

FURTHER PAPERS (No. 8A)

RELATIVE TO THE

INSURRECTION

IN

THE EAST INDIES.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1858.

LONDON:
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Further Papers (No. 8A) relative to the Insurrection
East Indies.

*The President of the Council of India in Council to the Court of Directors of the
India Company.*

Fort William, February 9, 1858. (No. 30.)

WE have the honor herewith to transmit, for your information, copy of accompanying correspondence, with a Memorandum drawn up by the Judge Advocate-General of the Army, of the circumstances which, apparently, led to the mutiny of the native army being precipitated.

2. These papers will be laid before the Commission of Inquiry at the proper time.

We have, &c.

J. A. DORIN.
J. LOW.
B. PEACOCK.

Inclosure 1.

The Judge Advocate-General of the Army to the Secretary to the Government of India.

Sir,

Simla, October 21, 1857.

AS some time must yet elapse ere the proceedings of the general court-martial, held at Meerut on the 6th May last, in the trial of the eighty-five non-commissioned officers and troopers of the 3rd Light Cavalry, can be submitted to his Excellency the Commander-in-chief, and transmitted for the information of the Governor-General of India in Council, I have the honor to forward the accompanying Memorandum of the circumstances which, apparently, led to the mutiny of the native army being precipitated, and which I lose no time in forwarding, now that the communication with Calcutta has been restored.

I have, &c.

KEITH YOUNG, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Judge Advocate-General of the Army.

P.S.—Copies of these papers have been sent to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, for his information, with letter No. 586 of this date, of which a copy is inclosed, and a copy also of the Memorandum, in a demi-official form, has been forwarded to the Commissioner of Scinde.

Inclosure 2.

*Memorandum of the circumstances which led to the Trial of Muttadien Sing, Havildar, and
eighty-four others, Naicks and Troopers of the 3rd Light Cavalry*

Judge Advocate-General's Office, Simla, October 21, 1857.

ON the 24th April, 1857, Brevet-Colonel Smyth, commanding the 3rd Light Cavalry, addressed the following letter to the Major of Brigade at Meerut:—

“ Sir,

“ I have the honor to report, for the information of the officer commanding the
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Yesterday, I ordered a parade to take place this morning, for the purpose of men the new mode by which they might load their carbines without biting s; and, late in the evening, I received information from the Havildar-Major of the first troop would not receive their cartridges (which were the same as used), and my Adjutant received a letter from Captain Craigie, copy of which was enclosed. This morning I explained to the men my reason for ordering the first ordered the Havildar-Major to show them the new way of loading, which he showed off his carbine. I then ordered the cartridges to be served out, but, with the exception of the men noted in the margin,* they all refused to receive them, saying they got a bad name if they took them, but that, if all the regiment would take the same, they would do so. I explained to them that they were not new cartridges, but the same they had always been using, and once more called on them to receive them, but, with the exception of the men above mentioned, they all still refused; I ordered the Adjutant to dismiss the men, as they were too large a party to be kept in the guard. The party consisted of ninety men."

2. On the receipt of this letter, a Court of Inquiry was assembled by Major-General Hewitt, commanding the Meerut division, with the view to elicit facts, if possible, to elucidate the cause of the refusal of the men of the 3rd Light Cavalry to use the cartridges on the 24th April, and to ascertain if there was anything objectionable in them.

3. The Court of Inquiry, which was held on the following day (April 25), was composed of the following native officers:—

- Subadar-Major Thakoor Awnstie, 20th Native Infantry;
- Subadar Gungadeen Dooley, 20th Native Infantry;
- Subadar Ramchurn, 3rd Light Cavalry;
- Subadar Gulness Sing, 20th Native Infantry;
- Subadar Golab Khan, 3rd Light Cavalry;
- Subadar Buxors Sing, 20th Native Infantry;
- Jemadar Fyze Khan, 3rd Light Cavalry.

