us, in fact that camp at Kalam that we spoke about earlier, where we were attacked by *dakaits* we had that truck with us ... On two or three occasions we have gone in the summer to Swat, you see Multan has an extreme climate, it's. it'll drop to freezing sometimes in winter but in summer it is extremely hot, you'd have regularly temperatures of a hundred and seventeen, a hundred and twenty, the hottest was a hundred and twenty-two that's fifty, fifty-one degrees Centigrade, something like that, extremely hot, just above the limit of human endurance except of course that it was dry, you can you can endure dry heat like that. Well, we had an arrangement that all of us in

town got one month break in the summer and so one of the places which we occasionally visited was Swat and we loved it.

J.W. : Did you ever spend any time during sort of holidays or leave in Murree?

R.O. : In Muree? Oh well, we went to Murree in 1952 for the four month language school, then the next year, '53 which was our second year we were only able to go up for half the summer and after that we seldom went to Murree, because Murree, it's [?] very much overcrowded, the place stinks, but it's very beautiful too. However, it was mostly a place for families unless you were there for language school. However, in 1960, '61, I was there as a principal of the language school while Jean was still sweating it out in Multan. But we occasionally went, I once spent a summer there as the as the expatriate community pastor in the Union church, it was just one big one big church community as it were of all the missions. So we've spent a fair time in Murree, but we would prefer some of the outlying places like Kherra Gali and Nathia Gali which are ten, twenty miles out.

J.O. : The Kaghan Valley and Chitral.

R.O. : Chitral we loved, but the of all the places that we travelled exploring valleys right form the Persian border, the Iranian border right over to the Indian Ladakh of them all the place that really captured our hearts was Baltistan. It seemed to us to be the most needy and the most welcoming, so these two things added together meant that we took note that when the days would come that a long summer in Multan was getting too much for us, we would hope to open up something up in Baltistan, which in fact we did.

J.W. : You've been back several times, you were saying that you often go back every year. How do you find, and I know this is a very general question to ask, but how do you find things have changed in the sort of areas that you were in originally in say in the '50's, to what they are now?

J.O. : Well, for one thing the population of every city has almost doubled (**R.O. :** Sometimes much more), the countryside is much more crowded, there are many more modern facilities and many more goods available, and as far as Baltistan is concerned when we first went up there, you travelled in a jeep on very dangerous, narrow roads, but now every year when we go up there you see a difference because roads have been brought down from a way up the mountain side down to the riverside, roads have been widened so that army trucks can go up and down them, and buses now go up and down them too, and because the road is better and wide enough for trucks there are far more goods available up in Baltistan than there used to be, I mean, when we first went up there all you could get to eat was local produce, and that was nothing much, but now you can get things going up from the Punjab.

R.O. : You get crates of chickens.

J.O. : You get meat occasionally and you get fruit from the Punjab which you never used to get and so on, things are changing.

J.W. : Do you think that such things are good or detrimental in that although they bring more supplies and things it changes the feel of these places the culture ...

J.O. : I think as far as Baltistan is concerned I think there a lot of things have not been good because you now have a lot more Punjabis up there than you used to have, I suppose you have Pathans too.

R.O. : Very few Pathans.

J.O. : But there used to be, practically, no crime up there, and the people were very peaceable and you could walk in and out of peoples' houses and they never locked their doors but that has changed and there is quite a lot of crime now mostly Punjabis who go up there to work.

J.W. : Could you perhaps just quickly, you mentioned Chitral earlier and how you loved the place, could you perhaps tell me, as you were telling me earlier about Chitral and the times you spent there?

R.O. : Well, Chitral was mostly a holiday thing, and it's as you know it's a most beautiful valley and we stayed in Chitral city and we had some very good experiences there, we were staying in a hotel in Chitral city and the Chief of Police came for us, we wondered what was happening, it was to ask Jean to come and look at the at the Assistant Political Officer. The only doctor in Chitral had gone over to Peshawar by plane and hadn't come back and there was no other doctor and that gave us entree into the political circles there and we got to know some people, we were encouraged to do what we wanted to do to visit the Northern bit in Buni which was closed to foreigners and we had some very, very happy experiences, like one being invited up on to the grandstand of the polo tournaments, this kind of thing, and then of course we visited the Bumboret Valley and we had some very interesting experiences there and of course Jean's medical readiness to help in a medical sense and my interest in the Christian literature I was carrying that gave a certain solidity, a certain value to our trips there, they wouldn't otherwise have had. It was a great experience and we enjoyed Chitral very much.

J.W. : Have you been back there recently since?

R.O. : No, it's many years since we were there I don't suppose we've seen Chitral for more than twenty years.

J.W. : When you first initially came home when would that have been when you came and then started going, say every summer, was that as late as '84?

R.O. : It was actually in 1983 but officially we didn't retire until 1984, that first year was a year's furlough prior to retirement. But we came home in March 1983 and August 1983 Jean was a way back again, I didn't go with her that time, but she went out there for three months to, because she was quite urgently needed, and then the next year we both were out, that kind of thing.

J.W. : What were your feelings, again I'm sorry this is a big thing to deal with, but what were your feelings on having to come home, sort of mixed feelings did you look forward to coming back?

R.O. : I think we had a sense of fulfillment. We had had thirty-three years, we reckoned that we were greatly privileged to have been able to work there we had successors carrying on the work who were all the better to be left to do their thing their way. There were two doctors who came women doctors who came and succeeded Jean in Multan, they certainly would prefer to, you know, do their work their way, they were a whole generation removed from Jean ... then there was also the fact that in Baltistan a Scottish doctor had gone out with his family and it was only fair to him to leave him to do his thing there. There was a sense of having another kind of work to do, I mean Jean for example began by doing a ten week locum for a doctor in the Borders and then, oh I had gone to Vancouver for a year's study I took a year's study leave doing theological studies in Regent College, Vancouver with a view to retirement work and writing projects, so it wasn't as if the bottom had fallen out of our lives, rather that our previous work as we've always found in each succeeding stage of life- that what you're doing now is the preparation for what you're going to do in the next stage of life, you know, there was a sense of continuity and a sense of purpose in it all.

J.W. : How did the people, the locals where you were working, how, can you remember what how they felt when you left?

R.O. : Oh some of them cried very nicely.

J.O. : Some of them were glad to see the back of us.

R.O. : But and we have had many visits here in our home from Pakistanis and of course we regularly not a week passes but we have letters from colleagues in Pakistan, we keep interested in them and we are able to do various things for them by way of supplies, this kind of thing. We are very much with them and of course it also leaves you with a degree of freedom for example three years ago in 1991 I had an invitation to go and teach Bible school in Ethiopia which I did and that opened a whole new phase of life which continues to this day and is very interesting so there's lots of interesting things happening still.

J.W. : And how do you feel people here, the everyday public for example sort of perceive that part of the world. Do you think they have a sort of complete disregard for it? Did you get a sense here that people just weren't interested, just didn't really care?

R.O. : Not complete disregard but just a general failure to understand the Third World or the two Third Worlds if you like.

J.O. : But I don't think that is so true nowadays because there's so many programmes on the television ... .

J.W. : Certainly.

R.O. : And so many people travel.

J.O. : About other countries and also as Robbie says travel is so much easier. Now when we first went to Pakistan the first, we were there for five five years, we never had a single visitor from this country but nowadays our missionaries in Pakistan they have aunts and uncles and cousins and mothers and grandmothers and friends that ...

R.O. : Sometimes they can't get on with their work.

J.O. : They're always having visitors, and we weren't we didn't see anybody for five years.

J.W. : Sorry to take you back, this is something that has occurred to me, but could you possibly tell me something about the occasions when you say visited Kabul, and were in Afghanistan?

R.O. : Well, I used to go over every May, every October, my chief ability for that work was availability that having a British passport all I had to do was get a visa for Afghanistan and no bother getting back again, a British passport just got you in without a visa into Pakistan in those days, so I was available so this was a thing I began to do. I was still on the executive in fact I served as a President a couple of times as Vice-President a couple of times of what was a very big mission, there were over a hundred and twenty professional missionaries there, surgeons, engineers, administrators, all this kind of thing and it was most interesting and it was a very stimulating thing to work at the nerve centre of one of the biggest mission operations on Planet Earth, really, what was happening in Kabul in those days, it was a very interesting thing. So I used to go over there and it gave the opportunity too of travel throughout Afghanistan it was much easier in those days, and so occasionally Jean was over there with me, and we have seen all the all the main areas of Afghanistan right from from the Iranian border to Chitral, which is the Pakistan border in the North-East. It was a very, very well run operation, most certainly, most enriching.

J.W. : How did you find the Afghans themselves? Did you see them as distinct from- obviously they would be distinct from the Punjabis- but was there a difference?

R.O. : A big mixture, the Uzbeks from the North, they were a distinct kind of group and I got to know some of them well. But I really wasn't in contact with Afghans in the way that I was in contact with folks in Pakistan, I was on the administrative level and the folks I got to know there were the missionaries and not the Afghans, but I did get to know some people, including Zia, a brilliant, blind Christian, he'd been a convert from Islam, and was later killed in prison.

J.W. : How did you, we find both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan, did you ... (The tape runs out and is switched over). '

You were saying earlier about Christians in Afghanistan, in Kabul, and persecution and that sort of thing. Did you find that was fairly common?

R.O. : Oh yes, three friends of ours were murdered there, one couple very cruelly. She was Finnish, Lisa, and he was Dutch, Ben, and, they were, folks broke into their home

and put them through a pretty bad time, and then cut their throats and the children were in the house and nobody found them out until the next noon, but another friend was shot. So it was pretty rough there.

J.W. : What about in say the Punjab, was, although I presume there wasn't the same sort of treatment, was there, did people perceive Christians in a certain way, were they seen as sort of lower because they were Christians or ... ?

R.O. : Well the Christian community in Pakistan is mostly drawn from what in pre-Partition would be the outcasts, or even untouchables from the lowest social classes, the sweepers, they would often call them [?] that's a particular tribe who ate the carcasses of animals found dead, who altogether their life was quite debased and degraded and in the late nineteenth century many of those whole tribes were converted. There was an element of course of social advantage in it, of social uplift, but it did mean however, that Christianity was branded as the kind of thing a sweeper would accept, but not a not a Muslim.

J.W. : Right, could you perhaps tell me a little bit more about your time in Quetta? When you were there in Quetta were there many Pathans there at the time because I know how there's a significant Pathan population in that part of Pakistan, or was it more sort of Baluchis and their sort of tribal ... ?

J.O. : There were Pathans there and in fact in the Mission hospital in Quetta two of the quite senior workers were Pathans who had converted to Christianity and ...

R.O. : There was Atlas and his brother Afzal.

J.O. : ... two brothers who had senior positions in the hospital and who were very responsible and helpful men. Amongst the patients I think we mostly had Baluchis and a lot of Sindhis, who came up from Sind in the summertime when it was unbearably hot in Sind and so they would bring one ill relative up and the whole family would take a private room, and as soon as the one ill relative got well somebody else would become ill, and so they managed to stay the whole summer in a private a private room in the Mission hospital in Quetta. That was quite regular. I can't say too much about Pathans there because I really didn't have very much contact with them.

J.W. : They weren't there at the time.

R.O. : Punjabis tended to colonise other parts of Pakistan, and so you would for example get, go to church circles in Quetta where the positions were wholly filled by (pauses) Punjabis who imported their own particular high-handed way (pauses) all over in Karachi, in Sind, the Punjabis tended to take over.

J.W. : Sorry to make you jump once more, but could you perhaps just tell me again what you were just relating when you met the *Wali* of Swat, when you were travelling in that area, the story you were just ...

R.O. : Oh, you mean you didn't record that?

J.W. : I didn't I'm sorry.

R.O. : Okay. Something like ten days ... when we were clobbered we were rescued the next morning by the local *hākim*, the hierarchy as you know from the bottom up would be the *tahsīldār*, then a *hākim*, over several *tahsīldārs* subject to a minister from Saidu Sharif and Mingora. well, the morning after we were clobbered the *tahsīldār* I think of Kalam with the captain of the militia came out and marched out, the truck was still going although the bandits had peed into the petrol so that it couldn't go but they had made a mistake, the funnel, the the opening that they that they used for that foul purpose was in fact the kerosene tank, so Jean was able to drive the truck the next morning and when we were on the way to Kalam we met this this small company of soldiers under the the *tahsīldār* and so they took us back, then got our story and telephoned Saidu Sharif spoke with the, he spoke with his *hākim* at Bahrain, and then the *hākim* spoke with the minister in Saidu Sharif who spoke with the *Wali* himself who then got on the phone and took a report. A quarter of an hour later he gave his instructions, 'Put those English people (English!) in my bungalow at Kalam, keep them under guard by day and night and bring in all the elders from six miles around, keep them in the fort, make them responsible for bringing every man and boy on an identification parade before these four English people, and find out what you can, arrest those that you can, send out soldiers after any who are missing, and I'll come up in a few days', oh yes, '... and a five thousand rupees fine on the district and I'm sending a hundred and fifty soldiers from Mingora and they'll be each billeted on a family and each will receive one chicken and one seer of *ghi* per day. Okay, ten days later the *Wali* came. In the first vehicle, you know, four-wheel drive vehicles, the first vehicle contained the *Badshah Sāhab* who had a little machine gun, you could call it a submachine gun, on his knee, sitting beside the driver, and then the second vehicle had the *Wali*. So, I told you that they spread an embroidered mat or a bed and they took me in to see him, they had to hoist me up under the oxters to get me in to see him he spoke very kindly to me the old boy did, we spoke in Urdu, and then they took me in to see the *Wali*, and he shook hands with me and said, 'Mr. Orr, I am so sorry that this has happened.' I said, "Well, it's no new thing for us to be, to find ourselves in an encounter with bandits. We've had that in the Punjab, we've had it in Sind, the new thing here is that you do something about it, you catch them.' They caught five out of six, there were six, I think, and they caught five of them of something like that, and by the way, they gave them he awarded them seven years imprisonment, seven years. Now to go back to that interview, the *Wali* said, 'I know what it's like in your Punjab. If there's a murder committed then there's a whole series of this prosecution and cases that have appeals and with difficulty several years later someone is hanged within the four walls of a prison. The effect on public opinion is nil, but here if the case is clear, if the evidence is entirely clear then what we would prefer to do is on the very same spot twenty-four hours later the next of kin of the murdered man is given a rifle, the man is stood up against a tree or a wall, and in the presence of the captain of the militia who himself has a firearm in his hand, the man is shot there, and', he said, 'that has a very salutary effect on public opinion, people are not so ready to let fly.' So that was the, that

was the what it was. And he was most courteous and indeed he gave an order to the to the *hākim* of Bahrain, the man over the *tahsīldār* of Kalam, that when we were on our way home that we would stop and he would give us cash compensation for all that we had lost, so we made up a list and we were very careful to be modest in our reporting of damage, because we didn't want to give people an opportunity to say that, you know, we'd done it for the sake of the money we'd get. Actually it was a thing one would not expect to happen in Pakistan.

J.O. : It certainly wouldn't happen in the Punjab. You'd have got nothing back.

J.W. : Do you remember what year would that be when this occurred?

R.O. : '50, just a minute, '59, '59, we've got photographs.

J.W. : I think that's everything I need to ask unless, do you have anything else you might want to tell me or any other incidents ...

J.O. : Is that still on, yes?

J.W. : Shall I ... ?

(The tape was then switched off and we continued in further informal conversation pertinent to Pakistan in general, and I was shown some of the photographs referred to above).

Mrs. M. M. and Mr. P. Scott
Recorded on Friday 21st March 1997
SA1997.85 & 86

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, **Mrs. S.** represents Mrs. M.M. Scott and **Mr. S.** Represents Mr. P. Scott

J.W. : Okay this is Jeremy Weston it's Friday the twenty-second of March and I'm recording Mrs. Scott and her son Mr. Scott at their home in Edinburgh. Okay, if I can start Mrs. Scott by asking you to tell me where and when you were born please.

Mrs. S. : I was born in Livingston Station in West Lothian.

J.W. : Aha, and when was that ?

Mrs. S. : 1913

J.W. : Right and how about yourself Mr. Scott where were you born ?

Mrs. S. : I was born in the American Mission Hospital in Sialkot, West Pakistan in 1949.

J.W. : Right okay so Mrs. Scott what did your parents do when you were born, what was their life like what was their job ?

Mrs. S. : Well my father was in the office the .local office of the shale mines and that was his daily work

J.W. : Right.

Mrs. S. : Working class people you would say.

J.W. : Right and what about did you have many brothers and sisters ?

Mrs. S. : I had three younger sisters and no brothers.

J.W. : Right okay and (pauses) when did you go to school and where did you go to school ?

Mrs. S. : Went to the local primary school at Livingston Station and then on to the secondary school in Bathgate, Bathgate Academy and from there on to the university, took an M.A. there and then on to Moray House Teachers Training College had a year

there. By that time I was beginning to be interested in the mission field and I took a year at St. Colm's Mission School of the Church of Scotland here in Edinburgh.

J.W. : I see right and how about yourself Mr. Scott, where did you go to school and when did you start school ?

Mr. S. : Well having been born in Pakistan I was there I suppose for just under a year until my parents came on furlough and came back to Scotland so we'd have been here for a year and then sailed back out to Pakistan when I'd have been two or three at perhaps the age of four (to Mrs. Scott) You can correct me I started going to a local Roman Catholic primary, nursery school (to Mrs. Scott) Is that right ?

Mrs. S. : In Sialkot yes.

Mr. S. : In Sialkot yes how long I was there I'm not sure did I change to another school ?

Mrs. S. : No

Mr. S. : Stayed there then came back to this country in the next furlough period which would I'd have been the age of six.

Mrs. S. : Seven.

Mr. S. : Six or seven and went straight to Watson's in Edinburgh in the last year of the primary school and was in Watson's for all the junior school period and then when my father retired form Pakistan he got a charge of a church in Forres in Morayshire so I finished my schooling there then came back ther.. went to Aberdeen to do an engineering degree and then came to Edinburgh to do a postgraduate degree and then started work with Ferranti in Edinburgh as they were then and I've been with them since.

J.W. : Right okay, so if I can ask you next Mrs. Scott. You said you were interested in mission work and you'd done your teacher training. Did you have any idea of where you would go on mission work or was that not your choice ?

Mrs. S. : I chose India rather than Africa because the minister of my church had been in India and had roused my interest in and had lent me books about India and had been a chaplain in Calcutta so there was that personal touch for India which made me chose made me suggest India anyway to the Church of Scotland Mission Board when I was asked.

J.W. : And what did you know about India then ? You said you read the books but did you have any other ideas ?

Mrs. S. : No I just had an idea that I would like to be a missionary and it was school work that I was trained for so that was why I was sent to a school.

J.W. : And (pauses) what did your family think about that what did your family think about the idea of you .. ?

Mrs. S. : they never tried to discourage me at all but on the other hand I think it was a surprise to them because my father was beginning to be slightly poor in health and actually he died a year after I was out in the field but there was nothing one could do about that.

J.W. : Sure and so how did it come about that you went out to India, for example did you know where you were going exactly and were you trained here before you went anything like .. ?

Mrs. S. : Well I was trained at the missionary college St. Colm's for a year in residence there that was the missionary training in those days.

J.W. : And what was that like what did that take the training ?

Mrs. S. : We had lectures and (pauses) classes and bible study, taking services taking Sunday schools, attending Sunday schools and there was the daily worship in the chapel there which we all took part in in turn, it's difficult to give details.

J.W. : Yes sorry.

Mrs. S. : It was just an organised life and we were really attached we got to know each other very well living in residence there.

J.W. : Sure of course.

Mrs. S. : It's changed now of course St. Colm's it's quite a different institution and missionaries now are sent to Selly Oak in Birmingham I believe for training, they're not trained here but it also had training for deaconesses, home work home study and Irish missionaries also were included Irish Presbyterians for different parts of the world.

J.W. : Did you have any language training there at all ?

Mrs. S. : Speech training as a part of our work but not language training no language.

J.W. : So ... when you went was it with an idea that this was for life a sort of mission for life or as long as it took or .. ?

Mrs. S. : Yes mission for life was the commitment.

J.W. : You weren't going out thinking, 'Oh I'll come back in .. '

Mrs. S. : No not just for a visit, we knew it was for five year terms in those days.

J.W. : Right and so when was it that you actually came to leave for India ?

Mrs. S. : February 1937 was when I left. War started and that about altered things. Instead of getting home after five years it was seven years before I got back

J.W. : Of course it would be.

Mrs. S. : So that was quite difficult.

J.W. : Right and how was it going out - was that by sea presumably?

Mrs. S. : By sea oh yes. There was a group of us from the Church of Scotland some senior, there was one in particular Miss Drennan who was returning to Calcutta we were put under her charge as it were the two of us who were going out as beginners, they were, she was very kind to us made us feel at home on board ship and so on.

J.W. : So where did you sail from ?

Mrs. S. : Actually we were a bit late and we had to go to Marseilles to get the boat there it had already sailed and we caught up with it there but I enjoyed the voyage.

J.W. : Right and how long did that take ?

Mrs. S. : Oh I think it was nineteen days but again I'm very vague about time.

J.W. : Aha, oh don't, it's not important it's just out of interest.

Mrs. S. : That was roughly the length of the voyage.

J.W. : right so where did you arrive when you arrived in India ?

Mrs. S. : We arrived in Bombay and were met by Church of Scotland missionaries who were told we were coming and we were put up there for the night and then they showed us on to the Frontier Mail the next day they took us to the train and put us on the train and that was I think a thirty-six hour journey or something of that sort (laughs).

J.W. : So what, can you remember I know it was a, quite a long time ago but do you remember what your first impressions were like when you arrived ?

Mrs. S. : First impressions I was delighted, there had been rain, it was cool, everything was green round about, we saw the white snow of the Himalayas away in the distance as we arrived, it was wonderful wasn't the sun baked desert of India that we had imagined.

J.W. : So you went you got on the Frontier Mail and then you had your journey, so where did you arrive ?

Mrs. S. : We arrived at the Wazirabad Station and were met there by colleagues with their car and taken to the ladies mission house which was where we were to stay and these other folk were there, there was Mr. and Mrs. Garrett, Mr. Garrett was the principal of Murray College and Mrs. Garrett his wife and there was Miss Scott whose place I was to be taking in the school her furlough was due so I was put into the boarding school and lived in this ladies' mission house it was called in Sialkot. There was May who was to become my sister-in-law and then there was Dr. Paterson who was in charge of a welfare centre on the premises and there was Miss Polson, who was in education work attending the local day schools in the area so we lived together that was four of us living in the one house.

J.W. : Right okay, and what was the routine you did from day to day the sort of work that you did at that time ?

Mrs. S. : Well language was the main thing they had already appointed someone to be a tutor and he came - oh the very, that was a Sunday that we arrived and he came the very next day and we sat on the verandah and I was shocked the first time he told me to say a prayer in Urdu (laughs) and the thing is the language school was due to begin a few months later and I had missed the beginning by arriving in February really instead of the autumn which would have been the normal time to arrive, so he had a short cut and taught me in Roman Urdu instead of starting to teach me the script he got me reading the language in the Roman script which I regretted afterwards because I've never really learned how to write Urdu properly but could hear it but I hadn't I wasn't especially good at the language.

J.W. : So did they emphasise the language then very early on they made sure you got the language ?

Mrs. S. : Oh we had to pass an exam after two years before we could start a job, any job, so that was it two years and we attended this language school each summer for the length of the summer holidays.

J.W. : Oh yes I've heard of that before.

Mrs. S. : So that was held up in (Mandhow) in the Murree Hills we went.

J.W. : So when was it then that you began your work after .. ?

Mrs. S. : Well that was language school '37, '38 and '39 and then it must have been May's furlough was due in the autumn of '38 so I think I was put in then although I still hadn't completed my language exams I still had my next summer to do at the language school, but I was put into the job of looking after the boarding school not much teaching involved more organisational work you know paying the teachers the daily whack for the school lessons not teaching actually but being the principal just meant taking the responsibility for the servants ordering supplies and all that keeping registers keeping accounts those sort of things more like a headmistress' job than a teacher's job.

J.W. : So when, did you start teaching later then or did you stay ?

Mrs. S. : Never at any time was I teaching from morning till afternoon sort of thing that never came into it.

J.W. : But you'd take .. ?

Mrs. S. : It was just the organisational side of things.

J.W. : Right okay (pause). So who else then was with you at the school apart from the other Scottish and British staff.

Mrs. S. : Oh there were all mission groups there Americans, English.

Mr. S. : Dutch.

Mrs. S. : New Zealand I don't think there were Dutch missionaries no, New Zealand, Australian, sent by their own mission groups not attached to the Church of Scotland necessarily.

J.W. : And were there any Indian staff as well any Christian staff who worked there ?

Mrs. S. : Well it was Indians who taught us, our *munshis* were Indian.

J.W. : Yes sure and were there any other Indian staff at all who taught or worked in the , can you remember ?

Mrs. S. : I don't really remember anyone other than the *munshis* who were up to teach us at the school at the language school especially.

J.W. : So were there any domestic staff to help with the running of the school ?

Mrs. S. : Oh the school of course.

J.W. : The sort of day to day running the cooking and the ... .

Mrs. S. : No I had charge of the servants we had servants in the school and our own personal servants for the house living in separate premises.

J.W. : What servants what sort of servants were they ?

Mrs. S. : Well we had our cook and we had our bearer and we had our sweeper all for the house then the school had the cook woman and her assistants and there was always the[*chaprassi*]who did the shopping.

Mr. S. : Gardener.

Mrs. S. : Oh yes there was always the gardener around yes and we had there was a mission car.

Mr. S. : Laundry *dhobī*.

Mrs. S. : No the girls did their own laundry in fact I have a picture.

J.W. : And did you tend to keep the same sort of servants for a long time ?

Mrs. S. : Yes they were there all the time.

J.W. : Like family almost ?

Mrs. S. : Yes and their families they had their own quarters with their wives and children there on the premises of the boarding school this is the Sialkot Girls' Boarding School in particular that I'm referring to but up in the hills that was quite different we were living in rented accommodation, living in guest houses you would say by people who were domiciled there and running this as their income for the income.

J.W. : Okay so at the school with all these other mission people form other sort of organisations and this sort of thing, what was the life like did you mix with them mostly or was everybody all mixing together the girls and everybody all the time outwith school's hours and this sort of thing was that ?

Mrs. S. : You mean in the language school ?

J.W. : No sorry.

Mrs. S. : No you mean down ... .

J.W. : I'm not being very clear.

Mrs. S. : In the plains.

J.W. : In the school in Sialkot what ... ?

Mrs. S. : In Sialkot?

J.W. : Aha.

Mrs. S. : Well it was a full time life for the girls it was very highly organised for the girls the school the prayer times and the services and they had their play times as well when they played in the compound , and there was a company of Girl Guides so they met regularly. Sunday they all went in crocodile along to the nearest church Hunter Memorial Church . Hunter was the first missionary who was murdered, perhaps at the time of the Mutiny when the prisoners at Lucknow broke out and then that spread to other places so the prisoners from the gaol at Sialkot also broke out and the British people had been advised to collect ion the fort in Sialkot City and Hunter and his wife and his baby were on their way to the fort when they were massacred by the local prisoners that was the beginning of the that must have been 1847 was it the Mutiny ?

J.W. : '57.

Mrs. S. : Was it '57 ?

J.W. : I can't remember myself.

Mrs. S. : And what about there were holidays at the school presumably at the school as well what happened then ?

Mrs. S. : they went home to their villages mostly the girls and we went to the hills of course for our recuperation.

J.W. : Okay (pauses) what about the moving to a different if you like what about the food that was in the school and the food you ate was that a mixture of .. ?

Mrs. S. : Well we stuck to European food mostly and our servants bought what we could in the shop there was one big general store in Sialkot and at other times there

would be trips to Lahore there, the mission car would be used and we'd all go into Sialkot, into Lahore and come back with European things you know things like cereal, big tins of marmalade things we couldn't get in Sialkot but we also enjoyed Indian food but the girls in the boarding school they were entirely on Indian food chapattis and rice and lentils all the time.

J.W. : How important would you say was having these things like the marmalade was that quite important to have those little things from home just to .. ?

Mrs. S. : Oh yes.

J.W. : A nice reminder.

Mrs. S. : Just kept our own eating styles you might say.

J.W. : Okay did you what about things like letters home and that sort of thing did you write a lot of letters was that an important thing ?

Mrs. S. : Oh yes regularly in fact I was looking through my pile to see if there might be anything that might be suitable for today and we have all the letters that you children wrote to us from Edinburgh when you were in boarding school we have those.

Mr. S. : Yes, I mean Dad was a prolific correspondent would you say ?

Mrs. S. : Oh yes.

Mr. S. : And he liked to draw little pictures on your letters too he took time to draw.

J.W. : Presumably you'd be writing back to the Mission Headquarters in Scotland would you did you keep any contact with them as well?

Mrs. S. : Well there was a mission council which was composed of all the missionaries of the Church of Scotland in that area and there was a Secretary and he did the corresponding and there was a Treasurer who dealt with our salaries our cheques and so on.

J.W. : And how was it, you weren't just obviously it wasn't just a Scottish run situation in there in Sialkot but when you were there and then you were in other places as well did you feel there was a sort of different quality, that being Scottish out there was somehow different to being anything else say to did you feel different from English missionaries or, not that you shut yourself away but ... ?

Mrs. S. : No we were definitely Church of Scotland and then beside us there were American missionaries two different lots of Americans there were the American U.P. and the American A.P. and I think the American U.P. you would say were more akin to us in their Presbyterian type of services. The College had a chapel and if the American missions missionaries happened to be visiting their colleagues some of them would take services if they were asked on a Sunday afternoon in English in the college chapel that special to Murray College and we got to know them pretty well and they were always very sociable and they had the Annual General Meetings when they would invite us to come for an evening for dinner and entertainment once a year those of us who were local.

J.W. : So you were all sort of distinct in your own way ?

Mrs. S. : We were.

J.W. : But you mixed at the same time.

Mrs. S. : quite independent as mission bodies no connection in the work but all doing the same work we had a girls' boarding school they had a boys' boarding school there in Shallot and they had the hospital whereas we had just a little welfare centre we didn't what should we say compete with one another we were all doing our own thing.

J.W. : I see what you mean.

Mrs. S. : Similar work.

J.W. : Right then so how long were you at Sialkot ?

Mrs. S. : I was ten years there but I was sent when May came back after her furlough she got her own post that was looked on as her special post and I was sent to a place called Chamba which was a small Hindu state and very isolated so that was quite different, completely Hindu there, there were two day schools I had to take charge of. One was for well to do Hindus, quite separate, the other was for the poor Christians and Muslims two quite separate institutions with no connection between them except the person who looked after them.

J.W. : So how long were you there for ?

Mrs. S. : I was there until my furlough was due. I went in 1939 to Chamba when I came back from furlough and I was there till 1944 when it was possible to get a passage home so I had been out the seven years you see '44 that's right and I was at home two years then '44 to '46 when they were able to send me back.

J.W. : So, sorry, so what was Chamba like can you tell me a bit about the life there anything you remember ?

Mrs. S. : Chamba was a very nice place to be it was on the banks of the Ravi a very different place to get to no motor road in I had top ride a pony to get there for a hill station and (pauses) I had these two schools there and also had charge of the Christian women visiting them and having little services with them. Now they were very much the underdogs in a Hindu state, the Christians most of the Christians were sweepers and lived in their own *bhangi* quite separately but my dealings were with them rather than with the high heidians.

J.W. : and were you just on your own or were there other missionaries ?

Mrs. S. : I was on my own for a bit. By that time there were no male missionaries in Chamba another missionary was sent Miss Dalglish who had been in Manchuria and had to get out of there because of the War conditions of course we were having a war to contend with as well rationing and all that sort of thing at that time so she and I were together for a bit. She wasn't an educational missionary she was more - I don't really know what we both did we were very much on our own it was so isolated we only got down once a quarter to attend the missionary council meetings so that we had very little contact. There was one British couple there Mr. and Mrs. Strong he was the British representative, the Raja was still a minor so Britain still you might say was in charge and there was the Prime Minister, Mr. Madhurah but and the missionaries left a good impression they were well received and we were kindly treated and so on but we were Christian missionaries and there for a certain purpose doing Christian work, but oh yes it was all very interesting. there was just one occasion when we was burgled and it was one of the staff one of the servants. The, a local pastor came up he had been a Muslim and was now a pastor of the Church of, Sialkot Presbytery and he used to come to me to get his postal expenses poor man (laughs). Anyway he arrived this day and he said, 'Is that your box that's down the drive?' and I said, 'Is there a box there ?' a trunk I had a trunk a little trunk and so I ran down and sure enough it was one of my trunks then I thought, 'Oh the safe!' - the safe was a chest that was nailed to the floor of one of the rooms in the house, dashed up and there it was broken open so I realised that was quite serious, and the local policeman was a Muslim and this the pastor got very friendly with him, and heard about what was happening and so eventually they suspected old Dethru, one of the serv.. senior servants and they found him leaving the bazaar one day with a great pile of new towels of things sheets and things over his arm and at that time there was no bank in Chamba and the money to pay the servants and to pay the staff came by registered post through the post office and the bank no the bank down in Sialkot must have been involved because the bank notes were all numbered a list of the new bank notes that were sent and by means of them we traced Dehru. I had paid the servants so I had paid the staff and so we recalled them to show which notes they had left in their possession and I knew which ones I had so by eliminat.. , by a process of elimination we

found out which bank notes were missing and Dehru had used one of the ones I had paid him to buy this stuff in this shop so that's how he was traced and he was put in the local gaol for about six months and I remember the day he was caught. It was actually, the River Ravi was right at the bottom of a steep bank and the servants' houses were alongside so he had leapt over the railing and gone down when he knew the police were on his trail and we were all standing looking over this railing watching for him down the bank with lots of bushes and so on. All at once I saw a flock of birds rise I said, 'Look he's over there he has disturbed the birds' and they got him that way I felt so sorry for poor Dehru that I was responsible for having him captured (laughs). I went to see him in the gaol I got permission to go in and see him but he was, other servants said he was given to smoking opium so they excused him on these grounds. Anyway though he did better in the gaol than he did at home because I suppose he stopped smoking and was being well fed in the gaol for a few months but that was the one sad experience in Chamba.

J.W. : Right you were saying after Chamba you went you had some furlough, yes, was that .. ?

Mrs. S. : Yes straight I went straight from Chamba for furlough for the two years on furlough from 1944 to 1946 and then got engaged after I came back April 1947 Lesley and I were engaged and of course in the meantime there was trouble being to be felt in India, in Pakistan, because of the political situation. So we had our holiday in Kashmir the two of us we were camping along with others up in, for our holiday and that was must have been from July to September, and in August of course the troubles began and we were told by the police that we could only get back to Sialkot if we accepted a military convoy that was, by this time colleges and schools were ready to be opened up for the new session, especially the College so we got this military convoy we were there on the bus there were American missionaries I can't remember all who were in the bus actually, but Indian missionaries had already gone but it was just those of us who were in the Sialkot area who were concerned but we didn't see a thing the whole way everything was lovely and peaceful and quiet and the fields all nice and green no sign of any of the bloodshed that we had heard about through the news, none at all, but the Sialkot, the American Mission Hospital had had seen many casualties I think and of course there was all the looting and the burning in Sialkot the big sports works were burned out you were always (in for ?) the sports industry and one interesting thing was, well, we were married in October of that year '47. We were married in the College chapel which was an afternoon service but there was a curfew in Sialkot at the time and so we couldn't have the reception in the city and our marriage was in the city we had to have our reception in the cantonment which was free of curfew military British military were there so that worked out allright.

J.W. : I'll tell you what shall I ... ?

(The tape was running out so it was stopped and turned over. Mrs. Scott begins to talk about Partition, thinking that this was my focus.)

Tape One, Side Two

Mrs. S. : ... Lesley came in one day and said, 'Oh dear I had to give Daniel a ticking off.' A letter had come in the post in Daniel's handwriting and when Lesley saw it he said, 'Oh dear this must be Daniel offering his resignation because I was ticking him off for something, opened up the letter and it was a year old it had gone to Kashmir and then come back and in it Daniel told what lesson what message he had been asked to deliver in Lahore during our absence he was telling of that and then on the way back he said he counted twelve corpses laid on Sialkot there had been this bloodshed on the train that he had been in. Christians actually were left untouched . Somebody was, they might have been attacked they were asked to recite the Lord's Prayer and if they did that correctly they knew they were Christians they weren't feigning so I heard I know we had no experience of bloodshed and we never experienced any enmity against ourselves it wasn't anti British - the political situation was anti British but not the personal situation at all which amazed us really. I think maybe it was different in other parts but not our part of the world of the country so that was that and Daniel continued to be head clerk for many a year continued to be head clerk of the (to **Mr. S.** Remember head clerk of the college, Daniel ?)

J.W. : How was it that you came to meet your husband ?

Mrs. S. : He was there, one of the missionaries, he was a lecturer in Murray College.

J.W. : Oh right.

Mrs. S. : And the boarding school where his sister was Principal was just about three or four miles distant and we had regular prayer meetings on a Friday evening in one anothers' houses so that's how we were meeting regularly one way or another social evenings invited out to dinner and there was the American mission doctor had a badminton party every Saturday afternoon where we were invited to join and there were some of the Indian Christians form the College there so there was quite a social life, narrow but regular constantly meeting so that's how I met Leslie.

J.W. : So the social life was ... ?

Mrs. S. : It was going on com.. simultaneously.

J.W. : Right okay that's answered that question. What was I going to ask ? That's right, so where did your once you were married where did your life go on from there what happened next after that ?

Mrs. S. : Well after that my time was taken up quite a lot with having the family the three of them obviously that took up time. Naturally we had the servants always on the spot so that Peter was pushed around in his pram by Charaag the college premises and the servants they were horrified when they found out that that the students would come over of course and were trying to teach him the swear words (**Mr. S.** laughs) they wanted to hear him speak the language and it was the swear words and the servant Charaag would say 'Oh *toba toba*' that means, 'Forbid, forbid!' but they wouldn't have words they wouldn't have used so that was Peter's beginning in 1949.

J.W. : And what do you remember of, what's your earliest memory shall we say Mr. Scott ?

Mr. S. : Difficult to put things in to a chronological order. First of all we stayed as a family while I was out there we stayed in two different homes. The first one was Murray College Murray House Murray College House ..

Mrs. S. : Murray College House it was called.

Mr. S. : .. and then we moved from there to Barah Patthar which was at on the outskirts of Sialkot.

Mrs. S. : Where Auntie May's school was or at least the same area.

Mr. S. : Right, the first, earliest memories, I can remember College House also I can remember in the summers going up into the foothills. I think Dingley Dell was the first place we went to and I'd have been about four then so that I can remember that so that I think the first memories must go back to about the age of four. First of all in Murray College some of the memories have been subsequently reinforced by seeing the films - we have films of Murray College in fact the films pre date my being born and there's films of me as a baby so that that's how vintage they are in colour some of them as well. Dad was a very ken amateur photographer and film. I can remember the servants the servants' children there was Cheemo, Patraas, and Andreas three boys Patras being the eldest and Cheemo and Andreas were about my age on either side I think so then we were pals and we just played really a lot of the time together. They were there with us in College House and I think they moved to Barah Patthar (to **Mrs. S.**) did they as well ?

Mrs. S. : Yes.

Mr. S. : Charaag was really the family domestic servant.

Mrs. S. : He was cook bearer by that time.

Mr. S. : Cook, cook bearer is that what it's called, because we had we'd have had the gardener as well and I remember him Mālī Laal.

Mr. S. : Mālī Laal.

Mrs. S. : Yes so I can remember the gardener almost an allotment at the back of College House would be growing vegetables and stuff there.

Mrs. S. : And oranges and lemons.

Mr. S. : Oranges I remember the grapefruit trees guavo trees no that was Barah Patthar down the drive. College House would be the allotment at the back the big garden at the front and the house itself I can slightly picture the layout of the house. I suppose when we were down in the lowlands I've got good memories of when we went up in to the foothills there the scenery of not being the least of the things that left an impression but the I think the weather, the monsoon time, we had some fairly dramatic times with flooding and dust storms. When it was particularly hot we would sleep outside on these canvas strap beds as children out in the garden and one night in particular I remember the sky turning orange fairly quickly and mum came out I think with Charaag or whoever, saying, 'Come and get into the house quickly' and we got into the house and the next thing the wind came and we were house bound for the next few days while the dust storm raged and the strong winds and other times would be the flooding I can remember Dad telling us that he'd sat on the veranda one night watching the water level rise something like seventeen inches in the night waiting for it to come up into the house because the house was actually built up on above the ground level and there are photographs of us wading in the day after or that was very exciting I suppose for us as children.

Mrs. S. : That was the time the cat was on the roof of the house.

Mr. S. : Oh yes that was when we found the cat.

Mrs. S. : That's it mewed.

Mr. S. : And that became pet yes. We had high ceilings I think in the main living room of Murray College they'd be sky light windows round and we noticed a cat or what turned out to be a cat up against one of them and I think this I presume servant would have gone and retrieved it.

Mrs. S. : No it was Dad took up some food to it from then on it was ours.

Mr. S. : Right another incident this is later so I'd have been in College House until when, the furlough or did we move oh no of course I was ..

Mrs. S. : We had a furlough in '57 to '58.

Mr. S. : Yes that's when I would have come back finally.

Mrs. S. : Yes.

Mr. S. : But when did we move to Barah Patthar would have been ..

Mrs. S. : It was Christmas time.

Mr. S. : Christmas time.

Mrs. S. : Christopher Harding was with us he helped us to move.

Mr. S. : Anyway ..

Mrs. S. : '55 perhaps.

Mr. S. : Right get the dates right I think the rest of the things I can remember clearly would relate to the after we'd moved to Barah Patthar and around that time going up to the Himalayan foothills although I can still in College House remember the Kendalls coming they came to Murray College, College House.

Mrs. S. : Yes.

Mr. S. : The touring theatre company.

Mrs. S. : That's right Felicity Kendall.

Mr. S. : She was just a baby then and they occupied part of College House we gave then rooms over to them we I can remember their visit and the play being put on in the College compound where I learned to ride a bike, I, we had a bicycle made for us by not the carpenter but one of the staff servant staff Dad taught them to make a bicycle for me and it had a little attachment like a small trailer but no that was the first bike - I learned in one hour I think Dad had been chatting in the College compound he'd run round with me and then he'd left me just to go round and round in circles while he chatted to one of staff so I learned to ride a bike in the College compound and that was surrounded by the College buildings so that would have been around the same time that the theatre people came.

Mrs. S. : The theatre people must have come in 1955.

Mr. S. : '55 yes.

Mrs. S. : Jane was a baby.

Mr. S. : I must have been five must have learned to ride just before that.

Mrs. S. : Yes this was the Shakespeariana Company going round the colleges and doing their Shakespeare plays and Felicity was about nine years of age and had a black pussy cat with her and her black *āyā* called Mary who was a South Indian lady and I came over from College one day I for a time I'd had to teach a girls' class and came over and there was Mary nursing Jane she'd lifted her out of her cot on the back veranda and Felicity was there so like her mother and her mother was known as Laura Little and the sister was Jennifer that was the lot so they had to board with us you see while they and they had a part of the house to live in. Actually I got a photograph - George Kendal came to Fours when we were living there I was busy that day and I couldn't go but Leslie went to see him and remind them of their visit to Sialkot. Anyway Peter you were telling your story.

Mr. S. : Yes trying to there's so many disjointed memories of people the goings on I can remember the actually when mum mentioned the students teaching me the language I can also remember a particular sitting on a bench in the corner of the compound and the students who I wouldn't have known sitting to me and chatting to me and probably getting feeding me with all sorts of notions.

Mrs. S. : (laughs) Anyway they were entertained by you.

Mr. S. : Yes then ..

Mrs. S. : Tun-dee-aa-nee.

Mr. S. : I remember Thandiani well, Dingley Dell I remember just.

Mrs. S. : That was Murree.

Mr. S. : Murree, yes Murree sorry.

Mrs. S. : In Murree.

Mr. S. : Dingley Dell was the name of the house and the Skinners were ..

Mrs. S. : Sharing the house with us.

Mr. S. : Sharing the house there, but that's only a vague picture that it was different from Thandiani, Thandiani was another station, hill station. To get there take a train from Sialkot to Abbotabad and then jeep.

Mrs. S. : From Abbotabad up the hill.

Mr. S. : And then eventually just ponies because there was no passage for wheeled vehicles.

Mrs. S. : No motors.

Mr. S. : So the last stretch and I, Thandiani would be about nine thousand, ten thousand feet and form where we were you looked across the is it the Indus Valley Gorge across to the Himamlayas and you could see distinctly Nanga Parbat I can remember that quite clearly and at Thandiani when we must have been there once when they celebrated Independence ..

Mrs. S. : That's right.

Mr. S. : Day and they had a huge bonfire.

Mrs. S. : Yes.

Mr. S. : We've got some of that on cine film put a huge bonfire on one of the hill tops. There were, another of the locals was the Thomas ..

Mrs. S. : Yes.

Mr. S. : Reggie Thomas they were up there one year with his daughter Tina Thomas ?

Mrs. S. : Tina.

Mr. S. : And don't know if the Khairullahs were up there.

Mrs. S. : The same time.

Mr. S. : Along with Auntie May who came up with us. We were up there twice was it Thandiani.

Mrs. S. : At least.

Mr. S. : At least twice so I wouldn't know which time it was which in fact did we have there were others the Olafsons were they Canadian missionaries ?

Mrs. S. : They weren't missionaries.

Mr. S. : They weren't missionaries.

Mrs. S. : He was out under the ..

Mr. S. : Anyway ..

Mrs. S. : He was out under the food organisation I could get the initials W-F-O or something like that.

Mr. S. : Anyway I can remember that Thandiani, and then coming back and then I suppose the move to Barah Patthar would have taken place about ..

Mrs. S. : After that.

Mr. S. : After that. The one famous incident that comes to mind was when we had just got a new mission car I don't know what kind it would have been a Morris Minor van. We also had a youngish lady missionary come out Stella Reekie who is she still ?

Mrs. S. : She's not alive anymore.

Mr. S. : And dad's sister Auntie May and a couple of other lady missionaries and my sister, myself and at least two of the servant children went for a car rune to go and see Muslim burial grounds I think would it be ?

Mrs. S. : No I think it was to see the mustard fields.

Mr. S. : Well to see the mustard fields particularly but there were the burial grounds as well.

Mrs. S. : Were there ?

Mr. S. : Which were pots I don't know if the heads were separate from the body.

Mrs. S. : No Peter I think that's your imagination.

Mr. S. : Anyway we set off the children were all in the back part of the van - not the back seat the adults were all in, in the front and we arrived at the Pakistan border and Auntie Stella as we called her told the border guards to let us through because ..

Mrs. S. : She was accustomed to visiting the villages in that area.

Mr. S. : I see yes.

Mrs. S. : And they knew her.

Mr. S. : Right and she said we wanted to go round.

Mrs. S. : To see the mustard fields.

Mr. S. : To get to a better a particular vantage point to see the fields, so we drove in to No Man's Land and kept going, she said we would go a little bit further and either one of the ladies or one of the children said, 'Oh look' and we saw Pakistan soldiers running out of the barracks towards us trying to stop us probably thought we were trying to go through and we didn't stop and the next eventually came round the bend and we were facing the Indian border and they promptly arrested us at gunpoint and took us in to the Indian side and we were left in the back of the car while they took Auntie Stella away for questioning. They brought us cocoa and stuff in the end. I suppose we set off on the outing initially in the early afternoon and eventually got released at ..

Mr. S. : Midnight.

Mrs. S. : Midnight but it involved having to get ..

Mr. S. : U.N. observers.

Mrs. S. : I don't know what went on behind the scenes but eventually we were allowed back.

Mrs. S. : Well I know from the other end.

Mr. S. : Yes, you know what was going on the other end. We were just having this long wait in the back of the car.

Mrs. S. : While Jane was a baby ..

Mr. S. : Yea she'd have been at home.

Mrs. S. : She was at home so we couldn't move but we got anxious when it came time for your meal time evening meal and you hadn't appeared and we knew that Auntie May had invited us and Miss Newing the principal of the Government Guild School we were invited to a meal in the evening because [Adeo's] sisters were the visitors for who this outing had been arranged you see, and they thought it would be nice to take you children along as well. . Well Leslie and I got anxious as time went along he got on to his bike

and went along to the cantonment to Ghulan Khader's shop . Oh yes they had seen Miss Reekie's car go along towards the border but they hadn't seen it come back so of course we were imagining we knew if there'd been an accident word would have come somehow *tānigā* men or somebody would have come I think really your dad I think knew there had been some trouble at the border. Anyway he went to Bob Foster the American missionary quite near asked him if he could take him out to the border so Bob got out the car and they went and found them there arrested at the border but the thing is they had to get in touch with the Delhi U.N. observers and they were out at dinner that night so they couldn't get them so they had to wait until such time as contact could be made so that's why they had to wait and meantime I remembered that Miss Newing would be across waiting for the dinner which was due at half past seven the dinner party so I sent Charaag across to her to tell her that there had been some delay and I think she went away off home without any dinner. Anyway Bob Foster arrived to tell me that Leslie was at the border where you had all been held up, you'd been having cups of tea and they had given blankets to keep you warm and so on so that was that expedition.

Mr. S. : Yes we'd been looked after quite well.

Mrs. S. : That was two years after Partition still this enmity between them.

J.W. : Oh yes.

Mrs. S. : And we were only six miles from the border with India with the Kashmir border so there was no crossing you see but one of the guards had said to Leslie that had there been a man among them he would have definitely been taken in to captivity he would have been arrested because they were all women and children in the car they were prepared to let them go so there you are.

Mr. S. : So that was ..

Mrs. S. : An adventure.

Mr. S. : An adventure I remember well. Another tremendous memory a very strong one was going in to the salt mines at I don't know where.

Mrs. S. : Khewra.

Mr. S. : Khewra.

Mrs. S. : Khewra, Gujrat, near Gujrat.

Mr. S. : Where we walked in the middle of the railway lines the stuff would be brought out in trucks and we just walked and walked down the lines and occasionally carrying,

people would be carrying torches, flaming torches I suppose or something and every so often they would point out that these huge caverns on either side of the track which would be brine filled and eventually going right, we'd go in at ground level and the salt of course they were mountains so you're actually going in to the mountains and eventually we went in to a central cavern and to give us an idea of the size of this cavern they lit there was a, either a hot air balloon idea lit it and let it go and it went up out of sight inside the mountain so I don't know how high it was dark of course.

J.W. : Difficult to think.

Mrs. S. : We were, we have a photograph of the outside of that somewhere and another, I suppose, quite spectacular memory was again Independence Day this time at Barah Patthar when we put candles - Barah Patthar and College House were quite big houses and we put candles, that size of candles every so many feet right round the house and lit them so that you had this ..

Mrs. S. : Celebration.

Mr. S. : Sort of like a giant birthday cake and the day after the children servants and myself picked up all the candles and took all the wax that was left and melted it down in a pan.

Mrs. S. : I didn't see that.

Mr. S. : No that's early engineering beginnings I suppose (laughs).

Mrs. S. : I don't know anyway you've happy memories.

Mr. S. : Yes absolutely, all this and what about other things yes I played I suppose a lot with the local Pakistanis.

Mrs. S. : Oh the children, the servants' children.

Mr. S. : And they were they lived yes ..

Mrs. S. : Were your companions you chatted the language with them and you don't remember a word of it now.

Mr. S. : No no.

Mrs. S. : Oh yes you were both very eloquent in your ..

Mr. S. : In our swearing.

Mrs. S. : Panjabi, well I don't know about the swearing but in the other languages of the children.

J.W. : That's the time to learn it that sort of age if you pick the language up and then it's good.

Mrs. S. : Yes do you, don't remember any words at all ?

Mr. S. : No nothing from then the country was you'll have to correct me, ek, do, teen, char, panch.

Mrs. S. : One to five was that as far as you got ?

Mr. S. : One to five.

Mrs. S. : Once you came home to Watson's one of the teachers gave you tuition in your sums Miss Dalgleish was that her name.

Mr. S. : Yes she was the first.

Mrs. S. : She was very good and gave you personal tuition to bring you up to standard.

Mr. S. : Oh right.

J.W. : Do you remember coming back when you had to leave and come back to school here what was that like then ?

Mr. S. : Well I, well first of all coming back because I came home along with Dad I think they'd been mumps or chicken pox or something and we came back on our own, mum and Mary Margaret and Jane flew out after us but I came ..

Mrs. S. : Peter took mumps that was it.

Mr. S. : I took mumps.

Mrs. S. : And of course we had to sign when we were to come on ship we had to sign that there was no infections, illness. Well we couldn't do that which meant that they both went on the ship the cabins had been booked for us all we were looking forward to travelling home on board ship all as a family a united family and he took mumps and he was better of his mumps and he left it with the other two which meant that we moved in with Auntie May in her house while our house was closed up and all the stuff packed

away for Leslie's successor - by this time we had arranged that one of the nationals would be principal.

Mr. S. : So I can remember the journey from Sialkot to Lahore would it be to Karachi in the train. That would be two days, eight hundred miles.

Mrs. S. : I think about thirty-six miles a day and a half from ..

Mr. S. : And arriving, staying somewhere overnight in Karachi before boarding and that was very hot the heat I think that has stuck in my mind that one particular night been much hotter than we'd been used to.

Mr. S. : It wouldn't be hotter than no Sialkot could reach a hundred and fourteen.

Mrs. S. : Yes but for some reason it was a restless night and then the ship coming back. We travelled it was the Anchor Line and there were the three sister ships the Selisia, Cecassia and Caledonia I can't remember which ship that was but we were on the B deck just near the waterline and going through the North corner of the Indian Ocean there was quite a lot of rough sea and I just have this visual image of one minute looking up at the sky out of the cabin window and then looking up looking down at this great mass of water turbulent water and it was moving not the ship (laughs) and I think I'd been quite sea sick there to begin with there and then going through Suez Canal I can remember waiting stopping somewhere Aden or Port Sudan and getting off with Dad and going to meet somebody or going inland ...

Mrs. S. : An old student I think it was.

Mr. S. : An old student yes I think he'd stopped ..

Mrs. S. : At Aden.

Mr. S. : At Aden yes.

Mrs. S. : And he insisted on feeding you and the food wasn't ready.

Mr. S. : That's right we nearly missed the ship.

Mrs. S. : You nearly missed the ..

Mr. S. : We were getting anxious. I can remember that now that Dad's boat that would I think carrying on stopped at Port Sudan.

Mrs. S. : Port Said.

Mr. S. : Well Port Sudan first of all.

Mrs. S. : First.

Mr. S. : And then up to Port Said because we went through no I'm mixing up the Red Sea with the Suez and then coming out at Port Said going out in a glass bottomed boat there and looking at the coral and then don't remember much more of the journey there - after no particular mental pictures until we came to Edinburgh and of course I'd never any no previous recollection of the West at that time so the first impression of coming to Edinburgh then ..

Mrs. S. : Quite new.

Mr. S. : Quite new. Oh that where else did you meet up with us then, must have been a time until you could find us.

Mrs. S. : We met up with you at Liverpool.

Mr. S. : Oh yes you met us at the ..

Mrs. S. : We stayed at the Harrow with Jean and Jimmy for the weekend.

Mr. S. : Ah I see yes.

Mrs. S. : When the plane arrived they met us at the plane took us to live with them I think for the weekend and then we joined you at Liverpool.

Mr. S. : So we then moved to there was a year at Comely Bank here and then Mary Margaret and I went into Cunningham Home House at Lauder Road then while Mum and Dad went back to finish their last ..

Mrs. S. : Spell.

Mr. S. : Spell, so we were in Home House for a couple of years. I went in ..

Mrs. S. : And we quite happy there.

Mr. S. : Yes.

Mrs. S. : You were well looked after.

J.W. : Well, was that .. ?

Mrs. S. : That was a residence for missionaries' children.

J.W. : I've heard of this place.

Mrs. S. : Cunningham House no longer in existence.

Mr. S. : So two years then went, all that time I was at Watson's and enjoyed it I think it was quite happy with school (pauses) but that of course is Pakistan behind now.

Mrs. S. : Yes.

Mr. S. : And no further contact really with the Pakistani world until the Ferranti Cricket Club and we started playing some of the Pakistani teams in the Meadows.

J.W. : Right, right. So what about back in Pakistan, Mrs. Scott, what happened then in your final time there ?

Mrs. S. : Well my attention then was on the College more than, the school life was behind me then. There was one year when Leslie asked me to teach some French because the lecturer had gone off in the middle of term you know to get a better paid post somewhere else so would I take over and I was reading one of my letters from a third year student was coming out to Barah Patthar from the College to get some tuition in French because I had French which was in my degree, French and Latin but that was all, then I remember I did have a Bible lesson with the girls at one point and I took them for their sports, badminton they played so I had to supervise that but otherwise my life was very domestic really iron and the washing and the cook .. well I wasn't doing the cooking we had servants doing the cooking but it was just I don't know what I did really.

J.W. : and did you .. ?

Mrs. S. : The children were always there either one on the way or there was one needing feeding I fed them you see myself so it was a regular routine for the baby but the family really took over at that point. But we had lots of outings too I remember one occasion when a new electric station was being opened and Leslie and I got an invitation to go to the ceremony I was the only lady there because the Muslim men wouldn't invite their women to take their lives with them although they may have been invited but I was the only lady and I remember the Chairman getting up and saying, 'Dear Gentlemen and Lady' (laughs) singled me out he had noticed the only one naturally only one European amongst all these Pakistani men that was very funny quite a formal occasion.

J.W. : Right I'll just pause ..

(The tape is paused to turn the reel over)

Tape Two Side Two

J.W. : So how about when it came towards coming home at the end of that last spell how did you feel, presumably you knew things were coming to an end and you were planning to come home.

Mrs. S. : well that was our full attention was on the thought of coming home and getting these two out of boarding and getting a home together and being all together as a family so of course Leslie had to find work once he came home he had to find a parish a charge and that was when we landed in Forres up in Morayshire that was 1960 and meantime (doorbell rings) that was when he got the O.B.E. first of all he'd got an M.B.E. while we were in Pakistan and then he was in the New Year's Honours list in 1960 so that '61 he received the O.B.E. under the Queen's Honours. He never knew why but I think it was partly that long family connection in the education and also they had made use of him when there was a threat of war between India and Pakistan the Deputy Commissioner came along and Leslie got some top secret papers to keep in the College safe. He would have been responsible for assembling all the Europeans who were in the Sialkot area and getting them evacuated and he had these top secret papers. I've never, I've often wondered what happened to these papers when we came away I've no idea they were so secret that even I didn't know anything about them but that was I wondered partly if that had brought him to the attention of the you know the authorities and they got his name for an O.B.E. but it was largely his lifetime's service to education and the whole family as you say that would a lot they were well known.

J.W. : And did you feel with the with that heritage of the generations before did you, was there a certain sadness at knowing you were leaving all this life of work, or was it I suppose ..

Mrs. S. : It was just the next move in your life you know you never know what lies ahead so this was naturally our next move and Leslie had finished thirty years of service so he was due to retire4 which any person does at the end of a life's work and I had accomplished whatever I had to do. The bit that made me shed tears was saying goodbye to the servants. You were conscious that they were so dependent on you for everything. Their livelihood depended on them getting their regular money or getting a loan now and again to help them over a difficult period and just the daily contact with them so that was the difficult bit for me.

J.W. : Right and difficult for them presumably, leaving ?

Mrs. S. : Must have been yes, this Patrice died quite young.

Mr. S. : Even by the time you came away there were clear signs that the local Pakistanis were taking over everything.

Mrs. S. : Oh yes your Dad deliberately encouraged ..

Mr. S. : Phased out ..

Mrs. S. : .. Uncle Reggie to take over to be responsible for the - by this time my husband had become Principal of the College in fact he was before we married just around about the time we were engaged he had to take over the responsibility and that was a very anxious time because students were liable to be on the two sides. Oh the College suffered from the departure of all the Hindus, Hindu and Sikhs all left so it was the Muslims and Christians who were left and financially too the College suffered quite a bit. Now of course it's all nationalised we don't have a school or a hospital or anything belonging entirely to the Church of Scotland although we still support these partly.

J.W. : So what was it like when you first came home back to this country was it .. ?

Mrs. S. : Well there was this finding of a charge for Leslie and getting you in to school. Mary Margaret was thoroughly sick the day the day I took her down to meet the headmaster of her school she just was so full of nerves at this new situation.

Mr. S. : In Forres ?

Mrs. S. : In Forres where we were, I don't remember you - I know you were always late for school, the local registrar called him the late Peter Scott because he was always running along the street after the bell had finished ringing I couldn't get him out of bed in the morning that was what ..

Mr. S. : I never got used to the change from Pakistan.

Mrs. S. : Yes maybe that.

J.W. : Yes it's true.

Mrs. S. : Yes in Pakistan you would have been up and out before school time of course but ..

Mr. S. : Your biological clock is still five hours ahead of Britain.

Mrs. S. : That's right.

Mr. S. : Or behind, that's the wrong way.

Mrs. S. : You've kept him awake this afternoon.

J.W. : And how about the people that you came back in among in Forres. How did they, did they react to you in a certain way because of all this life you had had in India ?

Mrs. S. : Oh I had to go round all the guilds speaking doing speaking at guild meetings about the work about what work we did. Mostly I had slides to show that made it easier than just a direct talk, but I had quite a I had a few pulpits even to speak in which was a real trial.

J.W. : Right, right and so there was an interest, people were interested in what you'd done ?

Mrs. S. : Oh yes, oh yes in the churches, all within the churches mostly anyway, I had one or two other groups around Forres that I would speak to.

J.W. : And did you ever go back subsequently for business ?

Mrs. S. : No I hadn't been.

J.W. : would you have liked to do you think or was it a stage that you had moved on to another stage in your life ?

Mrs. S. : Another yes, certainly after nationalisation when we had had to get out of the, I don't think I'd have liked to be back now. It's quite a different world the Muslim world from the Christian interest that was our special interest.

J.W. : And do you still have with the mission work do you still have sort of links with that area ?

Mrs. S. : Well being as old as I am there are very few links of my age group but this prayer meeting I am in touch with, I have a letter there I think I brought it or at least I put it in, that came from one of the staff of Murray College this'll be it you might be interested just to read it.

(The tape is paused and I read the letter, which asks for information on the construction of the Chapel and its history)

J.W. : Anything else can you think of anything else that you remember or because I think we've covered a lot haven't we ?

Mr. S. : Yes.

Mrs. S. : Yes we seem to have covered a lot, not very easy for you getting any particular theme through it it's just a load of personal reminiscences.

J.W. : No, that's what I'm looking for.

Mr. S. : If we'd had the photograph albums handy and gone through them that'd have jogged a few memories.

Mrs. S. : Oh that takes too long oh yes we've masses of pictures. Actually we have there's one album that has pictures of that College chapel being built stage by stage, old fashioned not good photos but I mean they could they wouldn't reproduce very well I don't know if you've (to **Mr. S.**) ever seen it it's just some that Dad took these photos himself as the College chapel was being built but I haven't a clue where the money came from it would come as part of the general grant that the Church sent out for the running of the place and ..

Mr. S. : Cause the other thing I remember particularly was going to meet you at Liverpool docks when you finally came back.

Mrs. S. : Down to yes Uncle Charlie.

Mr. S. : And you weren't in sight immediately on the ship I think we went on the in to the ship to see if we could find you and somebody said you'll be in the warehouse so-and-so.

Mrs. S. : Checking our luggage.

Mr. S. : Checking the luggage.

Mrs. S. : Collecting the luggage.

Mr. S. : Well the luggage was not just a few suitcases, part of the warehouse ..

Mrs. S. : Oh it was enormous.

Mr. S. : .. Was partitioned off with..

Mrs. S. : Enormous.

Mr. S. : Fifty-two crates I think.

Mrs. S. : Something like that.

Mr. S. : Of books and things that came back now how many Pickford lorries did it take to bring it up to Edinburgh ?

Mrs. S. : Oh I don't know but we weren't ashamed of the amount of luggage we had because we had nothing to come home to.

Mr. S. : Well you had, well dad had built up the library in the College and must have had thousands and thousands of books.

Mrs. S. : Oh but he didn't bring home books.

Mr. S. : Well he brought home a lot of books back did he not it would have been in the old chests a lot of books came back I think.

Mrs. S. : I can't remember what they came in but anyway ..

Mr. S. : So anyway that's a mental picture of this corner of the warehouse.

Mrs. S. : Oh yes we had a huge amount of luggage.

Mr. S. : All this stuff and then the move again to Forres.

Mrs. S. : Yes [*darris*] there were carpets those carpets you know the Indian car.. soft carpets we had brought maybe two of them big carpets, stupid (laughs).

Mr. S. : How did you get them all down to Karachi from Sialkot ?

Mrs. S. : Can't remember.

Mr. S. : That in itself would have been a major expedition.

Mrs. S. : It would have been the train must have taken them.

Mr. S. : Yes you probably had a train to yourself.

Mrs. S. : (laughs) I don't know.

Mr. S. : Well I remember Dad told a story about needing to go somewhere fairly quickly before they had time wasn't a college car and the bus station was fairly near College House and he went round to the bus station to find out when the next bus was

and I think it was a case of the buses left when they were full so Dad just paid for all the seats on the bus and took the bus in, you know, as the only passenger, still it would have only been a few pennies or something.

Mr. S. : Well I'm sorry Peter you've to take me home cause I've to go to the prayer meeting to be picked up before half past five.

J.W. : That's about everything, yes, please I don't want to ...

Mr. S. : If you want more, to come back we can always arrange another session.

J.W. : Well thank you, yes it's been wonderful just this once, thank you.

(Tape ends)

Alexander Bain
Kings' Own Scottish Borderers
Interviewed in Edinburgh on Wednesday, 5th March 1997
SA1997.35

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **A.B.** represents Alexander Bain

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston I'm interviewing Mr. Bain at his home in Edinburgh and it's Wednesday the 5th of March. If I could start Mr. Bain if you could tell me where and when you were born.

A.B. : I was born in Yorkshire on the 18th of December 1914.

J.W. : And what were your parents doing at that time?

A.B. : Well my father was a civil engineer and he was working on a public works contract in Yorkshire and that's why we happened to be in that part of the country.

J.W. : Where was he from?

A.B. : He was born in Glasgow my mother was born in Edinburgh.

J.W. : And how long did you stay down there?

A.B. : Well I was I only left Yorkshire when I was about just over a year old I don't remember that part and being an engineer he was moved around. By that time the War had started the First World War and he was put on to building aerodromes and things like that so we moved to Lincolnshire and from there we went to Dorset to Dorchester and by the time the War finished we had been in England for quite a long time then we were living in Wiltshire for a while then my father came back to this country to Scotland to the same sort of job and we followed in 1925. So although I was born in England I was (sic) Scottish parents.

J.W. : And did you, I'm trying to calculate, did you start school down in England or did you start school up here?

A.B. : I started school in England ... .

J.W. : And moved around ... .

A.B. : For the first well until I came I was ten when I came here and finished my education here in Edinburgh.

J.W. : What did you do when you finished school?

A.B. : I went into a chartered accountant's office and I was there for a couple of years and then I moved on to one of the people they audited which was a printing ink manufacturer and I was there until the War started and I was away for almost six years during the War four of them abroad and when I came back I went back to the same company and then I was I suppose restless I think most people were restless and I moved to Scottish Gas so at Scottish Gas until I retired.

J.W. : So going back to the War and when you started and went abroad in the Army when was it you first went abroad where did you first go abroad in the Army?

A.B. : I went abroad in June 1941

J.W. : And where was that to?

A.B. : To India.

J.W. : And before you went did you were you told you were going to India or was it just a question of being ... ?

A.B. : No well it was just now I was called up on the 30th April 19 ... no sorry the 30th May 1940, 1940 and I did the usual training infantry training and you didn't get a choice of what regiment you went into you were just picked and shoved into anyone and I was land ... ended up in the K.O.S.B. I did initial training at in Ayrshire and then we went it was before Dunkirk around about Dunkirk time, and they were anxious for recruits for reinforcements for the battalions that were in France, at that time there were two battalions the First and the Sixth and they took us down to Enfield in Middlesex where we did further training and then as a result of Dunkirk the whole thing came to an end so they took us back to Berwick-on-Tweed which was the depot of course and I finished my training there and I did signal training and I was on a job there for quite a long time and then went out to India to join the Second Battalion.

J.W. : And did you know what did you know about India before you went there?

A.B. : Oh a fair amount just through general knowledge I suppose. I suppose I was always very keen, I remember when I was a youth I used to read a thing called the *Boys' Own Paper* which is now defunct and you used to get sort of Rudyard Kipling sort of stories about the things on the North-West Frontier (laughs) I little thought that I'd ever get there (laughs). So I suppose I had a sort of romantic notion of going overseas.

J.W. : And what about your comrades that you went with do you remember any of what they thought about India or what they knew?

A.B. : Oh some knew to some extent a little but generally speaking they wouldn't know anything about it.

J.W. : And you obviously didn't have the free choice to go to India but saying that you'd read these books and that sort of thing do you think you would have liked to have gone to India yourself had you had the free choice had things worked differently?

A.B. : Oh yes yes to work there yea. Yes I had a friend who was at school with me and he went in to rubber planting in the, Burma and that always appealed to me that sort of thing.

J.W. : Right, and what sort of training did you have you obviously had your army training but did they give you any training before you went about what it would be like out there or ... ?

A.B. : No no.

J.W. : Nothing at all?

A.B. : No no.

J.W. : So it was in at the deep end. So moving on how did you physically get out there?

A.B. : I went out on a ship called the *Empress of Japan* of all things (laughs) it was later changed to the *Empress of Canada*. We left from Gourock on the Clyde and went right the way of the Cape to Bombay.

J.W. : And what do you remember of the journey what was it like?

A.B. : Well it was very tedious it took seven weeks altogether mind it was a big ship it was twenty-three thousand tonnes so that it wasn't too bad. We had one or two interesting things on the way out. Being in the Signals - we had a huge escort with two battle cruisers and about seven destroyers you know it was very being a troop convoy they didn't obviously want to lose it and I was reading messages coming from the of the battle cruisers about one of the German battleships I think *Graf Spee* or something it was quite interesting (laughter). That was the time they were chasing it around about that time or had just sunk it or done something.

J.W. : Right so what was it like when, where did you arrive in India ? Where did you arrive?

A.B. : When?

J.W. : Where did you arrive in India?

A.B. : Where? In Bombay.

J.W. : And can you remember your first impressions when you got there?

A.B. : Yes Bombay is we arrived about midday possibly earlier and it had a sort of magical look about it coming in from the sea it was a sort of shimmering vision that you got due to the strong light of course. You see the terrific number of people running about, there was a ship being loaded with coal and the they were carrying the coal in baskets on their head up a long plank must have taken weeks to do it they were cheap of course but it was very hot too that time of year it take I found it took at least six months to get acclimatised to it but after that it didn't bother much.

J.W. : Right, so you embarked at Bombay what happened from then on where did you go from there?

A.B. : Well I joined the I, I was on another thing for a while but I joined the Battalion on the Frontier in at the beginning of 1942 and then by that time of course is was the winter time on the Frontier and I remember the long train journey all the way from Bombay up to well around about Bombay up to the railhead at Bannu which was on the Frontier, and from there it was about sixty between sixty and seventy miles up to Razmak and you went up in a convoy but the roads they had what you called road openings which I wasn't aware of at the time but they piqueted all the hills along the road to let the convoy through and this happened as I found out later, three times a week to take up supplies and that's what we did. Razmak was the furthest out brigade on that particular road. There were three brigades you started out at Bannu I can't remember the name of the first one then there was Miramshah which I think was the in the brigade with the Somersets there were three British battalions the Queens the First Queens, the First Somersets and the Second K.O.S.B. and they were all in Indian brigades so the rest of the brigade was all made up of Indian or Gurkha. And we were in the brigade at Razmak it was called the Razmak brigade and we had the job of opening the road between Razmak and Alexander piquet which is the highest piquet in the British Empire eight thousand feet up, and I was in the machine gunners Vickers machine guns and we had mules for transport and you had to run the whole time you didn't walk you ran between places so you can imagine at six thousand cold feet up running up to seven miles at least once a week you got pretty fit.

J.W. : Kept you going yes. Who would when you were saying the piquets were being sent up there who were the piquets being sent up the hill were they ... ?

A.B. : That was the rifle companies. You see what you did you set up the machine gun on the top of the particular hill that was being piqueted and the there was a man called the flagman and he carried a flag at the rear of the, oh first of all you ranged on the top of the hill and then you raised sights three hundred feet and then you followed this flag to see which was the showed you where the last troop the last person was and you stayed in that position until they came down again and the flagman went to the back end coming down the way and when he reached the required distance down you lowered your sights on to the top of the hill again. I can't remember ever opening fire during that particular period although they occasionally got the tribesmen coming down as soon as the hill was cleared, they come up from the other side and take a pot shot they were amazingly agile people they were well that part Razmak is mostly its in Waziristan and there the two tribes there were the Wazirs and the Mahsuds and I think mostly Wazirs round about where we were.

J.W. : And what had you heard anything about them about the Mahsuds and the Wazirs?

A.B. : Err no the only ones I'd heard about were the Afridis I would think being you know, Khyber Pass district. Now later on in the year in July well first of all when I went up it was deep snow on the ground and frozen snow you walk on the surface of it and even the mules didn't sink into it and you had that constantly for three months and it was pretty cold I can tell you but and of course snow clearing was a favourite occupation too because the convoys had to get through but in July when it got the summer time it was a very good climate actually cause being high it didn't get so sticky as it did on the plain and the tribesmen had been causing a bit of trouble, you know the reason for British troops being on the Frontier in the first place was well it goes back to the Russian threat, but they also acted as a peacekeeping force between the various tribes because they used to fight each other over land and whatever and then when they got fed up with that they had a pot shot at the British (laughs) it was just rather like the Twelfth of August not terribly deadly stuff but great fun. So there was a bit of an uprising in 194 ... oh wait July or must have stared earlier May, June we went out no it must have been earlier May possibly they surrounded one of the forts in the Tochi Valley which was occupied by the Tochi Scouts and I think they sent out what they called a column made up of troops from the from our Razmak brigade and also the one followed down and I think altogether there would be let me see one, two, maybe four or five battalions altogether and we went up the Tochi valley to this place and relieved it and altogether it took a fortnight and was it hot oh dear dear coming up the Tochi Valley at that time of year. We had three people killed and one or two wounded but nothing really deadly. The first casualty we had was the first night actually we'd left Razmak and we were camped down the road near Miramshah and there's a shot rang out and the Adjutant was killed and he was hit and he died later. Now the nearest place they could have fired from must have been about a mile away they were remarkably good they even used homemade rifles you know and they made them on very often wooden lathes how on earth they did it must have been

very very time consuming and they used very very long barrels of course which gave greater accuracy and when we were out on target practice rifle shooting we had to first of all we had to count for at any time we had to account for every empty shell case they had a square brass plate which held so many and you had to fill this up with empty shell because they used to come along and pick them and reload reload them and on the rifle range which was just outside the Razmak you had to you fired through the target into sand bank you had to go and pick up the lead afterwards in case they got hold of it (laughs).

J.W. : And what about the sort of everyday situation where you were what was your ... ?

A.B. : In Razmak?

J.W. : Accommodation yea in Razmak?

A.B. : Razmak was it was quite a reasonably new one built in 1923 I think it was I think probably the last fortified place that was built and it consisted of a square sort of fairly low wall built with rough stone maybe five, six feet could look over it anyway and barbed wire outside that and every so often there was a post and apart from doing normal training and the road opening you had guard duty or piquet duty. You had a case you had formal guard at the guard house normally the traditional stuff but that would be only about once a month I would think but you were on piquet duty round the perimeter I would think at least once a week and then they had a tower outside the perimeter called Rifleman's Tower which was about half a mile outside just a square tower like a Border keep and they used to go out there every couple a dozen and stay there for a week and you had a ladder to get up into the first floor then you pulled the ladder up afterwards (laughs) really romantic stuff.

J.W. : So and who else was in that quarters with you it was were there any sort of servants well not servants but you know Indians who'd help with cooking and so on and so forth or was it ... ?

A.B. : Well you had the barrack rooms well the one I was in anyway they were just normal stone built with they had tin roofs I think there was about twenty in a barrack room and the you got your food from the cookhouse you had to go and get it and it was done the cooking was done by British troops but they had also Indian followers who did some of the work there. They had what you called contractors you see they'd be used for sort of menial tasks and they followed they very often followed the battalion wherever it went, the same contractor, and then you had people who used to come round and shave you because in the winter time there was no such thing as hot water and you had to be on parade at half past six in the morning and it wasn't easy so they used to come round and shave you lying in bed (laughs) a cut throat razor and some people were

actually shaved without waking up and these were local people not the sort of camp followers, they were maybe Pathans or whatever and it was a bit awe inspiring to look up and see a swarthy face about you with a cut throat razor (laughs).

J.W. : I should imagine.

A.B. : It was a very rough shave it was just enough to get you on the if you get through the first parade you see you were all right about three strokes that was it.

J.W. : And what was it like with did you not mix as such with these people but did you ever get to know them talk to them at all?

A.B. : Not really no the one you probably saw most often was the used to have the *chaivālā* who came round with tea and buns and things he had a big brass trunk thing he used to carry it on his back with string around it and the thing for carrying the tea you know with a charcoal burner under it to keep it hot but you know you didn't really know them because you see Razmak was a no females in Razmak at all, all these places were the same were purely like a barracks and apart from the few civilians they had what they called a bazaar but not the traditional bazaar you see in other places there were shops and there was a photographer I don't remember much about the other shops and then they had a what was it a bowling alley or a skittle alley or something which I never indulged in that but once a week they used to get beer up from it came up from Bannu it was called *Madras Straits* I don't know why they called it that and with the journey up it got all shook up it was the most potent stuff (laughs) but you couldn't afford to buy these things at least I couldn't I mean the pay in those days was two shillings a day.

J.W. : What rank was that for?

A.B. : I was a private at that time.

J.W. : And then it went up?

A.B. : It went up to three shillings?

J.W. : Right and how long were you at Razmak then?

A.B. : Almost a year.

J.W. : Almost a year.

A.B. : Yep when it was all over the they formed the war in Burma well the first the campaign in 1942 was a bit of a disaster and they were desperately short of troops and they reformed an old Indian Division called the Seventh Indian Division and it took the

whole of the Razmak troops which consisted of a division really, three brigades with the three infantry battalions in a brigade plus supporting artillery service and all that sort of thing and they formed into brigade the Indian Division and they did the same to the other two brigades down the road to Bannu so it was all that road area that supplied the Indian Division and that was towards the end of '42 almost at the end and then we did divisional training over towards Rawalpindi in the Indus district and after that we moved down to the Central Provinces and did further jungle training and then Ranchi which was outside Calcutta, further training there the monsoon had started by that time and we moved into Burma by a most devious route from Ranchi we went to Madras and sailed across the Indian Ocean no the bay of Bengal to Chittagong and then walked into Burma from there. I suppose that was to, I mean why we couldn't have gone down the coastal road from Calcutta because Chittagong's not far from Calcutta. Anyway it was maybe to baffle the enemy (laughs).

J.W. : How different was it then when you were being trained in Rawalpindi how did you find it there in comparison?

A.B. : It was very cold bitterly cold in Rawalpindi the time we were there it I can't remember now it must have been about a couple of months we were there before we moved South.

J.W. : Right and presumably the life there was that bit sort of ... ?

A.B. : Well in the Central Provinces it was extremely hot. The temperature inside a tent or *basha* or whatever it was about a hundred and thirty it really was you just sat and perspired it just dripped off you.

J.W. : I can imagine. So how sorry to take you back to Razmak I've just thought you were permanently in the area did they ever take you out at all did you ever have any sort of leave or whatever to go ... ?

A.B. : They did towards the end they ran a leave camp in Kashmir not a great number but certain people were picked to go to it and we went down to Bannu and then across to Rawalpindi, and then went by bus up along the banks of the river what's it the Jhelum up to Srinagar and had a leave camp run by the, possibly by our brigade and the one down the road they ran it as a leave camp we were there for two weeks altogether which was a wonderful experience ... .

J.W. : I can imagine.

A.B. : In Kashmir. But that was the only leave. Some others they would have leave they would go down to the, they got sometimes they got they could save up leave sometimes they went away for a month but generally it was two weeks were going to the

likes of Bombay or Calcutta it took you by train four or five days so you needed a long leave otherwise you were travelling the whole time. But I must say I enjoyed it, it was a spartan existence but it was so apart from malaria which we the Battalion developed malaria to, oh, ninety per cent after we had been out on column because the Tochi Valley is absolutely moving with mosquitoes at that time of year and we had no protection at all no mosquito nets you can't when you're lying out on the ground so that was the only real problem but Razmak itself you had no real problems with mosquitoes it was too high up.

J.W. : Did you catch malaria yourself ?

A.B. : I had malaria yes yes I had malaria a lot of times that was the first time no sorry that was the second time I had it. It's if it's ordinary B.T. malaria's not very serious it's an uncomfortable thing you shake and you just can't stop shaking. It last about two weeks then you're all right again.

J.W. : And how about again back to the Frontier back to Razmak you had your routine but what would you do to, any spare time you had what would you do to amuse yourselves?

A.B. : Well the only things well you could read you couldn't go for a walk no place to walk to. Some people did run round the perimeter I suppose you could do that nothing to stop you doing that. They played football, hockey there was a cinema I think probably about once a week they showed a film. Polishing your brasses, cleaning your rifle (laughs) no it wasn't a social life at all och I played cards and that sort of thing and the in the P-R-I that's the a sort of N.A.A.F.I. they had what was it called housey-housey or tombola which they had that on a Saturday now called bingo isn't it? Tombola's actually Urdu it means 'you shout'.

J.W. : Yea, yea of course

A.B. : Tombola.

J.W. : Yea, yea it's true yes (**A.B.** laughs) I'm supposed to be learning the language. And did you and your comrades as well was there any sort of not resentment but were you fairly say fatalistic about being there you thought that was your lot?

A.B. : Well most of them when I joined the Battalion it was I would think at least eighty per cent regular soldiers and they had been most of them had been abroad for seven years so they were time expired, you see you signed on for seven years and then you could extend it to twelve and then from there you could go on to twenty-one and you had a pension if you did that but most of them left the army after seven years but because of the War they couldn't get out so they were stuck there so they weren't very happy about

it (laughs) not the most enthusiastic of troops. The a lot of them were repatriated before we went into Burma they went back home and some of them ended up at Arnhem too they had the airborne glider troops too so there's a few ended up there but it was apart from the regulars there was about sixty territorials from the Borders and a few conscripts. I was a conscript but it was a different life you know with the regulars it wasn't the shall we say the intellectual life shall we say you might have got in other circumstances because in peacetime regular soldiers joined the army because they couldn't get a job or were running away from their girlfriend or their wife or something or they were running away from the law so that you tended to get a pretty rough crowd (laughs) but they were generally pretty decent chaps in spite of it but some characters amongst them.

J.W. : And did they did you all sort of mix and gel or was there any sort of ... ?

A.B. : Oh yes I used to travel about with a regular two regulars in fact but no there wasn't very much to do you sat in the barrack room at night and the tea man cam along the *chaivālā* and a kind of cup of char and a sticky bun and early to bed you had to get up early you see and security of course was tight.

J.W. : And how about contact with home while you were there letters and that sort of thing?

A.B. : Well we used to get letters I was married you see before I went out there and I used to get letters every once a week once a fortnight there was contact and I used to get papers sent out that sort of thing occasionally cigarettes and soap (laughs) that sort of thing and that was disastrous thing putting soap and cigarettes in the same parcel the cigarettes tasted of soap (laughs). But I didn't smoke a great deal for two reasons one because I couldn't afford it and two because of the physical exercise I found that if I smoked I couldn't do what was required of me I mean you had to keep up with the mule and the mule could trot along at a good pace and you just had to keep up with them (pauses) but have you ever seen pictures of these places?

J.W. : I in fact I saw some pictures of Razmak yesterday.

A.B. : Did you?

J.W. : Just one or two pictures.

A.B. : I've got some I can let you see .

J.W. : Oh thank you I'd like that. And with just an aside with the mules were they looked after entirely by troops as well or were there Indians who ... ?

A.B. : There was a cook sergeant who was a Borderer and there would probably be one or two other white British people and then there would be some Indians or whatever doing some other jobs you know peeling potatoes and that of course there were cookhouse duties to you you had to go and peel potatoes and this sort of thing it was a British mess not they weren't from the catering Corps or anything like that they were unit people before the days of the catering corps.

J.W. : Now with the other regiments you said you were there the Queens and the Dorsets in other parts did you and you said you were with them when you went into the Tochi Valley did you in any way feel that your experience was different to them did you feel that being Scottish you had any more of an ability to cope with that sort of thing?

A.B. : I think probably you know there was no contact with those other people we were surrounded by Indians and Gurkhas and, but an interesting thing happened when we went after Tochi Fort had been relieved they had a competition with the Tochi Scouts as to who could piquet a hill quickest.

J.W. : Really?

A.B. : And believe me the Borderers beat them.

J.W. : Really!

A.B. : Yes.

J.W. : Goodness that's something to be proud of because they're ... .

J.W. : I think there's probably two reasons at least . One that there's the determination that they would beat the locals and two I think Borderers, well Scottish people generally, they're more they're better at hill climbing that people in the flatter parts of the country. This showed up once we had a chap in the battalion who went in for professional cycling including hill climbs and he said that the Scottish people were always better at it than most of the English people because they were used to going up hill and they had developed more leg muscles and that sort of thing so there might be something in that.

A.B. : Oh yes yes quite possibly.

J.W. : And also the diet too I mean we were probably better fed than the local troops they are virtually vegetarian they don't eat all the Pathans they the people well all these hill tribes eat goat they don't eat well I don't think there are any cattle up there but goat is a cheap thing but it was mostly vegetarian stuff so they maybe don't have the physique that the British people have but as I say we had no contact with the other two

British battalions on that particular road we didn't have any contact with Indian troops either apart from the odd, they maybe had a game of hockey against some of them we had Sikhs there they were very good at hockey the 1st Royal 7th 2nd Punjabis and the Fourth we actually had the 4th 1st Gurkha but for some reason when they mobilised into the division we got a battery of Gurkhas who weren't at Razmak they replaced then the 48th. I don't know why they did that but they all had their own way of life and they did the road opening too.

J.W. : On the rare occasions that you mixed with them whether the Indian troops or the Gurkhas what was that like what were relations like ?

A.B. : Oh very good with the Gurkhas yep yep because they were treated differently they were first of all they were really treated as British Army a Gurkha could go into a British canteen whereas an Indian couldn't.

J.W. : Oh I didn't realise that.

A.B. : And a Gurkha got paid one rupee more than an Indian soldier got, an Indian soldier at that time got seventeen rupees a month and a Gurkha got eighteen. Oh I had a great regard for them. In fact I'm very much involved with them at the moment fundraising for the welfare trust, not to support the people who've retired on pension, it's the people the wartime ones who've who got no pension I mean British soldiers got no pension either and some of these are quite elderly now I didn't realise they lived as long as that you know generally speaking Indians don't live as long as we do but some of these Gurkhas are in their seventies or eighties even and Nepal is an extremely poor country they've got no benefits of their own no unemployment benefit and no health service nothing like that and the Gurkha Welfare Trust raises money and pays a pension to these people which is sufficient to keep them and they also run the health centres there's about twenty-four health centres and officers from this country go out there to, medical officers go out about twice a year inspecting the locals helping them doing all sorts of things so they do look after them quite well but I was hearing, is this on record? It's really nothing to do with that (**Mr. B.** very briefly described the pension situation for Gurkhas at present).

J.W. : When you were saying that you went from Razmak to 'Pindi and then further and then when you were in these other places in India, what was life like then, how different was ... ?

A.B. : Well in, well we moved from, Razmak was a settled community with proper buildings, when we were in 'Pindi we were camping out in tents and as I say it was extremely cold and beside the Indus the banks were a sort of powdery dust I'll always remember it, a greyish dust and everything got covered in it terrible stuff, and then when we moved down to the Central Provinces we were in, let me se now what kind of, we

had *bashas* you know the bamboo building, and it was extremely hot but apart from that of course most of them were out, by that time I had moved into a non-active job and I wasn't involved in manoeuvres *et cetera* so it was pretty static but the rifle companies and the support companies were out doing manoeuvres and jungle training mock battles and so on and so forth and then Ranchi was a continuation of the same only under different conditions, the monsoon has started and it was up to the ankles in mud, it was the last time I played rugby at Ranchi and it was hard going (laughs) we had some good players of course the Borderers.

J.W. : Oh of course yea.

A.B. : As a matter of fact, another aside, the number of K-O-S-B's who have played for Scotland is something like twenty-five, it's amazing, in number.

J.W. : And did, with Razmak being a completely different situation, but in these places did you get much chance to go away from your routine to get any leave time in Indian towns?

A.B. : Yea, leave went on, I was never on leave in that period, no, but no, yea, there was leave.

J.W. : And so did you have spare time, free time, to go out of barracks into town?

A.B. : No, no, there was, I mean it wasn't a barracks as such, it was just an encampment and in the C-P (Central Provinces) it was away in the wilds and there was really no place to go and I can't remember any sort of comforts at all in the form of beer issues or whatever, I just can't remember them, don't think we got any but there was no place to go. It was in a place called Chinwara it was in amongst the tiger country there was a tiger came through our camp one night as a matter of fact someone had a pot shot at it but it was the villages round there had stockades round them for that purpose, and, but Ranchi was more settled place because we had *bashas* there, it wasn't a camp specially for us it was a transit sort of transit training camp and they were permanently there.

J.W. : So in your spare time beyond your duties were you doing similar sorts of things that you did in Razmak to pass the time?

A.B. : Yea generally speaking, hoping for letters and writing letters, and reading occasionally, it was a pretty non-eventful existence.

J.W. : Right just generally there, is there anything else you can think of that you can tell ... ?

A.B. : To do with Pakistan?

J.W. : Yea, or any other.

A.B. : I always remember when we were coming down from the Frontier for the final time near, well we'd been at Bannu at a time I remember seeing a caravan coming in from Afghanistan loaded up with carpets and things and I always remember the women had a bright red this sort of red clothing on, real tribespeople. When we went out on column we were almost at the Afghan border cause the Tochi valley runs a way up that way a very barren part of the world. Apart from Tochi Valley's a very fertile part but the hills were very barren.

J.W. : And what, do you remember any individuals from the, your comrades at all what they were like, how they found life while they were there?

A.B. : I always remember one, I didn't know him personally he was very he had a dog, you were allowed to have a dog up in Razmak, and some people did have them this chap had a cocker spaniel I think it was and he was absolutely devoted to it and of course when the mobilisation came along the forming of the Division he was told he couldn't he had to get rid of it and he went berserk and he actually pretended about that time he feigned a sort of insane act so much so that he was sent home ... (Tape reel runs out, and **Mr. B.** continued to describe how this soldier was placed in an asylum. He was then asked about relations and contact with Indian soldiers) ... the field hospital and I shared a tent with a couple of Gurkhas but that's really the only contact but I mean you always sort of spoke to them if you passed them because they were a cheery lot, but no you didn't have any contact with them.

J.W. : Right okay, is there anything else you remember about that time at all?

A.B. : Well the only thing I remember is when the battalion go back to Kohima they were down to about one hundred and twenty odd whereas we'd been a full battalion, a Scottish battalion at that time was eight hundred and six and we had, you know, the wastage was absolutely terrific especially in the early days between September '43 and April '44 we had a turnover of twelve thousand twelve hundred in other words one and a half times battalion strength mostly through sickness malaria and dysentery but it's a terrific turnover and you no sooner got a batch of reinforcements and a couple of weeks later you were looking for more - terrible. We had a lot of casualties too of course, we had three hundred in that period there were three hundred battle casualties there was about one hundred killed and two hundred were wounded and it got a wee bit better later on because they started issuing *Mepacrin* which was a suppressant for malaria and, but I don't know what happened the second, the '45 campaign was a different type of campaign it was a much more mobile, whereas the Arakan was a much more static one, not trench warfare but it was more concentrated in one spot. It was peculiar warfare because you never knew where the enemy were there was no such thing as a front line

just fortified positions. In fact the Japanese broke through between our brigade and the one, 114 (One-One-Four) Brigade, the one the Somersets were in, and we woke up one day to find there was about ten thousand Japanese behind us that was the start of the [Admin] box you know the battle of Gnakyedauk. It was a funny mobile, mobile static type of thing not knowing where they were.

J.W. : You were saying earlier after that you came to the time when you came home. How did you feel about coming home with all these, were you ... ?

A.B. : Well the first thing we came back, by that time the Mediterranean had been opened so we came back that way and we had a day ashore in Port Said and it took altogether about three weeks coming back that way and we didn't have any escort until we got to Gibraltar and we had a few corvettes took us into Liverpool. The one thing that I'll never forget is that we were due to dock but we couldn't because the dockers were on strike which didn't go down very well (laughs).

J.W. : Nothing changes.

A.B. : And then it, we came up by train through, we had a change at Carstairs I think it was to get to Edinburgh and there were one or two soldiers in the train who'd been at home, maybe been abroad, I don't know, but anyway they were at home at the time and I though, 'What a scruffy lot you are', that's my impression I got, and then when we got to Princes Street Station in those days I got off the train and nobody paid the slightest attention they were all waiting for people from Europe, you know queues of family and all that. And of course you know the old saying about the Forgotten Army it really was although it was the biggest army of any it was an enormous army. But that was it and then my wife, I phoned home and my wife came in, her father-in-law, her father managed to get some petrol and he came in and took me back and then within a week I took seriously ill it's, was like malaria but much, much worse I couldn't move you know absolutely paralysed and I was taken in first of all to Astley Ainslie which was a general hospital and then they took me up to the Castle and I was there for five weeks and I think it was either typhus or malig ... malignant type malaria which affects the spine and is very often a fatal disease too but I recovered and I was in a convalescent depot for nine months after that down in the Borders in Teviot you know, Lord Lothian's house which was an auxiliary hospital so that was the end of my war (laughs).

J.W. : So let me think, what else? And how about the links from those days with your former comrades?

A.B. : Well about twelve years ago, the, a lot of them were in Burma Star Association you see.

J.W. : Yes, of course.

A.B. : And the Burma Star were having a conference and what have it in Edinburgh they had it in the Pollock Halls there and there was one or two of the Borderers got together there and decided that they would have a reunion and at that time they managed to get a couple of hundred names I don't know where they got them from, and they had their first reunion in Berwick-on-Tweed which lasts for two days it's a weekend thing and they had a hundred attending, all members of the Second Battalion and it, I missed that I didn't know about it and I was at every, I've been to every one since apart from one when my wife died I didn't go that year and then the chairman who was a lot younger than I was he died just almost at one of the reunions - he was in a shocking state of health mind you, and I was asked to take over as a, I'm the chairman now and last year we had about, oh, thirty K-O-S-B's, and guests made it about fifty altogether. This year I don't know, we have it in the last weekend in June every year. I suppose it'll go, well it'll certainly be on this year but how long it can go on I don't know. There are different categories of Second Battalion people. There's the ones who were, I would say there were three main categories, there's the ones who were up on the Frontier, there's the ones who were in Burma and the ones who joined after the War finished, in India at Peshawar they were stationed there two years on, you know, civil, helping the police to keep, before Independence. So you have the three categories and the ones who joined after are a good bit younger of course. Some of them were in the Seventh Battalion the Airborne at, not necessarily at Arnhem and I would think they would be well ten years younger than me anyway so whether they would be wanting to continue I don't know, but you can't really have a reunion if you don't have numbers, but it's a pity they hadn't started a bit sooner, but I think the general idea after a war people, you know, are fed up with the army or whatever it is.

J.W. : Of course.

A.B. : They don't want to know about it, it's only when they get older and more nostalgic that they want to have renunions, but it's a great success we have, well, most, well not most of, but a proportion of them go the Friday night we have a get together, then the Saturday they have the A-G-M in the afternoon and a buffet meal with dancing and bing ... , not bingo, a raffle and quite a good evening, and then Sunday they have a church service in the local church that we used to go to when we were in our training in Berwick and last year we put up a plaque, a memorial plaque in that church. There was two hundred and ninety-two killed altogether from the Second Battalion in the last battalion it's quite a lot. But the, we had the new Colonel of the regiment last year, Major-General [Twynsule] who's quite a character, he made a point of talking to everybody he really did.

J.W. : That's good.

A.B. : You know some maybe they're not so outgoing, but in fact the President, Brigadier Mattingly, who is also a C.O. of the First Battalion, his father was killed in Burma and he's a very reserved sort of person he doesn't mix with the troops as it were. We had a disastrous time with C.O's, well his replacement was, well he [Mattingly] died from wounds, that was both in the Arakan, and, oh survived after that. We had several C.O.'s, MacConnell, he was very much with Army Headquarters at one time, he was, these were all commanders of the First Battalion, Colonel Hogg was too. He's a nice chap, have you met him?

J.W. : I haven't no, I will do.

A.B. : He's a very helpful chap. But we twisted his arm to give us space in the, you said you've been to the museum.

J.W. : I haven't yet, no.

A.B. : Oh you haven't, we twisted his arm to give us space for the Second Battalion, it's not very big, it's not as big as I would have liked, but most of the Museum is taken up with regimental silver and stuff like that you know, we we've got a fantastic collection, we have our own wee bit, and the Sixth battalion have got a wee bit too, but you know, to cover every aspect you would need a big place.

J.W. : Oh sure of course.

A.B. : But it's a part of the barracks set up, which is now English Heritage but that's where I did my training in the barracks, but that was in 1940, '40 and the beginning of '41. So I don't know if that's of any use to you at all.

J.W. : That's of great use, I, unless you've got anything else you've to add ... ?

A.B. : I can't think of anything.

J.W. : I can't think of anything else either so thank you very much.

A.B. : You're welcome.

J.W. : It's been great.

A.B. : Do you want to have a look at these photos?

Tape is turned off and I looked at Mr. Bain's photos from his time on the North-West frontier

Captain Archie Black
Indian Signals
Interviewed on 25th July 1997
SA1997.95

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, and **Captain B.** represents Captain Archie Black.

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston, I'm recording Captain Archie Black at his home in Muthill, is that right? I've been practising that (**Captain B** laughs). Okay if I can start by asking you to tell me where and when you were born?

Captain B. : I was born in February of 1927. I volunteered for the army when I was seventeen and a half because I was terrified of being a Bevin boy.

J.W. : Aha I've heard that a lot.

Captain B. : Absolutely terrified. Anyway I, that, I (pauses) went into the Black Watch at Perth although I was actually born at Thornhill in Dumfriesshire .

J.W. : Right, aha.

Captain B. : But I went into the Black Watch, I had just started my apprenticeship, only did a few months as a chartered accountant in Glasgow and I was also at the university there doing a law degree, and so I was at school, in a boarding school in, near Gatehouse of Fleet in Kirkcudbrightshire and I don't really think there's much else.

J.W. : Had you known, before that time, we'll come on to when you enlisted in the Black Watch in a moment, did you ever pick up very much about India at all as a boy at school or ... ?

Captain B. : Not really, not really. But when I went to the War Office Selection Board you could put our name on what they called the Pink List, I put my name on the Pink List because a subaltern in the Indian Army got the same pay as a Major in the British Army.

J.W. : Right, that's worth doing.

Captain B. : (laughs) So that, for financial reasons I had my name on the Pink List and went out to do my cadetship at a place called Mhow in Central India, Indore State, and that was really, that was the beginning of it all.

J.W. : Right, and let's see, I tend to rush through.

Captain B. : I suppose I knew a bit about India because my uncle, my father's younger brother was a tea planter in, in what was then called Ceylon.

J.W. : Aha, s you'd heard sort of very general things about it?

Captain B. : Yea, yes well he came home on leave occasionally and we used to hear things generally about it. I didn't really know deeply anything about India.

J.W. : Right, so did you, how long were you with the Black Watch here before you ... ?

Captain B. : Oh just a relatively short time it was only about eleven weeks or something like that (laughs).

J.W. : Did you training here, did you ... ?

Captain B. : Yes, trained in Perth.

J.W. : Right, and so then what about then going out to India, can you tell me a bit about going out, the voyage out, this sort of thing.

Captain B. : We went on a troopship, I can't actually remember the name of it but I do remember it used to be called the *Empress of Japan.*

J.W. : An yes, I spoke to somebody else who went on the same ship.

Captain B. : Oh really? And then they changed its name to the *Empress of Scotland* (laughs).

J.W. : Oh right.

Captain B. : I'd forgotten that actually.

J.W. : You have to do that, don't you?

Captain B. : So that was it.

J.W. : 'How long ... ?

Captain B. : I can remember we landed at Bombay and I hadn't seen a banana the whole war, this was towards the end of '44, and I'd bought a dozen bananas and was immediately sick (laughs), I ate a dozen bananas all at once, terrible.

J.W. : Do you remember your, It might be difficult to remember perhaps, but do you remember your first impressions when you sort of arrived on a ship into Bombay, what was it like?

Captain B. : Hot and dirty. I can remember we were being taught Urdu on the way out.

J.W. : Right.

Captain B. : And the man said to us, he said, 'You know the longer you live in India the whiter the women get (laughs) so take care.'

J.W. : Who was teaching you on the boat, was that ... ?

Captain B. : It was an officer, I can't remember is name, it was an officer going out, back home after leave or something like that.

J.W. : Right, so they were just giving you, did you subsequently, when you were in India did you have a *munshi* to learn Urdu?

Captain B. : Oh yes.

J.W. : Right.

Captain B. : I got my interpreters actually.

J.W. : Aha, right.

Captain B. : Because you got a thousand rupees if you got your interpreters (laughs) not very much money, but it was a lot at that time.

J.W. : Oh it would've been, so lets think, you arrived in Bombay hot and dirty as you say. Did you then go straight to Mhow?

Captain B. : We went by train to Deolali, which is a transit camp north of Bombay, I don't know, about twenty-five or thirty miles, and we stayed overnight there, and we were all, no we weren't issued with rifles, or were we? I can't remember now, I think we may have been issued with rifles because we had to chain them to ourselves, to our body, to our wrist which was very uncomfortable when you're sleeping, or trying to sleep, and one bloke had his rifle stolen and his arm.

J.W. : Oh God.

Captain B. : He woke up screaming, he wasn't in the same *basha* as I was in, but he was in an, adjacent one, he had this rifle stolen and his arm.

J.W. : I haven't heard something like that before, I've heard of the chaining of rifles, but not of the , but oh, goodness, and can you ten tell me where did you go from the transit camp, then, was that ... ?

Captain B. : That, we went to Mhow.

J.W. : What was life like there, what did you do with the training?

Captain B. : Oh well, you were all, we were all kitted out with clean uniforms, you know, bush jackets and khaki shorts all very neat and clean, and we all had to wear a number, a white thing like a sort of, a jockey or something like that or a runner, and mine, my number was 1-1-3, I remember that (laughs) and we just got stuck into the training, it was quite arduous but I think that, I think we more or less enjoyed it, you know, I had dysentery a few times which didn't help but I, I kept up, they kept threatening to put me back of course, but I managed to pass the exams and so all was well.

J.W. : So what sort of thing, apart from, in addition to language what else were they training you for?

Captain B. : Well for Signals we were trained under, the wireless sets were the 22 set and the 19 set and one of my early commands was a wireless troop with mules and we had the wireless set on one side and the batteries on the other which was a, I think a very uncomfortable thing for the mules but they never complained. They're very stoic animals. The, we'd learned how to put cable out, you know, and all that sort of thing, and electricity and magnetism, which actually I found quite difficult I remember having to, I had to swat at that E and M, that electricity and magnetism, and we were taught quite a lot about, apart from the *munshi* teaching us language we also had quite a lot about the Indian Army, about the history of the Indian Army and so on.

J.W. : Was that a sort of, about cultural things as well, about the ... ?

Captain B. : Yes.

J.W. : What the troops were, where they came from?

Captain B. : Yes, yes, you know, and how you should behave with regard to the different religions which was just as well that I got to learn that because at one stage I had Muslims, Hindus and Christians all in my troop so I, you know.

J.W. : Right, you have to watch everywhere, don't you?

Captain B. : Three cookhouses to (laughs).

J.W. : I can imagine, so how long were you at Mhow, then, training, how long did that take?

Captain B. : About six months I suppose, I really can't remember, about six months.

J.W. : Yes, no, that's okay and you were then commissioned then?

Captain B. : That's right, and I went off to take over a troop called 2-4-9 Indian Medium Wireless Troop and almost as soon as I got there to Rangoon they dropped the atom bomb or two atom bombs, whatever it was, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I think, so the War was over within the space of a few days, you know, and this wireless troop that I was the commander of suddenly got re-equipped with very fancy, powerful American sets called SCR 3-9-9s and they were driven, we had three *Studebaker* trucks, great big things, I can remember one of them only did two miles to the gallon (laughs) and, oh, I'd get into terrible trouble over this veh ... , they thought that I was stealing petrol or something (laughs). Anyway we had that and this jeep, and as soon as my C-O heard about this jeep he, he snapped it from me and gave me a bicycle, a motorbike so I had to drive a motorbike, and there was I thinking that I was going to be in pride of place with a jeep. Anyway we brought that troop back to Delhi, and I guess the Viceroy was Wavell at that time.

J.W. : I think so, yes, I can check.

Captain B. : It was Wavell, and my troop wasn't fully occupied, so I was doing an Assistant Duty Signals Officer's job in G-H-Q in Delhi and when I did a night shift I used to, I had a bicycle and I used to cycle down to where the golf course was in Delhi and go for a walk, cause in the Signals office in the night everyone was smoking and, including myself actually, I smoked at that time, yea, it really was dreadful, the air was really polluted, so I used to go down there and have a little walk before I went into the mess for breakfast, and on one occasion I was walking across this fairway and here lying on the ground was a lovely, new golf ball, and I bent down to pick it up, and as I picked it up Wavell, Lord Wavell came over the hill, he had just played this shot (laughs) and he shouted at me and I dropped the ball, I was only a second lieutenant at the time and he was a Field Marshal or something (laughs) ... .

J.W. : That's pulling rank, isn't it?

Captain B. : Anyway afterwards I got to know him because he had to learn how to use voice radio because the British forces didn't possess voice radio equipment that could go

further than two or three miles and of course generals and field marshals use much further away than that from the scene of the action, and so I taught Wavell to use voice radio and then I taught Auchinleck. I was coming out of church one evening in Delhi, and by then I'd got to know Wavell quite well and he knew my name, and he turned to Claude Auchinleck and he said, 'Claude this is Archie Black', and Claude Auchinleck said 'Oh we can't call you Archie we've got enough of them', and Archie, Wavell, you see, he said, 'I'll call you Jock', so I was Jock for ever after you see. Both delightful men and then later on, some years later on Wavell of course lost his job as Viceroy and came back to the U.K. and his place was taken by Mountbatten, he who was a, he had to be taught how to use voice radio, you see in the Navy, if you're the captain of a ship or admiral of Fleet or something like that you've got a signaller beside you ... .

J.W. : Somebody does it for you

Captain B. : Who's using Morse or flags or something like a lamp or something, you know, and so the, none of them, they, all these people, and then there was another man called General Smith, now he was a full general, he was a very senior bloke, he used to preach at our church and he always preached in uniform with the riding boots on, and when he came to a point, when he was trying to emphasise a point he used to kick the pulpit (laughs) in the most extraordinary way.

J.W. : It wasn't you who taught Mountbatten and so ... ?

Captain B. : I beg your pardon?

J.W. : And so you didn't teach Mountbatten and Smith the voice radio?

Captain B. : Oh yes.

J.W. : You taught them as well?

Captain B. : Oh yes, yes.

J.W. : Taught them the voice radio, right, oh goodness.

Captain B. : And we had the practising you see, the, we were all kept back from demobilisation because they expected that the post and telegraph system would break down at Partition, but it didn't, it worked perfectly all the way through, I mean it was perfectly unnecessary for us to be kept on but we were kept back and of course this particular troop of mine was jolly important in the sense that we could use voice radio up to twelve or thirteen hundred miles, so we could cover the border, the whole of the future border area between India and Pakistan and we did a lot of testing and so on.

J.W. : Right.

Captain B. : And that was basically it.

J.W. : Right and then you send, you'd been, just chronologically I'm working, you said you'd been in Rangoon and then the bomb was dropped or the bombs rather. When was it then that you came back and were based around Delhi?

Captain B. : Oh I think it was about a month.

J.W. : So literally they dropped the bomb and almost straight back?

Captain B. : Yea.

J.W. : Right.

Captain B. : I had, it was a very, very nasty journey because I had acquired, it sounds frightful, you may not want to use this, but I acquired tropical piles.

J.W. : Oh goodness.

Captain B. : And I had this damned motorbike to ride (laughs).

J.W. : Oh goodness, that doesn't take much imagination.

Captain B. : I stood all the way from Rangoon to Delhi (laughs) but those are the sort of things that you never forget.

J.W. : Oh no, no, no. I've had dysentery myself so I can empathise with that, but nothing like that. Oh goodness, let's think, what, can you tell me a bit about, although this is a general question, your life, the sort of conditions of living out, you know, outwith your work, what was that like, where did you live, what sort of things ... ?

Captain B. : Well, when we were out in the, you know, kind of op testing or around the pi ... , where the border was going to be, we didn't really know where the border was going to be, but we had a kind of half guess, and sometimes we got to stay, or I got to stay in a *dāk* bungalow, you know a guest house, a government guest house, but more often than not we just put a bed roll down beside a truck and slept like that.

J.W. : Was it therefore, I mean obviously when you were testing it was a very mobile sort of life, you wee in one place one moment, another place the next, but when say you were settled say when you were around Delhi, was where, what?

Captain B. : Oh I was up on the, I eventually became what they called the Officer Commanding the Ridge in Delhi, which was the famous place where the Mutiny was finally resolved, it's about ten miles from Delhi and I had a proper bungalow there that I shared with an R.A.F. regular officer, because the R.A.F. receiver station was beside the army receiver station. Now then looking after this receiver station as well as having this troop, and we always seemed to, sometimes I had three different jobs, you know, doing a duty signals officer stint and then running my troop and then running the receiver station, it was all very complicated, and so, we had a good place there and because this *basha* had originally been built by the air force I would think it had the only flush toilet for twenty miles around (laughs).

J.W. : Luxury facilities, eh?

Captain B. : So we were very comfortable.

J.W. : Right, and what about your sort of leisure time if you had very much at all. What sort of things would happen there?

Captain B. : Well I used to play cricket quite a bit and also soccer and also hockey. I played hockey with Indian soldiers, I used to play quite a bit of soccer with R.A.F. sold ... , airmen, and then we played cricket but that would be anyone who wants to play cricket. We were once playing after the, we had just come back, it was about a week after Partition and we'd come back to rest and there was a game of cricket going on so I joined it, and while we were, were playing cricket a man came running on to the field, a civilian, an Indian, to tell us that a group of Sikhs had waylaid his family and were massacring them, and it was just about a mile and a half down the road from where the Ridge is, and so we jumped into our trucks and we didn't have any guns, we didn't take any guns or anything like that, we drove down there and we ran towards these Sikhs who had this Muslim family who wee having a terrible time, really being chopped up, and the fact that we ran towards them scared the Sikhs away because they were all armed with, you know, big knives and things. Anyway we managed to get this Muslim family back, and we bandaged up, well, one fellow had died, but we bandaged up the rest and gave them a meal and they were so grateful that the old head of the family who was a real greybeard said that he wanted to give us the two bicycles that he had, and so he gave them to me and ten took his whole family and their possessions down to one of the camps in Delhi, I think it's called the New Fort, I can't quite remember the name of this particular camp, and anyway I took the family in there, there wee quite a lot of them, I think maybe sixteen and went back. Well I gave these two bicycles away to a local village which was near our, near the Ridge, and about three weeks later I got a lawyer's letter from Karachi, 'Please return my bicycles (laughs) otherwise you will be sued', so I wrote to the lawyer explaining that I'd given them away and that was the end of it as far as I was concerned and there was no reply (laughs). They're much, heavily into legal activity.

J.W. : Now let me think. What about, we can, I'd like very much to talk about Partition, we'll maybe do that in a moment, but what about your relations with them men, the troops and this sort of thing. You said, say, at one time you had the Hindu and the Muslim and the Christian men in the troop, but what sort of was the make up of the troop that you commanded, that ... ?

Captain B. : Well, I had, there were eighty, it varied between eighty and eighty-two, the number of soldiers, of whom five were always British Other Ranks and that was kind of a drill, if you had a wireless troop and you're going to be using voice radio, you're going to use English and you always had to have a small number of British Other Ranks, and I did, I had five.

J.W. : They were just form various different regiments depending on who was in ... ?

Captain B. : They were all in Royal Signals I think.

J.W. : Oh right, they were all, right, okay, and what about the Indian members of the troop?

Captain B. : Oh they were smashing blokes. I got on very well with the Indians and I think they got on very well with me. I just enjoyed, you know, the relationships very much indeed, very much, and they, you know it's a sad thing that with Partition, you know, that wireless troop that broke it up then, because the Muslims had to go off and we decommissioned the whole thing, actually the whole troop, all the equipment I don't know what's happened to it, but the Muslims and the Hindus were extremely friendly, there was absolutely no nonsense at all, they were just smashing blokes. Of course they wee very simple fellows in many ways, you know, the Christians that we had, the Indian Christians, they all came from Madras or that area down south, which had got quite s strong Christian community. The Muslims and the Hindus mostly came from the north of Delhi, in fact these were the people who were going to be most affected by Partition. They were splendid chaps.

J.W. : Right and did you, you said you played hockey with them and these sorts of things. Did you, say, visit them in the lines, talk to them about their, what their lives were, where their families were?

Captain B. : Oh yes, yes indeed, you know, you've got a new soldier, you always say, '*Aapka kaun kaunsa hai*?', you know, 'Which is your village?', because they all come from a village, I don't think we had I never ever had a soldier who came from a city, they all came from villages. I suppose if you were born and brought up in a city you were probably expecting a rather higher income than these chaps earned in the forces, because they got very small money. So there we are, they were a great lot.

J.W. : Right, and maybe we'll, no I'll just deal with a couple of things suddenly fly into my mind. What about the, you talked about the housing facilities you sort of had. What about things like diet and that sort of thing, what sort of things would you eat, was it a mixture of Indian and British food or ... ?

Captain B. : Yes, yes, I used to go round when they were having their evening meal, I used to always go round the, you know, whatever was being cooked and if something took my fancy I would have some of that (laughs).

J.W. : I don't blame you, and another thing I suddenly see here, what about while you were there pretty much the whole time, what sort of contact would you keep with home in Scotland, would you write to people very much?

Captain B. : Oh yes I wrote to my parents every week. My brother was in the army, he was in the Royal Norfolks and I didn't actually write to him much but I think my mother used to send my letters on to him and sometimes I received copies, not copies, the actual originals of his letters, so we kept it a quite good contact in that respect.

J.W. : Was that important to you to keep those links because I mean, from what you've said you obviously enjoyed your life in India, but was it important as well to ... ?

Captain B. : Oh I think so, I think one always has a, family ties.

J.W. : And how about while you were there, were there not necessarily in your particular area, did you meet many other Scots while you were out there, serving in different regiments or other parts of the Indian Army.

Captain B. : A few. In I was in 19th Division and the Brigade I was in, we had a battalion of Gurkhas and at least three of the officers in that Gurkha battalion were from Scotland, at least three, maybe more.

J.W. : And was that always a good thing to meet fellow Scots while you were there, was it a sort of camaraderie sort of thing?

Captain B. : Well I suppose so, yes.

J.W. : But it wasn't, you know, that you ... ?

Captain B. : It wasn't frightfully important at all.

J.W. : No, it was just a ... .

Captain B. : I mean there were no other, apart from this chap Ian, err, John Anderson with whom I'd been a cadet, he lives in Fife, apart from him I don't think there was another Scot in our course when I was a cadet. There may have been, there may have been in one of the other courses but really, honestly, it wasn't important, it wasn't really.

J.W. : So being Scottish didn't make any difference to your experiences or what you did?

Captain B. : No, no, I have a feeling that it helped my Urdu. I think that I (pauses) not all Scots are the same, but I think I speak a little more slowly that most other people and so my diction is a little clearer for the Indians to understand, and I think as a result when I learned my Urdu I was much, I am much quicker at chatting with the, with Indian soldiers.

J.W. : Right okay.

Captain B. : Did you mean to talk about Partition?

J.W. : Yes, I was just going to say, I was seeing if there was anything else here. So you were saying you were sort of practising with signalling along the border. Was there, you were there the whole period, did you get a feeling there was a real build up of feeling of anticipation ... .

Captain B. : Oh yes.

J.W. : During that time?

Captain B. : Very much so, a feeling of real, of a very deep concern and we all though in the army that the whole thing was done in a very unplanned, precipitate manner, and so we didn't, we didn't enjoy Partition at all, and there were some frightful disasters, when two trains came into the station, stopped at Amritsar, it was a Hindu regiment going south and a Muslim regiment going north and about the range I am from you (approximately one metre) they opened fire on each other.

J.W. : Oh God.

Captain B. : It was just awful and I got a message to go there (pauses) and there was practically nobody alive, you know, and there was nearly a thousand blokes in each of these regiments, it was awful.

J.W. : Yea.

Captain B. : You've never seen so much blood, it was running down the track, you know, it was like a flood, it was awful. I remember being quite ill.

J.W. : Yea of, I'd imagine.

J.W. : And did you encounter a lot of atrocities or incidents like that?

Captain B. : Yes, yes, I'm afraid so. We had a river just north of Delhi, it's a tributary, and one day we were driving up there and I couldn't believe my eyes cause the river was totally jammed. Now what had happened was that the bodies had come down the river, and there must have been hundreds, probably thousands of bodies blocking the river, and the river was coming up to the bank (**Captain B.** exhales sharply), terrible smell ... .

J.W. : Yes, yea.

Captain B. : So we had a lot of little local difficulties as they say. Sometime afterwards when things had more or less settled down I was doing a shift in the signal office and encountered a signal which, we had an awfully stupid radio system because everything to do with India and further east we had one set of codes and everything to do with London, troopers we used to call it, had another set of codes and so we had to decode and encode every message and the whole thing was frightful, I mean it's military stupidity at its very best and aye, there was a code there, a message there in which it was estimated that two million people had lost their lives. Now that figure was never ever released. I mean, people talked about a quarter of a million. Well I know for a start that that's a gross underestimate.

J.W. : Yea, yea, and again I apologise that this is a little vague and general as a question but what, if you can put it into words, what was the sort of effect of seeing that sort of thing, I mean on eh, you had a very close relationship with your troops, you had a good time serving in the country and you were, say, anticipating Partition in a fairly negative way. When you saw these sort of horrors how, how was that?

Captain B. : I got quite bad tempered about it.

J.W. : Yep.

Captain B. : I can remember being really very rude to Mountbatten (laughs) about the whole thing.' I mean I felt he was totally inhuman in his attitude to what he was doing unlike Auchinleck who was, you know, a smashing bloke, just terrific, Auchinleck was deeply, personally involved, you know, with everything that was going on. Mountbatten was just swanning around, you know, I think it was deplorable.

J.W. : And did that in turn make it almost difficult to carry on from day to day because, did you ... ?

Captain B. : Well (pauses) it wasn't long after that that my troop was decommissioned and I then just became the Officer Commanding the Ridge, the receiver station, and doing the occasional duty in the, in this G-H-Q, and I used to see Mountbatten quite a lot because he used to come riding on, at the weekend up on the Ridge with one of his daughters, and it was always a different daughter there would rather, I can't remember their names, one was called Pamela and the other one Patricia? I don't know.

J.W. : Well as I say that's in books, I can check that.

Captain B. : Anyway I can't quite remember but they used to come, and we had a little, where this bungalow was that Peter [?], this airforce man and I lived, we would be having our breakfast out on the verandah sitting in our pyjamas and Mountbatten and his daughter which ever one it was would come up and stop, and they didn't, they didn't dismount but they always stopped and had a little chat and I fear it was on one of these occasions that I really got angry with him (laughs) which I not really what you're meant to do (laughs).

J.W. : Well no, but I mean, they're not normal circumstances really, are they? Oh goodness, and so you say your troop was decommissioned.

Captain B. : Yea.

J.W. : And then what ... ?

Captain B. : I guess about a month after Partition, and eventually I got transferred from the Indian Signals Corps to the Royal Signals.

J.W. : Do you know why that was or was that, it was just the same?

Captain B. : Oh I think it was expected. I was the last European officer in our regiment, G-H-Q Signals, was the regiment, was the regiment when I was located in the heart of Delhi, New Delhi, and I frankly didn't realise that I was the last European officer left because they were all my chums, you know, and so one day the C-O who was an Indian, a Sikh actually, he said to me, 'Well Jock, I think it's about time you transferred to the Royal Signals' so I did (laughs) always being one to take a tip you know (laughs) take a hint.

J.W. : Yea, so what happened then?

Captain B. : I transferred to the Royal Signals and eventually I was moved to Bombay and this was the last little Signals Unit left, Royal Signals Unit left in India cause we had gone through that rather funny period when we went to war with Pakistan and a fellow called John Millar, who was one of my closest friends, was in the Pakistan Signals so here was two great friends at war with each other, I mean quite ridiculous.

J.W. : So what happened in that situation there, you say, when they ... ?

Captain B. : Well, it was a stand off, I don't think there was any what you would call fierce action or anything.

J.W. : Was that when ... ?

Captain B. : Kashmir?

J.W. : Pathans were coming onto Kashmir area and that, yep?

Captain B. : Yep, ridiculous, anyway I joined this little unit of Signals in Bombay out at Kalabar Point, and there was quite a lot of rioting going on in Bombay at that time and I had to take some soldiers out, I can't remember where these soldiers came from but they were Indian soldiers not Royal Signals or anything, I think it was because I could speak the language and had to take them out and stop this mob coming down the street. Now I think there were only fifteen of us armed with rifles and there were thousands of people dancing down the street and shouting and bawling and screaming, and so I told the soldiers to fire over their heads and it worked.

J.W. : Fortunately.

Captain B. : (laughs) The only trouble was that I got half a brick thrown at me and I got quite a bad bash in my head and so that, when we eventually went off back on demob they had the *Pathe Gazette* cameras there, marching through the Gateway of India, and here was this single officer with great white bandage under his hat, and saw it on *Pathe Gazette* three weeks later when I got back to Scotland, that's how long it took (laughs) for them to process it and you know, and here was I, there was me coming down, I thought, 'Blow me down it's taken them three or four weeks to do it' (laughs).

J.W. : Oh goodness so when was it, then, that you finally came back over here then?

Captain B. : The end of February in 1948.

J.W. : And again I'm sorry, another general question, but what was that like, the experience of settling back to life in this country after all that had happened?

Captain B. : It was difficult, it was difficult because I had to go back to being an apprentice chartered accountant and we had a very strict office in St. Vincent Street in Glasgow and we used to get checked every morning by the Commissioner, a man called [Derwald], Sergeant [Derwald] of the Corps of Commissioners and he used to check that we had an unused white hanky in our top left hand pocket, that our shoes were polished brightly including the instep (laughs) and one of my colleagues, he was a bit older than I am, he's dead now poor chap, he, he'd been a brigadier and he had to come back to this business of being examined by a sergeant in the Corps of Commissioners so it was a bit of a shock because I think that (pauses) I can't remember what my captain's pay was but let's say it was, it might have been four hundred pounds a year. My pay as an apprentice chartered accountant was thirty pounds a year.

J.W. : Right, so quite a jump.

Captain B. : (laughs) But I did get a government grant of a few hundred quid so I wasn't actually all that bad, although we had to wait a long time for the government grant, it took a long time to come through. It was difficult, and getting back, the studying and swatting, you know.

J.W. : And had you been, when you knew you were, or came to know you were coming home, were you glad to be coming home or was it with quite a bit or regret? Or somewhere in between perhaps?

Captain B. : Well you know, the funny thing about it is shortly after I had converted to the Royal Signals I was invited to take a regular commission and I said, 'Is there any chance of me being able to stay in India? Could I be Royal Signals attached to the Indian Army or something like that?', and they thought about this, and about a week later they said, 'Well we're not very sure about that and we think that you should maybe just go', and I said, 'Yea, I agree, I'm going home', so I took my demob (laughs) got my demob suit at York with a funny wee hat, a trilby hat, anyway there we are.

J.W. : And let me see if there's anything else I can see here (pauses). Just jumping on for a moment, although we might go back in a moment. Right, to the present day with the Indian Army Association and this sort of thing, you still obviously have the links, and you know your friend in Fife who you served with. How important is that to you?

Captain B. : Well it is actually very important, you see I worked for *All Can* the last twenty years of my working life and I became the chairman of Indian Aluminium and I used to go to India six or seven times a year, and so the first time was a highly emotional occasion because I hadn't told anyone on the board of Indian aluminium that I had served in the Indian Army, and the had arranged a meeting at one of our major plants, we had nine and a half thousand employees in India. We had a meeting at one of the plants and the had a big stage and all the Board of Directors sitting at it, full of pomp and

ceremony and there was a, two microphones, one was for me and the other was fir an interpreter, but I had done some mugging up beforehand and I addressed all these fellows in Urdu and the gasp, the absolute gasp, it was really quite an experience, very emotional.

J.W. : Right, and did you go back again subse ... , with that position did you go back quite regularly?

Captain B. : Oh yes, six or seven times a year, I was there frequently, usually for a week at a time.

J.W. : Right, so that was, how long were you chairman?

Captain B. : About four, four or five. I started doing it when I was living in Sydney in Australia and then I carried on, oh no, it was probably nearer six years, aha, we then lived the last five and a half years of my working life we lived in Vancouver and that was a very, that's a very nice place to live.

J.W. : Right, so, and so, yes, as you say it's important to have those, and is it still important to have the links with your former comrades?

Captain B. : Oh yes, I actually, we have had the only Field Marshal the Indian Army has ever made, ever created a man, he's a Brahmin called Sam [Manickshaw] and if he walked through the door now you wouldn't know he's an Indian, he's just the same colour as anyone else and his wife as well. He and his wife have been here to stay more than once.

J.W. : So it's still, you know.

Captain B. : So we keep up, yes, we've had the man who was the managing director, an Indian, he's also been here with his wife to stay, he's retired now, lives in Toronto, but I think that, yes, India had a very, very major influence on my life.

J.W. : Yep, very much, just now we've rushed through these as always happens, and I can't think of anything else specific, but do you have anything else that you can think of that, because I know when I leave I'll doubtless think of a ... .

Captain B. : I know I can imagine I'm I think I've more or less told you, I think that a lasting memory of course is illness, not just my illnesses but soldiers' illnesses, and I had malaria, I had dysentery frequently and sometimes with no hospital to go to and my soldiers suffered equally, you know, it, you'd be surprised, I would, I have, I was sort of surprised I expected all my soldiers to be immune (laughs) but they weren't and it's the same with horses and things like that. You can't take a hose into Burma, they just die. I

forget what they die of, is it tsetse or, I don't now, some kind of thing, but mules are okay, mules are perfect, wonderful creatures.

J.W. : You never had any problems with the mules in the Signals then, cause I've ... .

Captain B. : Not really, I've been kicked by a mule occasionally, you know, they kick forward.

J.W. : Oh no, I didn't know that, I've heard a few stories about mules but I didn't know that.

Captain B. : Horses kick backwards, mules kick forward (laughs). We once were going along a little, a mountain path and we had these 22 sets and the batteries all and this poor mule lost its footing and rolled right down and we had to climb down, it was very difficult, it was a very steep slope, and I had to shoot it, it was awful, I didn't like doing that at all. We also, God, it was almost the same day we wee putting up a brigade headquarters, we'd gone ahead to do this and we were bringing some cable in, in the trees, and one of my soldiers had climbed up the tree, you know, to fix the cable on, and blow me down if he didn't get attacked by a nest of hornets and he died.

J.W. : Oh no, I would imagine that ... .

Captain B. : Yes it was awful, awful. He just died. We'd got, I mean he fell down and we tried to get these hornets away but his head was totally, covered, awful, and it just killed him.

J.W. : It would, I'm sure.

Captain B. : There were things like that, and of course the soldiers used to get all the things that we all got, dysentery and malaria and leeches and things like that.

J.W. : Actually now you say that, that puts me in mind of asking something else. You've described your own reactions and impressions as Partition came up. What about the soldiers in the troop and this sort of thing, what were their ... ?

Captain B. : They were appalled, absolutely appalled, I mean the troop had to be split up because the Muslims had to go north and the Hindus had to go south, and we kept the Christians in the Indian Army but it really, they just hated it because we were all such good friends. There was no preparation for this, it was just throw at us all of a sudden, and all these trains full of soldiers in my opinion all going the wrong way but I felt very upset about it, that's why I got so angry with old Mountbatten (laughs).

J.W. : Oh no, no, I can empathise as much as I can in a way.

Captain B. : I don't think there's much else I can think of.

J.W. : Have you been able to, any of the troops of the Indian officers or those you served with, have you been able to keep in contact with those people at all?

Captain B. : Well I used to send a Christmas card to one of my particular chums called [Subao Manyan] who was a Madrassi, a Hindu, and he and I used to write a we note to each other, but we stopped, I don't, I think we stopped because I went to Argentina and then to Brazil and kind of got out of touch with India.

J.W. : Oh it's easy to do, I would imagine, when you're moving around. Right ... .

Captain B. : So there we are.

J.W. : Well I can't think of anything else so ... .

Captain B. : Well okay.

J.W. : So just to say thank you very much.

Captain B. : Not at all, not at all.

J.W. : It's been fascinating, I'll stop this.

The tape is stopped.

Mrs. Margaret Brown
Wednesday, 7th December, 1994
SA1995.47

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, **Mrs. B.** represents Mrs. Margaret Brown.

J.W. If I could start by asking you just to explain for us the periods or just the timescale when you were out in the Frontier, these sort of areas, and what exactly you were doing out there if you could.

Mrs. B. Yes, well, I went out in the early Fifties to what was then West Pakistan on a posting from the Commonwealth Relations Office to Karachi, which was of course in those days the capital of Pakistan, and it was there that I met my husband who had been in the Indian Army in the 12th Frontier Force Regiment and serving in the Scouts, various Corps of Scouts and my main knowledge of the Frontier is small, my own experience was very small, but I obviously learnt a great deal from him.

J.W. Did you have, your own family, were there any connections with India at all?

Mrs. B. No, no, neither of our families had any contact, but in my case it was a childhood ambition to go to, to go to India as it then was having read Kipling and various other stories in boys' comics that are all now defunct I fear, and I knew the only way to get there was to get a job which was what I did in the Civil Service, and was lucky enough to get, to finally get, this posting. My husband had always wanted to go as well and with the coming of the War he was able to get there, fortuitously, he went out as a, he was in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, went out on the *Strathallan*, and I think they must have asked for volunteers, and he volunteered, went to the O.C.T.U. at Bangalore and into the 12th Frontier Force Regiment and then into the Scouts.

J.W. If I can just ask you, sort of take you back a little, how did you perceive the Frontier and that part of the world before you went there? Did you have sort of glamourous perceptions of it or ... ?

Mrs. B. Yes I did, very glamourous, the stories tend to glamourise that area and because it was so little known that the mystery of it was there and it was so remote and all the stories that I read, all the travel books I read made it into a, well, a very desirable place to go to, simply because, I think, of the mystery and excitement that there had been, and very brave deeds had been done there, brave men, men with great imagination, and I think also in that case there they had to be very intelligent people because they weren't just soldiers there, they were political animals as well, and this was essential, and I think my husband was very typical of the type of man that went there because you went by choice and you had to be hand picked.

J.W. Now something I've certainly read and heard people say and I'd be interested just to get your opinions on the subject, now they're obviously, it's a fact, very, very strong links between Scotland and the whole of India, not just the Frontier, but in many books I've read there's an idea that Scottish people were somehow better suited to work in that area, just by their nature they were closer, or more able to ... assimilate or whatever while they were there. Do you think there's a lot of truth in that or ... ?

Mrs. B. Well, Willie would have agreed with you all the way along the line because he always felt being a Borderer gave him a great deal in common with the men of the marches, as he called them, and also he said he'd a great deal in common with them because Scots were always having trouble with the English (laughs) which I think was very true, and then of course he married me and got even more trouble, but that was his feeling that Frontier people all over the world had more in common with each other than they do with anyone else.

J.W. Now I just asked you about your own perceptions of the area and also about how you perceived Scots in the area. How did other people, say your friends in this country, how did they think of you going off to India and these parts of the world, did they ... ?

Mrs. B. Well, let's not forget that in the Fifties a lot of young women just didn't do that. Careers in those days for people like me were teachers or nurses and I couldn't bear the thought of anything like that and I wanted to see something of the world, and so my friends thought it was all a bit odd, and they still do. I had a reunion with some friends the other weekend and they sort of looked at me as if I'd got two heads because I'd done all this. Nowadays it's different because the world has shrunk. In those days we had to travel by ship, it took three weeks to get there and the whole thing was all very exciting and I must admit none of my friends ever did anything like this, perhaps I was a show-off, I don't know.

J.W. Now you've already told me a good deal about your sort of say your reasons for going. Now either with yourself or with your husband do you think that there was any sense of duty or sort of mission in going out?

Mrs. B. No, I'm afraid mine was purely selfish, I wanted to see it, and it was always something I'd wanted to do. With regard to my husband he of course had no option, real option, he chose to go there but during the war he had no option, but what he did later in 1947 was quite definitely a very strong sense of duty and obligation towards the people which he felt and which he carried out, and it was duty, he did what he saw as his duty, not in any pious way at all but borne mainly through a sense of shame that the people had been abandoned, as they had been.

J.W. Now, to move on now, I'd like to just ask you about your sort of preparations before you left for the area. How for instance did you prepare yourself? Did you have any sort of language knowledge at all before you went at all or what other preparations did you ... ?

Mrs. B. Well it was all a bit primitive in those days. I had a friend who was born out there and he supplied me with a list of words I could count to ten and one or two other words like that, we were given an allowance to buy clothes, a vast amount, sixty pounds, to equip ourselves for a two year tour, had to go out and buy trunks and things because we travelled by sea and that in itself was very exciting. I also went equipped with a little note saying who I was, I didn't have to have visas or anything like that because I was under Her Majesty's, well it was, yes it was Her Majesty's protection by that time, which was quite a nice thing to have, to know she was looking after me if I had any problems, a little note said to let me pass, and also the Commonwealth Relations Office issued a booklet which in looking back now parts of it are hysterically funny the things we had to take and I found it not long ago and, well, people who've since been out do find it hysterically funny to see the sorts of things that there are in it, such as going equipped with long gloves for dinner and so on. In fact I'll have to show you the book because it really is very funny. It's called *The Newcomer to Pakistan* and each area was designated - you needed gloves in Lahore and you needed a fur jacket and so many evening dresses, because of course you dressed every night and told you what not to take nylon things because they were too hot, with a little more preparation I could tell you a lot more, but I'll show you the book anyway, but it was, most of it was very funny, but we took it all as gospel, yes, I mean I stuck to my little book, oh dear, I ticked things off as I got them. Various things you had to take two years supply of, medical things and so on and that always raised eyebrows when you went to a shop and asked for two years' supply of this that and the other, and in those days you could get, there was purchase tax on things which is rather akin to the VAT, so you could go and buy stuff, buy your equipment and get it with the purchase tax off, but you didn't see it, it was sent from the shop direct to the ship and you didn't see it until it appeared from the hold at the other end, so, you know, you just hoped that you'd got what you ordered at the shop, and I bought a radiogram which I still have which is a marvellous radiogram as they were called, and I bought that for the vast sum of twenty-five pounds, and that was, we used to, it was so good that we used to listen to the Grand National on the shortwave from, in Karachi we listened to the Grand National here on this, and I've still got this machine which my children call an antique, but however, that's, sorry, digressing.

J.W. Oh, no, no, no, not at all, now ... .

Mrs. B. When I embarked in a hat, I wore a hat to embark, I walked up the gangplank wearing a hat would you believe, yes I did, I did, it was a scream.

J.W. People certainly in my experience there's a model used nowadays very much for people travelling to such areas of culture shock and the idea of culture shock. Was that something that people mentioned at all, when you went over or do you think that's very much a contemporary idea to now?

Mrs. B. No, in the in the Department, the office I came from which was devoted entirely to Commonwealth countries, and India and Pakistan were the two that, and South Africa of course in those days, where there was, you would met a culture shock but it wasn't called that in those days, there were merely, you were given notes on how to behave, not to expose too much flesh, this that and the other, but of course in those days as well West Pakistan was still only ten years, within, less than ten years of Partition and was still very, very Westernised in that all the clubs you drank there, everybody drank, and life was very, very much the same as here apart from the fact that you dressed for dinner and all that sort of thing, and spent your time going to cocktail parties which was a great waste of time, but that was the social thing, but apart from there were some people who really didn't see any difference at all in their lives. I was lucky in that I married Willie he didn't have a great deal of time for the European in Pakistan because he said they made no attempt whatsoever to integrate and he had many, many more Pakistani friends naturally enough and so our live was spent mainly with our Pakistani friends which was very, very enjoyable, because with the Europeans you merely moved from one European house to the next, with no variety, but our Pakistani friends were of every class, well the two classes there were, rich and poor, and we had a great variety in our lives and much more so than the average person, which is why I was very, very lucky in my life there.

J.W. You were saying earlier about acquiring medical, sort of, equipment to take out. What sort of inoculations and sort of provisions did you have?

Mrs. B. I had, wait a minute, I never had smallpox as a child, I had never been inoculated which was rather unusual because it was, everyone had to be when I was a baby, and my father had actually gone to a J.P. and said he didn't want me to be done, so when I turned up at the Tropical Diseases Hospital for my injection and said I didn't want it done on my arm as everybody had in those days they were astonished to hear that I'd never had it done so I got one injection on my leg, I had cholera and T.A.B. and I think that was about all. And what we did I the High Commission every week a *bearer* came round with a long list which we signed and a tin of tablets, *Paludrine*, and we took *Paludrine* once a week, and was astonished to find when I went out in '88 that you took a *Paludrine* for what was it a week before you started, and four weeks after you came back. Didn't seem much like progress to me that didn't. That was that was really all as far as I can remember. I remember this going to, going to the Tropical Diseases Hospital for these injections, but that was all I'm sure, T.A.B., cholera, typhoid, typhoid and the smallpox which I had to have because I'd never had it, I don't know about other people but that was what I had.

J.W. How did you going, sorry to take you back again, going back to sort of perceptions of the area how did you sort of perceive the sort of medical aspects of going out to the Frontier. Was that something that worried you a great deal or ... ?

Mrs. B. No it didn't worry me at all I really didn't give it much thought which I suppose is a bit naive of me, but I did come across quite a bit of medical activity because well, having a child there and there wasn't very much believe me there wasn't very much in the way of medication, very little at all. In fact I remember that while I was having the child - my son - I said, you know, 'Can I have something?', and they said, 'Yes' and produced some oxygen which wasn't a lot of use, but the doctor was marvellous, she had much more of the psychological approach, because she confided to me that she did enjoy having English ladies and Chinese ladies to treat, and I sort of wondered why, and she said, 'Because they don't make a fuss.' Well, I mean I had to manage without everything then, didn't I? We had, we were involved very much with horses and one of our jockeys had a very serious accident and we went to the hospital to see how he was and I was quite appalled at what I saw there. He was lucky he was on a top bed and not underneath on the floor and, because we were able to pay for him, he was able to get the treatment, but it was pretty, pretty grotty. I don't know what it's like now I've not had, although I have, I've two friends who've suffered very, very serious heart attacks in Peshawar and have been looked after very, very well. I would imagine it's as good there as it can possibly be now, and it was then, it was, I mean, you know, I was the only white lady in the hospital so there was, no, never going to be any mix up with my baby but I had nothing but praise for them, it was although it was very funny when they came to take me to the room, and they called a sweeper lady in to push the trolley, and she stood over me and said, '*Baba*' or '*Bibi*'?, 'Boy' or 'Girl'?, and I said, 'Boy', 'Ah *shabash* (very good)' she said and I think if I'd said 'Girl' I might still be waiting to be pushed to my room. As it was, having obliged with a boy I got there pretty quick.

J.W. I'd like to ask you now, if I may, about the means of transport of actually physically getting out to the Frontier. How did you initially go, by sea presumably first ... ?

Mrs. B. Yes, yes went by sea from Liverpool with Anchor Line on the good ship *Secasia*, which was a one-class boat, great it was, wonderful through the Suez Canal and oh it was everything the women's magazines said it would be including a little romance under the Southern Cross, you know, oh yea, trouble was I found out he knew Willie, eventually, he was a tea planter over in Shillong, but that was the first stage to Karachi, and then of course I was in Karachi so that was that, but when we, when we went up country it was train to Lahore, the car was on the train, we sent that up and then drove from Lahore to 'Pindi and then over the Attock bridge which you don't do anymore, there's a brand new bridge which is not at all as romantic as the old bridge, I mean the

old bridge was wonderful, Grand Trunk Road it was marvellous, and drove on to Peshawar and then up to, we went to Swat, via Mardan where we stayed with Colonel Bacon who was running the sugar mill at the time and when we came back down the Frontier that was most exciting because Willie had written to the I.G.F.C., that's the Inspector General of the Frontier Corps who was an old friend of his, General Sariqullah, to say, 'May we go down the Frontier?' and so this was laid on for us, and we had an escort of about forty Scouts, radar van, it was fabulous, we travelled, we had a *bearer* with us on our honeymoon believe it or not, and, travelled with a gun in the front, and the escort came to meet us and we travelled the whole way, right down the Frontier via Tank staying at forts on the way, stopping for lunch, and meeting old friends of Willie's and it was really quite, quite remarkable down the Frontier and then on to Quetta, where we stayed in the only hotel there was, the Chotan, and then across the Sibi desert, again by car and the car broke down occasionally but we never had any problems. At one point there was a flash flood and the car was stuck and the Scouts just carried it out it was incredible I've got photographs of this it was quite incredible we got stuck there and the leader of the Scouts came to get his orders from Willie, and Willie said, 'Deploy all round' and it was quite astonishing, not a soul to be seen until we all got out, and then the tribesmen came it was all very silent and they just came it was a bit weird actually. I had to go and sit in the armoured truck while Willie stayed in the car and the scouts just picked it up and carried it out. It was quite incredible to see this and then we set off again. This of course was at the time when the Faqir if Ipi was still, still on the move which was the reason for the armoured escort, the armed escort. One exciting thing was at Jandola, Aircraftman Shaw better known as Lawrence of Arabia had served there and they had a copy in the mess of the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, and I was allowed to turn a page and I met someone there who I still meet all these years later, a brother officer of Willie's, Major Khuswaqt (later Colonel, see SA 1998.38) and oh, it was quite the most exciting experience, wonderful.

J.W. Just to very, very briefly go back to the journey, how long did that take, from say Liverpool right up to ... .

Mrs. B. It was about eighteen days, almost three weeks, to, from Liverpool to Karachi. I think it was about eighteen days, it was longer than a fortnight, but not quite three weeks.

J.W. To move on now to initially when you first arrived, very first arrived, on the Frontier. What was the situation you sort of initially found yourself in? Were you with, presumably, in a fairly large network of other British people or were ... ?

Mrs. B. No, no, no, no, when I first went to the Frontier was on my honeymoon trip and we stayed at Deans and went out to the villages, our *bearer*'s village, we went to Nali Kali and I met Maboub's wife and family and in 1990 I went back to the village and I met the children now all grown up, Maboub was dead, but I met the young the men I'd

met as boys all those years ago and that was wonderful it was quite remarkable. It was it was very emotional, actually, they came looking for me, they heard I was in Peshawar , they came looking for me and it was very emotional indeed, that was, and then I went out to the village that I remembered as a bride, and these were young men, but we, we moved mainly among the Pakistanis and the tribal people, we knew very few of the, I knew one or two of the High Commission people Peter Rattray was in the High Commission I can't remember who the deputy High Commissioner was, yea, Harrison, Mr. Harrison that was it, but by this time, of course well, I was still employed by the High Commission so I sort of, you know had to sort of still behave myself, but that we did mainly move among the Pakistanis. When we went up to Mardan we stayed with Colonel Bacon who had been Willie's boss as P.A. Gilgit and met more Pakistanis, and then on to Swat where we stayed in the *Wali*'s guest house, Willie had been a great shooting companion of the *Wali*, used to shoot a lot up there, and then coming back along the Frontier, as I say, it was, there were no other women, I mean they simply weren't there. European women simply didn't get to go on the Frontier, they got to Peshawar, sometimes as far as Tank but there's only one other lady I know who has been out there and that's Mrs. Sandison, who you mentioned to me, and she was there and I think they all pretended not to know she was there, but she spent a lot of time there.

J.W. So, and I'm sorry that this is going to be such a general question, but overall, being with so many Pakistani people how did you find sort of assimilating? Do you think it's something, and this is very general I'm afraid, I'm sorry, but do you think it's something that you can ever do, or to what sort of level do you think, you were able to assimilate? Obviously there'd be the cultural differences of course and the fact that there were so few women and the fact that women and men would be separate and this sort of thing ... .

Mrs. B. Well, you see in those days they weren't so separate, they weren't so separate, *parda* was not quite, *parda's* always been fairly strong on the Frontier, but it wasn't quite as strong in those days as it is now. I think the Raj, if you like to call it that, or British influence or whatever, I don't know, it wasn't so strong then, at least not in the circles I moved in. I never had any difficulty at all, I found I've always enjoyed talking to these ladies. A lot of them had been, were university graduates, Oxford, Cambridge, and so on, and they were interesting to talk to, most hospitable people I've ever met and I never had any problems whatsoever and I've not had any since either. It was like going home again when I went back. I was lucky enough to meet old friends and I just love it there.

J.W. How about while you were obviously living there, what were your contacts like with home, how did you sort of maintain contact with home? Was that an important thing or did it sort of ... ?

Mrs. B. Well, I've always liked writing letters and my mother was a widow so it was important that I kept in close touch with her, and we were very lucky in that our mail from the High Commission always went in the diplomatic bag, so we had to take out a supply of tuppence ha'penny stamps which we put on our letters in Karachi and then handed over for the bag as it was known, and they came back to London and were just posted so our letters from Karachi were actually posted in London, and that was easy that wasn't a problem at all, we always knew when I went out a telegram was immediately sent to my mother to let her know that I had arrived safely, which I always found quite a good thing, you know I was very happy and she was, and we were well looked after in that any problems at all, we were in very close touch with, the High Commission were very good and there weren't any problems at all with contact, in that way in the physical contact as I say, I liked writing letters and I'd got lots to write about and, err, lots of photographs to send home which I think made a great deal of difference to my mother. I was a long way away, but I was able to keep in touch that way, and that was the main thing. In those days you didn't just pick up the phone and get in touch, it was letters and postcards and so on, and it was a great thrill to her to get postcards from say, Attock and Tank and so on because then it also, she started reading more and was with me in spirit if you like, which I imagine is what a lot of people did I would think so anyway.

J.W. What about, say, did you ever have newspapers sent over from Scotland or ... ?

Mrs. B. Yes, yes my husband's mother used to send a lot of papers over, I wasn't that bothered about getting English papers. Mrs. Brown used to send the local *Southern Reporter* and *Scotsman* if there was something of interest and odd things, but not an enormous amount. Our life was there, and therefore that was the way it was. We read *Dawn* (an English newspaper in Pakistan) everyday, that was enough.

J.W. Moving on now to I was saying earlier about your medical and physical preparations at this end, when you arrived did you have many problems acclimatising physically to the climate and the conditions?

Mrs. B. Well, I think everybody on the ship got smitten with Karachi tummy before we ever got off it, or as it was known Delhi Belly in Karachi. I mean everyone got smitten and then you sort of got over it. We took salt tablets every day but I personally enjoyed the heat, it was marvellous to be warm all the time. As far as I was concerned it couldn't be too hot, so it never worried me in the slightest, never worried me at all.

J.W. You're very fortunate.

Mrs. B. Oh it was wonderful going back, feel the sun on your back, it's marvellous. Great for the arthritis.

J.W. What about during your time there would you visit, say, hill stations during the hot weather at all?

Mrs. B. Yes we went to we used to go to Nathia Gali. What we usually did was fly up to Lahore then go up in the old Dakota up to Chaklala, which was what the old airfield at 'Pindi was called and there then we would hire usually a station wagon, a big American Chevrolet type of thing and then go to Nathia Gali. Willie wouldn't go to Murree. He said it was full of people he was trying to get away from, and Nathia Gali was lovely, it was, have you been?

J.W. I haven't, no, but I've read and heard about it.

Mrs. B. Oh it's lovely, it's beautiful. The Pines Hotel which was a series of little log cabins and your bath water came in kerosene tins it was all very primitive and enormous fun, and we used to hire horses for riding. They would ride very early in the morning, we always took a servant with us to look after the baby and it was idyllic, it was really beautiful, it was, and I remember one day banging on the door, all rushed out, Nanga Parbat could be seen, so we all went to see Nanga Parbat and then she disappeared again.

J.W. You're very fortunate, I never ...

Mrs. B. I am very lucky, I am very lucky indeed it was wonderful.

J.W. If I could just move on now to sort of everyday life arrangements in the home and this sort of thing, did you for instance have servants for everyday jobs and what, were they, which were they ... ?

Mrs. B. Yes, our servants were all Pathans which always caused comment because several people said, 'What, why have you got Pathans? They don't make good servants 'cause they're too independent', and well, Willie said, 'Well, they might not make very good servants, but you won't get better friends', so we had Pathans. Our *bearer* they nearly all came from the same village, our *bearer* was Mahboub, he was a great old chap and Imal, a washing-up boy, [?], the [?] was general to the block and we didn't have an *āyā*, Willie wouldn't have these women so our [?], a boy called Yaqub, filled that bill and we had a driver and a cook, who wasn't a terribly good cook when it came to European stuff so I did all that but he was a dab hand at everything else. But they're excellent people, very good, they worked for practically nothing really, but our house was the place where all Pathans who came to Karachi all came to first, which was very nice 'cause we always got Pathan visitors, they'd be a great to do at the back door and Willie's curiosity would get the better of him and out he'd go to the back door and there was an old Scout or whatever who'd come to pay his respects before whatever else he'd got to do. I decided as a bride that I, a newly married woman, that I should take over the

household which was a great mistake on my part I should have left things well alone because as Willie used to say, 'You've done it again, you've bought camel' in the bazaar so after a while I gave up and let the cook, I'd say what we wanted and it was an old hand who told me, we had the cook's book the cook wrote down everyday what he'd purchased and then in the evening he would come and give the cook book to you for you to check it over, and the great tip was, 'Always look at his feet', because if he's twiddling his toes you've got to look extra carefully 'cause he's if he's standing quite all right then no problem but if he has a guilty conscience just watch his toes, and it worked wonderful, but our servants were great they were great people, marvellous and whenever we went, we went up to 'Pindi at one point and a very old gentleman arrived and he had been Willie's *bearer* in Gilgit, he came to pay his respects, and they were wonderful loyal people, great fun, great sense of humour, err, always knew what was going on more than anyone else did, life was very interesting with them and also they were so trustworthy, you could leave, well, we used to go away and just leave the place with them, I mean, there were no problems, no problems at all.

J.W. You were saying about the sort of diet you ate. What was the sort of balance, was it a mixture of British or European food and local food or ... ?

Mrs. B. Well we ate mostly local food, it was easier and let the cook cook what he knows how to cook, I would do extra things, I would do things for Christmas, what were perhaps more interesting, but we ate we ate rice rather than potatoes although rice isn't the main staple of course or wasn't but we ate very little bread it was mainly *naan* which we preferred *chapatti*, a lot of Chinese, there were a lot some very good Chinese restaurants, well, two in particular, one was Communist and the other, was nationalist so we always went to the nationalist one. Fish was particularly good there wonderful lobster and prawn, absolutely fabulous, short season because of the monsoon, you know, the dhows were a bit, but it was wonderful and meat was very, very good on the days that I didn't buy camel. Steak, you bought a whole undercut of steak, for the equivalent of about one and sixpence, it was about like that.

J.W. Oh wow.

Mrs.B. : It was, it was absolutely, the lamb was good. We used to go shooting a lot so we'd always got something different as well, we'd always got some game and once or twice Willie was asked to go out, there were boar out in Sind so we sometimes ended up with a bit of pig that was a bit on the tough side but basically the food was, we enjoyed it very much, it was excellent, excellent and if you wanted something like bacon well you went up to, in those days *B.O.A.C.* at the airport, and, had this place called Speedbird House and so you'd see people up there with withdrawal symptoms who needed a bit of bacon so you go there for that, we didn't bother very often we were quite happy with what we got, but just occasionally for a treat and you managed a shop called *The Coldstore* and you could get tinned stuff as well which you kept I the cupboard against

the day that you felt you must have a sausage or you'd die, but basically we ate Pakistani food because it was good, and as Willie said, 'We're here, and we live like they do' and that was fine.

J.W. With that comment in mind, did you ever have any any, much of a social life in terms of sort of clubs, or that sort of thing?

Mrs. B. Oh yes, social life did depend on the clubs and in those days in Karachi there was the Boat Club, was I think probably the most popular for all ranks of society. It was on the creek and there were boats obviously at the Boat Club, and there was a Yacht Club which was very good, we were there occasionally. Gymkhana Club was mainly rugby and so on, there was a golf course and the Sind Club was the club for the number ones of all the companies which was always a bit embarrassing because Willie had been a member of the Sind Club as an officer a lot longer than any of the number ones in there, so it's all slightly embarrassing in that we would turn up and they're all the number ones of the companies there, but we had our wedding reception there at the Sind Club and I believe it's still the best place there is but in those days as well I think Pakistanis had only just been allowed in. In Lahore it was the Punjab Club known as 'The Pig'. That was a great place as well, but there was of course prohibition in the Punjab in those days so on my honeymoon I signed a form saying I was an alcoholic and needed drink, I didn't know what I was signing until Willie explained it so, but you had to do that in the Punjab, and in, in Peshawar, the Peshawar Club was a wonderful place, it was quite a, quite the most marvellous place with the enormous bar and all these, the *bearer*s all had grey beards, the [?] and they always used to greet Willie as an old friend. It was a wonderful place that was.

J.W. What about using the Club for recreation, did you for instance use it for sport and that sort of thing?

Mrs. B. Yes, yes the Boat Club did have sculling and so on, ladies were allowed to use what was known as the tub fours which not many of us did, and the Yacht Club well that was, that was very, very good, very exciting, I actually sailed there before I met Willie. The Gymkhana Club we didn't go to very much. Willie had gone there mainly when he was a bachelor and still played rugby and so on, but our main activity was horses and Willie was the Secretary of the Polo Club, and polo was three times a week and racing, because our, Willie's polo ponies had to race in order to win money to support his sport, so it was polo on Tuesdays, Thursday and Saturdays and racing on Fridays and Sundays, so they were pretty busy horses but and we lived pretty close to the race course, which was, so that was our principle sporting activity, because also where we lived was right by the beach and exercising took place up there and there was this great expanse called the *maidān* where we could ride for miles. That doesn't exist anymore, it's now a vast housing scheme, which I couldn't believe when I saw it ... .

J.W. Right.

Mrs. B. : Oh, Willie shot a lot. He had friends out in Sind who used to invite him for shooting and the shooting was very good, he enjoyed that.

J.W. Right, to jump now, and this is rather a major jump, I didn't expect it to jump quite as quickly as this, towards your time when you were looking towards coming home, what was, what sort of pushed you towards coming home? Was it an end of employment or just ... ?

Mrs. B. Yes, what, what happened was that Pakistan was undergoing various changes at the time. General Ayub had come to be President and things were changing very much. All companies were run, principally the number ones and twos were all Europeans or Americans or whatever, Westernised, and the policy became, obviously as it must that the should be taken over by Pakistanis, so any Europeans who reached the end of their contracts were not replace from home, they were replaced by Pakistanis who had been working their way up, which was only right and proper, and Willie had gone into *I.C.I.* very much later than the other people there because he'd been so long in the Army. Most of them had gone in fairly young, he was much older and he worked it out that it was the best time for him to come home, he was, what, thirty-six, thirty-seven and felt that if we left it any later he wouldn't be able to do anything in this country, and having been away there since 1942 as a very young man, he'd no training for anything here. As he always said, being an officer and a gentleman doesn't fit you for very much in the outside world, but the only thing he knew about was horses and so that was what we decided to do and that was it his contract with *I.C.I.* which I think was a three or four year something like had was coming to an end and so we decided that that would be it and it was in '60 which was very sad but then you have to move on and there wouldn't have been, there wouldn't have been any future. In previous times you see people could work their way up the ladder but that had come to an end, I mean he'd seen this happen in the army, he saw it happen in the police and so he knew it was coming, just as it should be, I mean, it was the proper course of events, so he felt very fortunate to have been involved as much as he had been and always saw himself as one of the founding fathers of Pakistan, he felt he'd done his bit he'd had plenty out of it and the time had come to move so that was it.

J.W. How did the people you were living and working amongst, how did they react when they came to know you were leaving? What was their sort of ... ?

Mrs. B. It was very flattering, they were very upset as we were, in fact the party that we had was a party there will never be another one like it again, I mean, it was ... it was [?] they were so kind. We felt we were leaving part of our family and I think they felt the same, I mean Willie had been there since 1942 with only one break home so naturally he felt almost, like roots being pulled up, but that was you know, but then again when I

went back all those years later and renewed our friendship it was like going home it was wonderful.

J.W. How did you find, and then physically returning back to Britain, how did you find settling back here? I know that's a very general question to ask, but ... ?

Mrs. B. It was easier for me than it was for Willie because he'd been away for so long, although I'd never been to Scotland before so that came, I was back in a foreign country again but Willie being a Borderer we came back to the Borders we came to the Borders, Willie came back, and we found ourselves, we were a bit of an oddity. Being a small population we stood out rather, which was very good for business, we worked out what we were going to do, advertised, Willie bought horses, and we were up and running and it was a grand thing, it was great, we, our clients were the best clients anybody could ever have, and it was a very good life, doing what you want to do twenty-four hours a day is a great thing and I was very lucky, I think I saw more of my husband than most women see in a lifetime because the tackroom was only through the kitchen door we were there altogether all the time and it was quite, quite marvellous. I was very lucky, I've been very lucky.

J.W. How did, did you get the impressions for how people viewed you with regard to the fact that you had been out in ... ?

Mrs. B. They were very interested, yes, very interested, and we were probably rather boring on the subject because after all we didn't know, we didn't have much else to talk about, but Willie was able to renew friendships with several people, and, which was nice, but when you're in business you, you don't make friends with your clients, you can't make friends with people you're going to send a bill to at the end of the month, so our clients were clients, acquaintances more than friends, but excellent people and we had a very happy life, together here.

J.W. And how, I'm sorry this is an incredibly general question, but how, how do you feel people in general, since you've been back, how do you feel people perceive the part of the world you were in, in this country, do you think people actually care much about that part of the world or do you think they, it's just somewhere else to them?

Mrs. B. No, here in the Borders people are interested. The people in the Borders are different, they're a different breed, they're, they've all got their priorities right here, and they are interested. It's, they don't know much about it, because people don't know much about Pakistan, everybody knows all about India, but they don't know much about Pakistan, but anyone who I have talked to, or who has asked me things has expressed great interest and I've never felt it's just been a polite interest it's been a really genuine interest and I've been asked to speak to one or two groups and I've found enormous interest there and intelligent questions asked and I think people do take more notice if

they hear from someone, perhaps like me who's, knows a bit about it and can talk to them then I think it helps to spread an interest because I think that what I can tell them is interesting and fun as well, and a lot of laughs in it and I think also this medal this aroused enormous interest and I think people here well particularly in Melrose, have been very proud of what happened, Willie was one of theirs, it caused enormous interest and enormous pleasure, great pleasure ... .

J.W. Rightly so.

Mrs. B. : Yes, and when I've told people how well we were received and looked after in Pakistan, they sort of think, 'Oh well, you know, that must be a good place', which it is.

J.W. Well, I think that's about all the, all the specific questions that I can think of just now. If you have anything else you think you might want to tell me, we can pause the tape for a moment.

Mrs. B. No, it's no, I mean anything that, as I say, my time on the Frontier was quite short and all that I know I sort of imbibed. You can't help but do that when the household, when the house is a focal point for people coming, and Willie's friends, other army friends who, I mean, the talk was never anything but the Frontier, and the fact that Willie spent so long there without a break I think makes a big difference, and he threw himself heart and soul into it and in Gilgit particularly, where he was there without a break you see for three years that was it, and he was, well latterly, he was the only British officer there, his friends were all native officers and he just did everything that they did, he joined in the sports, he learned to play polo and if you've ever seen polo played up there it's a bit like rugby on horseback, it's not like anywhere else, and he tent pegged, and he did all these things he, he just imbibed the whole thing, he breathed it in and revelled in it and that I think is was very typical of all Scotsmen who served there, English people too, English officers too, obviously, they wouldn't have done it if they hadn't wanted to, and I attend the Frontier Corps reunion every year in London, and there all these elderly gentlemen all revert to type and they're all like Second Lieutenants again and it's a wonderful atmosphere because all they talk about what they did all those years ago, and it was pretty hairy, it was very hairy indeed some of the things that happened but they take great pride in the fact that they contributed to, yes, yes, yes they do, it's really quite marvellous, I love it, I love it.

J.W. I'm wondering again, and this is another one of my wide questions, if you could maybe just say a little about your subsequent visits, after you came home you've been back several times. How have you found those visits?

Mrs. B. Well, it was very many years because Willie always said we'd go back when he retired, and of course he didn't live long enough, he was only sixty one when he died, so I just gave up all thought of going back, but to cut a long story short I did go back in '88

with the Pakistan Society, and I must admit halfway there I thought "What am I doing? Why am I doing this?', and in Peshawar, purely by chance I met someone who, I didn't recognise him and he came and sat beside me, and said, 'Don't you remember me?', and he was, he was the Chief of Police in Peshawar, and when it dawned on me who he was - he had been a young policeman in Karachi back in the mid Fifties and he's been to stay here in this house with me, and I stay with him and his family, and that was when I knew I'd done the right thing going back and we went up, we got up to Gilgit and in Chilas there was a phone call and I thought, 'Who's ringing me up here?' and it was Willie's friend, Shah Khan, to say he'd heard I was coming and he would be waiting for me and that was really quite, quite splendid, and then, since then I've been back four times, and each time gets better and better and it's like a fairy story the things that happen, and this last time when I went for the investiture and they'd asked who I would like to see and I asked if the leader of Willie's bodyguard, I'd like to meet him, and they said they were very sorry, they couldn't find him. He found me, he walked for three days and came to see me and it was quite marvellous, he just stood in front of me and saluted, this old gentleman, announced his name and when I addressed him by the name that Willie called him the grin was like that, it was really, we both cried, we both cried, and I've since had a letter from him, which, wants me to go to his village up in Nagar.

J.W. Wonderful.

Mrs. B. It is, it really, they are quite remarkable people, and I went to, I was taken to, into Azad Kashmir because although military people knew what Willie had done in '47 the ordinary people didn't know, and it was made public last year, in August '93 when it was first announced that this medal had been awarded, and the people there they couldn't believe that someone had done this for them, a foreigner had done it and got nothing out of it. They couldn't believe this, and they came, you know, ordinary people came up to me in the street to thank me for what he'd done. In fact I think they've adopted Willie as the patron saint of refugees because if he'd been able to carry on it might not have stayed as it was he was pulled out because they couldn't have British officers participating anymore and there were quite a lot on both sides you see, there were some on the Indian side whose feelings were that way, and they were all pulled out, but if Willie had got his plans made he knew what he wanted to do when the passes opened again, but it wasn't to be, but really the way those people were it was incredible, I, they just, they couldn't believe it and I couldn't believe that they felt as they did, it was marvellous really was. It's a pity more people don't know about what's happening there because there you see they said all the time it was, 'Why did the British do this? Why did they let this happen?', and it's a very difficult charge to answer that is, very difficult you know because they were right, we shouldn't have left with an unresolved situation, I mean it must be the longest unresolved situation like that in the world, two generations of people have come and gone, very difficult to answer.

J.W. Oh it is.

Mrs. B. : Very difficult, but however, I, you know they seem, seem to think you know they see widows in rather a special light which is very flattering actually, they sort of see me as carrying on what Willie started all those years ago which of course is quite impossible to do, but you know they say, 'Will you tell people? Will you talk to them about Kashmir?', which I do whenever I can but it's not in the news, it's not exciting like Bosnia and so on, the media aren't there, and these poor people they leave their homes in the night they steal away and leave everything well that's not very exciting, is it? It doesn't make, it's not good journalese that isn't. Nothing to see, so nobody knows, but ... .

J.W. It certainly shows the esteem in which they hold people who had links with the area.

Mrs. B. Yes, yes.

J.W. The fact that even though, even though in reality you might not be able to do as much as they would hope you could they see you as the person who can.

Mrs. B. Yes they do, they do, and it's such a shame really because you feel you're letting them down, because you can't do anything, I mean I said, 'All I can do is tell people' which I do as I'm doing, saying to you. Whether it does any good or not I don't know, you know if anybody who knew anybody in, who knew someone in power, but you see, I mean it's all changed, we aren't, we're not an important power anymore, are we? No, it's very sad, very sad.

J.W. But hopefully every little bit helps.

Mrs. B. Yes well that's what I would like to think.

J.W. Yes I'm sure.

Mrs. B. : But whether that situation can ever be resolved. If Mr. Nehru had said, had held the referendum that was promised, nobody's going to do that now, are they? Mind, as one of them said to me, if there was oil in Kashmir it'd be different.

J.W. I think that's probably true.

MrsS. B. Which is true, yes.

J.W. Unfortunately, I have to say.

Mrs. B. No every time I go back is lovely (pauses). No, it's I mean what you're doing is an excellent thing, not only from your own point of view but I hope that they will get at some point into archives.

J.W. Oh they will, they definitely will.

Mrs. B. That I'm very glad to hear because I don't think there's enough of it and too many people for so long have been brainwashed into thinking that the Raj was oppression, and all the rest of it. Well, like most things it's got it's bad sides and good sides, but basically the people I've met, mind I'm biased of course, but the people I've met have good and had nothing but good thoughts and good intentions and did their best, and most of them came out of it with nothing. I mean, Willie came out of it with nothing, forty years later there's a medal, but he made nothing out of it apart from marvellous memories and a feeling of well-being, satisfaction, and that is how the people that I've met in the same line, army and civil, civil administrators, who I've met quite a lot, they're the sort of people who are the people we should remember. Okay, you can't forget the other side, but, err, yea.

J.W. Yea, it's, it wasn't the sort of job where you'd go out to make money or something like that quite simply because you could do it a lot easier in a lot of other ways, and that wasn't the motivation. It's one of the many things you do in life that you do for the love of it.

Mrs. B. Exactly.

J.W. : And for slightly different motivations and the individuals are ... .

Mrs. B. Yes, yes I think that a great many, well Willie was certainly an idealist, and a romantic, and he was lucky in that where he was, was the very place of romance, and, I mean, he was once likened in an article in the *Scotsman* as 'The Man Who Would Be King' in Gilgit because he was actually almost king in Gilgit, in fact the man he put in prison in his own book said that Major Brown ruled Gilgit which Willie never knew, he never knew about this book because he was dead before it came out, but this was the Indian he put in gaol, who wrote his own account of it and he said that Willie ruled Gilgit which of course caused a great deal of amusement among all his friends, you know, 'King Willie' sort of thing, but, no, it's these things should be told but it's a pity you know, it's a pity you know, you can't, it's a pity you're so young that's the trouble because so many people have died.

J.W. I've missed out there.

Mrs. B. Yes, yes you have actually, which is a shame but I'm sure that what you are getting is good. I hope it is.

J.W. I hope so too, yes, well, certainly today has been very valuable.

Mrs. B. Good, I'm very glad to hear it.

J.W. Thank you very much for being so helpful.

Mrs. B. Oh well, I just like talking, I just like talking (pauses) but I don't, I don't know whether there's anything else I can, I can tell you. Our friends came from all, all types, I mean Willie was in I.C.I., he was just as friendly with a lorry driver as he was with the other officials, he could talk to them, he looked after their interests, and that I think was very important because you didn't get that a lot because after the War you did get a lot of people jumping on bandwagons, and there were bandwagons to be jumped on, I think, but, he didn't, he didn't, the proof of that is the fact that we've got no money, but what we've got that was great, that was marvellous, well reliving memories is always, if you've got good memories it's good to relive them, and I'm lucky in that I've got a lot of friends in the Pakistan High Commission and what you should do if you're really interested is, if you're, join the Pakistan Society, because they have quite a number of functions and they'd love to have people who've been out there and who've got Pakistan's interests at heart and if you've done something like you have, teaching, you've given your services, they're pleased, they want to know, they want to know. Well I was at a function last week because the Pakistan festival is on, now as usual it's gone off at half-cock because they've no publicity, but what we saw in the Ismaili Centre and in the Commonwealth Institute was really quite splendid, things had been brought from Pakistan, a lot of Kalash stuff that you don't see anywhere else, and, but again nobody knows about it.

J.W. It's such a shame because there is so much.

Mrs. B. It's terribly sad, it really is, it upsets me terribly, I always feel that I must rush in and do something on the tourist line but I'm getting too old for this sort of thing, but you should join the Pakistan Society.

J.W. Okay, well, thank you once again for everything.

Tape was switched off.

Interview with Major Willie Brown
Gilgit Scouts
Recorded 14th July 1983 for Radio Borders *Reflections*
Used here courtesy of Mrs. Margaret Brown

L.T. represents Liz Taylor (the interviewer) and
Maj. B. represents **Major Willie Brown**

Maj. B. : I was born in Melrose and my father was born in Galashiels, my grandfather was born in Hawick and my great great grandfather was born in Earlston so I suppose I am a real Borderer.

L.T. : You certainly are, it sounds like you came from a very old Border family.

Maj. B. : Yes they started off in Liddiesdale, as far as I can gather they were a pretty rough lot of freebooters, reivers and that sort of thing (laughs) and they moved from there when both the English and the Scottish got fed up with them and decided to break them up. My part of the family moved to Earlston and settled at the Park and that's where the Earlston connection comes in.

L.T. : Oh I see yes, yes. And one of your ancestors was an MP for this district.

Maj. B. : Yes grandfather was MP for Roxburgh and Selkirk. Roxburgh, it was burghs in those days, Roxburgh it was Galashiels, Selkirk and Hawick.

L.T. : Ah and what party did he stand for?

Maj. B. : He was a Liberal like the whole family is (laughs).

L.T. : Can you remember him?

Maj. B. : Yes I can remember him I can remember him very well. He lived at Buckholm Burn in Galashiels and he was Chairman and Managing Director of Brown Brothers Buckholm Mill, and oh yes, can remember going up to Buckholm Burn, meeting him and playing in the garden up there and going down to the mill and that sort of thing.

L.T. : You never had any desire to follow in his political footsteps?

Maj. B. : Not yet, I take a keen interest in politics but quite frankly I'm quite happy with what I'm doing. Perhaps when I get older I might, I might go into politics (laughs).

L.T. : (laughs) Now how come you went to India, because you went to India as quite a young man.

Maj. B. : Yes India. Well as soon as I was eighteen I joined the army into the ranks, I joined the Argyll and rose to the dizzy rank of corporal, but I'd always wanted to go to India. As a small boy I'd watched films like *Lives of a Bengal Lancer* and that sort of thing.

L.T. : Oh really?

Maj. B. : And I though you know that's the place I want to go, so when the opportunity arose and they asked for volunteers to go on to India to join the Indian Army I put my name down and fortunately I was accepted and I was about nineteen, nineteen then and we sailed off to India on the good ship *Strathallan* from Gourock and landed at Bombay, landed at Bombay and well, the first thing to do when I got to India was to get a commission so we went down to Bangalore to the Officers' Training College at Bangalore and there it was all very quick in those days because they were needing officers rather desperately and I think if I remember it was about three months about three months cause at Bangalore, which I enjoyed very much because South India's a wonderful place and it had a very good place to start off your career in India because the climate is very nice down there in fact the climate is very much like it is here and at the end of the course we were asked, we were given a choice of regiments, and never thinking I would be accepted, and went for one of the top, one of the really high class Indian regiments the Frontier Force Regiment and to my delight I was accepted.

L.T. : And that's a very glamorous posting.

Maj. B. : It was it was quite a thing I was delighted about that so I got myself on the train and moved ooh thousands of miles I think way up into the North to a place called Sialkot where the regimental centre is located and started my life as Second Lieutenant Brown with the 3rd, 3rd the 12th Frontier Force Regiment.

L.T. : And is that the regiment that wear turbans?

Maj. B. : Err they do, not in my time, by the time I joined we were on a war footing.

L.T. : Oh I see.

Maj. B. : And we didn't wear regimental clothes. No, I tell you it was later in another band of men that I joined later that was when we wore complete Pathan dress all the time.

L.T. : So you dressed like a native?

Maj. B. : Yes we dressed like a native. Now this, the story is that someway or other they thought I was a very good instructor and I found I was pinned down in this regimental centre instructing all the time and I got bored, I wanted to go up and do

things. Now up on the North-West Fro .. right on the North-West Frontier there's a band called the North, Frontier Corps of Scouts and Militia. They're irregular, they're not under army rules they come under the Political Service and they asked, they needed one officer up there in the South Waziristan Scouts as it was called. I volunteered and got the job and from then on it was a much, a very exciting very irregular life, and as we were saying we wore native clothes all the time because had we worn British officers' clothes we would have been a complete target for hostiles, they could think immediately, 'That's a British officer and that's a good prize if I shoot him.

L.T. : [?]

Maj. B. : Yes. Now from there I moved up very very far North right up into Central Asia where there was a Corp of Scouts called the Gilgit Scouts in an area which was then known as where the three empires meet, British India, China and Russia, that little triangle right away at the top there, and our job up there was to patrol the border and liaise with the Russians and the Chinese and just ensure that nothing ontoward happened up there. Very interesting you had to cross passes about fifteen thousand foot high to get in, and once you got in you couldn't get out after the 15th June because the passes were closed with snow.

L.T. : What on earth did you do with your time? Did you read a lot?

Maj. B. : Yes we were a very good library in Gilgit, and again fishing, shooting, hawking, polo, lots of polo, we used to play polo about two or three times a week, not polo as we understand it here not polo under Hurlingham rules. It was a very much faster and much more dangerous game. It was played between stone walls the stone walls about two hundred yards long and about fifty yards apart, goals at each end and you played it rather like billiards, you cannoned the ball off the wall and caught up with it so the game went up and down very fast.

L.T. : Sounds extremely dangerous.

Maj. B. : Yes it was extremely dangerous looking back on it I think I saw two people were killed while I was playing up there but I don't know nobody seemed to worry very much. I remember one wretched man who was killed and they did they lifted him off the field and they put him on the wall and didn't do anything about him until the game was finished (laughs).

L.T. : And were you still the only European?

Maj. B. : I was still the only European, no, no, no, I beg your pardon, no, in Gilgit there was (*sic*) four Europeans looking after ...

L.T. : A massive population.

Maj. B. : A massive population, yes. There was always music in Gilgit they had bands and I was just thinking the instrument was called a [?] and I'm thinking of the nearest, a flute could, something James Galway ...

(Tape stops)

L.T. : Were you in Gilgit during the war years?

Maj. B. : Err, during the war years and up to 1947 when the Partition of Indian took place.

L.T. : Was the Partition difficult in that part of India?

Maj. B. : It was difficult it as a case of all god things come to an end so far as the peaceful quiet life that we lived up there. The difficulty about Partition up there was this. Theoretically Gilgit was leased from Kash .. from the Maharajah of Kashmir and for defence purposes we looked after it until 1947. Now the Maharajah of Kashmir was a Hindu but his population was entirely Muslim so by rights Kashmir including Gilgit should have become part of Pakistan ...

L.T. : Yes because of the religion.

Maj. B. : Difficulty arose down in Delhi because there were two things down there. Jawaharlal Nehru the Prime Minister of India was a Kashmiri himself and he desperately wanted Kashmir to come to India.

L.T. : Now he was a Kashmiri Hindu.

Maj. B. : Aha yes, he was a Kashmiri Hindu and he desperately wanted Kashmir to come to India. Now the other character in the plot was Lord Louis Mountbatten who at that time was responsible for negotiating the Partition arrangement in Delhi. Now Lord Louis being a man of action he wanted to get the Partition arrangement completed as quickly as he possibly could and Nehru had made it fairly clear that he was not prepared to allow Kashmir to go to Pakistan, so eventually Lord Louis Mountbatten agreed that Kashmir would become part of India and the Maharajah was instructed to accede to India which he did.

L.T.: But the people couldn't have liked that.

Maj. B. : The people the people didn't like that, and ethically it was completely wrong, it was at a time when all, the United Nations was greatly to the fore and so on and the thing was the will of the people and the people they didn't need a plebiscite it was obvious that the people the people of Kashmir wanted to join Pakistan.

L.T. : The Muslim State

Maj. B. : Yes. Well to redress that situation what happened was that an army of Pathans from the South got together and they started marching North into Kashmir with a view to taking it over on behalf of Pakistan ...

L.T. : Good heavens.

Maj. B. : And in the North I took Gilgit about one-fifth of the country over with the Gilgit Scouts on a plate as it were and handed it to Pakistan (laughs).

L.T. : You did that on your own?

Maj. B. : Yes I did that on my own both and I had a second in command a Captain Mathieson and the two of us together we whacked out a scheme and we just marched on marched in and took one-fifth of Kashmir over.

L.T. : Good heavens and how did the British government view this action?

Maj. B. : Well as far as ca gather Mountbatten was furious. He ripped a map down off the wall and jumped on it and latterly a friend of mine met him, a friend of mine who was coming out to, then at that time I was in Karachi and he was coming out to Karachi and he said to Mountbatten that he was going to stay with me, and Mountbatten flew into a rage and he said, 'That fellow Brown he was a traitor to India he was a traitor to his country and furthermore he was a traitor to me.'

L.T. : What a lovely thing to have said about you (laughs).

Maj. B. : However the funny thing was the British government seemed to think that it was all right because they gave me an M.B.E. ...

L.T. : They gave you a medal?

Maj. B. : They gave me a medal and the king wrote me a letter [I had a note from him] thanking me for my efforts.

L.T. : Really? So you moved politics ...

Maj. B. : Yes

L.T. : You took a decision into your own hands?

Maj. B. : Yes.

L.T. : hat must be a wonderful thing to know you have done.

Maj. B. : It is because that part that we took over is still in Pakistan. Unfortunately the Southern thing went all wrong.

(Tape stops)

Maj. B. : Things began to get difficult in Pakistan not so would say for the bachelors who could just at a moment's notice leap on to a plane and get out like that but for anybody with responsibilities because the government were unstable, revolutions were on the way and that sort of thing.

L.T. : Right yes and they subsequently did.

Maj. B. : Yes they did we were right on that and also oh things like getting baby food when William was ill and so on because it wasn't a place for a married person with responsibilities so we decided to pack it in and come home. Then the question arose what was I going to do when I did come home.

L.T. : That must have been a big wrench for you leaving Pakistan like that.

Maj. B. : Yes it was it was a very big wrench and it took an awful long time when we got home to settle in to the customs of this country as it were but I don't know I thin we were very quick in getting ourselves reorganised compared to compared to other people. Of course we had pre-planned, I've always been interested in horses ridden practically as long as I can remember ...

L.T. : You must have ridden a lot in Gilgit.

Maj. B. : Well we did because in Gilgit there was no internal combustion engine at all there was (*sic*) no cars so everything was done on horseback. You rode in, as I say, before the passes closed and you were in and everywhere you went was on horse. You're going out for dinner in the evening, you got you rode and hitched your horse up to the rail outside the post bungalow and when you had finished you got on to your horse and rode back home again.

L.T. : Sounds lovely.

Maj. B. : It was particularly if it had been a particularly convivial evening because we usually raced and first home, we went galloping through the streets madly. Yes I've always been interested, interested in them. I learned to ride in Galashiels actually in a very hard school. Some Borderers will remember old Robert Fairbairn, 'Old Bog' as we used to call him, yea, and he used to teach us to ride and if you couldn't make the grade you were no use and you really had to learn, I learnt from him, and I suppose it was old Bob that got me interested in it you know. We decided that it'd be rather nice to settle in the Borders and start a riding school and livery stable just a sort of riding centre and riding business which we did and we started up in 1960.

L.T. : And you're still doing it now.

Maj. B. : Still doing it now.

L.T. : Have you any plans to go back to India or Pakistan?

Maj. B. : To be quite honest with you no. I did it one time and one or two of my friends have done so, and I'm sorry to say they've come back disillusioned things have changed so much. Most of our friends seem to have gone or come to live in this country some of them. We have a reunion once a year in October down in London, which is always great fun and that's where I've heard about these people who went back being disillusioned. No I think I, I think I just like to retain my memories of twenty very happy years out there.

(Tape is switched off).

Transcript of Kim Prior's interview with
Mrs. Norah Carstairs, née Jethcott
No date specified (between 1983 and 1987)

K.P. represents Kim Prior and **N.C.** represents Mrs. Norah Carstairs.

K.P. I'm interviewing Mrs. Norah Carstairs née Jethcott born 16th October, 1899. Could you tell me when you first went out to India?

N.C. Well we must have gone out about November 19 '9, and we must have gone out with the regiment which my husband's reg ... , no my father's regiment and we were going out for six years. In those days of course was the days before planes we took about a month to get there, and when we got to Bombay we then had either, of course all this was new to us you may imagine where you slept in the train and all the rest of it, we thought this was marvellous. We must have done at least a two day journey up by train to a place called Kathgadam which is the railhead and after that the troops marched. We went up by bullock wagon and you could see where you were - it was the foothills of the Himalayas you could see where you were going to camp the next day or that night rather, and we slept in tents and I think it took us two days to get up to Ranukhet. Until a few years ago, which I assume still is the they've never taken they couldn't take the railways it's among the clouds but in our day it was either get horseback or bullocks or your flat feet, and naturally I went to school up there, I was the at the army school where I met my husband because he was a good few years older than I and he taught at, in years to come, at the army school there. Of course you've got to remember it was primitive days I mean that's going back all these years it would be. Wonderful sunsets, always the sun going down on the Himalayas. I mean it really was a marvellous place for youngsters to be brought up, really very hilly and mostly pine trees, cold in the winter and then during that period my father went on manoevres to Bareilly which meant you came all that way down again and you went by train where we lived for three months in tents so of course it was marvellous for us. I had a brother four years younger and a couple of younger sisters by this time you took all your servants with you and they just saw that everything was put on the train and you took the [*tiffin*] basket and all the rest of it you see with you, and after then we must have gone back to Ranukhet, the regiment then moved to Allahabad which was a very hot station because we got mother took us back to Ranukhet in the hot weather and the (pauses) I can remember Thursday was the days we called *bakhśiś* days and everybody took out their *charpoys* which were like they weren't *charpoys* as we know them now they were hospital beds and there were so many bugs it seems dreadful but it's true, you used to spend the whole of the time setting fire to the bed to kill the blinking bugs. You know it's awful to talk in this country to talk of these things but these are just part of life and the house we lived in they used to have *pankhās* just frilled material and the native boy sat outside and just pulled the *pankhā* and so on it's up and down the legs of the table were put in tins of water because you have ants I mean the things you have a horror of now but you just

took them as a part of life because as I say things were very primitive. Well the we were down in Allahabad and we were there, it was a church service on a Sunday that the day they announced the War. Well the regiment packed up and came to this country they couldn't take the wives or children we were left behind for a time and then, that must have been about the September I think about the December of '14 mother brought us home from India and we had to sail in convoy, forty ships, and you had to keep a certain, no lights at night because the *Goben* and I can never remember the name of the other but there were two German raiders raiding the seas and we among other [indiscernible] and we got taken there where we got divided up because there were five of us and part of us went to my grannie's and part of us went to my aunts where I spent the four years of we war in Birmingham and I've never lived there ever since because I got married I married very young in the interval and well after various episodes I went out to India again you see.

K.P. Going back to the beginning can you remember the voyage out when you were a child?

N.C. Well, it's very funny you should say that. Not, about ten years ago the phone rang one day and this person said, 'Do you were one one of the, wonder what a [jaf coat] is, that's going back a few years' and I said, 'Yes', she said, 'Well do you mind if I come and see ask you a few questions', and I said, 'depends' and she had known my husband who had taught her at school. She's dead now. She was a couple of years older than me and to cut a long story short she visiting me up in Edinburgh and she came to visit me and she said to me, '... and I used to think on the boat, "I do hope Norah doesn't turn her nose up at the pudding" (laughs)', so, I, well, I can always remember you see you went the accommodation was according to your rank, well, we had a cabin, but the other wives would have like big dormitories, so I'm telling you it was pretty primitive of course actually in those days very different from the days when I went out married, my husband was an officer and we had a, we even in those days you I think they do now but they didn't in those days share, the wives the wives shared another captain's wife and myself would have to be together and my first voyage I had to go in with two other senior wives because I can always remember he said they always went to bed first and got up first. But of course I remember more of when I was older you know when I'd be about twenty-three I suppose twenty-three up till about twenty-six I remember that. Well of course we went to a different part. We went to a place called Belgaum, with my still the same regiment although precious few of the same people ... .

K.P. Which was, the regiment was?

N.C. Uhm?

K.P. Which regiment?

N.C. The 1st Royal Scots. But when we went out to India I had a boy of about three and we went out I had to share with another wife and a small child, I'm having to think, you know coming back and all the rest of it and when we got out to Bombay we discovered we weren't going to Secunderabad that's where the Regiment was, my husband was to go with two companies up to Belgaum, but we went to stay with our own troops funnily enough they were neighbours of my father and mothers' that is the army used to be anyway you used to keep coming up against the same people as you moved around, and we went to Secunderabad just for about three weeks I suppose and then we went up to Belgaum, which was a good, not a hill station a good plains station but of course there again it was dreadfully primitive. There were just two companies of ours, I think we were, no, we were another married couple and ourselves the rest were single lads, I know my husband used to have an awful job because the the young fellows there was no women you see this was the unfortunate bit they'd get embroiled with the married wives and we didn't stand any hanky panky in those days I'm horrified when I see some of the pictures now however the wives got sent home and the lads got moved back to the Regiment, but we used to we had a very quite a primitive bungalow where the the water used to be no water laid on anything like that come up on the side of the *bhiśtī* you know the *bhiśtī* is the man who used to be the water carrier and he'd have a bullock which had just panniers each side of course the great thing that was used was the petrol tins they were used terrifically of course cars would be I suppose especially there weren't many cars about then people hadn't have the money and we had quite a nice bungalow and we got very friendly with another young couple he was in the Mahrattas. You can tell how things were looked down upon and how very proper you had to be that we went to a fancy dress ball at the club, to a fancy dress dance and perhaps she'd never looked upon alcohol I don't know but this girl got pretty well oiled, her husband who was a captain in the Mahrattas was on the nut the next day by his girl. British wives did not behave in that way soon told things but I think it's quite right we had to set the example to the people and it was just the days when Gandhi was starting up. I can remember there was the trouble about it. Well I was only out about two or three years at the most then my husband got sent to Aden and he was going to the desert so I just came came home again, but now if there's anything you want to ask me which I could that springs to mind I'd be only too pleased.

K.P. Could you then expand on the period from 1931 when you were in India again tell me more about your life and what you did?

N.C. When I was ... Now let me think was it as late as '31? Course I was here then. It must have been from about 1922, '23 to about 1926 when I was out and we just had a very what you would say a very bare existence. There was no social life except we had the club but no coloured people were allowed and I think there were no coloured officers and even Eurasians were very much frowned upon. Of course you've got to remember that was a good few years ago and people are much more well as I say I suppose they're much more allowed to do things they didn't do long ago. Well we used to go to the club

most nights and we'd share a *dandy* which was pulled by just a bullock oh I've got a (opens album) that's the type of thing so you call tell four miles to the club took you a long time to get there and you played tennis or whatever games and you got the [long/lawn] dances and then they used to have a senior officers' course it must have been and they used to come and there was a golf course but they were all the white people they were mostly the army people. I can remember the head of police was there and, but as I say we were just a very small community there, and the life itself everybody has there - I take my hat off to how the Indian servants did they're great for the honour of the people, well they were then and it really used to be a grand sight if you went out to dinner and your own bearer would go and he'd wear the tartan cummerbund all these things and if my husband dined in anyone else's mess he would take his bearer with him and they were great for the honour of the family. If you had a dinner party no [?] was half a dozen of everything and so did these Mahratta people and somebody we broke a plate, well you couldn't replace a thing where we lived so we just used to borrow each others and the first time I saw that I was very amused. I was at a table, this was in the days when people used finger bowls and I was at a persons to dinner and I said, 'Oh I've got finger bowls like that', and to my great amusement the hostess said, 'Oh yes, they're quite likely yours you know' and I used to sit on my own verandah and see the servants come back with somebody down there had had a dinner party and they'd loaned the things you see but as I say it was one of these places just a small bazaar where you couldn't buy anything so it was and it was no bother to have people to stay because you had so many servants and you had them according to your rank. In our day then all the furniture was hired and it was according to your rank that you had to have a certain sized bungalow and this bungalow I'll never forget it as long as I live the butler came to tell me that two young *sāhabs* had come to call and when I went in the one was covered with fleas to there and he says, 'If my mother could see me now'. Well, we used to sit in the in the club and talk about how you get rid of fleas in this country, are you interested in how you get rid of fleas in this country, and the whole this the whole this bungalow was just like mud floors like a garden like a country lane and the whole of the servants, you see you had a big compound where all the bamboo used grow and finally we had to a man come in and cut all the bamboos down and his wife they would like lattice stick mats on the floor and when the rains came all that side of the road got eaten alive with fleas. My son I used to have to stand him in the bath to strip him with pyjamas you can tell how bad he was. I contemplated suicide and they never damn well touched my husband (laughs). So it was not all honey living in these places. There was no sanitation at all you had a basket where the the thunderbox was put in you shouted for the sweeper and there was an iron affair pulled by a bullock which I never did find out I never asked where it went to but the the cooking arrangements always took my eye. The cooking was away from the house and it was like a wall with tiny about eight little just little things that a saucepan would sit on and was charcoal and they could do the most marvellous meals on it. It was nothing to say, 'I'll bring home so-and-so and so-and-so for a meal' and everything would be done just right but of course but the biggest thing was nuisance everything had to be kept under lock and key and it so happens that my

husband was a teetotaler I know it seems a bit odd a Scotsman in a Scots Regiment but he was and we had a whisky decanter that used to be squared you know, and if you didn't look up immediately after you'd had a party I mean though I suppose you didn't do it if you still had a hallway of people if I noticed it was halfway down the next day it was filled up with water (laughs) it must have been thin by the time it got to the end but a very artificial life I think personally I would far rather have a home here but there it was it was one of those things you just make the most of I suppose.

K.P. What rank was your husband?

N.C. My husband was a captain out there but he went on recruiting that's nothing to do with you but he finished up his lifetime Lieutenant-Colonel but we had finished with the he had to retire early because in those days you retired as a captain at oh I think it was only about forty-three because he'd swung his age when he went in and he jolly well couldn't get it altered and also of course the axe came you know it's like everything else so then he got re-employed by the War Office and he finished up as Chief Recruiting Army Officer of Scotland.

K.P. What were your relations like with the other British people when you were with your husband?

N.C. Oh very good but you see the sad bit is I don't think you mixed with the people of the country. I find that I, and one of my sons works abroad in different places and I have been abroad both to the west Indies and to Libya to stay with him and I've noticed that still which I think's a shame but you don't you seem to be very clanny and I notice the Scots people were more clanny than ever we were, they would say to my husband, 'Oh come and meet the so-and-so's they're from Inverness', but perhaps people do mix more now and I think but of course on the other hand the time I'm talking about Indian Army you see they would they wouldn't mix with much because their wives are still kept well they're more educated now.

K.P. Do you remember any particular did you have any female friends in particular amongst the other officers' wives?

N.C. Ooh yes, amongst the Army wives yes, oh yes you get to know all the people who went to the club and all that so they of course you did and we all played games I mean people there were quite a few dances and things like that, but it's like everything else you need to be young for all that kind of, I wouldn't like it now.

K.P. If you could tell me about your school in India then?

N.C. Now in my day there used to be very small classes because naturally you see as I told you most children were at home at that age and in those days you only well I had the

three R's it was before the days when people got, well we didn't have French or any of those things but I can see myself now doing all the blooming history you know 1066 is the only one I remember now, 1066 the battle of Hastings and carry on and there used to be, all the classes would be in the one room rather like the old days of the Scots dominie I suppose and there was a headmaster who belonged to the Educational Corps and the headmistress was the Army Educational Corps the the other I think there would be two other teachers they would be taken from the ordinary soldiers who would have to like my own husband after he took his first class exam he then took a schoolmasters thing which gave him that he could teach I suppose up to a certain age then of course in those days everybody left school at fourteen and I was to go on to be a teacher if I can remember rightly and I was a pupil teacher you taught the children in the morning and you got classes yourself in the afternoon but I don't really remember I suppose it must have just been an ordinary, very ordinary life because of course nothing much stands out in it. I can remember before we went out to India the Colonel, the only prize I ever remember getting anyway it must have been for sowing because I can always remember the Colonel saying, 'Little Miss Jethcott made a petticoat' (laughs). What else d'you want to know?

K.P. Can you tell me what life was like in the regiment when you went back with your husband?

N.C. Well life was very divided you didn't mix with other ranks, I know it sounds snobby but I'm sorry to say it's true. The warrant officers they'd had their own club and we, I used to go to the dances with them with my father and mother when I'd be about fifteen, sixteen and as far as I can recall we always kept very much, you see we'd all live together, close to each other and you wouldn't get to know other ranks and it's the same with sports and all those sort of things, I don't know if they do now but the officers would have a section, the warrant officers would have a section and then other ranks would have a section but then I suppose it's rather like, no it isn't like civvy street because you just your friends are from all ranks aren't they? But I never never missed out on I suppose one learns more after you've left school than ever you do when you're at school.

K.P. You mentioned earlier that when you went out the problems with Gandhi were just beginning to start. Do you remember much about the political disturbances I the interwar period, how did it affect your life at all?

N.C. Well of course you see we came home mother brought us home at the beginning of the War, when I lived in Birmingham all the war years and then my husband was an orphan and mother must have said to him, 'Oh come and stay with us when you're home on leave' and that's where it must have developed from there because my husband was with the Corps of Signals, he was seconded in those days I think it was the Engineers then they became the Corps of Signals and then he came back to his own regiment when

they went out to India again so we must have had a lapse of several years with the Corps of Signals down in Sussex and went out again but there were only two married ones of the Regiment. Now the Regiment [inaudible] now I think I've got my husband's papers here, now I can see that house there was in bungalow there was a verandah all they way round and each of you had a bathroom sounds awfully glamourous a bathroom consists of a small wall like that with a bath with a zinc bath which was filled with water every drop of water had to be brought up as I told you and the bathwater had to be boiled in the cookhouse and the, there was a commode in, and there was a basket outside you shouted for the sweeper there was a hole in the wall where the water got tipped in outside was a hole with a lot of bricks where you went round every morning to see that the servants had put an oil I think we called it must have been creosote in it must have been like disinfectant (doorbell rings). Excuse me. (Continues) You had to, for the mosquitoes. Now if you want anything made the *darzī* that was the dressmaker, came with his sowing machine and could copy anything my mother used to send me out the magazines and you could have all the things. The *dhobī* used to come and take all your washing many a time I've seen your dresses coming home with those frilly things there'd be a lot of you know it'd be hard work in those days and of course they were only bashed on the outside and bashed on the stones. They really did a marvellous this job both the washing and the cooking and everything else I often wonder how they did it but you employed a lot I think we employed about seven we had a butler and a cook and a boy and a second boy a boy for the lamps, seventeen lamps and no electricity, and then if you had a child you have an *āyā*. Well I had a Eurasian girl until my son used to talk thoroughly *chī-chī* and I got a bit wind up but so I can't remember well we must have had a boy for him in the end then if you had horses you had [?] for him sounds awfully good but then pay pay was very low. After the morning your cook went to you said what you were having for a meal and he saw you and he went and got it in the bazaars then you had a talk with him how much and of course the great thing you knew very well you were being done for so much and oh, I'm just wondering oh and the [?] a big lounge called the compound who kept the *mālī* which was the gardener and the monkeys used to come out of the trees and take the the tiles off and if you didn't get eaten with white ants your ceiling your roof you got the monkeys took the tiles off. I can always remember when we used to have to keep moving round with an umbrella up because with the rains come in you get holes in the ceiling and it was the typical Indian where half the job would be done and they'd run out of things.

K.P. What was it like, the countryside where you were stationed?

N.C. The countryside was quite pretty but very very red earth all Belgaum was red earth I've often wondered why but it was very red earth. There was only one person on the cantonment had a car he had a Dodge and he was the doctor and he took us to Goa one day as a picnic and he took a very pregnant patient of his with him and going round, nobody else could drive by the way, it was my husband, myself, this doctor and his wife and his pregnant patient going round into this village and we knocked a bloke off his

bike and before we knew where you were there was crowds, what a carry on we got out we beat it as quickly as we possibly could nobody could speak the language and then we stopped to have the picnic and by this time the milk had gone sour and then by this time doctor's getting worried about this pregnant patient I've never been so thankful in my life was to get back. The hospitals of course were very primitive. In my day my poor mother had to go from Ranukhet to Calcutta where she was in hospital for three solid months because there weren't the proper facilities I suppose and when I think of it what a journey I wonder how many how many people would have wanted to have done that and left all of us, the next door neighbour took my sister who was only a baby who just had to only be about eleven I suppose twelve at the most and we just had to do along with native servants.

K.P. Did you yourself travel much whilst you were with your husband?

N.C. No, you see because we didn't have any money in those days, that's the sad bit you're abroad when you're young when you haven't got, I mean my husband didn't travel he was sent up to Belgaum then he must have gone out to, he went out on a course and I stayed with some people for a month, that was right, and I bought Neil a [?] home but my husband went out to the desert in Aden and coming home I went abroad I went ashore from Aden and for the first time in for years it rained I mean it hasn't got the name for raining so, but, ...

K.P. Do you remember your journey on the train when you went back to India with your husband?

N.C. Oh yes you see your journey starts off I think I told you we went to Secunderabad the very people still live here in Edinburgh I think and stayed with these people well when you've got a *bearer* and that he travels with you because you do not, I don't know whether it's through trains new carriages now in those days you have a carriage and the bunks let down at night and you have a little toilet place in there and that was your native servant would be further up the train in the third class and he would come along and you'd unpack you took your bedding you took your food and you took everything in those days but I can remember when we first went out we stayed with people I knew people my sister must have been married quite well off from the railway and we stayed with them just to stay for the day waiting for our train and it was a beautiful flat overlooking Bombay harbour and I always remember in had those tile floors and all the rest of it and proper flush loo not a drop (laughs) we got to where we were going but it was a very primitive station I don't know whether they are as primitive nowadays of course.

K.P. Could you tell me more about your daily life while you were on the station?

N.C. Yes, our daily life. We were very, what'll I say an artificial type of life because there was nothing for a woman to do and you'd get up early people who rode would go out riding and I must have given the boy lessons I suppose he would be quite small and then everybody went to bed in the afternoon because it got so hot that you were quite pleased to do that people who liked to garden did a bit of gardening we had quite big gardens to each place and we always went to the mostly went to the club in the evening where you either played I never learned to play bridge because there used to be too many fights about bridge half done it was years after that I learnt to play bridge. There used to be we used to play tennis a lot and used to play badminton quite a bit and there was a golf course but there was browns instead of greens as you may guess and we put on our own shows, for concerts and things like that and I can always remember when I was a child they put on various, the officers must have got these concerts going because to this day I can remember one of the little songs was, do you want me to tell you, was daft, 'Once in the window of a ham and pea shop, Two little sausages sat, One was a lady one was a gentleman, sausages are like that.' I can't remember anymore and where it came from I haven't got a clue but that has stood in my mind all these years and they used to put on quite a lot of things and you'd have various touring parties come out you know and they'd put on shows and of course what always very dull and of course if anybody sang any of the old Scots songs you know they'd be people got very homesick, very homesick and ... .

K.P. What were your relations with the Indian people, did were there any apart from the servants I mean did you meet many Indian people at all?

N.C. No as I said to you before that I think is a great shame. My recollection is that you did not mix very much in our day the Indian officers of the Mahratta regiments didn't come to the same club, we were all just European people and I mean there was just the Mahratta Regiment and two companies of my husband's and one or two Indian civil servants that had the police and somebody named Taverner now what the devil were they, they must must have been Indian civil servants there were just those sort of people that we did not it was the days before they allowed the Indian army or any coloured or Indian Army into the clubs and there wasn't even, come to think there wasn't even other Western they were just British who kept very much onto themselves. The, they kept very much on to themselves but that may have been a sign of the times. I think people mix far more now.

K.P. Can you remember what the club was like the buildings there?

N.C. Oh yes it was just it used to have a great deal of bacon sandwiches and in the evening we'd have a bacon sandwich and a I didn't, I can't remember, I didn't drink so it can't have been much in the drink line and I can't ever remember seeing anybody the worse for drink. Yes, strange I'm just thinking that now but there must have been lime juice and those sort of things, yes there was limes of course they used to make into juice

things like that but I never remember seeing anybody the worse for drink and yet my husband used to be though he was a teetotaler he always took the drunks home from the club at the guest night and things and also women didn't go to the guest nights, they did, the last time I went was a big do in Glasgow, but I'm talking about a very small station.

K.P. Can you remember the layout of the station where the various buildings were, what there was there?

N.C. It's been must have been bungalows much the same as they are here, except you didn't have kitchens on them and there weren't the, there were just big big rooms you had a *pankhā vālā* you didn't even have we didn't even have electricity you he sat outside and the *pankhā* consisted of pieces of material white material with frills you know you've seen it on just wafted in the breeze back and forwards but and we, the in the end they were just like pavey stones put down after this dreadful experience with the fleas we had pavey stones and then they ran out of pavey stones when they'd got half of the blinking bungalow done and of course the housing seemed to be just as difficult as it is now, I mean you couldn't move around when they knew you were coming out. My first experience of this I think of this when I we went we got to Belgaum and we would go to the only other married couple for dinner that night and I woke up during the night and we got a bungalow that had had rat infested my husband killed one every night with a golf club. If I'd had the money I'd have come home on the next boat. There was this silhouette it looked I think it was about this size it was this rat sitting on the dressing table and my husband swore that they nibbled his toes through the mosquito net.

K.P. Did you have a lot of problems with other snakes other forms of animals there?

N.C. Pardon?

K.P. Did you have a lot of problems with snakes and other animals?

N.C. I always remember one night now from the dining room you must have had to have gone up to about three steps, I can see that in my mind's eye, to a verandah which used to have the hot, hot plate used to be a ramshackle thing of bamboo and inside was a [?] which kept the dishes hot and this the second boy, must have been the third boy, I can see him now, was waiting at table and he went up these steps to this thing to get the hot plates out and they say you go white with fear well he certainly went white though he was an Indian. He picked up what he thought was a piece of rope and it was a snake and another night my husband and I and somebody else we always carried lamps there was no lighting outside and I said, 'Stop' and everybody stopped, put their foot up and this this snake rustled into the undergrowth but I must admit I do not like creepy crawlies.

K.P. How did you find bringing up your children whilst you were there?

N.C. Well of course only had the one he'd be about four, maybe about three or four something about that and he kept very fit and what's more so did I touch wood I've never had and neither had my husband which always strikes me as very odd, we've never had malaria in our lives, it seems rather strange that but we had a fever called dengue for a time and we certainly never had malaria fever which struck me as very strange but there it is. I must have gone out with my husband before we were married, well I did of course, see by the time I'm growing up there are no other people my age about in Allahabad, so I suppose of two evils I think my mother thought it better for me to be round with him he was about five years older than I was, and we used to have bicycles and go out in the evenings and I always remember we used to go out for stuff they call [?] you never of it but it's like [?] and my father saying [?] on Monday, [?] on Tuesday and I can remember my husband renting a, a, I haven't thought of this for years horse and cart, a little pony trap and we must have done our courting in that, and then we had bicycles we used to go out on bicycles but let me tell you we'd only be out for a couple of hours you know in those days it wasn't done, there it is.

K.P. Do you remember more about Allahabad?

N.C. Now Allahabad was a big town quite a big town indeed and there was there were other schools there there was civilian schools there but there again, my father wasn't as high a rank as my own husband who in due course became, my father was the armourer quarter master sergeant by that time and we kept, we must have lived in the barracks I can't remember the name and I'll tell you a thing there that always sticks out in my mind, we got rations, I'm talking now before I was married and the ration card would come round I think it would be twice a week and we'd go out and get into the cart a big roast and rock salt I've never seen rock salt before or since. We'd get this big roast with the big undercut and the side and bread I think now nowadays they give them ration money or they did before but in these days when I was young and if you weren't very careful the blinking vultures would scoop down and scoop anything you were carrying and I remember we had a, of course you'd see often flocks of paraquets, we had a cat and a dog and a parrot when we were up in Ranukhet and they all ate off the same plate and the jolly old polly used to peck the other two to take good care when she got more than her share. It's only little bits that sort of come back.

K.P. Do you remember what life in barracks was like?

N.C. Pardon?

K.P. Do you remember what life in barracks was like?

N.C. Well now I didn't I think it was much the same as anywhere else really.

K.P. What were the barracks themselves like?

Tape Ends.

Sir Gerald Elliot
Frontier Force Regiment
Interviewed on 3rd July 1998
SA1998.42

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, and **Sir E.** Represents Sir Gerald Elliot.

J.W. : So if you can tell me first about your life before you were in the Indian Army, where you were born and when ?

Sir E. : Well I was born in Edinburgh, and went to a primary school and prep school in Edinburgh, and then went to a public school in England called Marlborough College, and from there, this is wartime, 1942, and you had certain choices available, of course everyone was called up, but you had certain choices in what you did, and I choice the Indian Army partly because I had some connections there, and it was, it seemed to be more interesting than going into the, into one of the infantry regiments which would have been the normal thing to do otherwise.

J.W. : Right, what were those connections you were saying with India ?

Sir E. : Well I had, one of my uncles was in a regiment which is now, which became defunct in the 1920's called the Deoli Regiment, and he served there, he worked there in the First World War straight from Sandhurst, and was commissioned in the Indian Army and stayed there as a regular after the War but came out in the early 1920's, 1921, and I also had an uncle who was in the Indian Medical Service and who became the surgeon to Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy at the time, and served as the Viceregal surgeon during the period of Linlithgow's Viceroyalty.

J.W. : Right so you were saying it was '42 you said you went out ?

Sir E. : Yes.

J.W. : Right, so we can sort of jump straight to India. Where did you go to initially, did you ... ?

Sir E. : Well I did what most people did, I went to Cadet Training College at Bangalore for six months, and then I was posted initially into a thing called wireless intelligence which was, which was wireless, getting wireless information as it was called then, and code cracking, but you were allowed to walk out of that if you didn't like it, and I didn't like it, but it was actually that that brought me to Abbotabad because I was *pro forma* posted to the Frontier Force Rifles and it didn't matter what flash you sort of put on it, you were going into intelligence, but I put down the Frontier Force Rifles because this was the most popular, one of the most popular regiments at the time, and in fact after six

weeks I decided that that wasn't for me, and over the road there was the Frontier Force Rifles depot with all these, with *sipāhīs*, and drills and shooting and all the things that people like, and I thought this was the way, I wasn't going to spend my War doing code cracking, 'cause I didn't think I was very good at it anyway, and I thought I might have done the language stuff, but I would go to the, the Frontier Force was there, so I marched off and went to see the Adjutant, and called on him and said, 'Look, I'm giving up this, I've got the option of doing so, would you like me here, I've got your *pro forma* posting'. He said, 'Yea, come along', so I did.

J.W. : Right, and taking you back a bit when you were at Bangalore with the training, can you tell me a little bit about the training, what you did there and what form that took?

Sir E. : Well, these things are well recorded, there was a certain amount of, it wasn't basic training because most people who came out as cadets, most of them had had some basic training either in their school officers' training, OTS, what was it called, training, Corps, or had had basic training before they came, became cadets, although the Indians required, sort of , quite a lot of Indians sort of required basic training, they were being taken right from the villages or right from the towns, but the British on the whole didn't require that, and this was six months which there was a lot of weaponry and musketry, they didn't really call it that, but the actual, thing learning to cope with weapons, elementary tactics, there was things like skills like map reading, and driving and maintenance. There were certain amounts of I thought completely wasted stuff with, on sort of sandtables, sort of high class strategy which you used to go to sleep over in the afternoon when it was hot, which I think was a complete waste of time. There's quite a lot of stuff out in the field in the way of marches, long marches and schemes, and we all had to work away at language of course, because people were expected to learn Hindi, some Hindustani by the time that they left. In fact I'd started Urdu before and I was able to take, and I took the elementary exam as soon as I arrived at Bangalore, and I took the Higher after I, soon after I came I went to my Regiment.

J.W. : So then which was obviously something that came ... ?

Sir E. : I was actually I was in the, because for various reasons I'd been delayed on the way out with one or two other people, we were only half a dozen people in a draft of about a hundred, the rest of whom were all Indians.

J.W. : Right, right, I see, so then you'd started then at Abbotabad. What happened, can you take me sort of chronologically on from there, were you based at Abbotabad for a fair time?

Sir E. : Well I was based at Abbotabad for the rest of my time, because, I mean these training sectors were large depots which were, which provided basically took in recruits from the villages and bashed them into some, into soldiers, and gave them, and we gave

them something like six months basic training, then they went off to get a couple of months a couple of months at a place outside Abbotabad at a placed called [Khaurpur] or Tobe it was called, and then from there went down to a jungle training camp which for our Regiment was in [Chinwadrah] and then most of them were destined to go into the jungle, the Battalion was fighting in Burma, so from there they went on to Burma, so it was quite a long training chain, and the officers in the depot some of them were attached when they were there, they were all attached to the training battalions, and some of them were there more or less permanently and some of them were just passing through, and my position was that I stared on training *sipāhīs*, and I got keen on this, and they didn't fortunately have many casualties in the active battalions, so I was never pushed on to an active battalion, so I stayed on this and I became a company commander in, running a company of four or five hundred recruits, and half *sipāhīs*, as part of a training battalion which consisted of two companies run by a [retired] *major*.

J.W. : Right, and was that, I mean often we read say about the Indian Army and the relationship between the officers and the men and, often they would have been maybe in an active role. Was it, was it presumably then a very different feeling because you were having, you were training troops for a certain period of time then they'd go off into active service, did it feel, was it a fairly tenuous ... ?

Sir E. : Ah yes, the training staff of course were permanent, and they were the people as an officer being responsible for them I got close to, and of course I knew, naturally, I knew some of the recruits but I didn't know them all, by any means, and they gradually started from being completely raw to being quite good polished soldiers. we educated them too we tried to get them literate as far as possible. I don't know what the statistics for success were, but they were quite high, in fact, I don't think they had to pass an education certificate to become a fully fledged *sipāhī*, but they had, they all got quite a degree of education.

J.W. : Right, right, well let's think .. .

Sir E. : And of course each were mixed, the Regiment was a mixed regiment, which tended to be, I mean the original composition was Dogras, what they call P.M.'s or Punjabi Mussulman, Pathans and Pun ..., Pathans and Sikhs. Well the Sikhs started to dry up fairly, I mean they'd been overrecruited, really and there had been resistance to serving, I mean I don't think that was so, actually, but they just, they were so much in demand, and so the Sikhs were made up with Jats, usually. Dogras, there were plenty of Dogras coming forward, and on the whole not bad Punjabis and people from the Frontier, Pathans.

J.W. : Yea, how did you find it, was there a difference working with the different groups like that ?

Sir E. : Not really, no, I knew Urdu very well, I didn't learn any, I learnt a bit of Punjabi, I didn't learn any Pushtu, but in fact they all learnt, they all learned Hindustani, so there was no problem about communication, and they all behaved virtually in the same sort of way.

J.W. : Right ... .

Sir E. : Or put it this was, in fact as you probably know when you've worked with people for some time you don't notice the differences. It's only when you arrive fresh you se they're all absolutely completely different, but as soon as you get to know them you take a rather different view of things [not] to differentiate them.

J.W. : Right, so let's think. I'll pause this for a moment ... .

Sir E. : We had, quite interesting, we had some, we started to recruit people who hadn't been traditionally recruited and one lot called the Ahirs they came from near Delhi, south of Delhi round about [Gurangsher] and they were rather a difficult crowd, I had a lot of them came in who'd been downgraded from the, from the artillery, possibly because they weren't bright enough, I don't know, but anyway, and this caused a lot of trouble because they found they were on lower rates of pay and people made a mess about that pay anyway, and we had fearful struggles, which I thought we'd sorted out, but in fact a friend of mine, an Indian friend of mine told me about thirty years afterwards he got the same bunch in one of our active service battalions and they practically mutinied so that's what happened eventually.

J.W. : Right, going back to the, the other training staff in the depot, were a lot of those pre-War sort of regulars who'd been in the Indian Army for a fair time, or ...?

Sir E. : No practically none.

J.W. : So they were all people like yourself.

Sir E. : Yea, the C.O. and second in command were regulars, but the people who, the next layer of people who commanded companies, the majors, they were almost always people who'd come in the War, I mean they were, of course, I was only in my teens and twenties, early twenties, they were very, they were sort of five or ten years older.

J.W. : Right, right, so there was no sort of difference between the officers and the staff?

Sir E. : No because the, the regulars were in of course enormous demand, and they went, they were spread, there was a great expansion of the Regiment, and a lot more, I mean I could work out the relation, but I think, but there were three times as many battalions at the end of the War as there were at the beginning, and the regulars had to be

spread out, spread out to the new battalions and took jobs as second in command and eventually commanded them.

J.W. : So how long was it then that you were there at Abbotabad in training?

Sir E. : Well, the total amount, I arrived there in June, I arrived there at about May or April '43, sort of at the end of having done my six months' training at Bangalore, and after complaining after six weeks, I arrived at the wireless station at Abbotabad, training in code, training in code breaking and a bit of Japanese to intercept wireless messages and that sort of thing, and then went to the, went to the Centre from there, and stayed there until I was demobbed in, save however a certain amount of intermissions for courses and things like that, until I was demobbed in February 1946. I would have certainly gone off to an active battalion in '45, in fact I agitated to some extent to do so, but then the war came to an end so there was no point on doing that.

J.W. : And did you, by the time you came to be demobbed, had you had any thoughts about staying on at all, or were you, or was their an option to do that?

Sir E. : No, I had a university scholarship to go back to, and also they had a marvellous system by which people who had scholarships could get out early, we all got early demob, otherwise I might have had to stay on another year, or probably more.

J.W. : So really in that sense, there wasn't - well maybe there was, but I was thinking about a sort of sense of regret on leaving, you had something very positive to come back to here, and you had ... .

Sir E. : Well, that's right and the, and of course it was cer ..., I mean it was clear that it was at an early stage of the War, or even before that, that the British weren't going to stay in India, that the whole thing was going to be handed over, I mean that became, that was started by the Cripps Mission in 1942 as you probably know, and the whole of, and all our, and all this vast army was going to be largely disbanded anyway, I mean all our, as soon as the War came to an end all our *sipāhīs*, a lot of our *sipāhīs*, both in training and trained were disbanded.

J.W. : So was there a general feeling around with your fellow officers and these other people was there an awareness of that, that, did people feel that things were winding down, or were there still some who had a, this idea of a ... ?

Sir E. : Well, in fact, everyone, most of the people in our Regiment, I mean they came out with us, they became keen on the Indian Army, but of course after the war one thing they were thinking was of, was going home, and some of my friends did become regulars, Mervyn Dove who you were talking to and one or two others, but it obviously wasn't going to be a career, particularly for people who hadn't actually been fighting, they

weren't going to get very far you see, and they'd be far too many people around. Anyway, I never intended to be a regular soldier - I might have been, might have gone and taken a couple of years with one of these Guides, Chitral Guides, as the ... .

J.W. : Ah yes, the Scouts, and this sort of thing.

Sir E. : Yes, that's right.

J.W. : Yes, I've spoken to some people who took that route themselves. So you came back, so it wasn't with any, as you say, any great sense of regret. How about since then, I mean do you still keep connections with the Regiment and is that still quite an important thing?

Sir E. : Well, you can hardly say that because the regiments, as you know, remained relatively intact, except that the Hindus went over to the, to the Sikhs, to the Sikh Regiment, and the Pakistan, and the Muslims remained in Pakistan, and formed the foundation of the present Frontier Force, and I've only remained in touch because in fact there's a, there's quite a strong, or has been quite a strong Punjab Frontier Force Association which sends out a journal and invites you to keep in touch with people you've known and when I went to, I've only been back to Pakistan once, which was in the Eighties, and then arranged this beforehand and went and lunched in the Mess and they were very nice, and it was pleasant to meet people, although by that time there was no-one I'd known, in fact, they'd all retired by then.

J.W. : But it was nice to see.

Sir E. : So I mean it's quite important, I mean it's a remarkable thing that connection has stuck so well, that the Indian, the Pakistan and Indian army people have been quite enthusiastic about keeping it up, you get plenty of anecdotal evidence of people going back and being greeted with open arms.

J.W. : Yes it's a very common thing, I know even I've found in my own experience as just a researcher they're very keen to ... .

Sir E. : It was rather a good institution the Indian Army because it was a great educational institute and it gave people careers and status, it was a pretty effective army, it fought pretty well, and the [?] really transcended the caste, the religious barriers, and racial barriers, there weren't any.

J.W. : Just one thing that chronologically throws us out a little, but going back to when you were training and that sort of thing, did you, was it a fairly formal relationship you had with the men you were training, or was there a sort of link with them, I mean in the

way that we, say, hear about this relationship between officers and men when they were serving together, was there a similar sort of relationship when you were training?

Sir E. : Between the ... ?

J.W. : Between yourselves, the training officers, and the *javãns* or whatever who were coming through in the training?

Sir E. : Well actually it was more sort of schoolmaster relationship, but this was set, I don't think it was set so much by the officers as by the, you know, the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers, I mean they were the backbone of the thing, of course the officers on top of us commanded, by the people who had the real relationship were the V.C.O.'s, and it always seemed remarkable to me afterwards that the thing wasn't done so much on military discipline as moral discipline, and they were rather good, and became rather good schoolmasters. I mean all these kids, after all, they were only fifteen or sixteen some of them, I think they were meant to be sixteen but some of them fudged their age, and you didn't beat him up, or put him in gaol for twenty-three days for having a dirty rifle, you'd tell him that they were letting down their village or letting down their uncle, or letting down the army.

J.W. : Which was probably a more effective means of doing it.

Sir E. : Which was much more effective, yes.

J.W. : Because it meant so much more yes. I can't think of too many more questions, we've gone through that fairly quickly. I'll pause this again. (Tape is paused).

Sir E. : (**Sir E.** talks about nostalgia in memory) You tend to see these things through rose tinted spectacles, and I enjoyed myself there, but I got fed up with all the requirements of army discipline, and having a tiresome C.O. and this sort of thing, because that was all part of it, but the whole, it seemed in retrospect it seemed a good organisation. Now I don't know how much, I mean there was certainly bad regiments in the Indian Army and how much they varied I don't know, the, and even there was quite a big difference between battalions in the Frontier Force Rifles the, on the whole the regular ones were better, because they'd got this colonel and really good skilled people, but sometimes they weren't all that happy because there were *sipãhīs* who'd been there for ten years and never got an opportunity for promotion, and some of these got drafted off to other to [?] but they weren't, they didn't see their promotion and career prospects as being very good, but they had, and they had varying degrees of discipline, I in fact was rather in favour of the battalion which had that had rather high discipline, because I thought that they were actually very, better run, I mean one thing you learn about the army is that however tiresome the regulations are, they work much better if you've got a

high degree of discipline and self respect, and this is not something that comes naturally to Indians or to anyone else.

J.W. : And presumably, you're saying the difference between the battalions and when earlier you were saying groups like the Ahirs who were coming in, did most of these newer groups like the Ahirs go to the sort of newly raised battalions that had been raised while you were there?

Sir E. : I don't know.

J.W. : Right, cause I wondered if that happened.

Sir E. : I think they, I think they probably, I mean, some of the, they had different jobs, the and two of the regular battalions were in Italy, and did well there, the 6th which is the one you were interested in, which had a good record in, fine record in Italy, and the 4th which came, having been, was on garrison duty in Cyprus and then went across and did very well too. The 1st Battalion was taken at Singapore so that just disappeared, the 2nd did quite well, it was rather bashed about in Burma during the Arakan campaign and it was in the retreat as well, and so its backbone wasn't quite as strong as the other ones, and then there was some very good wartime battalions which did excellent things in Burma.

J.W. : Yes, as Major Dove was saying you can't generalise, there were good and bad things on both sides amongst the Emergency Commissioned Officers and the regulars and equally amongst the *javāns* on both sides as well.

Sir E. : Yes, I certainly didn't find any friction between the E.C.O.s and the regulars, but that's because there were very few regulars there, I mean I know there were some regulars who were considered by others to be very tiresome, but on the whole they were pretty good, they had pretty high standards.

J.W. : Right ... .

Sir E. : We had the, of course the I.N.A. business came in the background a bit, it didn't impact upon us in a direct way at all, but we again with the war the 1st Battalion people which survived came back to the Regimental centre and they were dealt with I think extraordinarily generously, actually, I mean they weren't treated with any great respect or regard but they were re kitted and they'd had their allowances paid out to their wives all through the War, and were sent home with a few pence in their pocket. No-one, I mean, mostly people in the Centre would have little to do with them because they'd disgraced themselves, when they went off home to the station there was some sort of Congress town band to see them off, but as far as the Army was concerned there was no sympathy for them at all.

J.W. : And presumably as you were saying with the new recruits, the concept of shame, this was letting the side down, would have been a particularly strong thing as well.

Sir E. : Yes that's right, I mean obviously people, the 1st Battalion people had been isolated for four years they had been in prison camps, or carolled into these I.N.A. units so they had very little idea of what had been going on in the rest of the world.

J.W. : Yes, so it was a different situation very much. Right, well we've covered a lot there, and looking through my topics I can't think of too many other things so, unless you've ... .

Sir E. : Yes that's fine, I mean the Scottish thing, I mean there isn't, there's very little specifically, when you rang about it, I was doubtful, cause there's very little Scottish, I mean you can't actually blow up a particularly strong Scottish connection in the Indian Army, in my Regiment there were very few Scots in fact.

J.W. : So there was no sort of clique or anything?

Sir E. : No, well, they just didn't happen to be there, I mean the only Scottish, sort of relationship I suppose was that we had a pipe band in the Regimental Centre. Whether the battalions had ever had pipe bands or not, I'm not sure about that.

J.W. : I think some did, and I've been told that some of the repertoire the tunes and these sort of things had a Scottish influence, but there again there are people, they debate about where bagpipes come from, and there's a fair degree of evidence that said they actually came from the subcontinent this way rather than.

Sir E. : Oh yes, I mean one of the various things, one of the instruments in the subcontinent which are quite like bagpipes, but I'm sure, I don't know when it was introduced actually.

J.W. : It's difficult to say.

Sir E. : I think, and they still have a pipe band I think in the Frontier Force.

J.W. : Yes they still do they're still training them, and they have and they send over officers from the Scottish regiments, take over pipe majors and these sort of thing to judge competitions and to train and this sort of thing as well there's quite a strong link within the School of Piping which I think they have in Abbotabad and with the piping schools here as well.

Sir E. : They've got a school of piping in Abbotabad ?

J.W. : I think so yes.

Sir E. : Well the Army School of Music is there, so it's, it's probably part of that.

J.W. : Yes, in fact one of the members of staff, the ethnomusicologist at the School has been over there and done some research on that.

Sir E. : We had quite a good drum and fife band too, I think that was the principle band and this was for parades and that sort of thing, but I imagine they all became stretcher bearers or something in time of war. But how are you going to stretch this to make it a particular Scottish ... (tape is paused while I chat about my research. The interview is resumed when Sir Elliot recalls an aunt who was a missionary in India) ... By the Church Missionary Society, whether it was Scottish, I'm pretty sure she was a Presbyterian, but whether it was Scottish I'm not sure.

J.W. : Well they had, certainly in [?] and that sort of thing they had Scottish, well, involvement from everywhere, but where was that in India ?

Sir E. : Well she lived in a place called [Khuja] which is on the railway line between Delhi and Agra, and not very far from a place called [Gullansher] which is twelve or fifteen miles south of Delhi, and she spent, must have spent forty years in Indian altogether.

J.W. : What period was that?

Sir E. : Well she went out there, I think she went out there about 1910 or so, and then was there almost right through until the '50's when she returned and went off to Mussorie above Dehra Dun for a time, but then she got weak in the head and had to be sent, had to be brought home. She didn't, I think she told me she'd only converted one person in the course of her years there (laughs), and she wasn't even sure about that one.