4. This shows three Cavalry and four Infantry officers (the 11th Regiment had not yet reached Meerut, it is believed), as composing the Court; and there were two Mahomedans, two Brahmins, two (apparently) Chuttries, and one (apparently) inferior caste Hindoo. The late Captain Macdonald, 20th Native Infantry, was superintending officer, assisted by Major Harriott, Deputy Judge Advocate-General of the division; and Captain Earle, 20th Native Infantry, was interpreter.

5. Before this Court, the Quartermaster-Havildar, a havildar, the regimental tindal, and the senior Havildar, and the senior Mahomedan trooper of each troop, were examined. The Quartermaster-Havildar, a Hindoo, knew nothing of the making up of the cartridges, but he stated: "I know of nothing which should prevent either Hindoo or Mussulman using them. The cartridges are unobjectionable; they are the same as have been in use with the regiment for years. There is no grease in them." Hereupon the witness was directed to produce some of the cartridges; he did so, without hesitation. The members of the court examined them, and observed that "they are exactly similar to what have been in use in the service for thirty and forty years."

6. The havildar, a Hindoo, who superintended the making up of these very cartridges, said, "There is nothing whatever about them that either Hindoo or Mussulman can consider objectionable; they are precisely the same as have been in use for years with the regiment; they were made in the regimental magazine, as heretofore, by the regimental classies."

7. The tindal, a Hindoo, states, "The present cartridges were made up by myself and the classies of the regiment; they are precisely the same in paper, and in all materials, as they have been ever since I have been in the regiment, and that is thirty-three years. Till now I never heard an objection of any kind against them, and even now I cannot understand what point in particular is objected to. I have never heard anything beyond general rumour, which no one is able to particularize."

8. Of the twelve troopers examined, not one could point out anything objectionable in the cartridges; they spoke of the suspicion of impurity of some kind, though, of its nature, not one knew anything. Moollah Bux (Mahomedan) when questioned on the subject, insolently replied, "I have doubt about the cartridges; they, apparently, look like old ones, but they may, for aught I know, have pigs' fat rubbed over them." The next witness, a Hindoo, voluntarily handled the cartridges, to show that he considered them perfectly unobjectionable. It may be here remarked, that not only had no objectionable cartridges been served to the 3rd Regiment Light Cavalry, but, so far as is known, none fit for carbines had been received at Meerut when the mutiny occurred.

* Heera Singh, Havildar, 4th Troop; Persaud Singh, Havildar, 5th Troop; Golam Nubbie Khan, Havildar, 5th Troop; Husain Golam Mahomed, Naick, 6th Troop; Delawin Khan, Naick, 6th Troop.

9. The opinion of the Court of Inquiry is contained in the following words:—
 "The Court, having attentively weighed the evidence given before them, that no adequate cause can be assigned for the disobedience of Colonel Smyth the men of the 3rd Light Cavalry, in refusing to receive and use the cartridges served out: the only conclusion the Court can arrive at, in regard to this report seems to have got abroad, which, in some vague form, attaches suspicion to the materials used for making these cartridges; but the Court are of opinion that there is nothing whatever objectionable in the cartridges of the Cavalry, and that they may be freely received and used as heretofore, without the slightest degree, affecting any religious scruple of either a Hindoo or Mussulman, on any pretence, contrary to this, is urged, that it must be false."

10. When the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry reached the late Commander-in-Chief, General Anson, accompanied by Colonel Smyth's report, his Excellency ordered the mutinous soldiers (of whom forty-nine were Mahomedans and thirty-six were Hindoos) to be tried by a native general court-martial, on the following charge:—

For having, at Meerut, on the 24th of April, 1857, severally and individually, disobeyed the lawful command of their superior officer, Brevet-Colonel G. M. C. Smyth, commanding the 3rd Regiment of Light Cavalry, by not having taken the cartridges tendered to each of them, individually, for use, that day on parade, when ordered by Colonel Smyth to take the said cartridges.