J.W. : I again, I think that's something that comes out in the mission letters, this idea that you go out with the general idea of conversion and realise once they're there that it's a very different situation .. .

Sir E. : But she did do a certain amount of, I hope, useful social work, helping the poor and that.

J.W. : Oh I'm, they did a lot of them, very much, yes, yes, very, that's interesting, and it would have been a very interesting period to have been there from the early part of this century right through the Independence movement.

Sir E. : Yes, I think as far as she was concerned I don't think anything changed, she was in this little town and she got to know people and some of them were friendly and I think on the whole missionaries kept their distance form other people, I mean I don't think she entertained numbers of the local gentry in her house or anything like that.

J.W. : Oh yes no, no, it was a very different life, wasn't it?

Sir E. : And they were on a pretty friendly basis, the local lads sometimes used to tease her and flung her out of her tent when she went on safari, but nothing more than that.

J.W. : Right.

The tape is turned off, and I thank Sir Elliot.

'Major FFR'
Interviewed on 1st July 1998
SA1998.41

The interviewee did not want his name to be used, and so is known as **Major FFR** here.

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston.

Major FFR : I came into the Indian army from what was called the Officers Training School at Bangalore, a huge place, sort of machine belts as they turned out Second Lieutenants by the score, and the regiment I was posted to was the 13th Frontier Force Rifles, and you went up, the depot was in Abbotabad where you went, and there you had to learn the language properly and sort of become accustomed and acclimatised. Then you were sent down to the jungle training division, which was in central India, the 14th Indian Division, and when I was there I was sent on a Signals course which lasted six weeks in Poona, six weeks in war was a very long time for a course, and then I was sent back to the depot, and then the bomb dropped, you see, I was going to be posted to a battalion which was in Burma, but instead of going to the battalion they turned and came back, they were going to French Indochina, actually, so I didn't join them until they came back, and they were a wartime battalion called the 14th/13th. I don't know if you know this, but in each regiment there were five battalions, each with their distinctive names, and the 1st/13th was called Coke-ie's, because General Coke raised it before the Mutiny, and there was all sorts of reorganisations over the years, and by the time the War came, they were in nineteen different regiments, each with five battalions. The one I was sent to was the 1st, now they were put in the bag at Singapore, and the 14th Battalion and the 1st they had to, the 14th Battalion was shut down and it became both the ex prisoners of war and the old 1st Battalion. Now by that time it was 1946, about that, and the C.O., a wonderful man called Colin Mitchell who was a prisoner, he was the second in command when they were taken prisoner. I then went, I was entitled to home leave (laughs) which amazed, at that time nobody knew what was going to happen, so I was entitled to three months home leave and I came back, and by that time Independence was coming up, and we were sent to an area north of Rawalpindi, there was trouble there, and there was a Sikh, there were a lot of Sikhs there, and the job was to get them out, and it was very difficult, there was one town called [Rehwat] it was in flames, it's a very, most spectacular sight, the whole place, and we had to escort these Sikhs down to Rawalpindi, God knows what happened to them after that, and we then (laughs) were moved to the Frontier, no we were sent to Peshawar, that's the capital, not 'Pesher- waar' as the B.B.C. put it, and we were in barracks there, and then we were sent to right up to the border with Afghanistan, and that's the interesting part (pauses, and opens his photograph album, and shows me a view).

J.W. : Oh I see, wonderful, so where is ... ?

Major FFR : That's a place called Gardai, and railhead was Bannu, narrow gauge railway, the road led up to a fantastic place called Razmak, which was not like this, it was straight out of Aldershot, it could have been Aldershot - big barracks, stone built, football pitch, hockey pitch, hospital, quarters for a British battalion and quarters for Indian battalions, and by that time there was only one battalion there, [?], and it was out of this world, it was in the middle of nothing, like this, but I mean, you know, buildings like this, amazing, and the whole purpose was to keep the place supplied, and to do that the road had to be kept open, and that occupied an entire brigade, two battalions were there, and further down towards Bannu, at a place called [Dun Dhil] there was another battalion, we had once a week a thing called a road opening day, a R-O-D, and the entire road had to be piqueted, it took hundreds of men, and once the piquets were occupied then the vehicles could go up to Razmak and keep Razmak supplied, and come back again. It was all male, there were no women (laughs) and this was in 1946, '47, this had been going on for years. And there were two battalions there, there were the 1st/13th Frontier , and a battalion of Gurkhas, and that's the sort of shrub, (**Major FFR** opens his photograph album again) it wasn't particularly desolate, [?] country. There was this great big *nullah*, and that's a piquet. Those piquets had been there for generations, and the tribesmen, I mean, we weren't in danger, but you never knew if you were slack, or they diminished the force, then the tribesmen who were hostile to the British Raj would have come down.

J.W. : Yea, can I just ... ?

Major FFR : Then of course in the old days it was Russia, that was the fear, and I was there, I don't know, about a year until my demob number came up, and (opens the album) they had tanks, that was the vet, (laughs) cause he looked after the mules, there's hockey pitches and those were the lines where they lives, and, now that, Independence Day. This could only have happened in India. I applied for a Radcliffe commission in Gardai, I was sent to Bangalore, that's the entire length of the Indian subcontinent, took ten days, that's the way they did it for the British Army, and by the time I came back I'd got to Delhi, it was August 1947, 15th of August, and I on that day I thought I'd go see what was going on, I was in uniform and I was the only person amongst thousands and thousands of Indians in uniform, and I had a clicky camera, that is Nehru and that is Mountbatten. The, it was chaos, the mounted escort just disintegrated, and that's Nehru telling the crowd to get away, and utmost good nature. Now, in retrospect, I, it was bloody risky. If they'd been nasty, I ... .

J.W. : It would have been awful, yes.

Major FFR : And about a couple of days later I got the train back, and no trouble, but about a fortnight later it would have been a very, very dicey business indeed, because then the massacres started. But we were up in [Dun Dhil] bearing in mind the Battalion had Sikhs, Dogras, who were Hindus, Punjabi Mussulmans who were Islam, and Pathans

who were from the Frontier. Pathans were split between those who joined the Indian Army, and those who didn't, and we were completely isolated and what was going on down the line had no influence at all on the battalion, although you could listen to the radio and all these massacres were going on, both ways, Punjabi Mussulmans wanting to get out of India and Sikhs and Hindus wanting to go down you see, and then the time came when they had to split, and, now have I got (opens his album) the RSM, ah yes, here were are, here's the mule lines, (pauses, looking through the album), ah, now this is a very sad photograph, these are Sikhs in the back of a three tonner, on their way down, it was a very sad day, actually, you can see, and this was the scene, there were no commissioned, actually there was one commissioned officer, he stayed, the Dogras and the Sikhs, that's half the Battalion, had to go, and that's, I took that picture on, and that was the senior C.O., he was sitting in the front seat.

Major FFR : So they were going to join the Indian army and the rest.

J.W. : You see it's all very, it was good fun actually, I'll leave these with you if you like, you can have a look through at your leisure, one other picture of some interest if I can find it here, (pause while Major FFR looks through the album) that's the Battalion, (pause) hell, because it was of some interest. That, because I was the last British officer at the time I became something of an embarrassment, quite frankly, so this is, I was sent to the Brigade Headquarters with was also in [Dun Dhil]. Now, this is, that was one Brigadier handing over to the other, that's is Ayub Khan.

J.W. : Ah, yes, yes. Yes I recognise him, yep, goodness, right.

Major FFR : Then I think there's one other British officer there, yea, the Signals officer. Funnily enough we live, our homes are within a mile of one another. At that time my parents lived in Hillhead in Glasgow, and he lived the other side of Glasgow, and so on. But you can look through this at your leisure if you want.

J.W. : Oh I'd like to, thank you.

Major FFR : There's other ones here, these are just, they'll be meaningless to you, these are officers. That's , near Abbota .. , do they have, there's a place called Kakul, is it still there? Kakul is about five miles out of there, on the hill, Thandiani Hill.

J.W. : I'm not sure.

Major FFR : Well, it was the R.I.A.S.C. school, and we had a small detachment there, yes these are the depot, that's when we were hanging around, waiting whether to go join the battalion, we were in Madras waiting and we came back to Abbotabad, and so on. Some are, I don't mind, you can just, there's nothing.

J.W. : Thank you.

Major FFR : That is pretty deadly stuff (Major FFR hands me a book), but it's the history of the 1st, you may, it's awful to read, everything is superb, but nevertheless it's written, when is it published? Oh my God, it's a library ticket, *History of* .. , who wrote the wretched book? Colonel Willey, who, at 1930. Well it's awful, but nevertheless it's an interesting. What I learned, I thought that they way they divided the Indian Army into classes was as a consequence of the Mutiny, so there weren't any Hindu battalions, but no, it was pre Mutiny, they had classic example of divide and command (laughs).

J.W. : Yes, divide and rule ... .

Major FFR : So, yes, now (**Major FFR** shows me some copies of *Piffer*, the Journal of the Frontier Force Association) you've got these have you? Now Hank Howlett is a professional journalist, and when the previous editor, who was a retired colonel, he was dead, ooh he was an awful man, it was ghastly - family gossip, but since then these are quite valuable primary sources, and I'm hanging on to them.

J.W. : Very much so.

Major FFR : He's done a very, very good job Hank Howlett. Now, what do you think that is?

J.W. : Well, may I look and see?

Major FFR : It's a Christmas card, they've stopped sending them now, but we used to get, we all got Christmas cards every year.

J.W. : From the, from Pakistan?

Major FFR : What is so astonishing is that the Indian army and the British Raj, arch imperialist force is ever there was, and there was every reason for the Indian officers to get the British officers out and to run their own show. Not a, they kept the closest touch, generation after generation, and not only in Pakistan, in India, and I doubt if, I mean the French or the Portuguese, who else, the Italians, who had forces out, I doubt very much if they maintained that link what is virtually, nearly fifty years.

J.W. : Certainly, yes, your right, there seems to be still very strong links. Can I just take you right back, we've gone sort of through the whole chronology there. Can you just tell me very briefly what you did before, about your life, very briefly, before you went out?

Major FFR : To India?

J.W. : To India.

Major FFR : I was a schoolboy (laughs).

J.W. : So how old were you exactly when you went?

Major FFR : This is, this was a [scholarship?], I was at school here in Edinburgh, and the dear old colonel came round one day and gave a talk to the school, said we want people to join the Indian Army, officers, and of course, I was a schoolboy, Bengal Lancers (laughs) and so when I was called up, and lots of other immature schoolboys like me, joined what was called the Indian Army O.C.T.U., a detachment. We were called up, we were sent to London, to the Grand Central Hotel, Marylebone Station, and we were shipped out to India on a troopship, we went, I remember the journey, we went from, I suppose Euston, took about, seemed to take two days, my home was in Glasgow then, and we went to the tail of the bank, and the troop train passed within half a mile of my home (laughs), and we went out to India, via South Africa, we changed troopships, lovely three days in South Africa, Bombay, straight down to Bangalore. None of us had military experience in the ranks, it was, they were thinking of after the War, it was crazy.

J.W. : So when was it ... ?

Major FFR : So there was I, and I was eighteen I suppose, seventeen, eighteen I think they called you up, but in 19 ... this was in 1943, yes, 19 .... late 1943, I think, and that time the bottom of the barrel had been reached, the only people who were called up were the school leavers, everybody else was either in the army or in a reserved occupation. And this had been going on since the beginning of the war, and we were put through a crash course at Bangalore, I think actually it lasted six months, and quite a number of us got various bugs and things like that, I don't know, no were weren't all, but quite a number of us spent a bit of time in hospital looking out, after all I should hope, we were only eighteen, immature, it's an embarrassment to think about it.

J.W. : Right, so when you were called up did you have an option to go into the Indian Army, was that your choice, or were you ... ?

Major FFR : No it was decided, they sent you a from, the Indian office sent you a form, just like that, and we were sent to, the, to what Indian army O.C.T.U. detachment I think it was called. Technically you were in the Queen's Regiment, that was pure administrative convenience, and, well, so. But Bangalore turned out officers both for the British Army and the Indian Army, there was no, we did the same training, we weren't separate or anything like that, and of course those going to the British service were much more mature people.

J.W. : Had most of them done some sort of service?

Major FFR : Oh yes.

J.W. : They'd come through the ranks.

Major FFR : Ah, yes, most had as far as I can recall. I mean this is going back fifty years, and so, there it was.

J.W. : And so what sort of things were they doing in the training there, were there, were you, you said you were you had to learn Urdu and these sort of things.

Major FFR : What, do you mean at Abbotabad?

J.W. : At Bangalore, your initial, because presumably they had to sort of almost, from scratch with ... .

Major FFR : Well, drill, (laughs) all very important, drill and (laughs) the military, weapon training and which we would have otherwise done as private soldiers quite frankly, and I think the one thing that I remember is the route marching, they were very keen (laughs), you were sent on route marches once a week, and they got longer and longer, they were a bloody nuisance. I think the only thing you learnt, I thought, there, was how to do route marches, and you were taught in a very half hearted way, the rudiments of Urdu, which is not a very difficult language actually, but really you were useless until you could at least say, 'Come here' and 'Go there', 'No, you can't go on leave' or something like that, and up to a point you picked it up, and the instructors were called *munshis* who were teachers, and they were very good, and you, of course you were in daily contact, the officers spoke English naturally, the Indian officers spoke English, the other rank and file didn't, and there was no shortage of manpower, the place was enormous, and they were coming in all the time, they were young soldiers, but they were all recruited as far as I know from the areas which, with which the Frontier Force Rifles were affiliated to, each regiment had a recruiting area, they couldn't poach from other people.

J.W. : Do you know where that was for, for your particular, do you know where that was, which area that was or which areas that was?

Major FFR : No, except for the Dogras. I was attracted to the Dogras more than to the others, being, they were very amenable, the Sikhs and the Pathan companies were very hard to handle, they were called 'Barbary', they, yes, the Sikhs and the Pathans were a more forceful personality. The Dogras were quite small people, and amenable to discipline, and I suppose that, I had taken the easy way out, and I liked them, and they spoke Urdu, I think there mother tongue was Hindi, I'm not sure, but the relative merits

of Sikhs, Dogra, Pathans and Punjabi Mussulmans, they were all good, but they had their characteristics.

J.W. : Naturally, yes.

Major FFR : The Punjabi Mussulmans were straight down the middle, as I say, the Pathans were as I recall, they were called, 'Barbary', they were, they could fly off the handle, I have no doubt about that, and the Sikhs could dig their heels in and could be very obstinate (laughs), and the Dogras were very, were much more amenable, that sort of thing, so.

J.W. : One other thing about, that I ought to clear up in my mind, you, so you were called up and you said you went in late '43, was that, were you called up for the duration or for a certain length or period or what was the ... ?

Major FFR : Err, well, I think it was, they maybe had a thing called 'hostilities only'. The army, as far as I, I'm certain the Indian Army didn't, it was left open, because I don't think anybody really knew what was happening, and they weren't partic ... , the job was to win the War (laughs) they weren't thinking of the post War, but up to Independence day, not exactly, when Mountbatten came and Wavell had to go it was a rush job, which was probably in retrospect the right thing to do, it's been heavily criticised. Until then they were thinking or peace time Indian Army, some of them, some of the old fellows. No, have you heard the expression, *Koi hai*?

J.W. : Yes.

Major FFR : The old *Koi hai?*' (laughs), you know, and that was the way they were thinking, who can blame them, as to which was the more efficient, the Indian Army and the British Army, they were always in the, I don't know, in peacetime there was a bit of feeling, in India, between the British Army and the Indian Army, and I think the reason for it was that Sandhurst cadets who went, who wanted to join the Indian Army, they had to pass out of Sandhurst I think in the top twenty, you had to be the best, and the rest went, and if you wanted to go to the Indian Army and you didn't pass out high enough, you didn't go. You know Auchinleck and Montgomery loathed the sight of one another, they were contemporaries at Sandhurst, and Auchinleck was the model and passed out top, everything he did, whereas Montgomery was nearly flung out, and Montgomery was posted to his battalion in India I think, and, it's in his memoirs, the Indian army all they seemed to think about were their mules, and of course when the British High Command, they loathed each others' guts, I mean silly, I think Montgomery says in his memoirs I can't recall a single time when I agreed with Auchinleck and there was that, some people felt like that, the Indian Army British officers were a sort of élite. I don't think frankly they're any better than British officers. Of course some British, I mean, army officers

didn't want to go to the Indian Army but were extremely high flyers, but there was this feeling of elitism, I think, in the po ... in the pre War.

J.W. : So presumably in your Regiment there would have been British Indian Army officers who had come in before the War?

Major FFR : Oh yes, oh yes.

J.W. : Was there any differences ... ?

Major FFR : I would say right down to the rank of major, then, there were still some majors around, who possibly should have been, didn't get their promo ... , but the colonels, the commanding officers were all pre War.

J.W. : And was there any difficulty, did they feel, because as you were saying, as you termed it they were sort of scrapping the bottom of the barrel bringing all these people in, was there difficulty or any sort of resentment with people like this coming in, did they ... ?

Major FFR : No, not, no, initially, I think, the impression was the E.C.O.'s were competent, they just couldn't know, but they proved their worth, many were decorated. I don't think they ever got to commanding a battalion, they may, there may have been some others, they might have done, they certainly were commanding companies and yes.

J.W. : Right, so let me think, would the, was it you then who made a conscious choice as to when you left the Indian Army or was that ..?

Major FFR : No, at that time I didn't know what I was going to do, and I think found that my demob number was about the lowest there was, and as I say, I was the last to go in that brigade, and all I wanted, I mean there was no future, I mean what everybody wanted was to get home, and we went to Karachi, actually, got on a troopship, and, well, my father was self employed in the whisky trade, and I had no interest whatsoever in the whisky trade, in actual fact he was terminally ill, I didn't know at the time, so I decided to stay on in the Army, I applied the British Army, to join the Royal Scots Fusiliers, amongst other regiments.

J.W. : And remind me, when was the sort of date that you left India permanently then?

Major FFR : I think it was, I've got a picture of it (consults the album) and the date, there's the troop train, there's colonels queueing up for their mug of tea on the train, you were like that, jammed solid. You see they're all quite senior officers, that was the C.O., and when was that, be, not dated, it would be, I say, November, December '47, and that

was about the last of the lot, I would say, there may have been one or two other, but Southern India, oh I don't know what was the situation there, that sort of thing.

J.W. : And what was it, if you can put this into words, I mean was there a discernible difference from the few months you were there after Partition to before, or did things just sort of carry on, presumably?

Major FFR : Well, one thing, this could only have happened in Dargai, and in the Indian Army, the British C.O., Colin Mitchell, who was a prisoner of war, he retired, and he was succeeded by a Brahmin Hindu in the middle of the North-West Frontier province, and he wasn't terribly popular, a highly intelligent man, but he was not a good soldier. There was two *sipāhīs*, and one other Hindu who was in a sense, he was a commissioned officer, he was one of these very rare people who had gone through the ranks and been commissioned, he was [?] Ram, and he didn't, hardly spoke any English, but he and [Bawesh Renald], that was his name, were the only, and he was obviously worried as to how the hell he was going to get to India, but he was commanding the Battalion, which he did okay, it wasn't a difficult job actually, it was so much routine, but he I know he got back to India because his name was in the journal, but how he got back I don't know, whether he got special treatment, might have done, and was flown back, because, really, the rail, the road and railways, massacres, you probably know this. One or two British officers who were in the Indian Army were caught and killed, with their families in one case, dreadful situation, and then to complicate matters there was the Kashmir situation, and where we were was fairly near to one of the main roads to Kashmir, and that was preoccupying the Battalion, the officers, there were all, and what, some people were sent down to do a road count, vehicles going up. It was, Kashmir, was, and still is one of the most beautiful places, it's a wonderful place, Srinagar, but of course it's all, how it's partitioned I don't know understand it, but they're there for the, till Kingdom come, those two forces killing one another, and then one of the other funny things about this is that the Indian officers who went to the Indian army, Hindus, and Sikhs and rose to quite high ranks kept in close touch with their former officers over the border.

J.W. : Yes, you hear of it, I've heard a lot of stories about that, it's a curious paradox, isn't it?

Major FFR : Very sad, amazing to think.

J.W. : And, so I mean you were talking about the Partition massacres and this sort of thing. Presumably you, being placed where you were, you didn't have much direct contact with that, those sort of ..?

Major FFR : Where we were, we were completely isolated, you could ignore to actually, you weren't aware of it, though, obviously, we knew what was happening but it didn't affect us in the least, and probably, those two battalions at this camp called Gardai were more distant from the troubles than anybody else, I should think. But the Indian

officers just like the British officers, there were the run of the mill people like me and there were the high flyers, and one of the officers, a chap called Akram who was obviously a high flyer, he was a Pathan. Generally speaking Pathans were not so well educated, but he was, Pushtu, was it called, their tongue, he rose through the ranks, ultimately he rose to the Pakistan Ambassador to Spain, and he was a devout Mohammedan, he married a Dane, and it lasted. He was posted to the British High Commission in London. I met him actually, and there you met his wife who was a Dane, blond.

J.W. : You were just pointing out earlier in the photos that the gentleman who I think you said was a Signals officer, who lived very close to your family in Glasgow.

Major FFR : Maurice Redpath, yes.

J.W. : Were there many other Scots?

Major FFR : Lost touch with him.

J.W. : Were there many other Scots in the Regiment?

Major FFR : As such (pauses), people didn't, we weren't so much English and Scottish, but British (laughs), you know. Actually I think there was one Irishman, he was an E.C.O., I should think he's in the I.R.A. now (laughs), he was very much, but that's ... .

J.W. : Cause you read for example on the other side of India, say, you look at places like Calcutta, and you have all these Dundonians there, and they were all ... .

Major FFR : Oh yes, the commercial, well Calcutta was full of Scots.

J.W. : But for you in your experience that wasn't necessarily a sort of unifying force or anything?

Major FFR : Oh I said, coming back to the theme of Scotland and Pakistan, I can't think of any, any, either a situation or a affair or an occasion when primarily it was Scottish and not British.

J.W. : It was British and at the time, and the war and obviously, that would make sense. Now ... .

Major FFR : On the back of, you probably know these are the various battalions. The general view, I gather, they're going to wind this up at the millennium because it's difficult to get office bearers now, and, there comes a time when it's just not, but it's quite remarkable that this magazine has lasted all this time.

J.W. : Why do you think that is, I mean it's a very, do you, for you personally, and for any other Piffers that you know, is it a very important thing, the, ..?

Major FFR : Well, yea, in a way, I'm not a great reunion fan actually, but they do hold a, they still hold annual reunions, one in London, and one in the North of England, generally in Harrogate, where actually I used to live, and about twenty people, including widows actually turn up for it, the link is quite strong. It's not an élite force, it's not like the S.A.S. or something like that, it's just the Punjab Frontier, you see when these battalions were raised, the Frontier was not the North-West Frontier, it was the Punjab, hence there was a Punjab thing, and one of the Regiments, funnily enough, is a Gurkha Regiment, 5th Royal Gurkhas, I don't know how that arose, but they had their Depot in Abbotabad, as well as the 6th Gurkhas, and this, as you know, it's quite a small place, but it was absolutely teeming with troops. Now there's two other Piffers in Edinburgh, one is a brilliant man, Gerald Elliot.

J.W. : Yes, I'm going to see him on Friday.

Major FFR : You are? Good, I'm glad to hear it, give him my regards.

J.W. : I will do, certainly.

Major FFR : We have an annual reunion, and a chap called Ronnie Guild, the three of us have a ... .

J.W. : Yes, I've written to him, I haven't heard ... .

Major FFR : Have you been to see him?

J.W. : I haven't heard ... .

Major FFR : Well, he's a machine gunner, but his, but he was with the machine gun battalion. I think they were divisional troops, the whole battalion of machine gunners didn't go into action firing medium machine guns, but they were, but they had detachments supporting brigades, and that sort of thing, so he had a very specialised role, but Gerald Elliot, and I didn't know this until the last time we met. When he was commissioned he was sent straight to the Indian army equivalent of Bletchley, code breakers, and it was in Abbotabad, and I never knew that, and he got fed up with that so he asked to leave, he wasn't doing anything, achieving anything, and he was chairman of *Salvessens*, you know *Salvessens* have had some trouble but that's another story. I think he was about six months senior to me, and he was the first British officer I met when I arrived at the depot, and he, I don't know, I think it was moving kit, he spoke fluent Urdu, idiomatic Urdu, I thought, 'My Gosh !', and in fact he passed the examination for

what was called first class interprettership both in written and spoken Urdu, which very few regular officers did, and he took it in his stride, he really was, at anything, he would have been general in the army, chairman of *Salvessens*, whatever, he would have been Prime Minister in government probably, or something, he was a brilliant man. I'm glad, because I was going to suggest, if you hadn't I would have asked him if he'd wanted to see you.

J.W. : Yes, he's been very kind and has agreed to see me.

Major FFR : And Ronnie Guild was a slightly older generation to, Gerald and I are about the same age, but Ronnie Guild is getting on for eighty he [?]. both of them do actually. He can tell you, although obviously he's bound by the Official Secrets Act, and I suppose really he didn't until now, after all it's fifty years ago, it doesn't matter a damn code breakers in Abbotabad, but you went to the Depot then?

J.W. : Yes.

Major FFR : Well some of, quite a lot of Piffers have been back, but the rule I think is never go back, it spoils it.

J.W. : Yes, I've heard this from some other, I've heard both sides, I've heard people who've been back and had a wonderful time, equally ... .

Major FFR : Well one or two make a thing of it, and I gather everybody is very welcomed, you wear a Piffer tie and the door is opened.

J.W. : Certainly in my experience, and me with no family connections or anything, they were very kind to me. I mean I had inroads through other people, but once that was arranged they were very, very kind, very helpful.

Major FFR : Well I remember the Mess was at the top of the hill, is it still there?

J.W. : Well, I can show you some photos.

Major FFR : Oh I'd like to, yes.

J.W. : I'll pause this for a moment.

(The tape is stopped, and Major FFR is shown the photos of Abbotabad, and thanked)

Captain R.H. Guild
Frontier Force Rifles
Interviewed on Monday, 28th September 1998
SA1998.44

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, and **Captain G.** Represents Captain Guild.

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston, it's Monday the 28th of September and I'm speaking to Captain Guild in Edinburgh. So if you can tell me first about your life before you were in the Indian Army, about your schooling, where you were born, when and this sort of thing.

Captain G. : Born at, the first breath I took was largely alcoholic in nature because we lived within, downwind of the distillery at Haymarket in Edinburgh, and so when they smacked my bottom I imagine I took in a fair draught of rotting barley or whatever it is.

J.W. : Right, and when was that if you don't mind me asking.

Captain G. : 1921.

J.W. : Right, okay, and did you, and so you grew up entirely in Edinburgh did you?

Captain G. : Yep.

J.W. : Where did you go to school ?

J.W. : I went to school at a place, at a preparatory school called Cargerfield down at Barnton, and I then went on to Glenalmond which is in Perthshire and I had never been out of Scotland until the War.

J.W. : Right, so how, to take us from there onwards how did you then go into the Indian Army, what was the, the ... .

Captain G. : The progression.

J.W. : Well a chum and I decided we were not, we were going to go overseas and in our case that meant we were going to go to Dundee rather than going out to Penicuik, which was going to be in our own back garden, and at that time the government in its wisdom had founded these young soldiers battalions and they said to the, to all the borstal institutions anyone who volunteered to join up that was the end of their borstal sentence, so our unit was full of jolly borstal boys and my chum and I, who were made Lance-Corporals with effect from one day previous to our joining. That was the most rapid promotion I ever got (**J.W.** laughs) I think the reason was that we both had pyjama

trousers and could read and write, that's a slight exaggeration, but still, so Dundee it was, Black Watch Young Soldiers Battalion.

J.W. : Okay, and how, did you, can you progress on from there, what you were training there, presumably, in Dundee.

Captain G. : Yes.

J.W. : And then how old were you then when you went in?

Captain G. : You had to be nine ... , or was it eighteen, or nineteen, born in 1921, 1940, yes you had to be nineteen.

J.W. : Right okay, and so you were training there?

Captain G. : If you can call it training, yes.

J.W. : What sort of form did that take, what were you doing, just, you were just doing the basic ... ?

Captain G. : Well, we were essentially a home service unit, and our purpose was to supplement these home defence units were partly young soldiers, and partly old guys from the First World War, a wonderful mixture as you can imagine, and they were on the perimeters of air, aerodromes like Montrose, Arbroath putting the fear of death into the R.A.F. if not the enemy (laughs).

J.W. : So how long did you stay with the, with that, in that area, in there.

Captain G. : Oh I suppose three months probably.

J.W. : And so how did you then make the progression into the Indian Army ?

Captain G. : Well then one went off to South Wales to do Officer Cadet Training Unit, and then one came back to Perth and funnily enough just yesterday I was wearing my old Black Watch trews, that's a side line, but the thought that in 1941 Andersons the Tailors in George Street sent a special cutter down to North Wales to measure two of us for own personal measure of trews, kilt, jacket, overcoat and spats, and these were personally measured, in 1940, I mean the cost of that is, is it really bizarre, isn't it that they were still doing that sort of thing, anyway there it was. So back to Perth and from there, due to the odd gaff back to the Young Soldiers Battalion as an officer in Auchtermuchty.

J.W. : And had you volunteered for the officer training or was that something that you was, you were sort of persuaded or ?

Captain G. : No you were, well I personally the system was that in 19 ... in September 1939 they opened up some sort of system of signing on, reserves signing on, so one signed on that because it was a day off school I think, and we went off to St. Andrews for the day rather like a football team, miss all classes, we were signing up for anything to do that (laughs). I mean looking back it's all comic, I mean if it wasn't so terrible it was really a sort of, there was, young people at that age it was something different, you know, there was patriotism in it, of course there was, but there was also enormous sense of fun, and something completely different.

J.W. : Yea, right, so you've gone back then to the Young Soldiers Battalion.

Captain G. : Yep, in Auchtermuchty.

J.W. : In Auchtermuchty and how long were you there for ?

Captain G. : Well, the way I'll put it is when they realised that Auchtermuchty was no longer threatened directly by the Wehrmacht, one got a bit, I suppose one was getting a bit bored if you like. I mean Auchtermuchty wasn't really a young man's idea of soldiering, or romancing or anything else for that matter, really, (laughs) so a change was indicated, and I had a chum who was in West Africa, I remember, and I sent in an application to go to West Africa and I always remember the adjutant rang back and said, 'Sorry, old boy, there's no room in Africa, but there is room in India', exact quote, and so I said, 'Okay, well put me down for India', I knew nothing about it at all.

J.W. : Nothing at all, so there were no, you didn't know anybody at all, anyone who'd been there, no family nothing like that ?

Captain G. : No, no absolutely nothing.

J.W. : Right, so then were you, what happened then were you taken straight out, or?

Captain G. : No, no there must have been a delay I suppose, of, I don't know a month or something like that, and then yea, one got an order to report to the Beresford Hotel in Glasgow in Sauchiehall Street of all places which was a, a sort of transit camp, I don't know if you know the Beresford Hotel, but it's at the west end of Sauchiehall Street, and it was then a large scale, well you can almost say it was a house of ill repute, and the ground floor of the Beresford kept its original purposes, a sort of nightclub, by the standard of today nothing, but the standards of those times it was really quite a place, so, but the upper floors were all bedrooms for officers in transit, so one reported to the Beresford Hotel having made one's way past the jazz band on the ground floor and the

ladies who were there to give a supporting cast, and having said farewell to one's parents at Haymarket station, one was back the same evening, for three days, and went backwards and forwards four or five times on day off or whatever, and the reason eventually transpired that the troopship was having engine trouble and so the sailing date was, kept on being postponed and then we finally said and they said right on you go, and for me that meant spurting off to Haymarket so, April 1941, convoy R-O-Y-F-G, and I've often thought, here I am blethering into your microphone, that it was an amazing thought that the German's intelligence never got a grip or appeared to get a grip on the sailing of these convoys, despite the fact that there were a lot of people working in Glasgow, especially from Southern Ireland, to be truthful, whose sympathies were not on our side and you would have thought they would have infiltrated that, but no, apparently not, I mean let alone everyone there working at the Beresford Hotel knew when you were going, you know they would say, well you know you're not coming back this time no more leave for you, but that sort of information seemed to have percolated to anyone, so anyway, the Scottish connection on this troopship was that the OC Troops was a Major Mackenzie who had been the bursar at Glenalmond School, and he lined up all the, there were five old boys on the, on this troop ship, and he lined up all up and told us we were all to go to his old Indian Army Regiment, which was why one ended up where one did. I can't think of any other, oh yes, there were four of us in this cabin, two of us were from Scotland, the other, one was a chap called Dow who went to Madagascar and was killed actually I think, there was an expedition from, against the Free, the French, the Vichy French did something, I mean I can't remember the details, but we sent an expedition and they broke off and down, but anyway other things in the journey, the ship broke down, after the ship broke down, and the convoy consisted of, the convoy R-O-Y-F-G and all the other liners sailed on, and the escort sailed on, and they couldn't afford to leave the escorts to look after one of the liners, so our liner wallowed about two or three hundred miles west of Ireland for about a day, when we learned allowed to do, we weren't allowed to shout, or hit your teacup or anything else but the noise from the engine room was (**Captain G.** hits the table three times) while they were repairing, banging on the parts which had to be knocked straight I suppose. Anyway, well one wouldn't be here otherwise, pure luck, I have actually looked at the German naval records for that period, including the U-Boat dispositions, there you are, just pure bloody luck, cause I mean you couldn't imagine a bigger target that a three masted, a three funnelled liner stationary, I mean, U-Boat commander's dream. So there we are, right, okay.

J.W. : So you took the voyage you were there across presumably it was sort of via Africa, and then across in to ... ?

Captain G. : Well, yea I think we went due west for about, I don't know, a week maybe, and then down and then back to West Africa, yes, and then to Durban. Some Scottish family or other that offered me hospitality there.

J.W. : And it was on to Bombay, was it, from there?

Captain G. : Yea.

J.W. : And so what then happened subsequently in Bombay, were you ... ?

Captain G. : Well I insured my mackintosh, I insured my mackintosh, I can't remember, I suppose I insured something or other, but I certainly insured my mackintosh, because I remember cause I lost it, it was stolen within six hours of my emerging from the insurance office, but we went to Dehra Dun which one thought we were getting towards the edge of the world. I always remember on the first Sunday switching on the radio then getting the World Service, and the service was from St. Andrew's and whatever it is at the West End, conducted by the Reverend somebody Anderson his name was, so there one was imagining one had gone to the edge of the world and a service from St. Cuthbert's that was the church, St. Cuthbert's at the West End.

J.W. : And so you were there training with all the other officers at Dehra Dun, so how long was that for?

Captain G. : Oh I suspect it was about two months. While we learned the language.

J.W. : How did you find that?

Captain G. : Well I found it quite, I enjoyed it and, the, one was beginning to learn a bit and I didn't know the word for custard, but I did know the word for, what was it now how did it go, tangled up now, the end of it was, yes, can we switch off for a second while I just try (The tape is paused while **Captain G.** recalls the words, and these are related off tape).

J.W. : But presumably, I mean you had some *munshis* to teach you?

Captain G. : Sorry?

J.W. : Presumably you had *munshis* to teach you and this sort of thing?

Captain G. : Yea, yes.

J.W. : And you'd had as well the sort of military training back in Scotland, so was there much of that there?

Captain G. : I don't remember that we had military training, we must have, there was a sort of jungle quite near Dehra Dun in which we operated, I can't remember anything

that we learned, but needless to say I can remember there were a lot of Italian prisoners who were in a camp down the road and they used to, they had been taken in Abysinnia, and brought to India and they used to go for marches, or walks really, and they always, I can see them now with a sort of sleepy sentry at the front and one at the back, and they had butterfly nets and things, they never thought about going anywhere I don't think, although there was that chap that went off to Tibet, I remember, *Seven Years in Tibet*, he escaped from, so, but the Italians I don't think had any stomach to go anywhere, they were too comfortable, glad to be out of the whole business.

J.W. : And presumably it was from Dehra Dun that you got posted to your ... ?

Captain G. : Well because of the kitchen, the old Mackenzie bloke, I, we went off to Abbotabad on that train journey, and again one thought one was going to the edge of the world, because it went on and on and on, and the terrain became more and more not exactly mountainous, but fairly .. .

J.W. : Well, hills and mountains.

Captain G. : Yea that's right, yep, and we went on leave to Mussorie and did that fantastic ride by bus down from Mussorie down to Abbotabad, one of those terrifying Himalayan roads you know, corpses of buses down in the, skeletons of buses, washed away bits on the thing.

J.W. : Right, so how, and that was presumably the bursar from Glenalmond who had been on the ship he was sort of networking, was he, with the people who were still there because I've heard from other people they, you know, they had their three choices in the Indian Army regiments and this sort of thing, but there was none of that for you then, it was decided that you were all Frontier Force.

Captain G. : Yes, it was in, he worked the network from Durban by some sort of telegram I suppose.

J.W. : Right .. .

Captain G. : And the interesting this was, as I say, there were five of us I think. Four of us did what the bursar wanted, and one of said, you know, I'm going my own way thank you, and that poor chap was killed within two months, while the other four of us who drifted along survived, I don't know what you make of that.

J.W. : One of these twists of fate isn't it.

Captain G. : Twist of fate, yes.

J.W. : So the you went, you got to Abbotabad, and can you take things on from there, what, what did you start doing, was that ?

Captain G. : Yea, one was posted to a training battalion, they were called, and my first battalion commander was a marvellous Indian who'd been to Sandhurst, [Singh Kaspeah Singh Khattoch] who's still alive, and one, there was the *maidān*, and one had these new recruited people, it was like running a boy scout troop, really, in a way, with the old regular army *subadars* and *jemedars* and, who knew their stuff backwards from the point of view of basic training and literacy and I think it was a fantastic achievement to take the, people on that scale and 'a' train them and 'b' educate them to turn out what was a sophisticated outfit, marvellous.

J.W. : And were there any, sorry to interrupt you, were there any ... ?

Captain G. : No that's far better otherwise you could waffle on for hours (laughs).

J.W. : Were there any British, Indian army officers who were British, who were sort of pre war regulars there as well ?

Captain G. : Oh yes, there were, oh yes there were, in fact I got a, funnily enough I was just turning out my notes (**Captain G.** gets out a letter he wrote) I got this thing dated seventeen one forty-three, letter number thirty (**Captain G.** pauses as he reads the letter and then reads it out), 'That night I reached the mess famished, only to have the pleasure of watching the Colonel and Commandant sipping stupid little drinks, obviously after a late and large tea. I can scarcely retain my mutterings on such occasions.' (laughs), so they were obviously, one had the feeling that these old boys hadn't the foggiest idea what the, you know, what the devil was going on in the outside world, I'm sure they did have, but their disciplined life, and their pattern of life was that, I mean you know, set before and set parade hours and all this sort of thing, and a mess with silver and set with umpteen courses and you know it was exactly what one thought was going to ... .

J.W. : So was there any, there was no sort of regular sort of day-to-day interaction with those old pre War, I mean did you train, did they help you with training?

Captain G. : I think it was that they, the sort of metaphor that comes in mind is that they were really the school governors and headmaster, whereas we were the sort of prefects, it was that sort of relationship, I think, very nice, and very polite and courteous.

J.W. : Right, aha, there was no tension because you sometimes hear, I've sometimes heard of there being a little bit of tension between the officers who were coming in during the War and the old pre War ... .

Captain G. : Well, I mean that's my that letter was my sample of that, I mean that's just me discovered that in my desk today, and that's just what I wrote, 'I can scarcely retain my mutterings on such occasions', yep.

J.W. : Right, you were training men, and how long were you there in the Depot training before you were posted elsewhere

Captain G. : Yes, I have one, again an experience come out, bizarre anecdotes. I was, yea, at this stage one only got this responsibility, one was very young and unbelievably green, by, at least I think one was, I suppose one wasn't so stupid, but maybe one got that responsibility for all those people, and it's interesting now in terms of the religious feelings know, but I remember borrowing the *subadar major's* wife's pardā, and putting it on for an exercise. I don't think you'd probably want to do that today, and hiring a *tānigā* with another, with a chum who dressed up as a Pakistani and I was his wife complete with pardā, and off we went on this *tānigā*, I can't remember exactly what we did, but it was something to do with some sort of exercise, I think we were sort of agents or something (laughter) so there we are. But I think the interesting thing was that there was that degree of tolerance. I mean the Regimental depot was, okay, so the officers were Christian, we had, you know, a large slice of Muslim Punjabis and Pathans, we had Sikhs and we had Dogras, Hindus, and so we had four religions and there was no batting an eyelid about that. In fact I recall when I became a Company Commander one of my bloke-ies was going, was supposed to go on a course, a very important course, and I can't remember what the dates were, immaterial, but I remember him coming to me and saying, 'I'm sorry, I can't go on the course', and I said, 'What do you mean you can't go on the course?', he said, 'No the pundit back in the village has told me I've got to get married because the stars ...' or whatever it is, '... in the middle of the course I've got to get married', so fortunately I didn't, I suppose fortunately I didn't say sort of say, 'That's rubbish', I went to my Indian Battalion commander and he said, 'Yes of course he's got to get married then', and that was one, that was one part of the learning process that you had to, yea, respect that country.

J.W. : And was that learning process very much facilitated by, say, Indian troops people like *subadars* and these sort of people that you were interacting with, the *Indian* Indian Army troops, you know that say the V.C.O.s and these sort of people whom you would have been interacting with, did they help in that sort of acclimatisation ?

Captain G. : Oh yea, yea in this particular company the battalion commander certainly was a wonderful example of that, just that very thing.

J.W. : Right, and how about in turn relations with the men, the troops, *javāns* and this sort of thing, how was that, how were the relations with the men and how did you develop those?

Captain G. : (pauses) I don't think one deliberately set out to develop anything, it was, nowadays I've no doubt you would get umpteen lectures by some, you know, the personnel or development supervisor or some such person, and no doubt in the troopship there would have been lectures on international personnel development psychology or something, but no you just did what you thought, more or less, yea, they had a, I mean, they had a similar sense of humour, they would laugh at things yea, well I don't think there was any problem there.

J.W. : No, no, and these things just developed in a sort of natural course did they, I mean for example were there games that you would play with the troops and this sort of thing, would you play?

Captain G. : Yea, yes.

J.W. : And those sort of things they would help.

Captain G. : There was a, yes, you just had a sort of sense, I imagine that the Indian Army was in itself in a state of transition in so far as the pre-War arrangements would have been probably more rigid than there were by the time the likes of me got there. It was still by present day standards it was quite rigid, I mean I don't remember sort of sitting around in the barracks, sort of sharing cups of tea or sort of putting your feet on someone's *charpoy* and chatting away about anything at all. It was all quite formal, I suspect, but one was used to that because of the schooling one had got oneself, it was a bit, you know, sort of like a large public school, if you like, whatever, I've never thought about it in these terms before, but I suspect it was a bit that way, and after all it's fifty years ago so the memory's a bit, but the sort of thing that happened was, I remember one Sunday, for example, going down to the, to the lines because that was an informal way of meeting the odd bloke and having a wee chat, and there was a chap having an epileptic fit in one of the barrack rooms, and he was a huge, great Pathan, and it was terrifying, I'd never seen one before, it took half a dozen blokes to, ultimately to pin this poor soul down, so the fact that one was doing that does indicate that, you know, it wasn't just nine to five, you had a pastoral responsibility.

J.W. : Yea that's what I was checking for, right, and so where did you go from there you were in the depot, did you then move on somewhere else like ... ?

Captain G. : Yea, yea.

J.W. : Where was that?

Captain G. : Well, there were, there were nearly four destinations, you could go to the Middle East, you could go to Pi Force, which was in Iraq dealing with the Iraqi problems, the Persian business, you could go to a Battalion in India, well I suppose,

there were five destinations, you could go to a battalion on the Frontier, or you could go to a battalion in India, or you could go to a battalion in Burma, and it was the luck of the draw, I just happened to go to a battalion in the 9th/13th which was a, attached to the 44th Indian Army Division which was training without tanks in an armoured division without tanks, basically, in Surgaon in India. I think we had a few tanks, I think we were waiting for tanks to come from America, I think, they were going to come, and then they were going to the Middle East, but I think the tanks were all sunk in the Pacific as I recall it, so they never got to the Middle East, and that was in Secunderabad, then they, they were then going to be sent as a lorried infantry battalion, which we were, across I think into Burma, and, lorried infantry brigade rather, and at the time we were just on leave before doing that when the famine in Bengal started, and so the battalion was moved in to deal with the famine, and I always remember the C.O. had a big wall map, and he took a red [? graph] pencil and drew a circle, I mean that seemed to me to be about as big as East Lothian, and so, 'That's your area, old boy, carry on', you know, and that was basically the extent of the instructions as I recall, which meant that we got, I suppose, a company or maybe a platoon of *sipāhīs* and the necessary lorries and several hundred tonnes of grain, you looked at your area inside the red [?graph] and chose a place, and set yourself up there, and did the best you could, on absolutely, without any instructions as to how you were to do it at all as I recall.

J.W. : That must have been a pretty harrowing experience.

Captain G. : Well yes, because, yes it was harrowing but it was an interesting thought that in my case they were Pathan *sipāhīs* saving the lives of Bengali villagers. One often thought, subsequently wondered whether the children of the Pakistan *sipāhīs* and the children of the one in the Bengali villages were probably on the other side when it came to the war between ... .

J.W. : Yea, quite likely.

Captain G. : And, yea, one just lived in this little village in the middle of absolutely nowhere with these *sipāhīs* issuing out the thing. No that reminds me that the Battalion doctor came from Buckie, Jock Cameron, his name was and he was a marvellous figure, a pity he's dead he could have given you some marvellous stories, he came to live in Dalgetty Bay eventually, but Jock Cameron was the doctor and he spent, worked from dawn until dusk dealing with cholera and all this sort of, and the adjutant was Dougie Smith, from Dunfermline, so there was a good Scottish representation in that little exercise. Then when that was over we were all sent on leave and at that point while we were on leave the problem of Kohima grew and the rest of the brigade who were not on leave went to Kohima. We were all spread out across the Frontier Province and in my case up in Sikkim so we were never called, and by the time we got back they had decided that we were to be changed, yet again, this time to become a machine gun battalion and to do that involved going to Quetta, and that involved taking all the lorries

from Karachi basically across the continent to Quetta in a great convoy which took three weeks whatever it was a hundred miles a day or something like that, and in Delhi we were inspected by old Wavell, I remember, which is another good Scottish connection, but he was then GOC India. Yea, okay, next question.

J.W. : Let me think, well just to jump, in fact just to go, well not jump go back a little way to the Scots, your fellow Scots in while you were in Bengal, was there a, you'd gone initially with those four other Glenalmond boys and , you know, you had this bursar, was there any sort of sense, how can I put this, what's the best way ? Well did you club together as Scots at all or was it was there ever a sense of ... ?

Captain G. : Well I took my bagpipes, cause I had been, I was a piper at school, but I also was the Company Piper in Dundee, when I say I was the Company Piper I was the only piper they had so lots of funny things happened there, and well, yea, before we leave Abbotabad to show the way people, the Scottish thing came out, which is what you're interested in, yea, I'm talking about Abbotabad, (**Captain G.** quotes from a letter), 'That evening enlivened by my afternoon's fun', which I'd had with the, at a children's' party, 'I went down to the soldiers' club and got into confab with a particularly decent corporal. Before the evening was done it transpired that he had belonged to a section of signallers who'd been attached to the BW in Dundee' (**Captain G.** pauses, as he reads on). Yea, 'Do tell Henry', that was my chum, 'that I'd been talking to this bloke about Dirty Jock the cook' (laughs) in Dundee, this was in Abbotabad, so I go down to the club, the soldiers' club, I meet a chap who'd been a signaller in the Black Watch in Dundee, 'and he recalled Gypsy Wilson and sundry other nefarious characters. It ain't half a small world it ain't' (laughter). Right.

J.W. : So you got down to Quetta to the machine gun battalion (a remark from **Captain G.** which seems to give a more accurate location for the training is obscured here) so you were training then, that was troops from the, the Regiment presumably was it ?

Captain G. : No, no, the whole Battalion was there, oh yea the whole battalion had moved from Ranchi with our own wagons to Quetta. I think we were also doing, I think we were doing garrison duty as well, because they were never quite sure that they should completely neglect or run down the garrison on the Frontier, and there was some bizarre rumour, in fact I think the reason we were told we were going there was that the Japanese had been landing people on the coast of Baluchistan to make contact with the Afghans. I can't remember if that was true but it's the sort of barrack room rumours, that no doubt if there were Japanese intelligence people hanging around which I'm sure there probably weren't, they would have picked up the fact that that's why we were going, not to train as machine gunners. However there weren't any - we never found them, probably they all had pardā on anyway (laughter).

J.W. : So you were there in Quetta. How long were you there for ?

Captain G. : I don't know, about three months maybe, and then purely personally the Frontier Force had two machine gun battalions - the one we were training in and then another one which was in Burma already, and they wanted some more bods, so yours sincerely was despatched to go to the other one, yea, which meant having learnt, one machine gun battalion in Quetta, I then shoved off to the machine gun battalion.

J.W. : Who were in Burma at the time ?

Captain G. : Correct. That meant another journey.

J.W. : Of course, yea.

Captain G. : And those Indian train journeys, that was the sort of place where you could meet almost anybody in the train, it was a small world. Yea, and I think one of the, to be, I don't know, I don't want if I overdo the Scottish element of it, but I think there was a, people would soon discover, I mean you always said well where do you come from and if they came from Scotland there was obviously an affinity there.

J.W. : Of course, naturally, yea, there would be, and what sort of, I'm trying to add up all the jumps, what sort of period are we talking by then, then, that you're in Burma ?

Captain G. : Nineteen forty ... maybe we were in Quetta longer, Abbotabad '42, Secunderabad early '43, Quetta late '43 early '44. Yep the beginning of '45, yep, we'd spent all that time basically training for one role and then switching to another, and that was in a way, I think I look back on it, because the Battalion had been for a fairly sophisticated role, in other words we had a lot of mechanics, we had a lot of drivers, we weren't just an ordinary infantry battalion, we had been trained up to a more sophisticated role, therefore when they looked around for somebody to switch to a more sophisticated arm then we were natural candidates.

J.W. : And so when you went into Burma, what was the situation in Burma exactly, it shows my lack of knowledge about the campaign, but what was the situation in Burma ?

Captain G. : Well, we were on the way down, we were on the winning side. And again my, again the whole thing was serious, but what one tends to remember are the humorous things that happened, and I was had a priority Z, you know, I mean only those with a priority A and B were getting any planes, the whole thing was done by air, the reinforcement was all done by air, so I arrived in this transit camp in the middle of Bengal I suppose Eastern Bengal, having got from Calcutta by train and ferry and bus and train, that alone was a strange journey. I'd been dumped in the middle of this place, nowhere, and I was always asking for something to do, you now I was going bananas just sitting there twiddling my thumbs. After about three weeks, or was it longer, maybe

it was, the commandant, the Colonel commandant he said, 'Well you're in luck today, I've got a job for you. The movement officer has gone sick, he's got malaria, would you like to do his job ?' Well I said that was fine, so within twenty-four hours I had changed my priority from Z to A, issued my own movement order and disappeared over the horizon. Otherwise I'd probably still have been there. So that was the sort of thing one could do. I think the chap probably half expected one to do it, I don't know, he certainly, I mean, there could have been a hell of a row, he could have sent somebody else, he could have sent a particular officer, but he didn't do that .

J.W. : And so when you, presumably you'd gone on your own, had you, across this distance, you hadn't gone with anybody else, you hadn't gone with anybody from your Battalion that was training in Quetta, you'd gone on your own without your troops you were training.

Captain G. : Oh yea, they were surplus actually.

J.W. : You were then being posted to completely new people?

Captain G. : Yea, a C.O. called Campbell, that was another Scottish connection.

J.W. : And so who was that with?

Captain G. : That was the machine gun battalion the Frontier Force Rifles.

J.W. : Oh yes, of course, yes you've said, I'm sorry, but nobody you'd ever trained with.

Captain G. : No, no.

J.W. : So it was a getting to, well a familiar scenario, the same Regiment, but getting to know new people.

Captain G. : But you see that was never much of a problem, it really wasn't, no it wasn't a problem.

J.W. : Because I've heard for example on active service how the relations that would be within a battalion, within those ones, would be further cemented or honed even more.

Captain G. : That's right.

J.W. : But of course, for you that was it was with a different group, so, but was there an element of that at the same time in an active role did you have a particularly close relationship with the men, the *javāns*, and this sort of thing cause of the situation?

Captain G. : Yea, I suppose, oh yes, much more so, I mean obviously.

J.W. : Because you're all in the same boat.

Captain G. : All in the same stewpot. When I think about it, picturing it all as you ask these questions, I was made a quartermaster, only because there was nobody else, and I always say I made two great contributions to the campaign in Burma. One was to design a roof for the latrines, which of course were just trenches, and two was to provide them with underpants, because their underpants were completely worn out, and we had a parachute drop of supplies, and you were supposed to return the parachutes, I think it was a court martial offence not to return them, but our boys' underpants were completely worn to a fuzzle, in fact were non existent, and I thought you know 'tchh' to the regulations, and as soon as the parachutes dropped, and before the people could come and, I think the R.I.A.S.C. or somebody came to take them in, I had then spirited off to a neighbouring Burmese village where there were chaps who still had pre-War sowing, sort picture of some chap with a pre-War Singer sowing machine, they chopped the whole lot up and made new underpants, I always thought that was rather nice, a great contribution.

J.W. : Well, a very practical solution, wasn't it?

Captain G. : Oh yes it was, although I can't remember whether, I think they were different colours, so I suspect some of the boys had green underpants and some of the boys had purple underpants or some other, perhaps they've still got them, as a momento.

J.W. : And so then, you were then following the campaign down through Burma. How long were you involved in that for?

Captain G. : Not, I mean by Christmas, I suppose, two or three months I suppose. I stayed for as long as that. And then, I don't know, we all got, my nature, to be honest, I loved seeing new places and things, so one of these, they used to send, orders used to come round, you know, Divisional orders, or can't quite remember what they all were, so anyway this order was, wanted, volunteers to join this organisation in the Sian States. So, I thought that sounded all the time rather interesting, so I put my hand up and rather to my surprise again because nobody else had presumably volunteered in large enough numbers, one got an order to proceed to this place Taunggyi it was called, and nobody had a map which gave them the foggiest idea where Taunggyi was (laughs) I can't remember how eventually one discovered it was off the map in the Sian States, which lie between Burma and China.

J.W. : I'm glad you told me that, or I would have been searching for them on a map.

Captain G. : So anyway one set off.

J.W. : And what was that doing there, what was the job ?

Captain G. : Well, the job was that the road from is it Meiktila through Taunggyi goes straight eastwards, to a place called Kantang which is in a short of triangle where Yunan comes down, so you've got, drawing a map (**Captain G** draws a sketch map on a piece of paper) you've got it's a bit like that, this is Yunan, this is Thailand and this is the Sian States and Kantang is there, and this road goes like that, this is Taunggyi there, and Meiktila's down there, and the hills are like that you see, and the rivers run down that way towards the Bay of Bengal. And, anyway, there was this road and the idea generally was that the ordinary punters would be on the road, whereas this outfit was, would, which was composed of Sian tribesmen, was going to be scootling along on the tops making sure that the, that there was, that the Japanese had retreated from the whole place, so they were basically blokes like that, that's why I recall that one I had this whole area you see.

J.W. : So who, what other people were involved apart from yourself, other Indian Army officers was it?

Captain G. : Yes, there was a chap, there were three of us only, and the oldest of us was a chap called Bailey who was a tea planter, ex tea planter, so the outfit didn't even have a name so we sat down, I remember, to decide what it was going to be called, and one didn't realise how nearly one was to immortally, immortalising oneself in the name of a unit, I mean it could have been something like the London, Midland and the Scottish railway, or something, it could have been the force, Bailey, B-G I can't remember the name of the third bloke was, but we thought it was good being scouts, ex scouts that it was fair to call it after the oldest of us, so it was called Bailey's, Bailey being the oldest bloke, so it was bailey's it was actually called Bailey's Guerillas (laughs), and the funny thing was, looking back, that it had been originally founded by the thing called the Officers' Strategic Service, which was the forebear of the C.I.A., and the Officer's Strategic Service did these sort of jobs in China, the Philippines and all over. Anyway, when the Americans withdrew their interest, their immediate interest in this particular activity these blokes were, existed, and they had, I don't know, Uncle Sam had given them repeater rifles, three pairs of trousers, four jackets and radio sets that would get Washington direct, hammocks with springs, and God knows what else, sort of equipment, you know, paid them a millionaire's salary and when old John Bull took them over, he cut their pay in half, removed all their trousers, took away all their radio sets, gave them old pea shooters instead of repeater rifles *et cetera, et cetera*, and enrolled them again, so there it was that was fairly, slightly typical of the equipment that they got, although I don't think it, every one of them, but, I mean, it was a bit like that, they had spears and well they had a bit more than spears. So there it was.

J.W. : And were you still technically an officer of the Indian Army at that time ?

Captain G. : Oh yes, oh yes.

J.W. : They were still paying you?

Captain G. : I went back to the Battalion when that was over.

J.W. : How long was that for?

Captain G. : I can't remember, to be honest, a matter of weeks.

J.W. : Oh, I see, right.

Captain G. : I would have thought two months, probably, but then the thing, then the War ended in the middle of it you see, so we never actually, although one did actually, nearly meet one's Lord and one's Creator in the process of it, but it wasn't it was nothing of any significance to the great war effort. More a personal vendetta I think, anyway.

J.W. : Oh I see, right, and you were then back to the Battalion, were you, did you say?

Captain G. : Yes.

J.W. : And where was that, was that back in ... ?

Captain G. : To Rangoon. I mean again to give you the flavour of the thing, although it's nothing to do with, well I suppose the girlfriend was from Scotland, but again this is just a flavour, it's got no significance in terms of the campaign at all. One was sitting outside a pagoda washing, I remember, washing my underpants in an old tin can, God knows where it had come from, and a little spotter plane came round, they were called beachcraft, an American thing, single engined, high wing monoplane, and the chap came on [the A & O *sāhab*], 'Got any requirements, bud ? Hiya bud, any requirements?' and I said, 'Well, not really, but I'm very partial to peppermints, sweeties, I haven't tasted a peppermint sweetie for a long time, and I would love a letter from my girlfriend if you've got one'. 'Okay bud'. So he pulled his cabin, so I suppose, yea he had a radio alright, but he waved, he pulled his canopy back, waved, and disappeared over the horizon, and came back, I don't know, an hour later I suppose, pulled the canopy back and threw out an old water container thing, with a little improvised parachute on it, and it drifted down, and inside the canister was a bag of peppermint sweeties and a letter from my girlfriend. I've always remembered that, there's a lot of the sort of spirit that there was, you know, he was prepared to fly for half an hour, from wherever he'd come from, I suppose from Taunggyi or somewhere, special delivery.

J.W. : Better than the postal services today.

Captain G. : Absolutely.

J.W. : So moving on now towards, you've gone ... .

Captain G. : Correct.

J.W. : Back to Rangoon, how long then, what was the situation then, from there until you were, yea, the rest of your time in the Indian ... .

Captain G. : The function, sorry, to go back a wee bit, the function of a machine gun battalion, there were two roads from Rangoon that's right (**Captain G.** draws a sketch) I mean this is terribly rough, one road went, as I recall it, went up the Pegu Yoma are the hills down the middle, one road went up that way and another went up that way, and Pegu which were, where we were was there, and the Arakan was down here, so these Japs had made their way from the Arakan, they were making their way to try and get across the Salween River, which was here, to rejoin their chums who were on the other side of the Salween River and they were, they really were on their uppers, this was a hell of a place that they had out there, and this was flat paddy filed you see, so the point about the machine gun was that we were on the road in large measure which was up, naturally enough, above the level of the paddy fields, so the machine gun would have a tremendous trajectory across these flat fields, on fixed lines, and these poor sods, when I say that, the Japs would be trying to escape at night across these paddy fields, and these were firing on fixed lines. Anyway, sorry, back to Rangoon. And, yea, next thing was again one of these things came round asking for somebody to volunteer to do it, and this time it was that the Japanese Army Commander's sword, the Commander of the Japanese forces for Thailand, his sword had to be taken to Lord Louis Mountbatten in Kandy in Ceylon, a volunteer for somebody to collect this sword. So my girlfriend whom I was hoping the letter would be, which had come from the, well in the little parachute was in Ceylon, so I thought, 'Whopee, here we go', you see, hadn't seen her for three years, there we go. So I put my hand up metaphorically, and again because nobody else was interested I found myself setting off for Bangkok which was still being run by the Japanese to collect this sword. I mean really sort of *Dad's Army* stuff really, but it was a fantastic experience because the city was still being run by the Japs, there was a tiny military mission where I stayed, and that night, one said, 'Why don't, you know, we want to go, sit around in this place'or is there somewhere we could go and have a bit of fun ?', you know, so he said, 'Well there is, the King of Siam has been running an officers' club for Japanese officers, and now he's going to run it for us, so if you'll go and have a look and come back and tell us what it's like that would be very helpful', so I said, 'Well, where is it ?', and they said, 'Well you go out of the gate, we think, you go out of the gate here, turn left, second right, third left, first right, second left

and you're there', a slight, I'm making it up obviously, so I how to get there. 'Well, we've got no transport, all you'll have to do is get a pedal, these pedal rickshaws'. It was dark and so the pedal rickshaw had a sort of candle burning on the front, one candle power light, and the chap spoke nothing except Thai, so I set off, think, trying to remember where on earth to turn, and fairly soon we became aware of the fact that one was completely lost in this blacked out city, with nobody there who spoke anything at all (laughs), and eventually wandering about still trying to get to the King of Siam's club, with a picture of sort of champagne and all the rest of it, beautiful saris and all the rest, eventually came upon a barracks, and again of course there was no real light, there was no electric lighting, no street lighting, and this sentry was sort of was a bit like the sort of French revolutionary scene, sort of lantern burning, anyway, thank God I thought we'd arrived and you know somebody will be able to tell us where the King of Siam's club is, but the trouble was how to indicate to the guard [from the guardroom] who by this time had appeared that I wanted to go to the King of Siam officers' club. Well he didn't speak anything except Thai, so I thought, okay, sign language. King of Siam - crown, officer, well that was simple enough, point to the old pips on the shoulder, club, oh well, well a bit of the old alc, tipped the glass up, and a bit of dancing maybe. So they went into a huddle, because all this, all the guard had turned out by this time, and you can imagine what the end of that was, they came to a clear decision among themselves and then issued instructions to my pedal man, and I thought, 'Glorious, any minute now we'll be there', but of course we were headed for, shall we say a different quarter.

J.W. : Yes, yea, I can imagine.

Captain G. : Well to cut a long story short I got back somehow, I suppose just by, you know, a bang an the shoulder, get back there, but the, you know, next day returned to Rangoon with sword, and a load of crepe soled rubber shoes, because the R.A.F. had already got organised, unbelievably as quickly as that, they had, they were running a racket, racket, they were simply buying and selling, they were running a market rather than a racket. There was a shortage of crepe soled rubber shoes in Calcutta, and of course they had links, I think they were probably taking N.A.A.F.I. cigarettes, or something in, yea, so there we were. So the King of, oh I mean the General's sword and a load of crepe soled rubber shoes returned to Rangoon.

J.W. : Then on to Ceylon as well was it to, then did you take ... ?

Captain G. : Oh yes, then, there, oh yes there was a sad ending, I never saw my girlfriend because there was a superior officer who probably had similar interests who went on the other more pleasant bit of the journey.

J.W. : I see right, and so how subsequently from then how long were you in the Indian Army for the rest of the time then, did you ... ?

Captain G. : Well I suppose, yes, that was September, yes that was September '45 wasn't it, yes, and then the whole, then the arrangement was that the Division for example, some went to the Dutch East Indies, some went to Indo China and we went to Thailand, so I personally went back to Bangkok, to, and we were billeted in an old Japanese prisoner of war camp, yea.

J.W. : And this was sort of running things down from ... ?

Captain G. : It was garrison duty.

J.W. : Right, and how long there?

Captain G. : Personally I suppose three weeks, before going home on leave, and then by a clerical error, was in sent back out again, when I only had three weeks in Thailand before I had to turn round and go all the way home again.

J.W. : And then that was you out of the Indian Army was it?

Captain G. : Right, yea, yep, from the, came home with the Navy from Singapore, attended a war crimes trial in Singapore, which was interesting, simply because we came from Bangkok to Singapore on an old tramp steamer returning slave workers from Thailand to Indonesia, because the Japs had used a lot of slave, virtually slave labour on their various projects, and these poor souls were being shipped back, and there was a, I think there was a fortnight in Singapore and there was a war crimes trial going on at the time, and one went to hear that.

J.W. : And how was that, if you can put it into words, was it with regret that you were leaving the Indian Army, or did you feel you'd served your ... ?

Captain G. : Oh no one was very excited, longing to get home.

J.W. : Served your time, and ... .

Captain G. : Oh yes, at that age it was a long time to be away. It would be a long, welcome, at any age, but you know, it was a monastic, I'm not saying one was craved about wanting to meet the girls again, but I mean it was a, one wanted just to get home and get stuck into one's studies apart from anything else.

J.W. : And so that was what you did subsequently was it, you went to study and then on to ... ?

Captain G. : Oh, there was one, you appreciate what fun it is to have an excuse to roll out one's anecdotes, but on the second return to Thailand, as I say, I only did three

weeks, so the C.O. just said, you just interest yourself, so I went to visit a chum who was in command of a Japanese prisoner of war camp, and there was another friend of his there the week, the same weekend, and I was saying, 'Well, I'd love to see a bit of Thailand', and he said, 'Well I'm in charge of this dump and I've got a train in the dump, if you'd like to borrow the train, you're welcome.'

J.W. : The same train in the photos?

Captain G. : Oh yes, that, that's it. There were three carriages, you see, that's only the engine.

J.W. : Which is just a truck, presumably, which is just rigged up to drive on rails.

Captain G. : Complete with crew, you see, that's my Pathan orderly, and that's me and that's the train crew. So we set off in this train on a tour of, of, well we went to Chiang Mai in the North, and that was a fantastic, because I'd arranged with the, there was a Thai prince in GHQ in Bangkok, and I'd arranged with him for an introduction to the Governors of the different provinces on the way, (laughs) so I pictured myself staying in luxurious apartments, but I got to the first Governor's residence, anyway it's a long story, but the point of this one was, eventually we got to a bridge and the R.A.F. had blown little holes in all the bridges on the road, naturally enough, a good idea, and the Japanese prisoners were put to work on repairing these little holes, when I say little holes I suppose they were the length of this room. So the bridges were very like the bridges you see in old American films, sort of trestle things, you know, you looked out of the carriage window and you couldn't see anything except for the water down below, and so when you came to the gap it was even worse there wasn't, literally there was nothing. So we came to this ultimate gap which hadn't been repaired, it was dark, well nearly dark, this thing had headlights, so we came to this gap, and I said to the driver (**Captain G.** indicates on the photo) I can't remember which the driver was now, I suspect he's that bloke there I think, 'Would you go and fix up for us to stay a night in this camp', because there was nowhere else, it was just a ravine with a jungle both sides, and there was absolutely nowhere, so he shuffled off into the dark down this track and came back and said that was all arranged, so they had, they were just little huts like that, so I was having, they arranged a meal, so I was having my meal, when the orderly came along and saluted and said that the Commandant of the Engineer Battalion, would you like to come and have a conversation, and so on, okay that's all right. So he came along, and he spoke perfect English, and he had toured Europe in a *Bentley* car in 1937, and when we'd gone on to talk about what we were going to do when we got home, I said, 'Oh I'm very lucky, I've got a ...', you can picture the scene, Japanese Engineer Commandant, jungle scene, crickets, rain pattering on the roof, 'I'm very lucky, I've got a place at Oxford'. 'Oh', he said, 'which College ?' I said, 'Trinity', he said, 'Oh, I'm a Magdalene man myself' (laughs).

J.W. : It's a small world isn't it?

Captain G. : I've often thought that was a, as an example of a small world that was interesting.

J.W. : Oh yes, yes, and to jump right on from that.

Captain G. : Back home?

J.W. : To, yes, well to the, nearer the present day, I mean is it still these associations from that time, is it still quite important to you to keep these associations, things like the *Piffer* (the journal of the Frontier Force Association) and the Association and this sort of thing?

Captain G. : Oh yes, and for example just this last summer, I didn't bring a picture of him but one, my fellow lieutenant of mine who subsequently became a General in the Indian Army turned with his wife to stay, and that was tremendous fun, and yea, he became a General in the Indian Army, in the Indian Army which is interesting, and Colonel-in-Chief of the Rajput Regiment and all sorts of other things, and he came by bus from London and stayed in the Y-W, the student, the Indian Students Hospital., Hostel in London, and came up by bus, and so here he is, arrives at the bloody bus station yea, with his little suitcase, and his good wife in a most beautiful sari, I thought, 'Good God, if that's all Edinburgh can do is lay on that bus station.'

J.W. : Yea, yea, makes you wonder doesn't it?

Captain G. : Well again that was part of the spirit that this chap had inherited from his time, I think, in the Indian Army, pre, without that no Indian of his caste and his place in the hierarchy would have dreamt of rattling about in a bloody old bus carrying his own luggage, you know, yea. And yea, and also these sort of experiences are, I mean my own are totally irrelevant when it comes to any sort of campaign or anything like that, but they were part of the sort of funny things which happened to people ... .

J.W. : Yep, exactly.

Captain G. : Which happened to people on the way along. they weren't cooked up, you didn't arrange them, they just happened. And it's true I think that the more you put your hand up, they do happen if you do that. If you don't put your hand up and just go along in the stream, everything is organised and more predictable if you're a member of a big unit which is part of a big campaign. By it's very nature things that happen are not so personal, they are personal, but they're personal in different way. I mean that thing about this Japanese who is a Magdalene man, yea, it's a purely personalised thing, isn't it?

J.W. : Yea, yep, well I can't, I don't want to keep you for too long and I can't think of anything else, I think you've gone right through the, the whole show, haven't we, so thank you.

Captain G. : Yea, I mean most of the things that one said have been mostly humorous. I think the purpose of it all was so desperately serious, and there were people that suffered so much, beyond all endurance, yea, and the sheer courage of those who had suffered in way that we didn't even begin to understand, or we may have understood it, but we didn't personally suffer. I mean there are people who one knows who were in that first retreat for example, in 1941. Well that was hellish. But I suppose the same resilience, humour, camaraderie, yea, the use of your, use your know how or use your common sense or so on, yea. There we are. But the ultimate tragedy, oh yes, the last thing, I think the last connection is with, one, I remember when I was a, I actually did a little radio broadcast on a programme called, which was run by a, a bloke down in Queen Street, you know, for Asiatic and Chinese and what was it called ? I can't remember the other programme now, and one made the point that all these religious quarrels that there are, are so sad because of that time, as I say somehow people denigrate the Raj and the Indian Army and that sort of business, but in fact it did achieve an amazing, the thing had a cohesion despite the fact, the disparate elements that were in it, I suspect rather in the same way that the, probably, the Roman Army did the same sort of thing on Hadrian's Wall, I mean the auxiliaries there were from Syria, Morocco, the Rhineland, God knows where all else, but yet they had a cohesion too I suppose I suspect.

Captain G. : Well, on that historic note.

J.W. : Yes, well thank you.

Tape is switched off.

Mr. Duncan Henderson
9th/9th Jat Regiment
Recorded on 4th March 1997
SA1997.36 & 37

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **D.H.** represents Duncan Henderson.

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston I'm recording Mr. Henderson at this home in Edinburgh and it's the 4th of March 1997. Okay if I can begin by asking you if you can tell me where and when you were born?

Mr. H. : I was born in Chelsea in 1926.

J.W. : Right and what were your parents doing at that time?

Mr. H. : My par ... my father was with the Board of Trade I think at that timer he was a Principal so administrative grade he'd been at Oxford and had quite a good First war service with the Royal Engineers Postal Service serving in Salonika and so forth, and I think when he returned - he'd previously been with he Post Office and which I think is why he was the R-A-P-S which is what they call the postal service of the R-E and he seemed to have transferred to the Board of Trade and he was at one stage he was the Pres.. or the First Secretary and he went out to Australia on a tour and I was born I think it must have been just before he came back was it no after he came back it doesn't matter too much. Mother was mother had a surprisingly good education for ladies of her background and time she'd been at the Cheltenham Ladies' College but she was not but I mean at that time she was a purely a housewife she wasn't out at work and the family were well enough you know to have a sort of general maid a what do you call them a cook general and a nanny and so forth and then they sent me off to the local dame's school and sent me away to boarding school, prep school which I would never do to any child that I had and then on to Marlborough and now I am carrying am I saying too much?

J.W. : Yes, no, no, no, please carry on no, no, no, carry on please.

Mr. H. : Yes okay just sort of carry on and you stop me okay and then that's from Marlborough I was desperate to get into at Marlborough I spent quite a lot of time around on the railway so to speak, and since when have Great Western let schoolboys drive their engines as one would be passenger sitting on the station and I was on the shunting engine at Marlborough I knew the local signal boxes I was desperately keen to get into Army Railways and I actually volunteered partly to avoid getting sent down the mines as a Bevin boy, I volunteered my last summer term at Marlborough and I left in at Christmas 1943 that's right and actually I joined up before and I joined up and did my training at Lanark before I was eighteen I was still fairly young. Well with that

background the, well I should say I did get down to the home of Army Railways at Longmore and had quite an amusing time but with the background and so forth it was expected that I should put myself forward for commission and as at the selection board I was graded not yet now this was not unusual because they really were, the army really were trying very hard they'd get most of the people they wanted for the European theatre but some of us some of the youth mature at bit sooner and some a bit later and I was obviously one of the latter ones and I was sent on to the Army equivalent of Outward Bound the Highland Hillcraft Training Centre. Now in fact I could go on about this for quite a long time but it's not really germane to your project so I'd better not but it was after that via [Route On] which was the pre O.C.T.U. I was pink listed for India in company with other cadets and general sort of troops we sailed it doesn't really matter I can't remember the name of the ship just at the moment and we were one of the first convoys through the Med and the Suez canal and arrived at Bombay in the middle of Jan ... in 19 ... we're now talking about 1945 if I've got the dates right and this was of course a wonderful experience to be sent out to India at the Army's expense and we went by troop train to Kalyan which of course only about thirty-six miles out of Bombay and even there I managed to get involved in my as such spare time, well Kalyan was the inward bound trooping depot and there was plenty of time to go and visit signal boxes and get lists on engines and so forth, and then I was allocated to the Officers' Training School at Mhow, I don't know how much you want me to go into sort of detail there.

J.W. : You know, the more the better, anything you ... .

Mr. H. : I see, well, this was really quite amusing in a way because people generally, you could say that people hadn't, that India hadn't, the centre of India really hadn't been affected by the War and we were in quarters which were obviously, which dated back to the time of the Indian Mutiny, theses huge, lovely stone built barrack blocks and the cadets, I think there were two or three of us with a, I think we had, this was the first time we had a personal servant, so to speak, who looked after the three of us, and ordered the *bhiśtī* to bring in the hot water and of course the [?], the bathroom, was very bare and the *bhiśtī* heated the water on wood fires down the lines and the water, the hot water was carried in the old kerosene cans, petrol cans sort of thing, and tipped in and of course the important, the other, the important thing, the, I think the word is [*tutteē*] isn't it? For the toilet?

J.W. : I'm not sure.

Mr. H. : I'm not sure, but anyway whenever you used the toilet the sweeper who of course who was someone quite different, he must have kept an eye, I mean he must have known the natural functions, you might say of all the, because he'd rush in and clear the debris because there was no, obviously, there was no mains sanitation anyway at all. Well the Mess there was run by a retired British covenanted driver, railway driver, and I naturally got, Mr. Cadd I think his name was if I remember, I naturally got to know him,

and eventually through him I got one or two lifts on, again, footplates, trips on the railway, and there was one somewhat discouraging evening as it turned out, when I cycled out down the line to meet this, the idea of meeting the train at the next crossing point and putting the bicycle in the van, and coming back on the engine, and unfortunately I was a bit late and I was getting very worried about this, and I came to this bridge which had no side bit at all, it was a question of stepping over the sleepers over the [?] below, and if anything had happened I'd have had to have hung the army bicycle over the sleepers and lie down in the track, because there was no footway either side and darn it, and as I said I was late, I missed the crossing point and I had to cycle all the way back, and by the time I got back it was well after dark, and I got challenged for not having my sleeves rolled down and being in shorts, probably as was the custom, as then, anti-malarially after dark you, long sleeves and long trousers, however that's just a sort of by line, and I was actually commissioned three days after V-J day, if I remember rightly, and I would have gone on to Burma, as it was I went up to a jungle, oh, I could say an interlude there, I think I, our short spell of leave, a friend of my father's, John Sergeant, at that time was the Education Advisor to the Government of India and he had a, one of those very sort of upmarket bungalows, the suburbs of New Delhi, and he very kindly let me stay with him for my leave, but curiously he, for some reason, hadn't got a spare room and I was lodged with a friend and I can remember towards the end, well this was after the War, but of course, but whilst alcohol, there was no problem with it in India, the good stuff, the whisky, and so forth was in pretty short supply, and when I went over after we'd had our sort of drinks in the evening, dusk, went over to change for dinner there was this unopened bottle of Scotch sitting on the dressing table for me to have while I had my bath, and it, that was an interlude, you might say, and then I went on to a jungle training division at Saharanpur, you'll know where that is, Saharanpur, between Delhi and Dehra Dun, and it was jungle territory, and we were, I can't remember much of the detail, what I do remember is that some stage or other we had a sort of open day or a sports day and we sent some of the transport up to Dehra Dun to collect some nurses to add a bit of interest you might say, a bit of female company kind of thing, and at the end of the day in the evening before we were due to return it must have been the start of the monsoon season, because we had an almighty storm and the, of course the rivers were in spate, and of course a lot of these crossings, these fords, well the first lorry got through with the nurses and I think it must have been two, with their senior, she was a bit of a harridan if I remember rightly, she got back all right, but she was fairly worried, and I remember returning with the empty lorry, and the headlights picked out one of the, the second lorry on an island in the middle of this spate, and I must have waded through, and I remember falling and getting my watch underwater, which my parents had bought for me before I went out, I've still got it upstairs, a *JW Benson*, and the watch was never the same since I don't think it worked despite the attentions of an Indian watch repairer and of course we then carried these nurses back to the other lorry and shuttled, so that was that. I also remember getting a wound in my leg which took year ... ages, weeks if not months to heal, it would form an apparently innocuous scab over the top but underneath it was still extremely unhealthy and this

must have been before the days of whatever drugs they use now, it took ages. However, because the Japanese war, Burma, had been more or less finished, had been run down, I never got to Bom ... , Burma, and from there I was posted to the North West Frontier and I would have the journey by train, well of course now, I suppose first I went to the regimental centre at Bareilly and I'd be detailed off, and I took the train across Northern India, Lahore up to Rawalpindi, and would change there to a local train to Kundian, and then the Heatstroke Express as we called the little two foot six gauge train. Have you travelled in that?

J.W. : I haven't, no.

Mr. H. : Not, no, probably people don't use the train anything like so much now, the roads must be opened up, anyway you, you stopped off at the junction for Tank called [Lukimahwat] and they'd be chickens scratching around in the station yard which in fact, of course, happened to be next day's dinner, you had the previous day's chicken for the curry, a very good curry if I remember, and it carried on to Bannu and you would find your way to the Government Rest House there, and you would wait, you'd hang on until the next convoy, which if I remember rightly was run by [Rai Sāhab Kubaron], these were very civilian trucks which took the troops, probably the officer would sit in the cab which was probably reasonably fatal so to speak, I think tribal territory started about fifteen miles along the road from Bannu and they'd be twenty or thirty lorries in the convoy I suppose, if they were big ones they'd run in two or three flights, I can't really remember, and I was never involved with the detail of that, and I would arrive at my partic ... my destination, Gardai, which was well up into tribal territory, and this was a collection of what were referred to as Wana huts.

J.W. : Right.

Mr. H. : I don't know if you've come across these.

J.W. : I've come across the term.

Mr. H. : But they were mud walls with tent rooftop over the top, hopefully you had two, the double roof over the top, but as you'll know the frontier, there are extremes of temperature from really boiling hot, very dry, with snow in winter and sub-zero temperatures more or less, well sub-zero Centigrade but it was certainly pretty chilly and they were very draughty. I've got a feeling that whilst the huts that we lived in, and normally even as a second lieutenant I just had one hut to myself, and then the mess was interesting because there were, the table in fact was at ground, no surely at somewhere, anyway the mess, your feet went into a trench and you sat either side of the trench, and the table was between two, these two parallel trenches but it's, that may have been, we may have constructed those when we went out on a road on a column, but I, maybe it's going back a bit the memory's, may be not the details, a bit unexact no, I suppose even

in Gardai we must have had a proper sort, a fairly sort of mess, maybe there was even a permanent building but I don't have any memories of that but the memory that I do have if, that we were going to move on to Razmak and our relief battalion came up and I shared with a certain lieutenant and the lieutenant was a Lieutenant Newby, I think I'm right in saying that, and he had a large Alsatian dog with him and that's fine, I'm okay with dogs, and we duly moved up to Razmak, which is the end of the road if I remember rightly, the road used to go on to Jandola.

J.W. : I think so.

Mr. H. : But the part between Razmak and Jandola we had not opened again following a raid by the local insurgent, the Faqir of Ipi.

J.W. : Yep.

Mr. H. : That's a name familiar to you is it?

J.W. : Oh yes, yes.

Mr. H. : I see. Anyway, after I'd been in Razmak a while we heard that this dog had died and of course the theory was that it would have been rabies and so anyone who'd been as close, associated, and of course I was one of several started on this course of rabies injections and they do seven down one side of your stomach and seven the other, and by the time you've got past the first five it's beginning to get a bit sore. Well I think they'd just reached down one side when word came through that it hadn't been rabies so it was all to no avail. Well the photographs I showed you sort of Razmak, it was fairly civilised but in those days if you had an E.N.S.A party up, you know what E.N.S.A do you?

J.W. : No.

Mr. H. : You haven't come across that, well was it Entertainment National for Soldiers and Armies and Air Force, it was a semi-government organisation associated with the forces for providing entertainment for troops but in that part of the world women were not permitted, so it had to be sort of one-sided, but I don't remember any detail of that but certainly if there was a party up it didn't include any white women because the Pathans would do awful, worse things to them than they would do if, with any man that they caught, well I mean it was bad enough for thé men, I mean you expected to lose your whatever the phrase is, I can't think of something, well you can imagine anyway, you'd end up being castrated anyway, and the women rather worse so they didn't. They'd be a brigade, group, four or five battalions and some artillery, it was quite a wide area and as I mentioned when showing the photographs the football pitch was outside the actual perimeter itself, and further out still were these detached, out based piquets so

that we had a means of covering the ground from outside should there be any insurgent action by the Pathans. Now as I understood it there was a sort of three-line system of policing, you might say, because that's what we were doing. You stared off with the *khassadars* who were recruited locally. I don't know how they were selected, because of course all the liaison with the local people was through the Political Agent, a civilian appointment or a government appointment, and I've no doubt that the colonel and the brigadier would be on speaking terms with the second lieutenant, or by now I'd probably got my second pip would be, so I wouldn't know the detail of that and then you had the Scouts who were recruited but didn't serve, they served in a different part of the Frontier, of course, from where they were recruited and then you had the regular army. I can't say much about the Scouts, but I did, where, we had a delightful major who had had close associations with the Scouts, he had served in Fort Sandeman, I'm trying to remember his name, unfortunately I've got no documents, it may be that in my letters I can pick out one or two names, he'd be someone I'd like to meet again, there was one or two from there. I should say that the battalion I was posted to was the equivalent of an Indian Army territorial battalion, I can't remember what term they used for these, and breaking off a bit, I should have explained perhaps that before you were commissioned you had the choice of taking, of being commissioned into the British Army or the Indian Army but in either case you would serve at that stage with the Indian Army, there was no question of serving or commanding British troops, and I was perfectly happy to accept this and I thought probably it would be easier to serve one master rather than two and this actually paid off when I was demobbed because I was demobbed from the ship at Liverpool ultimately and I had no class ed. reserve and furthermore people who'd been commissioned into the British service coming back with me on the same ship in my own demob group, they were put off at Port said and did six months service in Palestine as it was then, so it actually paid off to be in the Indian Army, but one disadvantage was that there was absolutely no contact one I was demobbed, I never heard anything more other than a little chit from the Field Controller of Military Accounts at Poona demanding the sum of, I don't know what it was, but we'll call it thirty-six rupees, thirty-six, five ānās and two paisā for some piece of equipment which he had alleged that I hadn't handed in, but naturally we never corresponded but reverting, anyway, to my service up there, fairly, oh, one advantage of serving with the Indian Army was that you enjoyed the holidays of all faiths and there was an occasion when the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers challenged the British officers to a mule race and they thought of course the only way you could do this was outside in the dried up [?] is the word, was it [?]?, was a dried up river or river.

J.W. : Possibly, I'll have to check.

Mr. H. : Anyway, you can check that, anyway, a dried up [?] using a more general term and they thought to cushion the *sāhab's* bums, I should explain that mules were not riding animals, they were purely pack animals of course, and to soften the *sāhab's* bums they thought they'd supply blankets, well that was, they were two more surfaces to slip

on and I was soon, so to speak, arse over tit as you might put it, and I suspect that was the bang, I probably fell on my right hand side and that started the degeneration of my hip which ultimately was replaced two years ago but it could have been bad ski-ing technique ultimately, one doesn't know, so anyway that was okay, and I think at one stage the colonel, a delightful man, Colonel Simmons, who was managing director of a brewery in the Channel Islands, but that wasn't, you couldn't very well get Channel Islands beer out to the Frontier at that time ultimately, and he sent me down on a signals course at Poona, he wanted me to become the Battalion Signals Officer, so I had a happy travel by rail down to Poona and called in at Bombay on the way, so to speak, and probably travelled in the Deccan Queen, which was the sort of crack train on the G-I-B, the Indian railways are absolutely fascinating to me because, cause they were incredibly labour intensive but they were run entirely on British lines, they were entirely developed by British folk and there was no question of partition, partition hadn't raised its ugly head then, and that was fine, and the sergeants organised a weekly gramophone recital, I seem to remember that was on a Wednesday evening, and I picked there, they played part of [?], I don't know if you're into classical music, or semi-classical music ... .

J.W. : I don't know the piece.

Mr. H. : At all, but it's a delightful tone poem describing the course which could, allegedly it's the Danube when it starts off, and when does the Rhine become, no wait a moment, there's one river which changes its name in flowing through Europe, it starts off up in the mountains and the music portrays rather like in the Highlands here, over the rocks and so forth and gradually as the river builds up so the music builds up to, and it absolutely caught my fancy and when I came home it was the very first record that I bought when I came home, and it's one that I would play often, and it, it would spoil it playing it too often, it's just a contradiction, isn't it? Anyway, I enjoyed the Army Signals course, came back to the Battalion and used my wits, and of course I had to learn Morse and one of the photographs there, and as I mentioned to you before, we sent up the recording, the funds didn't allow for the radios to be kept, to keep the batteries going and we had to set up visual communication, well basically within the company you used the Morse flag, the big white flag with a blue stripe across it and so you go, for a dot, and the over to the right hand side for a, and I had to learn Morse which I can still send, but I can't read it and I learnt this at the hands of the Signals *naik* who was an Ahir, which prompts me into mentioning the composition of the Battalion. The regular battalions would have had two companies of Jats, who are rather solid farmer types from the Rohtak, Gurgaon and Hisar districts around Delhi, and I think there was a fourth one, and incidentally our little four-wheeled carriers were named after those districts. Well by the time that this unit was, this battalion was brought into life so to speak they'd run out of the medium grade Hindus, I don't think the Jats are sort of top grade Hindus, they're sort of two or three from the top, so they made up with Ahirs, A-H-I-R, I don't know really where they came from but I think they were subservient, slightly subsidiary or slightly lower caste but a, very good types and then of course they were balanced as

all Indian Army units had been since the Mutiny, with Mussulmans and the had a company of Punjabi Mussulmans, who were regarded as being a cut above the Mussulman Rajputs, who as their title suggests had been converted from Hinduism rather later, and we, on anything other than operational duties, guard duties and in the lines, their *pagrīs* included, the Mussulmans had their curler in the centre, and the tail of the *pagrī* was starched and the Punjabi Mussulmans kept theirs in a close, sort of upright bit, and the Mussulman Rajputs had theirs sort of fanned out, and that was quite interesting, the Mussul ... the Hindus of course didn't wear anything at all, and the Jats wound their *pagrī* with a rather sort of flat top and the Ahirs wound theirs like the *pagrī* that a Mussulman Rajput would do, but without the curler in the centre. Have I got those names right for the curler and the [?].

J.W. : As far as I know.

Mr. H. : As far as you know, well you can check up on somebody whose memory is better than mine, awful that the situation is. Now and then we had, in the mess the sort of cook's assistant was a bit of a lower grade and then we had the usual collection of sweepers, a *bhiśtī* yes I suppose who would be non, who would be enrolled as a non-combatant, that's right, well our job was to act as the final back up if the locals, if the, Waziristan's, our area, of course, was Waziristan, so do you call them, would they be Waziristanis?

J.W. : Wazirs.

Mr. H. : Wazirs that's right, you had the local leader, sort of, the Faqir of Ipi whose name is obviously familiar to you, and every now and then they'd get a bit too obstreperous. Of course, there was a fairly definitive code, the actual road itself, the public road was neutral territory, and if you strayed, but that didn't stop the Pathans shooting up or trying to shoot up any convoys on the road but as an individual, I think, you were okay on the road itself, but away from the road you were at risk so that we were not allowed outside the cantonment except as an armed force, and the, let me see, we would have to open the road to allow passage of the convoys as I mentioned earlier. If I recall it would be about twice a week in winter, in summer, and less frequently in winter, about three times a fortnight and the procedure would be, it was a, there was a regular sort of drill and there were manuals for it which I doubt if I've got still, but you had the advance guard sort of covering the headquarters, and before you had stabilised, before you had covered your bit of the road the guard, the mobile folk in the valley so to speak, had to cover the small unit, a platoon or so who the, whoever was in charge that day would decide which hills he was going to send piquets up, and he'd send the platoon piquet up the, to the top of this hill during the time of the road opening, and obviously you had to be prepared to give them covering fire going up, and at that point between the company and the platoon you would be using Morse or whistle as necessary. Between the battalion headquarters and the companies you'd be using these 48 or later 46 pack

radios, which reminds me that down on the Signals course at Poona we had what was to be called a canal crossing exercise, I think we were, whatever it was we were stripped to the waist so to speak, and running around and it was a very cloudy day, that didn't stop you getting very hellish sunburnt, and to be sunburnt and to be, have to report sick was a, more or less an indictable offence, so you didn't, and the next day we had an exercise carrying these 488 sets and I can remember the agony of that, because my back was extremely sore indeed. Anyway going back to the Frontier, by now think by now we'd changed from the variable 46, 48 sets to 46, which had three pre-assigned channels which, you would choose which you were to use, and I remember they had with them they had throat microphones which weren't the handiest thing, which were all right for the regular person who was carrying the set and doing the actual communication, the signaller as we would call him ...

Mr. H. : At the time we were, as I explained at the time we were commissioned, you would have to serve with Indian troops and I think we must have been offered the units that we would serve with, and I don't know what brought me, but I joined the Jat Group, which was the 9th in the reorganised list of 1922 and so I was with the Jat Regiment, and I was with the 9th Battalion of the, and the Jat Regiment was number 9, so I was with the 9th 9th Jats, but I can't go into, but I can't remember, as I said, I can't rem ... what they called it, sort of Auxiliary Force or something, but it was fully commissioned it ... .

J.W. : I've heard it called the Jat Regiment. Right, to take you completely back, what did you know or what did you think about India before you went, before you were commissioned, did you have ... ?

Mr. H. : Well before I went out I think my only sort of feelings were that this is an opportunity to see the world that I wouldn't otherwise get and I don't think I had formed any views at all of the Indian, of the set up in India, I would like to think that I went as a completely open and young mind, one knew no more than the history one had acquired rather inadequately at school.

J.W. : I see, right, and what about other people around you, did you ever hear anything from them about India at all, their sort of perceptions?

Mr. H. : I'm sorry to say that I don't have any recollection of that at all.

J.W. : That's okay, that's no problem at all, and you were saying obviously you, you sort of had a choice in going to India, would you say ... ?

Mr. H. : No, didn't have any choice in going to India, not in going to India as such, the only choice was the army assigned you to a particular training centre and I think Mhow was as good as any and I forgot to mention too it was run by, the brigadier was a very

keen ornithologist and on the field carrying [?] exercise part of the target were these huge earthenware [*chuttis*], you know what I mean by a [*chutti*] filled with earth and of course if you targeted it a, them, they made a, they exploded love ..., beautifully. Well he, the ornithologist part came in because the, instead of firing at a [*chutti*] as a target, some enterprising cadet fired at a rising [?] crane, and these were sacred birds and the brigadier knew the nesting habits of that particular family of [?] cranes, and of course it would have caused great offence to the local population, and that poor cadet was returned to his unit and I think the company which he served were put back a month or a week on training or something like that, and what was your original question there?

J.W. : It was to do with, but if you had had the choice would you, you said you saw going to India as an opportunity to see a part of the world so would you say therefore you would have gone to India had you been given the free choice?

Mr. H. : Err, I don't think I could specially say that, no, I mean that reaction of seeing the, India, as, going to India, seeing, as part of the world I think would be a post event reaction probably. I mean at that age and with the army whatever you thought didn't matter so that you accepted what came to you.

J.W. : Oh sure, and what about your, you've told me about your sort of training there, but did you have any training at all in a cultural sense, did they give you any training at all about the culture, the place, any sort of linguistic training while you were there?

Mr. H. : That makes, that needs a bit of thinking because I really can't remember that we were given any training but it doesn't mean to say that we weren't. Certainly we had the service of a *munśhi* for learning the language or for trying to learn the language but I really don't think, really can't remember anything special, being told anything specially about the sort of cultural system, explained, I don't know how we picked it up, I mean certainly at this stage of my life one is perfectly familiar with that, no I can't really remember. Although in saying that we weren't given any, I'm sorry not to be more positive on that.

J.W. : Oh no, please don't worry, and what about when you first arrived, you said you arrived by ship in Bombay. Do you remember anything of hoe it first felt, what your first impressions were?

Mr. H. : Oh yes, the first impressions of India there, you lined up at the side of the ship looking across, because don't forget they'd had this almighty explosion of, I don't know whether you know of that, a mighty explosion of an ammunition ship in Bombay harbour.

J.W. : Yes I was reading about it the other day.

Mr. H. : And I think that the place was still not, I don't think they'd fully recovered from that, I can't remember just when it took place, and, but I do remember the sort of dockside with the sheds and the palm trees and the general sort of odour of the place that is that really does stick as it would in most peoples' minds, of course people don't get that now because they arrive by air.

J.W. : Yes of course, and, let me think, what was your sort of routine, you were describing the training and the general sort of life, but what was your routine, can you say a little more about your routine from day to day in, say when you first arrived?

Mr. H. : When you first arrived, well, you'd be, we were in these, if I remember right they were pretty airy barrack blocks with the, yes, that would be our introduction to the string *charpoy* and of course, and outside each barrack block would be the *chaivālā* who would provide the early morning tea, which of course was an innovation at that stage, we wouldn't have had anybody assigned to us as staff. So you'd queue for your *chai*, your morning tea, and I suppose the showers and latrines were pretty elementary and the sort of cook hall and so forth. In Kalyan itself there was no training because it was the trooping depot through which everybody coming to India passed, although they were assigned to their units and that was another railway journey of course, so there would have been, yes, this is where we come into it, there was the Army Bureau of Education or something, there was another name, it, you won't have come across it, but I can't just remember at the moment, and I'm sure there would have been lectures at that point, there must have been lectures, they'd be lectures on medical care and so forth and how to, we would already have been briefed about the malaria precautions and so on and I know that on the trooping, on the ship trooping out this, perhaps an aside but you can have it for the slight, the rather porky, childish humour of it. We were given *Mepacrin* tablets to take everyday, I think it was two in the morning and two in the afternoon or something, and they weren't, and these of course turned the ends of your fingers and your nails yellow, I don't know, have you come across *Mepacrin*?

J.W. : Not as such.

Mr. H. : No it's developed since then and so on, but this was supposed to build up resistance to malaria and it turned your system, your urine was particularly yellow and so forth, and tended to get a bit of, yellow skin, and there wasn't a proper check that these were taken and I was very indignant over this, felt that the cadets, the troops should be taking these properly and the day I was mess orderly and all these tablets were left on the table, and I cleared the table in the, in our messing area and I scooped them up and I kept them for tea time, and when I went out to get the two dixies for tea I popped all these *Mepacrin* tablets into one of the dixies which went up to the other end of the table, and my end of the table it was all right and of course they gave it, they had a bit of flavour too, it didn't do the tea any good (laughs) but that was a bit childish anyway, but damn it, I was only about seven ... , no I had turned my eighteenth birthday, another

aspect of my immaturity. Of course when we got up to, when we got on to Mhow there was, of course, there were the various aspects of the military training and so forth, and interspersed with sessions with the *munshi* for learning the language. I can't, I suppose there was a library, those who wanted could read, but I should think they were probably hopelessly old fashioned that sort of thing and so forth, and I can't really remember possibly we'll find something from the letters, I don't know.

J.W. : And do you, say not just with the *munshi*, but with the initial, with the *chaivālā* and these sort of people, what was you relations like, what were, rather, your relations like with them?

Mr. H. : Well you couldn't say that there was any sort of relationship because one hadn't got the language, they would have some very basic Indian, English words and so forth but there were actually no relations at all.

J.W. : Right, and what about later when you had orderlies and this sort of thing, was there ... ?

Mr. H. : Yes, one did sort of chat and ask them about their village life, a bit about their village life and so forth and they would listen because most of them had no experience outside their bit of army life, their village life, so you could perhaps tell them a bit about England and so forth, I would have loved to have invited my own orderly over to Britain to have seen something like it but of course we didn't get on ... I said I left that unit so I never kept up with him or anything like that, I mean I never, some, I suppose some of the officers perhaps would have carried on a correspondence but I didn't.

J.W. : Right, and have you any idea, as much as you can have, how they in turn saw you and their relation with you, what do you think that might have been?

Mr. H. : Not really.

J.W. : I know it's difficult.

Mr. H. : Not much idea because within the discipline of the army it would be improper to discuss your colleagues and so forth, the, and the army had been organised since the Mutiny, I suppose it developed gradually, but since the N-C-O's, *havildars* and the *naiks*, you didn't have, now hold on a minute, you didn't have the equivalent of the English, of the British warrant officers, you had the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers, *jemadar*, *subadar*, and the *subadar-major*, and they, the *jemadars* would, can, they commanded, yes, I really, I'm not sure how you would, whether you're familiar with the set up as it was then, in a British battalion you have junior officers, lieutenants, commanding commanding platoons, and you might, if there was a spare one around have, no I don't think a captain ever commands a platoon, no, no the companies, I'm

talking about an infantry battalion, would normally be commanded by a major, the adjutant would be a captain and the quartermaster would be a captain, that's the post [?] they'd be one or two spare captains floating around, so to speak, and the commanding officer would normally be a lieutenant-colonel. You had anything, in an Indian, in a British battalion you had, I can't remember now, but if I, you had something like forty British officers. In an Indian battalion you only had fifteen British officers and the term British officer, incidentally, includes Indians who had the King's Emergency Commission, I'm using the term British officer to include them as well, but the smaller units, the platoons, were commanded by Viceroy Commissioned Officers, either *jemadar* or *subadar*, and the company second-in-command was a *subadar* and the company commander was a British officer, that was as low as the British officers went and they had the quarter, I think had a Viceroy's commissioned assistant, the adjutant was the British officer with two King's Commissioned, so to speak, as opposed to Viceroy's commissioned and then the non-executive senior Viceroy's Commissioned Officer was the *risal...*, *subadar-major*, or in a cavalry unit the *risaldar-major*, and he was a direct line to the colonel commanding the unit, and you never knew as a young British officer, and not really having full command of the language, you had to be very careful ... I always felt you had to be very careful how you spoke, what you spoke, because it could go the alternative way through the *jemadar* or the *subadar* to the *subadar-major*, the Colonel's ear, so you were a bit, you were a bit circum ... obviously a bit circumspect certainly in discussing anything on military lines and I hadn't got, really, sufficient command of the language to talk about the village life, things sort of outside the village, so there wasn't an awful lot of interchange or exchange of information in that sort of way, this is what really makes me wonder whether I'm being of much use to you (laughs).

J.W. : No, no, no, you are very much, so, and presumably you would always be based in barracks or cantonments or some sort of area distinct from ... ?

Mr. H. : Yes, rather less so when you're up on the Frontier cause I mention a place like Gardai, a staging post you could best describe that as, a sort of permanent camp you might say, I was no, I was never on detachment which would be the alternative to what you were, the question you put.

J.W. : So there was never really any interaction with civilian life?

Mr. H. : Civilian life, no, very little, I mean there was a wee bit, I mean I can remember in Mhow, the military cantonment was outside Mhow town itself, err, but for various reasons you didn't, you could go sort of into the town in the evening, we had a great deal of spare, free time and so forth, and in that part, of course, you could go off cycling, you could go sort of through the village, round the town, visit the bazaar and so forth and eat out in the town in the evening, a very nice Chinese restaurant and one particular aspect but this again is more civilian, is more sort of from the civilised thing, when I was on the

Army Signals course at Poona it could get very hot in the afternoon, and you more or less lay down on your *charpoy* in the afternoon to sort of sweat it out in the hot hours and you'd have a shower and feel pretty washed out about four o'clock and perhaps you might go down into the town, and the Indian government ran a series of sort of coffee shops and I can remember having the most beautiful iced coffee and little egg sandwiches and I've had a yen for egg and cress sandwiches ever since, but that didn't give you much mixing and I was probably a bit on the shy side and being of Scots parentage, perhaps, I mean, you didn't have much money to throw away anyway, so, because the pay was on the short side.

J.W. : Right, but had you, did you sort of yearn to mix at all, you say you were shy, but was there any sort of curiosity to get out into these places like you went for example on the railways, for example, is there ... ?

Mr. H. : Well, I was always interested with the railway and one reflection there, yes I could explain that, in the Kalyan area that was extremely British, and probably as near to one of our big, main line junctions, the person in the signal box whom we would, I mean, in a signal box of that nature we would have just one man, we used in those days to call a signalman and he would take the responsibility for signalling the trains between boxes, I don't know how much you sort of know about railway operation in that sort of way.

J.W. : Very little, I'm afraid.

Mr. H. : But essentially, in the old, in the old days the railway was divided up into block sections and the, you had one train on the line in a block section and we had a system known as the block, working, the signalman at A before wishing to send to B would enquire from B as to whether the line was clear, and if the line was clear, go back, I mean, 'One, three, pause, one' is, 'Line clear for ordinary passenger train', and signalman B would return back and he would operate the block indicator which would show that the line, as a reminder that he'd pegged up that line was clear, the train would leave A and A would send two bells, 'Train entering section', which B would acknowledge and change the indicator to, 'Train on line' and that would repeat in the modern system, it worked at both ends so both signalmen had a visual indication of what the situation was, they would record it in their register, and when the train arrived at B you completed the tale then, so that nothing got left in the section, the signalman at B would give, 'Two, pause one' - 'Train out of section' and then the instrument was returned to normal, and that was the basic system which has worked up to the present, and the signal. This was repeated in India absolutely to a tee, but the person who was sufficiently high caste to take the responsibility for doing this signalling and recording it, the signalling, between the two boxes, it was beneath his dignity to have the graft, the manual graft, of pulling the levers so that they employed an illiterate, low caste bloke to have the actual, and he would work under the upper man's direction, but in fact he knew

the service, he'd make the moves, he knew the bells and so on, he was perfectly capa ... , he'd got a brain the same as everybody else naturally, and he was perfectly capable of coping, so that was how it worked, and in some variations, you, a, Deolali, found in that way they had three boxes, A, B and C in the Deolali station area and the cabin man doing the actual signalling would be in B, say, and he'd signal the train to the next station whose name I can't remember now, but at A and C and indeed in B as well they'd be the lever man as well, but if the lever man at box A was required to operate a signal, a warning signal, when the van, when it was suitable for him to do it, the cabin man, the cabin man would transfer what we called an annex key from a dummy lever in his box, put it on the instrument shelf, it was kind of an electric lock which caused a loud bell to ring in box A and he'd take the key out and unlock his signal to the cabin man, the lever man in box a would take, so there were variations on it, and on crossing points the Assistant Stationmaster on duty would be qualified to work the signalling and operate the signal line instruments and so forth, and he would have the same control over the lever man at either end of the passing point, that was something, and in the days of the steam locos possibly on a main line trip whereas we would use. We'd have the driver and the fireman, and the driver could be a superior Indian or he could, as I mentioned about the mess manager now, as I mentioned, or if I haven't I was about to, he'd been a man, an Englishman, a Britisher who'd come out after the First World War under covenant to work for the Indian Railways for 'x' number of years, but he wouldn't do, he wouldn't touch the firing, he'd come to work in a white duck suit sort of thing, certainly the guards did, and you might have two on the footplate, two Indians on the footplate of lower caste to do the firing and the oiling and so forth that was a bit of, mind it was darn hot, wasn't it, and the average Britisher would have been exhausted in the heat so that was a minor, that was the you might say. that was the, because of my interest in the railway was probably, I don't say the deepest way, but that was my sort of contact, my principal contact with the civilian you might say.

J.W. : And moving on a slightly different tack, what was your diet that you ate while you were there, would soldiers like yourself eat ... ?

Mr. H. : Thanks for calling us soldiers, I think we ate, basically I think we ate British style food, yes, I can't give the detail, I can't remember what we had for breakfast and so on, but it would be British style, it was exceptional, I mean it was regarded as exceptional to have a curry certainly in our officers' mess in Razmak, a delightful little building as you probably saw from the photograph. We ate British style food, and the greeting was from the mess orderly when you came in for breakfast and there would have been porridge and cornflakes and this sort of thing, '*Aap kis kism ke andar aaj, sāhab*?', ''How would you like your eggs done this morning?', so you had the choice and the, you didn't ask for scrambled egg, you asked for rumble tumble which I think is an excellent description of scrambled egg, well made scrambled egg, but we did have one curry during the week, a plain, when I say a plain curry, plain rice and mutton or beef or something for curry, I can't remember what we had for the third, we had an

Indian style vegetable and, but on a Sunday in the main meal in the middle of the day we had almost a *barā khānā*, and, but it would be chicken pilau with a curry, side curry and vegetables and chapattis and certainly I enjoyed that, and I've never had anything like it since because of course what is done over here for us is not what you get over there.

J.W. : I know exactly what you mean.

Mr. H. : Then the troops, the *javāns* which, the collective term, the sort of friendly way, yea, I mean the official term, they were *sipāhīs*, but you called them colloquially *javāns*, the young men, and the orderly officer of the day was expected to sample their food. Now their style, they started life, they started the day it was the early morning queue to go out and use the outbased toilets and it seems the Indians achieved very regular habits and they would have something pretty light at the start of the day, and they would have their main meal at the, some time in the middle of the morning which meant that we had to be on the ball pretty early for the sort of early training and so forth, and I can remember getting pretty pissed the night before and going out whether I'd had a bit of porridge or something, clinging to the side of a carrier, probably in K-D shorts, absolutely freezing, feeling pretty rough, indeed they'd had something and we, I, couldn't face breakfast, but then as the orderly officer you would go and inspect the cookhouse and sample the curry, and cause you'd be familiar with, the meat had to be slaughtered according to the religious requirements, there's the [?] where, I can never remember, you get the head off in one chop, and of course the Gurkhas were particularly adept at that with their *kukrīs*, and the halal is the Mahommedan killing, isn't it, where it bleeds to death, most unhealthy, so that meant double lot of supplies of course because you had Hindus and Mussulmans all the way through, it must have been quite complicated, but they only, if I remember rightly, I think they only got meat about twice a week, they brewed up some darn good vegetable curries and it was a pleasure to sample these, but of course you did so at the risk of your own lunch, because of course this would be, sort of, about half past ten, eleven in the morning, and you'd be having your meal about half past twelve or something, I don't know quite, I can't work out really how we worked this phasing out, of course what in those days we called pack rations, they were a bit grim in as much as yes, we did seem to have Indian, more Indian style food there, because we got flat, we got flat chapattis probably baked hard by the time they'd been, because essentially a chapatti has to be eaten fresh off the iron, and what are those horrid things, you have them in Cornwall and Devon, pasties.

J.W. : Pasties.

Mr. H. : A sort of curry pasty, rather poor puff pastry that got thoroughly soaked with the curry sauce and so forth, certainly we had those when we were out on the road opening days and out on exercises and so forth.

J.W. : And what about contact with home, was that very important to you while you were there, did you write letters? You were saying the letters.

Mr. H. : Yea we exchanged, my parents were pretty good because remember I'd been at school since I was nine and where at school, boarding school, well, let me see, 1935, yea, it must have been when I was about nine and you were sat down to read, to write a letter each week. Well, that habit easily transferred itself to the army and I tried to write home most weeks and equally the parents, I'd get a letter from either mother or father, or perhaps one from each, each week. Yea, contact from home, with home I think was fairly important. I can't say how it compared with what contact that others had. somehow it was not the sort of thing one, I didn't find myself discussing it at all but I sort of accepted it, and that actually prompted me, to my regret, later on to, when I got the opportunity of taking a month's leave the, it was particularly applicable to forces, to folk who'd been out for much longer than me and you may have heard of LE-AP, Leave in Addition to Python.

J.W. : I haven't, no.

Mr. H. : No, it depends really, but the, after the War it was set up and it may have been while the Burma war was still on, folk who'd been out for a long, long time got the opportunity of a month's leave back in England or Britain, and, which was called LE-AP. Python was the long-term leave and I can't remember it what circumstances it arose because that was the battalion term, but in the Indian Army it was called S.L.I.U.K. (Mr. Henderson pronounces this 'slick') - Short Leave in the United Kingdom, and I really should have, I should not have taken that in retrospect but obviously even though I'd only been out for about two and a half years the idea of having a month back home was a great draw and you weren't, there wasn't air transport and I went home on troopship and on both occasions, sorry, both occasions, I'd better explain what I mean. When I completed that month's leave at home and I reported to the London District assembly Centre, which turned out to be my subsequent headquarters, because it was in the Great Central Hotel, and I'd passed through that when I went out originally, that was where all folk, going out to the East anyway, assembled, and as I said, it subsequently became the headquarters of the British Rail Boards back up there, of course I couldn't actually identify the room I'd actually slept in, but anyway when I'd actually got to go back after my S.L.I.U.K. to my unit they, 'Oh we've got work for you'.

(The tape runs out)

Mr. H. : Through the inward bound trooping depot at Kalyan and yea, this was a bit of a joke because the, what did they call the, the transport officer, the railway transport officer, the R-T-O claimed to not to know where my unit was and I said, 'Well it'll be up on the Frontier, just give me a warrant to Bannu and I'll get there on the convoy', and anyway I landed up, I got as far in the broad gauge and in those days you travelled from

Bombay on the old did we call it the North West Frontier, North West Frontier Mail probably.

J.W. : The Frontier Mail?

Mr. H. : The Frontier Mail, that's right, from Bombay on the B-B- and C-I not the G-I-P does that, do those initials mean anything to you?

J.W. : I was just trying to work them out in my head.

Mr. H. : Well you could, because they were still in the English companies and that was the B-B, Bombay, [Barodia] and Central India and then ran up through [?] eventually got to Delhi and the G-I-P, the Great Indian Peninsular Railway went more through the centre of India to the North-East, it was the principal route to Calcutta, and then it sort of turned off northwards to Delhi to use, the Frontier Mail was run by the B-B and C-I and took you right through to Peshawar. I would probably have disembarked at Rawalpindi and there was the occasion, I can't just remember the situation, but it may have been coming back then when I slept out on the station roof at Rawalpindi because the rest rooms were full of course the essential difference, or the big difference as you may have acquired the knowledge, certainly the upper class you took your own bedding roll with you, you had this big canvas valise with the mattress and the sheets and so forth made up and you spread this on the bunk and that was your own bed, and the, though it was perfectly simple to put this on the station roof and I can remember the dawn, I suppose deep purple, I suppose eventually paling to sort of pink it was Rawalpindi if I remember rightly, it's not exactly surrounded by mountains but there are mountains in the distance as you come up through Attock and so forth and that was fine, and I took the train out to the branch train eventually to the broad gauge railhead on the east, I think it was [Kalabagh] and way back across Northern India to Bareilly which if I remember rightly is East of Saharnpur and then I was assigned, I was posted back to the 2nd Battalion which had just been reformed, and they were at Kohat so I doubled back again. Well this was a very different kettle of fish. The Jats had two battalions captured at Singapore and this 2nd Battalion had just been reformed and they had some of the original members of the Battalion together with some from the 15th battalion which were popularly regarded as being jailbirds. It wasn't a very brilliant commanding officer and they had all the, they had all the Regimental silver it was a pre-war battalion, the 2nd, they had the Regimental silver and the band which I've shown you in the nice dress and so forth, and this was definitely a battalion which was considerably up market from the 9th which I'd been with and it wasn't long before I was made the Mess secretary. I thought the daily mess rate was appalling, high, because I think the mess staff, the cook, the [?] had been allowed to buy the stuff in penny numbers the sort of comestible stuff in penny numbers in the bazaar instead of getting it through the Rice Corps, which was the colloquial name for the Royal Indian Army Service Corps or the I-A Service Corps, and I made them get their stuff in bulk, like tea and rice and flour, dried goods and so forth,

and it brought the messing down quite a rate. They actually had a civilian mess butler, the [*abdah*] and they tried to make it a bit more formal. A side line here. I had been provided with, oh yes, this might interest, you got a mess, you got a uniform allowance but I was too mean to spend it. Now when I first joined up originally, because I was in the Home Guard at school as well as the School Corps, this was quite amusing, I was a sergeant in the Corps and a private in the Home Guard and the Company Commander or the Corps Commander at school wouldn't allow us, wouldn't go to the expense of converting the Corps, the Junior Training Corps, the O.T.C.s Corps into modern, we were still in First War, which is puttees in the Corps, but of course we had battle dress in the Home Guard, so I took my, when you joined up if you got an bat ... , army if you were in the Home Guard you took your battle dress with you, and that was one of the two uniforms that you had in Britain. Well I took this, the one that I was, the other one that I was issued with as a private had the utility style blouse with an open front, it, the fly front, but my Home Guard one had the fly front for the blouse as well as the trousers of course, so I took that into the army with me and when I got out to India one of the *darzīs* turned it inside out and remade it and it looked just like new, because they were very clever and that was okay, our Battalion commander in the Frontier, Colonel Simmons, didn't want, wasn't worried about whether a, their, officers came to mess even on a mess night in sort of formal dress and so my battle dress did perfectly well, so, but I got to the 2nd Battalion, this rather up market 2nd Battalion I just got away with it, only just I think, if I had served much longer I would had to have had to have gone out and bought myself service dress at great expense of course. Anyway the 2nd Battalion I can't really think what they did in Kohat but they made me animal transport officer there and I was in charge of forty-one mules and three chargers and so the daily parade was largely seeing that the chargers were properly groomed, I never sort of learned to ride but I shared a civilian bungalow with the road transport officer and he had acquired a very vigorous tomcat who would bring his or allow his companions or his female friends in and of course we hadn't got we hadn't furnished this bungalow properly, and it had a, it had umpteen rooms all opening out from each other and this cat would bring females in at night and the caterwauling that went on in there was nobody's business and when we, the battalion got transferred up to Tank and we had to load up - in the Kohat we were on the broad gauge, that's right, so we had to go to some transhipment point and at some stage or another I had this cat on a made up lead of army signals cable which consisted of steel wire but to improve the conductivity there was one strand of copper that didn't really matter, but this cat went mad at one stage or the other and what had happened was that one of the steel wires was necking him in the neck and of course I bent down to try and release this and so forth, and the cat actually went for me and I had a very uncomfortable cut, it darn nearly got poisoned, it didn't quite but then fairly soon after we got to Tank, and I can't remember any of the details at all, fairly soon the word came through the army, the Indian Army were getting rid of, by now we're talking about March 1947 and they were getting rid of the young British service officers and I got accelerated demob, and as I explained I travelled across India, we were actually issued with side arms which was quite exceptional, I mean that hadn't happened before and I

travelled across with a pistol and ammunition because of the potential unrest to Deolali for the inward, homeward bound trooping depot, but I can't remember much of the detail, and I set sail on my twenty-first birthday and that was really, that was absolutely the end of it. For some reason or other because I was demobbed straight from the ship the headquarters never kept up with me and only recently has my name been passed by a friend of mine who served in the Indian Grenadiers, the Bombay Grenadiers as they were originally, and I've started getting information from the Jat Regimental Association, but I've not come across any of the names, I think there's one exception any of the names that I recognised, and some of the people in the 2nd Battalion I honestly wouldn't want to know again, I would like to meet some of the people in the 9th Battalion but there's been a forty of fifty year gap, and quite honestly there's no, I feel no urge to sort of unite, but it is quite obvious that there is a terrific camaraderie still, the Indian Army particularly, and I think the Pakistan Army as well are even more British now in their adherence to the ceremonial and the mess silver and so forth, almost that they were in the times when it was the unified force, that aspect I think is quite amazing, it really is, and it's quite, if for what it's worth I do not, if you like I have some of the collec ... some of the circulars which have been received by me from the Jats and they've been terribly hospitable and the Officers' Association has been subscribing money for various good causes and so forth, and they've been terrific gatherings obviously.

J.W. : Right, speaking as someone of Scotch parentage as it were, were there other Scots in the Regiment with you at all?

Mr. H. : No, I mean if there were I knew nothing of it, I mean don't forget although I have a Scottish name, my grandparents, my paternal grandfather came from Kineff, my own father, there wasn't enough work for him and his brothers on the croft and he emigrated, trained, emigrated to England and trained himself with the Abbots of Kendal and set himself up as a shoe factory in Leicester, and then my father moved further South, I in fact was the first one back in Scotland so to speak, and I really had no Scottish connections until I came back here in 1960.

J.W. : Sure, right, did you ever notice any Scots out there at all?

Mr. H. : I'm afraid to say I can't recollect any at all, no, no, no.

J.W. : That's quite, now let me think what else there is (pause) I'll just pause this a minute (the tape is paused). You were just talking about your return home. How did you, can you remember how it felt when it came to coming home. Did you regret having to comer home or ... ?

Mr. H. : No I think, I don't say, I suppose that I was relieved at being away from the turmoil pre-Partition, it would have been horrible to have been involved with that but

I'm afraid very mundanely all I was concerned with really was picking up the threads which I'd dropped of been broken. You see I was very fortunate, I was only in the army just over three years and I'd never had any leanings towards army service and I don't suppose even at that stage I really reflected too much on the good experience that it was and I was just only too keen to get back, pick up the, pick up and get on with joining the railway.

J.W. : And so what was it like when you came home, when you first arrived home, did you find settling back into life here fairly easy or was it just as you say like picking up the threads again or ... ?

Mr. H. : I don't think, I don't really at this stage find it specially sort of difficult, it was, there were times when it was quite difficult sort of living at home you might say still with my parents but once, but I suppose with the background and so forth I might have made it a bit easier for myself rejoining civilian life with the railway, because without being, it's difficult to avoid, you use the phrase, what sort of phrase, you've had a comfortable upbringing within your social sphere and so forth and it was really only when, although initially in my early army days before I went out to India it was a very different life already, it was a very different life from what I'd had no longer the sort of fairly narrow, fairly narrow, sheltered life, that had been broadened considerably, then you had the specific again, the fairly narrow life as a commissioned officer, then you came back and you went into the much broader sort of life in working, and it was thrown back at me by the instructor at the sort of clerical training school at Clapham Junction who jumped, he knew my background, I suppose, well, I suppose there must have been, well, I don't know, anyway he kind of knew, he made certain that I got all the awkward questions and I jolly well had to be on the ball and sort of get the answers right and so forth.

J.W. : Right and you were talking just earlier about the Regimental Association, that sort of thing. How do you regard that time now, and the sort of links, are they important?

Mr. H. : I'd love to, I would have loved to have retained, now I would have liked to have retained it, and kept up but I don't see the point since there's been such a break. I should perhaps mention that my sister and I took up one of the *Scotsman* sponsored visits to India about ten years ago now, but again that was with one exception, you say in fairly well, you stay in five star hotels don't you, and the impact of arriving at Bombay airport after an overnight flight and you're pretty hungry and so forth, the general chaos that still exists or certainly still existed ten years ago in the airport there and so forth, and eventually you get out where we, yes that's right we went in by bus through the Northern suburbs of Bombay which have spread and spread and spread and there's the area where the *dhobīvālās* have their habitation, you can't put it any higher than that and then of course you get close into central Bombay but it was still, I was, I was, I enjoyed that

holiday enormously from the point of view of sort of recapturing part of them, being among the folk, that was me, and I thought nothing of wandering through Bombay and across to Victoria Station and of course you were constantly assailed by folk wanting either, asking for *bakhsheesh* of wanting to offer you some service or other and so forth, and that was still unchanged, the trains were still hopelessly crowded, yea, and from that angle, and as I said, I would love to go out and I'd love to be able to travel through the parts of Pakistan as it is now, up on the Frontier and so forth, but I've got on a bit, I've turned seventy and okay, the hip's all right but the knee's got to be done and it's going to be a year before I'm sort of properly mobile and the, it doesn't start hurting on me, so I think that's off for a bit.

J.W. : But the links then are still ... ?

Mr. H. : The links are there yea, yea, I'm, yes, you can say the links are there.

J.W. : Well I think that's about everything.

Mr. H. : Yes I think that's as much ...

J.W. : Have you got anything else you can think to tell me at all?

Mr. H. : I don't think so, I mean I'll let you know when I bring those, when I get these letters up, we can go through them together or I can turn them over to you, I hopefully we've got something there.

J.W. : I'm sure we have.

Mr. H. : But I can't really say, I don't think I've got anything in particular I can turn up, probably I can turn up one or two Indian Railway publications of the time if they would be of any interest, I know there's a feature about the destruction in the, in Bombay when the ammunition boat blew up, would you like to see those?

J.W. : Okay, yes, yes.

Mr. H. : Well hold the, switch the tape off.

J.W. : For now, thank you very much for everything.

Mr. H. : I think, I know, oh that's fine, thank you.

Tape is switched off.

Major Alistair Howman
Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders
Recorded on 1st August 1997
SA1997.96

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Major H.** represents Major Howman.

J.W. : Okay this is Jeremy Weston, it's Friday the 1st of August and I'm talking to Major Howman at his home in Pitlochry. Okay if I can just ask you first where and when you were born please?

Major H. : I was born by, in Kent, cause my father was at the staff college having come back from India and my mother didn't want to go further afield to a decent country like Scotland to have me so I was born in Kent in 1931, July 1931.

J.W. : And did you grow up there for a few years?

Major H. : No, my father was an Indian Army soldier and the next, the first memory I've got is being in Burma when I was three years old, that's my very earliest memories.

J.W. : Right.

Major H. : And then after that I went to India as a small boy before 1939.

J.W. : Right.

Major H. : Most, the place I remember most is a place called D-I-K, which is Dera Ismail Khan which is on the Indus and I remember that very well indeed but I also remember going up to Kashmir for the hot weather for six months and staying in a bungalow just outside Srinagar and having been on a houseboat in Srinagar as well.

J.W. : Right, do you remember any of the people around you apart from your family, servants, members of staff ... ?

Major H. : Yes I do. Curiously enough I had a [*syce*](groom) in Kashmir and coming home one day I suppose I must have been about five or six years old and we all had our own ponies and I had my own [*syce*]and we were coming back fairly late in the evening and the horse in front of me must have struck a rock with its shoe and there was a very considerable spark and something in my nature makes me something of an arsonist because I love heather burning for instance, and so the following day I went to my [*syce*] and I instructed him to take off my horse's shoe and went off into the woods to see if I could start a forest fire (laughs) and of course totally failed to do so but that afternoon we

were going, doing our normal afternoon ride and my mother was with us and she noticed my pony had its, wasn't properly shoed so she sent for the [*syce*] and gave him one hell of a dressing down, and he never gave me away, just took it on the chin, and made me as a small boy feel very guilty, I didn't own up to the fact that it was entirely my fault, that I'd ordered him to take my horse's hooves (*sic*) off and he was totally loyal to me and never gave the game away.

J.W. : So saying that, as a child then was there a very, quite a camaraderie between you and say the servants?

Major H. : Absolutely, I mean you know you went and talked to them and they always, I mean they were fascinating people to talk to, and later on in D-I-K the nursery bearer whose name was [Ram Tillaa] and I used to go and talk to him out the back and it was great, I mean I remember them terribly well and they were extraordinary people, I mean [Ram Tillaa] had actually been our nursery bearer in Burma, he was an Indian, he'd been in Burma in the family, he'd, we'd been posted elsewhere and left [Ram Tillaa] behind as one did and he walked the whole way for Burma to Dera Ismail Khan and turned up and said, 'Please could I be your nursery bearer again?' It's absolutely incredible.

J.W. : Yes, and so what other of the servants do you remember, which other ones?

Major H. : Well him in particular and I don't really remember, and my *syce* obviously and the *mālī*, he was a funny old boy with a huge great turban on and he used to get very cross with me because this was in D-I-K and we were right beside the Indus and the garden was watered by an old bullock going round a well, and these pots went down to the bottom and picked the water up and tipped it into the trenches and it went round the garden, and the *mālī* sort of watered everything by opening little dams.

J.W. : Right.

Major H. : And I found it fascinating to undo the dams when he wasn't looking and he used to get terribly cross with me, and I don't think he was actually cross at all, he was just amused, you know, and it was lovely fun playing in the muddy, this sort of muddy garden and absolutely what a small boy should be doing but the *mālī* sort of used to give me a terrible rockets, but I don't think they were terribly serious because I used to enjoy them.

J.W. : You say you went back three times ... .

Major H. : Yes.

J.W. : Over your childhood. What sort of period was that over?

Major H. : Well, that was between the time that I first went out as a very small boy, I suppose, about 1934, and up till 1939, came home in 1939.

J.W. : So let me think, as a fairly sort of general question how, what sort of effect do you think that had on you as a young boy growing up there? Did it make it difficult when you came back to ... ?

Major H. : No, no, not at all, because there were others like me at the time, I mean there aren't now many who've got that experience but there seemed to be others like me so I didn't think it was very strange although there weren't very many like me. I think one rather stood out as a hero cause you had sort of had this experience because most of one's contemporaries at school had never done anything except, you know, maybe go to the seaside for a holiday or something (laughs).

J.W. : Something a bit different.

Major H. : So I think one was rather privileged to have done it and something of a hero.

J.W. : Now can you tell me a little bit about what your father was doing there in the army, what regiment ... ?

Major H. : Well he was a soldier, he was commissioned right at the end of the First World War, he was a 3rd 7th Gurkha originally, and spent all his early life up on the Frontier. I think they were anticipating in 1919 the Fourth Afghan War which I don't think as such ever did take place as an Afghan War, it wasn't far away and it was never very far away and I think the troubles on the Frontier in the 1930s and what happened in 1897, which is always a part of Indian history that I've been fascinated with is absolutely the same, it's just history repeating itself, and who, I think to this day it's still like that.

J.W. : Yes, yes it doesn't matter who rules the show.

Major H. : And I think the Pakistan Army will never control these tribesmen – they're uncontrollable.

J.W. : Oh no, you're right.

Major H. : And the Russians found that in Afghanistan.

J.W. : Oh yes, they did, yes.

Major H. : But everybody's found that since the beginning of time and I don't think it'll ever change.

J.W. : So when your father came back in 1939 was that him settled back to the ... ?

Major H. : No we came back on a six month leave and they only had occasional little local leave in the army, and then every three years or so you got a decent leave home and we were on home leave, had a little cottage down in Hampshire and another one, well we were partly down there and partly up in Perthshire when, and we were in Perthshire when war broke out and my father went straight back to India.

J.W. : Right.

Major H. : And, shortly followed by my mother and I was left behind at a prep school.

J.W. : Right okay, so then did you go through your whole schooling in Britain?

Major H. : I did.

J.W. : And so can you take me sort of chronologically from there, what happened after you'd finished school?

Major H. : Well I left school at the age of eighteen and I did my National Service and, but, I slightly hankered towards wandering whether I wouldn't like to be a soldier, and for various reasons I couldn't make up my mind and I was actually scheduled to go to Cambridge, I passed the Cambridge Entrance Exam, and I was going to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, to read Agriculture after my National Service, but during my National Service although I was commissioned in the Black Watch for a very short space of time but I chucked that in and went to Sandhurst as a cadet and then became an Argyll and Sutherland Highlander.

J.W. : Right, and when was that, that you went into ... ?

Major H. : I was commissioned in February 1952, the only intake incidentally that never marched up the steps at Sandhurst because the King died four days before our passing out parade.

J.W. : I see.

Major H. : So there was court mourning and although we rehearsed the marching up the steps to the [?] or whatever the right tune was, we never actually did it and we were in court mourning so, as soon as I was commissioned I was wearing a black armband which I think went on for three months, it may have been only a month, but it was quite a long time.

J.W. : And had your parents, I mean the War was obviously long over by that time, but had they been out for the duration of the War in India?

Major H. : They were, my mother was in India from the beginning of 1940 to the end of 1943 and I lived with an aunt and then she came home and we bought a house up here, my grandfather was the Procurator Fiscal in Perth, and Perthshire was our natural home and we bought a house in Glenshee which still belongs to the family to this day, belongs to my brother.

J.W. : And did you, did your parents ever talk much, because you obviously weren't there, did you ever hear much about what it was like for them being out there during the War, was the life and the situation very different to what it had been before?

Major H. : Yes, I, one way or another I've still got a very good idea of what it was like because I've still got all my mother's air letters and she used to write regularly once a week, and I've still got all of these and that was always fairly descriptive of what they were doing and what was happening and so on, and she worked in G-H-Q in Delhi and my father did from about 1942 onwards, but before then my father raised a regiment in Assam, the Assam regiment, which is now part of the Indian Army. The thought behind that was that G.H.Q. appreciated that if the Japanese came into the War that India was vulnerable from the East, which no-one had ever thought about before in a serious way, it was always the North-west Frontier which was vulnerable and so they decided that they should really recruit some regular soldiers from Eastern India and these little Nagas and Simla tribespeople from Assam were a natural choice, they're just like Gurkhas, they're the same racial, little Mongolian people, tough as boots and wonderful soldiers, so this regiment was raised by my father because he had done the expedition into the Naga Hills and [Hukon] Valley in 1927 on behalf of making the maps which before that didn't exist and he was the only person who knew that part of the world who had any idea of the language or anything else, he'd been on this expedition for six months and he was the right seniority to raise a regiment, he was a fairly senior major by that time and due for promotion anyway, so he raised this regiment as a result of which the family has still quite close connections with this regiment, which although it's in the [Indian] army had as it's first non-white commanding officer, the first Indian commanding officer if that's not the wrong word to use, Ayub Khan who subsequently became President of Pakistan who when he used to come over as President of Pakistan the first person he used to see was my father in London, and who, used to go and meet in London.

J.W. : And so do you remember your father talking very much about the relations say with the men in his Regiment when he was with them either in the Punjab or, cause you hear this so often it's the sort of ... ?

Major H. : Oh yes I mean I think the organisation that's done us most harm as far as our relationship with India, is the B.B.C., who are so left-wing in their attitude and I

think what the British achieved in India, you know, we exploited the natives and all this crap, and it is crap because if you look at India it is the most astounding achievement on behalf of very, very few people, or relatively few people, I mean they've got a country, they've got the largest democracy in the world, they have a railway system, an army, an education system, a legal system and a language for heaven sake that we've left behind and I think that's a most incredible achievement. As far as the attitude of soldiers for their men is concerned, my father thought his soldiers were the most marvellous men that ever were, he worshiped them, he knew all their names, he spoke their language and it was just a privilege to be with such marvellous people, and it's totally alien when I hear the contrary coming from left-wing B.B.C. programmes and left-wing people who write out it because they think it's the thing to do. I get quite hot under the collar about it.

J.W. : And so when was it that your father came back finally from ... ?

Major H. : He came back in 1945 I suppose and he had a job in the War Office sort of helping to run down the Indian army with sort of effects, oh, bringing people home and things and then that was it, and he retired in 1947.

J.W. : And did you, do you remember his feelings on having to leave and that sort of thing, was he very sad?

Major H. : I would have thought, I don't, you know, one just knew it was happening and there was nothing that could be done about it, I think Partition was very hard for them all to bear, I think the found that really politically incomprehensible and I think it was very sad that it ever happened, but I suppose that's what did happen. I think the extraordinary thing is that I've never heard of any Indian Army Regiment who was involved in keeping the Muslims and Hindus apart at Partition who ever sided with one side or the other and yet most of those regiments had a Hindu company or a Muslim company and I think the sort of discipline of the Indian Army at that time really did shine through in a quite remarkable way.

J.W. : Now let's move back to your time now you had enlisted in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and you served with the subsequently. How was it then that you came to know of the link with the Frontier Force Regiment, the Scinde Battalion?

Major H. : Well this is purely historical, the Scinde Rifles which were a long established Indian Army Regiment founded in 1846, I think the date was, 1843, I beg your pardon. They found themselves, or the Argylls found themselves, the 1st battalion of the Argylls found themselves in the same brigade of the 8th Indian Army Division in 1942, '43 fighting up Italy, '44 and 1945, and they were in the same brigade, there was one British battalion and two Indian battalions. The two Indian battalions were the Scinde Rifles, the 6th/13th I think they're numbered, and the 5th/8th Punjabis who

incidentally my father had served with and incidentally is now a Baluchi regiment in the Pakistan Army, but my father had served with them on the Frontier in 1937, so there was a sort of rather curious connection there, and in 19 ... what two years, well I forget we're in 1997 now, well I suppose it was in 1994 the Pakistanis' regiment which is now the 1st battalion of the Frontier Force Regiment were celebrating their 150th Anniversary and they are officially affiliated to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders as a result of their fighting together and the close comradeship between the two regiments fighting their way up through Italy. Consequence of that was that they invited an Argyll to go to their 150th celebrations and I was very happy to go because I'm interested in that part of the world, I lived there as a small boy, I've got many relations who wee involved with that part of the world so I was fascinated to sort of go and see them, and they are marvellous, they're very different from the Indians in some ways and very much the same in others. Militarily both wonderful soldiers, they keep their traditions, all the traditions they have, I think they're terribly proud of their British traditions all the sort of silver that goes back in the photograph albums, I mean you think you're, I mean nothing had changed. Religion's obviously changed because they're purely Muslim and that was an obvious change and that has its sort of social effects because there's no alcohol and so, you know, you drink tea and Coca Cola and the segregation of the sexes and both of those are very different to hat an Indian battalion would be cause I've done the same with the Assam regiment and there they're far more like the British would be from that point of view, the Pakistanis you just felt you were with a wonderful British or British orientated regiment.

J.W. : And how was it, this might be a little difficult maybe to describe, how was it going back after you'd been there as a young boy, to go back all those years later, did it ... ?

Major H. : It's terribly evocative and I think what's terribly evocative is the sense of smell.

J.W. : Yep.

Major H. : And the sense of light, I think it's light and smell particularly in the North West Frontier part of India that is absolutely, well, Pakistan I should really correctly say, but in India as well, it's unique and it's it was impressed on me as a small boy and it all just comes flooding back when you go back to that part of the world it seems to be different from everywhere else and it's those smells particularly in the evening of cooking and such like you just suddenly remember, you go back fifty years and it all just comes flooding back to you.

J.W. : So what, what, can you briefly describe what happened on that visit when you went back, the anniversary?

Major H. : The 159th anniversary? Well we had three days four days down at a place called Bahawalpur where they first planted the Frontier Force regiment as it now is the 6th/13th Frontier Force regiment as they now call themselves they're part of an armoured division, and they put on a parade, magnificent parade, very smart and they did a pageant of the Scinde Rifles throughout history starting on camels because they started as the Camel Corps, the were founded by General Napier and he modelled them on Napoleon's Camel Corps in the Egyptian Campaign of earlier, and that's how they started life as a Camel Corps Regiment, and then they became a rifle regiment, and they have a magnificent history , the first V.C. to be won in France in 1915 or got there in the end of 1914, maybe the whole outcome of the First World War might have been different, I mean the British only sent three divisions and Indian sent two and quite magnificent. They had a curious little ceremony when we were there, the 150th Anniversary when all the officers were suddenly marched off parade, otherwise by that stage it had all been like the drill book. I couldn't understand what was happening, and what was happening was that in 1915 they had all their officers killed, every single white officer was killed and they had no officers and the Battalion was commanded by the Regimental Sergeant Major for a period of, I don't know, a period of how long, only a matter of days or weeks before new officers were drafted in, but they were representing that little bit of history by marching all the officers off parade and having a part of the parade commanded by the Regimental sergeant Major and it was a sort of tradition they brought in remembering that experience in France in 1914.

J.W. : And how about, you've already said the sort of, you know, differences between the Indian and Pakistan Army now, with, after Partition ... .

Major H. : Well those are the sort of social differences but otherwise there are no differences, I mean the tragedy is that they're at each others' throats and you get this complete anomaly to find that the Corps Commander on one side in the Pakistani-Indian War of ten or fifteen years ago were probably both at Sandhurst together, and it's absolutely a tragedy really.

J.W. : They meet and shake hands.

Major H. : And they meet and shake hands and then go back and fight each other rather like the knights of old and chivalry and all the rest of it, but it's just one of these tragedies of history really.

J.W. : And can you tell me briefly just as a sort of comparison, you said you went to the Assam Regiment there.

Major H. : I did, yes.

J.W. : How, was that a similar sort of situation there?

Major H. : Very similar. One of the things incidentally that featured in both very much the same were the pipers.

J.W. : Yes.

Major H. : The first thing that my father did when he raised the Assam Regiment was to send for sets of bagpipes in lorries and then pipe, you know, I think they put on seven pipe bands on parade in Assam, but they did the same in Pakistan as well and they borrowed some of the other Frontier Force Regiment pipe, pipers to put on a mass pipe band display and they play all the old Scottish tunes, and this association of the bagpipes is absolutely astonishing. Unfortunately Penny and I missed going to see this huge gathering of pipe bands in Lahore by, our plane was late coming from Peshawar to Lahore, and by the time we got there we missed this, but I think they put on something like a hundred and fifty pipe bands, military pipe bands all giving a display, and I'd have loved to have seen that. There's a friend of mine in the Black Watch who actually went as a judge on that occasion called Lindsey, he's the Regimental Secretary of the Black Watch headquarters in Perth.

J.W. : And did you while you were there on the visit with the Frontier Force Regiment there did you have any time to yourself to go to the places where you used to ... ?

Major H. : Yes we did, we went to, we ad about a ten day tour around which included going up the Swat Valley as high as we could go and we were taken hostage which was an exciting performance because they were fed up with the lack of electricity or something but, one of the villages up in the north, and they decided that they would take us hostage until the electricity came through and it took quite a, what hey, they just put great big boulders across the road after we'd gone past and we couldn't get back, and we sat and we chatted to them all, the were very friendly about the whole thing, and they thought if they kept us hostage it would be okay, and in the end we managed to get back all right, and we stayed, that was in the Swat valley, and then we went to Peshawar and we went to this extraordinary village Darra.

J.W. : Where the make the guns.

Major H. : Where they make the guns, and had a day there, a most extraordinary performance that was, and somebody produced a Martini-Henry rifle of 1876 and showed it to me with the ammunition that went with it and then, big grin, that they'd captured it off a British soldier (laughs) and they'd had it for over a hundred years and that was the big joke and of course we allowed that all to happen in exchange for the Afraid not being beastly to the British and we went up the Khyber Pass that was quite exciting, you have to go with an escort.

J.W. : Yes, I've been myself.

Major H. : Which shows that the Afridis have already extracted a toll for letting you go up that part of the world or the Orakzais or whatever the tribe is, but it's quite exciting up there.

J.W. : And how, how important do you think it is to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, this link I mean?

Major H. : It's become more important in recent years ever since Pakistan rejoined the Commonwealth and before then while they were out of the Commonwealth it was very difficult to maintain in any way because politically it was difficult to do. It's easier politically now. I just have a feeling that the Ministry of Defence is just a bit mean about these things, I mean, I mean I've done as I've said, I've been to Indian, and I've been to Pakistan on these things. Not one shred of help has come from any government source and yet you think the amount of money wasted on diplomatic missions and things and I would have thought that the good of someone taking the trouble and going at their own expense out to something like that and to stay with them and know something about it was fantastic and it keeps those links very much alive both with India and with Pakistan and I just feel we're being rather stupid about it quite honestly because I think they are incredibly important on a general diplomatic, keep friends with everybody, basis.

J.W. : Yes, and has there ever been any exchange of officers or anything like that in the past, do you know?

Major H. : I think, I remember we had from the Scinde Rifles we had an officer who came in the 1960s. He was an Orakzai, he was called Sam, I don't know hat his real name was, I can't remember, but he was a magnificent man and clearly a brilliant soldier. I think he was a captain and he had flashing eyes and al the Regimental wives eyed him with some envy (laughs) he was a superb chap and great fun to have and I remember he was an Orakzai, that's all I knew, we called him Sam Orakzai and what his real name was, I mean, it probably was Orakzai because that's the tribal name.

J.W. : Right and let me think (pauses) again this might be a little general for you to answer but how important for you do you think those links throughout your life with that part of the world are, I mean are, they've been very formative for you in many ways or a big influence on yourself with your father and mother being there as well?

Major H. : Yes, yes, yes, because not only was my father involved in India but all my mother' family were involved in India going a way back, I mean there were two generals, Sir William Ellis who did the first, or the second or third Hazara Expedition in 1879 I think, or thereabouts and my, or, his brother was also a general who ended up as a full general and incidentally who started off the United Nations, it was called the Hague

Convention, I think, and it was started in about 1912? 1911? 1910? something like that, and that's after he came back from being Curzon's military member, military advisor, personal military advisor, fought over by Kitchener, the famous Curzon-Kitchener controversy of 1905 and he was booted upstairs and it wasn't his fault, he was the jam in the sandwich and they made him a full general, General C. Willis, who's my godfather, so, and all those have Indian connections one way or another so ...

J.W. : It's been a very strong influence hasn't it?

Major H. : It's a strong influence in my family history and I find fascinating.

J.W. : Right, let me think if there's any, I think we've been on a roundabout tour, we've covered pretty much everything I can think of just about now.

Major H. : Right.

J.W. : Thank you very much for everything, I'll ... .

The tape is switched off

Mrs. Howman
Interviewed on Wednesday, 13th January 1998
SA1998.37

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Mrs. H.** represents Mrs. Howman.

Note: Mrs. Howman was unable to hear some of my questions clearly and so this caused her occasional misinterpretations of my questions.

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston it's Wednesday the twelfth of no thirteenth of January and I'm recording Mrs. Howman in Pitlochry. Okay Mrs. Howman if you could tell me first if you don't mind where and when you were born please?

Mrs. H. : Sorry I didn't quite get that.

J.W. : Where and when you were born.

Mrs. H. : Oh I was born in 'O' five (1905).

J.W. : And where was that?

Mrs. H. : I was born in London because my mother had been very ill she had two older children and she came home from Calcutta my father was out in Calcutta at that time and so she was told that she would stay in this country and I am to be keep very quiet and so I was born in London but as I say I never went out as a child my brother was by that time six and my sister was three and they were out there of course all the time and I didn't go out until my sister went out to Malaya and to stay with an uncle who was in the Land Civil Service and got engaged and I went out for the wedding. Well in those days I think I told you my husband had been transferred to the Burma Rifles. The Burma Rifles always had one company stationed in Malaya and his company was the happened to be there so I met him there and we got married out there.

J.W. : So when was that that you first went out?

Mrs. H. : That was in 1930.

J.W. : 1930 right.

Mrs. H. : Well Malaya was a lovely country and he was working very hard through staff college. He I may say I think I told you came from Orkney and he was an only child but anyway he was working through staff college and he passed the exam and we got leave home in 1931 he went to the staff college in at Camberley in this country and my elder son was born that same year that's Alistair who you've met.

J.W. : Yes that's right.

Mrs. H. : And then we went back after the staff college course to Burma because by that time his battalion had been moved back to Burma and we were stationed in Mai-niu which again was lovely it had a wonderful climate it's not too hot or too cold it's really very good and we had a very good year there during which he did some very interesting things because some trouble had broken out on the China frontier after that and there were some people called [Wahs] and the Chinese incited the [Wahs] to rise against the British and there were some silver mines and gold mines up there but (clock chimes) they had not been worked for a long long time and there was no real road at all so in the end my husband was sent up with a little party to discover if it there was any feasible way of getting up there cause by that time they both wanted the road both for dealing with the [Wahs] and if possible to discover what about the silver mines so he went up and they discovered it and then they got as far as the [Salawai] river where there was a steep drop a cliff edge and no way they could have possibly have gone down without a tremendous lot of engineering but they found that in fact bullock carts had been taken to pieces and the wheels dropped separately and the cart and then put together again at the bottom and so the bullock cart traffic had in fact gone on it was a fascinating piece of ... .

J.W. : Incredible.

Mrs. H. : Of bit of history anyway so that was that. While he was away doing all that a telegram came for him offering him a job on the staff out on the North-West Frontier and so in due course we were about three or four months later we packed up and went out and that was to Dera Ismail Khan and there we were for four years he was on the staff there first as a J.C. and later as D.A.A.G. and I went spent many time either up in Kashmir or I went home it was just as easy to go home as to go up there. Anyway that was that and then we had various years in D-I-K (Dera Ismail Khan) for some little time what would that be in 1939 war came and I we were at home on leave at the time and my husband of course was recalled at once and there were these wonderful scenes in Edinburgh where he had to report all the officers who had retired for a bit and had to get back into their uniforms most of which were rather tight for them and it was absolute pandemonium they anyway I think it was the North British I can't remember.

J.W. : Yep I think than that was the ... .

Mrs. H. : Anyway and he went was sent back and joined his regiment by this time he had been seconded to the Punjab Regiment which stationed up at [?] which is you probably know.

J.W. : Vaguely yes.

Mrs. H. : Quite near Razmak and so once again he found himself on the Frontier he was there a bit and then eventually he got a staff appointment in Delhi. Well of course I realised that I could be with him in Delhi and in wartime I felt it essential if I

could get there to join him that I was going I was quite prepared to leave the children at home with my sister because that seemed the best thing to do and of course the '14 no the '39 war took a long time to get started I mean you know that sort of Phoney War you see all that so I actually got out I went by Italian line and before Italy came into the war so we were able to go sail out in a blaze of lights you see everything [?] the course and closed down. Anyway I got out all right and I went and joined him in Delhi and I spent the war years there well the first few years there in Delhi. But the first year you know the whole of Delhi moved up to Simla and the first year they still did that well they found it quite impractical because the war offices in Delhi expanded and expanded and expanded and the thing became quite impossible so they divided it in half and the section that I'd taken on [?] the section that I was working with was being moved up to Simla but my husband's section was was staying down in Delhi so I transferred to one in Delhi and I had a very interesting job indeed.

J.W. : What was that?

Mrs. H. : Which was fascinating I worked as an intelligence officer dealing with Burma all the information about the retreat from Burma and I was put in charge of all routes from Burma to India and to re-route the road book which was hopelessly out of date and which meant I had to interview all the refugees who escaped from Burma and write that up into a very new route book it well it was a very fascinating job. It also had even to tell the American Air Force what to bomb and where (laughs) it was a fascinating job and my husband was in intelligence but not in my division and I had nothing whatever to do so that was interesting.

J.W. : Just thinking actually while we stop there to take you the your husband as an only child were there any family contacts on his side with India at all?

Mrs. H. : My husband did what?

J.W. : Were there any family contacts on your husband's side with India at all?

Mrs. H. : The family contacts yes he went he was always fascinated with India because his mother's people were Ross's and a lot of them who had served in India and as a small boy he was given stories about India and he read a lot and so when he had to decide what to do he wanted to go to India and he wanted to go to the Indian army and also when he was a very small boy in Orkney his father was Procurator Fiscal there took him to see an old retired general, General [Traquhair-Byers] of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who had fought in the Thin Red Line and he'd I think he'd also my history's not all that good but I think you can read it all there's quite an interesting account I've got it in that book he oh yes I know it was the in the Mutiny they the Relief of Lucknow and ... .

J.W. : He was there as well?

Mrs. H. : He'd been in on that and that fascinated my husband as a small boy so he was determined to go to the Indian Army that was that.

J.W. : So then, now we'll have to jump again so you were working you were saying you were working in this intelligence job with the routes in Burma what happened after that?

Mrs. H. : Well after several years at Delhi Auchinleck sent for my husband and said they were going to raise a new regiment and they wanted him to do the raising and that was to be the Assam Regiment. Well Assam had never had a regiment before and but they were going to enlist sorry what they had had was you know not regular troops you know sort of frontier guard things I can't re ... .

J.W. : Yes I know the sort of people you mean, yes.

Mrs. H. : And they had enlisted a lot of Gurkhas in that and they wanted to enlist some of the other hill tribes who had in fact been enlisted in the First World War when we were using more recruits and proved very very good soldiers so that's what they were going to they were going to mostly use the other hill tribes and that's what they did and they chose him because of his experience in Burma hill tribes who are very similar and speak in some of the cases almost the same languages as he had done all that he actually during his time in Burma had taken an expedition up right up to the frontier there putting down head hunting and human sacrifice and a few jolly little things like that that was 1926 but I think all that experience made them chose him for this job and he raised the regiment he went to Shillong they it was all rather tricky because you know they had they have a very very heavy monsoon in June July that sort of time and the rivers become impossible so it was a question of getting troops into Shillong in time for raising, the dates and so on and so they were quite they was quite an exciting moment they thought they might they had to bring early they thought they might have to raise a regiment in time of war without correct instructions from headquarters they weren't quite sure what the penalty would be but anyway that all went out. Well he had a splendid second in command a chap called Brown who was also Gurkhas and he joined in fact he'd been serving up on the Frontier and he joined fairly soon and otherwise he had mostly tea planters who had enlisted one thing and most of the officers were tea planters and I think there was certainly one [Khasi-Khsai] it's one of the tribes around there and a very splendid chap called [Barroa] he was one of the officers but all that was interesting. Well the regiment was put on active service within six of months of raising which I think is rather a record.

J.W. : I would imagine.

Mrs. H. : And incidentally it is the last I think regiment to be raised in the old Indian Army and when the Japs came into the War in '41?

J.W. : Yea I think it was '41 I can check I think that was when it was.

Mrs. H. : They were sent up to Digboi to guard the oil wells up in the north of Assam there and in due course they once they they started on the retaking of Burma they did extremely well there in fact I think they're the only regiment that got a battle honour to themselves. Now the Japs were eventually stopped at the Battle of [Kun-hio] and the Assam Regiment now I'm talking from memory which is not all that good the Assam Regiment was stationed at a little place called Jessami and they fought it was very rarely (clock strikes) who first stopped the Japs and with other help I think there was the Sussex Regiment I can't remember the other people who I mean they weren't the only ones but they were the only ones who got a battle honour to themselves which was Jessami a lot of them got Kohima which is a bigger place and many more regiments needed to stop the Japs but I mean that was roughly [them?] so we're always very proud of the Jessami part of it .

J.W. : Yes yes and was your husband still based in Delhi at that time or was he ... ?

Mrs. H. : No no by that time he'd been brought back so he unfortunately become rather good at intelligence and he'd been made Deputy Director of Intelligence for the whole of India and later on he was Director of that was when it became a Combined Operation under Mountbatten later on he was Deputy Director for the whole thing.

J.W. : Oh right, right.

Mrs. H. : And that was one of the rather more tricky sides of intelligence you see he was responsible for the security of India with Gandhi causing much trouble you see he could with fellows in Calcutta causing again much more trouble with the Japs trying to raise a force the Indian Army with propaganda and so on there was a lot of fairly difficult things to deal with ... .

J.W. : Yes, oh I would imagine yes.

Mrs. H. : There.

J.W. : So where was he?

Mrs. H. : Well then eventually the war ended and by that time I'd come home I came home during the war because I'd felt I'd got to get back to see about the children and I had a fairly uncomfortable journey back but still that was all right and the first convoy of ships to come through the Mediterranean otherwise if we had had to go round Africa .

J.W. : Africa yes, yes.

Mrs. H. : But he stayed on and when eventually peace came after a long amount of time he was due to go round all the nations that had been occupied by the Japs and discover what the situation was I mean he was he flew to Rangoon and then down to down the [Simahaw] of course to the Dutch East Indies and finally up to Chün-k'eng and Japan and in Tokyo he had to interview his opposite number the Japanese head of intelligence and find out why it was that the Japanese didn't do better than they'd I mean it was all fascinating because no question about it that our intelligence was very very superior but all that was quite interesting.

J.W. : Yes, right so what happened the War had ended and he'd gone and done this once things ... .

Mrs. H. : After the War?

J.W. : Had settled down from that after he'd done that intelligence then with the Japanese intelligence and then after he'd been to all these other places that the Japanese had occupied what did he then do after that?

Mrs. H. : Yes was his description of Tokyo was beyond words awful I mean there was no doubt that the all the firebombs they dropped you know one rather forgets the language I can't remember what they called them incendiaries and they had done I mean so many of these Japanese houses were more of less built of paper and for miles and miles there were just a few brick chimneys because their houses they built the chimney the chimney was built of brick but all the rest was either bamboo or something terribly lightweight and they had absolutely gone I mean it really was awful. Well he had a lot of years in as you know in with the Americans of course over that and he had a very interesting time over that too [Osprey] and joining up with them in Chün-k'eng finding out about that because that again it was that side of things which was interesting which was the very difficult relations with the Chinese armies which again was a great difficulty I think but he was kept going by the Americans with their air thing over the what did they call it flying over still ... ?

J.W. : So did ... ?

Mrs. H. : Well then he came home and he got a job he didn't he wanted to get home if possible to see something of the children and even and he got a job with the War Office in London we had a flat in London but meantime I bought a wee house up in the glen we had that as a base for the childrens' holidays that was good.

J.W. : Right well let's think we've sort of done a chronology now going what was did your husband ever have any sort of preferences he'd obviously been on the Frontier he'd also been and raised a regiment in Assam and obviously would have sort of close ties with there. Was there a particular area he particularly enjoyed working?

Mrs. H. : Did he have any any I'm sorry?

J.W. : Did he have with all the places in India that he worked and he was stationed did he have any particular favourite did he have any place he ... ?

Mrs. H. : Favourite part of India do you mean?

J.W. : Yea.

Mrs. H. : Well it's rather difficult to say I think Burma was a great love of his because of one thing he was he'd been quite a keen polo player and in those days you see they used to import ponies from Australia really very rough untrained ponies and train them themselves because they couldn't afford the ready trained ones which were much more expensive and they there was a difference of size of polo pony allowed in Burma which was not the official size in India but they had some jolly good teams all the same well he enjoyed all of that side of things I think yes I think he did enjoy Burma very much but I don't know I think latterly the Frontier fascinated from a military point of view there was no question he was delighted when he was offered that first staff job in D-I-K because there was no doubt that if you wanted to get on in the Indian army you had to have some experience of fighting on the Frontier which was quite a thing apart I mean his thing was he had studied was jungle warfare, when he came at the staff college at Camberley they always have to give a lecture themselves at the end of their time and he chose the subject of jungle warfare because he'd taken this expedition up north of Burma and he really knew something about it, and this question of putting down headhunting and all that sort of thing so he really did know and I think he got an invitation for being rather good at that so that was another side that he did find extremely interesting there's no doubt about it. That of complete contrast from the kind of fighting on the frontier which had all these bare hills.

J.W. : Complete opposite really isn't it almost apart from the you know up and down nature of the terrain.

Mrs. H. : Incredible steep and of course that's again I think if you were born in Scotland you were fairly used to hills the ones who got it had going up and down hills is the Gurkhas who were fairly good at it.

J.W. : Yea yea, no I think they'd be a lot of truth in that and how about your life in D-I-K what was that well any of all the places you were what was your life like you were obviously ... .

Mrs. H. : The house?

J.W. : Just your everyday life.

Mrs. H. : What you mean your ordinary ... ?

J.W. : Yep.

Mrs. H. : Well I personally enjoyed the time in D-I-K as much as anywhere we had a large bungalow built of mud all the walls were built of mud and the floors were built of mud. Later because the sandflies were so tiresome we had the floors cemented and they were then covered with home the local made rugs and it was very comfortable. The rooms were very high very good for hot weather not quite so good for cold and it could be quite cold in the winter.

J.W. : People always forget that don't they?

Mrs. H. : But each room had a fireplace and they were very roomy most of them had a big sitting room with a dining room which could be joined up if you haven't got a very big room but it was separate and then you have a very big bedroom you had good dressing rooms, each bedroom of course had its bathroom and you had a host of servants we had very very, very good I mean they were very very good we had mostly Mohammedans but actually they were there we had a terrible mixture because we had a Cochin orderly Straits born Malay [?] now that means he's Chinese but born on Malaya and we had a Chinese cook who was excellent we had an Indian head bearer he was a South Indian curiously enough because mostly after him we only had hill men from the North but he was a South Indian, he was good then I think six or seven different nationalities because we had a Malay gardener and the *syce* looking after the ponies.

J.W. : And what was the relation like with the servants how?

Mrs. H. : What with the local people do you mean?

J.W. : Oh no with the servants you had in the houses either in D-I-K or in Malaya how did you get on with the servants?

Mrs. H. : Well you see one of the troubles you see we did find was the relationship with local people to the extent that all the women in those days were in *parda* you could meet the men and the men were very often members of the clubs. In Malaya there were two clubs and one allowed all anybody but one was started by being rather fussy and only having British people and the regiment refused to join if that they stuck to that because they had potential other nationalities and they refused to join but it was difficult you see I never got to know any Indian women in those days at all.

J.W. : Did you regret that?

Mrs. H. : You couldn't you never saw them and it was not for want of want liking them well now I went back after separation.

J.W. : When was that?

Mrs. H. : And the first time I went back the Assam Regiment had quite a number of people working on the Staff in Delhi (clock strikes) we were in Delhi and they organised a sort of party for us it was very good of them and there were a number of Indian officers and their wives and I shall never forget my surprise because I enjoyed meeting them very much they were charming most attractive most of them spoke pretty good English, and one of them said to me, 'Oh where are you going when you leave here?', and I said, 'Well we're hoping to go down to [Barrackpore] which is where there's a nature reserve.' 'Oh' she said, 'oh what a pity you're just too early for the winter migrants.' Well when I was there before not anyone ever saw an Indian lady but I'm sure no Indian lady would have known what a winter migrant was I mean it really was a quite astonishing the change.

J.W. : The change yea.

Mrs. H. : But that I'd like to point out was not a question of the change from British to Indian rule because it was the Indians themselves who kept the women ... .

J.W. : In *parda*.

Mrs. H. : ... Away you see they simply would not let them come in fact I think all the caste the registered caste system which undoubtedly is a difficulty it's entirely done by the Indians it's nothing to do with us.

J.W. : Okay let's think now what else is there to ask? Ah you were saying, I remember now, you were saying earlier about you felt there was a very strong Scottish sort of a ... .

Mrs. H. : A connection.

J.W. : Yea a connection can you say a little more about that?

Mrs. H. : Well in my family apart from my husband's family but in my family my, I had two cousins who ended up one a Lieutenant-General and one a Major-General in the Indian Army. The Major-General one who wrote *A Brigadier at Peshawar* he had three sons two of them went into either Gurkhas or a Sikh regiment and alas both of them died in India one died of cholera and another died rescuing his *shikari* who was getting into trouble in a river and that'd be I mean that's only one little bit. Well now they were Ellis's who came from Ayrshire my great-grandfather was the minister in Saltcoats and you know ministers always seem to have enormous families and he had twelve children and it was certainly one of those was the General and the other was another cousin but there were a lot a big collection.

J.W. : And do you think there was ...?

Mrs. H. : That's only of course my family and here if you think around I have a great friend who lives near here who when she heard you were coming she said oh do tell him that I had I think her a great uncle who hailed from Aberdeenshire and who was all through the Mutiny days and has written a wonderful account of it all if you'd like to I'll give you her address.

J.W. : That'd be very useful thank you I'd love to in the future, yep.

Mrs. H. : If you'd like to follow that up she'd be delighted to help because she there was one of them was also on the Frontier with over the Dargai business there's a description but also you have it's so many people round here just over the hill there are some people McLaughlin he fought all through the last War alongside the Assam Regiment so he's been made a honorary member of the Assam Regiment Society and his father-in-law was in the was stationed up at Gilgit for a long time and absolutely refused to leave it he liked it so much so he was there for seven years.

J.W. : Right my goodness that's ... .

Mrs. H. : I think it's amazing this connection you come across it everywhere.

J.W. : And do you think Scottish people had ... ?

Mrs. H. : I'm sure.

J.W. : A different a unique relationship with ... ?

Mrs. H. : Yes I think you see it started off with the '45 so many of the lairds lost all their lands and so financially they had to go abroad they had to do something they had to try and make good and I think the Scots as a whole are a very adventurous lot they want to get out and see places I know my husband as a child his one idea was to to travel and I'm afraid my family have got the bug terribly badly cause I really my younger son I never know where he is he's just back at the moment from Thailand, Australia and New Zealand and only just got back but this is all a question of conservation which he's now doing.

J.W. : Right on goodness an international family truly (**Mrs. H.** and **J.W.** discuss lunch plans). One more question when you came towards coming home and you were back here how do you sort of think of those times in ... ?

Mrs. H. : When I came back?

J.W. : Back were you very sad to have to leave?

Mrs. H. : When I came back to this country ... .

J.W. : Were you sad to have to leave at all the life there?

Mrs. H. : Well of course the War was still on and my sister who was in charge of the children had moved up to Cumberland to escape from bombs because she had been living in the South and so I joined them there and I knew that we wanted to live in Scotland and my mother comes from Inverness-shire she was a Fraser and my husband as I say Orcadian had one idea was to retire in Scotland well almost immediately I heard about a house which was for sale up here and I came up which was up Glenshee fifteen miles north of Blairgowrie and it was quite difficult to get up to look at it in the War but my mother in law wonderful she got in touch with the local Procurator Fiscal who basically had a case up in that direction and he gave me a lift up there and he allowed me to take the police car on to look at the house while he was dealing with his case so I saw it I wanted it and I managed to buy it for a ridiculously small sum in those days because we were not at all well off in fact I booked it I bought it with the money that I had saved from my war job and well my the younger son bought it back we eventually had to sell it to we moved South for a time but we simply loved it up there you see it's a wonderful part of the world .

J.W. : So did that that helped having such a nice place to be in basing yourself here did that help in the regard of say missing the life in India although you left during the War?

Mrs. H. : Well I don't know (laughs) people thought I was mad because it had stood empty all the War years it had got a telephone it had no electricity there was none up there anyway up the glen at all it had very old fashioned kitchen range and but it was warm it was dry I gave an impression when I looked over it of not being all that cold it had about four foot wide I think it was about eighteenth century and it had terribly thick stone walls and a wonderful view and, well I just felt that's what I wanted so I moved in (laughs).

J.W. : And did you still, and since then ... ?

Mrs. H. : It was completely empty and the trouble was getting furniture because you couldn't in the War you could buy second hand stuff you see you couldn't I was able to get the maximum points to allow me to buy some material in order for curtains but it only did one room they had to make do with an awful lot of things but mercifully the house had there were beautiful old fashioned wooden shutters because of course everything was had to be blacked out you see and so that made it possible because it was remote as I say everybody thought I was mad of course you couldn't have a car anything like that but we got about it in the end.

J.W. : And since then to the present day and you said you went back and you enjoyed very much meeting the Indian ladies and this sort of thing do you still have an affinity do you still hold you know that part of the world in good regard?

Mrs. H. : Yes, yes, yes.

J.W. : It's still something you know and you were saying you were writing to a friend do you still keep all the connections from that time when you were in India?

Mrs. H. : Yes well I did pull myself together and write up my husband's life that's it there and then my son has continued and bound and they did it beautifully I think I'm very pleased the way they've done it I didn't publish it because I didn't I wanted to write it just for the family and you have to write in a quite different way if you're writing for a general public which I didn't want to do so I did that and yes well I think that is about it.

J.W. : Well it's a very important part of this family history.

Mrs. H. : Huh?

J.W. : It's a very important part of your family history.

Mrs. H. : Yea oh it was it was I mean I was only out altogether about fifteen years my husband was out about thirty years.

J.W. : That's a very big part of your lives isn't it?

Mrs. H. : I mean it's something you're incredibly glad to have done there's no doubt whatever and I still think one was so lucky in the pre package age you stayed there and you really got to know it in a way that these people who travel round nowadays spending a fortnight here or week there it's not the same thing at all but on the other hand much better than nothing.

J.W. : Aha that's true.

Mrs. H. : And immensely interesting and of course you can do a lot more countries.

J.W. : But in a different sort of a way I see what you mean. Well I can't think of anything more more to ask and unless you've got anything else to say ... .

Mrs. H. : No.

J.W. : Shall we stop for a moment? Thank you very much for everything.

Tape is switched off

Transcript of Kim Prior's interview with
Lieutenant-Colonel Roy Douglas Howse
No date specified (between 1983 and 1987)

K.P. represents Kim Prior, and **L-C.H.** represents Lieutenant-Colonel Howse.

K.P. I'm interviewing Lieutenant-Colonel Roy Douglas Howse born 15th of the 9th 1916. Could you tell me when you went to India and what you did in your early years?

L-C.H. Yes I, I started out for India on March the 12th 1937 by troopship, my first experience of the Army really, and all went well until we got to Bombay. Now the troopships normally had complete battalions on them but it so happened that the one I was on was taking reinforcements, small batches twenty fifty people to various British regiments that were situated around India. Now the night before the staff on the ship decided that all the hammocks for the men were to be removed forthwith. This meant that there was no way in which the troops could settle down and have a night's sleep. That was on the 31st of March 1937 and I was orderly officer army during the middle watch and I was suddenly called down to go and assist a senior officer because there was trouble in the troop deck and I went down with him and there was an absolute melee going on, fighting, and I was sent to collect all the detachment officers from all the various regiments whatever they were doing and get them, and they I brought them down and they assembled their men and they had to sit at the tables with their men and keep them quiet for the rest of the night, it was my first experience of the rough army, if you like, and what amazed me on that occasion was the fact that we waded into these troops that were fighting and I stood on several occasions between two troops who literally fought round me. I had left hooks going under my armpits and a right cross and all this but they never touched us at all such was the discipline, and they had to sit there and peace would reign for about five minutes until some bright spark would call across to another regiment, they were British county regiments in those days you see, 'Who lost their colours at Isandlwana' or something you see and then 'Woof' the two lots would get together and so the rest of the night passed happily or successfully rather I should say and the dawn broke and so we landed in India on the 1st of April 1937 which I'm not certain even now wasn't sort of a propitious day. My first impressions were of course as usual, a great number of people, an awful lot of dust and smell and the language which of course I knew nothing at all about. I was met by a *bearer* who'd been sent down from the regiment to temporarily look after me, that's a personal servant, you know, and I had arrangements were made for me to catch the night the Frontier Mail up to where I was going, Ferozepur, which was in the United Provinces. That was allright I got a nice berth and so on and I remember on the way up we stopped for dinner I was one of the very few people who got out to have dinner because in those days there weren't restaurant cars on the Indian trains one stopped at a station and one had the almost inevitable chicken boiled, curried or somehow dealt with followed by caramel custard

pudding and I was having a coffee when the station master came along and said had I finished, I said, 'Yes', well he said if it was convenient he would like to start the train again, and this was the first inkling I had of the sort of power of the British Raj, it rather tickled me not that I was of any importance. One then went up, joined one's British regiment and got allotted to a platoon, shepherded by other officers and one went into the normal routine as a very junior officer in a British regiment. We had the hot weather down in the plains and then we went up for a period into the hills also to break the monotony and in the winter of course we were all down in the plains. Now in those days one used to solemnly start army training on the 1st of January which was started off by a ceremonial parade, every brigade, every cantonment had its January the 1st annual parade in which the whole of the brigade were paraded in line and in column and all the rest of it and after that one settled down to the army life and we started right at the bottom which I thought was very stupid even then, of telling soldiers with about twenty years' service how to stand at ease properly and how to come to attention and as the thing progressed so one went on to section training, platoon training, company training, then the battalion went out on exercise culminating with imaginary manoevres during the winter months up to Christmas between, whoever you like, Ruritania and somebody else or they and us, and it was all good fun in those days. Well I joined my Indian regiment almost exactly a year later at Lucknow and after the initial shock of meeting the C.O. and other very senior officers I was introduced to the *subadar-major* and the adjutant said that, 'This is the *subadar-major*, you're going to such-and-such a company with *subadar* so-and-so. Now on the military side you will rely on these two for guidance. On the administrative side you will have in your office a clerk who can speak English if not more than one and also there is the Chief Regimental Clerk who is a *jemandar*, that's warrant officer class two, and he will guide you on that side', and so between the two one tried to pick up the basic elements of one's career. Now, the basic of tactics and so forth of course one learnt at Sandhurst and the biggest problem naturally was the language barrier and all through the summer months one used to have a teacher, a *munśhi*, in the afternoons which were used for rest periods trying to master this language which came gradually. I remember going back a little bit a little bit to the British troops. During the winter, during the summer months, I'm sorry, it was a rule that no troops were to go outside the barracks between the hours of two and four thirty and if you were caught going out it was, had to have a very good reason for doing so and the contrast to that was, is very interesting is that five years later you had British fighting quite happily in the desert in the boiling heat there with no question of knocking off between two and four thirty such was the difference between peacetime and soldiering. I joined the regiment and I was very fortunate in that it was posted up to Chitral. Now Chitral was a marvellous station from a subaltern's point of view. I had no private means which quite a number of Indian Army officers didn't have either. The Indian Army was much better paid than the British Army, but then you were expected to spend your twenty or thirty years in India which was what one hoped to to do so one went up to this place which was first of all rail to Bannu, then by road in *Albion* First World War *Albion* lorries to [?] which was a village right up in Swat, and then one went

over the Lowari Pass into Chitral. The Pass is 10, 600 feet high and it took us a couple of days to get the whole lot through there. Chitral itself is a queer little state. It nestles up in the North-West of India right up in the North, North-West and borders on Tibet, Afghanistan and Russia which was the whole reason why the garrison originally way back in eighteen something or other ninety was put up there to repel the Red menace. Now I don't know if you've read James Hilton's *Shangri-La*, *Lost Horizon*, I beg your pardon, but in that he has this place which was *Shangri-La* and I reckon that he must have based it on Chitral because it was cut off from the world, two passes the one I've mentioned and the other one the other end in Gilgit which was about the same height and apart from that they were surrounded by mountains which used to go up to twenty-three, twenty-four thousand, Tirich Mir was the highest, they, people were kind, non-violent, agricultural, they had no police, there was no need for it and of course they had no transport except horses and they lived a very peaceful life. There was only one incident while we where there in which a local shot a man with his old blunderbuss because he had borrowed his wife and this was reported to the what they call the *Mehta* of Chitral, the Emperor if you like who said yes well that of course that was quite understandable, it was excusable under Chitrali law, so apart from that there was no trouble. Now by going up to Chitral we were fortunate in having, for a subaltern, an extra hundred rupees and on the pay that we were getting which was about forty pounds a month for being shot at if you were on the North-West Frontier we got an extra seven pounds ten shillings or seven fifty if you like which was a marvellous for us and we were able to live within our income. The great thing in Chitral was playing polo. There's an argument between Chitral and Gilgit as to who started polo first, but polo to the Chitrali is the same as football to the Scot or to any other person who likes it, anywhere where there's a small place a backyard, Hampden Park you play football. In Chitral anywhere, village square, an odd open *maidān* anything you like you play polo, and the people who would mount themselves on horses, local horses they could get they were none of them trained to Hurlingham standards, they made their own polo sticks which could be quite lethal when the end came off in a melee, and the only rule in the game was that you were not allowed to pull your opponent off the ball, off his horse, unless he had the ball in his hands and when you have seen the cobblestones in a village somewhat similar to Kenmore in which, not tarmac like that was, but between the entrance we came out of Taymouth castle and the church opposite the two entrances and exits to the thing, it was cobblestones sloping down in the middle to communal shall we say sort of drain, so you hit the ball like this and it was bound to hit some cobblestone and go up, so you caught that and threw it through the opponents' goal. We used to play this regularly on the aerodrome, and the size of field depended on the number of people playing and the number of horses that they had. Now we were allowed to hire our government charger or chargers, and they cost us ten shillings a we ... , a month for insurance should they break their necks, so that for ten shillings plus the output of buying a couple of polo sticks, a ball, one had a marvellous game of rough and ready polo. There were no rules at all it was he who could keep his course the straightest and the most determined who won through and I'm told a couple of years before us we met two, two Chitralis were

playing on opposite sides and neither would give way to the other in the chase for the ball and the result was they met head on and one of them killed himself, but it was all a part of the game. From Chitral we came down to Peshawar where, that was 1939, 1940, we'd been up there for the first part of the war, 1940 November we came down, the war really was on for India before that it didn't really sort of strike people and battalions were expanding we got to the extent that we went to form a battalion, the first milking us they termed it of the regular regiments to form a new battalion which I went to the Fifth Battalion and the first document I opened was our detachments to be sent to another battalion in three months' time. We formed there, we made do with what was sent us from the other regular battalions, and as you can understand human nature being what it was we got an awful lot of rubbish, however we did what we could in that thing. From Benares we moved down towards Burma in gradual stages, we had a camp outside at a place called Midnapur about eighty miles from there, of which there was nothing, really, of any interest that happened. A small incident, one of the troops hung himself, for no reason at all, and he managed it by putting his [?], that is the *pagri* you might call it over the beam and tying the other end round his head. Now why it was extraordinary to me was that the [?] would stretch rather like nylon and he was discovered in the morning by his mate in the next side bed, who got up for an early morning pee, you see, and said, 'You're up early' to this bod who was standing stiffly at attention, and he went off and he came back and the chap was still there and when he noticed this he sort of shook him and of course panic set in, by which time he was of course very stiff so there was nothing else to do about that. We then gradually went forward from Midnapur, we went to the Arakan and we were corps troops there so we had a defence of various valleys, portions like that, our battalion was in one side to prevent the infiltration of the Japanese coming up the various valleys they had in that part, the big main, Arakan, sorry, was fought by troops who came through and down on to the peninsular. We weren't actually involved in that but we saw them go down, I was O.C. station when we first got there, I was sent on detachment to the roadhead, the railhead there [Sunguhead] of the river, Dohazar was the place and I had a hundred and ten units under my command, so I'm told, including the R.A.F. squadron, 60 Squadron and nearby aerodrome and two water divining sections, which I was never able to find in the jungle the whole time I was there no matter. People, this was '42 now we had lost the *Repulse* and the *Renown*, the Japs were supermen morale was very low we were getting recruits coming, in inverted commas trained soldiers, coming into our battalion who three months before had been ordinary villagers and normally they spent eighteen months in the training centre before in peacetime they came out, and it was a very raw lot that were down there and the Japs had only got to give a rumour that they'd moved here or there and on two occasions the whole brigade moved back five miles because they thought they were being encircled. There was one battalion that I know of which will be nameless that came down from the middle of India and was bunged up in the front line and everybody's nerves were sort of tuned up like a fiddle. Well one sentry saw a Jap, quite definitely, in the moonlight about a couple of hundred yards ahead moving in the bushes, he was very sharp eyed and he called out, being still a bit peacetime, he said, 'Right, halt who goes there?' in

Urdu and of course the chap didn't answer, so he called out again and having done it three times in accordance with the regulations he then fired a shot. His mate on the either side, 'What's happening?', he told him what was happening the mate looked and couldn't see anything but to be on the safe side he fired. Now within about three minutes the whole of that battalion front were firing and when you go into a defensive position in a battalion in line you have your machine guns on what you call fixed lines you have them aim at what you think is a possible target so that you've got crossfire and as you can't see at night you just press the trigger and you're firing a continuous belt. So that was going on, and the machine guns were chattering, people were firing rifles right the way along the length of the battalion, so some bright spark some officer thought it'd be a good idea to have some light on the situation so he fired a Very light pistol. Well that was all right, they couldn't see much there, and so they then fired again, and by the law of averages they eventually hit on the combination of Very light signals red over green over red which, for that night, was the S.O.S. call for the defensive artillery behind the position so as soon as the artillery saw the S.O.S. all their guns opened up on the defence lines and you never heard such a bloody racket. Well it died down eventually and daylight came and patrol, the usual army volunteers you, you and you were sent out to see what it was and straight in front of the original chap's position they found the cause of all the trouble, and that was a dead goat very dead and it just shows you the way in which imagination .... (Tape cuts out).

L-C.H. Right after that we had another incident of the same nature. There were two ordnance depots one each side of the main road down from Dohazar to Bhairab Bazar and one of them thought it saw some enemy. They fired just as a transport was passing. The transport hared on and reported when he got back that the Japs were attacking the depot. There was alarm and despondency to a certain extent. Somebody was sent out to investigate by which time both depots were firing solemnly at each other being convinced that they were each engaging the enemy. I'm glad to say that after a short time that little incident was finished without too many casualties. Right we left the Arakan on that occasion and we went up to the North-West Frontier. This was a very interesting place to go to. It's been described as the best training ground for the army in the world because you were fighting you were training against real enemy - the Pathans, the Mahsuds, the Wazirs who lived and still live in the buffer zone between Afghanistan and West - Pakistan as it is now, were a wild tribe who were never really conquered at all, and it was great fun for them that the road convoys and the troops piqueting the roads should be shot up at and if they could to get a rifle or so that was the thing that they did there. It was while we were up there that my education *havildar* that's the equivalent of a sergeant in the British Army, was escorting a prisoner down to Bannu Gaol the fifteen hundredweight truck overturned and he unfortunately was seriously injured. When he came out of hospital he was sent back to the Battalion and the C.O. called me in, I was the second in command at the time, the C.O. called me in and said, 'What should we do in the case of this *havildar*?' and I said, 'What's the matter?', and the C.O. explained that his medical report showed that he was no further use to the army

because his accident had broken his shoulder blade and he could not bear even the weight of equipment let alone a rifle or anything like that on his shoulder. Now this *havildar* was particularly good, very good indeed, and he had said to the C.O., 'If I can have three weeks' leave I can go back to my village and I can get my local *hākim*, the doctor, and he will put me right.' The C.O. called the M.O., who happened to be an Indian, and said, 'What do you think about this?' and showed him the report, and the Indian doctor said, 'Yes well I mean it just isn't knitting there's nothing that can happen' so the M.O. went and I was asked what decision I would make, so I said to the C.O., 'Well look, let him have his three months leave, three weeks leave, he comes back, he'll be checked by the M.O., we can then fill in his discharge papers, and he can't say that we deprived him of a chance to get himself put right', so the fellow was sent off. We were then bunged down towards the Arakan again and I forgot this chap until suddenly I was going round the lines and there he was in uniform and I said, 'Well, it's nice to see you, what the heck are you doing here?', and he said, 'Well I'm back on duty sir. Have you seen my arm's allright?' Now what the *hākim* did, I haven't a clue, and he would not tell me but that chap was serving when I left the Battalion in 1945 it's amazing it happened. I then went down to the Arakan where we had another six month spell during which I contracted malignant malaria. Now the cure for malaria in those days was what was called *M & B Pills*, yellow variety, and the drill was that everybody had to take their pills under supervision. This, the amount of malaria down in Burma was tremendous. In one attack we put in we had to combine two Hindu companies to form one company of normal strength, so there were far more casualties from wastage by malaria than there were from Jap, Jap bullets at any time in our part of the world anyway. It's an interesting thing, to my mind, that the Hindus as you know are vegetarian. The Muslims are meat eaters. Now the Muslims resisted the disease for longer, when they went down they recovered quicker. The Hindus went down like flies on one occasion we had a company which should have been one hundred and thirty-two strong was down to sixty-five and I'm wondering whether the habits of the Hindus vis-à-vis the Mohammedans showed that one needs a certain amount of meat in one's balanced diet. I as I say caught this malignant malaria and I went back on leave to, up to a place called Naini Tal, and this developed, came out, having not had the suppressive of the *M & B tablets*, this malaria came out you see, and I was put into hospital. Now I could feel that I was ill, and as soon as I saw the M.O. he didn't waste any time he just bunged me straight in at the depot, Bareilly, and I was fortunate in that the medical staff, this was the British medical staff, were a specialised unit, of some of them were Harley Street types who had joined up for the War, and their particular British military hospital complete had been sent to France in '39 and had managed to get out of France before the retreat, and were then posted to India so we had a specialised unit and I was fortunate in that they diagnosed exactly what was wrong with me which was sprue, which is a disease that no matter what you eat you do not get value out of it, in fact it's a wasting disease and from being eleven stone eight I dropped down to nine stone four, however having got rid of the malaria I was fortunate in that in the sprue they caught me when I was absorbing sixty per cent nourishment for forty per cent waste. If you go over the fifty fifty and you

have to be sent home and nobody knows the cause of sprue and there is no known cure except that you put the chap on a boat in Bombay, and by the time he gets back to the U.K. he's cured but he can't go out again to India. Well I was fortunate as I was caught at the right stage and once I got rid of the malignant malaria I started to then put on weight and I used to eat solemnly, an hour for breakfast, toast after toast after toast which I used to have for breakfast you see, and in the in the first week I put on seven pounds. However I then went to the training battalion for a year, another spell down the Arakan, and the I was posted to Senior Tactical School in Dehra Dun where we were training officers *et cetera,* and it was there that I, I was there when Partition occurred or rather Independence Day and shortly after that Independence day was August the 15th and I went down to Bombay on August the 25th and I sailed for Britain on the 2nd of September 1947, '46, sorry, so that was that.

K.P. Why did you join the Indian Army in the first place?

L-C.H. I was born abroad, the idea of serving in the Army appealed to me, I liked foreign places, there was no sort of regular Army commitment in any other places, the pay was good, the conditions were good, and I liked the idea of the country and for those reasons I was very glad that I passed out high enough at Sandhurst to be able to go into the Indian Army. Of course when one went to India one was what they called the Unattatched List Indian Army and for a year you spent with a British Regiment, in theory, I think getting used to working with troops if you were in the Indian Army and had to work with troops in the future. In practice of courseone merely became a very spare Junior Second Lieutenant doing any odd jobs that occurred. I was fortunate I was with the Border Regiment in a place called Ferozepur and they treated me very well indeed, accepted me as one of their officers I then transferred to the Indian Army, as I said, and in that time I had a year in which to be permanently accepted or not, and during that time I had to pass not only my Lower Standard but my Higher Standard Urdu exam. I was fortunate enough to be able to achieve both of those things.

K.P. Which Indian Regiment did you join?

L-C.H. The 9th Jhat Regiment, First Royal Battalion, that's the one I actually joined but of course during the War one was moved around to various battalions as the situation demanded.

K.P. Could you tell me about life in the Regiment before the war, what did you do each day?

L-C.H. Life in the Regiment, yes. In an Indian regiment in peace time, they always get up very early the Indians, whether civil or military and the day starts particularly in the hot weather you're up at and moving by five o'clock in the morning. You would then work drills and so on and so forth till about nine o'clock, you then had breakfast and you

came in you dealt with office work and then you dealt with such things as education, lectures, signaling, machine gun training in the shade of the barracks and so forth until about one o'clock, one then had the break from two to four, four-thirty and then one went and played games with the troops which were mainly hockey. They also played basketball which they were very good at. One didn't play everyday, but one was expected to go round and play with them because you got to know your men better if you spent say three evenings a week with them, and then you spent the other four down at the military club where you could play squash or tennis or swim.

K.P. Could you tell me about your relations with the troops?

L-C.H. (Laughs) In what respect?

K.P. This unique relationship that existed in the Indian Army between the officers and the men.

L-C.H. There was a very close relationship, yes. The Indian army, whatever your regiment, was made up of volunteers, completely volunteer army selected from the martial castes as laid down by the Indians, not by us, and because for the troops it was a steady employment, it was an honourable profession with a pension at the end of it, there was no lacking in recruits. When a person wanted to join the regiment he applied to the depot, the *subadar-major* would make discreet enquiries to find out who his relations were and what regiments they had been in and what ranks they had reached *et cetera*, and if he was suitable, and if there was a vacancy he'd be accepted at the training battalion prior to going to whatever regiment it needed replacement due to natural wastage of people going out at the top. The result of that was that discipline was absolutely first class, there was no trouble with the troops at all. A queer angle of this you see is that I had when I just joined a fellow brought up for being dirty on guard mounting. Now I asked what I should do about it and my powers were sensibly restricted to confining this individual or any similar one to ten days confined to barracks which merely meant that he couldn't go out of the barracks. Well I heard the evidence through the *jemandar* interpreter and I was then of course the great decision rested on me, as the whole of the British Empire, so the *sahib* still wet behind the ears had to make a decision so I thought, 'Oh well he hasn't done anything before' so I said, 'Allright, three days C.B.' So three days C.B., the chap marched out and that was that so when the officers cleared I asked the *subadar* if that was allright and sort of he being a good disciplinarian said, 'Oh yes it was allright' and so I said, 'Well what was wrong with it - it was only three days C.B.' and he said, 'Yes *sahib* but what you don't understand yet is that that fellow will have to report it in a letter to his father who I happen to know is ex-*jemandar* XYZ you see, and when that gets round the village someone is bound to pull the old man's leg and say, 'Well of course young recruits now you know dirty on parade didn't happen in my day' and when this young man gets back to his village he'll get absolute hell, so I took that as a warning and I was very careful as to what I did in future.

But the, we got on extremely well together, they had a great respect, they may not be very educated a lot of them but they if I may say they knew a great deal about their officers they knew their strengths and their weaknesses and if you treated them well as all the officers I knew did they reciprocated with a perfect loyalty. They were great people they had on occasions on the right occasions I might say a certain Rabelaisian sense of humour but it was all good fun, no they they were they were first class troops. I wouldn't have wanted to command any others.

K.P. Where did you recruit from?

L-C.H. The districts around Delhi, Delhi, Rottock, Hisar, Gurgaon, which were sub-districts around there.

K.P. Did you ever go on any recruitment tours yourself?

L-C.H. Yes I, I went on a two month recruitment tour during the war. I'm afraid it was rather, rather a failure in that in the end we got about a dozen recruits. The trouble was that by that time the War had been going on for four years, and as soon as a military vehicle arrived anywhere in the neighbourhood you see you go to a village and the potential would have disappeared out to some other village until you had gone away again but it was very nice talking to the to the locals, and they ask how the regiment was what's so-and-so doing and what's it like and one generally got back to it wasn't the same as it was when they were in the army, but the village life the villagers were always polite they would always share their their food with you. I mean I was quite fond of Indian food I got quite used to scooping with one hand with a chapatti and getting rice and [?] and whatever it was *et cetera et cetera* oh I liked going round there the village folk were very nice indeed, first class.

K.P. Were you touched at all by the I.N.A. business?

L-C.H. No. We had no I.N.A. at all. We had, the certain regiment which shall be nameless was, did have a mutiny on its hands, but we were never touched with anything the only thing which everybody regretted was that as the War progressed they came lower and lower down the scale of accepting people within the military caste system they were scraping the bottom of the barrel and those at from bottom of the barrel hadn't got the same loyalty hadn't got the same pride in the regiment that those who came from the normally top half of the caste system. The result was that like other regiments we had our quota of desertions and I remember the first desertion occurred when we came down from Chitral and the regiment was absolutely stunned, the *subadar-major* looked about ten years older than his normal age and he came to tell the C.O. the dreadful news that we had got one deserter it shook us alot that because one never thought that anybody would desert from a regiment, but I mean one must be honest these things did occur particularly in wartime. I remember an incident going off I'm afraid at a tangent back to

the centre but talking of the military caste system reminds me I was running a battalion there and we had a chap, a recruit who, a *sipāhī* who said who was said to be very good and was worthy of promotion. Now my regiment consisted of half Hindu and half Mussulman and there was one *subadar-major* and one *jemandar*, adjutant and so on and so forth and one had to be very careful to keep the balance of promotions between the two castes and before I made any decision I used to hold a conference of all my *subadars* and the *subadar-major*, Hindus and Muslims all together you see, and say, 'There's a vacancy in such and such a place, do you recommend so-and-so?' Well if it was a Hindu company and their turn of course the Mussulmans wouldn't object and *vice versa.* When it got to headquarter company which was mixed it became a little bit more delicate but on this particular occasion there was a unanimous approval that so-and-so would make a good lance-corporal or *lance-naik* as we call them, so I agreed and I was about to publish the order the next day when my *subadar* came along and said, 'We can't promote so-and-so' and I said, 'Why not?' 'Well' he said, 'He is a weaver and weavers are below the lowest ...'. (Tape ends)

L-C.H. I asked the *subadar* and he explained that the man concerned was a weaver which is below the lowest of the military caste. Now from that moment on the man was an outcast and I had to have an N.C.O. watching him to see that he was fed otherwise they would not feed him from the cookhouse which he had been using without anybody objecting for the previous six months, which just shows you how rigid are the divisions of the Indian caste system. Going on a bit, to towards independence when it became obvious that there was definitely going to be independence in India and it wasn't as the old hands say just a pipedream to, we'd go back to the pre-war days, I was sent back to the training centre and I had the the thankless task of disbanding the regiments. I disbanded three battalions, as they came in they were demobbed, given lectures on to look out when they got back to civilian life because with their back pay, demob pay, and other perks they would each be carrying quite a lot of money and they didn't want to be either mugged or looted by some fly by night contractor or somebody like that, and I was very hurt by the realisation that the Indian troops particularly in the senior ranks thought that we, the British, were deserting them, the Indians, particularly the military martial races, for no reason whatsoever and it was extremely difficult to try and get it over to them that the decision was not ours in the Regiment but their own politicians with the British government way back at Whitehall, but the Indian soldiers' attitude towards the civilian Congress people was that they were more or less a lot of numskulls and hairy baboons call them what you like, they were beneath contempt and they did not realise that the power of government had passed from Britain to India for good or for evil, and I had on three occasions to line out three battalions, three different occasions, and I put the Muslims on the left, the Hindus on the right and having made a farewell speech I said gave the order, 'Hindus stand fast, remainder left turn', the Muslims turned to the left, formed into a column of rout and marched to the station and were then on a train to West Pakistan and we were left with the remnants of three battalions, but I don't think they, the Indian warrant officers really forgave us for what they saw as betraying them by

handing over government to the *bābū logh*. After the, that I was sent for six months to the Senior Training Tactical School in Dehra Dun and I was there at the time of Partition. As things hotted up towards the time of Partition communal rioting began and in our particular case a large number of civilian houses of Muslims were barricaded up and the inhabitants fled. The civil authorities came to my Brigadier and said could anything be done about it, because there was looting going on. Now the situation then you must realise was quite serious, there were communal riots, they were particularly heavy in Calcutta but that's another story and my Brigadier said, 'Right, we'll have to take extreme measures', so we got hold of our sapper officer who was a British major and the Brigadier had the civilian police with him and said, 'Right, we'll go round the area. What do you think are the most likely places that'll be looted next?' so these were pointed out and the Brigadier said to the R.E. and said, 'Okay, booby trap them' and all these houses were booby trapped. After two explosions all Muslim houses were left intact. It may have been drastic by present day standards but it was a very awkward situation at the time.

K.P. When did it become apparent that Independence was going to take place?

L-C.H. Definitely I reckon it was about six months before it was definitely concrete then. The talking the talking had gone on for a considerable time, Jinnah wanted Partition Nehru wanted to keep India as a whole and the argument went backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards the whole time until eventually it was agreed that there would be Independence and there would be Partition and I reckon things solidified about six months before hand.

K.P. What was the reaction in the mess?

L-C.H. We were very sad because it meant a complete break up of everything we had known. It was considered and proved right later that it was unwise to serve on in India for this reason, that up to the time we handed over every officer had a right of appeal in the end right up to the Privy Council. When Independence came quite understandably the highest authority was the Indian government, and people weren't quite too certain as to how they would be treated frankly. Also which again was proved that British officers who stayed behind reached a certain rank and were then passed over by junior Indian officers who took what should have been their promotion in the normal course of events, so very few of us stayed on so it was then a question of what were you going to do you'd been trained for one type of life and you had no qualifications, so to speak, you weren't a trained lawyer or a doctor or something like that. Fortunately the British Army in the Gunners at that time was expanding. The British infantry regiments as they did after the First World War were contracting and so the line regiments contracted, but the possibly the threat that was seen with Russia made those in charge realise that effective anti-aircraft defence was worthwhile having and so they were expanding and they said that they were prepared to have a certain number of Indian army officers do a transfer over

and so I was fortunate again in being one of the fifty or so who were selected to transfer to the British army so on the question of one's career one was allright so to speak looking at it one way, but with no disloyalty to the British Army it could never have replaced the joy of being in the Indian Army.

K.P. What view did you and your fellow officers have of the Indian politicians?

L-C.H. Mainly unprintable, I think. We very seldom discussed politics in mess I'm afraid we thought, 'Well if it's inevitable well let them get on with it' but there was little we could do to influence it, it was entirely a matter of the Congress and the heads of the Indian parties getting together with Attlee's government, and we thought it would be a great shame because India was not ready for it, because they hadn't taken over sufficiently high enough up the scale whether it was in the I.C.S., the judiciary, the police or even business and what happened was that when we left you had very junior people being thrust into very senior jobs with very little experience to help them and there's no doubt that there was an awful breakdown in all lines. Also once it started, once this Partition was going, there was the movement of Hindus (*sic* Muslims) to Pakistan newly formed either East or West in those days, and Hindus from what was East and West India (*sic* Pakistan) into the newly formed Hindustan and there was a great deal of massacres going on on trains going one way or the other, first one party would waylay a train and anybody of the wrong type and you could always tell by dress and caste mark and so on what a person was, they, men women or children they were just butchered like that, then of course there was reprisal the other way and the third element was the *dacoiti* the bandits, for whom any train was fair game, and you might get a lot of money and so forth so stop a train, pull down the telegraph wire, push off into the Sind desert or wherever it was and off you went. In India in Calcutta I was talking to an officer I met subsequently. The amount of slaughter that went on there was beyond imagination. About half a million people at least were killed in, in Calcutta and it occurred in the hot weather, Partition wasn't until the 15th of August that was right in the middle of the hot weather and as you know corpses decompose very rapidly. The municipal services just cracked. There wasn't anybody dared to go out and do that and it really was plague ridden place and it was left entirely to British troops to sort out, and they had to go out and form burning piles of people and just burn the corpses and they went out with masks over their faces to gather up these decomposing bodies and put them on a funeral pyre or whatever you like to call it to get rid of them. It was, never got into the British papers at all, but it did occur and I had one officer who shared a cabin with me on the boat going back and he had all he had was his clothes that he was standing up in. The train he was coming down from Peshawar which was one taking Hindus down you see back was waylaid and all the Hindus murdered and he'd got no arms, no rifles, and the supposed guard on the train joined in with the people who were looting the train. His baggage was stolen and he said, 'There was no good protesting I'd have just had my throat cut' and he arrived on the boat with a khaki shorts a bush coat and hat and that's his possessions.

K.P. How far had Indianisation gone in your regiment by this time?

L-C.H. In my regiment it had gone about three-quarters, there were quite a number of of field officers, majors, by the time we departed there. We had our first Indianisation in 1923 and fun ... strangely enough it was the young officer then who was a graduate from Cambridge, and I speak from other peoples' memories, but I know that I got in straight hand the fellow who was the second in command when he told me was a subaltern in the regiment when it occurred, but when this Indian officer joined the training centre in Bareilly the club would not let him in and the regiment took a very firm line and they said, 'Right we will have this barred and we will get the rest of the military in Bareilly to bar the Club. This is an accredited officer of the Jat Regiment', and they had to give way and after that I mean we had a number of Indian people in and the other end of the story when I met him he, he became he became my Indian C.O. and I was very proud to serve under him he was a brilliant man a very good chap indeed, a very high caste Hindu I may say as it happened and we used to have little bit of arguments in the mess. The Indian officers would turn on the radio for Indian music you see, and of course we'd turn it back to British music and eventually it was referred to the C.O., and he said, 'Right until all of you (which he referred to the Indian officers) can speak English as well as I can you will listen to British programmes in English and not Indian ones', so that settled that matter. A question of Indianisation this was thought out many years before the Partition. We, the British, never regarded India as being a permanent colony if you like if you call it of the British empire. The Indian Congress was started by a Scotsman in about 1912, and Indians were trained up or were being trained up to take over positions eventually to have senior positions both in government and in the services and the Indianisation in my own regiment as I've said started in 1923 '24 and it went on until Partition. Now the trouble with Indianisation was not that it was ineffective, it was sound, it was progressing steadily to the correct conclusion which was to have the regiment from top to bottom commanded by Indians. Where the system fell down and I'm told the same thing occurred in in police and in the government was that at the time of Partition the Indianisation was only half completed ripping out all the British or European personnel from all the services left you with a gap which was being filled by very inexperienced officers, civil or military, who had a great deal of responsibility thrust on their shoulders for which they were not yet experienced or properly trained, and the result was that in a large number of cases in, Calcutta's a good example, the civil government just broke down.

K.P. Right, could you tell me what your relations with the civil people were like?

L-C.H. Yes, they were perfectly cordial but our paths didn't very often cross. You see military cantonments which is where the army was were always outwith the city which were generally built hugga-mugga from days gone by and it would be very awkward to put a large military contingent into an Indian city and probably very undesirable

particularly if they happened to be a communal uprising of some sort. Now the military had their cantonment which for their reasons they wanted compact in all its various elements from the supplies and ordnance and so on and so forth, and the civilians lived outwith the city in whatever was a suitable bungalow for them to have. Now in large cantonments not in small ones they were long before I arrived two sets of clubs not because the military and the civil couldn't stand each other but it, it so happened that they gravitated towards their own kind and we had the military club on one side and the civilians had their club on the other side. Now in smaller stations like Bareilly or Benares it was totally unnecessary, very uneconomical and undesirable to have the small civil population sort of pushed out to a club on their own and so we just had the Bareilly club to which we all had civil and military personnel and it worked perfectly well.

K.P. What was club life life like?

L-C.H. Well, nothing extraordinary it wasn't a, a drunken brawl from one end of the year to another. One used to have, normally one would go down to the club, and particularly take the summer though hot season, you'd go down, you would play your games whatever they were, have a bath have a shower and so forth have a drink and then go back to the mess where one had an ordinary, formal dinner. In the winter time at weekends, but not very often in the summer, in the winter months, the same thing occurred except that once a week one would have a dance in the Club, and everybody just joined in socially it was like a social club anywhere here in Britain or in India.

K.P. Could you tell me about *mā-bāp*?

L-C.H. Well, the ordinary Indian simple peasant would, held in awe any of the white folk particularly the those in government of military, hold government or military rank and they attributed to, as they've been phrased 'the heaven born' that there was nothing they couldn't do if they were prepared to look benignly on the Indian who made his request and there was no doubt that where it was possible of course one, one helped them along whatever it was but you couldn't always do that but there was definitely the feeling that was born in there from generations that if you could get the *sahib* to look after your affairs he would work whatever miracle was required to produce whatever the result was that you wanted. Course it wasn't always the case. When I went back with my wife, up in Kashmir, no, I beg your pardon in Delhi there was an Indian waiter and I could still talk a bit of the language and he engaged me in conversation and said that he wanted to come to Britain and he would be very pleased if I arranged this for him and he more or less was going to say, 'I'll remind you of it in about a week's time and I'm sure you'll have all the arrangements made.' Now that if you like it's an echo from the past, but he was quite certain that I could do it merely because I, I happened to talk the language he knew I was Indian Army and therefore there was nothing I couldn't do, couldn't do it on his behalf, but there is there's no doubt there was definitely this very strong feeling that we would look after the Indians.

K.P. When was that?

L-C.H. That was in 1970 if I remember rightly.

K.P. Did you have regrets leaving India?

L-C.H. Oh definitely. I had I was very keen to join the Indian Army and as soon as I joined it I knew it was a life I was going to like. I hoped like a large number of officers that I could serve at least up to commanding a battalion and in due course retire as a Lieutenant-Colonel in my own right. The more I was in India, the longer I was there the more I liked it. I liked the Indian troops I got on well with them. I got on well with my brother officers, it was a fine country, it was absolutely marvellous. Then we came to the question of Partition, and with all that it entailed, and finally of course I boarded on a troopship in Bombay to sail finally home. My feelings were mixed and I remember going up on deck and leaning over the rail when we were actually leaving, physically India for the first, for the last time and as they threw off the ropes and so forth we drifted gradually away from the dockside, I realised that a definite part of my life had come to a sudden halt and I was convinced in my own mind that whatever the future held that portion would probably turn out to be the happiest portion of my whole career whatever it was going to be. I had been fortunate to be selected for transfer to the British service so one could say one had continuity of employment, but it was an unknown factor and one is naturally a little bit apprehensive of what the future holds. What I would have liked to have done, not being too ambitious, was to have served my time out and retired in my own right as a Lieutenant-Colonel and an example I have of that was the O.C. of the Regimental Training Centre who started in August 1914 and was in the British army on the Somme transferred and served throughout India in the Second War. He ended up with thirty-two years' service, he'd completed his whole span and he could then happily retire back to Britain, and I would like to have done the same thing retiring in 1967 or '69 but I'm afraid fate took a hand and it was not to be.

K.P. Some of the anti-British propaganda that was produced during the War portrayed us as a defeated power and therefore one that had really lost the status that we'd had previously. Did this have an effect in the Indian Army in the regiments at all, did they feel that we were no longer to be looked up to?

L-C.H. Oh, Lord, no, no, I remember there was a very black period you may recall reading about we lost Singapore fell the *Prince of Wales* and the *Renown* two major battleships were sunk all within about the same week and it was a little bit shaking but talking it over with the troops they had no doubt whatever that we, that's 'they' and 'us', would conquer in the end, they were absolutely certain of it and I remember an odd incident in the middle of the Arakan when we were on the forward moving when we finally went up through Kohima down the Chocolate Staircase into Burma and also

attacked by sea and took Rangoon when we were on the up going towards that Lord Louis Mountbatten, who was the Commander-in-Chief South-East Asia came along and addressed the troops and spoke to them in their own language and said in effect that the pair of us, him and us, would fight together and there was no doubt that within a short time we would be in Rangoon. Now the Indian is a tremendous snob and to him Lord Louis Mountbatten was the King's brother, the King Emperor's brother, and what he said went and I remember hearing a couple of troops in the middle of the monsoon, it was pouring with rain and one was moaning about the conditions and the other one cheered him up by saying, 'Don't worry, don't worry, Lord Louis Mountbatten has said we will be in Burma soon and when the King's brother says that it is the fact.' I remember another small incident that occurred when we were facing the Japs across a peninsular in the Arakan it was about the only time which we had fixed lines as they had in the First World War and the Japs had an annoying habit of getting one of their Indian speaking troops to broadcast in Urdu telling the Indian troops to desert and join them as the brothers of the Rising Sun. Now the great trick was to find out where this tannoy system was and to blast it quickly off the earth with a Bren gun but on one occasion the Japanese propaganda merchant was carrying on and our fellow replied in a broadcast from our side giving him an awful lot of abuse, and eventually he achieved his object which was to make the Japanese lose face which of course is the ultimate sin as far as they're concerned, and the Jap stopped being polite and turned round and said in the vernacular, 'You bloody wogs, we shall advance quickly, we shall destroy all your houses we shall rape all your women and within three days we shall be in Delhi' and quick as a flash our chap replied, 'Not on the Indian railways you won't chum.'

Recording ends.

Lieutenant-General Mujib ur Rahman Khan & Colonel Raja
1st/16th Punjab Regiment
Interviewed on 27th March 1998
SA1998.40

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, **L.-G. M. ur R.** represents Lieutenant-General Mujib ur Rahman Khan, and **Col. R.** represents Colonel Raja.

J.W. : So if you can just tell me first when you were both in the army itself when you joined the army and how long you served for ?

L.-G. M. ur R. : Well I am Lieutenant-General Mujib ur Rahman Khan. I joined the army I arrived in fact the Academy in March '49 we had two and a half years training and I was commissioned in '51. I then joined the 16 Punjab Regiment first I went to 3rd/16 (Third-Sixteen) Punjab because of the family traditions my brother was the first commanding officer of that Battalion after Independence. I joined his battalion but after a year I was transferred to 1st/16 (First-Sixteen) Punjab Regiment and then I continued to serve in that regiment with of course interruptions for staff duties elsewhere and then I was lucky to come back to the same Battalion which is 1st/16 which later became 13 Punjab (Thirteen Punjab) and now known as 13 Punjab. I commanded that Battalion for two years then of course I later went to Staff College and so and so forth that was my association with the Regiment and then of course when you become Brigadier and later on then you are of course on the General list that is and here is Colonel Raja who can say about his record.

J.W. : Colonel Raja if you can say about when you joined and ... .

Col. R. : My name is Raja Ali Mohammed I just joined this Battalion due to a *sipahi* who was alive at that time and he served in this Battalion in nineteen hundred and ten. He used to talk a lot about this Battalion he had seen Delhi *durbar* and hockey and all that sort of thing. That fascinated me I felt if I joined the regiment battalion I will go to this unit. I came to this unit with a close friend of mine Major [Sahaadaq] who was also retired. I served in this Battalion only for a very short time to tell you honestly I stayed with them from '52, '54 yes '54 and thereafter I never got a chance to go to this Battalion again but I kept my associations with this Battalion due to people like General [Nashameen] and others close friends and then a big attraction for me was Major Tufail *Nishan i Haider*. We both left Battalion on assignment as an instructor in infantry school. From there we both joined [?]. There of course he died in an action and came back and since then I kept my association with the battalion. I didn't command this battalion I commanded another battalion of this group but due to him General Shameem and other close friends I had to take on this project of writing a little history in Urdu, in our own language.

J.W. : Rightly so.

Col. R. : Which we intend printing [with Allah's blessings] so that's how I joined.

J.W. : Right, right and the you obviously you both have a very strong affinity to the battalion and to the Regiment. Could you tell me a bit more about that about this loyalty to that battalion, you know how that, is that something that you have almost before you join because of the, the history and your reasons for joining ?

L.-G. M. ur R. : Actually the loyalty to the Battalion is something which has come to us through history. I think is that *esprit de corps* and the pride in your regiment which urges you on and which really encourages you to give your best performance to keep up the name of the regiment. This I think is a tremendous contribution by the British by this is the regimental traditions so and this particular regiment 16 Punjab Regiment why I particularly admire this now 16 Punjab Regiment is the part of overall Punjab Regimental Group but when I joined it 1st/16 and earlier in 3rd/16 I found that this regiment has a unique had a unique culture. It was not so much to raise the your own battalion but to raise the sister battalion and if somebody said that 1st/16 is the best battalion and you as a person belonging to 1st/16 you will say, 'No you're quite right but still better is 2nd/16 or 3rd/16' and you went over to them and they said sort of a mutual admiration society which developed that *esprit de corps* and a pride in the regiment and I must say in that Colonel Blackwood who was our central Commandant of 16 Punjab he had a lot to do with this to inculcate that spirit and I mean it was something tremendous, he was I was a lecturer at that time, subaltern, and he had commanded and he was a full colonel, he had commanded 4th/16 in War 4/16 Punjab Regiment he had commanded in North Africa and I was a subaltern and we had the tournament competitions sports competitions and all the battalions of 16 Punjab they came to a place called Kohat, and we had those competitions before the Regiment had got amalgamated with the overall Punjab Regiment and this colonel, Blackwood, he seemed to know all the colonels of all the battalions some is located five hundred miles in the south other battalions elsewhere but it was I remember talking to him in the mess I had brought my hockey team from 1st/16 and he was discussing with me what were the chances of my team when he knew me as much as my own friends knew me, because the whole atmosphere was so friendly and competitive at the same time. He had a lot to do with this and that was the overall regiment. So far as the battalion was concerned you know battalion spirit it was to do better than the others what one battalion could do you, you should be able to do better than them very healthy competition, and I think when you read the past history of the battalion such as the histories here we are deriving great inspiration from the deeds and actions of our predecessors and then we try and keep up that with that you read the actions of your battalion what they did at different theatres of war and different times and what they did in peace time not only in war the discipline, and I mean I know in 1st/16 we always remember that this battalion had one gold trophy in an international shooting competition. Now whenever you wanted to do that you always looked back on

that that you yes you had achieved that and I have been very fortunate to serve this battalion and also to be got the official to command later on became the Colonel of the Regiment only recently I have retired from that appointment the job of the Honorary Colonel of the Regiment. I always felt in that in the history of the battalion there are deeds of people who were and they performed much beyond their normal ability we had the example of a very famous officer of the Battalion who won the highest award, we're talking about Major Tufail who earlier on '47 served in Gilgit but in 1958 he had been assigned with now Colonel Raja sitting with us here they fought in East Pakistan this man he laid down his life for the sake of the country, and he earned the highest award which is equivalent to Victoria Cross. Now these are such examples I remember he was the second in command of the Battalion and whenever he found me walking a little in a lousy manner he had pulled me up and he would say this is not the tradition of the Battalion. Now that I remember he had a lot to do with the discipline and he would although he belonged to some other regiment and I too had come from some other battalion but when I found the spirit of this Battalion I found something very unique in 1st/16 that it was not very common and not very customary in the army and that the lower ranks addressed the officers by name I found for the first time that in this Regiment, when you off parade you address everybody by name without even mentioning the rank it was very very pleasing, very courteous, very informal, very friendly yet within the bounds of discipline, it was such traditions which kept it alive. Sorry, I am taking ... .

J.W. : Oh no, no, no, please, please, it's wonderful.

L.-G. M. ur R. : And you at one time mentioned (clock strikes) the thinking about what the British officer or the Scottish officer actually we hardly sort of knew when I joined the army most of the British officers had left but in the Academy I came across two British officers on the commandant he was Brigadier [Ingill] and the other was the Sergeant-Major Duffield . Now both of them were outstanding and I think whatever standard the Pakistan Military Academy immediately after its establishment in 1948 whatever it achieved it was mostly due to these two gentlemen, the Commandant and the Sergeant Major Duffield and we, Sergeant Major Duffield, I got a lot of pulling up from him but he also liked me very much I was in the colour party and I was quite all right in drill, and he wanted me to be in that colour party and that sort of thing. I was admitted in hospital I had running fever but he got me out of that because the parade was coming the next parade was to take place in a few days, so I came out and I was he said that I must take leave from the hospital so I joined the parade and participated in that although later on immediately after the parade I fainted because I was gone so weak, but he wanted me there and I stood on because he had asked me to come out, he had shown that was your confidence in me, he was very happy on that, and Brigadier Ingill who later on became Pakistan's Consul General in America he became an American citizen later on, and he I was very fortunate to see him there in Los Angeles he had made a tremendous contribution, and then when I joined the Regiment we found Colonel Blackwood

looking after the Centre and doing all that so most of the traditions which you find in the Pakistan Army the foundation of that is laid down by that time, some very fine things of the discipline. You find today the Pakistan Army is one of those institutions which our most respected in the country and you will find various things going wrong in different department but when it's a [?] it's a question of armed forces and particularly with the army everybody has the praise and I think in this the principles and the discipline and the certain things which were initiated and started by the British they continued. Of course the whole thing has been modified and changed according to our own requirements and our culture, for instance the dress that you and I are wearing today we couldn't wear that in the messes. Now this was quite unnatural we had this dress and this according to if you can't wear your own dress then your a whole lot of you know cycles of thinking changes of course that is why we had to modify but the basic discipline that you are to do your duty that you have to be punctual, and that you have to do your best and that there is nothing is impossible you must keep trying these are the golden principles which we inherit.

J.W. : Yes and when you were saying you were saying how the sort of regimental history and this sort of thing is very inspiring and in your training and in the training now is that is that taught to recruits is that taught ... ?

L.-G. M. ur R. : Yes yes yes of course I mean the Battalion is for instance 1st/16 is known as '*Haider Nishan*', '*Haider Nishan*'means, I mean, *Nishan-i-Haider* Battalion, Victoria Cross, equivalent to that, so you first a recruit comes sort of the right battalion he said they should belong to this battalion their people have done this, this was the tradition of the Regiment and this is what you keep up you don't do this in this regiment you don't take drugs in this regiment, you don't come second in this regiment, you have to do your best, so these are the you the history the past deeds the spur you on, and they are a sort of a touchstone for you to keep up to get standards, and in doing indeed start to do better I think it's a tremendous thing and it is, you find a very ordinary soldier when he comes to a particular regiment that thing is instilled and, you know, gets motivated with that and he becomes a different person altogether a different personality, this is all right that kind of trust has been reposed in you, you've got to come up to that standard, you inherit a particular tradition. It is very important for the army, very important to carry forward the traditions, good traditions and keep up the name of the Regiment.

J.W. : Now you were saying just now General, and also Colonel you were saying as well, when you were just saying with the dress and you weren't allowed to wear the dress in former times [?], and you were saying about the fact that was there, is there a sort of problem the way that there's this pride obviously in the British things, but at the same time from those times you were in an army in a country where you weren't ruling, where you didn't have freedom, is that a conflict?

L.-G. M. ur R. : Yes there is a conflict in this I must say because I hold some definite views on this thing. You see if somebody said that one is proud of a period when you were under the domination of another country it would be wrong you could put it in any polite words, but the fact remains that this is, and I have this little problem also mention that we had this association sister battalion of the Sherwood Foresters. When we were exchanging momentoes with them and we had a very famous sort of battle well not really a battle action I would say a turning point in the history of this that time India that is 1857 which is known as Mutiny. Well we regard it as First War of Independence so that's the different perspectives so I must say I mean that I, I give you another example and that is when I was commanding a division in frontier there's a place called Fort Lockhart in Kohat, it's now known as [? Samaana] . Now there is a monument there saying that these were the forty people who were who laid down their lives in overcoming the insurgency here. Now I as a Pakistani who belong to this area I am I was proud of the people who fought to throw out the forces from that, so I got upset, who should I honour? Well my respect is for both, those who did their duty and those who fought for the cause of their country. So, but the whole thing is that you had to treat the event as it is, it is a historical fact that British conquered us and ruled. It is also a historical fact and a reality that given a chance you wouldn't like to extend this rule for one more day you would like to get, so in the, in the Pakistan Army we would like to keep traditions of discipline, of hard work, of punctuality, but we would like to then see our own culture in our own heritage so that there is a healthy blend between the two. Let me say that when the British left here there was no bloody war between it was the outstanding leadership of the leadership of that time like *Quaid-i-Azam* Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru and all that that we got independence there was no that kind of bloodshed that you find what you find in Algeria for instance where they fought with the French forces and that. Well when you get independence after that intensive fighting there is a reaction against the forces that have been now thrown out and then you throw out everything that belongs to them. It didn't happen here it was a very peaceful transition sort of more of a political act than a fighting on the battlefield, so when the British left here it was there was no hatred against them and I think it was because of wisdom of the British people that they did not leave here there was no hatred in that, so in fact it was a gradual transition so we retained, some British officers stayed on here in the Indian Army as well as the Pakistan Army, and but every country must have its own culture or identity so gradually there was no reaction give you one simple example we started the dress. Now I go out in this *Salwar* and *kamiz* but for some years in the Pakistan army even the Pakistani officers did no allow you to wear this dress, and then they started to realise no you belong here and there are different seasons and there is a requirement you have to go to the mosque here to say your prayers and in summer it is very hot and all that, and you must look like your own people so this thing so we, we retained that kind of pride which is there, a certain tradition at the same time when you talk about battles here, when you fought against your own people you're not proud of that, you like to forget I mean skip over bad part of history . The history is history, you can't rewrite the history, the only

thing is that you do not take pride in that, you say all right you did it as a duty, but lesser you talked about it the better, this my personal views.

J.W. : Yes, no, no, I can see your point. Colonel do you have anything to add to that cause you were saying ... ?

Col. R. : Thank you, I think General has given you a very comprehensive review on this. I have a few things personal to add.

J.W. :. Yes, please do.

Col. R. : Because you see you wanted personal impressions you see. What we got from the British and these people and from this unit actually was our grounding you see. I came to the Battalion as I told you but what I'm going to give you is a few instances which will elaborate what was those things which made my grounding in this fine Battalion among these [?]. For example one instance I remember in history old British times in discipline from Mutiny onwards never lost any weapon except one Sikh who lost it during 1st April 1925, everybody wanted to make fool of him that's how he lost weapons, but he will tell you in his strengths when he was commanding a battalion the Battalion lost [several ?]

L.-G. M. ur R. : Oh wonderful instance.

Col. R. : You tell him so that.

L.-G. M. ur R. : You are talking about it, in fact when you start talking about it you remember certain things. I was in fact not commanding, I was second in command of the Battalion, we were located in Bannu and there's a river which flows about three miles outside Bannu and our Battalion two companies of the Battalion were who were to go to field firing range for firing of the weapons all that. Now they were going on foot what they, they were very good swimmers in the Battalion so instead of going over the bridge and taking a circuitous route six seven miles extra they tried to take a short cut and wade through the river which was a relatively, you know, there was very little water in the river it's a hilly area and as they were in the middle of it there was a flash flood, and some people were swept away and they lost a few weapons, two machine guns, rocket launcher and rifle you know, and, and soon a major he reported to me that this has happened it was a major tragedy, it's something major, the Battalion which had never lost a weapon finds that you lost four or five weapons so we had a new Colonel in the Battalion, and he didn't know the men, I mean traditions were, I mean, you know, your men you've served with them for fifteen years you know each and every one you know what, and I'm talking to someone and I'm looking into his eyes I know what he's telling me you don't have to even speak you can communicate, so I collected the battalion and I said, 'Look we have lost some weapons'. Of course the signals went all over GHQ and

we were dropped on the mat so I collected the Battalion being the second in command, and the oldest officer in the Battalion and I said, 'This river Kurram falls into the bigger river Indus still about after fifty miles. The weapons are in this river we will reclaim them we'll find them, so long as we live this Battalion will not lose the weapons.' So everyone in the Battalion from the commanding officer to the cook we combed the river up and down a few miles and by third day we recovered all the weapons and I still appealed it was summer but we said we'll do it, we cordoned the area we went up and down maybe two hundred times some buried under the sand and all that we claimed them with mine detectors and everything we had. Why - because this Battalion had never lost we will find it that is the tradition of the Battalion providing we have the time (laughs).

Col. R. : I have seen this tradition. Another instance of this tradition I can quote you. We were at Malakand and then on exercise [?]. C.O. was new I was Quartermaster at the time. One of the cook he lost his bayonet. We did look all places as usual to see where he had lost it. He was not [?] much he said find out whatever is. Without any officers' knowledge all Indian officers we call them [DSU's] they collected at night they cordoned the whole area and found out that bayonet and brought it back and the C.O. was very much calm although he was new and now this calmness of the C.O. who was leader of the Battalion I can quote you in old histories an instance. They say our unit was in 1st/16 was in Baghdad or area ahead of it in Palestinian operation. Our C.O. from Quetta he goes to visit the Battalion headquarter was at Quetta at that time and, and there was this signal they had there a subaltern was detailed with a guard to receive the C.O. . He was waiting at the port of course when the ship comes, he waited for quite long time, C.O. didn't turn up so this youngster he got hold of a boat and he goes inside of ship. There he found his C.O. playing poker so he reported, 'Sir we are waiting for so many hours', so he said, 'Young man go back home, you see I'm playing poker', so this is the calmness of that C.O. at that time that shows that is something inherent in this unit's coming all C.O.'s are doing like this. Another thing personal contact with the peoples that is most important, I quote you an instance. I was a youngster we went on exercise we used to have a R.A.P.

L.-G. M. ur R. : That is rifle aid post.

Col. R. : Yes so there we used to have at that time medical comforts comprising of brandy, even now we don't take some cases medical cases we give brandy to some of the chaps. So that R.A.P. chap [?] or what was his name he came and reported to C.O. to second in command, 'Sir somebody's pinching our brandy here is [?] seventh day that this is happening.' Second in command Major [?] he kept quiet and then he said, 'I tell you go and search Second-Lieutenant [Khazni's] tent.' They went and they found his water bottle filled with brandy. You see it is a question of knowing your troops.

L.-G. M. ur R. : Actually that also reminds me again, this is General Mujib speaking again, I want to quote two instances it is when you start talking about it you start remembering things.

J.W. :. Of course yes.

L.-G. M. ur R. : And as you said you may not in my age this stage one doesn't remember what happened perhaps a month ago but you a very vivid memory of what happened perhaps thirty years ago so readily. I want to quote two instances. One which Colonel Raja had just mentioned that in the regiment when you know the people what difference does it make and the second about the tradition. Now with the tradition the instance with the tradition first. When I was comman ... I was commanding this Battalion in Bannu that's a hilly area.

J.W. : Yes, yes.

L.-G. M. ur R. : You are familiar with that, the division asked us to lay on a demonstration of firepower where people of not only the division but the whole Corps would come officers and selected people, and it's, they's be a demonstration of fire power. Since all weapons were to be used it had to be hilly area the field firing range and the stand the, the our Brigade Commander said 'The stand should be', since there were to be no chairs, 'make a stand that everything is visible on the hill select a place.' So we made a, selected a hill on which a nice stand was made and the fire firepower demonstration was to take place. About fifteen days before the actual event when everything was we were preparing and all that, we had made that stand and the arrangements had been made the Brigade Commander came for inspection and he said that everything was fine but there's a mistake, and that is that the direction is not proper and the spectators is sun in their eyes and 'You must have it that side and it's lopsided.' Now that meant something colossal, you know, you had to change the direction which meant that, he said 'It's all right if you want to have it like that, but it would be better this way', he talked to me, he went away and I talked to my officers and I said, 'What would you say should we settle for the acceptable arrangement which will be tolerated or should we go for the best?', and everybody said we should go for the best and I said, 'You know what it means work for all of us for next ten days which means cutting the side of that hill with your bare picks and shovels, no machinery.' They said, 'We will do it just to make that five percent difference between and average and outstanding.' After ten days when the Brigade commander came to see that again the shape of the hill had been changed and we had made a stand cutting tons of rock just to say that that's a difference between a battalion with a tradition and somebody who'll accept just an average work. That is how, he said, 'We've never accepted something second best it has to be best', and that's a spirit which takes you to battle, you can get away with things, no it's not a problem to get away with the thing you have to do the best. The second thing example is when you know your men. It was the second day of my command, I was the

second in command and when I took over the command of the Battalion and became commanding officer it was the second day of my command and it was a winter with, about, it was not really that something I mean this season, it's March, April, March, very pleasant. At about eleven o'clock we are in the fort located the whole regiment is in the fort walled fort in Bannu one platoon is marching from their barracks to the school which is also inside the fort but about to continue the same incident it was the second day of my command as Lieutenant-Colonel of this Battalion 1st/16 Punjab Regiment we were located in the walled fort of Bannu, and the parade hours which start something in that time about six o'clock in the morning till about eleven o'clock they do school the soldiers also at schooling. It was the school time and the platoon is wearing shorts and vests and they're marching up to the school about twenty-five odd people and one of them we're all in fact sitting officers were in fact in the same locality, location everyone in fact was in the walled, there's only one battalion in that fort and one man walking up he falls down, he vomits blood, he's taken to hospital immediately and he dies on the way. So we go there and we find the man is dead what happened? Nobody knows and I was as a battalion commander this was my second day and I collected the whole platoon and I knew them, and I asked them what had happened and they said, 'We don't know.' There was no history for the man he's a young man very healthy. In the hospital we say, 'All right', they locate a wound up on the shoulder and they try to insert a rod and it went right through right to the I mean quite deep touching the heart and said so we didn't know and we said, 'All right let's have the post mortem' and they located a bullet lodged at the heart, near the heart, grazing the heart. Nobody had heard the sound of the bullet and I collected that people and in the room in the barrack and I talked to them and their platoon *havildar* was one person perhaps you would know his name was [Malik Tazwar ?] (to Colonel Raja) you heard of him?

Col. R. : Yea.