11. The Court sat on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of May, and was composed of six Mahomedan and nine Hindoo native officers, taken from the following corps:—

Artillery, 3rd company 7th battalion ..	0	Mahomedan ..	1	Hindoo.
3rd Light Cavalry	1	"	1	" ..
11th Native Infantry	3	"	2	" ..
20th Native Infantry	0	"	2	" ..
38th Native Infantry	1	"	1	" ..
54th Native Infantry	1	"	1	" ..
74th Native Infantry	0	"	1	" ..

12. At the trial, the evidence of Colonel Smyth was as follows:—

Examined by Judge Advocate:

~~On the 24th of April, 1857, were you commanding the 3rd Regiment of Light Cavalry?~~

Q. On the 24th of April, 1857, were you commanding the 3rd Regiment of Light Cavalry?

A. Yes.

Q. Had you any of the troopers of your regiment on parade that morning?

A. Yes; including non-commissioned officers and troopers, 90 men.

Q. Were the prisoners in Court amongst those 90 men?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. Did they, on that occasion, disobey any lawful command you gave; if so, state the circumstances?

A. Yes, they did disobey my lawful command. Each of the troopers, on being ordered by me to take their cartridges from the Kote duffadars, who tendered them to them, refused to do so, saying, "if all will take the cartridges, we will take them." I then separately and individually ordered each of the prisoners to take the cartridges; each man refused, saying, "I shall get a bad name if I do so:" this was the only plea that any of them urged; not one of them alleged any scruple of religion, but simply declared that he would get a bad name among his comrades if he took them. Previous to ordering the men to take their cartridges, I made the havildar-major load a cartridge, and fire off his carbine, to show them how it could be loaded. When they had all refused the cartridges, I told them that the havildar-major had used these cartridges; that there was no great harm in any kind on them, and that they were the same as they had always used, and that they had better take them. With these men on parade were 5 others, non-commissioned officers, who made no objection to taking the cartridges; I made these 5 men, who had obeyed my orders, advance a short distance in front of the prisoners, to follow the example those men had set them, but not one of them would do so (sic).

The prisoners, one and all, ended by disobeying the orders I gave them on parade, and as this was the case I caused the parade to be dismissed, and reported the circumstances for the information of the officer commanding the station.

Cross-examined :

Kudrut Ally, Naick, No. 232, puts the following question :—
 "If you show us the cartridges that we might see whether they were old ones or
 the Kote duffadars had them in their hands; you might have examined them in
 but you refused to touch them.
 Where were the cartridges, which we refused, put aside and confined with us?
 Are all the cartridges of the regiment are precisely the same; there are not two

Other prisoners decline to cross-examine.

Examined by the Court :

Why did you tell the men they would have to fire, instead of merely ordering
 to do so?

The parade was in orders the day before, and entered in the order-book as usual,
 and each man was ordered to receive three cartridges. I wished to show them the new
 way of loading without putting the cartridge to the mouth, and attended the parade for
 that purpose; when I came on parade, the Adjutant informed me that the men had not
 taken their cartridges, and it was on that account I ordered the havildar-major to take
 a cartridge and load and fire before them; and it was then, also, that I said, when the
 whole army heard of this way of loading, that they would be all much pleased and exclaim
 "Wah, wah!"

13. The defence of the prisoners made by Mulladeen, havildar, on behalf of himself
 and others, was in the following words :—