L.-G. M. ur R. : He was *Naik* Malik Tulwan he was an outstanding wrestler and on his outstanding performance I was very much interested in sport, successively I had recommended them as a second in command or company commander, he got accelerated promotion, he was the commander, so I asked this wrestler whose name was in fact Malik what happened, he was not so educated and he said, 'Sir I really don't know', and when he said that looking into my eyes I was looking into his eyes I knew that he did not know, I didn't have to ask, I went up to the brigade commander in fact it was evening at that time, I had been investigating and we had dinner in you know celebration of my command as you know I had a friend even in the same cantonment and there I tell the Brigade commander that I have lost a man through a falling bullet. In Bannu people fire bullets in the air and when the bullets fall if they happen to touch a soft spot as between the boneless area here it can straight lodge in your heart and he said, 'How this thing?' and I said, 'My men don't tell a lie to me, I was there, I had put my table outside my room and we could have we heard no sound of a bullet, the men didn't hear, there is a, no bullet has been recovered, therefore it must be a falling bullet and this is the end of

it', that was my conclusion after three hours of investigation, and the signals went up to GHQ and they said, 'No the man has been shot in a brawl or in the barracks, he's been shot by Khalid who was the officiating adjutant, son of Colonel Sardar on the ranges, he has been dragged into here and they are trying to cook up a story', and he told the Brigade Commande,r everybody knew, I said, 'If the, if we, if a, my man another man has killed him and people are not telling me this, then I am not worth my sword, worth the price of uniform that I am wearing that after seventeen years in this Battalion people are telling lies to me, and if I know it I am not telling you then I am a co accused. In both cases I shed my uniform and go to my village.' He say, 'How you say with such certainty?'. I said, 'I know these men, this man who is leader of this platoon, he has grown with me and I have recommended him at successive stages, he cannot tell a lie to me and I know he will not.' Brigade Commander said, 'Yes I agree with you but you have to go to', the case went up to Scotland Yard and the special investigation team under Colonel Ahmad Khan they came to Bannu, and they camped for one month in my Battalion and they came to the same conclusion which I had reached after three hours. We received, everybody was angry with us and I was in danger of losing my command, but I knew I knew my men, and then we got congratulatory letters and they said, I said, I said, 'This is prove, this proves that in the regiment if you have the same officers and men together they get to know each other so well that nobody could hide anything from anyone, but if you put in a new person to command then he doesn't know. Then you go back to, you know, who is brave, how much brave, and what is he going to do, this is the, you know, merit of sticking, having your commander from the same battalion and all that.' These are a few instances, when you start talking about them you start remembering them, but these are some of the very very clear examples where the traditions of the battalions urges you to do even better, you're to keep up with your traditions which you can set by your predecessors, and they become a beacon light for the service of posterity. Similarly there is a lot of merit for fighting units to grow together you know who you know whom you are sharing your trench with you can trust.

J.W. : Thank you. Now to in light of all you've said there maybe we can talk a little about the regimental reunions that you have in the present day when you have former officers from Britain as well as former officers from ... .

L.-G. M. ur R. : You know it is one these are the things that which revive your traditions you get to know you some very distinguished people who have served in this, for instance we have I mean amazing people like Roy Rutherford who come all the way from England (*sic.*) in this age taking all the trouble in that state of health and all that just to talk about the Regiment, just to meet with the people that who served together, it's a tremendous contribution, and when talking about Roy in particular you know he's a, I mean I luckily, I, when we were going to one of these reunions we were travelling together there was another officer who was coming and he told me about Roy, that he's there, so I made a point that when I reached Mardan I just look for and I found that when you meet someone after twenty years thirty years or even fifty years and you talk about

old times, the whole, that thing comes back to you and you, you really identify the strong bond that you have amazing and you take all that trouble and all that expense, you come these reunions are therefore a wonderful opportunity to meet with the people to learn from them what they did for the Regiment, and how to, we carry forward those traditions because there is otherwise a gap, you know, the people who served with the Regiment from 1945 and the person who's joined after sixty years or fifty years say in 1995, there are many impressions, gaps and they meet the its a tremendous game in particular well, personally it all history in capsule form, you get to know the people who have done so much for the regiment, so organisers are doing a wonderful job but I am more, I take my hat off to people particularly people like Roy Rutherford and other British officers who come out of, incurring all that expense and discomfort in this stage of their life when they're old to participate here, what a spirit they have which really you know motivates them to come here, it's something very tremendous and this is a fading, fast fading generation, we still have some people left and so long as they're there and they are invaluably set, a reservoir of the traditions and there is a tremendous contribution they be most welcome.

J.W. : What was I going to ask? I think I've that's covered everything I can think of really if either of you have anything more that you wish to add at all while we've been going through all that ?

L.-G. M. ur R. : The last reunion I could not attend he attended and I wanted to take you there but I had some but I could not do that Colonel Raja attended that maybe he could tell you .

J.W. : Yes could you maybe tell us a little about that last reunion ?

Col. R. : What else I can add to you really to do with that matter of tradition, and all this I can tell you although I never had a chance to serve with the English officers, I just served from distance Colonel [Crabtree ?] that's all, and I didn't have any association with anyone, but I did serve with those chaps who were directly trained by the English, my C.O. , company commanders, and all these things and that actually what I said before was made my crowning in the army you see, an instance I will quote you there are certain instances. My first C.O. he used to call everything we do as a battle drill even if you go to mess he will say, 'What is your battle drill to go to mess?' Even for going bathroom he will say, 'What is your battle drill?. This battle drill was very famous in our, this Battalion. I was on tour of the Unit and C.O. called me, we were out in the field area, we had at that time certain trouble from Indian side also which are subsided in 1952, I'm talking of 1951, C.O. called me and he said, 'You have not been on leave go proceed on leave for six day go to Lahore and enjoy.' I said, 'I don't need leave', he said, 'No it is my order you go', I went on leave when I come back the adjutant asked me that you have to go before the C.O. and this world to go before the C.O. meant something I said, 'What for, I didn't do anything I was forcibly sent to', they said 'What

happened?', he said 'You will come to know' there, I didn't bother. When the time came C.O. was fuming he said, 'Tell me Second-Lieutenant Raja are you an officer or a clerk?', I said, 'Well sir I am an officer', he said, 'No you are confirming my doubt, it is otherwise.' I said, 'What has happened?', he said, 'My God, you don't know what for you have come before the C.O. even if you, you don't know that?' I said, 'Sir I didn't, I don't know.' He said, 'I tell you why you, my jeep turned up five minutes late on so-and-so date.' Immediate reply was from my side was, 'Sorry I was at Lahore I don't know.' He said, 'Again you are giving me the same answer this is no an officer like. You may be in hell or you maybe in heaven if your battle drill doesn't work you are no good an officer', and that lesson I carried throughout my life. That was one instance I can quote you how this chap would train and other instance I can quote you I had about a month's service in a battalion. C.O. called me, 'Look General so-and-so from central is coming along with the C-in-C General Gracey and you have to give a demonstration you are fresh from school, infantry school, you have to give demonstration on patrolling the objects of these one, two, three [?]', and he said, 'Any doubt?', I said, 'No sir.' 'Allright Major John', he was Pakistani, 'Major John will be at your disposal they are in the ground you go and rehearse and he will answer any query march off.' I came for four or five days we were rehearsing Major John with his pipe was sitting there never talked never talked he never advised anything well I used to go, 'Sir I am doing fine', he said 'Fine? Have you got any doubt?' he even asked me, 'Have you got any doubt?' I said, 'Sir no I haven't got any doubt.' 'Allright'. When that actual day comes and demonstration was made everyone was happy as normal courtesy or what you can call it General spoke high of it and General Gracey also spoke high of it and now C.O. stands up my commanding officer he called me, 'Come here' he said, 'look this is the officer who had done this he needed patting no-one else.' Now you see this how much I was boosted up and the people around was boosted up, that C.O., he doesn't say it is my doing or it is Major John's doing, so that was another good thing and he used to tell us, 'Look we have learned it from someone that's why we are doing this' so there were so many instances like this when establishing tradition of the Battalion and these chaps, these chaps, they learn it from the Britishers, even I remember one day we were told to march up from this place to Attock for an exercise and ordinarily in the Battalion was that new officers or new inductees in the units they would never be told about boots, particularly any I, as a young officer I purchased a new boot I see my appointment in the Battalion being settled we had, 'It will pinch you because it is a new, it has not been worn', I never knew about it, I thought it and I went to [Hassan Abda] which is about twenty-two twenty-three miles, feet were bleeding, I took off the boots and I was sitting looking at blisters and all this the C.O. comes around in a jeep and he saw me, he smiles and he walks away. He never asked me what has happened. When we reached Attock Fort the message comes from adjutant the C.O. wants you to stand on the gate of the Fort, he is coming and he is coming in a jeep and you will travel with him now. I said, 'No I have reached the destination I will go there why are you asking me this?', he said, 'No stand there.' I stood there, C.O. comes without asking he smiled at me he say, 'Sit down' you see and then he took me to the place hardly two miles he had [?] this he, 'In

the army the unit [?] can never tell any officer the new inductees about these boots, they should learn themselves not to wear these boots', so these small things were part of tradition and they will probably tell us these are the things that we learned from someone of course and we are passing on to you those.

Tape is switched off and Lieutenant-General Mujib ur Rahman and Colonel Raja are thanked

Mirzada M. Shah Khan
Gilgit Scouts
Interviewed on 22nd March 1998
SA1998.39

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Mirzada S.K.** represents Mirzada M. Shah Khan

J.W. : Okay that's on, so if you can tell me first Shah Khan about what you did just before you were in the Scouts sort of growing up, your life then.

Mirzada S.K. : Scout life was a wonderful life unlike today you see a lot of paperwork, then there was no, less paperwork, and then there used to be very famous *gashts* there were you see about four *gashts* you had to do in a week [?] so that and then [they couldn't carry] comfortably the wireless sets and things like that they used to carry the pigeons with them to send the message back and they had these flags.

J.W. : Semaphore?

Mirzada S.K. : Helio so when we you see these modern facilities you see that nobody would believe if I tell them that what sort of a communication they had. And then there used to be a normally they used to do especially the young lot on after eleven o'clock so you'd do a *gasht* and come back and get [then within] the bar and get on to the I mean well drinking so and then the other side there was a lot of polo everyone had to keep a horse because in those days there were no vehicles so all the officers they had their own horses and the [?] used to be the horses if you go home [all over the] place plus the polo and so the, the life of the Scouts, and the Scouts you see they were trained in such a way they were not Scouts you see that not on the army lines or anything, so you see they used to have, I mean they had some piquets you know the piquets so they were very quick with the *chapplis* and the *śalwar* [?] you see they were so sure footed and later on the scene when they had the war with the Indians they were not used to that and [no ?] and all those believe in all the ['banda-bas'] that they should have everything these Lancers, so the Scouts would tell them, 'Up!' they will reach much quicker and then an ambush surprise them so these things well in fact I mean very very, I mean useful these tactics as they say guerilla. You see that when we were fighting that, the Indians, we started from there they had a battalion at Bunji, [?] them off and then we closed the [?] and then we wanted to capture more and more area and then you see we knew that we won't be able to stop the Indian army once these passes are open so therefore we were always slowly amounting to go and capture those bottlenecks before the Indian army come in and they were the Scouts I mean they didn't believe they rein.. there for days together they oh nothing for them to eat and no rations but still I mean they were so used to it so they never bothered so it was never a problem.

J.W. : Never a problem, sorry, what was it that made you want to join the Scouts in the first place yourself why did you want to join the Scouts in the first place to take you back?

Mirzada S.K. : Mmm Scouts in those day you see this was the only thing that nobody knew that what is army, and then this was the only I mean sort of only they had seen these things and from their childhood they were always keen to join the being in the Scouts the Gilgit Scouts in those days it was not just mixed up as it is now Scouts tribe wise, Hunza tribe they only purely Hunza, Nagar, Hunzawal, Yasin and so on so again in Hunza we had there were the two states independent states they had they had they were most of them in the Scouts and then you see all this the polo hunting so this was the attraction .

J.W. : It's a life that appealed to you in that sense right so let's think where can we go next? Let me pause that (tape is paused). So when so just to set the chronology when was it what was the year that you first joined the Scouts?

Mirzada S.K. : April '49 no sorry '41

J.W. : And err Willie Brown had served had been here during the ... ?

Mirzada S.K. : Willie Brown joined he came in '42 middle or late '42.

J.W. : Yea and he was here for how long?

Mirzada S.K. : He was adjutant junior officer in the Gilgit the Corps of the Gilgit Scouts and then as I said the English people they had they knew, you see, there won't be other means of communication except the horses so maybe this chap is crippled or he's never ridden a horse he has to keep a horse and [?] riding you know so much so he was encouraging them to play polo and I remember one chap he was a cripple and he had to play he was not very comfortable for him but still I mean this was our rule and this sort of thing I'm thinking this was a good thing, you see, the English people they always respected these local things which are very popular like polo was very popular and polo we considered it to be our national game so that always that they would encourage the people to continue, and as I said you see that once in the year there used to be a Gilgit used to be the headquarters there used to be a tournament while you see that the Political Agent he used to invite the people Mir of Nagar, Mir of Hunza, governors of the four the [princely] states they used to come with their dancing party, polo party all a lot many items so seven days they all used to stay as a guest of the government and there were the competitions between the and they were very very particular about these things you see that they should not lose from the Hunza always they said we will not lose to Nagar, Nagar had the same thing and then on the other hand the Mirs who were the rulers they brought the horses from all over the places fed them and they had made team for the

polo and before coming here once during April it normally used to be so they used to give them a lot of practice so this was sort of a spirit so they wanted to have good polo players and get a good name write back to their areas saying you see that we have won so many.

J.W. : Local pride, yes.

Mirzada S.K. : That we have won so many prizes and each the horses, you see it was compulsory to keep a horse not for to play polo you see they used to be multi purpose as a transportation and then normally the kids in the house they used to take the horses out by themselves and then everybody was a rider and then this was the thing and each village had a polo ground a small polo ground so they used to have I mean it's not everywhere they used to come down whenever there's I'm not quite sure there's a [?] and they used to bet you see for a sheep or a goat so they say whichever team wins they get the prize so this was the state of affair.

J.W. : And when Willie Brown was here when he came in the Forties there were there any other he was Scottish but were there any other British officers here?

Mirzada S.K. : Well yes there were many British officers I can't remember that there were how many Scots were with them but there were British there were always eight to twelve maximum when the officers used to be here and all British?

J.W. : And how many in the Scouts itself?

Mirzada S.K. : Scout used to be three officers one, four officers one officer used to be the commanding the Corps he's [?] the senior most captain he used to be in Chilas so he used to look after both these affairs the scouts and affair as well as used to be assistant Political Agent in Chilas with all these *jirga* systems so he would deal with this and other two one used to be the adjutant of the Corps and other fellow used to be a quartermaster so this used to be the strength of the Gilgit Scout officers.

J.W. : And how many Scouts themselves would there be in proportion to those officers there, there were the three British officers and then how many how many Scouts?

Mirzada S.K. : There were very few, very few, very few.

J.W. : But how many Scouts themselves?

Mirzada S.K. : In the Scouts you see four or five or so.

J.W. : Yes, but sorry the actual Scouts themselves the actual, you had the officers and then how many Scouts who weren't officers?

Mirzada S.K. : Oh, oh ya ya, well you see we used to call it platoons I can still two Viceroy Commissioned Officers and fifty men this was the platoon and that three platoons would make a company with company commanders and this sort of thing.

J.W. : So that was in the Forties then. Did Willie Brown go elsewhere before he was back in Gilgit in '47?

Mirzada S.K. : Yea he went in '46 I think he went '46 late '46 or even or maybe he went in late '46.

J.W. : To other Scouts?

Mirzada S.K. : From the Scouts he went and he got into some other Scouts there from there he approached the Maharajah of Kashmir's organisation and he offered his services and they were accepted and he said, 'No I'll be only one the one Scots therefore I'd like to take another chap also be quite useful'.

J.W. : So then what was his name ? **(Tape is paused due to noise of a passing tractor)** and Captain Mathieson he'd come about the same time had he to the Scouts?

Mirzada S.K. : Mathieson they were together and they went together you see after the Partition there, there they did a lot of work you see, and you see Willie was still commanding the Scouts, expanded Corps of Scouts, and then from 1st of November was Liberation Day then he was transferred from here on 16th of January both of them they went from here to F.C. , Frontier Constabulary so they were there for some time and then they went to other they were doing some other businesses.

J.W. : When did Captain Mathieson first come to Gilgit when did he first come here do you remember?

Mirzada S.K. : He came I think with Brown.

J.W. : Aha so it was at the same time aha.

Mirzada S.K. : With Willie.

J.W. : And did, did you notice any was their character in any way different to the other British officers did you get the I mean you got on very well you were saying with Willie because of your common love of horses and riding and these things. Was there are other level of sort of compatibility?

Mirzada S.K. : They the British as I said you see in the Willie's time the Political Agent's name then was Cobb, Colonel Cobb, terribly fond of polo, horses, hunting and fishing so he was known as a mad man for making major polo grounds and these things and there was best polo ground he got made this and then practically you see that the old ground used to be small once, you have dropped some money.

J.W. : Ah thank you.

Mirzada S.K. : So then you see he made it with proper sized grounds all over in [?] he always used to go and tradition was here it was after the [*jhalsa*] the tournament they never played polo because they wanted to give a rest to the horses, they used to take them to the pastures and maintain the polo grounds so he used to go on tours he go to Punial then he'd go to Shandur fishing, polo and then he knew the Chitralis he had been there also before as a P.A. so he was a very popular there also so he used to take the teams from here to Shandur to compete with the Chitralis [?].

J.W. : And it was that do you think it was that shared interest in the sort of life in things like riding that made these officers ... ?

Mirzada S.K. : Yes this was very much of the case the mail used to come once a week from Srinagar even the there was no daily system of there was no wireless sets, televisions so they were free people so then you see they are just the recreation, polo, hunting and this sort of thing it was very common and liked by the people and these people always encouraged them to work and to do this.

J.W. : So it made no difference to you you wouldn't for you the getting on well with these officers was more a question of shared interests it wouldn't matter whether they were Scottish, English, Irish or whatever it was just on a level of ... ?

Mirzada S.K. : You see I know that Willie was a Scot but whatever I know other Scots this fellow Mathieson and Brown and there was another Macrae, he was Macrae, was a doctor a very interesting person and the other one was a Mr. Mackenzie he was in the Scouts so these only that I know about four five of them and all that my friends, good friends.

J.W. : Right and they did they ever seem any different from the other British?

Mirzada S.K. : Well actually when there were pipe band dancing of the Scottish tunes so this was something this was something very known, so this was the thing I mean to say that never [took that to mean] the tunes and the pipe bands and the [?] and that. As I said you see all of these things, items, polo, fishing so that everybody was doing it not the only Scot people did it so that they were good people I liked them.

J.W. : Very much yea and let's go now to events in '47 you were, could you tell me, I know it's a very general question, but could you tell me about, take me through events at that time what was happening, what was happening here?

Mirzada S.K. : You see that I should blame the British. The Gilgit you see that the British had taken, had given, had taken on these from Maharajah of Kashmir for sixty years but after ten years there were two states being created Pakistan and India and then on the basis of whoever had the more Hindu population they could form into Hindustan, India, and wherever there were more Muslims then there was a [?] option if you want to go if anybody wants to go to India or from India on these basis. When he was, when the British were leaving this place they handed right back to Maharajah of Kashmir, they do the biggest mistake and unfair because on the basis of [democracy/the past you see] they created two states, and Gilgit had more reason 100% of the population was Muslims so that should have gone into the Pakistan they should have formed so they didn't do it, and then obviously when the Dogras came they looked like [?] control of [?] us this was why I mean if the two states are created and the option is there so why we should not be with the Muslims 100% the population why should not be part of Pakistan, this was mood here, and then again you see normally in the Gilgit Scouts the person who is commanding platoon or company who are reserved for the children [?] children of the Mirs, and the British they had brought up in such an atmosphere that I'm telling you, so out of seven days five days we are together so they were one, they were very cautious about the about their status so when the these people came there were rumours spread so much so they said they were going to suspend the Gilgit Scouts and then maybe Gilgit Scouts [?] almost to be here and they are moving the battalion which was at Bunji to this place which were not liked by us and we said why we should not clear this thing from the governors so we [headed in to ?] and then we went up there about five of us Viceroy's Commissioned Officers and we said, 'These are the rumours' and the [?] a person, a senior *sāhab*, said, 'We are very cautious about their status' so they said I mean seeing that this was a militia it's not a regular force why is the state force is a regular force, therefore the status wise [they were senior] so this was not liked by, by those people I mean the from the ruling family so those are two main things to bring this coup.

J.W. : And what were the people in Gilgit itself saying at the time, were they, what was the ... ?

Mirzada S.K. : They had no idea about this because no politician had ever visited Gilgit and the British they were saying you see 'God Save the King' and they [law] under the British this sort of thing they had, nobody had a slightest idea that there should be a coup [?] so therefore there was not much of a part, so the only Gilgit Scouts and what was the number of the Gilgit Scouts? Five hundred and two men and then you see that started from there, they captured Bunji they had the battalion and they moved up to the Skardu, Ladakh, and [?] got all these bottlenecks so them they gave a very tough

time and they pushed them out of these all the borders, previously it was the Gilgit Agency this former name but now after the Partition it is known Northern Areas, I mean it's what, two thousand and twenty-eight square miles this whole area so these are the things which made us fight against India.

J.W. : And so you'd gone the Scouts had taken as you say all these bottlenecks these passes so the State forces couldn't come through. What happened then you literally stayed there and held those areas did you to keep the ... ?

Mirzada S.K. : You see there were three columns. One column was given the task that they'd go through the [?] Valley and the pass to enter into the Northern Areas, had to capture that and then to stop the reinforcements. The other column was given the task they will go along the Indus and have small *piquets* here and there in Skardu and isolate the, what do you call it, and isolate Ladakh and then go up to the [?], another important pass. So this column somehow unfortunately could not succeed they were first [they take strong positions they lost those posts] and they were kept in Skardu for a good six weeks, meanwhile the Indians started sending the forces and as the time came they couldn't stop or fight them so there was the move you see that another the reserve, my column was in reserve and it was [Skiba] force it had got the code name because it had to walk thorough the snow and very difficult, their task was to hit them their headquarters in [Karni] hit their headquarters, isolate the two battalions that are moving towards Skardu and another the company which was coming down to Skardu so all the three objectives were given to me, and on the first day we captured a brigade headquarters, isolated those two battalions and then moved to our own objective, didn't stop, and this was only column which had to fight with the aircrafts and the artillery and then eventually with the tanks, so we lost that portion, at the end you see there's a slip on the commander's part so it [removes everything] so there was experienced people we'd been fighting there since the beginning of April nearly never changed, a new lot came in and this lot it was a Lieutenant-Colonel and he wanted to show them, show off, he said look unless we capture the Ladakh this outside the main valley so he pulled the those fighting troops, who'd been fighting with them he took them and sent them there so the Indians they got the information and the Indians knew they had twice they had counter-attacked my battalion and they were very badly beaten and then they said they won't be able to capture this, recapture this area unless they bring in armour and they were making the road with the armour and this was [a known place] and at this time it didn't have any mines [?] so they got the information and they got [the fighting troops they'll go in Ladakh the, might fill] the troops we had two lines a first line and a second line. We knew they were bringing the tanks they will break through the first line but the second line again you will have strong and because of the shortage of manpower the two companies were sent there [they were hardly one company], so they came and they broke through and we lost that important place and there's a tremendous, you see I have seen and read the books I have seen the actions also but the Scouts, the action, they held, the role they played nobody can ever believe it [it is now bringing in to this the Staff

College teaching]. You see now I had three or four companies when I went on the D-Day, I had to split them into three groups and they were independent so I gave them a lot of power they're there to fight with the peoples on their own so and then they never, our [security] was only in this ambush, sudden attacks, and then we can be master of it, I mean my most of the Scouts when they were taken the enemy never, never expected that you see we would attack in the [column by column ?] so they used to get them in the surprise. They never went in the normal, the road which is used always in behind them. So this was the tactic.

J.W. : Right, right, and while all this was happening you were saying before how the people in Gilgit knew very little because politicians hadn't come in. Were the people in Gilgit aware that all this was happening?

Mirzada S.K. : No that was a surprise to them also. We had to keep this thing secret from even our relatives the news of this secrecy was a must so till the last day nobody knew. The next day then in the morning when the [?] was brought, was arrested brought out of his bungalow, so the people started coming out, that was a surprise to the people also as I say we were from the day the plan was there till the end I've been with this, and not just a participant but one of the leaders so I know that, but later on just to take the credit many people the all these religious people all of these political people that many of them were doing this and they were doing, it is all humbug. It was just Gilgit Scouts five hundred and eighty-two to begin with, but later on you see that we got the sanction to increase the strength so then it went to the thousands so in the beginning they started with the this, though. It was a surprise to the government the Pakistan Government, so here when the first representative Sardar Ahmad came he sent Brown, Willie, to appraise the government what has happened and all these things so he went up there and he came with the news that he said that the they say we that all we have done we have done but Indian Army we could not continue resisting so therefore we should be allowed to extend the [?] so around three thousand people the Government agreed and two of us [?] and myself, so we said now we'll take them in the Pakistan army so this was a sort of thing for all our heroic deeds and activities they moved up and pushed the people out, we had taken Kargil but we lost Kargil, we lost Ladakh because of this one move the fellow was very keen to show off the [?] strength in Ladakh .

J.W. : So when did the Mirs in places like Hunza and when did they come in on the ...?

Mirzada S.K. : Yes I see after it was cleared for the Mirs the Government invited them and the Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagar and I went as a representative of the Gilgit Scouts with them, we went to Karachi then Jinnah was not there but we met the Prime Minister there the late Liaquat Ali Khan and it was a surprise to them also and they were very happy saying you see that we today invited the Pakistan and you have joined the Pakistan.

J.W. : Let's think ... .

Mirzada S.K. : Middle of the war the Chitral Scout people they came and the the *Mehta* of Chitral's bodyguard volunteers although they were not trained soldiers they were with us and mobs came great sort of a contribution from the Chitral.

J.W. : They were all coming over to Gilgit?

Mirzada S.K. : Yea and then three brothers they were in the Indian Army Mukhtar ul Mulk, he was made captain at Skardu other brother there was another [Willie] coming to stop the Indians Bairam ud Din, he's dead he was kept there and the Gilgit, the *nawabs*, the Chitral Scouts they came with their two howitzer guns [?] I mean this was much later.

J.W. : When you say much later when was that?

Mirzada S.K. : Then in the June, Julys it started in November and they came because the Shandur and all that it gets blocked.

J.W. : Obviously.

Mirzada S.K. : So when, it was opened then.

J.W. : And when was it you said it was the VCOs in the Scouts who had arranged all these things. When was it that you brought people like Willie Brown and Captain Mathieson into the ... ?

Mirzada S.K. : Mathieson as I said, Brown, till the last moment whole plane was to take go to this [connection?] at ten o'clock. Till ten o'clock of 31st October Willie did not know. So there you see he is our friend he is not a Dogra, so we'll ask his, what he wants and then when we asked him he said oh I'm so happy he said I'll join the regulars that's why the Government of Pakistan they gave the ... .

J.W. : Medal.

Mirzada S.K. : Award also so, and then we were friends and then after that once we cleared up up to Astor and these places the we started on the hunting and boozing (laughs).

J.W. : Was there ever any uncertainty in the minds of the VCO's that Willie Brown and Captain Mathieson would go that way or were you all quite confident that he would because of all the links and how having been in the Scouts he'd just go along ... ?

Mirzada S.K. : Yea yea.

J.W. : Right so when was it so you'd gone down to Karachi to take and you'd seen Liaquat Ali Khan there, was it then that the government then formally accepted ... ?

Mirzada S.K. : Yah but then the people here they were in doubt so what would happen, they thought that the Gilgit Scouts are not going to can fight with the Indian Army the Indian Army is everything they've got the aircraft and the Airforce they would start bombing here these places also and they have the artillery they have the thing they are very very scared and so much, so I know some of the people they've been saying if the Indian comes we show them the houses of those people who created this problem for us (laughs). Even the Mirs they were not knowing they had no idea see before the Partition took place the Maharajah of Kashmir invited these Mirs and others and then he said, 'Look we've been friends in the past so now when these things happen I hope you will be happy [with us?]', so there was no option for them they had been not known what is Pakistan and what's of the people from Pakistan and after they did not know that you see before the Partition before the British came all these areas were independent they were uncer ... they were not sure they would get the independence, they were puzzled, so it was a sort of a political little sort of a move that they accepted while they were friends and they'll be friends again so then they came here they saw all these things, so naturally I mean they would like to be in the Pakistan they were not because you see going out of this area very few people that could go going to India it was not a major job to Kashmir it used to take about ten days you'd gone on foot or you'd go on a horseback then from there you want to go to Bombay there was no available line unless they got to Jammu so this was the state of affair therefore I mean the people were confined into this these areas and then they'd like to stay back in their own area and then you see poverty they had no money to go on to have a to look for a job outside these areas so therefore the Mirs they were very happy, the government of British India they give them a lot of, they give them knighthood Sir and K.C.S.I. , K.C.I. all these other things on the line you see of what you were doing to the Maharajahs and the Nawabs in, of India.

J.W. : So then once how about you yourself personally, you stayed in the Scouts for how long after all these events, and after Gilgit had become a part of Pakistan were you still in the Scouts?

Mirzada S.K. : Gilgit Scouts I stayed for almost five years then the thing started the movement, so then after that they form another Scout that was named the Northern Scouts so I joined them the Northern Scouts because the Gilgit Scouts the idea was ceremonial sort of affairs they were not fighting so then you see in the army I mean I had to go there for at least I mean there were the training the co-ordination of tanks with aircraft and all these they are doing the tactics so I spent a year or so and then my requirement was too much because I had started I needed people, I needed men so then I

had to they had to bring me back here I [came back and joined] the Scouts and then I went to be the Air Force wanted me so I ended up in the Air Force Pakistan Air Force.

J.W. : What was when was that you joined the ...?

Mirzada S.K. : This was 1968, I [?].

J.W. : And just to, sorry, the Northern Scouts did that amalgamate other Corps of Scouts from this area?

Mirzada S.K. : No all locals, all locals, the Gilgit Scouts strength used to be only five hundred and there is about two or three thousand people.

J.W. : But did that say incorporate the Chitral Scouts ?

Mirzada S.K. : Chitral Scouts no, this, when we needed their help during the this then only we got them here.

J.W. : And do the Northern Scouts still exist or is there?

Mirzada S.K. : No, so this was the idea that there were many Scouts in this region there was Gilgit Scouts there were Northern Scouts there were Karakoram Scouts so that the GHQ they thought why to have the small little posts [at three different things?] so they marched them into one and they named it N.L.I., Northern Light Infantry.

J.W. : Right sorry I'm jumping you around a bit the Air Force then you were in the Air Force from '58 ... .

Mirzada S.K. : '58 till '80, 1980 then I retired as a Group Captain and then from eighties to today I keep myself busy not playing and all the time [?] so when I came here I thought what to do and then I thought you see the tourism is a very clean business I made a company invited the people and then I had to make accommodation for them built a couple of hotels at least for my clients and then that kept me busy for some time and then now I'm trying to do something with [agri]culture I want to make some farms, fruit farms, so that just it is not only for the money away from these politics and all these dirty things.

J.W. : And do you think this is I think will be a very difficult question to maybe answer but do you think it's the fact that Gilgit got that status from events in '47 do you think that's helped these developments things like tourism and with the highway coming in I mean things maybe could have been .

Mirzada S.K. : There are many it's no only the highway, highway is of course no doubt it has changed the fortune of these people, you cannot do any development unless you see there are the communications, so this is that's why you see they have to the seventies even our government was unable to do anything because of the government but beside that there were other things also. Our community system further education and hospitals and these things and then there's what do you call it U.N.D.P., they did a very great job for us in the Northern Areas and then the third agency was the A.K.R.S.P. and then when government was in a position to really extend, do something there, because government then realised that these people had been isolated in these mountains so they have also rights to have the same standard of living as the people that are on the plains so then government announced the development budget and that's why you see the things are because [they get up?] what do you call it schools, colleges for the girls and even the hospitals improved and then you see that now the people from there they become all on their merits who are the good students, girls or boys, they are given the scholarship they go to the universities, they become the doctors, there was a time when we really needed doctors and teachers because we had to depend on the because they'd not like to come here because why they'll they will have to establish themselves their children also the school and college places so it was really difficult to [?} but nowadays the local doctors are surplus they're even going around now down to other places so are the teachers. Now a woman she didn't work here in the fields but she would not like to her daughter to do the same as she would because then there were no facilities there were no other facilities so a lot of the girls the local girls the teachers and teaching their own children and then getting because the scholarship there are now two or three doctors I mean now Ph.D.s and they'll be many more.

J.W. : I'm sure and has, has all this changed with the highway but everything all these changes you've been talking about has that effected the society here the structure of society and the culture here irrevocably, has it changed it permanently ?

Mirzada S.K. : It does effect no doubt and this is what normally the people the tourists when they come they say they're jealous of other people they say why there so many people here they will spoil your traditions so because of the poverty nobody thought about the culture but nowadays the people are getting educated and they come and they give the ideas and now they say we should maintain our culture. Unless you have the culture you have no history.

J.W. : Yes, yes, and do you think that's possible?

Mirzada S.K. : No no that is I mean whatever the things effected the dresses you see here they wear all these [?] so that is there to some extent it's changed but now you see that it was a time it was very alarming the people were uneducated and they had no idea of their culture but now the people have a I'll tell you about this village my village

Gulmit. Ninety-nine per cent of the girls they go to schools I mean before Partition nobody had ever thought that his daughter would be able to go to school so this changes.

J.W. : And that's been accepted quite happily has it by people who live they're very keen?

Mirzada S.K. : Yes there are many things you see the women the women folk give some idea. The women for they to produce children and work like this was but now the women they have [?] A.K.R.S.P. [?] now they are made in charge of a section they are given the projects and they say we will work that out and a woman she hardly for having a rupee or two to but she know that her credit collectively they are doing this it is a [?] so a lot of women change it's all due to the A.K.R.S.P. they are doing all this because in the rural areas where the people are uneducated and they need this sort of [opportunity] then the U.N. D.P. you see they advise us in agriculture drinking water they supply us free pipes and [?] from outside and there's a lot of research in those areas and they found in Upper Hunza the soil and the climate's excellent to grow the seed potatoes now everybody [?... the space ? they always like the cash crop] so these things you see that is I realise that some of the failures how quick [they adopt these things ...?...] but it's very difficult for them to say there are many things all the facilities are available before ... (Tape is paused due to noise of passing tractor: from here on Shah Khan talks about the festival he attended).

J.W. : Sorry you were saying.

Mirzada S.K. : The moral is that our religious it should have been seasonal but there is something you see the two sects Shia and Ishmaili they feel you see Hazrat Ali when the Prophet was living he said he's going to be my successor so they believe that and this coincided with the [?] Day which is always on the first of March but it so happened that this was the [?] when they have that day that is why they're celebrating this thing from a religious point of view otherwise you see the New Year would be Spring comes and [?] there is a tradition you see you have to go out to your friends and friends will come to you and all that and today again it was Sunday so all the people they look for to meet the people so I was invited [?].

(Tape is switched off)

Major Zulfiqar Khianni and Major Tahir Akhtar Minhas
Interviewed on 30th March 1998
SA1998.40

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, **Major Z.** Represents Major Zulfiqar Khianni, and **Major T** represents Major Tahir Akhtar Minhas.

J.W. : So if you can just ... .

Major Z. : I am Major Zulfiqar Khianni from the 13 ('Thirteen')Punjab ex 1/16 ('One-Sixteen'). When I joined the 13 Punjab in before '71 in August '71 I joined them and then I quickly left then and then I had been joining them and you know ultimately I said goodbye to them in '82 when we were in Nowshera. The Battalion as we learnt was basically raised as 22nd Light Bengal Infantry and later on this battalion you know after a couple of years was renamed as 13th Punjab. The Battalion has been to places like Burma they have been they have been in the Middle East they went to Egypt and later on they came back to this part of the world that is the subcontinent. When I learned with joining the Battalion both based at Sialkot which is the interior of Punjab Pakistan and the Battalion fought its war in Sialkot the '71 War in Sialkot. The Battalion from there went on to straight to Karachi from there we were deputed to go to the Baluchistan Province which was then in you know some sort of a problem interior internal problems and we remained in Baluchistan for a good two two and a half years where we had a couple of operations and in peace operations we were ambushed you know a couple of times and unluckily in one of the ambushes I was also present there and in this ambush we lost three lives. The Battalion from there came back to the Frontier Province in Nowshera where I said goodbye to the army on my own and I joined the Civil Services.

J.W. : Major Tahir if you can tell me briefly about your career as well .

Major T. : I am Major Tahir Akhtar Minhas I was I took birth in the unit in December 1971 before the Indo-Pak War when the unit was located on the Sialkot border the unit was in a defensive position against the enemy and fought the war in that sector. There onward I served the unit in this unit about five years and I took the unit as Quartermaster of the unit to Karachi in a new location and from there I was posted out to Military Police as a captain. I keep on coming back to the unit's, in my total of 26 years of service I served as a you know almost all the appointments as Adjutant and Quartermaster then I commanded the Company and then I was I served as a Second-in-Command in the unit for three years and then finally I had some medical problem and I was posted out on a soft appointment due to my, a little disability but I remain with the in touch with the unit I was serving a very fine unit. The Battalion had a very rich history of which we had the documents of the history and then to and we also came to know through our old soldiers officers and we had been in talking this history part of the history to our coming generation in way of showing lectures in way of you know slogans

of 1/16's, 13 Punjabi and we have been coming (phone rings) during that summer we have been coming encounter with other battalion of the group like 2/16 (Two-Sixteen), 3/16 (Third-Sixteen)and 4/16 (Four-Sixteen) whenever they used to be and the competitions between the groups and we used to raise slogans up for all 16s so that the new generation coming should know the history through slogans and know that we are part of Sixteen Groups and that we are born from the ... .

J.W. : Right what sort of slogans are they can you?

Major Z. : You know we used to this (phone rings and tape is paused) this were 16 Group has been a very dominating group in Pakistan Army 16 Group and 13 Punjab which is my Battalion and 14 Punjab, 15 Punjab and 17 Punjab and 19 Punjab this group was had been very very strong and professional and non-professionals evens in Pakistan Army and this group had dominated in many many milestones that the Pakistan Army have achieved when even in two wars with India that we have experienced they have achieved many accolades and of course for to achieve any glory or anything of that sort we have to sacrifice we have to give our blood and all this group has sacrificed and now we have almost ... .

Major T. : Three *Nishan-i-Haiders*.

Major Z. : Three *Nishan-i-Haiders*.

Major T. : From this 1/16 three *Nishan-i-Haiders*.

J.W. : That is the equivalent of the ... .

Major Z. : That is the equivalent of the Victoria Cross

J.W. : Right okay..

Major T. : What are you giving when you understand I always have a faith that behind these achievement and these achievement the relation of officers and the troops is the key there and that it what we have found with our set up in our groups and especially in our [boy] battalion the relation of our officers and troops was so strong that any position given to our Battalion and our group was achieved and through this relations.

J.W. : How did you make that that strong link how was that strong link between the officers and the men?

Major T. : Yes I think by participating in each and every event with the troops that developed the relations and the understanding between the you know the officers' class and the troops and and it was mandatory for every one of the officers to participate in

every event whether it is a professional or non professional so officers participation was a must so that built the you know understanding and the relations between the two corps and that is the officers always used to lead the troops in the event and the troops they used to follow the officers and that was the kind of strong elements which persist always in the group and in the achievement of all missions.

J.W. : Right right and can you tell me . . sorry.

Major Z. : Sorry, well beside that you know that as I already told you that we still honour our relationship with the Sherwood Foresters because traditionally well initially when the two Battalions were raised they were raised together something or other I don't know exactly which point they were raised and they became sister battalion and we share a lot of tradition that we whenever the occasions you know like celebrations of the unit and all the we always consider to write back to the Sherwood Foresters that you know or the achievements that we have had you know that we always write to them and I think that this is from that tradition that how we manage keep the relationship between the officers and the men, you know this is also an extraordinary tradition of the 1/16 Group because I don't found exactly this sort of relationship in the other units of the army and the men because there's a lot of ground that comes between the officers and the men, the educational level, the social level, the economical level, but because traditionally we were new to those things you know what we liked to do every Eid day we will always have the junior commissioned officers coming to the officers' mess. This has never this never happens in the Pakistan Army in any other group this is a special tradition that you know they are invited they are raised to that level that they come down to the officers' mess and they have the food with us. Similarly they always invite us you know in the evening on serve dinners they will invite the officers to their mess so this is something you know and like Major Tahir said the officers went down to participating down to the level of even boxing you know which is generally considered to be you know a subject of the soldiers that you know they went in to the boxing like we had this Major-General [Dilshad] he was, participated in the boxing even and myself I took swimming with the unit but you know we always had one officer there traditionally in the swimming team always participating with the men whether it was you know volleyball, basketball, football, hockey any game you know which is in our hindsight we had to be of the professional things the officers would always go about participating as a team member. Similarly you know and traditionally whenever the unit were involved or moved or advanced whether in the peacetime training the officers somehow or other in the 16 Group or 13 Punjab they were always on the leading they never went behind the soldiers they were always on the leading so this is the kind of thing you know that we remain always with our men whether it was peace or war that brought us so much together and luckily we have had the junior commissioned officers in my time my I can quote one junior commissioned officer they were very well educated also I mean they came down like we came down they went up you know up and down they moved they were the one who could probably even quote you on the history of the Battalion the junior

commissioned officers they were they had the knowledge of the history I mean the third thing that the question that my adjutant when I went to the unit just after about a week ten days that the first question he asked me was are you settled in the unit I said yea well I'm settled well he said okay who was the first C.O. what was the name of the unit I mean they've taught that you know knowing the history is a must for the officers as a young officer if he don't know the history then they said there is no difference between your unit and any unit that has been raised now so this is we have been made to learn and made to contact our senior officers now I think the thing's probably everywhere you know whether it's U.K or Pakistan things are changing now but those days when we joined especially the lot which had joined pre '70 they were all told to contact the old officers go and see them meet them like you know the senior most officers then in Sialkot Cantt. when I joined the unit when General Mujib was Colonel he was our resident Colonel and he was the senior most officer so I was told to first go and call on him and this is a tradition that we must go and call on a general officer then I was told to go and write to those officers who were outside the unit you know that you know I'd joined and I had to send my photographs to them you know traditionally so that they know these the young officers who have joined. They knew me and I knew them well you know through correspondence or you know then probably the communication in the country was not too well so I call them on telephone but then we wrote to them then they wrote back to us this is how we learned about the unit history and then there were we always made sure there was an occasion or two when we had these raising days you know celebrate we will always celebrate our raising day on the 4th of April every year is it 4th of April we always have this traditionally that we were raised on the 4th of April so we try to contact the old officers in the country or all over so that they come together and then they talk and like I am talking to you they talk to us and they talk we went on talking to our youngsters, we still talk to them, we still try to tell them that the unit is different from the rest of the units because we have traditions how did we you know fight in Burma how did we fight in you know the desert how did we fight in the mountains in just after we sorry just after independence we were in Azad Kashmir this part of the sector so we fought the first war that is 1948 war in this sector that is the Azad Kashmir sector so they tell us how the Battalion fought and how did the officers fight and how did you know the *javāns* and so we're you know step by step we're keeping all those things as treasures with us we feel proud of our being associated like I already told you we always have this thing in mind yes pre '47 we were serving we were under the British rule but then we still feel proud that you we have our history we have a history we have a tradition and we have kept those tradition you know you know that do not contradict with our religion or you know they are not in conflict with the independence of our country or ourself, we love to keep that and we still love to keep on the higher point that those cup that we have or the china cup that we have or the screen that we have in the officers mess which keeps us reminding that we were once in somewhere on the China and we brought it from there in fact unluckily that got damaged somewhere in Sialkot and we sent it back to China to get it repaired because it has all those dragons we still have those small dragons which show the new [kind] when we

keep going for the dinners we have those small dragons which are laid down on the dining table and you know it has the menu card so we feel very proud of the thing that the Battalion has wonderful history a rich history and that keeps us you know still fit enough to fight and you know keep our traditions.

J.W. : Yes yes so one thing, oh sorry, just before one thing I should have asked you from the start when you joined the army did you have a choice as to which battalion which regiment you went in to?

Major Z. : Yea we had the choice we had we always opted for you know the units and all I mean I wouldn't say that I opted for 13 Punjab of course Major Tahir opted for 13 Punjab because his one of the near uncle was in 13 Punjab and that's Colonel Unis but opted another battalion of Punjab Regiment that was 22 Punjab. Luckily my second choice was 1/16 and third choice was 3rd/16 this because you know I liked this plume that we wear that green plume that we wear and also that I have regards for the people that fought in the '65 War and the Chiwindah battle which was fought in Sialkot and I took up when I wanted to make a choice I said you know well I want to go to Sialkot and I want to got to Punjab regiment so I opted for 22 Punjab because one of my uncles was serving in 22 Punjab. I opted for 1/16 because it had some traditions that I had learned then luckily I landed in 1/16 and I was told by then one Major-General [Khudadaad] who is also you know a relative of mine and he's a relative of my mother and in fact he will be Adjutant-General and he took you know took me and he put me into 1/16 and he called me and he said I'm pushing you to 1/16 because his son was then much younger and he was you know to be educated and to go to the army of course he joined the army later and he went to the Five Punjab, the [Shergha] battalion we have but because his father had commanded this General [Khudadaad] he basically commissioned officers from Pakistan 1/16 he was commissioned in 1/16 he remained in Six .. 1/16 from as a Second-Lieutenant to the rank of a Major the second in command but then he could not command 1/16 so he went to Five Punjab which is [Shergha] Battalion so his son went to Five but I went as his family to 1/16 and he was very proud of the thing that you know he has sent me so 1/16 was on the choice list of mine.

J.W. : Sorry Major Tahir you were about to say something there and I interrupted you.

Major T. : Well it's really you know army is the last quarter of the training of the officers cadet in P.M.A. in Khairpur when they do ask which unit that you want we want to join. As Major Zulfiqar has given the told you that I my real Colonel Unis whose those days he was in command of the Battalion that was one reason that I opted for 13 Punjab but before that you know Colonel Unis was my real guardian as my father was not alive and he was my guardian as all along official [?] and I went out in my college days I used to visit 13 Punjab, 1/16 and I picked up liking for looking at officers and you know officers participating in a different occasions and they did jobs and in one or two occasions I visited the units during summer and winter practical training with my uncle

he just took me along and I picked up a liking you know the way the officers you know conduct themselves and how they you know kind of perform their duties so that was the main reason and when I opted for the 13 Punjab my platoon commander was in charge of the training academy so he said what is your second choice and I said my second choice is also 13 Punjab and said what is your third choice we are supposed to give third, three choices I said my third choice is also 13 Punjab he said what are you talking I said my all choices are 13 Punjab but he said that you may not get that 13 Punjab I said well this is my choice I must get it and luckily I went to I got my choice and I am now a son of 1/16 13 Punjab and that's I got my battalion my choice.

J.W. : Right right and one other thing I'd like you to tell me about the film you were involved in about Major Tufail the TV film can you tell me a little about that what Major Tufail did and what the film was about and how you were involved in the thing?

Major T. : Yes I think it was a basically I want to explain one more point that we have been very lucky in this Battalion that this Battalion had a very good commanding officers all around who take the history intact and take the history moving to coming generations and I would like to mention General Mujib ur Rahman who has been very very active in 13 Punjabi and Colonel Raja, Colonel Unis, Colonel Zafar Ullah and you know there are many more who may not have you know raised to the commanding position but as a second in command and then the [?] Zafar Ali Khan and then the present commanding officers [?] they have been very active on the unit history traditions they have been very very active and that lucky and the unit was lucky that these commanding officers took the tradition in this unit but they took the traditions outside these units all officers remain in contact they never lose the contact of you know officers serving out or officers dead officers and I think that was a that was a probably the important thing that kept the unit you know history alive and to repeat the history and to keep the history you know unit most important part of the history was the *śahīd* [?] Major Tufail Shaheen and it was during '94, 1994 when General Mujib ur Rahman was serving in the Commandant as an aide from the Home Secretary he picked up the idea to you know project the national hero on the you know more to the public he was known in the army but his idea was there should be more and more people general nation to the nation of [?] so he got the idea to make a the idea of [?] and then it was Major Tufail his history then he could have his monument to that he should and I was lucky enough to be nominated as [?] officer and I took my you know company to take part in that drama and my company it was a [?] company and it took part in that drama making of that drama to depict the battle the action in which Major Tufail was participating and participated and he was *śahīded* during that action so that action was put into a video and I was lucky enough to act as one of the characters in that drama and I think it was I was lucky to be a part of this team that way.

Major Z. : But he the present C.O. who's Colonel Zaid ul Islam is we some of the first Muslim C.O. of 13 Punjabis the man who is now commanding the unit we have had two

of his sons serving the battalion first was Major Zaid ul Islam and unluckily on some you know personal grounds he left the army as a Major who was a really outstanding officer and outstanding at any of the things because he went to a company commanders course to States and he got the stick of honour and he's a sword of honour from Pakistan Military Academy Zaid ul Islam has also a sword of honour from Pakistan Military Academy and Zaid ul Islam commanding his father Brigadier Aslam Mohammed was the first Muslim C.O. once the Partition took place and he was the first Muslim C.O. and again by tradition how do we become a family actually we're not a unit we are a family we all what now Major Tahir is sitting in front of me I know his you know younger brothers where they are serving what his elder brother is doing what are his businesses and similarly he knows about my parents he has met my father and luckily what we do is especially with the 13 Punjab like we had one officer his son came to 13 Punjab Captain [Sharif Khat] Ullah Colonel [Amman Ullah] was his father he served as a C.O. of the unit so we kept on meeting Colonel [Amman Ullah] so we know a lot about these two. Major Iqbal Nabib who is a son of Major Ijaz Nabib who served in the unit in the Fifties he's in Lahore still living and Major Ijaz Nabib we've met a couple of times and we keep on talking about the history of 13 Punjab. Major Tariq [Sabal Raja] his father Major [?] we met home the other day of course you met Colonel Raja he now who is from my area I met another officer who was sent out of the army you know reduction scheme in Fifties I was I think born and he was sent out of the army Major Sadiq [Malik] so we keep on meeting the old officers and especially the old officers who were serving and there fathers they served whether they served in the ranks or whether they served as an officer we luckily have a tradition that we like to involve those people who are serving who have served in the past I will I like to introduce my son you know who's only seven years I like to introduce him to Major Tahirand Tariq [Sabal Raja] Colonel [?]so that they know that he is son of a 13 Punjabi. So this is how we are keeping it not only a unit affair a group affair we keep on making it a family affair so we you know pass whether my son comes down with the army but he still knows 13 Punjab and if you go and ask who you are he will say I am a 13 Punjabi or I am my you know little [?] is sticking outside of my house says Major Zulfiqar 13 Punjab so anybody passing that area he know the officer from 13 Punjab. I have seen a couple of people you know just banging into my house just for the reason that they see 13 Punjab sitting outside my house and they just love to wish me well and say that they have some sort of link with the group. So this is how you know generally we are trying to keep that love and you know that feeling for the unit alive I mean traditionally you know this is what we have got from our people when I joined the unit people told me like this when people joined after me like people Major Tahir and the other youngsters after me we tried to push through their throats that this is what we are and somehow or other till today we have been successful in doing this thing I don't know God may help us you know in doing so in future also.

J.W. : Right and this still and this continues ... .

Major Z. : They still ... .

Major T. : Even to the British officers who... .

Major Z. : Yea it con ... I mean like you know you just talked of 16 and you know normally you as it is a foreigner he's coming around but this he talks of 16 Punjab and we love to talk to him because you know he is talking of our history and he is talking of our tradition so we must talk to him we must you know share with him that you know we have those regards for the unit right from its raising right from its birth you know when it came down as a baby it was raised by the Britishers it has those things still and as I told you luckily now the Battalion is far off but otherwise we love to stand to because now people are quite educated its not only European languages that I speak the same language and everything but otherwise people are quite educated they know that the past has to be kept alive, they don't want it just you know to be marched off or anything they feel proud of this thing that you know we have we had a history we fought there either we won we were you know we were brave soldiers we never backed out and so far the unit is keeping its tradition you know whether it is a peace time venue or whether we go in aggressively in to sports and things like that, so that you know things which is in built us you know remains alive like this we went specially I joined the army of course after '65 but '71 people fought very well and when we went down to Baluchistan we did very well we went in to operations like the martial law or we went down to the helping the civil governments in floods or anything we went with that tradition that you know 13 you know then that will come down that 1/16 doesn't have to come down the basic standards of its so if we you know whenever we do anything we always keep this thing that this is 1/16, 1/16 cannot be left anything so I mean if we had nothing to consider of the past one can you know make new standards okay everything was going like this you know let's do it, but once we know that you know that this is the standard that our you know our people in the past have kept and we have to keep the flag high so that is the I believe you know I say this with a lot of proud feeling that because of that past history that we have that you know that the battalion did very well everywhere they had like I told you we have the *Shahaan-i-Haider* we have the [?] we have the other things done going down to being the best battalion of the year in [Okhala] best battalion in Lahore, best battalion in Nowshera whether it was firing whether it was the professional things like firing and physical fitness or it was you know just winning a basketball match or volleyball match we didn't we did our best to keep up the traditions that is how we went.

J.W. : And it even comes into your business today.

Major Z. : Yea now maybe I'm giving you the business that I'm doing now you've seen everything of mine the stickers they I you know they after all this belongs to another friend who's a [?] but we made this badge (the red, yellow and green of 13

Punjab) we made sure this badge has all the three colours and then we go in for I mean I am a Master in Business Administration I've learnt a lot and been coming down to civil but my basic force I always tell everybody that my basic learning you know is from 13 Punjab and that basic force is 13 Punjab my basic stay is 13 Punjab, and that is how we remain aggressive we remain professional we remain you know honest to what we are doing whether it is you know just educating somebody you know providing security in the civil or whether it is you know going down fighting the enemy we keep those traditions always alive, we say that we will not you know let down our past here because that is our main strength and if you will not if you don't I always tell my youngsters that if you don't consider your past then you could you know be you know one of the Sixty-Four Punjab or somebody Four Punjab or 84 Punjab anything but while we are different from others is that we have our history we have people to look back at and those people who are like me now I can be amongst the older lot in a way that you know now the boys who are joined in the army for me were they born then I mean not everyone was born then you know the youngsters who are twenty because more than twenty-eight years that I joined the army so the guy who was twenty, twenty-one who's now commissioned he wasn't even not even born so we tell them that the pride that we take and we pride that we pass on to you is because of the history that we have, and to tell I still have maintained this thing that history of course you know that good and bad well either, we have you know whether we failed somewhere or whether we were successful is something that we have to keep to you know tied to us, you know, we can not just ignore it and we must learn from what we did bad so that we can do better when we have been doing good we must follow it.

J.W. : Yes right.

Major Z. : Thank you.

J.W. : Well thank you, no, unless you have anything more to add we've covered a great deal there thank you very much.

Major T. : I think all the aspects have been covered ... .

J.W. : Yes.

Major T. : And for ... .

Major Z. : Yes if you go back and if you make a document if you find time and if you are not pushed too much I would love to have something you know of this.

J.W. : Yes yes, no happily.

Major Z. : If you send it back to us so that we hand it to the unit although I may keep it to ourselves also.

(Tape is switched off)

Colonel Khushwaqt ul Mulk
Interviewed on the 12th February 1998
SA1998.38

J.W. and **Col. Kh.** represent Jeremy Weston and Colonel Khushwaqt ul Mulk.

J.W. : Okay, this is Jeremy Weston it's Thursday the twelfth of February and I'm talking to Colonel Khushwaqt at his home in Islamabad. Okay so if you could start by ... .

Col. Kh. : One feature of this childhood of ours in Chitral is a tradition in Chitral where the children of the ruling family are given out to families in the villages to be fostered right from your birth almost you're handed over to your foster mother and parents and brothers and sisters you live with them and the object of this seemed to be that later on in life those people are expected to be your loyal supporters.

J.W. : And so how long ... .

Col. Kh. : Right from the beginning I was in the house of my foster parents up in Northern Chitral first in a village called [Ah-wee] which is 15 miles short of Mastuj, then in Mastuj.

J.W. : And so how long did you stay with those foster parents for?

Col. Kh. : I stayed with them and then I also stayed with their family in the fort in Mastuj up to the age of nine.

J.W. : And what happened after that where did you go?

Col. Kh. : After that we joined a class run by a private tutor in Chitral who was engaged by our father to teach English and Urdu and mathematics to all our brothers and cousins.

J.W. : So when you say 'we' that was your brothers and your cousins as well?

Col. Kh. : Brothers and cousins yes.

J.W. : So how many of you were there altogether?

Col. Kh. : There were about ten of us in the year.

J.W. : So quite a small class.

Col. Kh. : From the age of nine to the age of thirteen I was in Chitral among these other children with this private tutor. At the age of thirteen I went to school with my two other brothers one other brother actually the third brother was in another school we two were in the Prince of Wales' Royal Indian Military College in Dehra Dun in India.

J.W. : Right so that must of been quite a transition from Chitral to Dehra Dun.

Col. Kh. : Yes.

J.W. : How did you find that as a young boy?

Col. Kh. : Well I tell you how another student was senior to us he described our arrival in the school he is still living he is a retired general of the Pakistan army he says well these two wild looking boys escorted by huge people bearded people with long woollen gowns this chap who described them comes from Patodi which you may have heard of Patodi, the Nawab of Patodi used to be a famous cricket player at one time he was in the English cricket team this general is his younger brother so they come from very civilised modern family of those days living near Delhi so when they saw these wild people it seemed something strange happening to the school.

J.W. : So what was the school like can you take me through your time there?

Col. Kh. : Well school was was supposed to be the best in India it had all English teachers all from Oxford and Cambridge and Urdu teachers Mathematics teachers some of them were Indian Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims I was in that school from the age of thirteen until I left it to enter the Military Academy also in Dehra Dun.

J.W. : And what age was that that you left the school?

Col. Kh. : Well I left the school about twenty.

J.W. : What year was that do you remember what year?

Col. Kh. : I left in 1933.

J.W. : 1933 right into the Military Academy.

Col. Kh. : And then I spent two and a half years' in the Military Academy commissioned in 1935.

J.W. : And that was into the you told me.

Col. Kh. : Into the we had in those days you had to do one year with an British Army Regiment before you were posted to your Indian Regiment.

J.W. : So which regiment were you with?

Col. Kh. : I served for one year with the Green Howards in a place called near Meerut near Delhi for the summer we went up to the hills because Meerut was one of the hottest places in India.

J.W. : How did you find it in that in the Green Howards did they take you in did they accept you fairly well as a sort of attached officer?

Col. Kh. : Yes I was fond of playing soccer so that helped me to get to know the officers and the other ranks.

J.W. : Yea you could do things to join in with them right?

Col. Kh. : I remember one Company Sergeant Major and I remember his name Gilpin he was an excellent soccer player he used to play centre half he was everywhere on the field.

J.W. : So that year with the British Regiment that was just training?

Col. Kh. : One year with the British Regiment and then I was posted to the Indian Battalion in Quetta.

J.W. : And which Battalion was that?

Col. Kh. : It was the 4/19 (four nineteen) Hyderabad Regiment.

J.W. : Right okay.

Col. Kh. : While in Quetta my father died in Chitral so I went up in October 1936 and when I came back to the Battalion it had been transferred to Secunderabad down in Southern India.

J.W. : Quite a jump from Quetta.

Col. Kh. : Pardon?

J.W. : Quite a jump from Quetta.

Col. Kh. : Yes.

J.W. : And what was the composition of the Hyderabad Regiment what ... ?

Col. Kh. : Hyderabad Regiment all the ranks were Hindus the officers were mixed the senior officers were British officers I mean, the commissioned the commissioned officers were Indians officers this was one of the Battalions selected for Indianisation.

J.W. : Right and that had started yes that had started a few years before hadn't it?

Col. Kh. : Yes.

J.W. : So what stage had that reached when you were there, Indianisation?

Col. Kh. : When we were there they had not quite changed all the it was the British system in the British army in which Second Lieutenants go in to command a platoon but soon after I joined the Battalion that system was introduced and we were platoon commanders previously a British officer posted to an Indian Army went as a company officer and the platoons were commanded by what they called Viceroys Commissioned Officers *jemadars* and *subadars.* When the Battalion was Indianised *jemadars* and *subadars* were turned into warrant officers on the lines of the British Army (pause) and the new second lieutenants the Indian second lieutenants assumed the part of the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers although they were not called Viceroy's Commissioned Officers they were called Indian Commissioned Officers.

J.W. : So presumably you'd done a lot of your basic training at Dehra Dun at the Military Academy and you'd got used to say commanding and that sort of thing when with the Green Howards so what sort of things were you doing say when you were posted in Secunderabad say what was the life like what were you doing there as a platoon commander?

Col. Kh. : Well we were usually doing administration work until the Autumn you went out on training manoeuvres and and when you came back you were routine administrative patrol commanding organising their annual shooting and that sort of thing playing games all through the time.

J.W. : What sort of sports would they play?

Col. Kh. : Hockey football here was not as much cricket then as it is now.

J.W. : Did those games help with the ranks in the Regiment did it help to create a sort of camaraderie with them?

Col. Kh. : Yes yes.

J.W. : That was the purpose presumably.

Col. Kh. : They were very good playing games.

J.W. : And was it a good relationship you had with the men with the ... ?

Col. Kh. : Very good they were good people we had three or four classes the biggest class were Ahirs they're Hindus very strict Hindus they never touched meat and then we had Jats and Kumaonis, Kumaonis are hill men like the Gurkhas those are the three we had Ahirs Jats and Kumaonis.

J.W. : And would they ... ?

Col. Kh. : I always worked in a company which was 100 per cent Ahirs then Kumaonis I never served with the Jats.

J.W. : So each company would have just one group either Jats or whichever ... ?

Col. Kh. : I forget whether they had mixed or whether they had whole companies I think they had one company of Ahirs and one company of Jats and the third company was mixed.

J.W. : Okay so let's think you've come to that regiment how long did you stay there for how long were you with that regiment for?

Col. Kh. : I was with them we 1936, 37, 38, 39 we were in Singapore, Secunderabad. While in Secunderabad another officer arrived who had gone on leave he wanted to see the Middle East so he went to Kuwait, Iraq, Iran and came back through Afghanistan this leave was given in those days to encourage Indian officers to travel abroad we took advantage of this concession and we enjoyed the leave very much in countries that were completely unspoilt in those days, and we got to Kuwait and the Sheikh of Kuwait invited us to his customary coffee we slept in a low hall having coffee and just about that time they'd struck oil in Kuwait and a few years after that we heard that that Sheikh was quite a different man but there in those days he was just a ... .

J.W. : This is before that.

Col. Kh. : And you were lucky to go to these places when new inventions had just started for instance in Iran the railway line from Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea had just been constructed so we travelled on that right up to the Caspian Sea and back to Tehran and across to Meshed we stayed in Meshed for three weeks because there was no transport to bring us from Meshed to Iraq you waited until there was something going

the other way so we got a truck it was filled up with hides and skins in the month of June (laughs) and there were four of us in the truck this officer and myself there was a French couple who were going from Paris to Borneo on bicycles when they got to Tehran they left Iran just outside Iran they were robbed of their bicycles so they found their way travelling by buses to the British Consul General in Meshed and the Consul General sent them on to us saying they will travel with you, they were going to Quetta, Kandahar, Quetta and [Cha-wul] and we were going Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul to Peshawar so when we got back this was about July 1939 the rumours of war were getting hotter and hotter so our leave was up to the end of August so I went up to Chitral for the rest of my leave the leave was over by that time the Battalion had been moved from Secunderabad to Singapore.

J.W. : So you presumably went to Singapore then?

Col. Kh. : Before going to Singapore I got a letter to appear for interview with the Viceroy of India Lord Linlithgow because my name had come up for Political Service there were three of us who appeared for the interview one was Sam Manickshaw a Parsee who later on became the only Indian Field Marshall because of the Indo-Pakistan War in East Pakistan he was one there was another Colonel Sharif who lives in Peshawar and myself we three were for interview with Lord Linlithgow we had our interview he asked us questions about where we came from and he talked about and he was interested in agriculture and shooting and I got him talking about yaks which he liked very much yaks you know we have yaks up on the mountain in Chitral he was really interested about yaks. This interview was over but soon after the interview they stopped all postings outside the army because of the War so I went to join my Battalion in Singapore I was already enrolled on the ship and on the way to Singapore I tried to learn some Malay and the only words I remember now which I learned were ['*Tipa Upa*']

J.W. : What does that mean?

Col. Kh. : Which means 'Don't worry'.

J.W. : (Laughs) That's a very handy phrase to have.

Col. Kh. : The war with the war going on it was a very good thing to learn I thought I got to Singapore and I was there 39, 40 while I Singapore nobody mentioned that Japan was going to go to War the whole system of Indianisation was reversed they made all the Battalions acceptable to Indian officers not any selected Battalions so some of us became surplus in the Battalion so we had to be posted back to India so I was posted to the Scouts in 19 ... January 1941.

J.W. : Right I see so it wasn't there was no sort of element of choice with you joining the Scouts then?

Col. Kh. : Pardon?

J.W. : Was there any element of choice at all with you joining the Scouts at all or were you literally?

Col. Kh. : Well when they when they knew that we were being posted away they asked for a choice and I gave the Scouts.

J.W. :. Why did you choose the Scouts specifically?

Col. Kh. : Well I found the Scouts had three months leave every year (laughs) and that was a big attraction.

J.W. : Of course.

Col. Kh. : The Army had openly one month's leave three months leave on full pay.

J.W. : You can't complain at that . So you went then in 1941 to the ... ?

Col. Kh. : In 1941.

J.W. : And where did you go from there?

Col. Kh. : I must I always mention this one thing you see when I got to Peshawar Railway station after a long journey from Calcutta as I got off the train there was an officer with a message from the Inspector the Inspecting Officer of the Frontier Corps his name taking you there was [?] Scouts and saying since you've come back after a long time you may be wanting to go back to Chitral tomorrow there's a flight going up to Chitral which in those days was unheard of.

J.W. : I was going to say, yea.

Col. Kh. : The Royal Air Force plane was going up he said a seat has been arranged for you to go up which was wonderful man management of the first order.

J.W. : Yes exactly.

Col. Kh. : And he you have your one month leave prior to joining the Scouts I got it was wonderful I went up on a plane and I had a month in Chitral then joined the Scouts.

J.W. : Did they, taking you off tack a little, did they have a landing strip at that time in Chitral was there a any sort of aerodrome?

Col. Kh. : In those days the planes landed in Drosh not in Chitral.

J.W. : Oh right that would explain that I was just wondering.

Col. Kh. : The landing ground for military aircraft air force not regular aircraft.

J.W. : So sorry you were saying you had your one month's leave in Chitral and then?

Col. Kh. : Then I joined the SWS (South Waziristan Scouts).

J.W. : You went down, so can you tell me about that what it was like?

Col. Kh. : Well I was there from '41 to '46 as a junior officer in [?] officer you see '43 the beginning I was made from Lieutenant to Major and given the command of a wing a wing is about the strength of a battalion about a thousand people so about then it was in these days between '41 I don't exactly remember the year that Willie Brown joined us.

J.W. : I can check that up in the books I'm sure and so what do you remember of your first impressions of him?

Col. Kh. : Who?

J.W. : Of him of Willie Brown what do you remember of ... ?

Col. Kh. : Willie Brown, very quiet, an unassuming chap.

J.W. : You were commanding him weren't you or was that later?

Col. Kh. : We were both wing officers I think.

J.W. : Were you? Oh right now just to think something that flies into my head had you learnt Pushtu before this time or did you have to learn it?

Col. Kh. : I didn't know a word of Pushtu . When I got to the Scouts the *subedar* greeted me *'Stirarmashe'* I don't know what to do what to reply.

J.W. : So how did you subsequently ... ?

Col. Kh. : The C.O. was Colonel Wood he said, 'By jove that's very bad you've got to learn this language' you see I said, 'Sir I'll learn it but I think I should get the allowance that the British officers get' (laughs).

J.W. : And did you get an allowance?

Col. Kh. : He said, 'You learn it my boy I'll see that you get an allowance (laughs) I'll see that you get it' so I did get an allowance after I'd learned Pushtu.

J.W. : Did you have a sort of *mumshi* for that?

Col. Kh. : Yes we had a *mumshi* same *mumshi* that got all the British officers a very nice man I picked it up quite soon.

J.W. :. Cause you knew all the other languages it wasn't maybe such a leap as it was maybe for the other British officers.

Col. Kh. : Yes.

J.W. : Right well you read in the books what life was like in the Scouts was like but what was it like, like everyday life what sort of things?

Col. Kh. : Well most enjoyable life (pause) it came more naturally to Indian officers than the regular army. Now one thing you were given responsibility and you were left out on your own to do what you what you could do there were not many officers who were given that you see.

J.W. : So it really worked on your initiative.

Col. Kh. : Yes it was a good life more camaraderie between officers, and Viceroy's Commissioned Officers and NCO's and men played soccer and basketball there wasn't much hockey *gashting* up the hills and there my first experience of a very squakish speaking officer James Watson.

J.W. : James Watson, right.

Col. Kh. : James Watson you could hardly understand what he was talking about he was talking Scottish all the time he thought it was English (laughs) I don't know what happened to him I couldn't ... .

J.W. : I'll have to look the name up see and check see what his career was. So what were you doing in general in the Scouts you were sort of policing the general area were you or ... ?

Col. Kh. : Well the Scouts had their headquarters in Jandur the [?] they had one wing on the right and one wing on the left and the two wings went right up into the interior of the tribal area at a place called [Laghar] on one side and [Tyaghar] on the other [Tyghar]

was the end of the left wing [Laghar] was the end of the right wing. As you spent most of your time patrolling the hillsides and by the time you came back you were quite tired and you welcomed the life in the mess the magazines and (pause) good food.

J.W. : Right and let me think were you involved in road openings at all did you do that in that part of the world?

Col. Kh. : Yes we did, we had to.

J.W. : Was that with regular troops at all?

Col. Kh. : Army columns used to move to Wana and the Scouts took up the hills around you see with the army on the road then they were many kidnappings up in the plains we were informed about the incident and we went out regularly kidnappers and they never came into our bag we spent the nights out waiting for them.

J.W. :. So was that some of the first active service you had in the sense of actually having to engage people outwith training?

Col. Kh. : Yes that was the first, and nasty.

J.W. : And quite a, presumably quite a sort of tough ... .

Col. Kh. : Extremely, it kept you alert.

J.W. : Right now you were saying was it James Watson you remember.

Col. Kh. : James Watson.

Col. Kh. : And with Willie Brown as well did did you notice a was there a difference between them and the other British officers or were all the British officers much the same?

Col. Kh. : Well the difference is even in those days the Scot officers or even the Irish chaps who were there they we more like the tribal people we had tribal Pathans and settled Pathans these were more like the settled Pathans.

J.W. : In Mardan and those places yea.

Col. Kh. : The Scots and the Irish for one thing the tribal people didn't speak Pushtu in the same way that the settled people did and the Scot officers didn't speak English.

J.W. : No they wouldn't would they, no, so they there was a good camaraderie there between them and the Pathans as well. Right then, let's think (pause) I'll pause this for a moment. (Tape is paused) So how long then were you in that stage was it until 1946 you were ... ?

Col. Kh. : 1946 joined them as a Lieutenant and finished up as the second in command Lieutenant-Colonel.

J.W. : And so why did things stop then in 1946 what was the reason?

J.W. : 1946 (pause) Officers were not permanently in the Scouts you had to go back to the battalion.

J.W. : Right so did you then go back to the ... ?

Col. Kh. : I did go back to the Battalion.

J.W. : Which was the same ... ?

Col. Kh. : It was the same Battalion the name had been changed from four nineteen (4/19) Hyderabad it had now become the 4th Kumaon it was in stationed in [Lake Bhil] near Bombay.

J.W. : Right had the composition of the regiment changed to make the ... ?

Col. Kh. : No the composition was the same.

J.W. : They'd just changed the name right so how did you find life changing back you seem to have had a very enjoyable fulfilling time in the Scouts how was life going back to India?

Col. Kh. : Well I didn't understand a thing in the army there were too many rules and regulations it was like playing Chitrali polo and international polo.

J.W. : (laughs) That's a good analogy and so ... .

Col. Kh. : Lost myself completely then soon after the commanding officer of the Battalion had been commanding officer of the Chitral Scouts Lieutenant-Colonel Stapleton so I had been there two or three months I was out in my company when he rang up on the telephone and he said, 'You have been selected for the Staff College' I said, 'What? Are you serious?' because I had never studied for Staff College I had been in the Scouts you see I never knew [the Brigadier/] would select anyone so [?] you've been selected so you have to go to the to Staff College in Quetta. I went in '46 or was it

the beginning of '47 I think it was '47 I think it was the later end of '46 but there I found all the old friends from the Scouts were also selected see.

J.W. :. I see just pure coincidence or was ... ?

Col. Kh. : Well Prendergast was on the same course there was Hutch wait a moment several people so we found out at the end of the war the GHQ looked up these names and said theses people haven't had a chance to go to Staff College and they just sent us there we knew nothing about staff.

J.W. : So how was that at Staff College?

Col. Kh. : Then you see '46 '47 in the middle of all this Independence was going on there in Quetta there were Hindus, Sikh British, Muslim officers well as soon as it was announced the Indian elements Hindus and Sikhs disappeared the next day and disappeared of to India.

J.W. : Were things quite peaceful in Quetta did things go ... ?

Col. Kh. : Well not immediately people didn't wake up to all this gradually it worked up it became serious but then we were posted here and there the Staff course was cancelled some of us passed some didn't make the mark I was told I had passed but I didn't really know that I had really passed or not I must check that out. I was posted to Peshawar the Headquarters of the Frontier Corps.

J.W. : Right and so they that was just after Partition that you went up to Peshawar?

Col. Kh : Just afterwards yes.

J.W. : Things had gone through so so then how was life in the Scouts after Partition I mean obviously the British officers although were there any British officers who stayed on at all?

Col. Kh. : Yes there were five British officers, you see after spending a few months in Peshawar I was posted back to the SWS as Commandant so we had five British officers and some others who (pauses).

J.W. : And so how long did they stay for in?

Col. Kh. : They stayed there I think another two years.

J.W. : And did we were they still there when you finished with the Scouts or did you?

Col. Kh. : Yes I was posted away from from the SWS on promotion to Quetta when I left they were still there actually I handed over to a British my second in command was my British major.

J.W. : Right did that help with an element of stability in the Scouts do you think after Partition having those British officers there did that help or ... ?

Col. Kh. : I think it did at least I felt that it did.

J.W. : And did the character of the life of the work change at all after Partition were the Pathans in the hills in the tribal areas were they any different after Partition or were they still doing much the same thing?

Col. Kh. : Not really at that time when I was in the Scouts it was too near the old days the old system carried on and gradually I think it did change. One big change was that the Scouts' recruiting areas were disturbed because life with better pay and conditions in Arabia and the Gulf opened up people from there came and recruited Pathans then the best class of Pathans went over to the Gulf and Arabia (pauses).

J.W. :. So that changed things quite a lot of course they're still going aren't they to work and things. So you were saying you went did you say back down to Quetta once you'd finished in the Scouts.

Col. Kh. : I went to Quetta as the Deputy Inspector General of the Scouts which covered the whole of Baluchistan.

J.W. : Were there Scouts down there?

Col. Kh. : And Baluchistan is such a big area right down to the coast Makran coast opposite the Afghan border.

J.W. : What are the Scouts called down there cause I'm not familiar with their ... ?

Col. Kh. : There were different Scouts the Zhob militia was the biggest.

J.W. : Yep I've heard of them.

Col. Kh. : The Pishin Scouts near Chaman, the Makran Militia right down to the coast and the Chagai militia along the border with Iran I had those four, the Zhob militia, the Pishin Scouts, the Makran militia, the Chagai militia.

J.W. : And so how long were you there as IG?

Col. Kh. :I was there from '49 to '52.

J.W. : And then?

Col. Kh. : Then I went back to the battalion commanded the 3rd Royal Battalion 12th Frontier Force Regiment '52 '53 '54.

J.W. : I'm sorry where were they were they back up in the ... ?

Col. Kh. : They were in Jhelum in ... .

J.W. : Oh right so that's ... .

Col. Kh. : Jhelum and Sialkot.

J.W. : Oh right Sialkot I know the Frontier Force are there. So by this time you were fairly used to chopping and changing you were fairly used to the sort of army life and commanding in the higher ranks it wasn't such a shock as it had been before switching from Scouts to army by that stage?

Col. Kh. : Yes by that time I was getting settled down to it but soon I was posted away from the Army to the East Pakistan Rifles.

J.W. : Right was that over in East Pakistan?

Col. Kh. : Oh [?] I was there for two years which was interesting because I had Bengalis, Bengali troops, Pathans, Punjabis.

J.W. : Right and how did you find life over there was that very very different?

Col. Kh. : It was something like the Scouts life really not regular army they were part of the civil armed forces.

J.W. : Right oh I see so a fairly irregular sort of system. So how long were you there?

Col. Kh. : I was there '54 '55 then I was posted back to the Frontier Force Centre by that time Pakistan had come into being you see and I was posted to the Frontier Force Regiment that was before I went to Bengal actually then I was in command of the Frontier Force Centre in Abbotabad.

J.W. : Right and was that commanding, was there a lot of training there was that a training centre?

Col. Kh. : A training centre a depot in [?].

J.W. : So you were overseeing that so goodness that's gone through a fair few years.

Col. Kh. : From there I went on retirement.

J.W. : About time you'd done a good few years by then hadn't you, so and how so through all this time had you kept, kept the contacts with all the people you'd been with (telephone rings) people like Willie Brown and these sort of people?

Col. Kh. : Yes.

J.W. : So you were in contact there?

Col. Kh. : I used to hear from them write to them now and then letter writing became more regular.

J.W. :. So you'd have been well aware of what Willie had done in Gilgit and this sort of thing?

Col. Kh. : Willie went to Gilgit from there he used to write actually he wrote to my brother I'm trying to find the letters the correspondence between them it'll have much of a bearing on his book.

J.W. :. Yes that would be interesting to fill that out as well. So what then then you're into retirement did you, where did you, did you go to retire were you back up to... ?

Col. Kh. : Well I went back to Mastuj (pauses) then you couldn't take any other employment until you were out of the army for two years you see '57 '58 '59 I had a telegram (pause)would I if I would like to be a Commissioner for refugee rehabilitation Indian refugees who had come to so I thought it was a good idea but when I got to Peshawar from Mastuj I found that the post was going to be either in Karachi or Lahore and my children were at Kohat in school. Now I was looking for something else when someone told me the Americans were looking for somebody that would have kept me in Peshawar you see I like to be in Peshawar so I went to the American consulate and now here we want somebody actually the chap was the Consul there and extremely polite to me at all times it was in '59 Gordon King, oh a very interesting thing before that you see I was was walking going walking and I met an old man up the road a European looking chap who stopped and talked he said, 'Where are you from?', I said, 'I'm from Chitral' he said, 'What are you doing here?', I said, 'I'm seeking a job' , 'Seeking a job' he said, 'why don't you go and see King?' he was very good this chap and I said I was seeking a job and he said go and see King (laughs) I seem to remember that was very coincidental so I said I had already heard they had the Consul I didn't know that his name was King

so I went this made me make a decision you see and I went to see King and that was in January '59.

J.W. : Right.

Col. Kh. : And he said, 'All right I'll let you know after a month.' After a month I went there again and he said, 'Yes you'll take it on'

J.W. : So you got to stay in Peshawar?

Col. Kh. : I became the political analyst.

J.W. : Right for the Consul there.

Col. Kh. : For the Consul.

J.W. :. And how long was that for?

Col. Kh. : Well in those days there were a lot of Americans in Peshawar it was an American base you see.

J.W. : Yep that's right) (pause) it was interesting only two years later a U2 plane took off from Peshawar.

J.W. : Yes Gary Powers.

Col. Kh. : Power Gary Power.

J.W. : That's right, yep, it got shot down and so how long were you there?

Col. Kh. : I was there from '59 to '77 nearly eighteen years.

J.W. : And what about after that?

Col. Kh. : Well we had changed over from Consul after Consul there were all the younger people when I was very good people selected foreign service people I learnt a lot from them and we travelled a lot we went all over Gilgit, Hunza Quetta again Jammu, Kandahar, Kabul.

J.W. : That's a round about trip and what did you do after that after 19 ... ?

Col. Kh. : Then in '77 I shouldn't have left them and anyway I did leave I went on leave to Kenya just to see the game reserves I had a very good friend there Ian King, Ian

Grimwood who was in the Frontier Force we went on Land Rovers seeing the game reserves in 1977, '78 '79 I was back in Mastuj you see.

J.W. : Had you finished work or were you still?

Col. Kh. : I had finished work back in Mastuj and I got another telegram this time from the American consul saying that the Afghan refugees have poured into Af.. Peshawar would you like to join an organisation called *Care Pakistan* to look after the refugees and I took this on the team of Afghan engineers and Afghan refugees giving clean drinking water to the refugees.

J.W. : Sure in the camps and that sort of thing.

Col. Kh. : So we went along from Chitral to Baluchistan again along the same valley that I knew before preparing the roads.

J.W. : Yes of course because there were camps down there.

Col. Kh. : Lining them up with cement it was interesting too and then Care Pakistan wound up their work here and on to Somalia so we were transferred *en bloc* as a team to *Unicef* [where I really only served] until '86 when *Unicef* stopped their work and I went to the *Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan refugees* I was there for two years then I went back to Mastuj that was '88 then '88 the air service to Chitral had started *PIA* and the whole thing was always getting closed in the winter *PIA* getting irregular as there were people waiting at the *PIA* office sometimes smashing the windows and things so I went to the office and I said, 'Why do you want to go by air didn't you used to go by road?' I said , 'Come on if any of you will join me we'll go through Afghanistan' it was in '88 Russia was just leaving so I collected a few Afghans from the Afghan refugees set off on foot [from one end of the valley] and walked for five days and people said there were mines but there were people who knew the valleys and we just took the risk and went along spending nights on the way the roads the motor road had been smashed by the Russians but you could walk I went up to Chitral and got more people to walk down the area a few of them came from Chitral went from Peshawar they built a road ,was ... .

J.W. : That's the road where they go just into - oh right I didn't realise there wasn't a road there before. Okay and so ever since you, sorry.

Col. Kh. : And I've been travelling to England nearly every year now and then to America, Germany.

J.W. : You've been everywhere goodness and the contacts are still quite important to you are they from ... ?

Col. Kh. : Very important yes yes.

J.W. : Very important good yes, let me just pause this.

Col. Kh. : (**J.W.** asks about a Miss Wallace, a traveller in the area whom **Col. Kh.** remembered) ... From a prominent family in Scotland she used to come and visit Mastuj quite often once coming down on horse once coming down on horse she sent a message back saying I've lost my wallet Miss Wallace had lost her wallet so we sent people out they found her wallet she was very happy about it and the next time I was travelling with an American friend up into the hills when again with horses you see our baggage on donkeys got delayed we were waiting for our refreshments when the baggage train turned up but the bottle had broken and all everything had spilled out so he and I were sitting there and we saw a lady coming from the other direction from the Gilgit direction she walked up, there was Miss Wallace and produced a bottle and a big tin of *555* cigarettes.

J.W. : How old was she this Miss Wallace?

Col. Kh. She was nearly ninety then then she stopped coming over to Pakistan and I happened to be in England and I wanted to meet Miss Wallace I went to this huge she is the sister or aunt or something of a Scottish duke or something so I went to the place I asked for her and they said, 'She's gone to St. Andrews' , 'St. Andrews?' so I went up there and then by this time she had lost her eyesight I found her and other places talked about old days.

J.W. : When had she so what period was that when she was travelling in Chitral and these areas?

Col. Kh. : (pause) Oh I, you see she came out not long before that she used to do some medical work in Gilgit then it wasn't a long period she used to visit at one time and then she stopped a long time and then she was again she was actually also teaching in Hazara and her two sisters in Peshawar.

J.W. : So do you remember when she was doing that?

Col. Kh. : No I don't remember [my brother] would remember.

J.W. : Right was it a long time ago or was this relatively recent?

Col. Kh. : Late sixties and early seventies.

J.W. : Right well that's specific enough that was when she was working in Gilgit?

Col. Kh. : Gilgit or ... ?

J.W. : And then she subsequently came travelling after that as well, and was ... ?

Col. Kh. : She was in her nineties at that stage so she, she was about ninety then but she [was getting elderly].

J.W. :. When she was travelling?

Col. Kh. : Yes.

J.W. : At the last at the tail end goodness quite a character certainly. Right let me think, is there anything else I wrote can you think of anything else? You've gone through from start to finish it seems.

Col. Kh. : Here are all the good things.

J.W. : Yea I think that's about it shall we leave it now. Thank you very much.

Col. Kh. : Well thank you I hope it's been ... .

J.W. : It's been a pleasure talking to you.

Col. Kh. : [It won't] I don't know

J.W. : Yes it will be I'm sure I'll pause it .

Tape is switched off.

Major C.M.Moodie
17th Dogras
Recorded on 8th September 1998
SA1998.43

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, and **Major M.** represents Major Moodie

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston it's Tuesday the 8th of September and I'm recording Major Moodie in Blairgowrie. So if you could just tell me first about your life before you were in the Indian Army.

Major M. : Yea well I was brought up in Dundee itself and started army life in St. Andrew's University OTC in 1938, and it was from that after being sort of embodied in September 1939 they asked for volunteers for the Indian Army, and as I had thought of going out to the Indian army as a full time career anyway that was the opportunity that arose and I took it and went out with the Indian Army, to first of all stationed in Bangalore where of course on the military training, language and *et cetera* and from there, I graduated from there and went to join my regiment in the Indian Army.

J.W. : What that made you want to you got a ... ?

Major M. : I haven't got the foggiest idea it was something I always wanted to do either the Indian North-West Frontier Police and that was stamped on the head because I wouldn't have made the grade in height anyway, but having heard that the next thing was the Indian Army and that was it.

J.W. : So this had, I mean had things come in, this been had this been from boyhood?

Major M. : From boyhood, that's right, yes.

J.W. : So did you read books, what told you about it, I'm fascinated by what makes people want to do this, you know, what did you know about the country?

Major M. : Very little, really very little except odd friends who'd been out there in various walks of life and probably really things like the *Boys' Own* paper and stuff like that (laughs).

J.W. : And maybe with Dundee, as well, with the jute industry you might well have known ... ?

Major M. : Well to some to extent, that's right, but that's really confined to one particular area of India.

J.W. : Calcutta ... .

Major M. : Undivided India as it was then of course.

J.W. : Yes right, so right you said you went in, into Bangalore initially, when was that you actually went over?

Major M. : 1941, no I beg your pardon by the time we got there we left this country in 1941 and we that would be early 1942 we went to Bangalore.

J.W. : And that was training you had there then?

Major M. : Training that's right.

J.W. : You were an officer cadet presumably, right, and what sort of form ... ?

Major M. : No I'm sorry, no I'm wrong in was '41 I'm right the first time it was early 1941 we left here in, well we went down to Bangalore for employment in a contingent going out in the Indian Army in November 1940, early 1941 that's right, sorry.

J.W. : I was saying, the training, what sort of form did that take, what were you doing in that training because presumably you'd had basic training in the OTC?

Major M. : Oh yes, no, no, this was you know just field training, tactics, [?] service operating that ready or not [?] a certain amount of military history and language of course which was always very important.

J.W. : And how did you find that?

Major M. : Not too bad, not too bad, I was never really able to speak the language until such time as well later on I got stuck with a contingent or troops and found there was no-one there could speak English, so I had to learn to speak Urdu very smartly (laughter).

J.W. : Right and so you had your training in Bangalore, and so did you have an option at that stage as to where you went which regiment did you actually ... ?

Major M. : Oh yes you were given I think if I remember rightly, it was a hell of a long time ago, but if I remember rightly we were asked to put down three regiments in order of preference, just like that.

J.W. : And do you, which did you put down?

Major M. : I put down for the Dogras actually, as my first choice.

J.W. : And do you remember what the other two were?

Major M. : I think the Garhwalis were my second choice, going on the basis that everyone was going for the Gurkhas of course because they were the only ones they'd heard about, but I'd done a certain amount of history, reading of military history of the Indian Army. I can't remember what the third one was to be perfectly truthful, no.

J.W. : And what was it that made you choose the Dogras?

Major M. : Well I'd read about the Dogras and I'd read about the sort of people they are, you see they're hill people, they come from, going along the Himalayas you have Nepal of course where the Gurkhas and then you've got the Garhwalis and Kumaonis and Dogras going right along the foothills of the Himalayas and so they're hill men, and they're a very small regiment, a one class regiment that was one of the things that I liked about it, because so many like the Punjab Regiments they have a company of Sikhs, two companies of PM's and a company of Dogras very often, and I wanted a one class regiment, it was a small regiment but it was all one tribe.

J.W. : Right, and going back to your training do you remember any of the other people who were with you, what sort of people were they, similar to yourselves?

Major M. : Yea, nearly all similar where we are.

J.W. : So we're talking about the pink listed cadets are we at this stage?

Major M. : We're talking?

J.W. : It was something called the pink list.

Major M. : Oh I've never heard that before.

J.W. : Oh that's maybe something different I just wondered ... .

Major M. : I think that may be something afterwards because there were quite a lot.

J.W. : Yes, I think this, yea, you're right.

Major M. : You know going out to the Indian Army, and there were quite a lot came out after that but I've never heard the pink list before.

J.W. : That must have been a later thing, I've heard that from other people, but I think you're right I'll have to do some more reading on that. Right, and, well, let's move on you, when was it, remind me, that you actually went to the Dogras?

Major M. : By the time that I actually joined the Regiment it would be the middle of 1941.

J.W. : And where were they?

Major M. : I went to their Regimental Depot in Jhallander.

J.W. : Jhallander, right, okay.

Major M. : That's in the Punjab.

J.W. : Aha and can you tell me about that, what was it like starting out as a, a new officer, I know that's a very vague question.

Major M. : (Laughs) It is very vague in actual fact, yes.

J.W. : Anything you can remember.

Major M. : Well to start with being a very small regiment, and I think I'm right in saying I was the second wartime officer to be posted to the Regiment, to the Regimental Depot anyway. I was made very welcome, that was the first thing, they were absolutely first class, there was no hint that, 'I'm a regular officer and you're just an Emergency Commissioned Officer' they termed it ECO's.

J.W. : Yea cause I've heard that, you know, there was sometimes a tension.

Major M. : There was no hint of that at all, I was an officer I was embodied in the Regiment, I was expected to get to know more about the Regiment and it just took off from there, the first I'll never forget the first night in the mess, it shows you how little I really knew about the Indian Army. I was being dined in and of course a guest of the mess, and sitting on the CO's right, the Commandant's right, and after dinner well the latter part of dinner after dinner mainly was over and the coffee and the liqueurs and things were going round the table I said, 'God!', and the CO said, 'What's the matter?', I said (**Major M.** hits his ears), 'I hear bagpipes'. He said, 'Of course you do, you bloody fool, it's our Regimental band come to pay on the lawn', so that was that, and funnily enough they were playing funnily enough they were playing 'Up wi' the Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee' as they marched in. Hilarious, quite a traumatic thing, and I didn't even know they had a pipe band.

J.W. : I think you soon do realise when you see that so many of them do have pipe bands it's very extraordinary, isn't it?

Major M. : That's right.

J.W. : And so what did you do that, you know, and who were you in charge of initially as an officer.

Major M. : I was a Company officer and did what the Company commander told me and overseeing recruits training, because it was a regimental depot we were training recruits, and overseeing, and of course I, you're sent of various military courses and this sort of thing and [?] for it, and I was there until we near, just about a year.

J.W. : And what, did you, what sort of courses were you doing were you spent to speciality courses?

Major M. : I mean you had infantry training courses and this sort of thing, you know, and the one I really enjoyed most of I was sent on a riding course, absolutely marvellous.

J.W. : Right, and you were saying, how did you find the troops, the men, at this stage, because you were saying that you found the, well you didn't necessarily find the language incredibly difficult but you didn't really get to grips with it maybe until later, did you find that a big barrier at first?

Major M. : No, no, not really because you have, you had the VCO's , the Viceroy Commissioned Officers who presumably you already know about, and most of them spoke English to some degree or not. The *havildars*, the sergeants, a lot of them spoke English as well, so you know there was no real, the very fact that I had limited Urdu up to that time, as we all had at that stage, there was no real problem in the depot.

J.W. : Right, okay, so I mean chronologically can you take me on from that point, you said you were in the depot for about a year. What happened after that?

Major M. : After that I got a posting to the 1st Battalion. The Regiment had three regular battalions. Two of them were lost in Malaya, one of them in Malaya, one of them in Singapore. The 3rd Battalion which was on the beaches at [Kurra-barroo] when the Japs came in was more or less decimated. the Second Battalion at Singapore like most other regiments in Singapore they were put in the bag without really doing very much in the way of fighting. So that left only the First Battalion which was the Prince of Wales' Own, and they were at that time stationed outside Chittagong, and I was posted down to them. So I wasn't there very long when I was sent on a guerrilla course in [Sorgha] that was hard but enjoyable, and by the time I got back I can't even remember where we were at that time, [Cook's] Bazaar or somewhere like that, and then we went

on to Malaya and I had commanded the, each Brigade had a guerrilla squad and I was in charge of one of the guerrilla squads, which was recruited from my regiment, and I had the pick of the Regiment as far as soldiers were concerned, we had four NCO's and about thirty other ranks, you know thirty soldiers, *sipāhīs*.

J.W. : And were you given any indication as to where, I mean, what you were being trained for?

Major M. : Well to operate behind the Japanese lines.

J.W. : You sort of worked that out yourself?

Major M. : Yes, not on the long range penetration patrols like the Chindits or anything like that, we were just nipped through we were all thin on the ground at that time, this is Eastern Army, 14th Indian Division, if I remember rightly, and that was a complete shambles of course went down the Arakan, it was just a very ill thought out campaign altogether.

J.W. : So when did you get put in there to the active service you ... ?

Major M. : To the fighting?

J.W. : Yea.

Major M. : I can't remember dates exactly, but somewhere before Christmas 1942 ..

J.W. : That's as detailed as ... .

Major M. : Yea that's right, then we started I think we got in contact with the Japanese and we did not too badly to begin with we got right down to a place called Donbaik which is South of Maunggaw but my squad were decimated down there and I got a minor wound and was evacuated, on the hospital ship. the [*Wussui*] which the Japs bo ... , machine gunned from the air while we were sitting in Maunggaw harbour, however we got safely to Chittagong and I was then General Hospital Chittagong, and went up to convalescent camp, well it wasn't a camp, convalescent place in Komila. Eventually through a reinforcement camp went to rejoin, no, no, no, no, no, no, I was then put on a staff job with the FCMA in Poona, didn't like it at all I was eventually sent off to Shillong, I was AFCMA Assam area, a grandiosè title, didn't like that at all and I was able to wangle my return to my Battalion, who by this time the 2nd/1st Punjabs and ourselves, who'd been brigaded together in 14th Div came out and I think I'm right in saying that we were the only two Battalions extracted from that Division who then joined the 5th Indian Division which had come back from, which had come in to India from Abysinnia, I think I'm right in all this I could check up on that.

J.W. : Oh, I can check as well.

Major M. : You can? There's a book on the history of the operation called, *The Ball of Fire*, and the ball of fire was an actual, was the Divisional sign, a black background with a scarlet ball in the middle of it, and we joined the 15th Indian Division and then went back down the Arakan. I joined them from this staff job down in the Arakan, I'm damned if I can remember where, but very shortly after I'd joined, rejoined the Battalion we were then down in the Box shows, which you probably know all about already, and the 7th Indian Division were the main box, and we were the next door, the Fifth Indian division, you know the Battle of the Gnakyedauk and places like that.

J.W. : I've heard of these.

Major M. : After that we were flown up to Imphal and of course we were involved in the Battle of Imphal.

J.W. : And did the, just to sort of take you out of the chronology, was there a difference, we can talk and I'm sure you can say a great deal about the relation that officers had with the troops, the men that we ... .

Major M. : Oh very close.

J.W. : I mean did that intensify or did it change in any way?

Major M. : Yep you put a unit into battle and the relationship between the troops and the officers is always cemented put it that way.

J.W. : Yep, did you, so you felt a difference, I mean having been fairly close through that time as you were having the training and the guerrilla training and this sort of thing I mean presumably, what form did the relationship between the officers and the men take at that time, did you ... ?

Major M. : Well officers at that time in battle, well battle is the wrong word, in a war atmosphere lived very much with the troops and you eat the troops food and all this sort of thing, and then the Indian Army one of the great things about the Indian Army is that they look on their officers as being, as I said a saying in Urdu, as being a father and mother to them, you know, but equally they look after you, and look after you extremely well, they take great care of you I mean you go from one position to another and the first thing the batman, without saying anything he'd get a couple of bodies together and make sure that your slit trench or your [basha] if you're far enough back to have one, is prepared ready for you and that sort of thing, you know, so it's a very, very fine relationship in actual fact.

J.W. : Right, right, and in your time before the active service how had that sort of relationship been established, how, did you mix with the troops as an officer very much, or were you?

Major M. : On service do you mean?

J.W. : No, before that.

Major M. : In the depot?

J.W. : Yea in the depot and these sort of places.

Major M. : Ooh yes, yes you did, very much so because you as a young officer you had no choice you had to participate in the games and play with them, you know, and that sort of thing, I mean as far as, I always reckoned that I was pretty good at sport or at least I thought I was, and but when it comes to playing hockey I mean their standard of hockey was something I couldn't even approach, you know, but I still played with them and volleyball and all this sort of thing you joined in with the games, yea.

J.W. : And that was important?

Major M. : That's right very important, cause the thing is the Indian soldier has got instilled discipline in him, you know, he's very, very easy to cope with as a soldier, you don't have the problem, and then of course it was a completely volunteer army for a start, so you didn't have some of the disciplinary problems that British officers or at least officers in British units frequently encountered.

J.W. : And so if we jump back to the sort of chronology bit, I think we were at Imphal, what happened progressively after that?

Major M. : Ah you mean to me, well towards the end of, no at the end of the Battle of Imphal when we started a break out I was wounded again and I got my hearing damaged as well and after being hospitalised and being on sick leave and that sort of thing I went to join an organisation known as the 17/18 Jungle Training Unit, which was teaching jungle warfare. 17/18 was 17 Dogra, 18 Garhwalis they joined, jungle training, and I went there as senior jungle training instructor, oh, with a fair amount of experience of jungle warfare by that stage.

J.W. : Obviously, yea, where was that based?

Major M. : That was in a place called Badshahibagh which is outside Saharnpur which is eighteen miles from Dehra Dun.

J.W. : And how long were you there for?

Major M. : Until the end of the War, which was almost a matter of months really, and then I came home on leave because I'd been overseas for five years by that stage, and they set up a leave system when the War finished, and that coincided more or less with the closing down of the jungle training unit. I applied under this new scheme for home leave and got it, and I came home on what was ostensibly a month but it was increased to two months while I was there, and that was that, went back to the Regimental Depot, because by this time they had no unit as such, and I was sent up to a place called Wah which is outside Rawalpindi to join what had been a reconstituted Sixth battalion because the Regiment had expanded beyond, you know, and I can't remember why I went there because I eventually finished up as Second in Command of the Battalion, and that Sixth Battalion was then reconstituted as the Second Battalion.

J.W. : Right, right so by now we've reached the end of the War.

Major M. : The War's over that's right.

J.W. : So what sort of things were you doing then I mean obviously you're ... .

Major M. : (Coughs) Well, quite a lot of administration work but going back again going back one of the fortes of the Indian Army, doing frontier warfare what they thought they'd be up to and again the territory around that area is suited to that sort of thing.

J.W. : Yes, yea, so you went [over it , naturally]?

Major M. : Yes yes, and retraining troops and that sort of thing, doing a lot of range course stuff and that sort of thing.

J.W. : So where were you based on the Frontier?

Major M. : Well no, we did, never actually we never went to the Frontier, we were at Wah.

J.W. : You were just training for the Frontier in Wah.

Major M. : That's right in Wah.

J.W. : Oh I see, right.

Major M. : Up until the time that I left them to come back on repatriation, because there was no way that I could stay in the Army with this lot (his injuries).

J.W. :. Yea, and when was that that you ... ?

Major M. : Came back?

J.W. : Yea.

Major M. : Oh the autumn, I can't put it any closer than this, the autumn of 1946.

J.W. : Right, and here's another general question I'm afraid, but how was that leaving the Indian, I mean you'd spent all these years in the Indian Army, what were your feelings when you came to leave?

Major M. : Oh I mean great sadness, great regret, I mean your dining out of the Regiment and farewell given to you by the troops and the VCOs and you know, all the, is all very traumatic, it's all very sad, cause I mean by that time you'd built up a tremendous bond between your soldiers and yourself.

J.W. : Yea, yea, I mean I can imagine as much as I can, not having been through it.

Major M. : Yes, yes when you've been through, when you've been through, you know, a fairly sticky war together there is a very, very close bond.

J.W. : Of course there is.

Major M. : Very close.

J.W. : So you, you're saying with repatriation you came back, and what did you do at that point?

Major M. : Wondered what the hell I was going to do with myself (laughs) but I was quite determined to go back overseas again, and so I joined up with the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, and I was with them for thirty years.

J.W. : Right, so, cause you went back to Pakistan didn't you?

Major M. : I went straight back to India in April 1947, having been home for just somewhere around about six months, something like that, and I was sent to Karachi, and of course I was there during Partition, that was the worse thing in the world (laughs).

J.W. : Yes, yes, well continue on with that because I'm fascinated to hear about that as well.

Major M. : Well Karachi was not bad in actual fact, life got very, very difficult because a very large percentage of our staff were Hindus, and we had to get them out of course back to India, we were starting in August, it was August wasn't it, 1947, Partition, and by the same token of course Muslims started coming over across the border there was actually no problem in Karachi until January I think it was '48, '48 yea, when they sent a consignment of Sikhs down to Karachi prior to shipping them back to India. It was a bad strategical error because instead of keeping them in a *gurdwara*, a Sikh temple, somewhere well out, they put them in a *gurdwara* in the city, or at least just on the outskirts of the city, and of course by the time morning came along they had been decimated, though that set the ball rolling in Karachi and then there was a whole week when everything was shut down. As a matter of fact we had turned our office into more or less a refugee camp, and we, because the Europeans in the bank there were about five of us at that time, we went out and brought, because the thing broke out at four o'clock in the afternoon. Well we brought the families into the office and kept them in the office as far as we could, because we could wander round the streets, nobody bothered about us, there was a bit off killing each other off, but with a white face you could go anywhere, and so we did that and we had them sleeping on the desks, and cooking in the middle of the office - you can hardly think of this in a bank can you? - for about a week until we were able, because *Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Company* who, you know, were in the sea, the shipping business were able to get all our staff on some of their ships back to Bombay.

J.W. : Right, did you go back to Bombay yourself?

Major M. : No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, we just had to see them on the ship and then that was it.

J.W. : I see right, and how was that, I mean you, I've heard from a lot of other Indian Army officers who weren't in a Regiment that just had the one class as you say, and then how upsetting for them to see everybody go their separate ways at Partition. I mean but was there any sort of sense of that for you even, you know having served in a Regiment albeit just with one class, but was it an upsetting thing - I mean obviously it's upsetting to see you know bloodshed and all these sort of things, but was it a very sad time to see this?

Major M. : Ach I saw all this tremendous waste, you know, all these people killing themselves for what? Just emotions, and you know, set on fire and this sort of thing, and all so terribly stupid. The whole thing was done in such a tremendous hurry, things weren't properly organised at all.

J.W. :.I mean was there a sense of, did you feel a sort of sense of anger or anything like that at the way things were going towards ... ?

Major M. : I can't honestly remember I think I must have been, but you know there was so much to do.

J.W. : Yea, that you didn't have time to think.

Major M. : That you didn't really have a great deal of time to feel very much, you were so busy trying to get your own staff out, and wonder what the repercussions of that were going to be, pretty devastating, we were, I don't, a staff of somewhere around ninety-eight or something we were left with five, apart from the cash department who were all Parsis who again weren't bothered.

J.W. : So how did the bank pick itself up, or did it?

Major M. : Sheer hard work, we worked from morning til night, when I say 'night' I'm talking about eleven o'clock midnight every night, once we'd opened after that one week where everything was closed. We worked through from about eight o'clock in the morning until about eleven o'clock at night every night for months and months until we trained up staff, I mean you worked up until Sat ... I, the session used to start off at eight o'clock on Saturday morning there was no day, the bank was open Saturday mornings anyway, but you worked right through until about nine o'clock at night when your bearer came down with your dinner jacket and you went to the club and got drunk. And then Sunday you spent, you went back to the office on Sunday, not quite so early, and you spent the day going through all the correspondence that had come in during the week, cause you'd no time to answer any letters or anything like that, and you sat down on Sunday and you did all that, I mean that went on for a long time.

J.W. : Right, and I mean ... .

Major M. : The doctor came in every Monday morning and gave us our dose of *Benzadrine* for the rest of the week (laughs).

J.W. : And what about, what was I going to say, the, the new staff that came in, were they coming in from local people or were they *mohajirs* who were coming in from India or ... ?

Major M. : Coming in from India mainly, mainly coming in from India yea, there may have been one or two locals I don't know but mainly people coming in from India, but it was you see traditionally, there were exceptions, so this is just a generalisation, but the Hindus made up your clerical staff in most organisations, the Muslim was more the *zamīndār* who looked after, the farmer the peasant, who looked after the ground you

know, and raised the crops and that sort of, that's a generalisation but it was near enough, so we had to train such Muslims that felt in the mood to come in and teach them something about, you know, that side nearest the window is the outgoing and this side is the incoming (laughs).

J.W. : Right, well, I'm afraid it's another general question, but what was it like starting out there, because a new country and this sort of thing, how was it in the early years there of Pakistan, working there?

Major M. : Och, I think it was pretty chaotic for most of the way, but in those days I mean as far as the necessities of life were concerned, our necessities of life, you still had all your merchant firms, British merchant firms, you know *Raleigh Brothers*, *Williams and Jacks* and *Mackinnon and Mackenzie* and companies like that. We also had Parsi firms and one of the famous ones in Karachi was *Khattrak and Company*, and so we had our necessities, they were still importing whisky and gin (laughs) no but generally speaking that's right, so we didn't go short of very much, certain things you couldn't get but not, you know, vital.

J.W. : And was there any sort of change in, in peoples', people there, peoples' perceptions of you as a European and of the general sort of relation between.

Major M. : Not noticeably.

J.W. : No, it almost felt the same as it ... .

Major M. : Yep, there was no major change, there was an evolution over the years, but I, you know, I didn't notice anything in particular, I don't think any of us at that time noticed any particular change of attitude towards us.

J.W. : Right, and now this is something that we can go back through the whole time that you were in India and later Pakistan, but certainly in Pakistan at that time was there an expatriate community of Scots at all, cause I've heard of a few Scots who were ... .

Major M. : Well, we always had our St. Andrew's Society everywhere.

J.W. : In Karachi?

Major M. : We always did that. I doubt if we had it, I can't remember, 'I doubt if we had it in , in '47 we may have had before trouble broke out, '48 I should think we got it started again funnily I can't remember, we had it every year, there might have been lapses, but we had it every year the St. Andrew's Night [?].

J.W. : And was that quite important to have that, to keep these sort of ... ?

Major M. : Well I don't know if it was very important, but everybody looked forward to getting an invitation to it (laughs) particularly the English and you know people like that, and of course from then on we started inviting Pakistanis, which you would never have in the normal way have done before.

J.W. : Which is quite a ... .

Major M. : Yea, well, it was just the same as the clubs had to start allowing, you know, even the Sind Club which was very much your *barā sāhabs* club had to allow in top brass Indian officers, when I say Indian officers I mean Pakistani officers by that time.

J.W. : Yep, yep I understand what you're saying. Right and how about when you'd been in the Indian army were there other Scots in with you at that time in the Regiment or at any time?

Major M. : Oh yes, yes, quite a few, not a great many in actual, but there were a few yes that's right, but nobody paid very much attention to whether you were Scots, English or anything else.

J.W. : It didn't really matter.

Major M. : I was particularly friendly with a chap called John Haig and another one called John Llewellyn and John Llewellyn as his name would, was I think half Welsh and half English and Jock Haig of course was Scots but it didn't make any difference.

J.W. : cause you see you have some people who say it does but you hear one of, you hear half a dozen of people saying one thing and half a dozen saying the other. right and so again on the chronological thing how long were you in the bank in total.

Major M. : In Karachi?

Major M. : I left Karachi in '51, and then went elsewhere and I came back for a couple of years in '58, that's '57 maybe and then went to Lyallpur which is now known as Faisalabad, where I was for a year, and then went down to Lahore.

J.W. : Was life very different in those sort of places to Karachi, I mean Karachi being a big ... ?

Major M. : Ah well Karachi was always fairly easy to live in, I mean you had no big problems in Karachi. Faisalabad was, by that time I was married and a couple of children, and that wasn't too easy because the place was I think there was only one, as far as I can recall, only one other British couple there, which is a bit difficult, you know,

for a wife, cause the climate there is pretty ghastly and bloody hot in the hot weather, but we went into Lahore fairly frequently where there was more of a, you know, British social life so to speak, that was eighteen miles away approximately so wasn't too bad from that point of view but it wasn't easy for a family, you know, there were no schools, my elder son was by that time just getting to the age where he should be getting some schooling so we tried to do it my wife was doing it on a correspondence course business for the initial learning but had to, eventually decided had to go back and put him into school, nothing else for it.

J.W. : Came back here to Scotland?

Major M. : Came back to this country that's right.

J.W. : They came back or she ... ?

Major M. : She had to bring the children back to this country.

J.W. : And they stayed on?

Major M. : And they stayed on for another year and a bit.

J.W. : Right so she stayed over here in Scotland ... .

Major M. : And she stayed in Scotland until that time, that's right.

J.W. : So, so then, when was it that you finally left, then, that you finally left Pakistan?

Major M. : '58 I think, maybe '59 I can't be a hundred per cent sure about that it was rather a long time ago.

J.W. : No I mean, that's, give or take a year.

Major M. : But I was back again, of course, in Pakistan from '73 to '76.

J.W. : What was that doing?

Major M. : Banking.

J.W. : Same thing, right, okay.

Major M. : Yes, expect I was the boss man in Pakistan by that time.

J.W. : Right, right, oh goodness, so you, what happened in that intervening period you came ... ?

Major M. : Oh all over the place, let me see in geographical order.

J.W. : You left in '59 from Pakistan.

Major M. : Iran, Malaya, Thailand.

J.W. : With the same bank?

Major M. : Singapore, Borneo, Brunei that is, a very short time in Hong Kong, Philippines, I've probably missed something out in between but.

J.W. : Yea well, with that sort of list, so was that still with the *Bank of India* ..?

Major M. : Oh yes, right throughout.

J.W. : And were they, cause I've spoken to a lady whose husband was with the bank, and it ... .

Major M. : Oh it changed names.

J.W. : Was it *Grindlays* by then or?

Major M. : No, no, no, no, no, no, no, the *Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China* became eventually the *Charter Bank* and eventually amalgamated with *Standard Bank of South Africa* and became the *Standard Charter Bank*, which it still is today.

J.W. : Oh I see right, and so you, so then were on your own at that time, were you, had your wife come to join you by that stage?

Major M. : No, I've had a chequered marital career, no I think Faisalabad was too much for my wife in actual fact, she got on a ship to bring the children home as I say, met somebody else and I never saw her again, well for a long time I didn't see her, first time I saw her again after that was when my elder son got married.

J.W. : Right, right, so you came back to Pakistan in the '70s and was that back down to Karachi again?

Major M. : Well Karachi was headquarters, yes, that's right, being the main commercial centre of Pakistan but I had travelled all over the country, so I did quite a lot

of travelling to Islamabad, and Lahore, Lyallpur or Faisalabad as it became, up to Peshawar, you know travelling pretty, quite a lot.

J.W. : Right, and then, so that was seventy .. .

Major M. : I was there from '73 to '76, and then '76 that was it.

Major M. : Retirement.

J.W. : Retirement, goodness, after all those years, and had, oh can I fire another general question, was that with regret that you retired or had you, had you had, had it worn you out the whole?

Major M. : I mean well we always knew, fifty, the age of fifty-five was our retirement age, in actual fact I was over retirement age, but that was the exigencies of the service and you always knew and I mean there was never any doubts in my mind as to where I was coming, I was coming home and that was it full stop.

J.W. : And this is, I can't think of too many other things, but how is, I mean how is all that time, that's decades you were really in Pakistan and in India, as it was, how is that in the perspective of your whole life, as it were, was it very, has it been a very important time to you?

Major M. : Oh of course, yes, very much so, yes, I mean India, I'm talking about undivided India, the whole continent, subcontinent, is a place that gets to you, you've got India in your blood, you never get rid of it, I mean I look back on my days in India with a great deal of affection. I met some tremendously good friends in that part of the world, not many of them are alive now unfortunately, and it's just been part of my life, one which I highly value.

J.W. : And presumably the links, you know, regimental associations and this sort of thing are still ... ?

Major M. : Oh yes, Indian Army, my Regimental Association I don't think is doing very much these days lost touch with it through all my travels in the East, with the Regimental Association, but the Indian Army Association is still going very strong, I'm glad to say, thanks to Roy Rutherford, who you've no doubt equally quizzed about this.

J.W. : Yes, oh yes, I've spoken to Roy at great length. Right, let me think, hastily scribed through all these, I think we've covered most of the things, I can't think of anything else, I mean have you got anything else that suddenly springs to mind?

Major M. : I think that one of the funniest things that every happened in my life happened at that time when I was in Lahore, sorry, when I was in Wah, this was when I was still in the Army, when I was in Wah I went sick, I got course I had malaria and it carried on throughout the whole of my life, infected in the early days of the Arakan, and I got malaria and I got jaundice at the same time which made me a rather sick soldier, and I went into hospital in 'Pindi and was sent on leave, and it being cold weather, February I think it was, I went to Lahore, well you couldn't go up to the hills because they, you know, were covered in snow at that time so I went to Lahore to, for, to recuperate and, I will wrap here now, I don't know how much you know about it, but India loves the pipes which I mentioned before, and bagpipes. Now this was February 1946, and the pipe bands in Indian don't operate on names of any tunes, you knew this did you?

J.W. : Vaguely, but ... .

Major M. : Yea, well you, they had a book and if you wanted your Regimental pipe band to play *Up Wi' the Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee* you looked up in this book and it said number forty-seven or whatever the number was, and you said, 'Play number forty-seven' to the pipe-major, and he'd play *Up Wi' the Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee*, only he knew it as a number, not a name. Bearing that in mind, during this convalescent leave there were two other chaps also convalescing at the time with me, walking down the Mall in Lahore - have you been to the Mall?

J.W. : Uh hum, oh yes, yea.

Major M. : And the orders were, if you were in uniform, and any of the processions or anything came down, then you just made yourself inconspicuous in a shop doorway and let them go by. This whacking great student procession comes down, because you know Lahore is a big university town, and there were hundreds of them, probably thousands, and all the banners, 'Quit India', 'Get Out Britain', 'India for Indians', you know, everything, every slogan you can possibly think of, and of course they had a pipe band. They just got level, more or less level with where we were tucked into this shop doorway, and I burst into peals of laughter, and these two English chaps with me said, 'Well what's so funny about this?', and I said, 'Well you wouldn't know it but the name of the tune they're playing is 'Will you no come back again?' ' (laughter). I was repeating this, the next time, when I was in Lahore as a civilian was, as I say, you know, later on. I was repeating this in the Gymkhana Club one Sunday morning, and in the party was the Lord Chief Justice of the Punjab, who was a Scot by the name of John Orchison, Sir John Orchison, who was later to become, and he said, 'I can confirm this because I was in chambers which was absolutely opposite, exactly opposite where, you know where the Law Chambers are? And John was in Chambers when this happened, and he remembered, being a Scot he recognised it as well.

J.W. : Oh of course (laughs) one of those little ironies of history. Well one other thing that jumps completely out, I've just thought that, going back to the bank, as you went sort of progressively through, presumably, there was more I can't think of a term, but more Pakistanis were coming in and taking over the bank, were they, in terms of ... ?

Major M. : Oh yes, yea, you mean in the senior ranks of the bank, oh yes very much so, yea very much so, oh yea, yea well by the time I finished up I had a British manager in Karachi, but my personal assistant was a Pakistani, manager in Lahore was a Pakistani and the manager in Lyallpur was a Pakistani. All the managers were Pakistani, except I had a branch in Karachi, they were all by that time Pakistanis except for the Karachi manager, and he [?] and became a Pakistani as well, but my number two who ranked above the Karachi manger he was a Pakistani, a very bright boy.

J.W. : [?] and did you notice I mean going progressively back, presumably, the character of the country changed a fair bit and ... ?

Major M. : It changed a lot, you know it's changed a lot in the cities, which became very sort of political, as cities of course generally do, but your chap out in the country, your *zamīndār*, and that sort of thing, they didn't change, they were very much the same, they were a bit disillusioned with home rule, and when I was in Lahore I did a lot of riding in Lyallpur, I did a lot of riding in the country and very often I'd, you know, stop at a little village and the local *lumbadar*, the village headman, would sort of invite you to sit down and have a glass of *lassī*, did you have *lassī* when you were out there?

J.W. : Oh yes, yea I've had *lassī* many times.

Major M. : It was very good, it was very refreshing and of course on a hot day if you'd been if you'd been, had a couple of hours riding across the desert you get around Lahore and Lyallpur it did very well, I'd sit and natter with them, and because I was Punjabi troops I had a certain amount of Punjabi as well, you know they, you start talking about, and they get to know you, so they say, 'Why don't you British come back again?', 'Well you threw us out, why do you want us back again?', and the tale, nearly always the same tale in a different context, but 'I've got a dispute with my next door neighbour over a certain piece of land as to where our boundary runs and this sort of thing, and the local DC *sāhab* comes around, and nowadays if my neighbour can pay more than I can he wins, whereas when the British DC *sāhab* was here he met both sides and he just made a decision, and that's it', and of course the business of bribery and corruption just grew and grew, there's no doubt about that, it's happening all over the countries we vacated, did the same in Malaya.

J.W. : Yea, right, let me think I haven't got anything else on here, so I think if we've covered everything, thank you very much.

Major M. : Not at all, Jeremy, very pleased.

J.W. : I'll switch this off.

Tape is switched off.

Mr George Morrice MM
Gordon Highlanders
Recorded on Wednesday 11th June 1997
SA1997.93

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, and **Mr. M** represents Mr. George Morrice

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston it's Wednesday the 11th of June and I'm recording Mr. George Morrice at his home at Nigg in Aberdeen. Okay Mr. Morrice, if you could tell me where and when you were born please?

Mr. M. : I was born in January 1911 at Longside near Peterhead.

J.W. : Oh right, I see, and how about your family, what did your mother and father do?

Mr. M. : Well they worked in the land.

J.W. : Oh right.

Mr. M. : And later on they'd a croft, a small farm.

J.W. : Oh I see, right, and did you have any brothers and sisters?

Mr. M. : Yes I had two brothers and three sisters.

J.W. : Right, okay, and where were you, were they older than you or younger than you?

Mr. M. : I was the second brother.

J.W. : And so did you go to school up in Peterhead or was that ... ?

Mr. M. : Country schools and Aberdeen for a year.

J.W. : So how old were you when you left school then?

J.W. : I was fourteen years old.

J.W. : Fourteen years, so what happened then, what did you do when you left school?

Mr. M. : Well there was nothing for us but to work on the land.

J.W. : Right.

Mr. M. : And after four years I joined the army, the Gordon Highlanders, up in Aberdeen.

J.W. : What was it that made you join the army, why did you join?

Mr. M. : Well a lot of my friends joined and we might have had a drink or so (**J.W.** laughs) accused of that anyhow, and the next thing we knew of course was the recruiting sergeant says, 'You're in the army now', but that was where most of the recruits come from, country chaps, conditions were hard, not so hard as the army (**J.W.** laughs) we found out.

J.W. : So most of your friends, then, in the army were from a similar sort of background?

Mr. M. : Quite a lot.

J.W. : Aha, aye, right okay. So can you tell me a little bit about what it was like when you were first a recruit, what happened when you first joined, your training?

Mr. M. : Well we trained very hard and did drill all sorts of things a recruit does, you see, and as I said (in a previous conversation) I trained recruits myself years later.

J.W. : Right.

Mr. M. : I don't think we treated them so hard as we were, we had a, but it was all for our own good, and we had a very kind R-S-M [Regimental Sergeant-Major] called Jimmie Dunbar, he was just a sort of finishing as we were joining and he certainly chased us round.

J.W. : Right.

Mr. M. : But chased us round and square but we got a good training, I would say, for six months, and then we joined the home battalion in Ireland, [Ballykinler] and volunteered for India after a year. I trained as a signaller and of course I volunteered, as I said already, because all my friends were going, had already left, I was younger sort of a year younger than they so we left in September 1931, and sailed from Southampton to Karachi, and then we had a long train journey ahead of us to a place called Landi Kotal, it is now thé, it was North West, North West Frontier Province then, it was under Indian rule , and it was a monotonous train journey, we, I suppose we could have gone quicker but it was not important, and their were six of us in a carriage, three in the top, and you stopped and got meals which were of course laid on for you and arrived in Peshawar three days later. Now there was only one train a day to Landi Kotal which was a run forward through the Khyber Pass and sometimes didn't make the journey, it had to turn

back occasionally, there were two engines, but, however, we made it all right, and there was no station just a lot of rocks and everything.

J.W. : Right.

Mr. M. : And the railway stopped there, and it's interesting to note when I was listening to Mark Tully he done the same journey, and the train, the railway was pulled up for a few miles back because the Russians were attacking Afghanistan, so there was an easy passage, should, the railroad would have been easy to fix up but they never got as far as that. So it was, Landi Kotal was a hilly sort of place and it was an excellent place for training, we did quite a lot of hard training and after about a year there we moved to Peshawar about thirty miles away and we were there for about two years, at that time the battalions did their twenty-one years on, in a station abroad, you see, and at the end of the War the Gordons, the 1st Gordons, they were due, they were away to India so they'd been there for a few years before we went out, in different stations but they'd come from Delhi up to Landi Kotal, I don't know for what reason, it might have been punishment, I don't know if the battalions hadn't been working according to the rules and regulations. I never heard the right reason. It was a very fit battalion over a thousand men and in our part of the Frontier there was three Indian, or two Indian battalions, a battalion of Gurkhas, and then the Gordons, and at most of these stations the brigade consisted of four battalions, it doesn't do so now, I don't know what they do now, but it was in my time down to three battalions, so at night, you see, you had, very offit, they had what you call a perimeter guard, and they had trenches and barbed wire, that was to keep away the unruly Indians though they never tried very much with us and the natives didn't stay, they stayed just outside the perimeter. They had villages like I showed you in the photographs and of course you'll maybe not believe this, but it is a really gospel, they paid the Indians to keep to keep quiet.

J.W. : Oh yes, I've heard that.

Mr. M. : You've heard of that?

J.W. : I've heard of that, yes.

Mr. M. : Well I think it was quite true, I've heard it from other sources. somebody explained to me that the reason for payment was that it was cheaper to pay a hundred rupees a month, a lot of money for the Indian families you see, than have fighting all the time.

J.W. : Of course, yes.

Mr. M. : And maybe the principle was wrong, but ... .

J.W. : It worked.

Mr. M. : It worked, it certainly worked. Once a month they had to gather, some sort of feast it was, and they painted the donkeys different colours and then it finished off maybe with a shooting match but the money was withheld during that period but it was all right, and Peshawar the time passed very, very quickly and as I said about every fourth night you was on duty or somewhere during the night and of course the hills was there as well, I don't think, I may have a photograph of that but I've taken, I think someone bought a photograph anyhow. Landi Khana was a place, just the Khyber Pass went right through there, that was always an Indian garrison. So the Khyber Pass was a very interesting piece of engineering. It was some of the general's plan, I can't remember the name now, but they built a pass, it was, they wouldn't have gone into Asia Minor I wouldn't think, but it was certainly right up through the, as far as the border of India, and there was an old road just adjoining the Khyber Pass, and it was a case of when you was coming down the Khyber Pass as we sometimes did you had, there were so many [caravans] on it you see.

J.W. : Oh yes, I've seen it.

Mr. M. : You could be shaking hands with another company but some of the caravans that were coming form Asia Minor or whatever it was, camels would have been pulling them you see. Well they preferred to go often by the soft road than by the tarred road, often by that, whether it was easier on their feet or whatever it was you see. Now we had a sort of blockhouses just outside the wire you see, but they were manned for maybe a month, some possibly maybe a platoon or something or who, rank, an N-C-O corporal or sergeant just normally, just a sort of watching with binoculars, they'd got a good view of the countryside but they were well up, usually you could see anything that was coming. So there was a rumour, I don't know, I wouldn't have vouched for this, but they went up with a ladder and in at night they took the ladder folded up you see, and closed all the doors, and his night they hadn't done so, or so they said, or they hadn't pulled up the ladder and they found next day they were all their throats cut. I wouldn't have vouched for that being correct, it didn't happen to us. I was never in it at all, I was signaller, I was going out on scheme, and once we walked thirty-six miles back to Peshawar, that's maybe later, it was during the time we were on the Frontier, and the old colonel who was about fifty-eight, his horse was walking behind and he walked all the way, he was fifty-eight which is quite good.

J.W. : That's quite something in that sort of conditions.

Mr. M. : And the other officers, the more junior officers with a horse, they had to walk as well (**J.W.** laughs) and they didn't like it.

J.W. : I wouldn't have thought so, no.

Mr. M. : So our time, we had a place, a *chak* which was more or less, a hill station it was well up on the hill, it wasn't an official station like Murree hills.

J.W. : Yes, I remember.

Mr. M. : But it was a, we went up there and miscalculated the distance and we had to walk right up the hill and of course everyone was falling out, and I was pretty hardy and the officer, he finished up a general, K.C. Davidson, he says, we walked to top of the hill you see, we sort of rested and right down there was mules and everything lying out (**J.W.** laughs), dogs, people had dogs, they miscalculated, I think, the distance, and he says, 'That's just like the bloody retreat from Moscow', and I don't know who did a retreat from Moscow.

J.W. : It was Napoleon I suppose.

Mr. M. : Napoleon I suppose it could have been, but he hadn't seen it anyway, he'd heard about it, so when we were up there we were told to stand by because there was trouble in India going up Peshawar way, and what it was, the trouble was there was an English doctor, he'd been posted to India, posted to the Frontier, and I saw this much later on, on T.V., and this Anglo-Indian nurse, she said, the doctor says to her can you sort of play golf nurse, and he said, well I'll take you tomorrow and learn you and he was murdered that night.

J.W. : Oh right.

Mr. M. : Now he's a very popular doctor and he hadn't, and things like that, the tribe the murderer belonged to they sort of watched them, because they would have fallen out and it would have been right over the Frontier one side against the other, but it never came to anything at all, we were all called down to Peshawar.

J.W. : Do you remember who the doctor was, what his name was?

Mr. M. : Was it Gower or something?

J.W. : I'm not sure myself, but I, it (the case) sounds familiar to me.

Mr. M. : I cannae mind whether it was Gower or no, but she was given a talk, she wasn't a nurse then, she was a matron, but she was Anglo-Indian but a supporter of the British so that, so we did a lot of training in India, manoeuvres, and then when the time came after about two years in Peshawar we had to, we were going to [Hanifa] on our way home you see, we were, twenty-one years had been done and of course with it such a long distance we did the journey in less time than we did coming up but I was very

sorry to leave India, I liked it fine you see, we got on with the Indians and they respected us.

J.W. : To take you back, because there's a lot of things I've thought of as you've just been talking. You were saying first, well let's go back to Jimmie Dunbar, we were talking before, just now, about how he was out in India. Did he ever used to talk to you at all, any of the recruits, about his time in India?

Mr. M. : No, no.

J.W. : Not at all?

Mr. M. : He wouldn't have been, off duty he would ask where you came from and anything and, but he wouldn't have gone into anything personal with his life.

J.W. : Right aha.

Mr. M. : But he was out in India a wee while and the R-S-M of the depot, it was a plum job and he worked hard for that.

J.W. : And then you were saying how you volunteered to go out to India and a lot of your mates had done that as well. Now what was it, and you obviously wanted to go because they were going, but what was it, say, that made them want to go to India?

Mr. M. : To see the world.

J.W. : To see the world.

Mr. M. : That would have been enough. I didnae need to go, you see, cause I had passed out pretty well in the signals examinations and signal sergeant and a signal officer, but we were given a [chocking off] but they were always accepting volunteers, you see.

J.W. : And did you have those sort of ideas as well, that it was a good chance to see the world, to go?

Mr. M. : Yes, aye.

J.W. : Okay.

Mr. M. : And I must say in India if it'd been possible, but it wasn't, I would have had a transfer to, which I had difficulty of doing, might have been a Welsh regiment, see, you never can tell.

J.W. : And what about when you were here before you went, before you volunteered, did you know very much about India at all, had you ever heard anything ... ?

Mr. M. : Yes I had an uncle who was out in India, he was in Peshawar.

J.W. : Oh right, what did he do?

Mr. M. : He was a Gordon as well.

J.W. : Oh right.

Mr. M. : But he worked at staff at, as something to do with staff officers, aye, he was a sergeant.

J.W. : So that was part of a reason for going as well?

Mr. M. : That it was he used to talk about it as well. Strange to say he joined the Prison service and I followed him in the Prison service as well.

J.W. : So sort of a family tradition. Oh we've answered all those questions already. So when you were there you did all your sort of military training and all your manoeuvres and all that sort of thing. Even when you first arrived, or before you went, did they give you any training about what it would be like, the sort of culture, the people, anything like that at all?

Mr. M. : No not very much at all, with that you just, they got [?] themselves just when we first arrived in Landi Kotal there's a hill and we were sort of having a walk around the second day where, there was about eighty of us altogether, and somebody said, 'Take a look at that chap he got up the top of that hill', and the sergeant he says, 'He bloody well walked and that's where you're going'. It was tough walking, you see, but you had to be acclimatised to the area.

J.W. : And, well, you've described the journey over there, but do you remember what it was like on the ships going over from Southampton to Karachi, do you remember what that was like?

Mr. M. : Well it was monotonous, but all sea journeys are.

J.W. : Do you remember how long that took roughly?

Mr. M. : Twenty-one days, we stopped at Malta and Port Said, it was twenty-one days, round about that time.

J.W. : Right, you were saying, I wonder if there's anything more you remember of the sort of routine while you were there, say while you were at Landi Kotal first, you were saying that you did manoeuvres and sometimes you were on guard or piquet. what other things did you do, was there a set routine most days that you used to do?

Mr. M. : Well we had a drill parade, we had drill parade you see, we got, our old colonel started out there until he was nearly sixty I suppose, quite an old man, he was a fine man.

J.W. : Is that the same colonel who walked off his horse?

Mr. M. : Aye, that was just before he went home you see. I was, a very good story about a, we had an old Q.M., that's a Quarter-master officer you see, Menzies, we called him Wullie Menzies, and he must have been a long time in the army but a real Scotsman he was, well he wouldn't [?] and when you left one place there was usually an officer and a quarter-master went down to take over any barracks, any things they had been done themselves and this King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry they had made a pitch, they were five years there you see, and it was very fine and guarded and it was, they wanted some money for their work so the major, admin, and a Q.M. they asked for, was it, five thousand rupees, an honest amount anyway, and the Q.M. said, 'Na, na a thousand rupees'. Oh they were all against him, so he says, 'If you no like that wrap it up and take it wi' you' (laughs), that's [Howell] Saunders, he was allied to Gordons, sort of hands when I was a signaller then, a long time, he says, 'Loon', that's an old Scottish word, loon, 'How ya doing loon?', that's, he retired form Peshawar but he was very much thought of by the Indians, he was garlanded and everything when he went away from the station, so people got on all right with the Indians in my part, but it was of course Gandhi and them common business, they were sort of trouble makers but of course you, otherwise, of course you have to maybe look at it they were freedom fighters.

J.W. : Yes, I guess, but how about when you were in Peshawar, well two things. Firstly, what did you, let's start with that, what did you do there when you were based in Peshawar?

Mr. M. : Well not a lot, we had drill and manoeuvres, route marches and things like that you see.

J.W. : Were you used to, sort of, in a civil capacity while you were in Peshawar?

Mr. M. : There was never anything, that was our function but we were never was to go out the fort anyway.

J.W. : Cause at that time am I right in thinking the Redshirts were around at that time in Peshawar?

Mr. M. : It was after we left, '30s that they came.

J.W. : After you left they came. That was further on in the, right okay, aha, and how about were there any, you obviously had your, the rest of your comrades, the Gordon Highlanders with you, were there any, either when you were in Landi Kotal or in Peshawar, any sort of servants or camp followers, and Indians that used to ... ?

Mr. M. : Oh there was a lot of them.

J.W. : Right, and what sort of people were they, what sort of jobs and that sort of thing.

Mr. M. : They would have stolen anything they got their hands on (laughs) but the, there were, never trouble at all and we always treated them with respect.

J.W. : And did they, they weren't always the same people were they? Did you get different people at different places you went to?

Mr. M. : There was people came along in the trains and in the ... what do you call, char valas and they used to come in the morning before reveille and say, 'Charvalas', shout it out you see, yes they know all right, and there was Indian, educated Indian, Wazir Ali, he had an English wife back in India, well one of his wives likely, and he had a lot of power with them, and he and he took them, any misdemeanour they did he took them and made them work in his plantations for a while. They didn't think there was anything wrong with that, they agreed wi' him, but we thought it was real hard net for the chap but he had plenty of money, he probably had some of the officers in the pocket (laughs) [?].

J.W. : And how about in the, in these places that you were at, what sort of diet did you used to eat? Did they cook you Indian food or did you have ... ?

Mr. M. : No.

J.W. : All British?

Mr. M. : It was buffalo beef, the buffaloes and after a while you got used to the different beef and we got potatoes and all sorts of things and [?] and all, it was near hand as they could make it British you see.

J.W. : And how about health wise while you were there, were most people quite healthy, did you all ... ?

Mr. M. : Quite healthy.

J.W. : So no problems with that, good. Right, and how about with your leisure time, and sort of spare time that you had, what sort of things did you used to do?

Mr. M. : There was a, played football quite a lot, we had good football pitches not that I was a great player, I kicked the ball, I might have been in the third team or carry the ball for the second time but we got quite a lot [?] there were canteens, canteens there you see, and they were all efficiently ...

J.W. : Was there anything else you used to do?

Mr. M. : We had pictures [?] was built when I was there and all the up-to-date films was seen.

J.W. : And how about contact with home while you were there, did you ever, did you used to write letters home?

Mr. M. : Yes, yes.

J.W. : Was that ... ?

Mr. M. : Three weeks it took.

J.W. : Was that quite important to you or did you, you know to have that contact?

Mr. M. : It was handy to know that everybody was okay, but, well, I suppose people got in, they didn't make much contact, it wasn't a, my brother used to work on a farm and (Mr. Morrice relates an anecdote about how two workmen on the farm where his brother worked discovered that they were brothers) but of course that's nothing to do with the army.

J.W. : Oh no, don't worry about that, and how about now, sometimes I've read and some people have said to me as well, that Scottish people in those sort of places, their sort of experience was different compared to other British people. Do you think that's true?

Mr. M. : No, no.

J.W. : Not at all? Did you ever find that?

Mr. M. : All the same in a uniform and everything and [?] together and I don't think there's anything, there was never any question of English or Scottish, we were all sticking together.

J.W. : But did the people there, they didn't make any distinction at all?

Mr. M. : No.

J.W. : Not at all, right, okay, goodness we're rushing through these. Well can you think of anything else just now because I stopped you sort of mid stream earlier on. Can you think of anything else of your time there, any other people for example that you remember, your friends that you were serving with?

Mr. M. : There's just not many of them left alive nowadays.

J.W. : But do you remember what they were like, what they did, how they found things?

Mr. M. : Well everybody got on all right, play at football or anything, swimming, oh I couldnae swim so I could not swim, I could, at Haifa, that's later on, you got a chance we had [?] I didnae think that was fair because you got [?] the rest of your duties, we had two people to rescue, I never went, I just sat in the baths but I kept to the shallow end, but everything was all right you see, and och, when we came home was '35, so many times I wished we could have stayed in India another while longer.

J.W. : And how about when you were, say, when you were in Peshawar for example, when you had any spare time were you allowed to go into the city at all or were you always restricted to barracks?

Mr. M. : I could always go in but some places were out of bounds, they were always out of bounds.

J.W. : Where, what sort of places were they do you know, that were out of bounds, where?

Mr. M. : Well what do you call, the bazaars, some of the bazaars because you were probably seeing your own trousers that were stolen a couple of weeks ago and somebody trying to sell them. I never bothered anything like that at all. But there was a ruling out there, it was very warm at times, so you had to be into barracks. Well everybody had an hour of sleep there, they required it. But Peshawar it wasn't, it wasn't so much, but you'd see all those bazaars and we weren't encouraged to go along, you see, but there was homes there, Weslyan Home, you'd go there for a cup of tea, a look at papers or something like that.

J.W. : Did you used to do that quite often?

Mr. M. : Yes when we was fed up. We had all the sleep you wanted.

J.W. : But if you went, did you used to enjoy just going out in the city, just going around?

Mr. M. : Aye of course, but you used to have to watch some places.

J.W. : So when you did that did you get much of a chance to mix with the local people there at all?

Mr. M.: (Mr. Morrice mishears the question, assuming that I mean British civilians) Err no, the civilians wouldnae take you on a soldier at all, you were looked down on. There's a story about Lord Roberts in Peshawar and there was a place out of bounds to soldiers and he says, 'Oh I can't go here', and he says, 'Why?', he says, 'I'm a soldier' so the law was changed but that was long before my time.

J.W. : Oh, yea, but it shows the distinctions people made. But how about the native peoples there when you were out in the city, how did they sort of treat you?

Mr. M. : Oh all right.

J.W. : And did you ever, you know, sort of chat with them?

Mr. M. : No, not at all, a lot of them don't speak English.

J.W. : Cause did you pick up any of the language?

Mr. M. : (Mr. Morrice says something in Hindi or Urdu that I was unable to recognise) When I come out of the army there was an Indian come or somebody round selling something and I wanted to help him, but I've lost all that.

J.W. : Well you do, don't you, when you don't use it. Did you just pick that up naturally?

Mr. M. : Yes.

J.W. : You weren't trained in it at all, they didn't give you any lessons or anything?

Mr. M. : No.

J.W. : Right, and how about with the, you were saying earlier that with a, I forget whether it was a division or a brigade, but how, there was the British one and you were posted with say a Gurkha regiment and this sort of thing. Were you ever posted with other regiments ... ?

Mr. M. : No.

J.W. : From the Indian Army?

Mr. M. : The Gurkhas was there, they're more attached to us. But you see the reason for four battalions in a brigade, well, they all had to be different or they might have started fighting, that was the reason for that, they might have started anything and you couldn't control it right, they were all, there were two English which you never had, they were always scarce on the ground and you put them on like that at all.

J.W. : Did you ever come across any other Indian Army battalions or anything while you were there?

Mr. M. : Yes we did.

J.W. : Do you remember which ones they were?

Mr. M. : No, I, just the Garhwalis there were a good lot of them, you see.

J.W. : Cause yes, there were a good lot of them out on the Frontier.

Mr. M. : They were good fighting soldiers.

J.W. : Did you get on well with them when you were ... ?

Mr. M. : But they carried on more with their own people more, they were encouraged to do that.

J.W. : Right okay, well as I say, can you think of anything else at all, I've got some more questions, but that's moving on a little. Can you think of anything else you remember at all? One thing I've just thought of, the Gordon Highlanders they were out in the Frontier in the nineteenth century as well before you were there. Now did you ever hear any stories about that cause people like, was it Piper Findlater?

Mr. M. : Yes.

J.W. : Did they used to tell you about that?

Mr. M. : No, he was a piper at Dargai, but I've seen the chap, he had a farm, a small farm, I've certainly seen him but I didnae know him personally.

J.W. : Oh no, you wouldn't ...

Mr. M. : He, a son was in the Gordons a while during the last War.

J.W. : Oh right, oh I see, I didn't know that. But that was part of the, you know, sort of lore of the regiment, did they used to tell you was he sort of put as an example to you?

Mr. M. : Yes.

J.W. : He was, you know a hero of the regiment. Uhm, let's think. So you were saying, I know you've said a couple of times that you were very, you were quite sad to leave, you enjoyed it very much while you were there. What, just, so, just briefly tell me about sort of when you came home, what that was like, how you felt and what happened when you came back here.

Mr. M. : Well when I came back here I was, there wasn't very much to do even just looking out at the hill in India, somewhere or other, but that would hardly be a [?] would it? You saw different people but you could never take them, you were never invited to Indians' houses that [?] not fraternising it was called.

J.W. : Did you regret that, would you have liked to have done that do you think?

Mr. M. : Well the powers that be thought the answer was no, but they maybe didn't want that, they maybe didn't want that at all and we had a separate canteen, you see, and their beer was cheaper than ours but we had more wages than what they did. The Gurkhas only had a similar scale.

J.W. : And so, so how did you sort of feel when you came back, you came back presumably by the same route from Karachi, then went up ... ?

Mr. M. : I think it might be Bombay, we went over, I'm not sure if it was arrived in Bombay or Karachi, but we were in both places anyhow.

J.W. : Right, aha, and did you come back, did you come back to Aberdeen to the depot?

Mr. M. : No to Edinburgh, Redford Barracks.

J.W. : Oh that's right, yes.

Mr. M. : We wouldnae leave India at one time, we come into Palestine nearly there, but that's before the trouble started, there was no more trouble in Palestine at all but two years later there was plenty of course.

J.W. : Right.

Mr. M. : And it's rather strange to say, somebody said it was all the American money coming in to the Jews and the Arab wasn't getting any at all.

J.W. : Right.

Mr. M. : Bu this is a different story altogether, but that's where we landed first after we left India.

J.W. : And then from Palestine you came back to Scotland?

Mr. M. : Back to Edinburgh, yes.

J.W. : And how did you, did you find it difficult settling back into obviously you were in a military sort of life and it's fairly sort of ordered but did you even with that find it quite difficult to settle back in to?

Mr. M. : Aye, it wasnae good to settle, I found that very difficult because you lost a lot of your friends, their time, you see because when you was abroad you did an extra year, you're supposed to do an extra year but I had a year and something to go and a lot of friends was away, and newcomers was coming in whom you didn't know. You see they were waiting at the Depot, the Regimental Depot, until such a time as they could cope with them, the Battalion could cope, because the 2nd battalion we went to Gibraltar for a, that's counted a home station you see, but we carried on, India was a foreign station.

J.W. : Right.

Mr. M. : Army rules and regulations are all funny, you'll never understand them.

J.W. : Right, uhm, so from, I can't think of any more questions in particular just now, but do you. looking back on that time in India, that's a very happy time for you is it?

Mr. M. : Yes it was.

J.W. : Cause I know. cause I know you've been telling me you were in the last War as well and this sort of thing for the sort of whole of your military career.

Mr. M. : I did fourteen years you see.

J.W. : Fourteen years.

Mr. M. : That's both peace time and war time.

J.W. : And was that time on the Frontier one of the better times for you?

Mr. M. : It would have been maybe, so to speak, the war would have been. I had a, was a junior rank in India, but then when the War came naturally they wanted all of us who were in there to take promotion and of course, as I said, I finished up as Acting R-S-M when the War finished.

J.W. : Right, okay.

Mr. M. : But not a very good R-S-M, I had no experience, but the C-O (Commanding Officer) said I just had to do it because I was the only one who had the courses and everything you see.

J.W. : Right okay.

Mr. M. : But I don't think I would have just like to make the Army my career but when I was going away home to demob the C-O was begging with me to stay on, you se, but I made the right decision, I got in touch with the Scottish Prison Service again, and then of course I finished up quite high in that thing but not in the Governor grade.

J.W. : Right, aha. But for your time in the army, how as a sort of overall thing was that time in quite, quite a, well, how did you feel about that time in India compared to the times you were in the other places, was it a good thing?

Mr. M. : I think it was good.

J.W. : You have happy memories of it?

Mr. M. : Aye, you had all the food wi' much, is it, other battalions maybe so, the Gordons didn't, didnae very well.

J.W. : Right, that's about all I can think to ask at the moment. Can you think of anything else at all that you remember? We've covered quite a lot.

Mr. M. : We've covered quite a lot. I'm just trying, thinking anything. There's. you'll get a good lot of stuff from the museum.

J.W. : Yes, I hope to go in a few weeks.

Mr. M. : Colonel Strachan, I was, his father's in the army and he's retired, he did very well in the ranks, you see, he joined up just after the War finished and he got a commission so it takes a bit of doing that, you see.

J.W. : I'll look forward to that. Oh well, well thank you very much for everything.

Mr. M. : No, will you have a cup of coffee?

The tape was switched off

Major Ronnie B. Paul R.A.
Mountain Gunner, Indian Army
Interviewed on 13th May 1997
SA1997.89 & 90

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, and **Major P.** represents Major Paul.

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston, I'm recording Major Paul at his home in Edinburgh. Right Major Paul, if you can tell me first where and when you were born please.

Major P. : I was born on the 5th of September in 1918 in 28 Dundas Street right in the middle of Edinburgh in my own home, in my mother and fathers' home.

J.W. : Right and what did your mother and father do at that time?

Major P. : Well my father was a tin box manufacturer in Edinburgh as was his father and my grandfather as well and making tin boxes is quite different to what people think. They're stamped out with big heavy power presses in blows, in single blows, and then they're printed and decorated, and our business was built up over a hundred years making shortbread tins, biscuit tins, paint tins for I.C.I. and, well, any form of tin box container was what was made.

J.W. : Right and did you have any brothers and sisters at all?

Major P. : No I hadn't, I was the only one.

J.W. : Just yourself, right. So did you go to school in Edinburgh?

Major P. : Yes I went to Edinburgh Academy for three years and then my mother thought that I should go to boarding school because I was an only child and she couldn't have any more children and she sent me to Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh to board.

J.W. : And how long were you there for?

Major P. : I was there for nine years. I went there aged nine and I left when I was eighteen.

J.W. : Okay, and what did you do after that when you finished school?

Major P. : Well I was then, I wasn't given any option I was told I was going into the business the family business and I was to go and learn how to make the machines that make the tin boxes in Wakefield in Yorkshire to a place called *Rhodes, Joseph Rhodes and Company*, so I went there and started on the shop floor as an apprentice engineer. Normally they started at sixteen but I was eighteen so I was a bit of an oddity but I got a marvellous training, there were eight hundred engineers there, all

first class Yorkshiremen, all first class engineers I couldn't have had better training, I enjoyed going there and in fact yesterday one of my friends from Pontefract in Yorkshire came in here for lunch so I still have contact with Yorkshire.

J.W. : So how long were you down in Yorkshire for?

Major P. : Well I was up there till the War started then I joined up much to the annoyance of my family - they said I was the only one left and someone had to run the business and I said, 'Oh I'm not staying here I've got to fight this guy called Hitler'. So I joined up with a friend at the Edinburgh University O.T.C. I think the place is still up there we went up and signed up there and joined up, was there for about four weeks in Edinburgh doing nothing, waiting to be called up and then on October I was sent down to Yorkshire again, to Richmond, to barracks there, the old Green How ... the old Green Howard barracks with a whole lot of other cadets like .

J.W. : Is that who, you were with the Green Howards then were you?

Major P. : No, no, I was a gunner.

J.W. : Oh yes that's right.

Major P. : I'd signed as a gunner and there were all prospective gunners who were there. Most of them had been in their school O.T.C.'s and had the Certificate A so that we, most of us knew about soldiering, some didn't you know, so had never soldiered at all and we' six months there.

J.W. : So what happened ... ?

Major P. : And then the next thing that happened that was the start of the fun because I got this notice that I had ten days' leave and I was to report to Woolwich Depot in London to be posted overseas - I didn't know where. So anyway, I appeared and they said, 'Well, you're going across France and you're going to get on a troopship, South of France at Marseilles and you're going to India', and I though, 'India?' - it was just a place on the map (laughs) and so that's what happened and I was put on a train to Dover across to France to Le Havre rather, and then got on a train and all the way down to Marseilles and then arrived at the docks and found this troopship and we were to go through the Suez Canal to India because at that time the Italians weren't in the War and there was no threat from Italian ships. So anyway we got on the ship and we set sail for India. One small thing that always amuses me and sticks in my mind was that we went into the N.A.A.F.I. there to get some cigarettes and found that you could get whisky there for 3 and 6d a bottle and gin for 2 and 6 d a bottle (laughs) and being a Scotsman I couldn't resist I bought a case of each and took it aboard ship, I didn't know what I was going to do with it (laughs) I took it with me and when I arrived in India it was a great asset because they were short of whisky they were glad to have it. However, that's jumping the story so we went by troopship through the Suez Canal to Bombay. When we got to Bombay there was

forty of us in the draft and the com ... , the Major, the officer came on board from Army headquarters and lined us all up and said, 'All right chaps we'll take you in alphabetical order and I'll post you where you're going to go'. My name being Paul I was fairly far down the list and when he came to me there was only me and another chap left, he was a chap called Simpson, so he said, 'Well you better toss for where you're going to go the pair of you.' He said, 'There's one place in Peshawar and there's one place in Kuala Lumpur in Malaya. One of you's going to each!' So we tossed. I'd decided I'd gone far enough, fortunately I won the toss so I said, 'I'm going to Peshawar or *Pesh*awar (emphasises the first syllable) or whatever you call it, because I didn't know how you pronounce it, so he said, 'Okay, go to Bombay to the railway station and catch the Frontier Express to Peshawar' and he said to the Malayan chap, 'You'll have to stay the night here because you've to go across country to Calcutta to get the ship to Kuala Lumpur, so we parted company and I set off for Peshawar.

J.W. : Now to take you back you said India to you was a place on the map. Did you know anything about India at all?

Major P. : No I didn't, not a thing.

J.W. : Not a thing, right.

Major P. : It was just a place on the map in the East.

J.W. : Right, and nobody around you, people you'd known ...

Major P. : No I didn't know anybody who'd been to India.

J.W. : Right so it was completely out of the blue as it were. Right and so going back to the story what was it like then when you first arrived, do you remember first impressions when you first dropped off the ship in Bombay?

Major P. : Yes.

J.W. : How it struck you.

Major P. : I just saw all these dark coloured people running around in their thousands. I was mesmerised. I didn't have long because I had to go straight to the station and get the train, and then I got on the train when I got there still not really knowing, you know, what was what and I'd fifteen hundred miles to go by train to get to Peshawar from Bombay and I knew I was going to be a day and a half or so you know on the train, but I just sat there and watched the country go by and saw all these people with turbans on you know and wooden ploughs and you know just thought, 'This is prehistoric (laughs) I don't know what I'm doing here', and then I arrived in Peshawar about 8 o'clock at night the next night to be met fortunately by a fellow Scotsman John Bell who was the adjutant of the regiment he met me at the

train and very kindly took me to my quarters to where I was going to sleep which was in a bungalow and he chatted to me because he wanted to know about Scotland, he hadn't been back for as while, and he was from Greenock not far from Edinburgh, so John Bell who was a great help he sort of, you know, filled me in and he said, Now we'll go across and dump my gear and go across to the mess and have a bite to eat. It's a bit late now, everybody's gone now, but we'll go and have something, you know, a drink and a chat', and we'd more chat and he said, 'Right, I'll come and collect you in the morning because you won't know where to go or what to do', and he said, 'I'll meet you', so he did, he came and collected me you know took me to the mess for breakfast and then took me down to the Colonel's office which was, you know, just about a couple of miles away. When I got there, it's all very vivid in my mind, he said, 'Oh just wait outside', and I said, 'Oh right' so I sort of wait outside and this chap came along with a turban on and a crown on his shoulder so I immediately saluted, and he said in perfect English, 'You don't salute me I'm a *subadar-major*, I salute you' (**J.W.** laughs), I said '*Subadar-major*?', I didn't know what it meant and in perfect English, you know, he said, 'Oh no, I'm an Indian officer', and I said, 'Oh, when were you last home?', he said, 'Well, my home's just near here I go home regularly', I said, 'So you don't come from Britain?' (laughs) shows you how ignorant I was. With that I was summonsed into the Colonel's office. He said to me, 'Gee boy welcome to India', and I thought, 'That's not English' (laughs) I thought he was American. It turns out he was Canadian, Canadian colonel in the Indian Army, Colonel Fiskin by name, and he said to me, 'Do you speak any languages?', and I said, 'Not really I learned a bit of French at school but I wasn't very good', and he said, 'That's all right, John, see that he gets a *munśhi* to teach him two hours a day, *munśhi* being teacher, and then he said, 'Can you ride?', and I said, 'No sir, no I can't ride'. 'John, get him out every morning six o'clock (laughs) and give him two hours' riding lessons every morning, and he said, 'Right well, I think now that's just about everything', and I said, 'Well just a minute I think there's a mistake. I joined up to fight Hitler. I didn't join up to learn a language and to learn to ride', and he burst out laughing (laughs) and he said, We'll soon teach you, gee boy we'll soon teach you'. I said, 'Yes Sir'. You know the whole thing to me it was a shock and a mystery, here I was going to learn Hindustani with a chap called *munśhi*, I didn't even know what *munśhi* meant, and be taught to ride and I'd come to fight Hitler. You know it didn't add up.

J.W. : No, exactly.

Major P. : So I was then taken down to the battery, John took me down to the battery, which was another mile away the other way, because the four batteries were all separate in different places, the regiment was all split up round Peshawar, and he took me down there, introduced me and said, 'This is my friend Lou Packard, he's the Battery captain, the Major's away on a course', and Lou said, 'Gee Ronny, pleased to meet you' (laughs) - what have I come to? A Canadian Colonel, a Canadian Battery Captain, a Scots adjutant, learning to ride and speak Hindustani. It's crazy. And Lou said, 'Oh well, I'll take you round the battery and show you your section, you're going to command the Mohammedan section.' I didn't even know

what Mohammedan was, you know, it didn't mean that much and you know John Bell stayed for a bit and then went away and then he took me down to the battery and started to introduce me to the *subedars* and the *jemadars* and I didn't know what *subadar* and *jemadar* were it was all strange to me, chaps with beards and pips on their shoulders, oh it was crazy. That was my entry into India.

J.W. : Right, and you said you met John ... .

Major P. : John Bell.

J.W. : Fairly early on. Was that fairly important, did it mean very much to you to find a fellow Scot?

Major P. : It did, you know a fellow Scotsman suddenly out of the blue you know I felt rescued.

J.W. : And did you keep together for a fair while after that?

Major P. : Well no, he was the adjutant in the regiment so he wasn't in my battery because Lou Packard I was really working with most of the time. There are only four British officers, were only four British officers in the battery, the rest were all Indians, and there were four Indian officers as well of course. The, so, we were only the four Britishers together and we got to know each other very well and we were together for two years the four of us, and we went to, oh, that's another part of the story and then we went to fight in Africa and we all went together so we all got to know each other very well.

J.W. : Right, so how did your training go, you said you had a *munshi* to teach you Hindustani and that sort of thing. How did that progress, and the riding?

Major P. : Well I was then told that I had to pass an exam in six months time, I had to write in Arabic.

J.W. : I'm trying to learn myself.

Major P. : That was the most difficult part.

J.W. : I can imagine, yes.

Major P. : You know there were five esses in the language, you know the esses, five different, you know, depending on which way they came in the alphabet, and then of course I had to learn to write which I did but then it was two hours a day, you know five or six days a week, but it was made easier because every day I was in the battery I was hearing the language.

J.W. : Exactly yes.

Major P. : And I've quite a good ear for music, I can play the piano by ear so I think that helped me to learn the language quicker by listening to the Mohammedans and the Sikhs speaking to each other and I think that helped me, but the writing was hard work.

J.W. : Right, and how about riding lessons?

Major P. : Well I just had to start from scratch (laughs) and there I was, and I was given these two hours every day and I was very well taught because all the Mountain Artillery officers had been trained at Woolwich at what they called the Shop, and they'd be trained to ride properly so they trained me to ride the way they'd been trained and eventually I could ride without stirrups, even without a bridle, I could ride a horse by just jumping on and riding but that was after months and months of practice and of course we rode a lot, not only was I taught to ride two hours a day but we rode a lot every day, and, well every week really we spent riding, by the time I finished I was quite a good horseman, and I knew how to groom them and how to feed them and, you know, how to look after them and I could ride, a thing I never thought I could do, used to be, to ride in shorts without any breeches or anything.

J.W. : Sounds painful.

Major P. : What?

J.W. : It sounds painful.

Major P. : Well it isn't after about four months with ordinary riding breeches on and getting your grip right, you then knew how to grip and you just learned how to ride just with shorts and I could still grip, you know, with, from knee to thigh, I had no trouble, so I rode in shorts particularly in the summer, never thought of having riding breeches on.

J.W. : Right and did you, you had your *munshi* training and all the riding training. Did they ever give you any sort of other specific training to do with the sort of culture and that sort of thing or did you pick that up from the other officers and that sort of thing?

Major P. : Well as you learned the language, and I was in charge of the Mohammedan section, not the Sikh section, I was ultimately, I got the Sikh section, but initially it was the Mohammedan section I learned about them and their religion, I mean they all had their little churches, the Sikhs had their *gurdwara*, and their own teacher with their own gurus and things, so that I learned about it as I went along, and I took part in the ceremonies, and jumping four years or so I actually finished up as best man at a Sikh officer's wedding.

J.W. : Oh right.

Major P. : I was invited to be the best man and that was an interesting experience, do you want me to tell you about that now or later?

J.W. : Well maybe we'll do it later, but we must remember to do it (laughs). So, and was that, and did you feel it was very important to know all those things about them and it helped the relationship between ... ?

Major P. : Yes I did. There's one more thing I didn't tell you. The Colonel said to me just at that stage, just at that stage when I was going out the door, he said, 'Now young man, there's one thing you must know', he said, 8and you must learn. There's no such thing as bad troops and there's only bad officers.' I didn't believe him. I thought, 'How do I know about the troops I've got? Nothing to do with me.' But he was right. There are no bad troops, only bad officers. Good officers get to know their men inside out. They get to know all their plusses and all their minuses. There isn't such a thing as a bad soldier. It's a bad officer. But I didn't believe it (laughs) until I proved it.

J.W. : So did you used to mix with the men in the section, did you go down to the lines?

Major P. : Well not at night, we went back to the officers' mess at night which was purely white officers and we had a few extra officers from the Indian Service Corps, what the called the Rice Corps, the R-I-A-S-C, and we had the odd engineer and the odd doctor and we had a Canadian doctor again (laughs). I couldn't believe it. Seemed to be full of Canadians. The reason being of course it was good pay in the Mountain Artillery. Mountain Artillery was the highest paid branch of the Indian Army.

J.W. : Really? Oh, I didn't know that.

Major P. : Well, of course, we were highly trained with animals and screw guns. I brought that to give you an idea (Major Paul shows me an illustration of a mountain gun).

J.W. : Oh I see, I see.

Major P. : You had six mules per gun.

J.W. : And you just dismantle it and put different bits on each gun (*sic* mule)?

Major P. : And put the parts together, and there's a whole load of technical parts about that even, and then how to fire it and all the rest of it, so it was quite a technical job.

J.W. : Of course, yes.

Major P. : And it was only those who passed top out of Woolwich pre-War that got into Mountain Artillery. You weren't even considered unless you were in the top bracket of those passing out of the gunnery course at Woolwich so I was jolly lucky, I was the first War Emergency Commissioned Officer in Mountain Artillery. They hadn't seen a beast like me (laughs), a guy who couldn't speak a language, I hadn't even fired a gun, I didn't even know how to fire a gun.. At Cathick where we were trained in the Green Howards barracks we weren't even given the chance of firing a gun.

J.W. : Oh goodness. So did they quite take you in, they accepted you, did they, even though you hadn't been through that?

Major P. : They were terribly kind. I think I was an oddity, this peculiar Scotsman who couldn't do anything (laughs) and we'll train him and they took to training me.

J.W. : A sort of challenge.

Major P. : I think it was and the ordinary gunners were great, they just used to laugh and if I made a mistake they would tell me, '*Sāhab, ye bolt kharaab hai*' ('Sir, this bolt is broken') and all the rest of it, and then I just learned, but I was lucky to be trained, and don't forget the time that I joined the Regiment the minimum service was seven years. They were all fully trained soldiers and the battery I was posted to, 18 Mountain Battery, they'd just come back from Razmak, they'd been up there fighting what they call frontier warfare and that's the original battery type (**Major P.** shows me another illustration) it was two point seven five and that was in Kipling's day and the guns we had when I arrived, it was three point seven, it was bigger, same thing, same wheels, same cradles and similar barrels but much smaller, but I thought you'd like to see that to give ...

J.W. : Yes, it helps to visualise.

Major P. : Shows you and that's how the *sipāhīs* looked in those days and, as opposed to that as they were when I arrived I've dug these out you know for you.

J.W. : Thank you.

Major P. : Well, there's a battery, 5 Battery, Bombay Battery, that's the officers Indian and British, but as you'll see there's only four British officers (in a photo **Major P.** shows me from a Regimental magazine), the rest are Indian and N-C-O's of course, *havildars* and *naiks* and all the rest of it, and there's the whole mountain battery together which is about two hundred men in round figures.

J.W. : Right, goodness, yes. Now just going back a moment we were talking about then men in the sections and this sort of thing. Was there any, you would obviously train with them and this sort of thing.

Major P. : Yes.

J.W. : Did you ever visit them socially or go down to see them to talk to them, or was that more ... ?

Major P. : It doesn't work that way because most of them were married and there were married quarters.

J.W. : Oh I see, right.

Major P. : And they had their wives and or children with them as well.

J.W. : So they were there.

Major P. : So they were there, and they were all, and we didn't go in to the married quarters because there were Sikhs and Mohammedans and they didn't allow us, there was ...

J.W. : *Pardā.*

Major P. : *Pardā* and all the rest, as you say, so we could see the wives running about in the distance but we were never introduced to them. we had social evenings with some of the Indian officers and *havildars* and things, we had *khānās* and *barā khānās*, you know, that sort of thing if you know what that is.

J.W. : Yea, yea.

Major P. : And they gave us their curries and we had an evening with them. That was all. Their was no social goings between their wives and us and a lot of the British officers, they were all regular officers and I was this unique beast to begin with, and they had their wives and most of them were married - actually the Colonel wasn't, Fiskin wasn't, and that was sad and I was sorry because Fiskin was a good soldier, he was a bachelor and he took to drink, and he was invalided out, it was just one of the sad things, but most of them were, the majors and the captains, not the second lieutenants but they were married and their wives were out there stationed in Peshawar and then it was hot, in the winter, in the summer they went up to Abbotabad, you know, to the hill stations or up to Srinagar, or wherever it was called, Gulmarg, that was the favourite, I don't know if you know Gulmarg, it's rather sad, I went there not so long ago, I took my present wife out to India because she'd never been, my late wife had died as I told you and we got, remarried and I took her out to Indian and I, to let her see it and I went to see Gulmarg, Srinagar and all the rest of it and, oh it was all overgrown it had all changed.

J.W. : Where is Gulmarg, can you tell me?

Major P. : Well, you know where Srinagar is in Kashmir on Nagim Bagh lake, well it's about twenty or thirty miles up into the hills from there and it was just a hill station for British officers of all ranks and all regiments, engineers, doctors and, you know, they went up there for the heat, for the summer and their wives went up there, and it had a golf course and it was a nice golf course but when I went back it had all of course deteriorated, it was rather sad actually. Srinagar was the same again, tragically, you can't got there now.

J.W. : No, you can't, no.

Major P. : I was so glad that I'd taken my present wife to Srinagar when it was quiet when I did.

J.W. : Just at the right time.

Major P. : I was at the right time. but I couldn't go back now. I think it's terrible.

J.W. : And can you - a difficult question perhaps, can you describe your sort of routine that you had there obviously, it would be different ... ?

Major P. : Oh it's not difficult really, oh, apart from Sunday which was a different day, every other day was working day.

J.W. : Right, and what sort of things would you do?

Major P. : And you would get up at six o'clock in the morning or even half past five, depends what time you went on parade, but it was roughly, you went on parade about six, no later than quarter past anyway, and then you did parades about ten o'clock and then you went back for breakfast, and then after breakfast then you did tutorials, what they called tutorials, because it was very hot, then you didn't do much parading after ten o'clock until lunch time, and then you had lunch, and then you had two hours training with the *mumsis* while everyone else went off and had their sleep, and then at four o'clock we had parades again because it was cooler and you could do things in the evening until six and then we went back and we had a bath and dinner and drinks and bed. Occasionally we used to go to the cinema in Peshawar. There was a cinema - Peshawar's a big town, I don't know if you know it?

J.W. : Yes I know it reasonably well, Peshawar in the present day that is.

Major P. : Well it's not much different with a big wire fence around it.

J.W. : That's right.

Major P. : I think it's about twenty miles round the outskirts if you go right round, if you measure it, you know, going right round the outskirts.

J.W. : Oh probably, yes. Did you, were you allowed to go into Peshawar very much?

Major P. : Oh yes we used to go down into the village yes. Yes we were allowed in. It's an interesting place.

J.W. : And did you enjoy that, going into the city?

Major P. : Yes, well I didn't go in everyday but occasionally just to go in to see what was going on and to see those traders coming from Afghanistan with carpets from Persia. Some of the officers, when we came back from fighting in Africa, some of the officers bought some of these things, but I didn't buy any, but it was interesting just to watch all the camels and the caravans coming in, there's hundreds of camels in a caravan, and to watch them all walk past was fascinating. It was interesting to see what they had and what they were carrying. No, I liked going into Peshawar village but as I say, not regularly.

J.W. : Right okay, and who else, you had yourself, the other British officers and the Indian officers and the men in the Sikh section and the Mahommedan section. Were there any other sort of followers with the Regiment at all?

Major P. : Oh yes there were camp followers, that was what they were called, camp followers. We had those in Peshawar – when we were posted to Africa they were left behind because they weren't allowed to because they weren't regular soldiers.

J.W. : Were they just sort of hired at the point where you were?

Major P. : Within Peshawar they had plenty of camp followers, yes.

J.W. : And what sort of things?

Major P. : Bankers ... .

J.W. : Ah right, that sort of thing.

Major P. : And that sort of thing and *dhobīs* and *darzīs* and, you know, tailors they had, they were very well organised but the camp followers I can't remember now, but there were probably thirty odd to a battery.

J.W. : Did you see them very much at all?

Major P. : Oh yes you could see them everyday doing your job or wandering about or you'd see the *darzis* sitting and sowing, but we didn't talk to them everyday, but you saw them and you knew they were there and you knew what they did. One thing that might interest you. I hadn't been long in the battery when the Major said to me, the Battery Commander, Dick Ashby, 'Now look Ronnie you'll be approached by the

local shopkeeper, he'll want you to accept gifts so that he's allowed to continue to trade in the Battery', he said. 'Now whatever you do don't take anything from him, he'll offer you fruit and vegetables. Don't take it, cardinal sin', and I think every officer was warned that but every new officer was approached, they never learned, they always approached the new boy and offered him bribes only because really they wanted to be offered the contract for a year to supply the battery with all their needs like cigarettes and whatever, no, but I was duly approached, duly said no.

J.W. : And how about your, you had your daily routine that you were describing. What about, and you were saying about the officer's mess. what about any other sort of social life that you had and then leisure. What did you do in those sort of times?

Major P. : Well we used to go to the local club.

J.W. : To the Peshawar Club was that?

Major P. : Where there was a swimming pool and there was tennis courts there as well, but mostly you went there to swim and have a drink and meet other officers and then the wives you'd meet them there too, but being war time a lot of the social life had been curtailed and things were much more regimented because of the war and we had much longer working hours cause, for instance, we had to train to march long distances in case we had to in the War wherever we were going and that was right, that was correct, so there wasn't so much time for social life, you know, in between times and it was really work and very little play. We did play hockey.

J.W. : Was that with the men?

Major P. : Every battery had a hockey team, yes, and that was an interesting experience because the sportsmanship amongst the Sikhs and Mahommedans is quite different to the British (laughs) they don't like being beaten, they hate it, and one particular day I was playing with the Mahommedan section and [Semundar] Khan was the Chief Clerk and he was in the army and he was in the battery and he was a very good hockey player, but he hated being beaten and, you know, he would try and cheat (laughs) and I told him one day, I said, 'Look [Semundar] Khan, you're not going to do this anymore, and if you do you're off the field'. Well of course he did it so I sent him off the field and he couldn't believe it.

J.W. : Oh no.

Major P. : Because I sent him back to the battery lines, I said, 'You go back, you're not going to play anymore, we'll play with ten men not eleven', 'Can't do that *sāhab*', 'Well, I've done it'. That just shows you how they hated it – they couldn't understand how you played for fun – played to win yes, but not at any cost.

J.W. : Right, and I've just seen something here, what about in terms of everyday living, what sort of things did you eat, what was your diet like?

Major P. : Our diet was a pretty normal British diet, curry was an exception, you know, we had curry probably once a week, we had everything else, I mean we had lambs, we had good milk, we, all the milk in Peshawar was done by the army, them had their own cows and it was run by the army and we had lovely milk and I've been a milk drinker all my life and I enjoyed the milk. I used to drink milk in the mess but it was all run by the army, they had this farm producing milk for the whole of the cantonment.

J.W. : Right, okay, I didn't realise that.

Major P. : I don't know if it's still there but it was jolly good milk and it was all controlled and run by the army.

J.W. : And how about your health while you were there, were you always fairly healthy?

Major P. : Well I was lucky while I was there I never had a day in bed once in five years.

J.W. : Gosh, that's quite something.

Major P. : I never got malaria, the only thing that happened to me once was coming back from Africa fighting, we got a lot of very good food, I was posted up the Khyber Pass at a place called Landi Kotal and by then I was commanding the battery and we had superb food and I think we all ate too much, too much cream and all the rest of it, and so on, and I came out in boils, I had that for a month or two, however I soon got rid of that, but the food was good we never had, we were never, shortage, we were never rationed, was in Africa, we were on bully beef and biscuits.

J.W. : And what about contact with your father at home and this sort of thing, was that very important would you write letters?

Major P. : I wrote letters, yes, but they took about two or three months in wartime and then they had these sort of air mail letters came available and that was much quicker, you know, ten days.

J.W. : Was that important to have that contact?

Major P. : Well it was important for some people but not for me, I was, no brothers, no sisters, my mother was dead, my father was on his own, I was a loner.

J.W. : And you were enjoying ... .

Major P. : And I enjoyed being a soldier and I enjoyed riding and I enjoyed playing hockey and I enjoyed learning a language, I enjoyed the Indian Army, it suited me

and that's why I wanted to go to Gilgit and take command of the station up there, and had my father not been as he was I would have gone there and I wouldn't have been here talking to you as I am today (laughs). You can't tell what's going to happen.

J.W. : Yes that's the way life is. You were talking earlier about John Bell. Were there any other Scots in among the British officers?

Major P. : Not at that stage.

J.W. : Or did you encounter any other ... ?

Major P. : No there wasn't at that stage. I met other Scotsmen in Gurkhas and some of them in the Punjab Regiment but there was none in Mountain Artillery where I, 24 Mountain Regiment that I was in I was the only Scotsman other than John Bell.

J.W. : Sure, did you tend to sort of congregate with the other Scots when you got together, was that the ... ?

Major P. : Not particularly no, it was just British officers, we didn't really have anything of this as I told you we had all these Canadians, they all wanted to get into the Indian Army because of the good pay, that's why they were there.

J.W. : When was it, then, that you went to Africa, when did that ... ?

Major P. : Well it was March 1942. We were actually the first invasion of the War. Our battery was originally posted to Aden and we didn't know why. We knew initially that we'd be posted overseas and we'd gone to Aden and we didn't know we were going to fight in Abyssinia and Somaliland because at this time this was all owned by the Italians, so we got to Aden and it was then made clear to us that we were to train for any kind of warfare that we might get involved in and we had a camel corps next to us in Aden, stationed next to us, what they called the Bikaner Camel Corps, it belonged to the Maharajah of Bikaner, he'd paid for it and all these camels and all these chaps were next too us, but they like us didn't know what was going to happen but we were there for three or four months before we then set sail from Aden across to Berbera and we were all marched aboard a ship one night and we didn't even know then when we were going and we were told that we were to go across to Aden and it was very funny because as we got on the ship I followed the Battery Commander up the gangway and it suddenly struck me this is a tiny, wee ship. It turns out that it was only six hundred tons and it was to take the whole of the battery that's all, just us, and it was owned by the Parsis who traded, it was a trading ship that they had, and it operated between Somaliland, Eritrea and Bombay and [*Cowasjee, Bikasjee, Binshaw*] was the name of the company that owned it, all Parsis, and we marched on to this ship, at least we climbed on to this ship and I was behind the battery commander as I told you and he sort of fell back down the stairs and I caught him and then I realised that the other side of him was the Chief

Engineer, he was drunk, he'd been seeing the captain and he feel down the stairs, the Battery Commander caught him and I, we both backed down and we laid him on the deck, this was the Chief Engineer drunk, so we went up the steps not knowing what was going to happen, and there was the Captain with a bit of blood on his white shirt, he'd had to lay out the Chief Engineer for being drunk, and he apologised - he wasn't that sober either. I had visions, who's going to get us across?

J.W. : I was going to say.

Major P. : Once he excused himself, this is true, it's an extraordinary story, he excused himself and disappeared down the stairs presumably to look after the Chief engineer. And we met the Second-in -Command who was an Indian, he was a Parsi, and a very nice young man, very polite and obviously quite capable, he said, 'Oh don't worry about those, two I often have to take charge' he said (laughs) 'don't worry, everything'll be all right', and I though, 'Good God'. Well that's absolutely true, we never saw the Captain or the Chief Engineer until the next day, and he just took charge, he'd obviously been used to this. Apparently he told us, they'd obviously been used to this, apparently, he told us they used to go traipsing around the Red Sea calling at all these ports trading for the Parsis and he said the Captain was actually rather sad, because he'd been a Red Sea pilot, and apparently on the Suez Canal, and he just over-ed on the drink and got the sack and the got the job as the captain of this Parsi ship, he was obviously a very capable man but just liked the drink so there we are, and as far as I know after the War they still continued to trade, [*Cowasjee, Bikasjee, Binshaw*] as they were called (laughs).

J.W. : And so when you got into Africa and when you were in action did, did the, cause I've heard this from other people, did the nature of the sort of relations with the men, did that change, did you find once in sort of in action, did you ... ?

Major P. : No didn't no.

J.W. : Get closer to them at all?

Major P. : No we were always close to them. We knew our men. The Colonel was right there's no bad troops, there's only bad officers.

J.W. : Yes, I remember you saying.

Major P. : And I knew all my men by name, every single one of them, and it was very difficult, particularly the Mahommedan section, because they were all different names, you know, Mohammed Akbar, Akbar Khan, whereas the Sikhs were much easier, [Khurbatcha] Singh or Gugra Singh, whatever they were all Singhs - Singh means 'lion' actually the word translated means lion cause it's part of their religion, but the Mahommadans it was much more difficult to learn their names because they were all, each one was totally different so that, no, but I knew them all anyway so the relationship didn't get, and, closer or any broader, it just remained the same.

J.W. : Right okay.

Major P. : The only thing that changed was their food - they had to learn to eat bully beef and of course the Sikhs being Hindus didn't approve of eating beef and they had to get permission from the *Granthi sāhab*, that was the chief priest, to eat their bully beef. They then got to like it so much that they didn't want to give it up when we'd gone back to India, they didn't want to give it up (laughs) it was really quite funny.

J.W. : So when, then, did you come back from Africa?

Major P. : Late '43 early '44.

J.W. : And yo said you went back to Landi Kotal after that?

Major P. : Yes well before then I better tell you what happened in Abyssinia because that really was quite a large part of our war. We fought all the way, we landed in Somaliland and fortunately for us the Italians literally ran away, they fired a few shots and beat it. The reason was because they were being cut off by our troops coming up from Kenya and they had to get out of Somaliland otherwise they'd have been cut off and they had to go back into Abyssinia which they did, so that enabled us tom land where the Black Watch had vacated, we actually landed in Berbera where, the Black Watch had vacated the place in 1941 and then we started to fight our whole way across Somaliland and then across Abyssinia which is a huge country, you don't realise it's the size of Europe, enormous, and no roads, they've only about three or four main roads across the country, the rest of it's just tracks, and it's a very varied country for two thousand feet high right down to sea level, I mean you can get snow in Addis Ababa at Christmas time whereas it's red hot sun down at the coast so it's a very varied land, and as I say we fought right across there, and being gunners we were supporting different people every week, you know, first we'd be supporting shall we say Sudanese troops then you'd be supporting Kenyan troops, King's African Rifles, then you'd be supporting Rhodesian troops then you'd be supporting South African troops, because a lot of South African regiments came up, and then the Boers sent up some regiments and we were supporting Boers, so we fought with and supported all sorts of people which again was marvellous experience as a young man to meet all these people. One incident happened was I was sent as a young officer to what they called the Observation Officer, O-P Officer, and I was to report to the regiment of Boers, and I arrived at the map reference and it was a crossroads, and here was the whole of the Boer battalion sitting at the crossroads smoking cigarettes and pipes and things and at the time the Italians had bombers and we were a sitting target, and I said to them, the colonel, I said, 'Do you not think we should move off, it's a crossroads, we shouldn't be sitting here'. Well, he said he didn't care, he wasn't scared of the Italians and I thought, well, you stupid idiot we'd lose a lot of the men if they stared bombing, however fortunately they didn't, and I said to them, 'Well what's going to happen tomorrow morning?', and he said, 'Well,

well just get up at seven o'clock and we'll just set off [?]' - he had no plan, I couldn't believe it. Well that same Boer battalion eventually went up to the desert and they were all put in the bag and I wasn't surprised. They went up to North Africa and they were so indisciplined, you know, they were really, as far as I could see, so superior to the British, we know what we're doing, you don't know what you're doing. There was a distinct cleavage between Boer and South African and British.

J.W. : So what happened then when you came back, you'd gone through Abysinnia, did it ... ?

Major P. : Well actually it was two stages, we got to Addis Ababa and they decided that we would go away to the south of Addis to capture the Duke of [?] and he had some troops down there of his, called Jima (i.e. at a place called Jima) a long way away. So the South Africans were then posted they were to go north up to a place called Gonder and to [?] and they said, 'Right let's have a game of rugby before we go' (laughs). I said, 'A game of rugby?', I couldn't believe what I was hearing. They said, 'Oh yes we've got rugby balls we've got everything', and I said, 'I've only got four British officers and none of my Indians can play rugby'. They said, 'Oh we'll get a team in Addis Ababa, you can go around and get British officers'. Anyway cutting a long story short I got a team organised to play rugby in Addis and they organised this and they even got goalposts put up, they had everything, so we had this game of rugby in the middle of Addis Ababa, British versus the South Africans and that was fine until half time and then all the locals, Abyssinians, most of whom were virtually naked, you know, they just had on a little piece of leopard skin and a spear. They'd all been watching this, they all rushed on the field to play rugby with spears.

J.W. : Interesting.

Major P. : And we didn't know what to do (laughs), we had to clear them off the pitch. They decided that they would have a go at this thing but they didn't know what they were doing, however we got rid of them and then finished the game and then off we went, so we went south and the others went north. Well ultimately we went south, we did our fighting and then went north again and we went right up to Eritrea then, and eventually we went to Syria and Palestine and we were to be trained there to go and support the Russians, we were to go to the Caucasus, and this was an interesting, there was three British, Shropshire Regiment, Scots Greys and the Chesire Yeomanry all with horses, they were cavalry, and they had all their horses in Palestine outside Haifa in a place called [?], [?] Camp which was on the Plains of Armageddon, we were literally camping on the Plains of Armageddon training to go and fight [with] the Russians, well, they between them they had about six hundred horses and they had all their mules and horses of course, and by this time we were joined by another mountain battery and this was all organised and we started to train and then the Russians said they didn't want us, this is true, the whole thing was just cancelled and I was told that I was to stay behind and bring all the mules and horses by troopship, or at least by cattleship, all the way from Haifa to Karachi the, they

would see me there. So everybody disappeared and myself and forty of the *javāns*, the Mahommedan section, well there was twenty of each so there was twenty Sikhs and twenty Mahommedans and a vet, left in Haifa to transport all these animals from Haifa to Karachi. So that was that and we spent a day or two waiting in Haifa for the ship, because we didn't know what the ship was, and the ship obviously, eventually, arrived in Haifa and we were in [?] Camp which was about twenty miles out, and I was told, 'Right, well take all the chaps in and everything else but leave all the horses behind, you mustn't take the horses', and I thought, 'Crickey, I'm not leaving my charger behind (laughs), I'm taking the mules so I'll smuggle it', so I took it. I had to leave the horses, I couldn't take a hundred horses and put them all on board, so we got down to Haifa to the docks and we were loading the mules on and it was going fine and then I said, you know, to my orderly, 'Pop that horse over the top', you know, just by the mules and it was literally on the crane, halfway up, and this commanding officer, full colonel from Haifa, came down, and he saw the horse, and he shouted, 'Whose bloody horse is that?', and I had to say that it was mine and he said, 'Get it down'. So I couldn't take my horse, I lost my charger, but anyway we set off with a shipload of mules and it was the middle of the hot weather through the Suez Canal and down through the Red Sea and it was a Greek cargo ship which was very interesting because they'd never had animals on it in their lives, it was converted and they didn't know anything about it and obviously by the people who converted it didn't know much about it either. Yes we were on this ship and the mules were sweating, so the vet who had, I had with me was, you know, the only other white officer that I had and he said, 'We'll have to get the mules up from the bottom deck to the top deck to get some fresh air for them to cool off. So he said, 'You'll have to organise it to get all the mules rotated.' Well that was some job but we did it and everyday we used to change them round and it took us sixteen days to get to Bombay doing this, and everyday and that was that, and we got to Karachi in fact and not Bombay, because they altered it, it was, I think it was Bombay originally, but anyway we went to Karachi, and when we got there we unloaded all the mules on to the dockside and there were pens there used for cattle, they are there to this day, of course where the cattle we held to put them all there, so I said to the vet, 'Look we'll have to wait two or three days and feed these animals up', you know, they were down to just bran, there was no corn, they would have gone wild if they'd have gone, we had to reduce their diet day by day over the sixteen days until it was just, they were getting about four pounds or five pounds of bran each, no corn or nothing else, and there was no hay of course, so I said, 'We'll have to keep them here for two or three days', and he said, 'Yes, I agree with you'. So the Station Commander came along and I said, 'Look, I want to stay here for, you know, three days before we march out to camp', it was the other side of Karachi. 'Oh', he said, 'you've got to go out tomorrow morning'. I said, 'Well, I'm not going', and he said, 'You'll do as I tell you otherwise I'll put you under arrest.' So I didn't know what to do so I said, 'Well look sir, don't be silly you can't march these out, they'll die on the way, I mean we're going a long way out and they haven't done anything for sixteen days and they're just on four pounds of bran.' He said, 'I'm very sorry, you'll do as you're told. I said, 'Well be it on your head these mules will die, be, or some of them will.' Well we set off and all the way out of camp there were mules

dropping down and the *javāns* with me they were getting buckets of water to give them to keep them alive and it was criminal.

J.W. : Oh yes, I can imagine.

Major P. : Eventually we got out to the camp and there were a lot of mules missing and a lot of them dying. Well that was that and very shortly, a day or two after that we were all put on the train again and sent up from Karachi to Peshawar. Now when I got back to Peshawar and told the Colonel what had happened, he was absolutely furious, I don't know what happened, I mean, I don't know what action he took but I mean, knowing him he would, by this time we had a Scots colonel, a chap called Finely from Elgin up north, and he, Pat, was an interesting character and he was very angry about it, but I don't know what happened, but the colonel whoever it was, the Station Commander in Karachi should have certainly have been court martialled for being so criminal, but it was cruelty to animals of the worst possible type. I was horrified, so then we got back to Peshawar and we got this new colonel, Pat Finley with his, he'd only one arm and one eye, and as a subaltern he'd been demonstrating in India how to throw a grenade and he thought it was a dummy grenade, and in fact it was a live one and it went off in his hand, and he blew his arm off from there and he blew out his left eye. However it was all repaired and proved to me that you didn't need two eyes to be a gunner. I thought back to the test when I joined up at the O.T.C., the University O.T.C. when they tested your eyes and I must be honest I cheated a bit because I'm slightly blind in one eye, I can see people and pictures but I can't read a thing, so that when I was going to have my test at the Varsity I was fortunate, I was given a bottle, told to pee into, and I took plenty time and I could see the chart where they were testing the eyes so I memorised the first four lines and fortunately when it came to my turn to get my eyes tested he didn't juggle the lines and he just asked me to read the first line, then the second, then the third, then the fourth, and I got A1 eyesight. So it worked but in fact I didn't need my left eye because I didn't have one, it didn't work, and even to this day when I use binoculars I shut my left eye and just use it as a monocular.

J.W. : Right, okay, so you, you came back to Peshawar and then you said you were at Landi Kotal for a while?

Major P. : Yes I was posted up to Landi Kotal.

J.W. : How long were you there?

Major P. : Oh about five months I think it was, five or six months.

J.W. : And what was that doing there, just sort of keeping order?

Major P. : It was guarding the Frontier against any possible invasion form the north and, of course, the local tribesmen as well. It was a nice station there, I liked Landi Kotal. When I was there I had an interesting experience, I think you might be

interested in this. I got a note one day that General Wavell was coming up to see me and I, 'I wonder what General Wavell wants to come up the Khyber Pass to Landi Kotal for?', there you are, and by this time I was commanding the Battery, I was Major. So anyway I, he appeared with his staff car (telephone rings).

J.W. : Do you want to answer that?

Major P. : Wavell, and I knew he was coming, and he appeared and I met him out the staff car at the Battery mess, and he said he'd come up to see me because, he said , 'I want to know if we can make Gurkhas into mountain artillery gunners', and I said , 'Oh, why's that, sir?', and he said, 'Well we're short of troops and we've got a surplus of Gurkhas and I thought we might make gunners out of them.' So I said, 'All right sir, come down the Battery lines', of course he knew what mountain artillery was, I mean he, you know, had been in the Indian Army himself, in fact, was in the Indian Army, and so I said, 'Right', and we went down the Battery and I said to him, 'Well these mules are fourteen and a half hands high and those Gurkhas are not very big. How are they going to be able to lift the cradle which weighs four hundred pounds and put it on top of the mule because it takes four men to do it?', and he said, 'Well, let's try', so we tried (laughs) but of course they couldn't raise ... .

J.W. : They hadn't got the reach.

Major P. : They hadn't got the reach to get the cradle on to the top, because there's a knack in doing it, you've got to lift it right up, move over, four of you, and drop it slowly and not let it drop down otherwise you'll break the mule's back, so he said very quickly, 'Obviously this is hopeless, we can't do it.' I said, 'Well you can't have smaller mules, they can't carry the gun', it's the weight of the gun that they've got to carry is up to four hundred pounds, I mean that bit (**Major P.** indicates on an illustration) is up to four hundred pounds, what you call the cradle. The rest are a bit less, I mean these are about three hundred and forty, three hundred and fifty pounds, all the bits, but that was the big one, and he said, 'Right, that's the end of my little scheme, and I said, 'There's one more thing, I don't think the Gurkhas, the little I've known them, and I've fought with them up at Razmak and Wana', I said, 'I've been in action with them', I said, 'although they can work a compass I don't know if they'd be able to work a dialsight. I know they can work rangefinders to find the ranges, I don't think they'll be able to work the dialsight because it's quite tricky, you need quite a good mathematical brain', and not all the Indians could work the dialsight in our gun team, we had to pick the ones that were good mathematically. So he said, 'That's a point, I hadn't thought of that. That's the idea scrubbed', and that's why to this day there are no Gurkha gunners.

J.W. : Oh, I see.

Major P. : That's the reason. 'A', they're not big enough and 'B' they're not mathematically equipped to work the dialsight.

J.W. : Right and how about, you were just saying you were in Razmak.

Major P. : Yes.

J.W. : Well, that was before you went to Africa?

Major P. : No, no it was after.

J.W. : Was that after, just was that after you were in Landi Kotal?

Major P. : Afterwards, in Landi Kotal we went to Wana and then we went to Razmak. Och it was just a matter of months, they moved ... .

J.W. : They were just moving you around.

Major P. : Moved batteries around from one to the other and it was good because you were in various stations. Razmak was the longest from base, it was a long way from railhead to Razmak for goods and ammunition. Wana was quite a lot, way away but it wasn't so far. Landi Kotal of course was quite near to Peshawar and the train goes right up the Khyber Pass and there's a good road, albeit it's very twisty.

J.W. : So how was it out in these stations on the Frontier?

Major P. : It was very good actually, very healthy, you were up in the hills. You were not too hot in the summer. It was hot-ish and in winter you could get the odd flake of snow. In, Wana and Razmak and Landi Kotal and these places were healthy staions and you got to know people very well in it, the other regiments, the Punjabis or the Rajputs or Frontier Force Rifles or whoever all the regiments were, the Scouts, the Tochi Scouts and all these people. You know it was great experience because you got to know them and you worked with them because you used to go out and open the road.

J.W. : Road opening, yes.

Major P. : Which was a standard performance. That wasn't a daily performance but it was about every fortnight or so. That was good experience. There's a very funny story about that. I'd had by this time posted to me a very nice chap, a very nice chap, a Pathan officer, Faisullah Khattak, he was the maths master at the school outside Peshawar, and that's how he got into mountain artillery, he just joined up for the War, he was a good man and he spoke very good English and of course his Pushtu was perfect.

J.W. : Obviously (laughs).

Major P. : And of course he spoke Hindustani as well so he was a great asset and I was very fond of Faisullah and he and I got on very well. He was a real Pathan, and

he said one day, 'Can I have a few days' leave I've got one or two things to sort out in my village up on the Frontier', so I said, 'Oh go on, away you go, Faisullah, for ten days', and away he went. Well when he was away we had to go and open the road and he wasn't there, of course, and when he came back from leave I said, 'How did you get on?', 'Oh', he said , ' I got everything sorted out.' He said, 'You know the Battery works jolly well on road opening.' I said, 'How the hell do you know?', he said, 'Oh I sat and watched you. In fact I fired a few shots at you' (laughs). I said, 'My God Faisullah', he said, 'Oh I had to go out because my local village was going out to try and break up the convoy. I couldn't not go.' So he said, 'I couldn't not go, but I didn't fire at you, I fired over your head (**J.W.** laughs). So I mean, it's only out there in a place like that that these things could happen.

J.W. : Exactly, yes, yes.

Major P. : He was a good chap, I often wonder what's happened to him since, he was a good officer. I think he would go back to being a schoolmaster, Islamia College was where he taught.

J.W. : Oh yea, yes.

Major P. : Do you know it?

J.W. : Oh yes.

Major P. : It's between Peshawar and Landi Kotal.

J.W. : A beautiful building.

Major P. : That's right, well that's where he was the maths master.

J.W. : Oh right, I see, so how long were you sort of posted on the Frontier then?

Major P. : Well that's interesting, I was there for about a year and I was getting a bit tired of this. By this time the Japs were in the War and there was a lot of fighting going on in Burma and I was stuck up on the Frontier and I was thinking, 'Oh I don't want to do this forever', so cutting a long story short I volunteered to join Combined Operations and I was posted down to Columbo in Ceylon to, actually to Trincomalee Harbour which is near Columbo and it took me four days and five nights to get there by train.

J.W. : It would do, yea.

Major P. : It's a long journey, I did the whole of India from Peshawar to Columbo.

J.W. : Wow, that's some trip.

Major P. : On my own that was, some trip, and I'm glad I did it because I saw the whole of India.

J.W. : Exactly, yea.

Major P. : It was a very great experience and anyway I did that, then I went to Trincomalee then, and then I trained with the navy and I learned Naval gunnery and how to fire naval guns cause there was, I and one or two more were to be dropped by submarine on the Malayan coast the night before the invasion, of the re-invasion of Malaya, we trained for this, how to, how to understand the naval guns cause naval guns have a very low trajectory, they fire very low as compared to mountain guns which fire very high (laughs), and so that was good training and I learned all about naval guns. However at the last minute, the whole thing at the last minute was called off because Lord Louis Mountbatten couldn't get enough landing craft, the rest of the landing craft that were available had all been taken up to land in Sicily so our thing was cancelled, so I was then told I was no longer wanted, and I was on the H.M.S. Sheffield cruiser ship and there was a Vice-Admiral who was in charge, a charming man, he said , cause he knew me quite well by then, he said, 'Well young man, where do you want to go, see, because I'm finished with you, I've no further use for you because we're going to be posted somewhere else in the Far East.' So I said, 'I don't know', so he said, 'Well you can go where you like' (laughs), I said, 'I can go to London or Edinburgh?', and he said , 'Wherever you want you can go', this is true. So common sense prevailed, I though, 'I'm a trained mountain gunner and I've got all this experience with the Navy, I can't just go away back to Britain', so I said to the Admiral, 'Well look sir, I think I think I'd better go back to Delhi and report to the gunner at Artillery in Delhi' cause I'd no idea was by this time, I'd lost all contact. So he said right, I was given a first class ticket from Columbo to Bombay and then by Bombay, by train to Delhi all first class.

J.W. : Very nice.

Major P. : So this was a *P and O* liner that I ended up getting from Columbo and there was nobody on it except the crew and me. It took me a day and a half to go from Columbo to Bombay. I spent the whole of the time learning to play liar dice with the officers, the naval officers taught me how to play liar dice and I got there, got on the train and got to Delhi, then I got a bit cold feet, I didn't know what to do. So I thought, 'There's only one thing to do, I'll go to headquarters and ask for the Master Gunner, he's the boss'. Part of my training, always go and see the boss, so I went into the headquarters in Delhi and I said, 'Can I see the Master Gunner?', and they said, well, who was I and I said who I was, and he said, 'Wait a minute', so I waited a minute and then eventually an officer came down from upstairs and said, 'Yes the General will see you, he's quite interested to know what you've been doing.' So up the stairs I went. So I told him all what I'd been doing, that I'd been with the Navy and I'd been trained, because he was a gunner himself, and oh, he was intrigued with all this , and he said, 'Well what do you want to do?', and I said, 'Well I don't mind sir, I'm at a loose end now, I'm fully trained', so he said, 'Well look I'll

get the Brigadier to fix you up', so he phoned the B-R-A up, Brigadier Royal Artillery downstairs and he said, 'Look I've got this chap Ronnie Paul up here I think you'd be interested to chat to him to see if you can fit him in somewhere.' So down the stairs I went and the Brigadier heard all the story and what I'd done and all the rest of it and he smiled and said, 'Well as it so happens I've got a position that might suit you', I said, 'Oh yes, sir, he said, 'How would you like to command your old battery?' 'Oh', I said, 'I can't believe it'. 'Yes', he said, 'the Battery commander has suddenly taken ill with cancer of the testicles and he's going to have to go home', and he said , 'would you like the job?', 'Oh', I said, 'yes sir', so that was that I just get on the train from Delhi straight up and go to Kohat, I had to go to take over, the Battery was there at Kohat, that proved to me that you always go to the top.

J.W. : Yep, it always counts. So how long did you command the Battery for?

Major P. : Well I commanded the Battery, oh, for about a year I suppose.

J.W. : Right.

Major P. : And then of course the War was, the German war finished, of course, and there was just the Japanese and they didn't want gunners, they already had too many gunners, so again I really was at a lose end, there was no war because the Japanese war was out, they didn't want anyone else, so I was sent back home here and posted to a British regiment of twenty-five pounders and I was made adjutant there, och, it was just a pointless job really, I didn't do very much, and they were posted to Germany and I went across with them to Germany for about a month or two, spent my time riding horses. That was a funny story because we were stationed at Hanover, and it was near General von [Meinstein's] Hanover estate and he was a prisoner of war and he was on the court for having sided with Hitler, and he was really under arrest and he was going to be tried, court martialed, and his brother who was a farmer from Silesia in Germany had come up to take over his estate and look after it for him while he was in gaol, really, with the British. Well he had a whole lot of horses on it, he had about sixteen horses and a groom and nobody to organise and thingumme so I used to go out with the grrom and exercise these horses while General von [Meinstein] was being tried, and one day the Colonel came to me and said, 'Look you're not going to believe this but', he said, 'there's a lot of prisoners who've escaped'. I said. 'Escaped?'. and he said, 'Yes, they're all Polish prisoners, Russian prisoners and most of them have been in camps, the Germans', and they've been starved and they're running around shooting the cattle and the sheep', and he said , 'I gather that they're going to raid [Meinstein's] estate so you'd better go and sit tonight and take some troops with you', and anyway to cut a long story short I went there, knocked ion the door, a long delay and he came, this very tall, Prussian German, and what did I want?, and I said, 'Well I'm coming here and I'm going to defend you against a possible attack and I want to see around the house and station some troops with their rifles and things round there.' 'Oh', he said, 'you can't come in here', he pointed to a notice which was, had been produced by the Army of Occupation, you know, 'This is Private Property', I said, 'Oh that may be but your

lives are under threat, anyway I'm not interested in you, I'm interested in protecting the estate and the animals and everything else, so just get out the way sir.' He was furious, absolutely livid because he couldn't do anything and I went into the lounge, I will never forget it, and there were these two ladies dressed in black sitting there and this turned out to be general von [Meinstein], General von [Meinstein's] wife and his brother's wife, and I said, 'I'm very sorry ladies you're going to have to go upstairs to the bedroom, I'm going to have to put some men in here, they're going to have some rifles at the windows', there were a lot of windows, and they were furious, they almost refused to get up, however, they did go, but fortunately nobody raided the place but shortly after that, thank God, I was posted home for discharge so I left the Regiment in Hanover , it was still there when I got posted out.

J.W. : Okay, so how was that, then, what did you do after you were discharged then?

Major P. : Well I took the train up here to Edinburgh, stood all night - there was no room to sit, yet alone sleep, just stood all night on the train, it was packed, you know, troops coming and going, got home here to Edinburgh and then went to stay with my father and in Edinburgh, and I said, 'Right, well, here I am, what am I going to do?', and he said, 'Right, well you'd better come and, you know, run the factory because I'm getting past it and things are in a bit of a mess.' So I said, 'Right', he said, 'added to the fact', he said, 'I've just married your aunt', so my aunt so happened was my mother's sister, two brothers and married two sisters, so I knew her very well, she was a charming lady and I was delighted for both of them because my uncle had died and so they had a home and I went and stayed with them at Learmouth Terrace down on the Queensferry Road there, and that was me, and I went into the factory to see what was going on and then of course I realised all the chaos and saw what I had to do so I had to start from scratch and sort it all out and I hadn't much time to do anything else except work. I didn't mind, it didn't bother me, and I'd fortunately had such good training in Wakefield in Yorkshire, but I was glad I had actually been offered, I didn't tell you, I had been offered to go to Cambridge, to Pembroke College, and I had fortunately turned that down because I wouldn't have been able to take charge of the factory if I'd gone to Cambridge, I wouldn't have known the technical side of it, so in fact I had made the right decision as it so happened.

J.W. : And did you find it sort of, because obviously you'd sort of been round the world and done all this. Did that make it easier to settle in that you had that sort of specific job to do?

Major P. : It wasn't difficult, and the reason it wasn't difficult was because of the good training that I'd had in the Indian Army.

J.W. : Right, aha.

Major P. : I'd had good officer's, good training, and therefore I was equipped to take charge, the factory had almost three hundred people in it - it was nothing to me to take charge of three hundred people, I'd already commanded a battery with three hundred people in it and, you know, a hundred animals, so it wasn't difficult to take charge, and as I told you I'd had the two years' vital training on the factory floor in *Rhodes* in Wakefield, so that I knew about tin box machinery, so that nobody could pull the wool over my eyes. Had I gone to Cambridge or Oxford or even Edinburgh I'd have been well trained in the economics but I wouldn't have known anything about the engineering so it was the best training I had.

J.W. : And did you, how did you, you were posted to that British regiment and then you went, how did it feel leaving India when you had to leave, when you were sort of suddenly shunted away like that, did you regret ... ?

Major P. : I did.

J.W. : Because I remember you saying you applied for the post up in Gilgit and this sort of thing and would have liked to have stayed.

Major P. : And I had, if I had my life over again I wouldn't have made a different decision, I would have, still have stayed had I been able to.

J.W. : It was just the way things ... .

Major P. : The way things happened it was like the guy I tossed with to go to Peshawar and Malaya, he got killed, I'm here, he got killed in the Burma campaign so I wouldn't have been here.

J.W. : Just on the flip of a coin.

Major P. : It was on the slip of a coin I'm here alive today.

J.W. : And how, obviously now, since then you've said you've been back to India.

Major P. : With my second wife, yes.

J.W. : Was that important to you to go back and to see everything?

Major P. : It was important, yes, I wanted to go back, but then I had an, I had a dual interest because she'd never been to India and the idea of going there with somebody who knew it appealed to her and she loved it, and she took it all in. My wife's a very able lady, she was a surgeon's assistant in the oper ... , a nurse, a theatre assistant, Sir Norman Bruce, he's now dead, but he was in Edinburgh, and then I gave her a job when she got married because they wouldn't employ married women in the medical service in those days, she had to get a job. Her husband was working in Scottish Newcastle Brewers and she couldn't, she had no, had any children, so she was at a

lose end and she applied for this job, I was advertising for a personal manageress and she applied for it and, and she came up and she saw my works director and he thought she was a nice girl and he said, 'Look I think this girl would make a good personal manager, you know, she's a theatre assistant, everything else, you know, she's got the attitude', so I interviewed her and took her round the factory and told her what she's have to do, and I said, 'By the way in addition to looking after all the staff and engaging all the staff and their health and everything else you'll have to supervise the canteen because that comes under you.' 'Oh', she said, 'I'm not used to doing that'. 'Oh', I said, 'you'll soon learn how to do that.' She said, 'Can I think about it?', and away she went. Fortunately she came back and said she would take the job. Se we trained her, she went on courses and everything else in the University of Edinburgh, and she eventually became one of the chief personnel managers in the whole of Scotland, she was superb. She became a Companion of Honour, she was so good, and then her husband died, then my wife died six months later, and by this time, of course, she knew all my family, she'd been twenty-one years as my personal manager or manageress and she knew all my family and my child ... , grandchildren, she was at their weddings and their christenings, so she knew them all and she was on her own and I was on my own, and I met her and said, 'Let's go and have dinner and a chat about old times [?]', so I said to her, 'I think we should get married, what do you think?' She said, 'Well that's not a bad idea though I've still got my mother alive, I've got to look after her.' Well I said, 'That doesn't matter, all my children are up and away, you know them all and you know the grandchildren', so we got married and that's eleven years ago now. So here I am.

J.W. : And you, just one final thing, I think we've, we've covered everything haven't we, but with the, the association, that is the Indian Army Association and that sort of thing, is that very important to you, the sort of memories?

Major P. : It's important, it's not vital, I'm going to an Indian Army luncheon party at Hopetoun House, you know, Lord Linlithgow's palace, they're having a, there's ninety-five of us going, all ex Indian Army people and it's just a luncheon party and it's just a bit of fun, and they do this every year but I think this may be the last.

J.W. : Really?

Major P. : Or the next one, well we're all getting old, I mean I'm seventy-eight and some of them are eighty-one, eighty-two and you know it can't go on, it'll die, but while there's enough of us it's good fun and there's a Mountain Artillery dinner every year in London. I've been to every third year, I don't go every year, it gets a bit boring, and they're talking about giving that up next year, that'll be the last one, so some of these things'll die, I'm afraid, but it's important yes, but not vital.

J.W. : Yea it's just an element of your life and that sort of thing.

Major P. : I'm just sorry that some of my children couldn't have had some of the experiences that I had. I've had some wonderful, marvellous experiences, I've been a lucky young man and luck does play a part, I mean, the toss of a coin I'm here.

J.W. : Well I think that's about everything.

Major P. : Well does that suit you? Does that help you?

J.W. : Yes, unless you can think of anything else I think we've covered a lot.

Major P. : No I think I've covered most of it.

J.W. : Yes, more than covered it, covered it and halfway back again.

Major P. : What I can tell you, and I think everybody who I meet, and I still meet these chaps, you know, once a week, some of them down at the golf club at Muirfield, I play down at Muirfield, and quite a few of them members, we all are very grateful for the army training, and we all feel that it's awfully sad that they've stopped taking on recruits in the way that they used to. It's good training, even if it's only a year everybody could do with a year's service whether it's the army, the navy or the air force, you see the world and you meet other people, and I've met people I would never have ever met, and broadened my outlook and given me a lot of pleasure and a lot of enjoyment so I think that's important.

J.W. : Okay, well, I think that's about everything. Thank you very much for your time.

Major P. : Not at all, delighted to give it to you.

J.W. : That was very interesting, I'll ... .

The tape is switched off.

Major Peter Rattray
45th Rattray Sikhs
No date specified (between 1983 and 1987)

K.P. represents Kim Prior and **Major R.** represents Major Rattray.

K.P. : I'm interviewing Major Peter Rattray born 2nd December 1914. Could you please tell me where you were born and any details about your parents.

Major R. : Yes I was born in Dera Ishmail Khan which is up on the Frontier of India in in 1914. My father was then a Major in the 45th Rattray Sikhs and I don't think I can tell you very much more about my birth actually but I have various memories and I think my first one was in Simla. I don't remember my father but the first thing I remember was in Simla sitting down in a very small room with a birthday cake with one candle on it and I think it must have been my sister's birthday and then the next thing I remember that same bungalow with the orderly and him telling me how to halt and be drilled in the front of the thing and then there was a fire down in the, there was a stick bank in front of the bungalow and there was a fire and every time they threw buckets of water on large flames flared up in the air. The other thing I remember about this was seeing going up into the into the pine forests and seeing enormous kind of palisades with the ropes running through and they told me of course that it was to pull the guns up but I suspect it was something to do with the logging in that part of the forest. Now let me see what I remember after that. Next thing I remember really is the troopship coming home. This was in 1918. Came home on the *Titantic*, no, was it the *Titantic*? Can't remember really. But anyway and then I came home and then I was home until 1946 when I went back to India again.

K.P. : What ... .

Major R. : Having been at Sandhurst.

K.P. : What happened to your father you ... ?

Major R. : He was killed, well the regiment was wiped out in 1917 first of February at the Battle of [?] it was outside Kut-el-Amara and the regiment went in and I think about fourteen or so men came out otherwise they were all killed.

K.P. : Did your mother come from an Indian based family?

Major R. : Sorry?

K.P. : Did your mother come from and Ind ... .

Major R. : No she didn't actually my mother was the daughter of, of Mr. Piper of in Shropshire and my mother met my father just near Ramsgate. She came to keep house for her brother who was a doctor and met my father that's where they met and then my her other sister married a local farmer there so you see they all kind of wheels within wheels. Then I came back. Then I went back in 1946, 1934 having gone been having gone to Sandhurst, and I joined the Norfolk Regiment in Jhansi, I went on H.M.S. [*Neuralia*] I've got a picture in the in the book in the photograph book and I was a year with the Norfolk Regiment where I was supposed to learn Urdu which I didn't but I had a very good time and other than there wasn't an awful lot as far as India was concerned during that time one was just with a British battalion and then I went and joined the 45th Sikhs they were Rawalpindi 5th of February 1940, '35 and I always remember getting off the train and seeing the Adjutant who was an enormous man about six foot six and I think his name his name was Taura, Captain Taura, and he overawed everybody I think when they first saw him and we went we went back we were stationed in the cantonment in Rawalpindi then and we all the men were on leave because we'd been posted to Chitral and so they were given six months leave before they went and six months at the end because they were on a on a four year, two year posting or thirty-six, yes four year posting so they went on six months before they went up and then went to Chitral and then when they came back they got another six months at the end. So there was nobody much in the battalion and I was given a company to command straight away having been dipped in at the bare, at the deep end, but fortunately I had a very old experienced *subadar* who really did most of the commanding you know stood behind me and told me what to do kind of thing and it was really very interesting. Anyway when the Battalion came back we went on a lot of route marches because I don't know what it was to get us fit for [because when as we] went up to Chitral in lorries or aeroplanes it was it was but it was get to knock the holiday spirit out I suspect of everybody who'd been in the been on leave. 'Pindi wasn't not awfully eventful though I remember one very interesting thing. We had at that time we were handing in *Lewis* guns and taking taking out *Vickers Berthier* guns which was a one that before the *Bren* gun was issued *Vickers Berthier* and we were walking round the lines one day with a C.O. and there was a small Sikh boy playing something a tubular thing in the dust so the *subadar*, *havildar major* went over to have a look and it was a complete *Lewis* gun which nobody which nobody owned of course but this was very often done in the army because they it was a terrible thing if you lost part of an arm or if you lost a whole one so if it was possible to collar a spare one it might be it might come in very useful to cover up on some sort of occasion so this was obviously what had happened in this case. Nothing much else I don't think although I remember going on these route marches being very hot and the *havildar* who was the kind of waiter mess waiter came and stood when you dismissed and came to your quarters he was there with a large jug of lemon juice to wash your thirst away. Now what else can I tell you?

K.P. : Going back a bit you were educated at Sandhurst. Where else ... ?

Major R. : Sorry?

K.P. : Where else were you educated apart from Sandhurst?

Major R. : I went to Cheltnam College and I was there until I went to Sandhurst 1930 you went eighteen months at Sandhurst so it would have been halfway through thirty-three.

K.P. : Was it always were you definitely always going to go back to India?

Major R. : Oh yes I was actually a King's Cadet King's India Cadet which was no merit of mine in this it was because my father and my grandfather had been in the Regiment. My grandfather raised the regiment in 1856. He was one of the only officers infantry officers to command the Viceroy's bodyguard and rather a colourful fellow with large flowing beards and hair you know all over the place and he wore very flamboyant sort of clothing too and he commanded the Viceroy's bodyguard and then was taken sent to raise a police battalion and it was the first Bengal Native Police Battalion and it consisted of one thousand infantry five hundred cavalry and some muzzle loading guns and he marched them down, he recruited them from Ranjit Singh's army, they were trained by the French and then he marched so they must have had some semblance of order among them because almost straight away and then he marched them down the Grand Trunk Road to Bengal and he held the whole of Bengal, this is written in all the history books and he held the whole of Bengal against the mutineers which was really quite an quite an effort and then after the Mutiny was finished he, he went off and became Inspector of Police Battalions and things like that but the regiment was then made 45th Battalion Rattray Sikhs Bengal, Bengal Infantry and it didn't become the other didn't become part of the Indian Army, well that was the Indian Army, but it didn't become anything else until later it was then marked the 11th Sikh regiment and all the Sikh battalions were marked together became the 3rd battalion and now then it became to 3rd Battalion The Sikh Regiment, 3rd Battalion Rattray Sikhs The Sikh Regiment because each battalion was different, 1st were the first battalion, 2nd Ludhiana Sikhs, 3rd Rattray Sikhs *et cetera et cetera* like that and this this is the Sikh Brigade tie.

K.P. : Which is green, gold ... .

Major R. : Green it's green, green background with yellow or gold and red and a white stripe. The white stripe, they're supposed to be each battalion the red one's the 1st Battalion I'm not actually one hundred per cent certain that this white one is the 3rd Battalion and whether the yellow is the 1st 2nd Battalion Ludhiana Sikhs I don't know but I know it's supposed to a combination of all the colours of all the all the, each individual battalion.

K.P. : When you went back to India what impressions did you have after arriving back after a childhood in England?

Major R. : I don't remember an awful lot of it you know from what I'd what I'd remember before I wasn't so surprised as some people because India is quite different to anywhere else. It's a tremendous number of people and everybody walking in different directions as far as one can make out but I seem to remember from way back which made it no so surprising to me as I think to some people. I didn't remember much in the way of language although I must have talked to my *āyā* in Urdu but it didn't you know people say that it comes back to you but I remember, I remember a few nursery rhymes in Urdu obviously taught me by my by my *āyā* but I didn't the language didn't suddenly come flowing back as one is lead to expect that it would happen. I had to learn the thing all over again.

K.P. : Do you still remember them?

Major R. : What the nursery rhymes? Oh yes yes.

K.P. : Could you?

Major R. : Yes yes would you like to hear them? (**Major R.** recites some Urdu rhymes). That's 'Little Jack Horner' and then 'Humpty Dumpty' [Urdu] (laughs). These are the *āyās* used to teach. And then there's the other one which is 'Daisy' you know the song 'Daisy' they used to sing this [Urdu]. Do you understand this in Urdu? None at all? No? It's all a kind of literal translation, not very grammatic I don't think, I think some *āyā* who was more intelligent than the other kind of translated it, put it more or less into verse and then it got handed around everybody so you'll probably get this from a lot of your other interviewers, interviewees.

K.P. : When you, your year with the Norfolk Regiment could you tell me a little about that?

Major R. : I was Platoon Commander I was given a platoon. I had a very experienced sergeant Sergeant Patrick. Most the men were nearly all Norfolk men and the NCO's were Cockneys. Very good combination actually because it was a very excellent battalion. It was the 1st Battalion The Norfolk Regiment and yes very, very good. The men were extraordinarily, a lot of them couldn't even write or read and you'd have thought in those days 1936 really they ought have been able to do something like that but they couldn't one or two of them, but I did insist that they should or the C.O. insisted that they should be able to write their name to sign for their pay- none of this kind of putting your thumb impression on it like that. So that was that was something that was interesting. They were very good. I remember we went off on a scheme for about a week or a couple of weeks or something like that and they did very, very. I never went

with them up on the Frontier but they did very well on this scheme, it was a good battalion actually, very good boxing and very good at all kinds of sport. Sometimes that doesn't go together with a good battalion they're inclined they're inclined to take the boxing very seriously and leave the rest of the thing but it worked quite well quite a good battalion that and I was very lucky to go to them. Nothing really much else. We were in Jhansi all the time the, there were some barracks for Indian troops but none of the Indian battalions were there because I think there was something happened up in Mohmand country and they were they'd been called away and I think the only one left there was the Norfolk Regiment so when ... .

K.P. : What about mess life and social traditions and ... ?

Major R. : They that was now I'll tell you something rather, rather funny because we had two Indian officers attached to the Norfolk Regiment when I was there and they we were they treated us all very well indeed until they had they had a ladies' guest night and when a ladies' guest night came along we were told we couldn't come and we suspected it was because we, that the some, some of the Indian officers were Indian, Indians you see and we suspected that that's what it was but we were told there wasn't room but we think that well as we know that the best table had very many leaves that could be added to it and there were a lot of spare chairs all round the place we thought that that was really rather a hollow excuse. But one was a Hazara officer and the other I don't know what he was I think he was a Punjabi Mussulman or something like that but two very good very nice officers and I know them well and I met them again afterwards I think. What else can I tell you? Nothing nothing very little happened in Jhansi we seemed to be spending most of our time guarding this that and the other thing and there was nobody else there so there wasn't much in the way of in the way of social life between battalions because they were no other battalions.

K.P. : What about relations with other with civilians?

Major R. : Sorry with the ... .

K.P. : With civilians.

Major R. : No there weren't not really not really very much. You know the army was very inclined to life within itself. If there were other battalions you got asked out and they came back but if there weren't any then you kind of lived within your own with your own sphere you had very little to do with any civilians. We used to have guest nights. You know in those days when we first started we wore these high collars and stiff shirt fronts and all this kind of thing and we used to wear mess kits every night except for Saturdays and Sundays and then you were allowed to put on your dinner jacket but then you put on your dinner jacket and you wore your stiff shirt and your stiff collar so it wasn't really that much more comfortable but we used to I was U.L.I.A.,

Unattached Listed Indian Army so we used to patrols used to wear overalls you know what an overall (?) overalls tight fitting breeches that fitted absolutely you wore a boot underneath and the breech, breech came over the top of the boot and had an elastic down round the outside of it and they were tight fitting really like modern day jeans that some of these girls wear (laughs) frightfully uncomfortable and you wore those and you wore a patrol blue patrol jacket which had a which had a came right up to your collar and you wore a white white collar inside it I think perhaps they wear patrols now and we used to a side hat with it that was worn on every dinner every dinner night every night and every week the C.O. used to come and that used to be the C.O.s and we used to drink to the King and all this kind of business and so on.

K.P. : Did you take part in any particularly sporting activities while you were in the regiment?

Major R. : Any?

K.P. : Sport.

Major R. : Sport oh yes. I used to play cricket for them for the Battalion for the Norfolks I wasn't quite good enough to play hockey for them but some of the Indian officers that were with them played, played hockey for them. Yes there was a lot of there was a lot of but that was these were the main sports was hockey and cricket, cricket. There was a fanatical core of cricketers who if I ever thought if they ever thought I was letting up on it used to Harry me down to arrange a match of some sort against the against the Ordinance or something like those. But very hot in Jhansi you know in the hot weather temperatures of 120 in the shade and the worst of it was that it used to be very hot at night about 100, 110 at night which made it very difficult to get to sleep. It's easier in other parts of the world where it's a high temperature during the day and it gets very cold at night you get a good night's rest and so you can are we nearly finished?

(End of side one)

Major R. : Ready?

K.P. : Just one or two small things that I remember about Jhansi. One was that we used to go fishing never very successfully but it was a kind of let up from kind of army army part. We used to get go on our bicycles and bicycle down the railway track. As only one train in about every three days passed along the track we were fairly, fairly safe especially on these bridges which had no you could look down between the sleepers and you saw about thirty or forty feet down below and you clutched your bicycle hoped swearing never to let go of it in case you fell between the sleepers that was one thing we used to do and the other thing was we went we my C.O. was sent up to the hills I think

the name of the place was [Khylarna] anyway we went by train to the base and we from there we were going to march up because in those days companies used to take it in turns to get out of the hot weather used to go up to the hills to kind of unwind a little bit and we went up we arrived at the base and everything was unloaded and we moved we moved it to a large open space which had a number of fig trees enormous great fig trees and the officers' mess was set up under one of these fig trees fig trees and all the paraphernalia cooking pots and everything like this and the cook started off Indian cook started up a very smoky fire I suppose he was going to boil the tea or something like that and the smoke wafted up into this fig tree and out came thousands of the most ferocious bees (laughs) so we all took to our heels took to our heels and fled and everybody fled all around as far away as they possibly could not to get stung and after about half an hour or so the word passed round that it was safe to come back again and when we came back there was still a lot of bees flying around and there was they had a curious thing in India they used to have these things called meat safes and they were a kind of box with wire netting all around and I suppose the meat was kept in it I don't know we thought it'd be just as hot there as anywhere else however the meat was kept in it and there was this meat safe there was no meat in it but the second in command who was commanding the who in order to get away from the bees had got into the meat safe (laughs) and there he was he was a little man he was a little man with the most enormous handlebar moustache that you could see from behind and there he was sitting in the meat safe grinning, grinning looking out looking out at everybody else not daring to come out this thing really was the most amusing name was Major Cubbitt don't know whether that he'll probably have me up for libel if he ever listens to this tape (laughs). He had a brother who was a great big tall man about six foot three or something like that and he was a senior subaltern he had seventeen years service so you know and his brother was a major second in command and that was really quite an amusing thing and we had a display I see in my album here we had a display of silver I can't remember what it was for I think it was a kind of when the band played when the band played and they displayed all the silver and asked anybody of any importance in the cantonment to come along and have tea and things like that and then there was a display of the drums and all that kind of business. Some of the N.C.O.s used to go and shoot things called [?] which is a kind of camel or I'm not sure if it's a camel or it's a goat it's a kind of it's a kind of wild animal that used to live in the Central Provinces in the jungle, you wouldn't have thought there was much room for any animals considering the number of people that live in India there were those these things called [?] I don't know whether they were good to eat or not but I know that some of the N.C.O.s used to go out and shoot them shoot them I never went on I actually saw them I remember one very amusing incident I went out I thought I better, I did a lot of riding at Sandhurst and I got fairly proficient at it and I got one of the Regimental horses and I went out riding with another bloke and we got overtaken by dark. We were told we were told one was led to believe that the thing to do was to throw your reins over the horse's neck and it find its way home however our horses did nothing but eat the grass (laughs) so we got off these things and it was quite dark couldn't couldn't see where we were going at all we couldn't see, see any stars or

anything else, and we got off and we lead we started to lead our horses and we went on and on and it didn't seem to be able getting out of the bush and then suddenly we came across things and we think we've been around this place before you see we were walking round in circles (laughs) however we managed to get out in the end and we went out and looked at it next day and it was surprising the small area we'd been walking around we'd been walking around in a circle in an area of about an acre and just round and round (laughs) this incredibly getting nowhere and that was really very, very, very amusing. I don't have anything else very much about the Norfolk Regiment.

K.P. : How did your daily routine go?

Major R. : Oh well when, It all depended how many men we had whether they were taking part in a football or boxing, boxing great boxing regiment and I can remember once or twice turning up on a parade and the sergeant Sergeant Patrick saluting very smartly and saying ' 'Fraid Sir everybody's everybody's off on been excused for boxing and there's only you and me.' And so I'd say 'I don't propose to exercise you Sergeant Patrick shall we dismiss?' and so, so we went off, but on a normal day but on a normal day it was small arms training individual training which was taking a *Lewis* gun or whatever it was to pieces and putting it together and learning how to rapid fire your rifle and all this kind of individual, individual thing, making self, and they knew how to use all their weapons and then at certain times of the year you went on section training and then to platoon training and then the culmination of course was when you went to company training and went on an exercise in the end. But so the normal when you had when you had your full compliment in the platoon you were either doing individual training or weapon training or you went on the range there was a fairly comprehensive rifle, each man fired quite a number of rounds of ammunition every, every year and then he was graded as a marksman first class shot second class shot third class shot, you had to be pretty awful to be a third class shot and it was fairly easy to be a marksman didn't mean to say you could hit anything the other end but you know the *Lee Enfield* is really a very good rifle very good rifle it stood an awful lot of knocking about and it really kind of worked very well even when it had a lot of dust and dirt and mud and everything else it seemed to go off all right in the right direction anyway didn't get hit in the foot or something. We didn't have very complicated weaponry the battalion in those days there was one company a machine gun company and then three rifle battalions and the rifle battalion each had a *Lewis* gun each section had a *Lewis* gun and the man was all armed with a rifle and bayonet grenades and that was it so it was none of the *Sten* guns and things like that that came afterwards.

K.P. : Can you tell me a little more about Sergeant Patrick he seems to crop up.

Major R. : Sergeant Patrick yes, yes he was he was a Londoner he came from London very nice man he was firm kind he looked after one he must I think he I think he I think they must have picked the sergeants who they gave the inexperienced officers in charge

of because you'd always very nicely he would would kind of steer you in the right direction and see that you didn't, didn't do anything that was wrong and come to suggest to you what, what you should do and when you should inspect them when you should inspect the lines and all this kind of business, I can remember one day going in with Sergeant Patrick round the lines and there was a man who had been gambling, he said, 'So and so's been gambling' and he'd gambled away all of his clothes and he said, and I said, 'As long as he's got his uniform (laughs) we don't worry very much about the other clothes (laughs) he can go around naked for the rest of the time (laughs) as long as he's properly dressed on parade', but this sort of kind of mentality of one or two of them you know. They were quite good soldiers but not an awful lot of intelligence.

K.P. : How did you fell when you finally got transferred to your Indian Regiment?

Major R. : Oh well I was I always kind of looked forward to going there. I think when I got there it was really quite a shock because it was so different and *vice versa*, at the end when there was Independence I was offered to go back to British service and I said no I wouldn't I had so much independence.

K.P. : How did you find it different?

Major R. : Well it was as a, as a, well, the establishment in India in the British Army the establishment was something in the region of thirty-six officers. In the Indian Army the establishment was thirteen officers which included a medical officer so that was twelve officers, well you only had to have one or two of these off on secondment or doing staff college or you know doing a course of something like that and you were left pretty bare there was an adjutant a quartermaster second in command C.O. that's four of them had gone, that left eight, eight officers with four companies to command you had a signal officer you had a mortar platoon officer, you had a machine gun, well start of all he was a machine gun officer so you had three of those so you see it didn't, it didn't, you, with the H.Q. staff of four and say three specialists, seven, it only left you five officers for secondment and command all the companies, so very often you find yourself commanding two companies because possibly the native officer couldn't speak English so he had some difficulty with the paperwork so although he would command the company as far as the training and things like that you'd have to find have to go into the Company office to do all the paperwork of the other company so so on paper you were commanding two companies at the same time. Yes I joined the Battalion in Rawalpindi, Rawalpindi's quite different a different place from Jhansi. There were tree lined, tree lined streets there were a large number of battalions we weren't we weren't on our own like we were at Jhansi there were large number of battalions so there were a lot of social life there, very active club Jhansi, Rawalpindi club a lot of tennis and these kind of games going which there didn't seem to be so much at Jhansi because I think there were only us there not that many other people to play but it was very much more busy cantonment Rawalpindi. There as I said the battalions were all on leave so there were

only a very few men when I first joined but after me and I got into the way of doing the office work and all this kind of business.

K.P. : Could you tell me a bit more about your *subadar* ?

Major R. : Sorry?