"On the evening of the 23rd ultimo, at about half-past 7 o'clock, about five or six
 men of the 3rd Troop were standing in the lines; they were saying to each other that
 Brijmohun Sing had just said that he had that day fired off two of the new greased
 cartridges; there will be a parade to-morrow morning, the Colonel and the Adjutant be
 present, and the new greased cartridges are to be used; we shall then see whether any one,
 Hindoo or Mussulman, will refuse to use them. After this, a number of us said to each
 other, if we use the greased cartridges, we shall lose our caste, and shall never again be
 able to return to our homes. We then consulted as to what was to be done, and came to
 the conclusion that we ought to report the circumstances to the Captains of our troops, so
 that something might be done to save our caste. The native officers of troops reported
 the circumstances to the Captains of our troops. We all went to our respective
 huts. Early in the morning, as we were ordered to turn out for parade, we all went there
 and found that what had been done or said the night before by Captains of troops. The
 Adjutant came down to parade shortly afterwards; and then the Colonel stood in front of
 the ranks, and said, 'I have invented something; listen to what I am about to say:
 if you will fire off these cartridges, the Commander-in-chief will be much pleased, and you
 will have a great name, and I shall likewise get great praise; and I will have the whole
 affair published in the papers.' The Colonel called the havildar-major to the front, and
 said to him, 'take a carbine, load, and fire it off in the way I showed you yesterday;'
 and then he said to us that we should have to load and fire in the same manner. The
 havildar-major brought his carbine to his side; and, having handled his cartridge, was
 about to bite off the end, when the Colonel stopped him, saying, 'tear it with your hands;'
 he loaded and fired. The Colonel then said, 'Where are the cartridges? bring them here.'
 The Kote duffadars brought the cartridges tied up in cloth. The Colonel went to the right,
 and said, 'Will you take those cartridges?' All said, 'No, we won't take them;' we would
 not take them, as we had great doubts about them, as the Colonel had to induce us to
 take them—a thing he had never done before. When the Colonel had put us three about
 to dismiss us from the parade, we begged to make a statement to him. He fronted us,
 and we said, 'If the other regiments will fire one cartridge, we will fire ten.' The Colonel
 said, 'There are no other cartridges for other men.' We said, 'There are pistols.' The
 Colonel then again put us three about, and dismissed us."

14. By the votes of fourteen out of the fifteen native officers, the whole of the
 prisoners were convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for ten years
 each. But the Court solicited favorable consideration for the prisoners, on account of the
 good character which they had hitherto borne, as testified to by their commanding officer,
 and on account of their having been misled by vague report regarding the cartridges.

Major-General Hewitt approved and confirmed the sentence, and made the
 following remarks :—

I should willingly attend to the recommendation of the Court, if I could find

anything in the conduct of the prisoners that would warrant me in so doing. Their former good character has been blasted by present misbehaviour; and their having allowed themselves to be influenced by vague reports, instead of attending to the advice, and obeying the orders, of their European superiors, is the gist of the offence for which they have been condemned. It appears, from these proceedings, that these misguided men, after consultation together, on the night of the 23rd of April, 1857, came to the resolution of refusing their cartridges, having so far forgotten their duty as soldiers. Their next step was, to send word to the troop Captains that they would not take cartridges unless the whole of the troops in the station would do so likewise. Some of them even had the insolence to desire that firing parades might be deferred till the agitation about cartridges among the native troops had come to a close. In this state of insubordination they appeared on parade on the morning of the 24th, and then consummated the crime for which they are now to suffer, by repeatedly refusing cartridges that had been made as usual in their regimental magazine, when assured, too, by Colonel Smyth, that the cartridges had no grease on them; that they were old ones, and exactly similar to what had been in use in the regiment for thirty or forty years. Even now they attempt to justify so gross an outrage upon discipline, by alleging that they had doubts of the cartridges: there has been no acknowledgment of error, no expression of regret, no pleading for mercy.

"To the majority of the prisoners no portion of the sentence will be remitted. I observe, however, that some of them are very young, and I am willing to make allowance for their having been misled by their more experienced comrades; and, under these circumstances, I remit one half of the sentence passed upon the following men, who have not been more than five years in the service;" and then follow the names of eleven troopers.

16. The prisoners having been delivered over to the Civil Power on the 9th of May, the Native Cavalry and Infantry at Meerut mutinied on the evening of the following day, and proceeded to Delhi, where they were joined by the native troops at that station. It will be seen that the general court-martial was formed of native officers from all the corps that mutinied on the 10th and 11th of May, and the President of the court-martial, the Subadar-Major of the 38th Light Infantry, was afterwards, it has been said, one of the principal leaders of the mutineers.