K.P. : Could you tell me a bit more about your *subadar* ?

Major R. : He was, he actually left soon after that he was he was coming to the end of his service and he was when before we went up to Chitral he'd retired so he was just about retiring but he was probably a man with about thirty thirty-six years service something like that thirty-six thirty-eight years service and he would probably have been I can't actually remember in this case he'd have probably possibly been made an Honorary *Subadar-Major* if he wasn't a *Subadar* Man *Subadar-Major* as soon as he retired as Honorary Lieutenant or Honorary Captain and sometimes they were given *jāgīrs* of land which were a parcel of land that the government gave out to long serving officers who were civilian or military and they retired on to this land a very sometimes they would if they had land already because this kind of Sikh we used to recruit were Jat Sikhs which were farmers. There were different castes of Sikhs they maintain that they don't have castes but they do in actual fact they're Labhana Sikhs which who look after the mules there [are] Kutris who are the town Sikhs the ones who keep the shops and all that Labhana Kutri there's the Jat Sikh which is who is the farmer and there's various others [?] who is the iron worker and all those other things and they're very strict in keeping into their own caste they don't marry from one caste into another caste, and we used to recruit all Jat Sikhs except for we had we had a machine gun platoon a mule company it was a whole set of Sikhs who used to look after the mules and each company each platoon had a mule which carried spare guns and ammunition and things like that. Then there was a machine gun platoon which was which had mules to carry the machine guns and the mule's a marvellous animal because a mule will go anywhere where a man will go on two feet and they go most amazing places up hillsides and in and they used to get very well trained you know. I can remember a mule coming to us being very skittish wouldn't be loaded and bolted in every directions things like this and we used to be sentenced to fourteen days and fourteen days consisted of taking the mule on parade and getting, getting two sandbags as heavy as possible and tying them on to his back with about six men holding on to the mule so he couldn't bolt and then letting him go with a couple of with a mule driver with his arm over the mule's neck and lifting him off the feet and the chap the mule used to be allowed to bolt where he wanted until he got tired and eventually they used to get really, really quite quiet and I remember machine gun mules under fire and you know really not absolutely not turning a hair not you know you'd have thought they would bolt but not a bit of it machine guns being fired over their back almost but fired right over them and really it's amazing what you how you can

train them. These were all run by Labhana Sikhs but of course when the War came they all came and mixed up together.

K.P. : Why did you distinguish between the Labhana and the Jat?

Major R. : It was a lot of it was divide and rule you know. We had two companies were recruited to so-called [Maulwa] companies and two companies were [Manja] and the [Maulwa] used to come from one side of the Sutlej and the other used to come to the other side of the Sutlej and there were two promotion rolls kept because normally in the battalions you know had went up were not one class battalions very few one class battalions Sikhs first three battalions of Sikhs were the only ones. The other battalions used to have half Sikhs and half Punjabi Mussulman and so the companies were kept separate but in order to produce some rivalry they used to have [Maulwa] and [Manja] and they used to keep separate promotion runs. It seemed rather ridiculous looking back on it but this was the way the thing worked and then your Labhanas used to look after the mules and then you used to recruit Kutris Sikhs to play in the band because it was alleged I don't know but it was alleged that they were much more intelligent and learned to play musical instruments more readily. We had a brass band when I first joined but later that was changed to a pipe band because and it was much more popular in actual fact and you'd be surprised really because the pipers used to get a lot of private contracts you know how British regiments here they hire their bands out well pipers used to play at weddings and all kinds of things, I don't know what I dread to think what they used to play but I suppose (laughs) suppose Indian and Punjabi music on pipes after all pipes came from India didn't they originally and they were brought by the Celts all through all through Europe right up to and now exist in France in France, Normandy, and then up Ireland or course and Scotland and so it was only kind of going home again and they were very popular the pipes and, but we I think we gave up after recruiting Kutris when we went into a pipe band because there was great competition by anybody to be a piper and we used to get young men young boys in at about seventeen sixteen or seventeen and train then to be pipers and they learnt very, very quickly and very well. Now to go on with what, there were no others others were Sikhs in all the companies and the Jat [Maulwa Manja] business used to be mixed up in the H.Q. company which was a signal the machine gun mortars that kind of thing, mortars we didn't get until the beginning of the War. They started it off with wooden mortars but then that's another story I'll tell you about that later. Now what else can I tell you?

Major R. : Right I'll tell you I'll tell you a bit about the kind of social connection with one's company as a Company Commander in the Indian Army. You of course had no contact with the wives at all because in those days there was very much you know a matter of *pardā* and therefore wives you had no you never saw you never talked to. The only time you did talk to them if you happened to talk to them was if you happened to have to do a censar (*sic*) and then census so if there was a census being taken you had to sit at a desk with probably closely guarded, whether they were guarding you or whether

they were guarding their wives I don't know but two or three *subadar* (laughs) *subadar-majors* and people like that sitting all around you and the wife would come out with heavily, with her head heavily, with her with a sheet over her head so you couldn't see anything and you'd have to question her like that but other in the normal course of events one used to go round the married quarters and the *havildar* used to tell them you were coming and it was all a bit of a thing because everything was specially spruced up for you to have a look at, but, however, I suppose it was a good thing that everything was at least spruced up at least once a week when you were and when you did your inspection and you inspected the whole of the quarter and in the meantime the family went out. There were a lot of children there you used to come talk to them but the women used to kind of disappear. They used to, oh that was an interesting thing about the arrangement on beds. We used to they used to sleep on things called *charpoys* which were issued by the army but the army used to give an allowance for the amount of rope to string a *charpoy* so each so each *sipāhī* had an allowance on the amount of string that we could get so that if he managed to make his string last for a long time and didn't fall through his *charpoy* too quickly he made money out of it (laughs) you see. I suppose this was all a legacy from the days when a man used to produce his own horse and his equipment and everything else like that because they used to buy their own uniform too. It used to be issued from the army and they used to be given a thing called a clothing allowance which I think was twenty twenty-eight rupees a month and then if he needed a new shirt, say six rupees or something like that it was deducted from his clothing allowance and his clothing allowance which was, God I could be wrong one rupee one rupee eight *ānnās* a month used to be deducted until he'd built up twenty-eight rupees in his clothing allowance fund and then from that new equipment used to be bought but they were allowed to take away the old equipment that was considered no longer suitable so that they could you know hand it on to brothers and sisters perhaps or use it themselves on their farms in their time off. That was another interesting thing because this of course all lapsed during the war and they were just issued issued things from the Quartermaster's office but they used to have to buy it before which was quite interesting. The other interesting thing of course was the mess. They used to have they used to recruit cooks and they were very strenuously tested by the medical department and they were all tested they were given stool tests and all these other sort of things to see they weren't carriers so it was really, really very good kind of organisation there were special forms to fill in and a cook when he was recruited was tested and then every six months after that he was tested, tested again to see that he didn't hadn't become a carrier in the in the meantime and they used to not necessarily Sikhs they could be Sikhs but they might be Hindus too and they were just kind of followers, they were non-combatant so they didn't they were issued they weren't issued uniform but they weren't given issued they weren't given any rifles or anything like that any arms. Then in a company you used to have also carpenters bit like the Roman Army in a way except in the Roman Army they all used to be carpenters and tradesmen but we had a certain number of tradesmen, we used to have blacksmiths we used to have armourers we used to have, armourers were generally Punjabi Mussulman because they were better at it they were

[a] special tribe who used to make do make arms you know look after arms and mend them and all the rest, and these cooks used to cook on a great big round iron sheet which was built in over the top over the fire, open fire, wood fire, was stuffed in underneath it and this thing used to get red hot so used to they used to flatten the bread flatten the dough out between their hands and just throw it on and then with a long thing like a big shovel they'd turn it over on top of the thing and they used to make hundreds of these chapattis very good to eat too I may say and then the other ingredient was generally daal of some sort, lentils either [mong] or one or other of these other daals they had and then goat and you'd be surprised the curry with goat you'd think would be strong tasting, it is very strong tasting but it tastes extraordinarily good in curry and they this is what they used to this is what they used to eat. I'll tell you a story about that later which has just come to mind (laughs) but this was a part later on in Chitral. Now what else? This that this was another interesting I'll tell you while I remember it. If you went if you were sent as an advance party to take over a new barracks having moved if your Battalion was moving to another place like say Chitral you were sent on in advance and you used to take up an advance party with you which was several *havildars* several *naiks* a lot of *sipāhīs* and you used to arrive in this place and and everything was laid out, there were certain things that you had to take over like *charpoys* and things like that with or without string and they were all laid out in lines so when you when you counted you counted physically you went down the line counting the *charpoys*. When you started off a line you put one *sipāhī* on that *charpoy* and then you counted down to the end and put another *sipāhī* at the end because it was if you didn't do that then the handing over battalion might well if they were short of a *charpoy* swipe one from one end and put it on to the other end so you counted it twice (laughs) so you went with a large number of men to see that there was fair play as you might say (laughs). But that was that was very interesting. Now what else can I tell you about, the ordinary men used to have barracks of course. I never told you about the Norfolk Barracks did I? Shall I tell you now or shall I yes? In the Norfolk Regiment talking about that they were enormous buildings very high and they used to have, do you know what a *pankhā* is? They had these *pankhās* great big cloth things on the bottom and these things used to come way backwards and forwards and used to stir the air which was very necessary in the very hot time and they used to have a thing called a *khas khas tattī* which was a reed mat which was placed over the doorway at the side where the breeze was coming from and then you had a small child who used to sit outside with a bucket of water and throw water over so that the water ran down the *khas khas tattī* and blew in and blew cold air into the room. These *pankhās* were all linked up, I think originally they must have been hand pulled but they were when I was there they were all linked form one to the other and at the end there was a kind of machine I never actually saw how it was driven or anything like that but there was a machine I think it was electrical machine that was turned on and used to work these work these *pankhās* that used to be interesting. Of course Indian Army you never had anything like that the barracks were very much smaller lower and on the whole Indian troops unless you were a kind of in reserve you weren't inclined to be stationed in places right in the middle of India you were more, I know my Battalion was

always just on of off just off the Frontier and the barracks were very much smaller and they didn't have *pankhās* or anything like that. But the set up was more or less the same in that the *havildars* that's if he was married he had a married quarter if he wasn't then there were quarters there were there were special rooms at the end of the barracks where these people used to have a room to themselves and then the *naiks* and the *lance naiks* which is of course equivalent to a lance corporal used to sleep with the men in the barracks.

K.P. : What were your actual social relations with the troops like?

Major R. : Well we used to, I well, we used to go to go and, we used to go and I used to often go and eat with them in fact I got a great liking for goat and curry and I thought that chapattis were absolutely marvellous so one was sometimes a little bit pushed to eat a little bit in the mess. Yes very good we used to go we used to go and visit them in their villages too. Generally taken round by a senior *subadar* or somebody like that and it was all mapped out so-and-so's going on leave so you'd visit him in such-and-such a village and he would show all you round the village it was kind of almost like a line inspection all over again everything was whitewashed and they tried to impress you especially if it was a village that had half Muslims in it especially how good relations it had but you saw Muslims lived one side and they lived the other side there was a line in between but when the sahib came you see they all entertained you together generally on native spirit and hard boiled eggs in fact at the end of one of these tours you got absolutely heartily sick of (laughs) hard boiled eggs and you didn't really want to see any much of the native spirit anymore (laughs) so it was really rather that was quite interesting.

K.P. : Did you have to do that frequently?

Major R. : Yes, quite, quite, I went on quite a number of them yes if there were any number of men on leave the C.O. took it into his head especially young officers you used to get hold of the *Subadar-Major* and say 'Look we must arrange for the *suba*... young officers to go off and see the men in their villages it's a good thing for them to, to find out how they live' you know and all the rest and we were really rather frightened of the *Subadar-Major* because he wouldn't actually he wasn't quite like a sergeant major in the British battalion the R.S.M. in the British battalion would come up and tell the subaltern off to his face he wouldn't do that quite but he would go to the adjutant if you went out sloppily dressed or something like that and you'd be called up and the *Subadar-Major*'d be there and no good denying it you were sloppily dressed and that was it and you were hauled up in front of the adjutant and you might get extra inspections or extra orderly officers or something like that. You used to have an orderly have a *jemandar*, a *jemandar* or a *subadar* used to be orderly officer of the day and then you'd have field officer of the week which was a British officer because there was so few you see, you did a week at a time and you'd go and turn the guards out and all this

kind of thing you, as an orderly officer you only turned out the you only turned out the regular guards and you walked round the lines in the middle of the night to see that the because they used to have stick guards unarmed because barracks were fairly easy places to get in to and therefore there was a possibility of getting thieves and that so you used to have a stick guard normally on the lines who used to wander round, round the barrack, round not the actual each barracks but I the area used to have a certain number of them. There ... I'm a bit stuck there.

K.P. : Did you see active service whilst on the Frontier at all?

Major R. : Yes I was most more actually after the War do you want at the end of the War do you want shall I jump on to that now?

K.P. : If you want to.

Major R. : When I came back from we were in Middle East most of all the time actually when the Battalion I went came back to the training battalion I was a certain length of time in the training battalion I was training officer and I used to train an awful number of recruits perhaps a thousand, a thousand recruits we had double companies, double companies with a major in command of each of then we used to have a colonel in command of the training battalion and this is all laid down so there is no good me trying to remember what they what they did actually but I was in the training battalion but when we came back from the from the War then I was sent away to command the 6th Battalion up at Razmak because they you know the C.O. had gone been posted somewhere else or something like that so I went up there which was half Punjabi Mussulman half Sikh Battalion and they we went on one column and Razmak they had seventeen inch guns so they used to bring they used to be a fire from the cantonment and they used to they used to they fire something like twenty of thirty miles I think these seventeen inch guns so they used to cover us when we were out on these on these columns and really not very there was you were fired on a bit it was generally pretty inaccurate things pretty much whistled over the top of you if you heard a bit of a crack you knew that that one was fairly close.

K.P. : Where exactly were you, I mean, who exactly were firing at you?

Major R. : Well just Pathans very often you know very often people who just for fun it was their form of fun. I remember very well I was in Kohat and we were we were we were being sent we were sent away for training and I was second in command and I looked back to see the band cause we'd left the band behind and there was, the Bombay Grenadiers had taken over from us and they had, they moved in and I happened to be there and about eleven o'clock at night somebody started to fire into the camp and you saw the flash like that and something a pretty long way away you know and you saw the flash like that and then quite a long time after (**Major R.** imitates sound of a bullet) this

thing came over the top so we reckoned they were firing quite a long way away anyway they fired about a couple of hundred rounds into the camp so where they got the ammunition from I don't know. Anyway they all got they stood to and all the rest of it. I think you know that on the Frontier they got to know if there's a battalion that hasn't been to the frontier for some time because I remember another case where one of the They were Indian Army and then the Rajahs had their own private armies and there was a battalion of Sikhs took over from us who were I think they were Gwallior Rifles or somebody like that but they were extraordinarily good they didn't they got bombed they blew up they blew up their headquarters they went there of course it was just several tiny ones. The first day they went there they mined their headquarters thinking 'Oh well they'll come back to the same one again', but of course they went to another one and this thing blew up in the middle and they got fired on and all the rest of it and they came out really kind of flying colours they were a really good battalion but I can imagine the shambles that happened if they hadn't been so good but they there was a sort of but they knew what when a new battalion came on they could play up a bit. I always remember one very interesting thing. We were in a fort I think. We were in a fort two battalion two battalion fort and the C.O. and I this was after the War the C.O. and I decided that we were getting a bit fed up just sitting in this fort so we ordered the, like a Roman fort it had a gate one end and a gate the other end we ordered two ponies here and there were a series of jumps outside the gates so we got on the ponies here opened the gates and we had an arrangement when they saw us here they'd open the gates again. We got on the horse leapt on there went over all these jumps round the thing and in through that door there (laughs) you see. There was notes came from the Political and you know and people like that you know saying who were these officers who'd gone outside the thing without an escort and all the rest of it like this and got frightfully het up and we said 'Well you didn't catch us did you did you we got in and out before you' and they said 'You mustn't do that very dangerous men' all the rest of it absolute nonsense is that they were a bit upset that they hadn't been consulted and we wanted to go outside but this was interesting on the Frontier in this on this normal ... . We used to have a day a road opening day and the day a road be opened in order to let the convoy in with the rations reinforcements and anyone who had to go away used to go back and so convoys used to go up so battalions would go out so a battalion would go out and it'd be given a certain sector of the road which it had to piquet and it used to send piquets up on the hills that immediately commanded the road so there couldn't be any sniper fire or anything like that. Now you couldn't command it all but you could command the highest hill and you could overlook anything all round so if anyone crept up in the middle and started to fire you could see them from the top and could have a good you could have a pot at him but you never once you picketed the thing nothing used to happen very much. What used to happen was that when you started to come off the pickets they would very often fire at you. You came, they got very quick we were all very quick at coming off the hill we used to take a few men off, the slowest ones, and they were sent half way off the hill to a certain position and then the others used to come off afterwards having perhaps fired some shots if they'd been fired at but otherwise they would come off the hill and they'd

never come off the hill the same way because another favourite thing to do was to ambush them on the way back so if you went up that way you might come back that way but you might also come back that way but you might also come round that side of the hill there weren't that number of alternatives but that was general principle of the thing and when you were withdrawing piquets you always used to have a covering force so you could retake the piquet if anyone was wounded because you'd never leave your any wounded out wounded or dead bodies actually out on the piquet because the Pathans used to mutilate ... (Recording breaks off).

Major R. : About nine months after I joined my battalion in Rawalpindi we moved to Chitral. Now this was a move that entailed part of a move by rail and part of a move by road and then a part of the move by walking. The rail move was interesting from two or three points of view. When we had with our mules in our mule platoon we had mule carts and they were most ingenious things, absolute boneshakers but they took to pieces absolutely took to pieces and every part of them came apart and packed flat. Very easy too and they were all put together with split pins you know that kind of pins that stuck in and these were all taken to pieces and put into the railway carriages and packed very nicely because they took it to pieces and everything for the journey was prepared months before, a list was got out of what food the officers needed other than stuff they could produce buy locally tinned food all this kind of business and it was all packed into which held about a *maund* and a *maund* was about fourteen pounds I think or was it more no it must have been perhaps, can't remember it was a *maund* a donkey load half a half a mule load so you used to put one of these packages on either side of the mule this was in the marching part at the end so these were all loaded up on the train and everybody's personal bedding and all this kind of thing and off we went by train and as far as I remember there were cattle trucks for the for all the equipment and there were third class carriages for all the troops and first class carriages for the officers of course. We then arrived at we went to Malakand where we stopped and grouped. Malakand was one of these Frontier forts that was garrisoned by troops of the Indian Army and it was half kind of Frontier. When my father was before the First World War he held the Malakand Fort against an attack by a lot of tribesmen and he got a D.S.O. at Malakand they were really quite hard pressed with their signal signal tower being cut off and really quite a battle but this is all all related in the history but it was rather interesting going back and there were rocks there where the battalions that had been garrisoned and the battalions that had passed through had carved their regimental badges and insignia of the battalion on the on the rocks, a more or less permanent record of who had been there to Malakand. Malakand was a kind of jumping off point and everything was kind of checked and laid out and then it was loaded into lorries. One platoon one company was going by air and they went to Peshawar I was not fortunately not I that company I went by the lorry lot which was the rest of the battalion but we were going first. Now previously Chitral reliefs always took part place they sent up I should think probably a division in order to piquet and put one battalion into the into Chitral which was about one hundred and twenty miles over the border up towards Russian Turkestan and they put this one

battalion in and than this one battalion out and it took months, I think it took something like three months or something complete Chitral relief. They decided they'd do it by modern way so one company was sent in by aircraft and the rest went in by on lorries. The lorries were all driven by Pathans because the I think other than the Guides, the Guides used to recruit Pathans but nobody else did because they were supposed to be unreliable. However the transport used to have them, very fine looking men all over six foot and blue eyed a lot of them and you know really, really kind of square you'd have thought kind of ideal kind of fighting men however this was the [?] the order. So they were our drivers anyway and we drove in these lorries which were awful old *Albions* as far as I can remember something very primitive anyway but they didn't give us much trouble and we were escorted by a kind of looked like ferret cars these things with machine guns in the front armoured armoured cars they're tracked vehicles with a machine gun [in] the turret and we were escorted by these and no, and also *Rolls Royce* armoured cars were also in our escort so we had two forms of two forms of protection, I suppose this was the first sort of modern warfare really and we assembled at Malakand and then in eight hours we went right up through the through all the tribal territory and arrived at the other end and it was finished all in one day. Well in fact I heard that the political officers had a number of complaints that the thing had they hadn't been told and the thing had taken place so quickly that everybody was taken by surprise probably a good thing you see they hadn't been able to muster up their artillery they used to have one gun which was a muzzle load and used to be rented out between the tribes anybody who had a war used to rent the muzzle gun out and there would be pots at everybody with ... . However they hadn't been able to do this and they were all finished in a day and then when we got to the other end Dir we, which was supposed to be fairly kind of friendly country we unloaded and there were hundreds of the most motley looking local transport mules donkeys and mules and horses you name it that was in I don't think we had any camels but that was about all we didn't have and these were driven in long strings one attached to the one behind, the one behind attached to the one in front at the saddle and the one muleteer kind of leading the lot and they went at a most lamentably slow pace and all the all the were loaded on to these on to these mules this is why we had to have all packed up into mule bags you see and when we had a rest, the normal marching order was one hour's march ten minutes rest and then one hour's march again you went on like this but these things used to go so slowly that it used to take them the whole of the ten minutes to catch up catch up and very often they didn't even do that and one case I found the piquets, the Chitral Scouts were piqueting the piqueting the hills and the piquets had withdrawn in front and there I was trying to push the push the mules forward right at the back and the piquets coming down right in front of however (laughs) lucky there was no enemy and so all was well. And then we used to go about eight miles ten miles in a day which was always held up by these mules the local transport really went up so slowly and then we'd go into camp pitch tents and all this and off again next morning. I remember one camp we arrived in and it started to rain poured (**Major R.** imitates noise) rain and hail and goodness knows what and you can imagine trying to raise tents doing this so we raised and then took off about six inches of earth in order to

get down to dry land underneath and I remember helping them out getting my company all settled in getting the earth off the floor and everything like this and suddenly coming along a large shout and there was the quarterguard which had the treasure chest and everything else like that in it was a large river had suddenly sprung up and there was the quarterguard being washed away down the river (laughs) running down catching the boxes of ammunition and everything like that I think I think we got the lot including the treasure chest and retrieved it all but another rather interesting point. The treasure chest used to used to hold, a certain amount of money used to come in for the men's pay so it was really quite a big affair it wasn't just a kind of small you visualise a kind of small strong box about two foot square or something like that but it wasn't it was really quite a big, big trunk and in this was all the all the rupees pay and stuff like that was kept. During the War when we used we weren't quite so fussy on who people we recruited we found when when the recruits arrived that a number of them were opium eaters so the *Subadar-Major* used to keep a supply of opium, it used to be dished out to them the whole idea was to try and get them off the habit so they were given extra tea and every sort of inducement to get them, nearly all of them gave it up by the time we'd worked on them for about a bit so this was another thing that later on the treasure chest was used for but it was under the under the charge of the *Subadar-Major* the *Subadar-Major* had the treasure chest. Now to go on with the Chitral thing we went on and the valley got we walked up this valley lovely place with mulberry trees small kind of stream running down the kind of one side not very not very to begin with its wasn't a very big river stream and we used to we were camping when we camped we camped on the kind of levelled fields of the local people there we (*sic*) no crops in at that time it was after the harvest so there's only stubble so it didn't do any harm no doubt the army paid a large rent for the use of the field which made them a bit richer and we went up this narrow valley which got narrower and narrower until we came to the top which was the summit and there this I think is the summit it doesn't look very steep there but the bottom half these were the muleteers you see these blokes here and this was the kind of this was the use of the mules they had a kind of coconut or hessian net and the and the load was wrapped up in this and slung over the donkey's back really ingenious really and the saddle all the saddle was a kind of enormous pad made out of made out of cloth sackcloth stuffed with rags and this sort of thing was drawn over the back and then the load over the top of that and then a rope put round right round the right round the whole thing and then the mule was attached to the mule in front and these furry legged gentlemen here used to used to lead the mules you see. When we got over the other side there was a dramatic change in the in the terrain. You can see here that this part of the terrain, terrain wasn't too high you know the hills weren't too much but when you got over the other side the country changed completely and if I tell you that at one time I went up I went up this hill and I walked for three hours three hours three hours and I got to fourteen hundred feet and the horizon was still at forty-five degrees above me and the valley was way down below me you can get some slight idea of what the counter was like it was simply gigantic and there were no foothills. You see, normal Frontier country there are there are foothills fairly low hills near the country just gets bigger there on but

here the country just went straight up like that and at this high altitude there were a lot of fir trees not a lot by Norwegian standards because they weren't planted they just happened there but there were these fir trees but you can se how steep the country was and then the road was cut into the side of the hill. The road was there was no transport up there. I think the *Mehta* of Chitral had who was the ruler *Mehta* being king had one car but otherwise nobody had any cars the means of getting along was on horses you used to ride from one place to another and the road was pretty rough and narrow I suppose a car could have got along it however we walked along it but it was really very, very dramatic and the eventually we came down off this road came into the main Chitral valley. There is a the very fearsome the Chitral river which is really I mean if you fell into that you had it really because it was very fast very dirty you could hear the boulders being rushed down with this with this kind of torrent even in the times when there wasn't snow melting and there wasn't rain up in the mountains it was always pretty full of water so it ran pretty well all of the time. When you came along there the road kind of got a bit kind of better a bit kind of better maintained and there were various kind of forts some of them some of them owned and garrisoned by the *Mehta's* army and eventually we came to the fort we lived in we occupied two forts and we were really kind of reinforcements to keep the *Mehta* by his unruly neighbours or by the Russians I suppose in those days this was the top as I was saying. I'm showing pictures at the moment then you see you can see here just the kind of country that it was a magnificent and here's the kind of road you see just not just enough for four men abreast to walk down it. This was a platoon coming down the down the hill but you see the enormous amount of fir trees beautiful place and this is them going down it looks as if they're going up but they're actually going down the hill and here are the muleteers really a very interesting place. Then when we got to Chitral, do you want to know any more about going there? No? When we got there the other company A Company who were being flown in the first lot of air moved, air transported troops you see were flown in I suppose Rawal ... I suppose from Peshawar I think they came from Peshawar they got into these things I don't know what Hercules would they be [?] they might be Hercules aircraft and it I somehow have a feeling that these were they were they were biplanes with a kind of tail a kind of double tail biplane sort of tail and a couple of a couple of engines with four bladed propeller on either side and what looked like a pretty solid sort of body and an enormous door at the side (laughs) side the company came up in about four of these and they landed on the this is the aerodrome in Chitral and there was only about one way this is the road so if the wind wasn't blowing the right, you had to find out that the wind was blowing the right direction you had to make sure that the wind was blowing in the right direction before you came up or you wouldn't you wouldn't be able to land and the local battalion there's only one battalion there you see used to maintain the aerodrome used to see that it had that it was kept smooth and all the holes were filled in and all this kind of business and we used to use it quite a lot because as you can appreciate there weren't many aeroplanes and they didn't come to see us very often anyway. It was much cheaper to send a chap on a horse than to send an aeroplane so that was really what

accounted for the Chitral relief but it was really unique because it was the first one that was carried out by by motor transport and by aircraft.

K.P. : What was Chitral itself like?

Major R. : Sorry?

K.P. : What was Chitral itself like?

Major R. : Oh it's it was a marvellous place. We went there the C.O. said 'Ah now I'm going to get you up into the into the mountains where you're really going to do some proper training' (laughs). When we got there, there was this place with a valley from about four hundred yards in the narrowest places up to say a couple of miles broad in the kind of more broad places with an enormous kind of rushing torrent in the middle and then the side of the mountains went up to oh fifteen sixteen seventeen eighteen thousand feet absolutely straight out of the valley permanent snows on the top of the hill. The largest place mountain was a place called Tirich Mir which the locals said was inhabited by a creature called the Boghazoo which was a frog the size of a donkey that lived in the glaciers but as nobody had found one then nobody we offered the most enormous prizes if anyone would produce a piece of the Boghazoo but it was never found nobody ever produced a piece of the Boghazoo so we never knew how true the story was. And these mountain tops were absolutely covered in snow there was no getting to the top of them it was it was really a major expedition you really had to be a mountaineer. A number of officers did climb some of the mountains. This was a mountain we called the Matterhorn and they climbed that and went on top of it but they were people with some experience of mountaineering and the ordinary officers didn't go on the top. I took an expedition up on to a glacier and I must say it was really kind of rather frightening because a glacier is continually moving all the time especially in these high hills where there's a lot of a lot of melting of the ice you see stones hurtling down over the top of the glacier and a lot of the men some of the men I took up got mountain sickness so I think I was with two others the only ones who got to the top, the others we left and collected on the way down, I don't know if they really got mountain sickness or got fed up of climbing up the hill (laughs) these mad sahibs these mad sahibs were making them do it, it really was rather fun. We used to have we used to have another place in Chitral which was a training area and a large log cabin with a big flat area a big flat area a big flat area where the men used to camp.

Major R. : Yes about twenty miles. Are you ready? About twenty eight miles from the main fort there was a training area which was called [Madaglasht]. It was up a side valley and it had a log cabin Canadian sort of type with a kind of flat turf roof which used to get covered right up with snow during the during the winter. The height was about twelve thousand feet something like that fairly high Chitral itself the fort was

about six thousand feet high so it wasn't it was fairly good climate. This training area was up a side valley and we had to make our own road up there there wasn't a road so one of my first jobs when I get there was to and reconnoitre a road which I did do with the pioneer platoon was it the pioneer platoon (?) intelligence section I think it was intelligence section came and drew drew a map and we drew a map mapped the whole of this and the amount of work that needed to be done all the way up number of man hours required to make this road and in due course the battalion came up and made this road bridges and all the rest of it, bridges were pretty primitive there happened to be a lot of logs trees cut felled and felled across the road and filled in with turf but enough for the mules and transport to get across, there was no wheeled transport at all there was just all pack or foot or horses you see. This it was a very interesting place the locals used to make their houses in much the same way just of just of logs and flat roofs which they used to sit out on in the middle of the in the middle of the summer or when it was and it was fairly kind of cool up there and this area flat there was a good place for trips to camp but not much good for training because it was just kind of flat, flat area that was about all so really on the whole it was more or less kind of holiday holiday kind of area which people went to. We used to use it also in the winter as a skiing place but then again that only benefitted but then again that only benefitted the officers really. This is what my point was that it was very much master and man before the War and very much became not so much as teacher and ... .

K.P. : Would you like to talk about any changes during the War then?

Major R. : Changes during the, well, then when the War came of course there was a number of British officers still to come to the Indian Army but there was an enormous expansion. We sent away N.C.O.s and men and things to make up a new battalion and I think the each battalion doubled up so there was an enormous expansion of the Indian Army altogether so the number of British officers who came out were obviously insufficient and so at Dehra Dun they had a officers training college equivalent to Sandhurst and Indians were taken in there and they were sent out and we were sent mostly Sikh officers but quite a number of ordinary just Hindus or Hindus. Some of these officers were extremely good and they became very close friends in fact some of them have come to this country to come and see me and I fully intend to go out there and see them. In 1956 I actually went out but I'll tell you about that. They became, we went through an awful lot of these officers a lot some of them were not were not suitable. I remember one officer I won't quote any name in case in case he hears this at any time but one officer I was adjutant at the time and he said he wanted to see the C.O. so I said, 'Certainly' and he said 'I wish to make a complaint the adjutant's been rude to me.' Well that was the kind of thing you see but normally they didn't they didn't mind that much I mean they expected to get a raspberry occasionally but some of them just couldn't take it ... .

K.P. : Were they ... /

Major R. : On the whole they were very nice.

K.P. : Were they socially more sensitive within the Regiment then?

Major R. : Uhm you know I met them more socially when I went back in 1956 where the thing had completely changed I mean all the ladies all the women had come out of *pardā* and things like that. When I was with the Regiment after the War we went down to just near Bombay and the, no families with them at all but we used to play bridge in the mess and in fact when I left them there were no other British officers at all I was the I was the this was a unique unique thing about it really, my grandfather raised the Battalion and was presumably the first British officer in them and then during the First War and I was the last British officer to command it so really kind of unique I don't think Hodgson's Horse or Probyn's or any of these other people could produce the same sort of record so I was the last British officer to command it I think that was really something you know I'm very proud of it.

K.P. : What I really meant was were they more sensitive these Sikh officers to anything were they more difficult to handle?

Major R. : I don't think, I didn't find so. I didn't find that the good ones were but then you had some very difficult British officers during the War I remember I had I had rather unfortunate, we had a C.O. a temporary C.O. who used to drink rather a lot and he had to be you know with a C.O. I mean as long as he wasn't absolutely tight you couldn't kind of cart him out of the mess so you had to wait until he was a bit inebriated and then you got somebody else who took him off took him down to his tent took his trousers off and so nobody was to go near him you see, it was really unfortunate and I got one officer and I got hold of him one night and said 'Come and give me a hand' and when he got down he said 'I have a complaint to make the C.O. hit me' and you know this was really you know if he had hit him he didn't hit him very badly and anyway it was this was the kind of attitude so some of them were no more no more difficult than some of the British officers we got some of the British officers were really not officer material.

K.P. : Did standards change dramatically during the War then?

Major R. : That's right standards had changed tremendously. They changed actually they took in any Indian officer that could any Indian who could speak English pretty well or had a command of English so quite a number of them I mean we went through a hundred with thirteen officers we went through a hundred and eight Indian officers I counted them up which we skimmed off the ones we liked and the others ones we sent off sent back to be posted off somewhere else and I suppose the Service Corps and people got them but the ones the ones that we ended up were really first class I think it's a great pity that India didn't recruit a certain number of Indians in into the Army before

the War so that they came in together so that we could grow up together because Sikhs are a martial race and obviously in Ranjit Singh's time and all the rest of it they were officers as well, there's no reason why they shouldn't have been after all so I think it's a great pity that they waited so long to produce officers.

K.P. : Could you tell me about your fellow British officers within the Regiment?

Major R. : With, actually it was really very funny. Regiments were really very family. This regiment happened to be called Rattray Sikhs because my my grandfather raised it but it could quite easily be called Macleod Sikhs or something like that because there were a number of, the majority of officers were Scottish officers before the War there were MacBain and MacBain's father and son let me think there was Macleod but he was the only one only Macleod, names slip me at the moment but a lot of them were of Scottish descent and had joined for, the Regiment and had come in father and son into the Regiment and this happened very much with the men too if a if a Sikh was in the Regiment then very often he sent his sent his son in there too even the ones who never ran, raise, rose above the rank of *sipāhī* you'd find that they'd send their on retirement they'd send their sons to come down quite often the *sipāhī's* son became a *subadar* or *subadar-major* even and he went back and dad was only was the *sipahi* but dad was as proud as punch of him.

K.P. : When you joined the Regiment did you actually meet men that remembered your father?

Major R. : Uhm not no but some of the pensioners had some of the pensioners I remember the orderly we had his name was [Ehshah] Singh the one I told you about who was who was drilling on the [Simla] but I never he was dead when I went back I tried to locate him but I did meet his son which was quite interesting but not really some of the pensioners knew my knew my father but not actually serving with the battalion. Now if I if I went back now there wouldn't be any that that knew me. There was an officer who joined us from Dehra Dun, no, an officer came a chap came to us and wanted to go through the ranks and join and join you know become an officer and he, such a good bloke we sent him off to Dehra Dun and we asked for him back again which was really unheard of because if you served your time as a *sipāhī* you didn't normally go back to that battalion again you went back to some battalion who didn't know you but this chap was such and he became Major General and his name was [Khabak Singh] and he became quite a quite a well known soldier in India subsequently during the wars with Pakistan and during the separation of Bangladesh and things like that he was active service he was on active service he was on active service and he was a Major General commanding a division and he came to England and came and saw me and he was a very good very nice bloke, we used to write to each other occasionally and I must say it was occasional I think the letters was ...

K.P. : What was mess life like in your Rattrays?

Major R. : When I first joined I think, did I tell you about the first bit (?) we used to wear we used to wear mess kit with stiff shirt fronts and stiff collars and things like that and even on one day a week when we were let off that on Saturdays we used to have to wear dinner jackets with stiff shirts and stiff collars but this gradually we gradually went into wearing soft shirts and soft collars. The mess kit was excruciatingly uncomfortable it was overalls tight trousers absolutely skin tight rather like these girls wear you know jeans (laughs) you know with every part showing out of them and then they were terribly uncomfortable and then these high boots that came right up inside your thing right up inside you calf and which would take spurs the kind of thing that would take spurs when you became a field officer at the back and a kind of bum freezer sort of jacket rather like an Eton jacket the old type Eton jacket that was kind of we had white faces and regimental badges on the front and a white waistcoat and a black tie. We used to wear stiff shirt things like that and this was worn every night that you went into mess and normally it was just an ordinary dinner night and the senior officer used to used to take you in but once a week you used the C.O. and the married officers used to come in and you had a guest night and anyone would ask happened to be a friend of his from another regiment and they'd come in and have a meal and then you used to drink the King and all this Vice President Mr. Vice the King Emperor this kind of thing and there you used to eat enormous, little bits of enormous amount of courses. It absolutely fills one with horror the amount one used to start off with and *hors d'oeuvres* fish something like that an or soup and then you'd go on to fish or something like that then you'd have the main course two or three vegetables then you'd have then you'd have a pudding of some sort which ice cream or something like that, there's the interesting way they used to make ice cream too and then you used to go on to kind of cheese fruit and things like that drinking glass after glass of various sort of wine so you can imagine you only took a very little of each thing or you'd be stumped before the time you got to the end.

K.P. : Did you develop more relations with people outside the Regiment when you joined the Sikhs with civilians ?

Major R. : Yes because Rawalpindi was much, much more there was a lot of regiments there and a lot of ancilliary troops there too so you so you got to know them quite well. You didn't mix so much with the civilians in that the the Civil Service and things like that we didn't we didn't get to know them so well. After the War I got to know more of the civilians than I did at the beginning. We, after Quetta you see we came down and we went to, after, sorry, after Chitral we came down we went to Quetta for a time which up of course on the Afghanistan border Afghanistan is just over the other side we had a garrison at a place called Chaman which was twenty of thirty miles away and there they had there was a tunnel that had been tunnelled by Welsh, Welsh miners they'd bought Welsh miners out and tunnelled this tunnel through and the other side you looked over, over on to Afghanistan and that was really quite an interesting place the, not a kind of

Frontier in that one was sniped on or anything like that but they used to a chap used to ride up every now and then I remember a man coming in on a camel with a rifle slung over the camel and down the camel's neck so the camel was kind of wearing the rifle round its kind of neck and the bloke was sitting on the top kind of riding it. I shouldn't think he could use it very quickly (laughs) he had to untwine it from the middle of his camel but that was the kind of thing that was all the kind of warlike part of it that you saw. We had in Chaman we had an awful lot of there was enough material to make every bridge between there and Kabul so if they went in to invade and every bridge was pulled torn down they had the exact duplicate I suppose political officers had been in there and measured them all up you can imagine them surreptitiously producing a tape measure to measure the bridge but anyway they were all made out all made out on the edge ready to pick up and if one had to go in there were all the bridges already numbered and you knew which river it had to go across woe betide if it hadn't fitted I suppose but that was really quite interesting. I know another thing about Chaman was that you used to get up on the hill because there was a large hill with a tunnel through between that and Quetta and the whole countryside gave the impression of being tilted. I suppose it was it was actually tilted and they used to get these because of the you used to get these whirlwinds that go across do you know do you know what I mean what I'm talking about a kind of whirlwind that progressed across the plain and they said that these were the souls of the good Mohammedans going to Mecca. They were really quite interesting and the whole countryside looked as if it was kind of tilted very arid and almost kind of desert like but not sand sandy desert but other sort of desert. Then Quetta we walked from Quetta to Quetta we walked back we did sevent ... eighty ninety-six miles in eighteen hours something like that on a continuous march we were we were we did a lot of practice before we got there but that was quite quite an achievement, the C.O. said we really must get fit before we do this so we did up to, forty miles every in a day you know marching but it was pretty it's almost like running it's a pretty soul destroying job you really don't know you really don't know what to think about when you're doing it, you can gather I'm not much of a runner.

K.P. : How about health did you suffer much while you were there?

Major R. : No not really. I was very lucky. A number of people had malaria of course we used they weren't the drugs that you could take for anti-malaria you relied more on prevention you used to have a kind of cream that you ran rubbed on your hands on exposed places face and that kind of thing that was an anti a mosquito repellent. But I had malaria once but I it never came back again but a lot of some officers were very much very much troubled with cholera we didn't have we used very strict hygiene with boiling water and all this kind of business and we insisted on it for the men too so sickness was a not a major problem. The men of course were hand picked so they generally at about the age of sixteen or seventeen they came in in at the regiment. The main thing we had to do was to teach them to wash (laughs). I remember giving, a party of recruits coming in and standing behind one who stank so hard that (laughs) you had to

detail [a] lance corporal to take him off and teach him how to be washed (laughs) but on the whole Sikhs are a very clean people he probably came from a somewhere where the water's a bit short (laughs). I'm just trying to think now.

K.P. : During the interwar period there were a lot of political changes in India. Did those ... ?

Major R. : They didn't affect us awfully.

K.P. : Did you sort of gain any repercussions from them ... ?

Major R. : Not really.

K.P. : Basically ... .

Major R. : No not they're very, Indian Army you know was very non-politically minded and it was the men were all taught to be true to their salt [?] and I think as you probably gathered from what I was saying we were very inward facing we didn't we didn't mix very much with the population outside. One of our main dreads of course was to go in aid of the civil power and that was a terrible thing and we went once on that, this was actually after the War. I was going taking a hockey team to the Punjab Native Hockey Tournament and I arrived in, which was a great kind of gathering of the clans you know really and all the kind of hockey playing regiments used to send their team and I was taking this and we arrived in can't remember what it was anyway it doesn't matter and I arrived in this place and our 2nd Battalion our 3rd 4th Battalion met us at the station and said ... (tape is paused). Yes I took a Punjab hockey a hockey team to the Punjab hockey tournament or I was on the way to it and on the way I was stopped and told to take my equivalent of a kind of platoon I suppose I had a number of reserves and things like that I suppose I had about twenty-two men mostly *havildars* and senior N.C.O.s who were the ones who made up the hockey team and one or two officers and we got off and we were told that there was we couldn't go any further and we got to go and join our 4th Battalion because there were riots on, this was in Rawalpindi and so we joined we went to this Battalion we formed a platoon and we were sent off on patrol and we had this was in aid of the civil power and there are some horrific things that these rioters do to each other. I remember coming along one lot and there was a whole load of dead bodies and there were all every direction what had happened was the Muslim from the countryside had come in and they had surrounded a Sikh *gurdwara* and they had bumped off the whole lot of them everybody in the thing at all there were all the bodies that they'd looted and burnt and everything all around so we then proceeded to evacuate all Sikhs and Hindus and bringing them into the centre of Rawalpindi itself. When called out it was one thing that one didn't like to do it was one of the very nasty things called out in aid of the civil power and Indians seemed to be particularly bad at rioting they did the most horrific things and they seemed to riot very badly very burning

everything and everything indiscriminately in all directions. The drill was that you were supposed to take a civil magistrate along with you and the civil magistrate was nearly always some kind of Indian *bābū* who kind of joined you and wouldn't had to was supposed to make the decisions but if you didn't have a civil magistrate with you then you automatically became the magistrate yourself and so you then you then made the decision so the first thing was to frighten the frighten the civil magistrate off and that he would have some excuse to go and see his headquarters to report or do something like that so when the time came you didn't have a civil magistrate and you went out and you dealt with the situation as you found it which made it much simpler because if you had to fire a round you fired a round and you never fired over the heads of the of the rioters if they, we used to take a bugler with us and we used to draw up in front of the line and the used to draw a line with chalk or white wash or something like that in front of us and we used to say, 'Now if you come over that line we will shoot. Stop.' and the bugle call used to be made and then the this was with a loudspeaker was shouted out to the mob and if they took no notice of that then you used to get a marksman and you say, 'You see that man there. Shoot him', and he used to shoot one man and generally one round was enough and the crowd would then leg it but this the drill was if you fired over their heads you possibly maimed or killed people who were perfectly innocent, the bullets what goes up has to come down and it came down somewhere where somebody wasn't rioting at all so the idea was one round and if one round was enough that was it that was all that that was it that was all that was required.

K.P. : When did that incident that you mention take place at the Punjab Hockey incident?

Major R. : Oh that that happened after the War. When we came back and we sent we were in Allahabad I think no we weren't in Allahabad somewhere or other anyway we they decided that we'd take part in the Punjab Hockey Tournament they all started up again and so off we went back and this was just after the War 1950 nine 1946 sometime in that it was really bad. In the end we took in lorries and we were so stretched that I was taking lorries out into the countryside thirty or forty miles away with just a couple of Sikh *sipāhīs* and myself the only escort one had and we were going to these villages and picking up any Hindus or Sikhs, this was the beginning of the Partition you see and very often you used to arrive at a village and they didn't know that anything had happened and they were saying, 'Oh you're going to take away all our ...' because these Hindus and Sikhs were generally the watercarriers and the kind of lower class people and the makers of shoes and the the darners of clothes and things like this and therefore they would say, 'What are we going to do if you take away all our all our [?] and our watercarriers and people like like who's going to carry the water?' 'Sorry you'll have to carry it yourself.' and 'Goodbye.' and these people of course wanted to take all their household stuff and the lorries were kind of up to the top with baggage with a lot of people sitting on top of it. Really rather but it wasn't a nice experience at all I remember I remember going out on a patrol one day and I had a platoon this day I had a

platoon which was half Punjabi Mussulman and half Sikh. Well Punjabi Mussulman these were their own brothers you see so you had to be a bit careful you see and so halfway I made the Sikhs march at the back and the Mussulman the Punjabi Mussulman march at the front and I marched at the front of the whole lot and then we changed over and when I [got back from] this the Sikhs said, 'We didn't mind marching at the back but we didn't like we didn't awfully like having them marching behind us marching at the front marching at the front.' (laughs). They thought they visualised them putting on a bayonet or something or the other but they were a good regiment and they stood up to that and you never shot anybody if you could possibly avoid it in fact we never we never fired a round on the thing we used to shout at them and I used to get the Punjabi Mussulman *subadar* or *jemandar* or whoever it happened to be and I said to them, 'You now you talk to them tell them they've got to go home and there's got to be and end to this business.' you see and nearly always they did this and then I used to say to them 'Right now put down all your sticks throw them in the river and go away.' then I used to send them in to go and collect up all the sticks and things like that but it worked quite well.

K.P. : Did you see a lot of trouble between '45 and '47 then?

Major R. : There was a lot of yes, no I didn't see a lot because we my regiment because we were all Sikhs and they thought we might take sides you see and therefore we were sent down to near Bombay so we really were right [outside] of the trouble altogether but some horrific stories came through like trains arriving with only the only the engine driver and everybody dead else dead on board probably heard from elsewhere but these kind of stories came through and there and the Sikhs in Lyallpur and Montgomery had recruited on their *jāgīrs,* these are parts of the Punjab districts of the Punjab they'd recruited Punjabi Mussulman labour so when Partition came about the labour turned round and turned them out. They were nearly all ex-soldiers they formed themselves into a into a kind of battalion and fought a rear guard action and got back got back into Indian part of the thing and little or no casualties which was really quite a quite a feat rather. I suppose it shows that we trained them fairly well these people going back (laughs).

K.P. : Did these rumours coming back to the Regiment cause any problems?

Major R. : That caused quite a lot of disquiet especially people who lived in these areas about Lyallpur and Montgomery but we had no we didn't have any deserters or anything like that where we possibly could we'd send a man on leave provided that he provided that he was going for a genuine genuine thing, not a lot of them were allowed to go but if families were in any hardship and been booted out and got nowhere to go and they needed somebody then we then the man would be sent sent off to kind of go and look after them and then come back again and they all did, they all behaved very well and as far as we know they didn't they didn't take part in the thing but some horrific things

happen on both sides, I mean I don't say the Sikhs were any blameless any more than the Mussulmans so they were all you know ... .

(Recording ends).

Mr. J. Robinson
Indian Signals
Interviewed on 26th February 1997
SA1997.33 & 34

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Mr. R. :** represents Mr. Robinson.

J.W. Okay this is Jeremy Weston I'm recording Mr. Robinson at the Haig Memorial Home in Edinburgh. Okay Mr. Robinson if I could start just by asking you where and when you were born?

Mr. R. : Well I was born in Southport Lancashire in 1923 but I left it at the age of nine months so I hardly know it actually. My father was a doctor and I sort of grew up wherever he was. Most of my youth was in North-West London because he was stationed in London as Senior Officer of London District most of the 30s so I sort of was, went to school at a place called Harrow Weald not the famous Harrow, Harrow Weald you see it's a sort of suburb of, near Harrow, and of course when the War started I was a schoolboy I was about sixteen if I remember rightly living in London a place called Edgeware North-West London.

J.W. And what so what happened to you subsequently during, after your school life where did you go from there?

Mr. R. : Well what basically happened was of course the War began September '39 and I was a schoolboy then of course we came into 1940 and I was about to leave school, I think I was about seventeen, I suppose and I think it was 15th of May 1940 there was a radio announcement they're going to form some new body of volunteers to defend Britain against the, Germany who were expected to invade of course but they never actually did. It started off being called the Local Defence Volunteers later was renamed the Home Guard as you probably know, and you joined by calling in at the police station on the way so as I cycled home on the way to school without telling my parents, I was just eligible being about seventeen in a few days, I think I popped into the local police station and I said I wanted to join this thing, cause a police sergeant terribly old looked up at me and said, 'What do you want sonny?' I've never forgiven him for that, I was almost seventeen years here's one offering my services to the Crown and he called me 'Sonny'- I've always felt a bit iffy about police sergeants ever since, but then I joined the Home Guard, but we, I think our first duty we were very near Hendon aerodrome as it then was which of course was an R.A.F. place North-West London so our first duty was, there were five of us I think we had pick handles and an armband which said LDV and we were to defend Hendon aerodrome against German paratroops not that they ever came, and I sort of said to the old boy in charge who had one arm - he had lost the other one on the Somme - I said to him, 'What happens if the Germans come?', he said, 'Well as they're landing they'll be helpless so you hit them on the head with the pick and then

you line them up in very neat rows' you see it was very, cross, he was very you know emphasised the fact they had to be in neat rows on the airfield I thought to myself, 'It sounds a bit funny I'm not sure that's going to work very well', but anyway they didn't come and looking back on it I'm rather glad at seventeen I thought it was great fun although I don't think it would have been had it happened. So and then that summer 1940 my father said, 'It's time you got yourself into university. At least get into the door' cause he and the War 'you'll come back and you'll be at the end of a huge queue' which looking back on it was probably true. Course I was wanting to rush into anything that would take me sort of thing join up you know. Well I was seventeen, 'You're too young to be of much use to the forces get yourself into university first and then we'll see', so I went up to Cambridge and passed the then entrance exam to Cambridge which was then a thing called the Cambridge Previews Examination I don't think it exists now the university jargon name for it was [Little Go] but I don't think it exists the equivalent one at Oxford was called [Responsance] or was in those days and I got through with a bit of a struggle, I wasn't very good at maths that was awfully difficult I found, I was never very mathematical still am not and the other requirement which was compulsory in those days was Latin, you had to have Latin, the alternative was Greek so of course I took Latin as I knew no Greek at all not much Latin come to think of it I could struggle through the Cambridge Previews and got myself into Cambridge, Downing College and I was there 1942 and I was coming up to the age you got called up anyway and the idea was that if you volunteered you had some choice of what you went into - if you waited for call up you had no choice and later in the War some of them ended up in the mines as Bevin boys so I decided to volunteer, and mainly because I'd learned Morse in the Home Guard I went into Signals, Royal Corps of Signals. By chance the signal section I joined in 1940 had a chap we called Corporal Carling, he struck me as very old although I suppose he was only middle aged and he'd been the Chief Senior Radio Officer on board the *R.M.S. Mauritania*, one of the pre-War Atlantic Blue Riband liners and of course he was an expert on Morse and he taught us boys Morse and so when I went into Signals for training I already knew it I was already half way there as a Morse operator so I was trained as an operator wireless and line as they called them in those days and as soon as I qualified which would be summer of 1942 I think, yes some time in '42 we were posted, we were sent up to some place called Ulverston in North Lancashire and did a short period of training wandering around the Lake District with a pack of fifteen hundredweight trucks practising radio operating and then we were posted. We went to Gourock by train got out at Gourock we knew nothing about it except that we were going to catch a boat and we sort of caught the boat at Gourock, somewhere on the Clyde I think and then weeks later and of course we were still in a convoy part of a convoy, and the ship I was on was technically called the *John Erikson* it was actually made in Hamburg in the 1920s and had been taken over by the Swedish, not what the what was it the Swedish-America line I think, anyway the Yanks had not got it and it had an American civilian crew actually, we were just passengers, and of course we they knew where we were going but we didn't we guessed was somewhere in the Tropics because they'd given us tropical kit. It coincided with the North African landings

actually our departure from Britain so that's where we thought we were going cause off the Straits of Gibraltar the convoy turned off and headed through the Straits so we said, 'Oh we must be going to Africa' but in fact we weren't we suddenly turned off we had another two ships and headed down the West Coast of Africa and then we were running out of food literally what happened was the ship had gone over the Atlantic, refuelled and vitalled in New York or somewhere in America they'd put a lot of food aboard and they'd also taken German prisoners across and they'd eat everything, so by the time we got off West Africa they were literally running out of food so as an emergency measure we had to be shoot down to Cape Town as fast as we could get there because there was no food on the ship, they were issuing biscuits with *Spillers* across them, I thought that was adding insult to injury, we knew they'd be dog biscuits but they didn't have to rub it in, sort of emergency rations hard tack I think they called it, had *Spillers* across the biscuit and as a result we ended up in Cape Town which was a bit of l ... , we had several weeks in South Africa we had a marvellous time in Cape Town and that was in'42 summer of '42 we had six weeks in Cape Town, we went by train from Cape Town over the high *veldt* ended up in Durban on the other side of South Africa and we passed through Ladysmith, and it was snowing first time in many years apparently, and came down to Durban got another boat and ended up in Bombay and that's when we knew more or less where we were going, and Bombay being Signals we were sent to what was called the Signals Training Centre, British a sort of Indian equivalent of Cattrick where they trained the Indian Signals for the Far East and that was at a place called Mhow in Central India, actually it's in the Indian state of Indar in the state of Indar, Halka, North of Bombay some distance above Bombay some distance to the North, and after a few weeks training in Mhow sort of brushing up our Morse and working procedure and so on we suddenly five of us were fished out, we'd only been out in India five weeks and we knew nothing about the country at all, pretty helpless, and the oldest chap among us was put in charge of us and we were told to get a train and they said it'd be what was it a two day journey no a four day journey that's right so we got a four days ration allowance and a bit of money and they stuck us on a train and we ended up in Calcutta, but instead of a two day journey it took about ten weeks mainly because we coincided with extremely bad floods that part of India, the train was actually crawling through waters much of the time going along at hardly any speed at all, you could see water all over the track look out of the window of the carriage and nothing but water for miles a most eerie experience, and of course the other problem was you bought your food on the train and of course our ration allowance had gone nowhere, two days ration allowance, and we were broke and it was very difficult actually because we had no money at all and no way of getting any - you had to get your food by paying for it on the train which made life a bit tricky. Anyway we ended up in Calcutta still not knowing where we were going to, eventually, and after a short time in Calcutta in a holding place a transit camp milling around in a state of confusion we were told to get another train going out of Calcutta going down to a place called Chittagong which I think is nowadays in Bangladesh as you probably know, which is a port on the other side of the Bay of Bengal on the far side of the Sunderbans over from Calcutta some distance, so we got on this other train which

was the Bengal and Assam Railway which was a narrow gauge railway and we were told that we had to get off at a place called Golaghat, and we did but Golaghat was nothing at all it just the track went up the side of the river which would be the Ganges, and stopped that was it there was a tin hut which was locked and nothing else at all - apparently I discovered years later the thing changes its location depending on the flooding annually, it's a sort of temporary, so we sort of pushed off the train and then to our horror saw it pushing off in the other direction standing around there not knowing what the hell to do we'd had no instructions from anybody when fortunately out of the out of nowhere apparently appeared what we called a V.C.O. the Indian Army had sort of, you probably know of it a sort of in between sergeant major they were a sort of peculiar position, they didn't hold the full King's Queen's Commission King Emperor Commission I should say they were a sort of in between status, there were several of them *jemadar* was the lowest in rank and *subadar* was the next, and then *subadar major* above that and so on and they sort of had an in between status, and he appeared out of nowhere this *jemadar* and took us off to get to this transit camp somewhere nearby and saved our bacon actually, and then the next day a thing that looks as if it came out of *Saunders of the River* turned up on the river some river steamer ancient looking thing had the interesting name of *Halu* looked as if it came out of Queen Victoria's reign and we got on that still not knowing where we were going to we were pushed off at another place similar to Golaghat further downstream, downriver, they were tributaries of the Ganges looking back on it and we got off at a dismal looking place and got another train and then they said, 'You're going to Chittagong' and then we said, 'Oh yes we had heard of that' and then on the way there they said, 'Where are you going?' and we said we were told to report to the docks. 'Ah yes' they said,' the Japs are bombing them at the moment', there was a daylight raid a daylight air raid on at the time and you could see the odd plane dropping bombs looking rather casually on the docks cause they said, 'Where are you going?' and we said, 'The docks', 'Oh', they said, 'that's what they're bombing at the moment', it was a Jap air raid and there didn't appear to be any ack-ack or any air defence of any kind I don't think there was much in those days so we ended up at the docks and got another river steamer and eventually went down to what's called the Arakan it's the other side of the Bay of Bengal I don't know if you know of the ... .

J.W. : I've heard of the Arakan.

Mr. R. : It's a coastal strip on the other side of the Bay of Bengal running down from Chittagong down eventually of course to South Burma a long way down, and the division we were joining, the 5th Indian Division, was at the time in ... (a member of staff comes in and offers us coffee) and of course up till then most of our soldiering had been in Britain and was sort of civilised you see, Divisional Headquarters they'd be a general and all the rest of it we were expecting something fairly superior sentries all the rest of it and we turned up in the middle of nowhere and a bit of patch of sort of clearing in the jungle and we sort of looked round and said, 'What's this?' and they said, 'de Briggs Headquarters' and we said, 'Well where's the General's house?' and they said,

'You see that motor caravan over there that he pinched off the Africa Korps he lives in that' and he did, a man called Briggs Major-General Briggs that was he'd brought it with him all the way from West North Africa, he'd grabbed it the desert during the early fighting and we realised then that things weren't going to be quite the same as in peacetime soldiering, and we joined the Indian Division Signals most of our Indians were Punjabis what the Indian Army called Punjabi Mussulman the majority not all of them at lot the others were Madrassis from Southern Indian a lot blacker, different racially as you probably, Dravidian stock I think and mainly I think, I did ask, I said, 'Why have we so few Punjabis and so many Madrassis?' 'Well' they said, 'the Madrassis are nearly all Christians and they've all been missionary school trained they already knew fairly good English so they're much more useful to Signals, we don't have to retrain them. The people from the North are martial classes, soldiers and warriors and so on and from a senior's point of view less civilised and less easy to train, so we tend to get the South Indians because they fit into Signals very well they already half way there cause of their connection', and many of them had names like Havildar John Thomas which you presume is the missionary influence so then I remained with them until the end of the War three years later, I eventually ended up in Java five months in Java that went 1946 anything else you want to know?

J.W. To take you back just a little. I know you said you arrived in India and you felt as if you didn't know anything about India.

Mr. R. : That's true.

J.W. : But did you have any what were your sort of ideas about India just before you went I mean how did you ... .

Mr. R. : I mean actually we'd had no real briefing there was no attempt to indoctrinate us at that stage possibly because they didn't intend us to know where we were going, so it came as a complete surprise I mean I was never even technically in the Indian Army as such I was always in the Royal Corps Signals but I served with the Indian Army several, for years effectively as part of it to all intents and purposes and living under very similar conditions to the Indian Other Ranks, I mean there was a certain barrier but it was very nominal under wartime conditions, the peacetime barriers were very much, they existed in theory but that was about all, if you're living in the same bit of jungle you can't really maintain that much difference in living standards the main difference was different cookhouses depending on religion.

J.W. Right and how about the, your comrades in the Signals do you can you think of what they thought or what they knew of India did you ever hear anything?

Mr. R. : Well actually it took a while, you began to get accustomed you began to get to know the Indians after a while and you came to like them, I mean everything was strange

at first but there wasn't so much of the racial barrier that you might have got in peacetime, it was there but it wasn't emphasised and we came to have quite a high regard for them as a, on the whole but that was I think due to the war conditions we were all living under much the same squalor then of course in my case as a wireless officer I was always on a set nearly always anyway so as I result I don't think I ever got a full night in bed the whole war because we worked on a shift system, even now I still, if, I, we used to be on at two or three in the morning or something and I'd still wake up in the middle of the night almost by clockwork, if I make the mistake of looking at the *Radio Times* or the *T V Times* and seeing a programme that I might be interested in at four in the morning I decide well it's ridiculous I'm not going to stay up and watch that and then four in the morning I wake up, so I might as well watch it that's literally true (Tea lady comes in) so I never get a full night's rest but on the other hand I had an interesting job it was more interesting than it might have been I suppose but there it is.

J.W. : How about although you didn't have a free choice as you say in going out to India if you would have had a choice would you have liked to have gone to India do you think?

Mr. R. : Well I don't think I would have minded, I don't think I'd have chosen Burma as a place mainly because of the conditions, I don't think anyone in their right mind would have chosen the Burma campaign not for choice not that of course we knew at the time what it was going to be like. Cause our main enemy out there apart from the Japanese was health wise conditions were going to be pretty difficult. Malaria was rife it was unavoidable really although later in the War we got something called *Mepacrine* which were yellowish tablets which we used to take to help to ward it off but in the early days there was nothing and there were cases of 100% of a unit going down with malaria at one time that was perhaps unusual but it did happen and our main enemy apart from Japs were the health wise so it did. I weighed seven stone when I came out coming back from the Arakan the autumn of 1942 it must have been, no '43 sorry, 1943 it and, and then after we'd been there a few weeks a few months I think we wake up one morning to find that we were completely cut off surrounded by the Japs we were on the edge of a range of hills called the Mayu Range, actually as hills go they're not very high they're only about three thousand feet but they're very steep and jungle covered very few tracks across them, and we were stationed at the foot of the pass which had the unfortunate Burmese name of, I think the correct Burmese pronunciation in 'naughty dork' but it was spelt G-N-A-K-Y-E-D-A-U-K the troops all called it 'no-key-dough-k' that wasn't the correct name but that's what everyone called it but Gnakyedauk was technically correct this was a track across the hills, the Japs were on the other side of the Mayu Range and we were just this side of it Divisional Headquarters was at the foot of the Gnakyedauk pass to use the local name and we woke up one morning, my twenty-first birthday actually to discover that the Japs had turned up in our old position a few miles north of us and had taken it over and we were completely surrounded and there were several weeks of very difficult fighting, the other side of us was the 7th Indian Division across

the other side of the Range and during the night the Japs had attacked from further down further South along the range of the Arakan and they got in behind us and the walked into the 7th Indian Division Headquarters and the General got out by wading down a [*chang*], a stream up to his neck in water with a couple of wireless sets that was all and they walked into the field hospital and murdered everybody, chopped them up that was an atrocity actually and we were just a mile or two away though we didn't know it was happening of course, we got a message but you were out of touch with everybody, Corps headquarters which was 15th Indian Division under the late General Christiansen just North of us at a place called Bawli Bazar, he, in order to avoid being cut off themselves actually what happened was their Signal office truck drove away so quickly that the wire cables leading to the instruments inside just snapped off, they left heading like mad for further north and I can't say I blame them. We found ourselves next morning completely out of touch with anybody, completely cut off, so the problem was what to do we couldn't do anything really we just stopped where we were waiting to see what would happen. I happened to be on the wireless set by chance I happened to send the first message back to Army Headquarters in India telling them what had happened, I didn't actually know what was in the message because it was in code in cipher and I was told afterwards that's what it was and the, what we did we used to work on wireless nets of course and we were in difficult position because technically we were working back, our Corps Headquarters was working back and forward to our Division in France and other units, we had to break into the Army, the Corps Headquarters was way back, there was a base unit in Chittagong north of us, we managed to break into their wireless network and insisted on them taking our message back to Army Headquarters back at a place called Comilla in India and that was the first news they'd had of what was happening apparently so they were rather pleased to get that message and some unfortunate Royal Indian Army Service Corps ended up in our previous position, the Japs turned up in it and found we'd left it two days before without telling them so we always thought, the Royal Indian Army Service Corps was nicknamed Rice Corps mainly because that's what they supplied anyway but those unfortunates found themselves attacked by the Japs much to their horror, and then they missed us by us shifting without telling them two days before otherwise the intention was to knock out both Divis Headquarters at once that was the intention. I think in the text books it became the first Battle of Arakan or something later on years later and then we sort of sat tight for a while and things sorted out and we got some reinforcements and then we got news that we had to move up to a place we'd never heard of before called Imphal up in the North-West of India, well up in the North-West of Assam yes it would be India technically, yes it was India just and the other side of Assam so the idea was they fly the Division up to Imphal and the press said everyone in the 5th Division was flown to Imphal but that's not literally true they took eleven of us with jeeps and trailers and a wireless set, put us under a second lieutenant who was technically a British officer but he was a half caste really I think he came from Goa but a nice lad not that he knew what was happening either, we were told to move as fast as possible to a place called Imphal which we'd never heard of and get there and get there as quickly as possible so we

headed off with our these twelve jeeps and trailers heading off North-West to this place that we'd never heard of called Imphal and we eventually got to what to us was civilisation, a place called Shillong which is the capital of Assam which to our standards was a big city but it's only a large village glorified but to the standards we were used to it was civilisation so we said to this officer couldn't we stop here a bit longer rather than going overmight so he looked thoughtful and scratched his head and said, 'Well I don't think so I was ordered to move up as far to Imphal as quickly as possible', so we thought he was a right so-and-so but looking back on it he saved our lives he didn't know it of course so we headed, we left Shillong with regret headed up to a place called Dimapur which is the foot of the Manipur road up to Imphal which is on a plain on the other side of the mountains on the edge of the Burmese frontier, we, down the Manipur road which is quite a long road it's about getting on a hundred, several hundred miles of it and to our astonishment vast numbers of everything was coming in the opposite direction, we were the only people coming from where we were going everybody was coming our hell for leather and rather unusually for British troops they were wearing tin hats and were all armed to the teeth, and we thought about it and remembered our rifles were in the back of the trailer under a pile of rubbish, thought about it didn't do anything else about it and eventually we got into Imphal and they looked at it in astonishment and said, 'How the hell did you get here? We've written you off they've closed the road' and we said, 'What d'you mean "They've closed the road" we've just come down it', that was about seven o'clock at night, anyway next morning in the early morning we heard the road was closed it remained closed for three months and we were the last troops into Imphal they must have watched us coming down the road and said, 'Well they're not worth bothering about them.' Looking back on it we were obviously regarded as expendable, the Division obviously said, 'Well we can't get everyone on the planes but we've got a second lieutenant who's not much use to anybody and a lot of young soldiers who've just arrived as traineees recruits virtually so we'll send them up and if the get in the bang well it won't matter very much' I'm sure that's what it was, but had looking back on it had that second lieutenant stopped the night at we bade him to in Shillong we'd have almost certainly been caught in the middle of the road as it happened. Then the Siege of Imphal started which I think was four Jap divisions surrounding us and all supplies were by air the only way in and out was by air, actually the road was closed for three months I think and I never saw the end of the siege because after I'd been there a few weeks I was flown out of there to a hospital where I spent twelve weeks so I missed it unfortunately.

J.W. What was the problem then was it illness?

Mr. R. : That was malaria.

J.W. Malaria right.

Mr. R. : Mainly malaria because I remember before we got the plane, the plane itself was an American Dakota, American aircrew first time I'd ever flown in those days

actually and before they allowed us on the plane there was a senior officer of the Indian Medical service aboard a Colonel I think and he said to me, 'What's wrong with you, sonny?' so I said, 'Well I'm not sure I had malaria and they say my haemoglobin's at 60%' - I don't know what that meant but apparently it was on the edge of pernicious anaemia so my father told me years later, that was what why they flew me out so I, he said, 'Well', he said, 'What, how does it affect you?' and I said, 'Well I'm perhaps doing a fatigue about after half an hour I get so terribly tired and the sergeant says I'm slacking and I'm not really' and he sort of sighed and said, 'Get aboard the plane lad' and we took off in the monsoon and it was quite interesting we were sitting in a seat sideways on to the plane, American air crew looking out of the window and you suddenly see a mountain top coming up just below you out of the out of the mist and after about half an hour we landed again and we said, 'Well that didn't take long. Where are we going?', and he said, 'We're going to Dhaka' in what would be now East Bengal I think it's now the capital of East Pakistan, no Bangladesh, we said, ' Well why where are we then we thought we were in Dhaka?' and he said, 'We're back in Imphal we couldn't get over the mountains because of the monsoon that's why you kept on seeing mountain tops under the wing tips so we'll have another go at it if it eases off son', that's what the chap said so we took off again and ended up eventually in Dhaka in 62 Indian General Hospital Combined they combined them and took Indian and British 62 IGHC. After a few months there three months in hospital I eventually got back I think, about sixteen months later I got back to my unit but by then they'd been fighting down something called the Tinnam road and this was a very unhealthy place, apart from the Japs there was a form of typhus not the same as European typhus I think it had a Japanese name and it was called Japanese Swamp Fever and it had another name [?] disease or something and it was quite difficult because although it had the characteristics of typhus it was quite different to European typhus and quite lethal, I know friend of mine was sharing a tent with five others, he saw all of them go into hospital and every one died, it was a bit trying actually, he said it was a bit worrysome to see them all disappear one after the other and find yourself the only one but that was fighting down towards the Tinnam which is South of Imphal some distance South.

Tape ends

Mr. R. : (Some material was omitted as **Mr. R.** began to speak before the tape was ready) Were not typical Indians at all if you've seen pictures of them.

J.W. : I haven't no.

Mr. R. : Their origin is a bit dou... dubious they were in fact headhunters so we discouraged it under British rule but they were genuinely headhunters I'm told, and they're tribesmen, natives tribesmen of the mountains of Assam and they're quite un-Indian in appearance in fact I think they have distant ancestry with somewhere in the South-West Pacific that's going back to prehistory. They like for some reason they liked

the British mainly because the Japs treated them quite badly and we treated them rather better, so they changed their headhunting to going for Jap heads which we approved of we didn't mind them headhunting so long as it was for Japs. I think in peacetime they created problems for the Distirct Commissioners and people by headhunting which wasn't approved of under British rule. However during the War when it was Jap heads we didn't mind too much and the Nagar tribes lived in the mountains around Manipur, still do as far as I know but they don't get on very well with the Indian government there's been a lot of trouble with them, the Indians try and control them and they're not very controllable people, they're quite primitive basically, and then after Imphal when the siege was over we beat the Japs eventually and we then headed South heading for Rangoon, raced down through Central Burma went by road out of Imphal and then we crossed the Irriwaddy which was quite a big river even that far North opposite a place called Pagar which is full of ancient temples, it's quite an interesting place to drive through vast temples going back quite a long time, ruined temples looking like pyramids not literally pyramids but vaguely that shape, and we crossed the Irriwaddy on rafts and then moved down through Burma mopping up the Japanese until we got somewhere near to Rangoon, then the War in Burma sort of fizzled out and downstairs I can show you the Jap sword I got, in the door my Jap sword's there, well it's mine now the previous owner's no further use for it but there's ... . Another one, one or two things, a Gurkha *kukrī* I think which was given after the War by a Gurkha, my own sword because after the war I was commissioned, I wasn't commissioned in those days I think there's a picture of me with it over there somewhere.

J.W. Yes that's right.

Mr. R. : Yes that's Royal Army Education Corps that was years later and then the War sort of came to a sudden end, actually we were on our way operation called Operation Zipper we left Rangoon with Burma more or less captured, oh there were pockets of Japanese here and there all over the place and this would be 1945 we sailed down towards Malaya with a view to retaking Malaya from the Japs, we got off I think it was the Straits of Malaka somewhere off Penang actually, and to our astonishment we'd been going down through a minefield in a sort of V-shape formation British and Indian minesweepers in front of us clearing the way, in fact you could see the odd mine bobbing through the convoy and everyone on the ships watching it like that and they got a very crude way of dealing with it bloke goes out with a small gun and pots at it with a rifle, it's as basic as that the thing blows up behind the ship and we suddenly to our astonishment saw a Jap minesweeper coming out from Penang, that's when we realised the War was over we hadn't really believed the news that the war was over because knowing the Japs as we did we never believed that they'd give in, they had vowed they wouldn't of course but of course we knew nothing of atom bombs, we'd heard a rumour of a mysterious new bomb but nobody really believed it but when we saw this Jap minesweeper appear and took up position at the head of the other sweepers, he knew where the mines were of course, he took us through the Straits of Malaka with Sumatra

to the other side just off Singapore when the War ended when we got there there was one British cruiser all ready with his guns pointing at Japanese Headquarters we were the second ship to arrive during the War and the Japs had surrendered with a very bad grace the man commanding the Japs in Singapore was a man called General [Zigaaki] he'd be he'd be he'd commanded the Japs who took the Philipines off MacArthur he had, as far as he was concerned an undefeated army because having taken Malaya they sat there out the rest of the War having quite a very good time of it, all the fighting had been in Burma a long way away so his army was virtually undefeated, he gave in with a very bad grace indeed the rumour was that his boss was a sort of there but for the grace of God a kind of Japanese version of Kitchener Field-Marshall [Chirochi] who was up in Saigon he was related to the Emperor so he was of course almost a God-like figure and [Chirochi] apparently told [Zigaaki] that if you don't obey the Emperor's command and surrender I shall personally come down from Saigon and take your sword from you and all that kind of nonsense, so [Zigaaki] with a very very bad grace surrendered because I remember seeing him come aboard our ship, it was only a few days after the War, no-one was quite sure what the Japs were going to do, I mean they did surrender but it was a very very slow way of doing it and very very iffy, you know, so we saw him come aboard the ship to see our General you couldn't see what he was thinking he was fairly impassive looking, of course it was the first time we'd seen a very senior Japanese officer of high rank close up and he came up the gang plank followed by various other Japs, the Japanese ceremonial uniform it's a sort of funny mixture sort of long olive olive-y sort of coloured tunic and a floppy cap with a red star on the front and then just to spoil the effect of it all instead of a formal neck they've got an open neck white shirt rather like a sports shirt like a tennis shirt flopping out over this, and of course as he was coming to surrender he'd only got his sword with him but there was a long string of them following his Chief of Staff and then at the far end the only green Indian I've ever seen there was a very small number of Indians who joined the enemy, were known as the Indian National Army JIF's was the other name we gave them and there was a chap who was an ex British Indian officer I think, he'd been a major or something or other and he was the nominal head of the I.N.A. in Singapore under the Japs and of course he knew as far as he was concerned he was a traitor, he was looking very worried, I noticed he was trailing along behind all the other Japs looking miserable as sin not encouraged by the fact that most of the troops took no notice the Japs as if to look at him sort of doing this (**Mr. R.** mimes a throat slitting gesture) to him which they shouldn't have done really but they were, I don't know but he probably ended up a Prime Minister in a postwar Indian government but anyway he, I don't think they actually did hang any of them but they certainly must have been a bit worried because the whole thing collapsed and they were on the wrong side of course, then after a short time after a few weeks in Singapore we were suddenly told at very short notice that we had to go down to Java to a place called Surabaya which is the old Dutch naval base at the Eastern end of Java. Our official role was the recovery of Allied POW and internees that was what we were officially going for. The difficulty was that the Indonesians had just declared independence and as far as they were concerned we were going there to bring the Queen

of Holland back and they didn't want that at any costs so it was a very difficult situation a bit like Northern Ireland, you weren't officially fighting them but they were attacking you and we landed at Surabaya we got on board what was technically a naval vessel, a landing craft a landing craft assault carrier called H.M.S. Glenroy, there were two of them apparently a Glen something else, I never saw it, and they were converted merchantmen of about 10,000 tons and they carried in place of life boats they had twelve landing craft no, I think it 24 L.C.A's, Landing Craft Assaults, hung on davits like lifeboats either side of the ship. I think as one landing craft infantry [?] to thwart the ship sort of sideways on across the ship, somewhere around four and we sailed down through the South China Sea or would it be the Java Sea, one or the other, ended up off Surbaya and the way into Surabaya is behind a big island which is just north of it and there's a long narrow channel about twelve miles long which would be the peacetime way in. We made our way in landing craft to Surabaya, we were not quite sure what was going to happen when we got to the other end, you could see the tops of warships that had been sunk in 1940 just sticking up out of the water, Dutch gunboats and the like, and we eventually got to Surabaya and they landed there and only a short time before the people who had arrived before us which was an Indian brigade I think, I forget which one under a Brigadier somebody or other they decided to call a meeting with the Indonesian authorities in the town hall at Surabaya, the Indonesians attended the meeting and then murdered the lot of them the Brigadier and most of his officers, I, one foul swoop so when we landed we faced about ten thousand hostile Indonesians who were facing us and we had a month's street fighting to get ashore though technically we hadn't gone there to fight anyone, we kept on telling them 'We're not we're not your enemy you know', 'Well you're, bringing the Dutch back we don't want the Dutch back' you know this sort of thing. Another extraordinary situation was the to our astonishment we found a hundred U-Boat crew in Surabaya just about to be murdered by the Indonesians, they were very glad to see us, last thing we expected to see was two German U-Boats in Surabaya harbour covered in barnacles - apparently what had happenend was it was very near the end of the War they'd been somewhere down in the, somewhere south of below South Africa and they'd run out of fuel oil, diesel oil I suppose, and the nearest friendly base was the Dutch the former Dutch base in Eastern Java which the Japs had and of course they were still technically allies of the Japs so about May '45 they'd managed to get to Surabaya and they had run out of fuel and had sat there ever since and of course and of course being Germans they very tactfully swaggered through the town beating the Indonesians off the pavement and into the gutter, if they happened to meet the local wogs, you know, this sort of thing and of course then of course Japan collapsed, they found themselves at the mercy of the Indonesians who weren't very friendly disposed, they said, 'We can't see much difference between you and the Dutch but we don't like either of you' and they were on the point of having their throats cut, but we arrived in the nick of time to make them prisoners which saved their lives I think. It was the last thing one expected to see German U-Boats there but they got stranded there at the end of the War, ran out of fuel and rather tactlessly had thrown their weight around with the local population then of

course things changed and they were on the wrong end of the stick. There was a very curious situation in Java they gave a medal for it eventually with a bar 'South-East Asia 1945-46' there was actually several months of fighting some of it quite heavy but it got very little publicity because it wasn't an official war but there was a, real fighting nobody wanted to fight them. The Indonesians were in their first throes of getting independence and chucking their weight around under Doctor Sukarno and their favourite ideas of democracy was ['*Abala mau dekuu*'] which, Indonesian, means freedom and then incinerate Dutch women and children in their oil drums, that was what they thought was democracy which, we weren't keen on that and it was a very tricky situation altogether. I know further along the coast to the West of us the other way in Java there was a little town called Semarang on the coast I think it was Semarang and the British Indian forces there happened to be Gurkhas and the Japanese had surrendered but were more or less sitting around helping the Indonesians, not officially but they were in practice, and the Gurkha commander British Indian commander found himself approached by, the Japanese commander locally had a Japanese tank battalion and he said, 'We don't like these Indonesians either and your Gurkhas are very much like the Japanese you attack these bastards and we'll help you' - there were questions in Parliament as to why these poor democratic Indonesians were being attacked by the Japs supported by British Gurkhas, there was a row about it afterwards when it leaked back to the House of Commons, the people of the day didn't approve very much you see, because they were completely out of touch with the real situation but on paper there we were supporting the Japs against the poor locals you see, poor harmless Indonesian democrats there was a bit of a rumpus over that and you got a ridiculous situation in Batavia, the capital, I think it's now Jakarta the capital of Java because in the same street you had one end of the road the residence of the former Governor-general Lieutenant-General of the North-East Indies that at night had British Indian sentries on duty and then further down the road there was the Headquarters of the Indonesian republican forces with their own people and we were fighting down the road within sight of one another, then at night the Japanese sentries went off duty and Indian sentries came on guard in the place - it was a ludicrous situation quite fantastic really, and then after several months of sorting out, shuffling and messing around the fighting fizzled out and we came home again, in 1946. The war at home had long been over of course, I ended up in Liverpool, that'd be the summer of '46, and I went back to university of course, and tried to restart studies after all that gap which I found very difficult. It was nice to get back, bit, it was very difficult to go back and read History for an Honours degree after all that gap which I eventually got in '47 got the degree in '47.

J.W. Through all that time were you still with the same division of people?

Mr. R. : Yes I remained from '43, summer of '43 I went abroad and I stayed abroad and I remained with the 5th Indian Divisional Signals until the autumn of '46 when I came home, well by coming home it meant we went back to India actually which was home as far as they were concerned but not us of course, and subsequently came on from

Bombay on a ship called the *Britannic* which had been a pre-war [?] ship, she was a liner I think. We came up through the canal though we didn't stop anywhere, we didn't stop in Alexandria, we came through the Mediterranean, came into Liverpool and that'd be the autumn of 1946, then of course I came home, I left the 5th Indian Division it was about the time that India was getting independence and beginning to split it hadn't actually happened then but it was getting very close to happening, things were a bit muddled.

J.W. You were saying a bit earlier how in the wartime conditions a sort of camaraderie ...

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Mr. R. : Oh yes there was a tremendous one.

J.W. : Between the Indians and the British. Could you tell me a little bit more about that if you ... ?

Mr. R. : Well of course you see, I mean in the first case of course actually how it happened, the 5th Indian Division was one of the pre-War regular army divisions most of the soldiers in it were professional soldiers, what we termed regulars in British terms. When I joined the unit it had a very high proportion of British regular army there were very few of us who were sort of really civilians in uniform who had come in in the War, and most of the soldiers were professional soldiers - the Indian ones and the others as well. There were British ones pre-War regulars and so on, and of course there was a good deal of mutual esteem, it was a regular unit, previously it had been fighting in Ethiopia before that in North Africa so it had quite a lot of war experience before I joined them. Actually it was one of the, it was a good division if I say so myself, one of the best in the Indian army and under the conditions in Burma divisions of rank and race they existed in theory but that was about all, if you're living in the same patch of jungle you can't really distinguish very much between you you're all having the same rough time of it, the same food to a very large extent so that the barriers that would exist in peacetime were not there except theoretically, and of course working on wireless sets you were of course in close touch with the troops. It was rather comical at first until you got used to it you'd call up sort of, 'Hello all stations y-able able rather' the phoenetic alphabet we were using was able, Barker Charlie Delta, I think it's altered since then and you sort of got to know the voices of the people on the outstations I was on, what we called forward control that worked forward from Divisional Headquarters to the different brigades, Indian brigades, and you sort of wait, 'Hello all stations able report my signals all stations over', 'Y-able one w-oaky w-over' our Madrassis never said 'okay' it was always 'W-okay' and 'Able' was always 'Y-able' and then they'd be a pause and the other fellow would come in, 'Y-able 5 y-able 4 w-okay over', he spoke very quickly that chap and so on you got used to this, of course though it's different with Morse of course, we used Morse for the longer distance communication. Oddly enough a Morse signal can get through where speech won't you get longer range. In fact in when we were in

Surabaya I was working by Morse back to Singapore which must have been several thousand miles I think we had quite big sets for that purpose - most of our equipment then was American origin and very good equipment, we had a very big set a [six ?], a sort of *Studebaker* called a Signal Corps Radio SCR 399A, that was our biggest wireless set, we used that to work back to Singapore because it's quite a long way it must be about three or four thousand miles I think, certainly more than two thousand and, but for more local use you used smaller sets. The equipment was much smaller but old fashioned by modern standards because there were no transistors it was all valves, the weak link were the batteries, you had to have had to have chargeable batteries they were quite heavy clumsy things to lug around. At one stage we had mules for a while but that's interesting somebody said mules are stupid. They're not from their point of view they are from our point of view. Actually they're anything but stupid from the mule's point of view they're very intelligent creatures - if you wanted to load the wireless set the idea was you carried the charging engine on one side of the mule and the wireless set on the other on special fitments, so if you went round the front he bit you and if you went round the back he kicked you, and when you finally got the charging engine and the wireless on he threw the lot off and started all over again and they say mules are stupid, anything but, but it was rather funny it was. A curious thing actually we had one or two Indians in the unit there were one or two we couldn't communicate with and one chap from somewhere in Central India one of the hill tribes nobody knew his language. There are one or two bits in the centre of India, the [Nilhili] Hills, where there are some fairly primitive tribes hill people and they've got fairly weird languages I mean the South Indian languages are quite different to the Northern, anyway they're Dravidian as you know but those hill people they got strange dialects and I think there was only one chap in the unit who could talk to this fellow, so of course he worked on this and got away with murder because you'd give him an order and he didn't understand Urdu, '*Mai naaluum sāhab*', 'Don't understand' which was deliberate, I'm sure, in a lot of cases but funnily enough he was extremely good with the mules, he used to talk to them and they used to act up with him he got on very well with the mules, he was a fine muleteer actually but almost impossible from every other point of view, but he could communicate with his mules very strange I forget his name now, yes he used to get away with murder cause he used to rely on the language barrier if you wanted him to do anything he didn't want to do it he didn't want to understand you which was probably semi genuine but only semi.

J.W. You were saying just now, with Urdu, were you trained then in Urdu while you were there?

Mr. R. : Well we never formally learned it I mean the regular peace pre-War peacetime people did they got extra money for learning it, it was a sort of *lingua franca.* I never formally learned it but you picked up a certain amount actually it's rather amusing I only have to go into the local post office the first time recently it changed hands from rather dour Scots who were running it and I took one look at the face and I said, 'You're from

the Northern Punjab' His name's Suleiman and he beamed happily from ear to ear although actually he wasn't, well the father was born in India but his boys and girls who run the post office I think the girl was born in Leeds I mean they are really Scots technically though they're still of course racially Pakistanis or Indians, he beamed happily I don't know what it was but odd smatterings of Urdu and Punjabi came back to me cause I said to him, 'You're from the Northern Punjab' and whenever I see him now the odd expression comes out and I've only got to go there now and he lays down the red carpet opens the door for me it's the most embarassing all the other customers look, 'Why's this old man getting the door opened for him by this ...' sort of attitude you know I say '*Shukria*' and he beams happily, that means 'Thank you' I, he can't do enough for me, it's all because of a few words that come back. I never learnt it thoroughly I mean I've got a smattering of it enough to get by but I never knew it formally in the formal sense of course that would be Roman Urdu I never learnt the native script the Nagri [Devanagari] which is the long lines with the bits above the bits dropping down and the Arabic is the other one which you probably know, I never learnt that native script at all I mean we didn't use it very much anyway, but you did pick up a smattering of the language though of course the native language of most of our operators was Tamil or Telegu, Malayanam was the other one that's on the other side of India the Cochin side what would it be South India the West Coast that's right, they have a strange language called Malayanam most of the Madrassis speak Tamil or Telegu is the other version I think 'Come here' is '*Ingiwar*' in Tamil if I remember rightly '*Ingiwar*' is 'Go there' no '*Ingilar*' is 'Go there' no actually because they had their own language which they were born with, most of them picked up Urdu and used it as a *lingua franca* it was the common language of most of the Army in pre-war India too - even if peoples' official language was something else they mostly knew Urdu or a bit of it anyway. Actually it's got different names actually it's Hindustani's the other one I think the posh version's Hindi that's rather upper crust version of it rather like High and Low German but most of us picked up smatterings of Urdu or Punjabi it's basically a form of Punjabi.

J.W. And when you said you came back and found it difficult to settle back into life?

Mr. R. : Yes it's difficult getting back into studies such a long gap several years of course and my health wasn't that wonderful, I was seven stone and it was difficult to readjust mainly because of being out of study for so long you see, quite a few years but anyway I got my degree in summer went back into residence summer of 1946 and got my degree in the summer of 1947 it'd be June 1947 I think that's right. At Cambridge you take what was called the Tripos exam, I think originally it was a three legged stool historically and the unfortunate and the unfortunate candidate used to sit on this and be quizzed by the by the examiners or the inquisitors as I liked to call them, and the name Tripos came into use and the most of the subjects are such-and-such a tripos I was reading for the Historical Tripos which unlike many universities the basic [?] tends to be a one subject degree unlike many universities where you have to do a number of subjects you tend to take one main subject and concentrate on that for the Honours degree, at

least the BA, the basic degree, and I started with History mainly because I liked it and was good at it I would have tackled Geography which I also liked, but it had Mathematical Geography and I knew that was hopeless for me I was always mathematically blind so my father said, 'You'd better take something you're fairly safe with you'll have to do that Mathematical Geography if you want to get the Geography Tripos.' Many years later I did get a Scottish teaching qualification in Geography they didn't have any Mathematical Geography in, that was a long time later though, in fact I ended up with Scottish teaching qualifications in what was it History, Geography and Modern Studies and English eventually, that's years later of course.

J.W. And how about now with the Indian Signals Association that we were talking about earlier how, is that a very important association for the sort of camaraderie ... ?

Mr. R. : Well it's nice to belong to it but actually we're so scattered I think there's only about 189 of us left currently we're so scattered we don't see anybody, but I did curiously enough I got a Christmas card last year out of the blue from a chap called we knew him as Henrys, his real name was Sergeant Hall, of course because of the band leader Henry Hall everybody nicknamed him Henry, I think his real name was Edward actually, out of the blue, I last saw him in Surabaya in 1946, a Christmas card arrived from Henry to my astonishment he picked up my name from the membership of this list of this thing and of course he connected it, it was actually curiously enough I'd forgotten it but I taught him mah jong, the game you know the Chinese game you've probably heard of it, he remembered it and wrote me a card so I'm in touch with him, I'm in touch with another fellow called Lesley Meadowcroft who was out there with me as a boy but basically that's all, you just get links like that, but as an association there's so few of us (there is a knock at the door and **Mr. R.** says, 'Come in') he went out in '43 with me to Mhow originally the Signal Training Centre British and then we'd served out in Burma he ended up in Sumatra actually, not Java, but it's useful in that respect though when I joined I didn't realise that would happen of course. Actually for many I didn't know it existed I didn't discover it existed until a few years ago.

J.W. Right.

Mr. R. : Cause it got no publicity when I came home. I suppose like most people I intended to forget the Army, well you become a civilian again, I had a lot of exams ahead of me, I'd got to find a job in civvie street that was all in the past, you knew it was more important to get my degree and then get some kind of professional job or something, so you sort of only picked up these things when you got older and of course I rejoined the Territorial Army because actually I rather liked the Army despite the War, I suppose having had an army background, my father had been in the Army before the War and was a regular officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

J.W. Had he been out to India at all?

Mr. R. : No he didn't himself most of his service was in Palestine under General Allenby and also in France I think, yes, he was in Europe or the Middle East Palestine mainly he ended up in Ethiopia after the First War, he was Doctor to Tafari Makonnen who became Hailie Selassie, for a while he was his doctor, that was in 1919 or so for a period. My mother was in the Air Force in 1919 she was an officer in the Womens' Royal Air Force she had a service background and years later when I finally came out of the Army my short service commission had fizzled out after about twelve years or so and I went to the Civil Service Commissioners and I saw a small advert or rather a young officer I was with in the Mess at the time said, 'There's a job here for you Captain Robinson', I said 'Yes' rather doubtfully cause they used to pull our legs a bit. I was some kind of teacher and they were still at the age where they looked at teachers with some kind of suspicion. Being Education Corps we were older than them of course, militarily senior, and they were inclined to pull your leg a bit so I said, 'Cor Sidney, what is it?', 'Well' he said, 'the Civil Service Commissioners are wanting a lecturer in a dockside technical college' in, it was in Modern Studies I think or what the Scots call Modern Studies - Current Affairs and Liberal Studies was the actual jargon in the advert. He said, 'That would be down your street that's your subject' and I said well it was I suppose so I said, 'Well what's it for?', 'The Admiralty', 'Oh they won't want me I was never in the Navy'. Anyway the Civil Service Commissioners appointed me to the Admiralty so I became a Civil Servant with the Ministry of Defence Navy ended up in Chatham dockyard and was teaching dockyard apprentices, and then I got promoted something came out of the blue the principal of the college called me in to see him and said, 'As a result of the selection board' I said to him blankly, 'What selection board?' because I hadn't been interviewed by anybody. 'Oh' he said, 'we had one we didn't need to see you we know all about you. You've been promoted and we're sending you to Rosyth', so that's what took me North and at the time my sister was married to a Scot in Glasgow anyway so it suited me so I ended up in Rosyth dock.

Tape ends

Mr. R. : (Mr. Robinson had continued to talk about his pension that he received having finished his military service) You won't be getting any more they'll be giving you the silver badge he called it the King's Badge and it had the monogram 'G.R.I.' and the Crown and 'For Loyal Service' on it, and the pensions in those days were a pittance by modern standards, so I got the War Disability Pension which was really pocket money as much as anything, and of course went back and got my degrees and eventually with this arm going funny and not being able to cope very easily I came over here some years ago now. Well I'm not disabled but I can't do silly things I couldn't do that button up for instance I can no longer tie shoelaces so that's not that much use, so it's useful to be here where people do those things for me.

J.W. Okay I think that's covered most of the things.

Mr. R. : Probably yes.

J.W. : You covered most of the things without me having to ask the questions.

Mr. R. : Yes I suppose I have I hope I haven't missed out anything that mattered.

J.W. : Oh no, and if you've got anything else can you think of anything else at all?

Mr. R. : Well let's see India itself I started off in Mhow which is North of Bombay some distance above Bombay near Indore the state of Indore, and from there I went by train to Calcutta. Other places I've been to Allahabad mainly because it was on the station on the railway line and Chittagong right through Burma down to Rangoon, and ended up as I say in Singapore and Java at the end of the War, five weeks in Java and six weeks in South Africa during the War went across the high *veldt* across to Durban, and while I was, at the end of the War when I got back to India I got my first leave during the War, I only had two weeks leave and that was in Calcutta because that's where they told us we had to go, we had no choice where we went, so I got a month's leave at the end of the War just before I cam home I went up to Sikkim I don't know if you know where Sikkim is.

J.W. I don't, no.

Mr. R. : Well I'm not sure there was, I think I've an idea there's an atlas over there but Sikkim is North of Darjeeling it's right up in the North on the edge of the Himalayas actually you're only about you're only a few miles from the top of Kanchenjunga which is the second highest mountain in the world as you probably know (*sic*) it's if you think of the map of India with Calcutta and the [?] and all over to the side right up on the edge of the Himalayas you get Darjeeling, just above that is the Indian Native State of Sikkim and that's semi-independent sort of autonomous over the other side you get Bhutan and further up Nepal running along the top of the Himalayas where the Gurkhas come from, and I went on a fortnight's trek through Sikkim we marched for about a hundred and twenty miles we got to over ten thousand feet I think the last day we did seventeen miles and dropped down to blow sea level and right up again to Dargeeling at six or seven thousand feet Mount [Zinganeeda] was the highest place at just about twelve thousand actually and there's a monastery a Buddhist monastery or [*golfa*] there as they call them which was very interesting we were taken round by the monks and they [?] of it, it's a peculiar sort of, not orthodox Buddhism there's a kind of devil worship thrown in [?]. Anyway we spent the week walking for one hundred and twenty miles through Sikkim up through the Himalayas and there was one point in the trek where the weather was clear which it wasn't very often, you could see by looking round five of the highest mountains in the world at one go you could see Everest you could the unamed peak next

to Everest you could see Kanchenjunga about twenty miles above you, looking up like that and yes there was one point where you could see five of the highest mountains in the world at one go, weather permitting, quite incredible, mind you Everest was about seventy miles away you didn't see it very closely, but it was there and I've also been to the wettest place in the world I managed to get up in Assam on the edge of the Khasi [?] Hills where the mountains rise up the hills rise up like an escarpment from the planes of Bengal, the monsoon clouds come up over the Bay of Bengal and they hit this lot and the whole of the monsoon seems to drop on this place, it's about forty miles south-west of Shillong, it has the reputation of being the wettest place in the whole world, I'm not sure whether that's literally true but it shares it with Hawaii and somewhere else in the Andes I think, and it gets four hundred inches of rainfall in one year, one year they get four hundred inches of rainfall and it's rather funny having been there three years later after the War somebody nominated me for the Royal Metereological Society as a Fellow of the Royal Metereological Society, which I became and I'm told that was a reason I wrote them a letter during the War telling them about my visit to this place and after the War they made me a Fellow of the Royal Metereological Society though I knew very little about metereology as such, technically speaking as such they'd never heard of anybody who'd been there for years and years, it was only a little native village and a few elderly, well we thought they were elderly I don't suppose, they weren't really, missionaries, Welsh missionaries there though I'm not sure what denomination one of the Welsh Biblical sort of sects [?] lot they are precisely they looked after the rain gauges and so on and they were delighted to see us we were the first people they'd seen for years so we said, 'How do you find it living in such a wet place?', 'Oh' said the chief missionary chap he said, 'it's very much like home, I come from round Snowdon'. I thought that was very funny he said in all this misery, 'Oh it's very much like home. We're going home fairly soon' he said this was just at the end of the War looking back on it miles from anywhere they were.

J.W. And when was it exactly when you were there? That was during the War years?

Mr. R. : That was just after the, well it would have been very near the end of the War, it must have been about '43 '44 round about 1944 I think that would be approximately then, by '46 we were back in India after the War back from Java that's when I got my leave in Sikkim walked up through the hills.

J.W. I think that's about it really.

Mr. R. : Probably is.

J.W. Yes thank you very much for everything.

Mr. R. : That's alright I'm glad to know it's of some use to you.

J.W. Yep very good to talk to you I'll just ...

Tape is switched off.

Major J.P. Rutherford
2nd 2nd Punjab Regiment
Interviewed on 7th May 1997
SA1997.83

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Major R.** represents Major Rutherford

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston, I'm recording Major Rutherford at his home in Edinburgh and it's Wednesday the seventh of May 1997. Okay Major Rutherford, if you could tell me first where and when you were born please?

Major R. : Well I was born in Edinburgh in 1921 but my father was in the *Chartered Bank* and they were home, it was not long after the War and they were home in Edinburgh at the time.

J.W. : Right, and did you have any brothers and sisters at all?

Major R. : No.

J.W. : Just your self. And so did you go to school here in Edinburgh or .... ?

Major R. : Yes, yes, I went, I went to Fettes.

J.W. : I see right, and so you were there from what ages?

Major R. : From thirteen to eighteen.

J.W. : Right okay, so what did you do after that when you finished school?

Major R. : Well I left school in July '39 and I went up to Cambridge, I tried to enlist in the army, you know, the War started just a month after I left school so I tried to enlist but I was told to wait until I was called up, and then after Dunkirk they started forming what they called Young Soldiers' Companies so at the age of nineteen I joined up in the Royal Scots and after two months, two or three months I supposed, I must have been called up because I was then posted to the Black Watch Infantry Training Centre in Perth and while I was there in October 1940 the War Office invited what they called potential officer people who'd passed their Cert A at school to volunteer to do their officer training in India and take up commissions in the expanding Indian Army. Now I jumped at that because during my time at school I had always had the feeling that I would like to get in to the Indian Civil Service. One of the things I remember we used to hear from time to time of an old Fettesian, Sir George Cunningham. Now does that mean anything to you?

J.W. : Yes, yes, Sir George Cunningham.

Major R. : You know his history?

J.W. : Yes.

Major R. : That he was Governor of the North West Frontier Province for about nine years and then after his two years, after his retirement when he was living in St. Andrews, he was Rector of St. Andrews University, and he was invited by Mr. Jinnah to go back and take over the Governorship again, so that was why when I went up to Cambridge I had it in the back of my mind that I'd to get into the Indian Civil. Of course I jumped at the chance of going to India, and after my time at Bangalore when I was commissioned, I was lucky enough to be posted to a battalion in Peshawar.

J.W. : Oh right.

Major R. : And that was in July 1941. All that, all the time that we were there that part of the Frontier at least was very peaceful. There were no uprisings or anything like that at all. But when I was commissioned in July '41 the Germans were going strong in Russia and there was, the Commander-in-Chief, General Auchinleck, at the time – another Scot, decided that something would have to be done to prepare defences in e Khyber Pass in case of a German invasion through Russia and Afghanistan. So we spent a couple of months right up on the Frontier preparing fortifications on the mountain, it was called [Speenatzuka], the White Peak, and oh, it was a wonderful two months, I remember so well the view from the top of that mountain, we could see, or at least we thought it must be Jalalabad in the far distance, and then we didn't do much moving around, we used to ride down to Landi Kotal. You know, you got a map of the area?

J.W. : Yes.

Major R. : You know what ... ?

J.W. : I know Landi Kotal, yes.

Major R. : It looks like?

J.W. : Yes.

Major R. : We used to go, ride out to Landi Kotal, but we wee not allowed, of course, into any of the villages and we weren't allowed within two miles of the actual Afghan frontier which was, so I didn't really see very much of the people. So at the end of our two months, well I was sent away on a course to Sogam in India, and I came back, I rejoined the Regiment at Christmas time, and then soon after Christmas (**Major R.** gets

up) I'd better shut the door, we were posted up to Landi Kotal on our way to [Speenatzuka] we marched through the Khyber Pass. When we were posted to Landi Kotal we went up by train and, you know, you're talking about connections between Scotland and the North West Frontier, I think, I must have lent it to someone and not got it back, a book I had about the Khyber which mentioned the Khyber Railway. It was built by a chap, I think his name was Bayley and I think he was a Scot.

J.W. : I'm not sure, I'll have to check.

Major R. : Because, well if so it is a part of the connection (laughs).

J.W. : Oh yes, very much so.

Major R. : So we were in Landi Kotal from January 1942 until about March, and then we were sent down the Pass again to the Khajuri plain. Now does that mean anything to you?

J.W. : I'm just trying to place it. Where exactly is that?

Major R. : It's to the south west, I think, of Peshawar (opens book to show me a map), it's really between Peshawar and Kohat.

J.W. : Oh right, yes.

Major R. : And it does, it does have a certain history. During the Redshirt uprising of 1930 the government occupied the plain. Why they did it, I can't remember why they did it but it was very unpopular with the Pathans because they had used it as a grazing ground (laughs) for their cattle, and they still did, they still used it in the early 1940s, one, one, there were quite a lot of them you would see wandering around with their cattle and there were three forts on the plain, there was the [Bhara] fort and the Jhansi post, it was called, and Fort Millwood which was named after the general I think who'd occupied it, and we wee there until 1942 I think, and then we were sent down to Trichinopoli to join the newly forming 25th Indian Division, and I never got back to the Frontier after that, so I didn't really see very much of it.

J.W. : Right, and what battalion was that that you were originally with?

Major R. : The 2nd battalion 2nd Punjab Regiment.

J.W. : Right okay. Now to take you back before all that, before you said, said you were interested in joining the Civil Service, and then subsequently went into the army, what did you know about India when you were living in Scotland? Can you remember?

Major R. : Well very little. I never studied when I was at school, but my father had worked abroad, you see, and I just had this feeling. Well I wanted to join the Civil Service, and I thought the Indian Civil I could pass the exam which I probably wouldn't have done. And then when it came, when the War was over and I was demobbed there was obviously no future in India so I joined the Colonial Service instead and I was told I was to be posted to Kenya. I didn't like the idea very much, I'd applied for Malaya, of course, and then I was sent on a training course and while I was on the course the Governor of the new colony of North Borneo asked for more staff. Before the War North Borneo had been run by a chartered company, and Sarawak, and next door had been run by the Brooke family, but after four years of Japanese occupation neither the chartered company nor the Brookes could carry on, so they sold their land to the crown and both territories became colonies, and this was after the War, and it wasn't until 1947 that the Governors were appointed and arrived and the Governors, and they immediately asked for more staff so on the course people who wee going to Africa were invited to volunteer to go to North Borneo and Sarawak and of course I jumped at it.

J.W. : Right okay, and let's see (pause). Do you, you said you didn't know much about India. Do you remember your friends or anyone in your family, did anyone around you know much, do you think, about India, or was it ... ?

Major R. : No I don't think so, no. My father he was in the *Chartered Bank* and he started off in Bombay.

J.W. : Right, so ... .

Major R. : But that was many years before. He didn't talk much about India.

J.W. : So there was no link at all. Right so before you, or even initially when you were sent to India, was there any training you had at all, did they give you any information or was it rather more sort of in at the deep end when you got there, the officer training and that sort of thing?

Major R. : None of us had any training at all about Indian before we went there to Bangalore on the officers' training course, of course we learned about Indian, well the, it was mainly the Punjab that was where most of the army came from, we, we learned their manners and customs and we learned Urdu too.

J.W. : Right, okay, so ... .

Major R. : But we didn't learn Pushtu either.

J.W. : Right, and did you have to take exams in Punjabi, Urdu, sorry, did you, was there an exam you had to pass?

Major R. : Yes, well it wasn't until after we were commissioned there was the Higher, err, the Lower Urdu and the Higher Urdu. What happened if you failed I don't know, I managed to pass both.

J.W. : That's some achievement compared to my limited Urdu certainly, and do you remember going out at all, the journey out to India?

Major R. : Yes I remember it very well.

J.W. : Can you tell me about that, what that was like?

Major R. : Well it's a rather a long story.

J.W. : Well, no, go ahead please.

Major R. : We had assembled at Aldershot and we left Aldershot at tea time, I think it was the 2nd of January for an unknown destination it was security reasons of course, we weren't told which port we were going to, and early in the morning I woke up and I peered out of the window through the black out and somehow one couldn't see very clearly but it looked very familiar, and suddenly realised we we travelling round what was then called the Suburban Railway, I think it's now called the South, it used to be the South, I think it's called the South Suburban Railway now, you know, it passes through Craiglockhart ...

J.W. : Oh right.

Major R. : And I wondered whether we were going to stay in Edinburgh, it happened to be my mother's birthday and I was thinking, 'If I stop here well I'll have to ask whether I can get leave' (laughs). However we didn't stay in Edinburgh, we went on to Gourock where we stayed for a week, and then we embarked on the, it was, the ship was called the *Highland Chieftain* it was one of a fleet of about six ships which had been built for the South American meat trade. The troop decks were absolutely frightful. So we eventually sailed, we must have gone about a third of the way across the Atlantic to get clear of the submarines before we, we went south, and we out in at Freetown and then we put in at Durban, and then at Durban we sailed over to Bombay and then by train to Bangalore.

J.W. : Right, can you remember how long that took the sort of whole journey from end to end?

Major R. : Yes we sailed for Gourock it must have been about the sixteenth of January, and we must have arrived on about the third or fourth of March because my birthday was

two, I remember my birthday was on board ship which is twenty-eighth of February which is two or three days before we landed.

J.W. : Right, a long, long journey, and how about when you landed there, can you remember your feelings, your first impressions at all, what it was like?

Major R. : Err yes, we weren't allowed off the quayside, we were loaded on to a troop train, what they called Military Special Carriages and they were just frightful hard wooden bunks (laughs) and the journey from Bombay to Bangalore we went almost as far as Madras and then back up into, back up to Bangalore.

J.W. : And what, how did it feel? Obviously it was uncomfortable but do you remember any sort of vivid impressions you had if India when you sort of first beheld it?

Major R. : Not really no.

J.W. : And so after you, now when, you say you were trained first and you went to the Frontier later ... .

Major R. : Yes.

J.W. : What was the sort of everyday routine while you were there? I know you were posted to lots of different places but was there a regular routine?

Major R. : You mean at Bangalore?

J.W. : No sorry, when you were posted to the ... .

Major R. : Oh in the battalion. Well we used to do training out of doors in the early morning. We got u at about five o'clock, you see it was during the hot weather and we did, you see, I found myself posted as an Acting Company Commander rather to my horror, and we did company training in the mornings and then we finished that about nine o'clock and then we had breakfast, and then there was office and then after lunch in the heat of the day we did, we rested until about four and then it was usually playing hockey with the men or volleyball or something like that.

J.W. : Right okay, and what about there, was the, officers, men such as yourself and then the Punjabis, the soldiers as well. Were there any other sort of followers with the Regiment at all, do you remember? Would there be sort of like servants and personnel who were around the Regiment too?

Major R. : Yes there were the cooks and the water carriers and the sweepers who were, were of course outcasts, but when we were mobilised we joined 25th Indian Division I just, you know, I just can't remember what, but, but I think they all, they all left.

J.W. : Right so would they, presumably would they be recruited at specific points where the Regiment were?

Major R. : Yes.

J.W. : Right (pauses) and you were saying when you were on the Frontier you didn't get a chance to go into the villages and that sort of thing.

Major R. : No we weren't allowed to.

J.W. : For security and so on, but with the men how did you, you said you played sport with the men but did you mix with the men very well/

Major R. : Yes, oh yes.

J.W. : Right, and what sort of form did that take?

Major R. : Well we didn't eat with them of course but it was mainly games. Well I used to go down to the lines and talk with them, and sometimes I attended religious services but we weren't as close to them on the Frontier as we were afterwards when we were in the field.

J.W. : Right, do you want to tell me a little bit about that when you were in the field with them, what was that like?

Major R. : Well I don't know really, we were living together and eating together.

J.W. : So the situation sort of made things closer I suppose? Right, and where was that that you were in the field with them?

Major R. : Well we didn't go into Burma until March '44. The, a division had been formed in South India, and at that time there was still the, the threat of a possible Japanese invasion across the Bay of Bengal and that was really why we had been formed. That threat didn't last long, and then, well, no, it was more than just a rumour, I think, we were told that the idea was that we were formed into a corps the 25th and the 19th Indian Divisions and the 2nd British Division, and our commander was General Christiasen whose name you may know.

J.W. : Yes I've heard the name from others.

Major R. : He died three or four years ago at the age of a hundred and the idea was that we were to attack through landings on the Andamans or possibly Sumatra and this was early in 1943 and ten it was decided that there would have to e a landing in the south of France as well as a landing in Normandy so all the landing craft were withdrawn from India and sent back, sent back to England so that was the end of any idea of landings in the Andamans and Sumatra so after that we hung around in South India and eventually our Division as posted into Burma into the Arakan where we came under General Christiasen's command again, but of course all this is a long way from the North-West Frontier.

J.W. : No, no but it, I'm interested in hearing, you know, your relations with the men and that sort of thing and how you were saying it was very different or different at least in those conditions. Was there a much stronger link in those sort of conditions because you were there with them?

Major R. : Yes uhum.

J.W. : In, in the same conditions.

Major R. : Well you see under the Indian Army organisation they did have Indian officers you see, *subedars, jemedars* and well, when we were in the field I more or less lived with them. I still had British rations but I saw a lot more of them in the field than in the mess.

J.W. : So, and just, you were mentioning rations. When you were back on the Frontier and not necessarily when you were in Burma did you generally have British rations all the time?

Major R. : Yes.

J.W. : Right, okay, and for the time mainly when you were settled in India were you fairly, if you don't mind me asking, where you fairly healthy while you were in India, was health ever a problem for you there?

Major R. : Uhm, I have jaundice once.

J.W. : Goodness.

Major R. : But apart from that I had no illness at all. What was the cause of the jaundice I don't know. A lot of people had it.

J.W. : Yes I do hear it mentioned.

Major R. : What it was caused by I don't know.

J.W. : Right, and did that affect your feelings for being there, did you, did it give you a sort of negative feeling when you were ill there?

Major R. : Oh no, I don't think so.

J.W. : You just took it in your stride. Right, what about contact with home while you were out there, did you have much contact with home, did you ... ?

Major R. : Well we used to send letters. Apart from that there was no contact, no.

J.W. : So nobody would send things, newspapers or anything like that at all, because some people I've heard would do that.

Major R. : I don't think, no I don't remember getting newspapers. We had an Indian Army newspaper in English, it was mainly in Urdu, but there were English bits as well.

J.W. : And did, and were the letters very important to you did you enjoy ... ?

Major R. : Oh yes.

J.W. : Right, now this is perhaps a difficult question to answer but being a Scot in that part of the world, did you feel that gave you a sort of different experience to other British people who were ... ?

Major R. : No I don't think it did.

J.W. : You were just ... .