17. When a report of the result of the trial was made to the late General Anson, it was intimated that the mutineers, before being made over to the Civil Power, were put in irons on the parade-ground in the presence of their regiment. His Excellency approved of the sentence that had been passed upon the prisoners, but expressed his regret at this unusual procedure. Nothing more was heard regarding the mutineers till the receipt of the telegraphic message giving information of the mutiny, and of their release from jail.

KEITH YOUNG, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Judge Advocate-General of the Army.

Inclosure 3.

The Judge Advocate-General of the Army to the Secretary to the Government of India.

Sir,

October 31, 1857.

IN continuation of my letter of the 21st instant, regarding the case of the troopers 3rd Light Cavalry, I have the honor to annex a copy of a letter of the 28th instant, this day received from the Assistant Military Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab.

I have, &c.

KEITH YOUNG, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Judge Advocate-General of the Army.

Inclosure 4.

The Military Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab to the Judge Advocate-General of the Army.

Sir,

Lahore, October 28, 1857.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st instant, forwarding Memorandum of the circumstances leading to the trial of native officers and men of the 3rd Light Cavalry, previous to the outbreak of the Meerut mutiny, and with

reference to the erroneous impression which the account of that event, as laid by Colonel Sykes before Parliament in the debate of the 11th August last, is calculated to convey both to the people of England and also to natives of this country.

The Chief Commissioner is of opinion that subsequent events occurring with such a unity of plan and operation through the length and breadth of the land is an ample refutation of the statement of Colonel Sykes, which at the present time is of no power either for good or ill.

Under this view of the case, the Chief Commissioner desires me to return the documents, the publication of which he trusts you will agree with him in thinking can be safely delayed, till the opportunity offers for forwarding them to the Supreme Government.

I have, &c.

W. WYLD, *Captain,*
Assistant Military Secretary.

Inclosure 5.

The Judge Advocate-General of the Army to the Military Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab.

Sir,

October 21, 1857.

I HAVE the honor to forward, for the information of the Chief Commissioner, copies of a letter and memorandum which I purpose dispatching, for submission to the Governor-General of India, as soon as direct postal communication is established with Calcutta.

2. The Chief Commissioner will doubtless have observed, as reported in the public journals, the erroneous account of the mutiny at Meerut, which Colonel Sykes is stated to have laid before Parliament in the debate of the 11th August last. Coming from such high authority, the statement made by him will, of course, be received, not only in England, but throughout India, as the correct version of what actually occurred at Meerut, and it will probably be some time before Colonel Sykes is placed in possession of the true facts of the case, to enable him to explain to the House of Commons, and through it to the world at large, the error into which he had been led by some ignorant or designing individual. In the interim, the effect, as it appears to me, may be very prejudicial, for it will be generally believed that the commanding officer of the 3rd Cavalry endeavoured to force the objectionable greased cartridges upon his men, and that the Commander-in-chief of the army abetted him in so insane a proceeding.

3. I would beg to suggest, therefore, for the consideration of the Chief Commissioner, whether, in justice to the late General Anson, and with the view to counteract the unfavorable impression such a belief may have, especially amongst the native community, it will not be desirable to take immediate measures for making as public as possible a correct statement of the circumstances originating the mutiny at Meerut; and Sir John Lawrence may, perhaps, agree with me that the best mode of doing this will be to allow the editor of the "Lahore Chronicle" to publish in the next number of his paper the inclosed memorandum, or such portions of it as may be thought sufficient for the purpose, with an intimation that it has been furnished him from your office, by direction of the Chief Commissioner.

4. I may here also remark, that Colonel Sykes appears to have been equally misinformed as to the origin of the disaffection in the 19th Regiment Native Infantry in the month of February last, the cartridges which the men of his corps declined to take not having been greased cartridges, but those of the common kind that had been up to that period in use in the regiment, and containing nothing whatever objectionable in them.

I have, &c

KEITH YOUNG, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Judge Advocate-General of the Army.

EAST INDIES.

FURTHER PAPERS (No. 8 A) relative to the Insurrection in the East Indies.

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