Major R. : There were no other Scots in the mess, at least, none, I can't remember, I don't remember any others, I'm trying to remember. One, yes, we had one chap who had been with the Black Watch ... .

J.W. : And did you ... ?

Major R. : He was British Service Attached actually, he wasn't Indian (i.e. Army) Ian Nicholson, well, yes we were all in it together so to speak, there wasn't ... .

J.W. : A sort of little clique of you?

Major R. : Oh no, no.

J.W. : Right okay that's that, and how about, obviously in Burma the situation was completely different, but when you were on the Frontier and maybe other parts of India what was your social life and leisure, what for did that take?

Major R. : Well I didn't enjoy the Peshawar Club very much. I remember, well I used to go swimming there sometimes. I remember once I went to a dance but there were no Scottish country dances so I didn't go to anymore dances and I never went near the Club again hardly, except for swimming.

J.W. : Did many of the other army officers go to the Club or was it mainly civil personnel in Peshawar?

Major R. : I think yes. I don't remember many from army, yes, going to, going to the Club.

J.W. : And did you do anything else for leisure?

Major R. : Well I used to play bridge. Our commanding officer was a very keen bridge player and well, there was one other officer, a temporary officer who'd been a planter, he played and the adjutant played because he had to and I was the only other one who knew the game, so I was more or less detailed to make up the four. Well I remember that particularly after, well, when, when we were on [Speenatzuka] and when we were mobilised in Trichinopoli, night after, night playing bridge with the C-O.

J.W. : Right, and you said you played sport with the Punjabi soldiers in the Regiment. Did you do any other sort of leisure things or social things with then at all?

Major R. : Well when I was on leave I played golf and there was a golf course in [Trichinopoli] I used to play there too, because, well I'd always been a keen golfer.

J.W. : And you were saying earlier you'd go down to the lines and talk to the men. Did you enjoy that, was that important to you?

Major R. : Oh yes.

J.W. : And did they seem to enjoy that as well?

Major R. : Yes, oh yes, well it was something one had to do, it was part of the ... .

J.W. : Right, and where were they, do you know which part of the Punjab they were from, any particular ... ?

Major R. : Well my company was Dogras and they came from the [Khangra] I think, I've rather forgotten where they, we had one company of Dogras and one of Sikhs and two of Punjabi Mohammedans, that was the usual composition.

J.W. : Right, now let me think, do you remember any other characters in particular, British, British or Punjabi, individuals that stand out in your memory that you can tell me ... ?

Major R. : Oh yes, all the V.C.O.s. The one I remember well the, the Dogras of course there was, what was his name, Subedar Lachman Singh, and Jemedar Guhra Ram and Jemedar Sahadar Maal, but when I first joined the Subedar-Major he was a Sikh and he was an Honorary captain, he'd been, had been decorated for valour in the First World War, I think it was the Indian Distinguished Service Medal, and then eventually when we were in Landi Kotal the time came for him to retire and I remember we all were going down to the station to see him off. He was a terrific character, [Bakhshish] Singh his name was.

J.W. : Right and did you, so was there quite a strong bond with the V.C.O.s?

Major R. : I think so, yes.

J.W. : Right and any others you remember in particular?

Major R. : Well I remember one or two *havildars* and corporals. I don't remember any of the, I don't remember many of the *sipāhīs*.

J.W. : Yes, yes and what about other British officers who were with you, British as in British, rather than, not, not sort of from the British army but other British Indian Army officers, do you remember any of those?

Major R. : In the Regiment?

J.W. : Yes.

Major R. : Oh yes, yes I remember them.

J.W. : Any particular individuals?

Major R. : Well all of them really.

J.W. : Right (pauses) Can you, cause I'm getting near to the end, think of anything else from your time there that I haven't asked you about?

Major R. : I don't really think so, no.

J.W. : Anything else that might come through at all? So shall we jump on. How, how long then were you in Burma before you finished there?

Major R. : A year.

J.W. : Right okay, and than did you come back to India?

Major R. : We came back from India, we came back to India and we were sent down to the south to Coimbatore.

J.W. : Right.

Major R. : And everyone went on leave. Before we went on leave we were told that when we returned we would train for the landings in Malaya. We had in the Regiment what we called British Service Attached Officers who'd done their training, their officer training in Britain, in fact most of them latterly were British Service Attached and they wee all given free passages to go and spend their leave at home but the Indian Army officers weren't. I remember, so, writing to my bank to ask for an overdraft but this was refused. So it was while we were on leave the War in Europe ended and when the British Service officers applied to come back their passages out, they were told, 'It isn't worth sending you back, the war is over', so there we were going to land in Malaya with three or four of our most experienced officers no longer with us, and mercifully the bomb was dropped just a fortnight before we were due to land. If it hadn't've been I don't think I'd be here now, that landing was a, there it is, that's nothing to do with the North-West Frontier.

J.W. : No, no, please don't worry that's, so when was it that you came out of India, when was that?

Major R. : Well we did the landing in Malaya unopposed and then we stayed on there as garrison, we were sent over to the East Coast and it was while we were there a circular came round inviting people who were interested in joining the Colonial service to put their names, which I did, and I was interviewed out there and then I was sent home. This was in April or May '46 or the interview at home and I wasn't due for demob until August or so and then when I asked about my passage back they said, 'Oh it isn't worth sending you back, we shall, we'll de, de, demob you now', and I was very upset about it because I never really said goodbye to any of them.

J.W. : Did you ever have any chance to contact them at all or ... ?

Major R. : Well I wrote to them of course, bit I didn't really have any chance of seeing them again, no, it was a ... .

J.W. : That was a shame, and did that happen to many other of your comrades as well?

Major R. : I don't think so, no, no, because I was the only one who went into the Colonial Service.

J.W. : Right, okay, and so what, what happened, that was when you went to Borneo and those places, right, you've said before ... .

Tape runs out

J.W. : So you were saying earlier when you finished with the Indian Army reluctantly you then went into the Colonial Service and you were in North Borneo and these places. How long was that for that you were in the Colonial Service before you ... ?

Major R. : Well from '48, I arrived in '48 after the end of the course and then in '63 it became independent and I stayed on for another five years, and then I did three years, then I did five years in Brunei on contract (laughs).

J.W. : And then you came back to Scotland?

Major R. : Then I came back here, yes.

J.W. : And how was it when you'd spent all those years, a very long time, overseas, how was it when you came back to Scotland, how did that ... ?

Major R. : Well I'd been on leave regularly, it wasn't strange ... .

J.W. : A shock for you, and how did people react to you, with all these experiences and having gone round the world, did people take that in a sort of matter of fact way, or did they ... ?

Major R. : Well I think so, yes, I mean ... .

J.W. : You weren't treated as something ... ?

Major R. : No I don't think so.

J.W. : Right.

Major R. : No I don't think there was anything. There were quite a number of people who'd been abroad.

J.W. : Right, and how, remembering as you are those days, how do you see them now, are they very important to you the memories of those days because obviously, you know ... .

Major R. : Well they're very happy memories.

J.W. : Right, right because you're in the Indian Army Association. Is there still a very strong feeling of camaraderie do you think?

Major R. : Oh yes, there is I think.

J.W. : Right, and do you still keep any links at all with any of your former colleagues?

Major R. : No, well, only those who are members of the Association, I'm afraid. I used to write to them sometimes, but I rather gave it up in the end you know.

J.W. : Yes these things are always difficult. Right, well, I can't think of anything specific – is there anything else that you can think of that comes to mind?

Major R. : I don't think so, no, nothing about the North-West as I say, I thought you were mainly concerned with the North-West.

J.W. : But, oh, you know any other part of when you were, were you ever based in Punjab at all, perhaps?

Major R. : No, no, no, we were in Peshawar and Landi Kotal and the Khajuri plain and then we were posted to join Twenty-Five, the ... .

J.W. : Ah, sorry to, I can think of one other thing, do you remember Peshawar at all, the city, did you ever get much time to spend in the city as well?

Major R. : We weren't allowed into the city.

J.W. : Not at all?

Major R. : No.

J.W. : You were in the cantonment?

Major R. : I can only remember going in once (i.e. to the city) when we were doing an exercise in the Fort. I can't even remember what exercise the exercise was, but the city was out of bounds to officers. I'm not quite sure why but they, it was ... .

J.W. : Right, well, I think that's about everything I can think to ask. Thank you very much.

Major R. : No I'm sorry I can't be more helpful about the Scottish connection with the Frontier.

J.W. : No you've been, oh don't worry, you are a Scottish connection, in person, with the Frontier, that's been wonderful talking to you, and thanks very much.

The tape is switched off.

Major Roy Rutherford
1/16 Punjab Regiment
Interviewed on 22nd May 1997
SA1997.87 & 88

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston, and **Major R.** Represents Major Roy Rutherford

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston, I'm recording Major Rutherford outside his home in Gullane. So if I could start, Major Rutherford, by asking you were and when you were born please?

Major R. : Yep. I was born in 30th November 1923 in Perth.

J.W. : Right, okay, and what did your parents do at the time?

Major R. : My father was in the army. He retired about a year after I was born.

J.W. : What regiment was he?

Major R. : Black Watch.

J.W. : Had he been out to India?

Major R. : Yes he had. He was out there in 18 ... he joined the army as a boy soldier, he was an orphan, he'd been to an orphanage in 1898 and was quickly posted out to the 1st Battalion Black Watch in India and I suppose for me that's where the Indian saga all started.

J.W. : Right, and did you have any brothers and sisters at all?

Major R. : Yes I had one brother and two sisters. The story about one of the sisters. She married a soldier, she went out to India and married him in Bombay again with the Black Watch and so this was another influence. She was quite a bit older than I was but nevertheless this was another influence on me in those days.

J.W. : And so did you go to school in Perth?

Major R. : Yep.

J.W. : Where was that?

Major R. : Perth Academy.

J.W. : And how long were you there for?

Major R. : Err, six years at Perth Academy.

J.W. : And what did you do subsequently after that?

Major R. : I left Perth Academy in 1941 at the end of the summer term and two weeks later I enlisted in the Black Watch. I was seventeen and a half.

J.W. : Now you were saying just now that you had these family members who had links with India. Did you ever hear anything else about India at all, were you taught things about India, or just stuff you picked up before you went out there.

Major R. : Just stories of what it was like to be there and I, from a very early age, I'd wanted to go into the Indian Army, so what I had was the stories that people tell about India in those days, Queen Victoria's days, he went from there straight to South African War but India would come up as a subject of conversation, my sister, when she came home on leave and eventually when she came home altogether she and her husband would talk about India with a lot of affection and nostalgia. This is the, but I didn't know anything about it, I didn't know anything about it politically. I don't know that at that age with a war going on that one was terribly mature in political terms.

J.W. : Right, okay, goodness we've gone through so many questions already (laughs). So when, how did you subsequently go from the Black Watch in ... ?

Major R. : From the Black Watch ... ?

J.W. : Into the ... .

Major R. : I couldn't go directly into the Indian Army, so I went into the British Army and went in as a volunteer, I enlisted underage and when it was suggested that I went for a commission I had to produce a birth certificate and that showed that I'd transgressed, I was charged with fraudulent enlistment and marched up in front of the commanding officer who told me that I should settle it with my conscience and I had to wait a little bit longer before I could get a commission. Err, when you put down on the various pieces of paper that you get, what you, who you want to serve with, I put down Indian Army and I went to a WOSB in Edinburgh here I think it was, it was the first WOSB that was ever held and I saw an elderly gentleman in Edinburgh somewhere who had served with a Sikh regiment and he'd told us one or two things, I've forgotten what he told us, I doubt that it was terribly relevant, and then I went back to the Battalion I was serving with I then reached the rank of corporal in the 70th Young Soldiers' Battalion Black Watch stationed at Muntieth until I was summonsed to go to Great Central Hotel in London and subsequently on a troopship out round the Cape and arrived eventually in

Bombay. But you will have heard this story no doubt from Jim Rutherford, I didn't go out at the same time as he did, but you knew he had a similar experience I suppose.

J.W. : You're right, yes of course. Do you remember the journey at all?

Major R. : Yes I do.

J.W. : What was that like? Can you tell me about that?

Major R. : It took ten weeks. We were, as officer cadets we were in a deck called D2 or D3 which was well below the waterline, we lived in, there were hammocks all over the place and one slept in these and ate below the hammocks, food was not outstandingly appetising and conditions were fairly rigorous, and it was a converted Dutch meat ship called the *Maloja* or the *Mal-oh-yah*, it was run by the RAF and one had to compete for places to sit on the deck, one sat down on lifejackets which you had to take everywhere. There's nowhere at night, in these days smoking was quite common, you couldn't smoke anywhere really because to go up on deck you would show a light, so it was fairly rigorous but the time seemed to, in retrospect I'm just trying to think of those days zig-zagging in convoy across to South America pretty much, then down the African coast, a pause at Freetown for some reason or other, and then down to Cape Town, two or three days in Cape Town, and then down to Bombay. Just long, long days of reading books, queuing for the NAAFI if there was a NAAFI, it was a ship's canteen. That was about it really, rough seas, calm seas, conjectures about the presence of U-boats, our escorts, but it wouldn't prey on one.

J.W. : Okay, how about when you arrived in Bombay, can you remember what it was like, what your first impressions were, what it was like?

Major R. : Yes I can remember precisely what it was like, it was as I imagined it to be, there were Indian dock workers with turbans all over the place, the smell of India struck one fairly soon and there on the dock was a captain in the Rajputana Rifles whose name was Birkett, Roy Birkett, he was immaculately turned out creased shorts, beautifully turned out. We'd been on a troop ship for ten weeks and the kit that we had was archaic, it'd been issued I would imagine to Kitchener's Army when he was relieving Khartoum. No washing facilities worth talking about you had to use the salt water soap I seem to remember. I got into trouble for taking my washing to the ship's quarters where they were happy to do your laundry if you paid them some money and there was a raid by the RAF police when I was there and I was picked up, I was punished by having to go down into the hold and shovel coke which just about did for me, however that's got nothing to do with my impressions of India but that's what it was, it was great to be there, and one looked forward tremendously to getting off that ship and getting somewhere else.

J.W. : Yes I can imagine. So what happened subsequently then, you'd disembarked at Bombay ... ?

Major R. : We disembarked at Bombay, there were the usual delays that seem inseparable from these journeys on ships. Eventually we got on to a train hard wooden seats and one had all the paraphernalia of a soldier, packs, rifles, steel helmets, gas marks, all this sort of, two kit bags, so we were fairly congested in this train, and I can't remember how long it took to get to Dehra Dun which is where we were going I have a feeling it was days I have a feeling that we dosed off and woke up again I think the meal was a packed meal, and I can't remember whether we were issued with so many days' packed meals or whether it was lobbed out I would imagine that it was lobbed out by the man who was or had appointed himself or been appointed as our sergeant major. It wasn't too onerous for us because we'd been packed together on a troopship so there wasn't too much of a difference with us being packed together on this in this train. Stopped at stations, saw monkeys on the roof and people selling tea, *chai vala* and eventually we arrived at Dehra Dun days later, I would imagine night time we were lined up again, lots of monkeys about the place I seem to recollect. We got into, I can't remember whether we got into three ton lorries or whether they had coaches there or not, but we moved off to the Indian Military Academy which I would guess was about four or five miles outside Dehra Dun and there we were well received, there was a bearer between four of us, I had a Gurkha bearer. He showed us to places called *chupas* which were canvas tops, were they canvas tops? No they weren't, they were thatched tops with canvas sides and a concrete plinth and each one took four of us. There were mosquito nets set up for us to use, we were shown where the ablutions were, we were told that a meal had been prepared and would be served at whatever time it was. There were showers which was a novelty. We dumped our kit, cleaned ourselves, we went across to the mess tent and it was absolutely glorious, spacious, there were servants in white kit there were, the bar, I can remember the first meal that we had we sat down at proper tables being treated as proper civilised people for the first time in an awful long time and we had curried meat balls I seem to remember and the name of the contractor was Premna. That's when the story of the Indian Military Academy began.

J.W. : Right, so what, you were being trained there, that was your officer training presumably?

Major R. : That was officer training, Indian Military Academy. There were other officer training schools in various parts of India, Belgaun, Bangalore, Mhow and various other places, but the Indian Military Academy was the equivalent of Sandhurst, it was the permanent college, military college for India and it was pretty, it was a good place, the setting was good, you could look up form Dehra Dun up into the foothills of the Himalayas and you'd see Mussorie and climate was quite good time of year we arrived there, I think it was about July or August, can't be quite sure, September maybe.

J.W. : Right, and what form did that officer training take, what sort of things?

Major R. : At first, firstly every afternoon or nearly every afternoon was devoted to Urdu, you had to become proficient in Urdu to pass the Elementary Urdu exam before you could be commissioned. That was a sort of sleepy business, afternoons sleepy with a *munshi* who tended to ramble on and one tended to doze and get a bit bored. For the rest tactical training of various types, lectures, lectures on frontier warfare not a great deal on jungle warfare some reference to West Africa, a bit of military law, Indian military law and administration, the usual drill occasionally but not tremendously, exercises involving marches through rivers into jungle with various cadets being appointed company commander, platoon commander. One's recollections are of some of the more archaic forms of instruction there, for example we had a lecture by an officer in Skinner's Horse about the camp kit you should take with you and there was the [?] with a leather thing, there was a special sort of bed, a camp bed of a special sort that you had which I don't know, I suppose in some theatres perhaps on the Frontier this was still relevant in those days but certainly down in Burma it's relevance was limited, very limited.

J.W. : Yes, I can imagine.

Major R. : But then they lectured on subjects they knew and not many of them could lecture on conditions of, for example, the conditions under which the Burma Army had withdrawn back through Burma to Imphal. It was, we went everywhere on bicycles, you probably might have heard, and there was a drill for getting on your bicycles, yes, you lined up with your bicycles and various words of command were given , 'Prepare to mount', and 'Mount' and you got on your bicycles, it was based on a sort of cavalry drill but I think it was common in Sandhurst and maybe one or two other establishments so you went everywhere on a bicycle and inevitably who'd never managed to ride a bicycle and so they used to arrive late for lectures and weapon training periods and they were a case of some amusement. Talking about weapon training, we'd all been accustomed to the *Bren* gun in the U.K., and we found that the light machine gun there was the *Vickers Berthier* which we thought was rather cumbersome and it wasn't quite what we'd had or become, used, but no great deal. When I was posted to my, or posted away from there I never saw a *Vickers Berthier* again, which shows again that maybe that wasn't tremendously relevant to what we were going to do. There wasn't an awful lot of weapons training because actually we'd done all this, we were trained soldiers ranging in rank from private soldiers up to regular sergeant-majors, so there was no need to do bayonet training and rifle training but this was a conversión, it was known that this was a different weapon. But there were lectures on the principles of war, quite a bit about mountain warfare, of course, this was a speciality and a lot of people could lecture quite authoritatively on it. I would imagine that it was quite a balanced course although in retrospect looking back on it one picks out only, maybe, the oddities and not the routine, not the real foundation of what you were learning, but I've got memories of very hot

marches in, through rivers principally I mean coming out at the other side and just marching on and being very happy when you got back eventually to barracks and you were able to strip off, have a shower, change and doze while the *munśhi* babbled forth with little bits (laughs).

J.W. : Did you find that very difficult learning Urdu then, or did you find when you subsequently ... ?

Major R. : What learning?

J.W. : Urdu.

Major R. : No I didn't find it too difficult and before the examination one did a certain amount of punching up. I didn't find it desperately difficult to pass the examination. I do remember that we used to have examinations, tests, periodically, and we were told that we mustn't cheat, we mustn't take in cribs and so on and I can remember one chap who was Coldstream Guards, a sergeant, very good guy, very solid found cheating he was R-T-U'd and sent to Delhi to serve with the Enniskillens. So that's just an irrelevance but we learned the Morse code I already knew the Morse code I mean I'd served in the Home Guards while I was at school and I'd been in the signal side of that. I'm trying to think of other things I can remember, dinners in Chetwood Hall and vast tables, white linen, silver, Indian cadets, when I say 'Indian' I mean also Pakistani looking very, very smart in the evening I mean we were all mixed up with them and being offered a chilli which I didn't know was a chilli, I was told, 'Have one of these really very nice' by some Sikh chap across the table. I took it and bit it and of course I dissolved in perspiration, tears and the usual sort of. You got fitted eventually when you were commissioned I can't remember whether you had a passing out parade I suppose we might well have done, but drill was a wee bit of a joke. It was taken by drill sergeants who were pre-war British regulars who'd served in India for a long time and the form of drill that they gave us had really been designed for some kind of people who really couldn't cope terribly well. Instead of doing an about turn you did two, you did two right turns to get round, I seem to remember. They had very big *topīs* and these *topīs* seemed just about to hide them because generally speaking they were quite small. Yep eventually we were commissioned and we had our uniforms made up in Dehra Dun by military tailors and we were very proud of our uniforms of course and a single pip on the shoulders.

J.W. : So were you commissioned at that, you knew by that stage which regiment you would be going to?

Major R. : Yea, some time during the course we were asked to state which preferences we had and eventually when we were commissioned we were told which ones we'd got (laughs).

J.W. : Did you get your preference?

Major R. : No I didn't.

J.W. : Who had you chosen originally?

Major R. : I chose the 11th Sikh Regiment, 6 Rajputana Rifles and maybe as a first choice I think I chose a Gurkha regiment. I was, I commissioned the 16th Punjab Regiment and looking back on it I'm very glad, I was very glad, I was, because I met some wonderful people, wonderful soldiers.

J.W. : Right, when you, through all that training you had obviously the military side there. Did you, did they ever give you information about the sort of, information about the culture, you said you had the Indian military law, but was there any information about ... ?

Major R. : Yes there was, we were told what Sikhs did, what Dogras did and what a Punjabi Mussalman did and we were also given lectures of aid to the civil power because this had been a long standing role of the army in India but there was no deep cultural thing. I don't think, you see in the army the political scene had very much impact certainly not on the *jawans* they didn't see anything beyond the Indian Empire and the British army and their villages and the officers whom they trusted, and we on our parts looked on the British Empire as a permanent state of affairs so I think they were quite right, it wouldn't have been, it wasn't relevant to what we were being trained to do, they had four months to turn us from being British soldiers into Indian army officers and there was quite a lot to teach, certainly there was no point - one has read a lot since and there was no point trying to provide us with controversial ideas about the political set-up and so on.

J.W. : So what then happened subsequently, you were commissioned into the Punjab Regiment ... ?

Major R. : 16th Punjab Regiment. I went on leave with a number of friends who were being posted to the same sort of area that I was going to, my Regimental Centre was in Sialkot so was the Regimental centre of the 12th Frontier Force and I went on leave to Lahore in the Punjab, ten days there, visits to the officers' shop, visits to the High Commission, did they have there, certainly invited to play tennis there and drinks, went to the races once, never really cared for horse racing but some of the other lads did, went to Faletti's [a famous hotel in Lahore], saw how the permanent establishment of Lahore did their thing, went to a dance at the Railway Institute, I suppose a lot of Eurasians there, didn't have much of an impact on one, wrote a few letters home and eventually moved by rail to Sialkot.

J.W. : So what happened in Sialkot there, what was your say, routine once you got established took up your commission that sort of thing?

Major R. : Well I was posted to a training battalion in various companies and I was posted to one of them as a subaltern and one was given and one was given administrative duties such as fiddling about with pay books, doing inspections of kit, taking people on the thirty yards range and then I was given the appointment of guerrilla platoon commander, that was good news, I had a platoon of fairly fit guys and I devised a programme which included explosives, there was an engineer regiment nearby and they were able to tell us about Bangalore torpedoes, booby traps, making obstacles, I taught them boxing, we did an exercise against a similar platoon in the 8th Punjab Regiment which was, whose depot was in Lahore which involved us marching twenty-four hours along a railway or that's the route I chose anyway to lay on an ambush on these, for these people, we did that, it was a march of considerable distance must have been about thirty miles on the trot but we were pretty fit, we'd been doubling it everywhere and doing all sorts of things that people did in those days and we got there and we waited and waited and waited and nothing happened and eventually we marched back again and we learned that the 8th Punjab Regiment had called it off and hadn't been there at all but that's the sort of thing that one remembers but I do remember marching through villages and when we fell out the soldiers getting water and sitting me down and bringing me stuff to drink you see, really life was transformed because one was being looked after when you weren't on duty, you were being looked after pretty well your *bearer* would come and sort you out, take your kit away and it would be laundered. Incidentally I shared a bungalow I started off in a pretty meagre place that I was given to begin with it was baking hot. One of the other officers who was already there, I was living in a bungalow and the chap I was sharing it with was posted and he asked me if I'd like to join him and I said I would and it was a magnificent, great rambling colonial place with a big garden and we had a gardener and sweeper and I took my bearer with me as well, a chap called Robertson I met him about three or four years ago I realised he was still around, he lives across in Forfar. I invited him to come to a luncheon which I organise each year so this was the guy I shared a bungalow with, he's changed a great deal since those days, so, no doubt, have I, but it is a point of contact and I do, can talk about it but the mess life was immaculate, you will have heard the tales about you go into the mess in the evening and your own bearer has turned up, he's immaculately dressed, he stands behind you all the time, you don't life a finger he does it all and there's bearers all the way round, and if you ask somebody to pass the salt, they'll say, 'Haven't you got a bearer with you?', and this became not an eccentricity but it became the norm in this what was basically a peacetime establishment.

J.W. : What about the ... ?

Major R. : War?

J.W. : The men, well we'll come on to that, the men you commanded.

Major R. : The soldiers?

J.W. : Yes.

Major R. : A mixture of Sikhs, Punjabi Mussulman, and Dogras which was the class composition of the battalion which I was ultimately posted to, and I could make myself understood although it was pretty halting stuff and they would respond, and you see they didn't speak Urdu as a first language they spoke Punjabi.

J.W. : Yes of course.

Major R. : But there wasn't any real difficulty about communication it wasn't a matter of pidgin English it was Urdu that we talked, and I think my *havildar* had passed his third class English, I would guess, or some such thing I can't distinctly remember that, that's conjecture, but I can't really remember individuals in that platoon as I can individuals in the battalion to which I was subsequently posted.

J.W. : Did you mix, I mean obviously you had your mess life, but would you ever go down to the lines to se the soldiers, would you?

Major R. : Yes, yes, in the evening they would change out of their military kit and they'd be wearing their white *salwarz qamiz* and one would talk to them and there would be basketball, there were hockey matches at which they were great experts of course at both these things. Yes.

J.W. : How important do you think that was to have that contact?

Major R. : In that stage in a transitional area where soldiers were trained for, I can't remember what their period of training was there and the officers were in transit as it were they were only there until they were posted apart from those who were posted to the regimental centre as permanent staff, I was just floating on my way through and so were many. It was absolutely fundamental to life in an Indian infantry battalion this relationship between officers and men absolutely fundamental. Not, it's perhaps difficult for someone who has not served in that environment, in that sort of relationship to understand it, and it's so easy to be misled by what one reads what has been written about it by those who had no actual inside contact, only an outside contact, conjecture.

J.W. : Right, and what shall we go to now? What about going back to mess life, what about your diet while you were there, what about food that they would serve up, was that a mixture of Indian and British?

Major R. : Very much European this is the training centre, I'm still in the training centre.

J.W. : Yes sorry.

Major R. : Very much a European diet.

J.W. : And what about subsequently when you were posted to your regiment did that change?

Major R. : Yes to some extent it did in the Battalion but we haven't got to the Battalion yet, we can either deal with diet or we can wait until we get there.

J.W. : Shall we go, we can ... ?

Major R. : We can deal with diet if you like.

J.W. : Whatever ... .

Major R. : In the Battalion, when eventually I got there on operations almost from the time I arrived there you ate, we were on light scale rations compound rations, very much augmented from the soldiers' kitchen, chapattis, daal and various curried things would appear on the menu quite frequently, because otherwise the compo rations can be quite uninteresting, but the cook we had, a little Madrassi cook, and so there was a quite Indian flavour to the food one ate and preferred. Soldiers existed on chapattis and daal and goats, live goats in the lines which were slaughtered on operations, it was different obviously, there were no live goats there (on operations) and they were issued with, their ration consisted largely of tinned fish and biscuits and milk. They tried to introduce meat and in a regiment such as ours which was a mixed regiment there was halal meat and [judka] for the different classes that was always regarded with great suspicion and not really very popular. I mean breakfast, a typical breakfast, would be a British type breakfast with eggs, bacon, lunchtime would be stew or something of this nature, the same sort of thing in the evening, I'm thinking primarily of the Battalion now, it used to be fairly elegant back in the Centre and it was fairly elegant in the Battalion when we weren't on operations.

J.W. : So how about subsequently, can you tell me about being posted to the Battalion? When did all that happen?

Major R. : Yea, I used to form up, from the time I arrived there I used to form, I formed up once a week in front of the adjutant and I said, 'I want to be posted to a battalion', and eventually I was, but before that I was sent on courses from the

Regimental Centre. I was sent on a carrier course, a Bren gun carrier course at Sorgha, and I think I was sent on a small arms course at Sorgha and eventually I was posted, and I was posted to the 1st Battalion, 16th Punjab Regiment which was in Burma. Other battalions I could have been posted to were the 4th Battalion which was in North Africa and the Middle East in the 4th Indian Division. We'd lost, our Regiment had lost two battalions on Singapore, 2nd Battalion and 3rd Battalion, regular battalions, there were other battalions which had been raised subsequently, 5th Battalion, 7th Battalion, but anyway I was posted to the 1st Battalion which was [?] and I went with a chap called Reg Sloane, who'd come out as an officer cadet with me, same troopship, Indian Military Academy, posted together. We went in the first instance up to Delhi where his parents were. His father was a manager of General Motors India or some such thing, and we spent two or three days there and then on we went to Gaya which was a reinforcement camp or transit camp or some such place the monsoons had not broken and temperature there re ... was absolutely, the humidity was pretty ghastly and we lived in tents, no fans or anything like that, so that wasn't a terribly popular place to be in. Again, we used to form up and say, 'we want to move on', and it seemed to us there was no organisation, no urgency and we might have been there forever. However, we did manage to push on and we went to Calcutta by train and shortly after that there may have been a short journey after that but we then got on a steamer and went up the Brahmaputra to Gauhati, Gauhati?, and then three ton lorry up into Imphal via Kohima, down into Imphal into a small transit camp in Imphal where we were met after a very short space of time by transport from the Battalion, we were taken in the direction of Palel from Imphal itself and we found the Battalion, at least the rear part of the Battalion located at a place called Waithou, which is on the side of a hill overlooking a lake which formed when the rainy season had come, but that rear party, I can't remember many of the officers who were there at the time, but the Battalion at the time were down in the Kabaw valley on the Chindwin River at Tamu and was due to come back, the monsoons had just begun and they were due to come back in a reasonably short space of time, so I don't know how long I spent there in that rear party before I was despatched with transport to take transport to meet the Battalion coming back up out of the Kabaw Valley at a place called the Saddle, it was called the Saddle, a tremendous amount of mud and vehicles over the side, over the [?] side and I can remember the first sight of the Battalion coming up in a long line, it was being led by James Lawford who was the second-in-command who was a regular officer, he was on a pony and he gave me fairly short shrift and that was his normal sort of manner he was an excellent man, a good friend of mine, and I saw the Battalion coming up in their muddy uniform, rifles over their shoulders, Sikhs, Dogras, steel helmets and we organised, I didn't organise, I produced the transport and they organised themselves in the transport and back we went to Waithou and that's where I became integrated, really, into the Battalion. I was interviewed by the commanding officer, a chap called Willie Wilcock, who'd had an M.C. on the Frontier, he'd been in the South Waziristan Scouts on attachment. What he didn't know about the soldiers in the Regiment simply wasn't worth knowing. He spoke Urdu fluently, he spoke Pushtu fluently, old fashioned chap, bachelor, he used to drink

quite a bit, but so did the other officers, the older officers. I remember having dinner in the Mess, which was a *basha* of bamboo construction which is what we lived in, in Waithou, they were made by the local Manipuris of bamboo, bamboo slats. He used to fall asleep (laugh) fall asleep during dinner always, he needed prodded up, he'd get and go back. So he saw me, and when I went to be told what my fortune was he asked me a few questions about what I'd done and I told him I'd been in the signals section in the Home Guards, so he appointed me to be signals officer. So I enjoyed that, that was tremendous fun, we had, in those days wireless sets were pretty much a novelty, they didn't work, the ones we had didn't work and the platoon really relied on flags, helios, which wouldn't be an absolute first choice in jungle because ...

J.W. : Yea.

Major R. : Lamps signalling daylight short-range, telephones, field telephones, I think the D2 very primitive with D3 cable, so I was indoctrinated into all this stuff by the signals *havildar*, a very good, a really, a clued up organisation, I enjoyed in that signals platoon that little exchange, operators and I learned it all the helio set up, the light signalling daylight short-range set up, we did exercises with the platoon, but maybe the principle thing that I did there was, that I introduced a wireless set which we'd just been given and hadn't been opened, it was a 48 set, it was a Canadian built set and it held promise. I went to Divisional Headquarters on a short course on signals procedure, British Signals procedure and the operation of this wireless set in Urdu. I was assisted after I'd been doing this for about a month by a *naik*, that's a corporal, Mohammed Halim, who'd just come back from a course in India on the wireless set and the wireless procedure, so he had some ideas about this as well but that was great fun and the operators used to go out into the surrounding countryside and we would communicate and do various things, change frequency and all the technical things that one does with wireless sets, put up different aerials for different reasons and the norm was for when a battalion did an exerciser then my signallers to go out on attachment, my Dogras would go out to B Company which is a Dogra Company, my Sikhs would go out to a Company, a little detachment of about three to each company. The signal platoon was based in headquarter company that's what happened and they'd be a nucleus at Battalion's headquarters running the control set and telephone exchange that was appropriate.

J.W. : Right.

Major R. : I could ramble on.

J.W. : Oh no please.

Major R. : I (laughs) could ramble on for the next six months, you'd best start me, I'm pitching it all.

J.W. : And how about the, obviously the conditions are completely different when you've arrived in Burma. Did you, and you said you were really integrated into the Battalion there, was it, well can you tell me about that. How, I mean obviously it was different, and how that changed say the, did it change the relations with the men?

Major R. : Yes I became very close to all the soldiers in my platoon, I mean I knew them extremely well, I would know which villages they came from and I would play games with them in the evening, basketball was the principle game that was being played because we were on a hillside. On the other side of the hill, across the road and on the other side of the hill were the 1st Seaforths which were in our Brigade, and the 1st Patialas were somewhere not too far away either. I had a shock initially, I was given an orderly as opposed to a bearer, an orderly to look after me, he was a Dogra, very nice guy, very quite, cause I hadn't had him far more than two weeks before he shot himself.

J.W. : Goodness.

Major R. : Got under his mosquito net, got his rifle, stuck it under his chin and pressed the trigger with his big toe. I was assured that it wasn't my fault, because I thought I didn't shout at people, I didn't bully them, I didn't do any of this sort of stuff, but I was assured, no, there was some other deep reasoning that as far as I was concerned didn't really come out, I was probably too junior and too new to be given the chapter and verse for the reason for this, but, so that wasn't too happy a scene, but my next orderly was a P-M, a big-ish P-M, jovial sort of guy, that was fine, so we did, this is in Waithou before we went into action, before the Japanese had really tried to do anything. There was patrolling still down in the Chindwin but it was fairly meagre. Things started to develop shortly afterwards, it would be about October 1943, October 1943, we were, our Battalion 1st 16th was dispatched to 17 Division, we were in 23 Indian Division, we were despatched to 17 Division, which was on the Tiddim front, we were on the Tamu front, vast distances, there's no connect ... , nothing connected anybody with anything, the distances were too large and it was jungle and mountains, and we travelled by three-tonner for a certain distance and that's where the roadhead finished, and we marched the rest as they didn't have jeeps in those days, so we marched taking a week or more, maybe, staging at various places, till eventually we went forward at Tiddim, forward of Kennedy Peak which is about eight and a half thousand feet to a place which in those days was Milestone Fifty-Two, I think they've changed the number and in books it's called something different, but it, Milestone Fifty-Two, and it was in between Kennedy Peak, where there was a battalion of Gurkhas - 17 Division I should say consisted of two brigades, 63 Brigade, 48 Brigade, they were both Gurkha brigades, and a division of troops were British, 9th Border Regiment and I don't know who else. One of these brigades, 48 Brigade, was back in Shillong resting and training, because 17 Division had been involved in the retreat back through Burma, 63 Brigade were forward and they needed an extra battalion, so we were interposed about half-way between Kennedy Peak

and the stockades at Fort White which was occupied by 1st 3rd Gurkhas, and this was a great mountain overlooking, you would look right down on a decent day when the mist, when the early morning mist had dispersed you could look down in the direction of [Ko-lay-mio], [Ko-lay-wol], [Ko-lay-mio] one or the other which was Japanese held, and there'd been skirmishing taking place in the stockade area and the Fort White area, the Gurkhas had been involved in patrol clashes. The disaster, we didn't have a happy time on Milestone Fifty-Two I have to say. The Brigade had practically deployed the Battalion saying they wanted a platoon here and a platoon somewhere else and a platoon somewhere else, so we ended up pretty dispersed in a tactically unsound layout, one has to say. The weather was pretty cold, we were very high up, the weather was very cold and we started losing people through illness, through pneumonia, and so on, and platoons were down to about twelve or thirteen that sort of size and James Lawford, whose name I mentioned before, second-in-command, was pretty keen to do some aggressive patrolling so he took out a patrol of, quite a strong patrol, a fighting patrol of about forty, I suppose fifty, forty and with him went Dick Seeger, from whose company the patrol was found. Dick Seeger a Sikh - he wasn't a Sikh but his company was Sikh and I was a Battalion Signals officer so my role was very much keeping in touch with those companies and changing batteries and seeing telephone lines and so on were working, setting up I dug an enormous great bunker in Battalion Headquarters. It was the only serious piece of defensive work that was in the Battalion area. It was quite deep, I took it quite seriously, I had a telephone exchange down there, signals exchange down there. Anyway this patrol went out and they laid an ambush for a Japanese patrol and it was, they made contact and they brought back a Japanese sword and they had killed some Japanese. We had lost one or two soldiers, James Lawford was wounded, and he was evacuated. So that was our first contact, the first contact the Battalion had with the Japanese. On the thirteenth, no on about the eleventh of November, tenth of November the Japanese attacked one of our outlying platoons, a platoon of B company, and they attacked it and attacked it, and this platoon withstood all the attacks, it was doing tremendously well and then there was all sorts of movements of, Japanese had been reported in sit reps and so on, then there was movement around the side of the Battalion which was detected and our guerrilla platoon commanded by a chap called Wyn Williams, very nice guy, was put, at fairly short notice taken away from Battalion headquarters and put down in between our Battalion and Kennedy Peak on its own, a small platoon it couldn't have been more than about twenty-five strong. Isolated without support from anyone. I went out to see Wyn Williams, see the wireless set up was all right and I think we laid a telephone line to him, and night was beginning to fall and I can remember Wyn saying to me, 'Stay on and have a, we'll make some tea and have a meal and have ... ', and I said, 'No, I've got to get back while, you know it's still daylight', I couldn't afford to be driving around showing headlights and I didn't want to go over a *khud* so I left him and that night he was attacked. Now that was an attack in between us and Kennedy Peak where the 1st 4th Gurkhas were established on this enormous great mountain. Wyn was attacked that night and we had good reasonable communication with him, and it wasn't until about, difficult to remember timings now,

but it must have been three o'clock or four o'clock in the morning that we lost contact with him and it was assumed that he'd been wiped out. A counter attack was mounted by 1st 4th Gurkhas to try and get through to us, because the Japanese were now between us and them, that didn't, that didn't succeed and the Japanese were left in position between us and the 1st 4th Gurkhas and it wasn't long before the Japanese developed an attack on our, if you could call it that, main position, it was a pretty scattered, but to go back just, it'd two or three hours back before Wyn Williams was attacked and the Gurkhas had tried to break through to us, we'd had to, we were reinforced by a Gurkha company from the Fort White area that was because brigade headquarters as I told you kept on dispersing us, that was brought in just about last light and they were put in positions they were unfamiliar with, they weren't dug in they were just scattered around, so when the attack developed on us on the main battalion position the following day it very quickly came in against Battalion headquarters which was protected by a platoon, a carrier platoon dismounted in an light machine gun role and this Battalion of 1st 3rd Gurkhas who didn't quite know where they were or where we were. 'A' Company, two platoons maybe of 'A' Company, and as I told you a platoon was about twelve strong in those days, the Japanese attack fairly quickly developed against Battalion headquarters and came up against the Gurkhas and against our 'A' Company, and it was very difficult to distinguish Gurkhas from Japs I have to say because they were wearing little cap comforter things but the Company Commander, Willie Wilcock who was dressed in fairly well-cut bush hat, trousers, leather holster round here as we all wore in the 1st 16th Punjab Regiment with rounds in his belt, I'm not sure he wasn't wearing a *topi*, I think he was, wanted to lead a counter attack of about a dozen chaps to try and retake the ground that the Japanese had occupied, I can see all this, there was Willie Wilcock, there was me in the trees with a straight hole in the ground this great overhead cover where my people were and Willie Wilcock had been out in the open and he was trying to encourage this counter attack to go and it wasn't really succeeding of going anywhere and Willie was wounded in the arm with blood dripping down his arm. We were being supported by some mountain gunners somewhere, and I don't know whether it was our mountain gunners or the Japanese, the Japanese had been shooting had been firing, Japanese guns had been firing at us I don't know whether it was that or whether it was our own stuff but shells were coming down all around and one of them or two of them got Willie Wilcock, Dick Seeger and our, another officer in a one-r about thirty yards out in the open from the trees where we had our Battalion headquarters and Subadar-Major Laal Khan told a couple of chaps to go out and get Willie and bring him in, so they went out, doubled out very smartly, got him back in dragging him by the arms like that. There was some consternation about all this, obviously the Gurkhas were coming back they weren't staying where they were they were sort of coming back and fading sideways and eventually they cut Willie's badges of rank off, he was dead, they put him in a slit trench and new second-in-command James Newell had a short discussion of what we should do - he didn't ask me, I was a very junior guy but the senior people, we'd withdrawn from where we were the Battalion Headquarter area because it was undefended, the Japs were through, we consolidated down on 'C' Company position or it might have been 'D'

Company position. There was a sort of discussion there about whether we could hold out there or whether we would be any point or whether we should try, do, try to put, mount a counter attack so it was decided to evacuate that position. So this we did we were to evacuate to Kennedy Peak, but since the way back was blocked by the Japanese - I believe the Japanese used a regiment on this which is equivalent of a brigade, we were to make our way right down, Fifty-Two Milestone it was a fairly big feature on its own, it might have been about seven thousand foot right down into a *nullah*, the Beltang Lui I seem to remember was a place, and we would withdraw down that and concentrate on Kennedy Peak. By this time the Gurkhas had come down, I talked to their company commander, a good guy, and I and my Battalion signallers went with him, he knew the ground well, he'd been up in this area for quite a while, so he knew where the Battalion was and he knew how to get there, so I thought, 'That's great'. So I went with this company of Gurkhas, this was thirteenth of November. There's ringing in my ears of shots, Japanese screaming and that persisted for a long while on the way back down there. I remember falling asleep on a track at one stage or another. I can remember looking at sort of banana plantain things and thinking that there were, you know, that they were huts and there might be Japanese in there. There was no panic, you know, one might imagine that this was a helter-skelter it wasn't it was a very sensible and well conducted move. Eventually we got to back below Kennedy Peak and we didn't know if Kennedy Peak had been taken by the Japanese because this was a fairly serious attack of theirs. So we started moving up the flank of Kennedy Peak and then the Gurkhas, because it was held by the 1st 4th Gurkhas, the Gurkhas sent a patrol up to the top to make contact if it was Gurkhas, and yes it was Gurkhas, so we went up this mountain side, eight thousand foot we were in pretty, pretty exhausted by the time we had got there, yes they were still in control there, no they hadn't been attacked and tea was, char was available, the soldiers were well looked after by the Gurkhas and we gradually concentrated there. I remember the Divisional Commander, Punch Cowan, a famous character, came along to see us and said, 'It's all right, we've got a twenty-five, a twenty-five pounder on Kennedy Peak' - we'd had very little support so that ended my first experience of contact with the Japanese, not a very satisfactory one. I'd lost some of my signallers, I'd lost the signallers who were with the guerrilla platoon which had been, which we thought had been completely wiped out but in fact two or three of them turned up in the next few days and told us what had happened. Wyn Williams, they had held out until they had no ammunition left, and then Wyn Williams led a charge and he was badly wounded, tied to a tree and bayoneted and that was a pretty unhappy ending. That might be a suitable place to ... .

(The tape is paused and we break for coffee on Major Rutherford's earlier suggestion).

J.W. : So when was it then, for how long were you in Burma, when was it that you ended up coming out?

Major R. : Well there were many engagements such as that which I've just described. The Japanese crossed the Chindwin and encircled Imphal, cut it off, there was fierce fighting for several months the Japanese were finally defeated, heavily defeated, and 23 Indian Division which was the division we were in which had been the longest continuous serving division in Burma was withdrawn in about May it might have been, May of 1944 back to Shillong.

J.W. : Shillong right, and so where did you go subsequently from Shillong?

Major R. : From Shillong, we did individual training and rest in Shillong, and then we went to Marve outside Bombay to do combined operations training for the invasion of Malaya. Operation Zipper. We were in Bombay for several months then we went inland to Nasik where we stayed doing battalion, brigade, division exercises again in preparation for Zipper, it was all orientated towards the move back to Malaya.

J.W. : Right, and am I right - my historical knowledge will fail me here, I'm sure did that not go ahead in the end?

Major R. : Well it did, but happily the atomic bomb was dropped and the arrangements to invade Malaya went on but of course the Japanese had officially surrendered, it wasn't absolutely certain whether all the military would give up or whether some of them would continue to fight and so we embarked at, I think we embarked at Bombay, went in convoy, got to, into, sought landing craft and landed over the beaches at Port Dixon in Malaya, so I was with the Battalion during that time and we had about three weeks in Malaya herding up Japanese and occupying strategic points in the peninsular when the situation in Java had deteriorated and the Japanese were finding it very difficult to keep the Indonesian nationalism in check, and so our Brigade, 1st Indian Infantry Brigade, were dispatched to Java, and we landed, we went in landing craft and landed at Tanjung Priok which is the landing port for Batavia, I would guess it was about October 1945.

J.W. : Right okay, so how long were you there?

Major R. : I was in Indonesia for a year during which time we were engaged in the main, the roles we were given were to succour R-A-P-W-E, R-A-P-W-E were the repatriated, those people who had got, who were in P-W camps, Japanese, Dutch civilians, disarm the Japanese, maintain law and order. Eventually it became quite a struggle with the terrorists, the terrorists?, the Indonesian national forces, whatever you like to call them, who were who were unwilling to let the Dutch women prisoners who they had control inland free, they wanted to use it as a bargaining point for their independence from the Dutch so we had a lot of casualties we had our adjutant killed in the first week in a sort of slaughter scene, we used artillery in Ban Daeng, we employed Japanese artillery in fighting some of our actions. I had an operation for appendix in Batavia, I had a girlfriend, I spent three glorious weeks in Bali convalescing after my

operation and during this time it was, I think the Independence of India was fairly well established with dates being established. I had passed a regular commission board in Calcutta when we came out of Burma and when we were in Shillong I was commissioned into a British regiment to leave Indonesia which must have been around October, November I left them and I went to, I went back to the U.K. but while I was in Indonesia I was posted from the Battalion as Brigade intelligence officer, and I was intelligence officer in Batavia, Bandung and Cianjur on the way back. The Battalion wanted me back as an adjutant but at that time I felt that my future had to begin elsewhere, so I very much regret, in retrospect, I very much not staying with the battalion till the absolute end.

J.W. : Right, I was just going to ask you about that in fact. So you, I suppose, what happened then is really what I'm trying to ask (laughs).

Major R. : What happened then.

J.W. : Back in the U.K.

Major R. : What happened then I leave the Indian Army and go into the British Army and after a, coming back to Scotland I was given a fairly uninteresting job so I formed up in front of my superior at North-West I-T-C in Carlisle and said that I'd just joined the Regiment and I'd very much like to be posted to the Battalion of the Regiment so I was, so I joined the 1st Battalion of the Loyal Regiment in Asmara in Eritrea.

J.W. : Right okay, and so you say you obviously regretted leaving the Indian Army.

Major R. : Yes I did.

J.W. : As you said earlier it was like a family to you. How did you, or did you at all manage to settle into that time in Eritrea and the new ... ?

Major R. : It was very, very different. Soldiers were very different, discipline was not, it wasn't as good. British soldiers were less well disciplined, there was more crime, more offences, more drunkenness which is something that distinguished, the Indian Army did not have that sort of problem. The soldiers who served in Indian regiments were extremely, they were all volunteers to begin with, they were very proud of the fact they were serving in the regiment of their choice serving the King and the Viceroy Commissioned Officers were very much in touch with what was happening in the village back in the Punjab and any misdemeanours would get its way back the village and would bring shame on the parents and the village and so on. This didn't apply in the British Service and possibly never had, it may have always been difficult it was, has always been a different sort of relationship there but I regretted it retrospectively. I just had one thing in my mind - I've served with the Indian Army, it's finished now and I've

got to start my new career but having been back there subsequently and seen how it is and seen what I might have done I regret that, I regret not having opted for the Pakistan or Indian staff college instead of going to Camberley, it's very much, that was a big mistake, I should have gone back again and continued my original love for as long and as much as I could possibly have done.

J.W. : Yea, okay. Now to sort of chronologically fill in, because I want to take you back to that in a moment. How long were you in Eritrea for, what happened?

Major R. : What happened. We were in Eritrea which had been an Italian colony and its future was uncertain. I think it was held perhaps under some United Nations mandate while it was decided whether it would become independent or stay independent, or whether it would go to Ethiopia. It was unsettled, there were shifter bands who were creating certain amounts of trouble in the hinterland and we used to send out columns in order to deal with them or frighten them. We marched through Asmara fixed bayonets, drums, colours in order to impress the people with our strength and we were very, I think we were very successful. We stayed there for a year and we had to leave at very short notice because there had been a massacre of Italian civilians in Somaliland, Somalia, Mogadishu. We moved there at short notice which in these days, this was still before the days of air trooping to any extent, we went by sea from [Massawa] which is the port for Eritrea, round to Mogadishu and we were the only British troops there, we patrolled, curfew was installed, we went up country in patrols and generally made our presence known. There was absolutely no trouble at all, anything there had been against the Italians stopped, just stopped the, our presence brought some sort of peace to the area, and when you think of Mogadishu in more recent years the trouble there and the nonsense there has been very difficult for us actually for us who served out there and had the situation so tightly in hand to understand how it could have got into that situation. **(Tape is paused due to a low flying jet).**

J.W. : So how, when was it that you came back to the U.K.?

Major R. : Well from there, we were there for about a year, and we were relieved by a battalion of the Border Regiment which had been stationed in Hargeisa in British Somaliland which relieved us and we set sail for Cyprus all by sea. We arrived in Cyprus just as the Jewish, the last Jewish camp was being emptied and they were going across to Palestine. Cyprus had been used as a place for putting illegal, for putting attempted illegal immigration to Palestine in those days. The last of the camps had just emptied again, we were the only British battalion on the island. It was a great station in those days, there was no trouble between Greeks and Turks. We did a lot of training, we beat the retreat - great station, we were scattered all over the island some in Nicosia, some in Famagusta, some in Dhekelia. A great time.

J.W. : So how did you, what happened then, and subsequently to bring you back to the U.K.?

Major R. : To bring me back to the U.K. The Battalion having been in Cyprus for about a year, I keep saying, 'about a year', I've really forgotten now.

J.W. : Oh there's no need to be that specific.

Major R. : About a year we were relieved by a Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and we moved to the Canal Zone, still the Canal Zone this was before the Egyptians took over their canal, and while the battalion was there I was posted from there to Eton Hall Oxford Cadet School as an instructor, that's in Cheshire, so in 19 err 50, about 1950, I came back to the U.K. and I was posted to Eton Hall. I was instructor there, I was instructing officer cadets for two years after which I was posted out to my battalion which by then had moved from Cyprus and was then in Trieste which was again a sort of, there was a brigade or regiment of Americans and the 24 Infantry Brigade of which we were a part was there. Our role was to maintain the independence of the Treiste territories until such time as it could be determined which, how it was going to be divided up, whether part of it was going to Yugoslavia or part to Italy or what was going to happen, so we had an operational role there to maintain the boundaries there against possible incursions from the Italians on one side and the Yugoslavs on the other side in co-operation with the Americans. We went on exercise into Austria up to [Schmeltz] for field firing, we did all the things that soldiers do. I was posted from there after I'd been only there for a year which was unfortunate but I was asked for by the depot commander at our Regimental depot in Preston to go there as a Company Commander of the training company there, so very regretfully I left the battalion, I left Trieste and went to our Regiment depot where I served for about a year I suppose, it may have been a year plus after which I was plucked out and went on the staff in the then War Office at Stanmore in the Military Secretary's branch. We were concerned with the selection of officers for command and higher command and posting and staff colleges and so on. While I was there I managed to select myself to go to staff college, well that's not quite true but I used to prepare the lists for selection there and again after about a year there I went to staff college in 1957, where have we reached now, I think about 1957. I went to staff college for a year from which I was posted to headquarters of the 3rd Division Strategic Reserve which was in Colchester, and I was in 3rd Division as a staff officer for again two years during which time we went to Cyprus at short notice in order to support Jordan against a possible incursion by somebody else, Syria or someone. We did exercises all over Cyprus and eventually we came back again when things died down. We had a brigade on standby, we might even have sent a brigade to Jordan, I'm not quite sure, and then back and the battalion moved to Bullford where we continued our role as strategic reserve and then I was posted from there after my tour of duty to Military College of Science, Shrivenham, where I did a short course of three months or so and then I was posted back to the battalion, 1st Battalion Loyals

which by then had moved from Cyprus out to Malaysia against terrorists, anti-terrorists role out there and back to Germany and they were in Wuppertal when I joined them in wherever it was I joined them. So by that time, shortly after that I had, for various personal reasons, I decided to leave the army which I did in 1960, or '61, '62 I came back to the U.K. and I worked for somebody who'd commanded the Battalion in Cyprus and elsewhere for a small company called Richard, Thomas and Baldwin in a training capacity. I managed to endure that for about a year during which time I was persuaded by various people, 'Why don't you come back, why don't you come back to the Battalion?', I mean, the reasons for which I'd left in the first instance had been resolved so I went back, I was able to go into the Battalion again, back into the army again. I joined the battalion in Barnard Castle which is where it then was and I served with the Battalion, Barnard Castle, back to Cyprus, public duties, Buckingham Palace, St. James' Palace on the staff again out to Singapore where I was on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief Far East, Air Chief Marshall Sir John Grandy, where I used to commute between Singapore, I used to fly to Kuala Lumpur where I was his representative on the National Operations committee. This was during the confrontation with Indonesia (pause as another jet flies over) so that was a great time, I used to fly in the morning from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur and fly back in the evening three days a week and then I'd spend three days at headquarters in Phoenix Park in Singapore which was the Far East forces, got in a certain amount of tennis, swimming, it was very congenial. Whenever anyone wanted me I was always at the other place, that sort of thing. That unfortunately came to an end all too soon when confrontation with Indonesia finished and Malaysia didn't really want us any longer so my job of flying to Kuala Lumpur and going to the Ministry of Defence in Kuala Lumpur came to an end and I was posted to a joint planning staff in Bangkok, joint with the Americans, Thais, New Zealand, Australia representatives and we were planning for an exercise called Exercise Aurora which was to be the biggest non-soldier exercise imaginable, it was really to cover the possible withdrawal of American forces through Thailand from Vietnam, and planning for this exercise went on its ponderous way for about a year I suppose and eventually it took place with Americans coming from all over the place, from the States from Honolulu from you name it, wherever they were they came in their hundreds and hundreds and they were subjected to a series of lectures and situations where they'd break up and solve the situations and come back again and so on, it went on. I, that was a good time, I had two children by this time, I'd married some previous time for the second time, and Bangkok was okay, we lived in a house let to us by a Thai lieutenant-colonel had the house built specially so it could be let to foreign soldiers and that job came to an end when the exercise was over, came back to the U.K. via Penang, Singapore and home, flew home and I was posted to the Ministry of Defence much to my disgust, I'd asked, when I had [been] asked where I wanted to go I said, 'Pakistan, India, anywhere else abroad' so I was posted to the Ministry of Defence in Lansdowne Square and that really sort of turned me off and I thought, 'It's time for me to call it a day' so I took premature retirement and became a stockbroker, first in London, then in Edinburgh and you can see me now retired at these past, past eight years, six, seven, eight years.

J.W. : Now that's gone through a whole .... .

Major R. : That's the broad spectrum.

J.W. : There aren't many people who can be quite as broad as that. Now you were saying earlier that you've been back subsequently to Pakistan and India. Can you maybe tell me a bit about that?

Major R. : Yea surely.

J.W. : How it came about.

Major R. : There is, there has been a Regimental 16th Punjab Regimental Association which is run by a great friend of mine from 1st 16th Punjab Regiment. We used to meet every year at Landsdowne, not Landsdowne, Hurlingham Club for lunch, so I'd be in touch with Indian Army matters all the time and it came about that suddenly at very short notice, David Mills who's the Secretary of the 16th Punjab Regimental Association was approached by the British High Commission, I think it was somebody there, and asked to whether they would like to send somebody out to this reunion which was to take place about a month later - hardly any notice. So David couldn't approach me in the first instance because I was a friend of his and it would be all 1st Battalion, 1st Battalion you know, so he asked for somebody else and they said they couldn't do it so he turned to me and I jumped at it. So that's how I came to go out there. I checked to see the cheapest way I could go because I didn't have an awful lot of money and I went ultimately by Philippines airways which was great. I went to Karachi first, I did it my own, my own time (tape is paused as another low flying jet passes). I went to Karachi and then got a flight after a lot of cufuffling to Lahore, I wanted to go back to Lahore before I went to India and I thought I didn't just want to go there for five days and then come back so I made a tour of it. I had about five days in Lahore, I went back to Faletti's to see what it looked like. I'd heard that it was dilapidated which indeed it was, it was nothing like the smart place where people had to be seen in the days when I was spending my commissioning leave as a second-lieutenant aged nineteen. It wasn't, but I stayed there and I liked it. I wandered about Lahore. People stopped and talked to me and it was so good, and I did remarkable things in Lahore that would take up a couple of tapes, I'm sure, to tell you. I met a British couple. The chap was doing some sort of travel job involved in getting people up to Gilgit and that sort of tourism. He was based in the Lake District back in this country. His girlfriend was a Dutch girl. They were á very nice couple, they were living on a shoestring somewhere, but they used to go out in the evening to a big hotel to eat. I joined them there one evening, it was great. They were beautifully done up in Pakistani garb. Great, we talked a lot, we should meet and do this, that and something else. I went round, I did all the sort of treks round the museum, Kim's Gun, the Badshahi mosque, the Fort. I bumped into people who showed

me all the way round. In the meantime I'd arran ... I wanted to go by train from Lahore up to Peshawar just to remind myself what it was like to be on a train in India because I'd been on leave to Kashmir in the old days and so on. I found it too difficult to arrange in the time so eventually I flew up from Lahore to Peshawar and I met up with two other British officers at a hotel which used to be in vogue in our day in Peshawar, it's name I've forgotten for the moment I've written it up somewhere.

J.W. : Deans is it?

Major R. : What?

J.W. : Deans would it be?

Major R. : Yes. I met up with them there and eventually I met up with the officer who was deputed to look after us and meet us and another British officer, the fourth British officer, who was living in a very smart hotel. He had been the military attaché in Kabul he'd been a regular officer before the War, he spoke immaculate Urdu, he was immaculate in all sorts of ways, the other three of us were not quite so immaculate but we stayed for a day or two in Peshawar and then we went, we were taken to Mardan which was the location of the Regimental reunion. So the reunion spread over five days. It was quite memorable in all sorts of ways. It wasn't just for us - we were an incidental part of something very much bigger, we were spectators, very privileged spectators, being allowed in on this thing. The President came, there were receptions during the day in tents and masses of old pensioners and I bumped, several guys I'd served with I met, a British officer *jemadar* who was a very good M.C. on a feature called Ben Nevis which was one of the engagements we were involved in. I got him to give his account of him earning that Military Cross on a tape. I've got it there somewhere. We went on a guided tour, we were, after the main sort of events were over we were taken with conducting officers up to the Khyber Pass and up to Malakand two different days staying at forts on the way and being talked to about people by people who were up in that area who were bringing the history of the attack on wherever it was by four brigades, and at the time I was thinking, 'We haven't got four brigades in the British Army to deploy, for example, in the Gulf'. It just showed you the scale of things in the days of the Empire. The other officers were talking about, you know they'd been asked, 'Would you like to go and see your Battalion?', 'Yes, yes', and it was all laid on for them because all the officers we met there from our regiments were terribly keen to get us to go and stay there with their Battalion even though I had never served with their Battalion and it was the same with other officers. I was told, I was sort of blanked off straight away, 'I'm afraid you won't be able to go to your Battalion'. I wasn't even told where it was. 'There are security aspects to it. Just take it from me, I'm afraid you can't go. Is there anything else you'd like to do?' Well some guy was asking me if I'd go to some battle school in Quetta, I think not the Staff College, a battle school or something where he was a chief instructor and this seemed to be brewing up quite nicely, and then there came, one of, the

reception when I think the day the President came and the Army Chief came, and I was being taken forward by one of the conducting officers to be presented to the President and another officer came up and said, 'No he's got to come across here to a different place', and there I found General Mujib who was Commander of the 1st 16th Punjab Regiment and who I'd met and who had been terribly kind and courteous to me throughout, and he presented me to the Army Chief, and the Army Chief said to me, 'And what are you going to do after this is over?', so I said, 'I haven't quite decided yet, I might go up to the Northern Territories'. I had begun to say that when he said, 'Are you going to see your Battalion?', I said, 'No, I understand that's not possible', and General Mujib butted in and said, 'With the Army Commander all things are possible', and from then on it was walking on air. The other three guys I left in Peshawar (laughs) two of them had been invited to share a room and they hadn't liked the room that they had been sharing and voices were raised in protest. I was taken away by an officer of the 1st 16th Punjab Regiment back to Mardan again where I was moved into the V-I-P Mess. I was presented (laughs) the acting A-Q there, a Colonel whose father, father-in-law had been the first British officer at Sandhurst (i.e. the first Indian officer to go to Sandhurst), that's right, chatted to me at some length. Anyway the following day we set off for Kashmir, I had heard then that they were at Kotli Kashmir. I went off with this conducting officer, a very nice guy, a good friend of mine now, and we went off to Kashmir. How did I come on to that? That's how I came to go. Stop me there and ask me something else.

J.W. : Am I right in thinking you've been back again since then?

Major R. : Yep, yep. How did that happen? Right. That trip just to complete I visited the battalion up in Azad Kashmir. Occasionally there was shelling by the Indian forces. One night I asked the Battalion commander, I said, 'What should I, what would you like me to do if the Jats and the Gurkhas come over that hill?' We were being opposed by Jats and Gurkhas, and he said, 'I'd like you to be my second-in-command'. That was one of the proudest moments in my life.

J.W. : Oh I can imagine, yes.

Major R. : I thought, 'I've got nothing to lose, I'm getting on in years, I could distinguish myself in this last encounter'. I left the following day and made my way down to Lahore, across to Jalandhar, stayed with Kher Singh in Jalandhar. He passed me on to his son who is a Group Captain in the Indian Air Force in Agra. I had a wonderful three days there, then back to Bombay, Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay for three days relaxation while I sorted out my return trip back tot the U.K. which I did. Second time? Second time I had heard I'd been told that there would be another reunion after four years, so I waited hopefully for that to happen because it had been suggested that, 'Oh yes, we're going to invite many more British officers.' Nothing happened and nothing happened and I'd been in touch with General Mujib by letter since then over

various matters of Regimental interest and eventually I thought, 'If I'm going to go again I'd better go now because I'm getting on a bit'. I was over seventy then and 'I'd better do it now'. So I wrote to General Mujib who kept saying to me, you know, 'If you're coming out, if you want to come out, you know come and stay with me' and so on, so I wrote to him and that's what I did I went out there, this time I went direct to Islamabad airport or 'Pindi Airport, I was met by General Mujib, he took me to his home in Islamabad where I was going to stay for a while, we then moved straight on to the golf course at Islamabad. Well I tried to compose myself for golf, but I was suffering from jet lag and I put up a dismal display. No worse than some of the displays I've put up here I have to say. He arranged for me to go and see the battalion which by then was in Lahore Cantonment. I had a most tremendous reception there, three or four glorious days there, they got pensioners in to see me, I inspected the quarterguard, I talked to the Battalion, I was taken out by, the adjutant and the intelligence officer acted as my guides, I was taken around the circuit again in Lahore. Pipe bands, and then the Battalion set off again on a long exercise and I said goodbye to them on the road as they went by in single file, the rifles, light machine guns over their stuff, I took some photos of them and said farewell. I then went back to Islamabad where General Mujib had laid on suggested areas for me to go and see, so I did. I went up to Gilgit, from Gilgit I went to Skardu in a country bus sitting in one corner, I couldn't get out, the precipice either side was quite terrifying. I got to this place called Shangri-La in Skardu, there were only two other people there, they were both Pakistani, couples on a honeymoon, delightful couple next door to me. First night hot water bottle leaked and I got saturated, I stayed there for about two or three days, went sight seeing with one of the couples and then the road was cut by terrorists, couldn't get out, I hadn't got a specific place on the plane booked back, it was open from Skardu. I telephoned General Mujib (laughs), he said he would arrange for something. he got in touch with the A-D-C to the President happened to have been the 1st 16th Punjabi or 13th Punjabi. He got in touch with the station staff officer in Skardu who was the Baluch Regiment chap. He got in touch with me at the Skardu Hotel. I went down the following day to the airport, airstrip, milling with people trying to get on the plane, and there's only one plane a day and it's a wee one. The chap told me, this Baluchi officer introduced himself, I sat down, I waited, he said, 'It's all right, just stay there.' I waited, eventually people all got up and moved into the plane as it came in and I was left sitting there on my own, and just when I was about to give up he came over and said, 'Can you give me your ticket?'. I did, he disappeared for five minutes and he came back with another ticket. He said, 'Here you are.' I said, 'How did you do that?' He said, 'There was a chap there who wasn't really all that keen to go' (laughs), so I moved on to the plane and flew back to Islamabad. So that's, you know, and as before I went across to India and saw Kher Singh and saw sóme of his relatives.

J.W. : How important would you say these trips are to you, gaining the impression from the whole of your time, the need to, or the desire to go back, and the reluctance at leaving the Regiment in the first place, what did that trip mean, if you can put that into words?

Major R. : Yea, I had, when I left the Battalion there was no real contact with the Battalion after that. I was in the British Army then and I was stationed abroad for much of the time so that just faded into the background of my memories until I came back, during the times I was back in this country I'd attend Regimental lunches and I'd hear vague things such as, 'Oh the battalion's doing very well' here or there or somewhere else, and nevertheless it was fairly distant just as though it was something in the past that had been closed off. But then as I was about to retire from being a stockbroker here in Edinburgh, and I was planning my retirement for the last year or two years, it had become more and more of a thing for me, I wanted to go back to Pakistan, and so I was planning to do this and I wanted to do it on my own or with David Mills I wanted, didn't want to share the experience with anyone who hadn't actually been with me in the first instance. I didn't want to act as a sort of tour operator showing someone else around, this is this and this is something else, and you know, 'I'm sorry there isn't a fan' or 'I'm sorry it's not air conditioned, I'm sorry the lavatory doesn't work'. I didn't want to get involved in any of that, so I'd planned to do it on my own when this extraordinary business came up in the year after I retired. I retired in November, I was out there in, I was out to Pakistan in July in this reunion business. And when I was back there it really made an enormous impression on. It all came flooding back again. I went back to Sialkot after I'd been up with the Battalion up in Kashmir, I went to the church there, I went to the Club, I thought I saw a tennis court there where I used to play tennis or where they'd all been modernised. The Club has no longer the same, they didn't have a bar, they didn't have bridge parties and that sort of stuff. I looked for the place where my bungalow was and couldn't find it, I tried to find where the headquarters was and couldn't. I travelled in buses that, what d'ya call it, High Life Bus Business.

J.W. : Flying coaches and this sort of thing.

Major R. : I just fitted into everything, it was absolutely tremendous and I was very conscious of the presence of the religious aspect of life all the time. I was talking to people and meeting people who lived with God, literally lived with God and that too made an impression on me. So it was then I thought, 'This is what I've missed. I could have extended it a bit longer. I could have extended it for a year.' I know it would have been, there would have been all the troubles of Partition, which when I left I hadn't anticipated, nobody had anticipated the bloodbath that was about to fall upon them, but I could have stayed out just that bit longer with these soldiers and then that was about it.

J.W. : So then, now, I've read in a lot of works and various books and things, there's this, you often hear about Scots abroad in India, places like Dundee, say, the jute business, they congregate together and this sort of thing. For you then, was it much more of a thing where there was that very strong affinity and identity with the Regiment, with the people, with the whole, the whole place, and it wasn't, I mean, had there been fellow Scots it wouldn't have mattered, it was a ... ?

Major R. : It wasn't the Scottish aspect at all. The initial sort of impulse to go into the Indian Army was through my father who'd served out there and who had these romantic sort of, painted a romantic picture of a life in a British battalion in Indian in the very latter part of the last century, and my sister who enthused over her life in India.

J.W. : Yes, I remember you saying.

Major R. : Two of her children were born out there, and this is what took me in the first instance. The Scots aspect quite honestly didn't come into it, and never really intruded into it.

J.W. : There were never any fellow Scots with you ... ?

Major R. : No, there were, yes, there were in the 1st 16th Punjab Regiment, there was James Vickers, a Scotsman who I think came from Edinburgh, there was James Fenwick who came from Perth who'd been at Perth Academy about fifteen or twenty years before I got there, so there were two Scots, but they were both, they'd, both were in Calcutta before the War in banking, one was in the Chartered Bank and one was in some other bank, and they'd been in the Calcutta Light Horse or something and had found their way into the 16th Punjab Regiment.

J.W. : But for you the identity was with the men, with the Regiment ... ?

Major R. : Absolutely, it was with the ... .

J.W. : You weren't a little clique together?

Major R. : No the Scots aspect of it was not there. They'd been expatriated for so long serving in various parts of the Far East that it wasn't the Scottish aspect, it was the relationship. Officers who shared my experience of being in an Indian battalion, and who related to the men in a way which was common to the way which we all related to them, we would talk about them in the Mess to each other, about the doings of this one, what *subadar* so-and-so had said, about whatever *havildar* so-and-so had said or whatever it happened to be. This was the way that we looked upon them, and we talked to the soldiers in the way that we talked to them, to say that we talked to them as equals is not as it was, because we were officers commanding them and they were soldiers, but there was no, there was no racial superiority, absolutely none, and particularly with the V-C officers (Viceroy's Commissioned officers) there was really a very close relationship. I mean, Laal Khan, who was the *subadar-major*, when Willie Wilcock was commanding, they used to walk round the Battalion together at Waithou and they were closer than is almost imaginable for two people to be, to be close, it was great.

J.W. : Well I think that it about everything I can think of. I know we could probably think of a lot more. Unless you've anything else that suddenly springs to mind?

Major R. : No, I could bang on about the special relationship.

J.W. : Well, I think you've summarised it very well, I mean sure I'd like to talk to you, I don't want to keep you any more.

Major R. : I don't want to keep you, you've got other things to think about, but as to going back again for a third visit, I really don't know about it, maybe not, unless David Mills who's too old, he wouldn't do, his health is suffering, he's about eighty-one or eighty-two now, I'm seventy-three, unless there was some sort of structured thing for me to focus on out there, I wouldn't sort of do a do-it-yourself one as I did again, I probably wouldn't be able to, to do that as well as I have done it in the past, it had been so ... .

(The tape runs out. Major Rutherford ends saying how his previous visits were wonderful and how he fears that any subsequent visit might not match up to expectations. I thanked him very much for his time and help).

Mrs. A. M. Stewart
Interviewed on Friday 23rd May 1997
SA1997.98

J.W. represents Jeremy Weston and **Mrs. S.** represents Mrs. Stewart.

J.W. : This is Jeremy Weston, I'm recording Mrs. Stewart at her home in South Queensferry and it's Friday the 23rd of May 1997. Okay Mrs. Stewart if I could ask you first where and when you were born please?

Mrs. S. : I was born in Aberdeen of the 21st of September 1915.

J.W. : Right, okay, and can you tell me about your family, what did your parents do?

Mrs. S. : Yes my father was in the army, R-S-M of the Gordon Highlanders.

J.W. : Oh right.

Mrs. S. : And we spent five years, we were four of a family, one boy and three girls, and one boy and two girls went to Malta, first of all in Aberdeen the Gordon Highlanders' barracks in Aberdeen, went to Malta where we stayed for a year and then on to India, to Delhi, no to Secunderabad and the Deccan, Southern India, and we spent three years there and then to Delhi where the Regiment, the Battalion, moved up to Delhi in 1928 I think that, no '27, where the youngest, the fourth child, was born and we stayed there until the February of 1929 when we came back to the Gordon Highlanders' depot in Aberdeen.

J.W. : Right, okay, so did you then go to school ... .

Mrs. S. : In Aberdeen.

J.W. : Some over here and some in India?

Mrs. S. : Well yes in India, well yes most of my time in little army schools, you know, there was always little schools where the Battalion went, but I did have six months in a boarding school in Southern India which I loathed. My brother, now I was at the age of eleven then, I think, and spent only six months but I wasn't a good scholar, I was nervous, a bit highly strung and rather awkward and I can remember writing to my mother and saying how I loathed it and I wanted to come home, and she eventually had a great talk with my father and won the day, which was wrong really, I really should have been made to stay, but she came and collected me, but my brother did a similar sort of thing but he remained at the school for two years and that was in Poona, [?] School in Poona, and he a year and seven months older than myself and then when we came home in '29 my sisters and myself went to the High School

in Aberdeen, and Jimmie went back to his first school when he was a little boy before we went abroad, to the Grammar School in Aberdeen.

J.W. : Right yes, I've heard ... .

Mrs. S. : Well he did then, he completed schooling then, and my brother wanted to go to sea from the age of, oh twelve or thirteen. Well he did, he did an apprenticeship and then came home during the Depression in the early '30s and got a second mate's ticket but he didn't get a posting, there was no hope of that, and eventually he joined the army and joined as a private soldier in the Signals, and from then on he got promotions and all that sort of thing and eventually, well went round various places, you know, Africa and Indian and so on, and came back to the country and retired here, and we've been living here more or less. I've a sister (**Mrs. S.** indicates to a house further along the same street).

J.W. : Oh I see.

Mrs. S. : Up, it's, it's like in one garden the three of us are now retired and living together.

J.W. : Oh wonderful. The

Mrs. S. : The fourth member of the family who was born in Hyderabad, that's near the, Secunderabad, and spent her first eighteen months of life in Delhi before we came back in the February 1929. So that's a brief ... .

J.W. : Oh no, that's very ... .

Mrs. S. : If you want anything ... .

J.W. : Well, no, I'm fascinated by that, I didn't realise that you were there at that age. Do you remember anything else of ... ?

Mrs. S. : Oh we had a, it was a I don't know if there's talk in, about the army, the R-S-Ms are strict, marching and, och, dreadful, well he was the most gentle of men towards his family and I think he was interested in his troops and cared for them . Well he was strict but in a nice kind of way, a good man, well we all thought dad was a saint, but he really was marvelous, but I wonder what, well, with, used to go up to the hills right down south, Ootacamund way, Wellington and the Mussoire, Dera, we had a lot of movement round about there but I can't remember any real, oh yes we were in Delhi whilst the Viceregal Lodge was being built and my parents became friends with one of the engineers, a British, a Scot, I think, a fellow Scot, I think he was, must have been a fairly senior engineer because we were invited along to his home and I, I even then I realised, oh, he was quite an important engineer on this job building the Viceregal house which was really quite something to watch in the making, the building of it, but we didn't see it complete, we, I think we left before it

was complete, I think, so about, now what else did we do of any real excitement? I, you ask me some more.

J.W. : Well do you remember anything say about where you lived, what that was like, the servants, this sort of thing?

Mrs. S. : Ooh well, the servants loved us. You know Indians and the Pakistanis they love children ... .

J.W. : That's right.

Mrs. S. : Don't they, you must have found that and we liked the curry that they made for themselves rather than the one, we used to have curry once a week, it wasn't everyday and it was too mild, insipid we thought as kids, and after we'd had our lunch we then used to trot into the cookhouse at the bottom of the garden and the cook would give us, ooh, rather on the hot side, but the flavours, real Indian curries, super, and the, well, we had some, mostly in our youth I remember the servants all being easy to get on with, but when I went back as a married woman and had my own two boys as small ones, this hashish stuff, a neighbour of mine who was born and brought up in India said, 'Anne, I think you have to keep an eye on this boy'' I had an *ayah* for the boys first of all, and then when they got that little bit older I had a man for them and she told me that he was on something and he was a nice man, but the very idea of dope terrified me, you know, I thought he might not know what he was doing and that sort of thing, so very sadly I had to say, now that was quite common, this same person invited a whole lot of people to Christmas dinner (laughs) and the cook shouldn't have been drinking of course, a Mohammedan, but he had been drinking like a fish. Now she, because he was such a good cook ... (**Mrs. S.** checks the microphone lead) Is that in the way?

J.W. : No, I'll just ... .

Mrs. S. : She appreciated his cooking and made allowances for minor lapses which he'd had, but on this occasion she said fortunately, 'We'd always had loads of tined food around in case it was difficult getting the fresh stuff', she said (laughs) the whole party was just tins of this and tins of that and the cook was so drunk that he was telling them to go to the devil and all this, so they had to get rid of him, that sort of thing happened now and again, you know, exciting bits there, but overall we got on very well with the local people, very well indeed, marvellous.

J.W. : Did you find as a child, then, that the servants were very close to you, you used to spend a lot of time ... ?

Mrs. S. : Ooh we were, we were with the servants and even with my daughter now, when she was seven years younger than my second boy, and was in Rawalpindi, I don't know whether you've ever heard of the Holy Family Hospital?

J.W. : Yes, oh yes.

Mrs. S. : Well she was born in the Holy Family Hospital in Rawalpindi and she spoke Urdu like a native, absol ... , so if ever I went shopping, which I didn't, I was lazy because you don't really get to know people unless you know their language, however Fiona was always with me when we went round, and she rattled away and bargained away in the bazaars (laughs) she always got them to take so much off, well they do that, you know, they what do, they charge you the earth, no these were very happy years until it was time to send them home to school, this is the problem. However ... .

J.W. : So what happened subsequently, you say you came back to Aberdeen and what happened from there on?

Mrs. S. : My husband, who became the Assistant General Manager and was due to take over as General Manager a year, that was '64, in '65, he was due to take over because the present, the current man had, was going to Australia, his wife was weary, she wanted to go to Australia, she'd had enough of the east and there, well, to cut a long story short there was a, in the company plane my husband, the Director from London and his wife, and the pilot were all killed, it crashed, and that's why I had to come home and I came home and stayed, bought a flat in Aberdeen and stayed there from 1965 until I, came here and joined my sister and husband who'd a big house over the way, and then we decided when we were there on the go, [houses], that this would be nice to be in the same garden and each with their little home.

J.W. : Sure.

Mrs. S. : Yes.

J.W. : How about, though, when you as a child, when your family went back to Scotland, how did, was it, how ... ?

Mrs. S. : Oh that was grim. But my mother was very good, she always said, 'Now kids, when we go back they'll be no servants and they'll be no this' and she explained that we could never live at home as we did out there.

J.W. : Sure, of course.

Mrs. S. : She was very sensible. And, oh, now let me think, yes, we came, that's right, so much did she talk about this that I began to be worried cause I was the eld ... , well my brother was the eldest, but I was the eldest girl and I thought, 'Oh how on earth are we going to, this sounds pretty grim'. Well it was grim in the first place, cause when we came off the ship at Liverpool it was February, early February, and the weather was appalling and, oh dear, everything was awful, and we went back to the barracks in Aberdeen and stayed there, you see, and then I went to work, and my sister went to work, and the baby of the house she had, she was very bright, and she

went to university and did all the Honours and all that sort of thing, and she went on working throughout her married life, in fact she's only recently retired, so as I say I had those years when my daughter was at school and one of the boys was in the army and the other was doing medicine at Aberdeen University, and then both boys married, and my daughter married eventually, and I decided, I was in this big double flat, you know one of those old, with high ceilings and all that, and I thought, 'No, no this is ridiculous', so to cut a very long story short, my sister said, 'Now why don't you come down, we can give you rooms on your own', and we stuck to this, we didn't mix except by invitation, it worked very well until we then came here so we're all here together now, but a very ordinary, dull life, there's been no real excitement or anything, just the pleasure of watching and the worries of watching, you know, when you've family and so on. But I'm trying to think if I've, if I've any more, anything more ... .

J.W. : Well, how was it, how, can you tell me about the time between when you first came back after you'd been there as a child and then how did you come, say, to meet your husband and then subsequently go back out?

Mrs. S. : Ah yes, well, well, when we came back, yes, I was, how old was I then? About fifteen, fourteen, fifteen and back to school and all that to the High School in Aberdeen and I met this, my husband, he was a year older than myself, when we were about seventeen or eighteen, and we eventually became engaged, and then war broke out, so we decided we'd get married, but we decided, we didn't have any children until afterwards sort of thing and he joined, he wanted to join the Gordons, I think I mentioned this, and it was full *et cetera*, so we were married in the December 1939, and he was, by this time he'd qualified as a Chartered Accountant and then went to work in London in the City of London with one of the big firms of Chartered Accountants and then there was a whole year went by while he was doing the, and the bombing was gong on and we were moving parts of the office to Buckinghamshire and we went to stay with an old retired general and his wife, and they wanted, they were the real McCoy, you know, the real old gentry, and this dear old fellow thought, 'Oh these common or garden people they'll be able to paint', because they weren't well off at all, they were terribly hard up, but they were charming, they were really lovely they were, and 'Mr. Stewart would you paint this for me?' it was a rickety old bedside table, you know, (laughs) and Doug sai ... , he was my husband, he said, 'Oh yes, we'll see that it's done' and he said 'Now look Anne, it's over to you I haven't got time I've got to go and work' so we (laughs) but all this was lovely, nothing to do with Pakistan, but however ... .

J.W. : No, no, it's interesting.

Mrs. S. : Anyway he was eventually called up, and as a Chartered Accountant the had an opening for him in the Army Service Corps, not in the education, nothing to do with the money side of anything, and he would, drove on Salisbury Plain and used to send his washing home, and I used to wonder what the devil he'd been doing because it was so cold he kept all his pyjamas, he put everything on when they were

on these manoeuvres overnight and so on. However back he came from the War eventually and he bought, he did all this, I was at home, I'd had, had, having my first baby, no I had the first baby just shortly, no he came home shortly before the first baby came, that was it, and went back to his job, then he looked for the house in Lon ..., and we got a, bought a house in [?], do you know the London area at all?

J.W. : Some of it.

Mrs. S. : Surrey.

J.W. : Oh yes.

Mrs. S. : A little semi-detached house in Surrey and, but we were only there for about two or three months before I discovered I was expecting another child, and ooh, it was real slavery and that bad, bad winter of '47 one, altogether between us we had a chat, and he said, 'I'm seriously thinking of putting my name in the *Chartered Accountants Magazine*, an advertisement, 'Keen , alive, alert looking for ...' (laughs) the sort of things we did, and you'll get away and you'll get help, *et cetera, et cetera*, and when I think about I, it was a pretty trying time for him, he'd been away for five years and he'd just qualified the year before and he hadn't had a lot of practical training and so on. However, but I did tell you he was accepted for the Indian Army ... .

J.W. : Right, no, you didn't.

Mrs. S. : It was the Indian, ah, what do they call it again, the, Service Corps, ...

J.W. : The Indian Army Service Corps?

Mrs. S. : It was the R-I, yea the Indian Army Service Corps.

J.W. : The R-I-A-S-C.

Mrs. S. : When, and he was posted near Lahore, Amballa, he was there for a while and he really fell in love, like most people there do, and he knew it was interesting to hear his opinion of the time he had been, although he wasn't in India all that long because the army had to move and he as in Italy, the usual going up Italy. However, we, he eventually said, we had this conversation, and he said that he would put this advertisement in the *Accountant*, I think it was called, and a reply came and he was called for interview, and to cut a long story short he was accepted as an accountant to go out to Rawalpindi, yes, he didn't have to do any training in the London office, he went out to Rawalpindi and I joined home about a year later because the trouble had just started, 1947 was a bad time, although he kept on writing to me and he would say, 'Now everything's quiet'. I was a bit scared to take children out, but I did realise when I eventually joined him in Rawalpindi that could have been there a year

earlier, but, however, we had seventeen years in all out there, and as I said it was a very happy, happy period and we did, we went up to the Kaghan Valley and did fishing, that was another interesting trip, went camping there and we all took our gear with us and the comfort and the cooking that these people can do in primitive conditions ... .

J.W. : Oh yes, it's incredible, I know what you mean.

Mrs. S. : It's incredible, and the baking of iced cakes, astonishing really, and I wasn't very good, we were always told, 'Don't go into the kitchen, keep clear of the kitchen', but I liked to know what was going on in the kitchen and nobody took umbrage, the servants accepted me, and every morning we had to do our chitties, you know, about the expenses and so on, and I had to pretend that I knew more about how much things cost than I actually did, and make allowances for a little bit of graft (laughs) now what, you ask me some questions.

J.W. : Now let me think, you've, you, when you first went out and when your husband was out there as well, did he know, and did you know how long you would be out for?

Mrs. S. : Ooh yes.

J.W. : It was a fixed ... ?

Mrs. S. : Ooh yes, it was a full-time employment, yes, and originally we came home by sea and had six months holiday at a time, and then fortunately later it was a case of every year having six weeks or so ... .

J.W. : Oh yes.

Mrs. S. : You know, when the planes, and they paid for the children to come out for holidays which made it wonderful really.

J.W. : That'd make it much nicer, really. Can you tell me a little about the work he was doing?

Mrs. S. : He was, as I say, he was a chartered accountant, he was head of the money business, was, that was it, he was called the Chief Accountant and then he was promoted to be Assistant General Manager and would have been General Manager. It was early on in the days when these firms had a, chartered accountants, you know, you'd have someone who was doing monies but they were not chartered accountant, I think I would say that Douglas was quite, one of the early people that *Steele Brothers* engaged to be on the spot and do a job outwith the London office, yes.

J.W. : So that was with the *Attock Oil Company*?

Mrs. S. : *Attock Oil Company.*

J.W. : Now what did they do?

Mrs. S. : Well the *Attock Oil Company*, well, it was a small, when you think of all te big, now, I've got, wait a moment, I'm sure I've got some magazines I can give you. (**Mrs. S.** goes to fetch the magazines and the tape is paused). Here's those magazines and that would give you an idea.

J.W. : Oh I see, it's (*Steele Brothers*) like a big group.

Mrs. S. : And this is the local, this is telling you about the tragedy, the air crash, this is my husband, you see, so in Urdu, and there's the General manager who my husband was to take over from the following year.

J.W. : Right I see, oh, all the ... .

Mrs. S. : There, you see, now what does it say?

J.W. : Oh it shows you al the processes of how they extracted the oil ... .

Mrs. S. : It'll give you a vague idea, excuse me one moment I'll see if there's anything here that you may ... (**Mrs. S.** checks a cupboard in the room).

J.W. : How they took the oil from the pods to the refinery.

Mrs. S. : There you are, this tells you about *Steele Brothers*, and they were Arabian Gulf but it's no longer, it's no longer, it's business has finished.

J.W. : Oh I see, yes. Right, this is a marvellous, marvellous magazine. Right (pauses).

Mrs. S. : This is quite an interesting, about Steele Brothers it gives you ideas about what they did and where.

J.W. : Right I see.

Mrs. S. : I mean Aden, you can see here the many places that they had.

J.W. : Right I'll have a look.

Mrs. S. : So if you'd like to take that and have a look.

J.W. : Thank you, thank you.

Mrs. S. : And keep it because I've got plenty more of these magazines.

J.W. : Oh yes, very much, thank you.

Mrs. S. : Well good, good.

J.W. : Well how, let's talk a bit about your sort of everyday life while you were there. What was it like where you were living in Rawalpindi there, the house?

Mrs. S. : Well we lived, when coming from Lahore the Grand Trunk Road, well just about three miles from Rawalpindi you branch left up a steepish sort of hill, and a mile up that road was the refinery and all the bungalows and the hospital and everything all in a big sort of area there, and then there was a place out in the fields you won't know Khaur, you haven't heard of that thing?

J.W. : I haven't, no.

Mrs. S. : Or Dhulian?

J.W. : No I don't know that either.

Mrs. S. : Oh, the drill, you know, was out there.

J.W. : Right, right.

Mrs. S. : All within about, goodness, I can't even remember how many miles, within about thirty or forty miles.

J.W. : Right, oh that doesn't matter exactly.

Mrs. S. : You know, that sort of thing, yes, and I'm trying to think, well naturally I didn't work, we had my family and that sort of thing, and what did we do? We had coffee mornings, luncheon parties, sowing bees, you know, the usual sort of things that women do.

J.W. : Sure.

Mrs. S. : And at home in the evenings certain people we had to entertain, you know, some of the contractor people and you had to watch because you mustn't accept presents.

J.W. : Obviously.

Mrs. S. : And they're determined that you're going to accept them and we've had some funny presents usually, you know, on Christmas Day they arrive and we had one, an Afghan, dear old thing and I didn't speak Pushtu at all and he and I just smiled nicely and we had a few words together, but the moment my husband came in

everything was al right because he was fluent on the languages, and in would be, the bearer would be asked to bring in, or his staff to bring in this basket and a colossal , you must have seen great big baskets of fruit. Well in that could be tucked all sorts of ... .

J.W. : Piles of rupees.

Mrs. S. : Yes, and my husband just had to say and as tactfully as he could, but it was all in the foreign, I didn't hear the details it was an embarrassment because we were allowed to accept fruit or cake, they were always bringing cakes, they always gave you a lavish cake. Well our servants loved it because they knew when all this came they were going to have a real feast (laughs) but it could be embarrassing because they're always, they're determined in some way to get you into their clutches, I presume that's what behind it all.

J.W. : Oh yes, yes, I've heard this from a lot of people.

Mrs. S. : Well that's typical that sort of thing.

J.W. : You say your husband was fluent in the languages. Had he learned them when he was out with the Indian Army?

Mrs. S. : Yes, well I think he was obliged to.

J.W. : Yes, I know they ... .

Mrs. S. : And then I know that all our young men who came out to the oilfields, to Rawalpindi, they, there was a prize, a present, if you learned to be fluent speaking, say it was two hundred rupees, if you learned to be fluent in the writing it was say another, bonuses for them and it was expected that they would, that was your handling, and there were, I'm trying to think how many employees, there was a huge number of employees who had very little English, yes, so it was necessary.

J.W. : Now can you tell me about any of the other British or Scottish people who were there wit the Company that you remember?

Mrs. S. : Ooh yes, well we ha some engineers, a few Scottish engineers and the admin staff, we had a few Scots and English.

J.W. : Right.

Mrs. S. : And one Irish person we had, yes. Well when I went out in the '48, Doug went out in the '47 and I went in the '48 I don't think we had many on the senior staff, we hadn't many Pakistanis, very few actually, but gradually we were obliged to take in more, the staff, the powers that be were told we've got to bring in, we've got

to bring in. Now that could be successful and sometimes it wasn't all that successful, but it was necessity.

J.W. : Did people resent that, the fact that that had to change, or did they just accept it?

Mrs. S. : Oh they accepted that this had to be done. Oh I think people, we got on I think, there was no animosity there, but work must have been frustrating for the trained British mind to have to try and teach some of them. Others were, you know, well educated and well trained but we had some of the tip-top aristocracy of Pakistan. We had, for instances, Bhutto's, a great friend of Bhutto's father, you know he was executed, well you know we used to meet him socially in many of the high up Pakistani houses and he wasn't very popular long before he came, before, I've forgotten what he was in the government in some way or other, in some capacity, but I can't remember what it was.

J.W. : Yes, I can check on that.

Mrs. S. : Yes, that's, we knew that family and now she, his daughter, my daughter went to the same convent school and occasionally we would ask Mrs. Bhutto, her mother, we would be asked to give the prizes away at the flower show and the daughter would come with the mother and play with my daughter while we were, you know, looking over the big vegetables and the lovely things so that she could decide what was what, and if, you know, and present the prizes, so that was, and we've met the Bhuttos and then there were the Said family, ooh many families, they were of tip-top aristocracy and, or well educated, and I used to play, oh what's that little tile, not Mah Jong, the little on the board, with the tiles, word game ... .

J.W. : Scrabble?

Mrs. S. : Scrab ... , not that's a card game or is that the ... ?

J.W. : Scrabble has little letters.

Mrs. S. : Yes it's [?] my card game, my memories a weeny bit confused and she, I'm ashamed, she used to more or less knock me out (laughs). Well, I mean, she was taught the grammar of our language thoroughly. Well I'd forgotten, you know, more or less because I never had the higher educational training, I mean, I couldn't compete there, but I mean she was brilliant, it used to amaze me, I mean, how on earth do these people learn all the, then she'd been brought up speaking English all her life and who knows what other languages.

J.W. : Yes, oh yes, they're marvellous linguists a lot of them, yes you're right.

Mrs. S. : Yes, and well some of them, the senior staff, he chemists for instance, he had done his, I think, probably went to a university in Pakistan initially for his first

degree and then went over to the States and did his doctorate in the States. Now I, we heard all sorts of rumours about the universities in Pakistan being, you know, you hear all this, what was it talk about failed B-A so and so and all that, I don't know what the standard is like but a lot of people used to criticise, and the doctors, for example, weren't as well trained as our doctors, you know, British, you know, the Western doctors, but however it was a very happy period. Now what else can I tell you?

J.W. : Now let me think, if I can think of another area that we can look into. How about you were saying that there was quite a lot of Scots employed around about the Company.

Mrs. S. : Yes, yes.

J.W. : Did you, I'm not saying that you used to socialize with them exclusively, but was there a strong sort of feeling of community with these Scots while you were there, or did you ... ?

Mrs. S. : No, no.

J.W. : You mixed wit everybody?

Mrs. S. : I never felt, 'I am a Scot', but 'I'm British first rather than Scottish first', and as for having a free Scotland, I think the world is too small to break up any more. Nationalism, I'm anti it. No, no, oh it was a pleasant, well I've no doubt some men thought they could be paid, you know, they ought to have promotion, well it's life isn't it, that sort of thing?

J.W. : Yes, yes, and what did you, how about the sort of life outside of work, the sort of life outside work, the sort of social life ... .

Mrs. S. : For the poor and so on.

J.W. : Oh no, no, sorry, for yourselves, what did you do socially and for leisure?

Mrs. S. : Socially?

J.W. : You were saying yourself that you had the coffee mornings.

Mrs. S. : That's right, well we didn't go out every, very often, even things at home, reading of listening to our radio, music, just as one would do at home.

J.W. : Yes, yes.

Mrs. S. : Except that we did have more evening parties than we do at home and we ad to entertain bigger numbers, you know, it wasn't always your intimate friends you

had to do that sort of thing and travel, well, I loved just travelling about, I mean fascinating.

J.W. : What sort of places, you said you went to the Kaghan Valley but any, where else that you can tell me where you travelled?

Mrs. S. : Yes we were taken up the Khyber by this same contractor man.

J.W. : Oh right.

Mrs. S. : And you know he had his bullets here.

J.W. : His bandolier.

Mrs. S. : And all his laddies with their protective and a great, he used to wear a turban with, a most elegant looking fellow and a, oh dear, I was only sorry that I couldn't converse with him properly. However on this occasion because my son, we had had both sons, no, just the younger son who was out on this occasion we, this, my husband had asked this man if we could be taken up, you know, to see his home area, district, so he got, ooh, everything organise and we had car loads with his bodyguard and himself and Doug and my son and we were taken up, did you ever go up to Landi Kotal up the ... ?

J.W. : Yes, yes.

Mrs. S. : Well I was very keen to see Landi Kotal because the Gordon Highlanders had been at Landi Kotal, no beyond, a bit nearer the frontier, from Afghan ... , (laughs) all right we arrived having, ooh yes, we got out of the car and he said, 'Now we must stay this side of the road', and you know, you got all your, don't stray off this, that and the next thing in case there are people shooting at', so we had a good look round, it was quite inspiring really, and then back into the car and then into his compound. Now there was a wall, you know, higher than the ceiling.

J.W. : Oh yes, yes I know the ones you mean.

Mrs. S. : Huge.

J.W. : Huge, like forts, aren't they?
Mrs. S. : Yes and into this huge courtyard and not a woman in sight, of course, and bearers galore and all that, but with dirty looking towels, it wasn't very pleasant. Anyway we wee taken into a big sitting room and I was asked to sit down, well it was a sofa about this size, I sat down and it collapsed, well you can imagine (laughs) when we're all supposed to be (laughs) on our dignity, oh it was hilarious, and I kept a straight face but my son, my youngest, he would have been about twelve then, he as hating every moment of it, but he was out from the U.K. at this time and he was used to everything clean and fresh, and that, he wasn't the sort of person, I mean I could

hide my feelings, but he, no, he showed how much he was disliking it all, and that made me very nervous because the Pathans, you know, are touchy people (laughs). Anyway we got over this collapse, then it was time to go and sit at the dining table, a long, long table and food galore and there were the eyes of, I don't know what is it, the sheep?

J.W. : Could be sheep or goats maybe, yes.

Mrs. S. : And they had little tight liver kebabs I remember it was (laughs) and I said, I was sitting next to mine host, of course, and Alan was sitting with this glum face and I was trying to catch his eye and just so, say, 'Now come on chap, handy up a bit' but I couldn't be refused to look at anybody, anyway, in the, this excitement [?] and I said, 'Oh my son, oh he does like liver kebab', and do you know what the host did, he put his hand into the bowl and picked up a heap of these kebab things and put them on Alan's plate. Well I thought we'd all collapse at this, his dad, (laughs), however Alan, poor fellow, he did eat some of them but he couldn't eat, take them all, and poor boy instead of being a pleasure for him it was an absolute bore. Now we all got that over and done with and we wee told we were going up to the frontier, the Afghan frontier, there was a friend f his who lived just before the frontier. Well naturally they always want to give you something to eat or drink, so they came with this sort of green tea, and I mean it's all right but to a child it must have been absolute poison so Alan had to knock back some of that so by the time we got back to the hotel in Peshawar Alan just sort of flopped back and let his feelings go and said what he thought of the whole shooting match.

J.W. : Oh dear.

Mrs. S. : He wasn't impressed but it was a wonderful, a wonderful trip really to, cause I'd not seen the, Landi Kotal, so after that of course on another occasion we went up and we went into the bazaar, and in that bazaar the things from Russia, you know, when Russia was a closed book and some of them, the beautiful, beautiful pottery and lovely ... .

J.W. : Oh it's still the same.

Mrs. S. : Is it?

J.W. : In the bazaars in Peshawar all brought through Afghanistan with the war.

Mrs. S. : Still the same, yes.

J.W. : In fact there's a Marks, there's a place that sells Marks and Spencers smuggled goods in Peshawar, you wonder, don't you?

Mrs. S. : And you see some of the places on the way up making these rifles.

J.W. : Oh yes, Darra, Darra Adamkhel.

Mrs. S. : You know these people are very clever, aren't they?

J.W. : Oh yes, oh yes without doubt, what they can make.

Mrs. S. : It's like the tailors, you know, when I first went out I had naturally quite a lot of clothes and the naturally, well, I wanted a change, and all you do was to give to this *darzī* this dress and and say you want it in this material.

J.W. : And they make it perfectly don't they?

Mrs. S. : Beautiful, beautiful, oh yes.

J.W. : Oh yes, it's quite incredible. How about, you were saying you went on these trips travelling. With your life at home did you ever get much of a chance to mix with locals, people?

Mrs. S. : Ooh yes.

J.W. : With the business associates and this sort of people?

Mrs. S. : Well one business firm, Fazal Karim, I wonder if it's still in Rawalpindi in the compound area, not in the bazaar, not in the city, you know, in the what do you call it, Civil Lines, what's the Mall, the shopping area there. Yes, oh we would, we didn't have them, we didn't have them up to our house , but we were very friendly when we went to get our shopping and that sort of thing and we discussed all sorts of things, and the tailor for example, my husband had a soft spot for this Abdul Aziz, he was, and he'd been a tailor, cause 'Pindi in the old days was a very smart army, military to do with all the tip-top in the days when the aristocracy were all the sold ... , officers and so on, so he'd made clothes for many of these people and he was very proud of it and he obviously had asked them for recommendations, so I don't now what he thought of we, the commoners, I mean when we went out and we were in all these senior places. They must have thought that, 'Ooh what a, how things have changed.' But I didn't hear anyone speak badly about working for British people, but of course they were sure of their money and that sort of, if they worked for their own people they were overworked and less well paid, and so to a lot of the poorer people we were missed I would say.

J.W. : How about in the house, you say you had your servants to cook and this sort of thing, but what sort of things would you eat?

Mrs. S. : Well we, English, mainly British food, but on Sundays always we had curry and, you know, super selection, and very often on Sunday one would have a few people in, we'd have a beer or a gin or something, sit in the garden and then go in and have our curry, but otherwise it was nor ... , British food, unless you had

someone, an Englishman, from another station coming in and you knew they enjoyed a curry, you know, more than once a week then that, you know, would be done but as a rule we lived like British people really, like we live at home.

J.W. : And how about with your family back in Scotland, did you keep contact with them while you were there, did you write letters?

Mrs. S. : Ooh yes, every wee, ooh yes, ooh rather, but of course those days you couldn't phone as now, you only lift the phone, and I couldn't afford to have my parents out there because it took us all our time to have the boys out until they were paid for and so on, by which time my mother wouldn't have been able to come, but when I think about it now my younger sister, she has two daughters and both married to oil boys. One is with *Shell* and the other is with *B-P*. Now the *B-P* one's the one who did his doctorate whilst working, he had an Honours degree and then years afterwards, I think, the companies now want Ph.D.s for the senior positions so one of them is now, he's with *B-P* in the States, he's in Houston, and the other one's with *Shell*, he's in Borneo, is it Borneo? Brunei.

J.W. : Brunei.

Mrs. S. : Brunei, yes, Brunei, and mum's been to the, not yet to the American one, but mum and dad have not been to the Brunei one. Now the American one's saying, 'Now you must come, mum and dad', so they'll be going over there so it's a different, it's lovely, you can have your own family out now, well, we couldn't.

J.W. : But was it very important to you to have those contacts?

Mrs. S. : Ooh yes.

J.W. : To write home and so on.

Mrs. S. : Well we've always been a close family.

J.W. : Yes, from what you've said it's, yes exactly.

Mrs. S. : We're now altogether.

J.W. : Let me think what else is there? How about you with your children and your whole family. Was your health quite good while you were there?

Mrs. S. : very, I've been a very healthy woman but we were fortunate in Rawalpindi because we had central, not central, what do you call it, err, central, air conditioning, but not the whole house, but now it is the whole house, it was our bedroom and the dressing room only, and when it became really nasty we'd retire there and have a coffee and a chat.

J.W. : Right, right.

Mrs. S. : But as a rule the heat didn't trouble us, you know, not at all. It was a healthy climate. In a good winter we needed fires in the evening.

J.W. : Yes, it's nice that part around Rawalpindi.

Mrs. S. : Yes it's rather nice.

J.W. : It's got a good climate just there.

J.W. : Right now, goodness, I can't, let me think, I don't know if you can think of anything else before I ask you, so when you were talking much earlier on about when you came back, but ... .

Mrs. S. : When we came back still children?

J.W. : No when you came back after you'd been with your husband out to Pakistan. So remind me when was that you came back?

Mrs. S. : I came back in sixty ... , my husband died on the 12th of December '64, I was home here for Christmas Eve in a blizzard.

J.W. : Aha, right, and so ... .

Mrs. S. : My eldest son came out, he was doing second year medicine by this time. He came out to be at the funeral, and then we flew home a few days later and the second, I wanted both boys to come but unfortunately Alan was in the army and he couldn't get away at such short notice and be ready t come out so he didn't come, but when I got home I stayed with my sister with whom I stayed in this big house over here, and we stayed there until I bought a house in April, and then set up home.

J.W. : Now that must have been a very difficult time.

Mrs. S. : It was a very sad time.

J.W. : Obviously, yes.

Mrs. S. : Well my dear daughter she was only ten, and she and her dad were very close and she was so brave, she really was, and sadly she can't remember any of her Urdu or whatever, or whether she doesn't want to remember it I don't know.

J.W. : Yes, such a big shock as that could do that, couldn't it? So how was it subsequently settling back into life here?

Mrs. S. : Well I was lucky, you, again, see, my mother was in Aberdeen, my youngest sister and my other sister so my family were all around me and I've been, I never felt, 'Oh gosh to go home and work'. I was forever working, could never convince myself that some work in the house could want until tomorrow, I was over anxious about being able to keep everything going, shall we say, but then I got settled and into a routine, and as I say I had very good health so that I had no problems; just it was a lo ... , if you've lost your husband well I mean it's just ... .

J.W. : Naturally.

Mrs. S. : Someone special goes and life is different but I'm in, on the otherhand it was good that I had someone else to think about, that I had my daughter and my sons, you see, yes, no, no, I, it was a bit difficult but everybody was ... .

J.W. : Of course, it would, for everybody, you're right. Well let me think, that takes us just about full circle.

Mrs. S. : You see, I told you, I'm not very good at, sort of, telling about places and all that.

J.W. : Oh no, no, no, believe me what you have said is wonderful, please don't, don't, don't ... .

Mrs. S. : Is it?

J.W. : Yes, it's exactly what I'm looking for.

Mrs. S. : Ooh, I'm so glad of that.

J.W. : And how about, say, looking back to those times, say, do you still keep any contact with the people?

Mrs. S. : Well Anne who you saw, she, every year now, my brother-in-law no longer drives, he's had eye trouble, he's only got the sight in one eye, within the village he will drive but he won't do, on long so Anne Scott takes us out in her car and we have lunch somewhere once a year and now and again she comes and has lunch with us and we go with her ad if any of her friends from Pakistan are visiting, you know, we keep in touch and I have this special friend who was born and brought up in Pakistan who now lives in Wales, so I speak to her on the phone and sadly now another couple in London area near Maidenhead, the husband died of cancer just two months ago so I've been in touch with his wife quite a bit, oh yes, we still keep in touch.

J.W. : Is that important to you to keep those contacts?

Mrs. S. : Well it's rather nice.

J.W. : Yes I would imagine.

Mrs. S. : It's rather nice.

J.W. : Right, and you were saying when I first arrived you'd just been reading the magazines and seeing Pakistan now, how does that strike you when you see, saw ... ?

Mrs. S. : I love the, whenever articles in the *Geographic* anything to do with India and Pakistan, particularly Pakistan, and I'm also interested in China, when I heard you say you might, but that's an amazing, to think they were civilised long, long ago.

J.W. : Yes, oh yes, yes.

Mrs. S. : Weird isn't it?

J.W. : But it's obviously, it seems very important to you to, that you still have these links.

Mrs. S. : Ooh indeed.

J.W. : A very important part of your life, yep.

Mrs. S. : Yes there's no doubt about it, and I was there for quite a long time.

J.W. : Oh yes, yes, and right over your life as well, from when you were young.

Mrs. S. : Oh yes, five years only as children but they were important five years.

J.W. : Yes, very formative years.

Mrs. S. : And I can, well, remember that Viceregal lodge going up in Delhi, I mean it was wonderful to see that and we lived in Kingsway, in, Kingsway camp is mentioned in the news and we were under canvas in this Kingsway camp, and evidently a lot of the refugees are now around about and so I can just see, I can see, remember, these places.

J.W. : Right, how wonderful, well I'm not sure I can, well actually one thing that strikes me now we've gone back to when you were a child, when you first went back after you'd been there as a child.

Mrs. S. : When I was married, yes.

J.W. : you came back, yu went when you were married, how did it strike you initially when you went back for the second time, had it changed at all?

Mrs. S. : No, no, because I think the big changes have happened in the last thirty, forty years, haven't they, you know Bombay again and the smell, it was just as if I'd never been away, yes I never felt odd, you know, the children were a bit nervous of the dark faces although up north they're a bit fairer, although I remembered not to use the word about, I was speaking about one of the Pakistani ladies, now this was to my friend who [played] *Scrabble* with me about how fair somebody was, and she said, 'Anne, may I just tell you, my dear, don't use that word because they're sensitive about their colour', but the people up north, the ladies up north, some of them are beautiful aren't they?

J.W. : Oh yes, yes.

Mrs. S. : Beautiful, much fairer, when we were down south they were dark, the Madras area, Madrassi type, very dark skinned and we had a little *ayah* who was almost black and she used to, she'd had earrings, you know, that made great loops in her ears, I can see her, Lizzie, she was a so called Christian, and Lizzie, that one down south she was very obviously a Madrassi type, but up north, and further north we used to go up to Peshawar and of course you didn't see many women on the street without their *burqās* is it still as bad?

J.W. : Err, fairly similar yes, and in Afghanistan it's got even more severe.

Mrs. S. : Were you into Afghanistan?

J.W. : We weren't allowed to go into Afghanistan. I would have liked maybe to have seen it, but maybe another time.

Mrs. S. : Well I remember when I looked after the daughter of a couple who were going up to Kabul to stay with friends. This would have been in the, well between 1950 and 1960, I can't remember the year, but when they were allowed to go, well we weren't allowed to go up to the beautiful, the Shalimar lakes.

J.W. : Yea, I know where you mean.

Mrs. S. : We had to fly from India and then fly from there up, whereas this friend who was born and brought up there she did it on horseback, they went from Rawalpindi and did it all. What's the name of, I've forgotten.

J.W. : Shangri La?

Mrs. S. : These places, not Shandur. Oh this is ridiculous for me to forget.

J.W. : I know where you mean.

Mrs. S. : Where you rent house boats and so on, Gulmarg was one of the hill stations.

J.W. : Up in that part of Kashmir?

Mrs. S. : Kashmir! Of course, that's it. Yes, well, we never saw ... .

J.W. : It's very difficult really, you can't get into there very easily now.

Mrs. S. : But the Kaghan Valley was very interesting indeed.

J.W. : Now we took, we stayed overnight in resthouses and at that time when we went, we had to go by jeep, it was a [?] road and ooh, you used to see an old bus or something and the drivers looked as if they were falling asleep, and I remember looking nervous but I believe now you can motor, but it took us six hours from what was it, Jalalabad up to Naran, and then we had to go up, now how did we go up there? Can't remember, must have been by jeep again to where we camped by the river, and, oh, everybody caught marvellous trout, and we lived on trout while we were up there and we took whole lot of it back and everybody in the camp got a couple of trout and that had to be, the scenery and everything was gorgeous, lovely. Now you were going to ... ?

J.W. : I'm trying to think if there's anything else that I can think – I think we've covered a lot, haven't we?

Mrs. S. : Well not really in depth, I'm not able to give you ... .

J.W. : No, no, no, that's, what you've given me is fine, that's exactly what I'm looking for.

Mrs. S. : That's what I feel if only I'd settled down and learned the language. Now a friend of mine who was a teacher before she was married now she was, she did the right thing, She had no children and she taught in a Pakistani school and learnt the language. I mean she really knew, and I thought that was wonderful.

J.W. : So that's maybe ... ?

Mrs. S. : Someone like that would have been interesting for you.

J.W. : Well you're very interesting yourself, but that's a regret of yours, to have not done that?

Mrs. S. : I much regret that, yes I do, and I could have made plenty of time to do it. I, I don't know why I say idle, because I'm not a idle person, I've no confidence about learning languages.

J.W. : Sure, no, it's a difficult thing to do language learning, it takes a lot of confidence.

Mrs. S. : Well I certainly found it that way. I understood of course, when you got used to t your servant, and of course most of them spoke English. If they hadn't have been able to speak English I'd have been obliged to have learned a bit more.

J.W. : Well I think that's about all I can think to ask.

Mrs. S. : Would you like a glass of orange juice or something?

J.W. : Oh that would be lovely. Well thank you very much for everything, it's been lovely talking to you.

Mrs. S. : Not at all, my dear, I hope it'll be of some use to you.

The tape is switched off