

John Armstrong Hubert (1900-1972) and
Magdalene Rawson (O'Dell) Hubert (1908-1989)

**Life Notes – Part 2 –
Beginning of World War 2 through
Partition of India up to retirement**

These life notes were compiled in 2017
by their daughter Anne Freeth Molver

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Lt Col John A Hubert and Mrs Magdalene Hubert, Sialkot, Punjab, 1945

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Introduction

The compilation of these Life Notes has depended on a number of sources. Family photographs, memories, diaries and letters have helped considerably. Much of the information has been supported by various internet searches and genealogy studies. The most important reference source has been the book *"Solah Punjab – The History of the 16th Punjab Regiment"* by Lt. Col. JP Lawford MC and Maj. WE Cato, published by Gale and Polden (Aldershot) in 1967.

John's military career was as a British Officer in the Indian Army, largely serving in the parts of northern India that became Pakistan during the Partition of India (1947). It has been quite difficult to source military records of these British Officers who made such an important contribution to the development of the Indian Army prior to Partition and to the Pakistan Army after Partition.

Structure of these Life Notes

John and Magdalene (always called Mag) had complex and interesting lives with constraints of place and time. Although they were devoted to each other they were forced to spend much of their time apart specially during war time. These Life Notes attempt to paint a picture of their lives and of the people and places they encountered and the times they lived in.

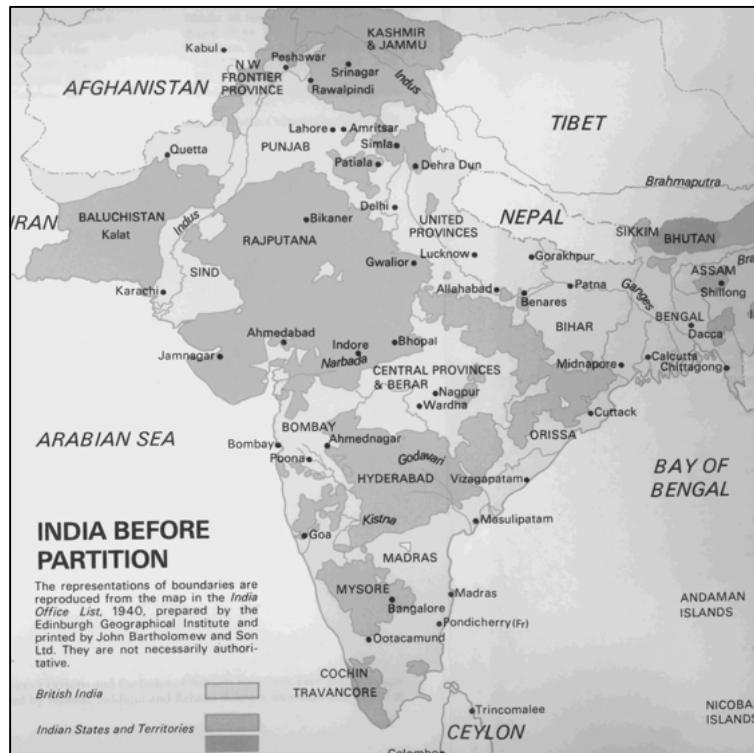
This document comprises Part 2 of the Life Notes – covering the period from just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 up to the Partition of India in 1947 leading to John's retirement in late 1947. John returned briefly in 1959 as an honoured guest at the Centenary Celebrations of his old regiment.

Life Notes – Part 2 – Beginning of World War 2 through Partition of India up to retirement		page
2.1	John Hubert (1938-1942)	4
2.2	Magdalene (Mag) Hubert (1938-1942)	9
2.3	John Hubert (1942-1944)	13
2.4	Magdalene (Mag) Hubert (1942-1944)	18
2.5	John Hubert (1944-1946)	21
2.6	Magdalene (Mag) Hubert (1944-1946)	25
2.7	John and Magdalene (Mag) Hubert (1947)	27
2.8	Appendix 1 – John Hubert – Honorary Guest at Centenary Celebration of the Punjab Regiment (1959)	33
2.9	Appendix 2 – John Hubert's Medals (1920-1947)	35
2.10	Appendix 3 – John and Mag Hubert's timeline (1938-1947)	37

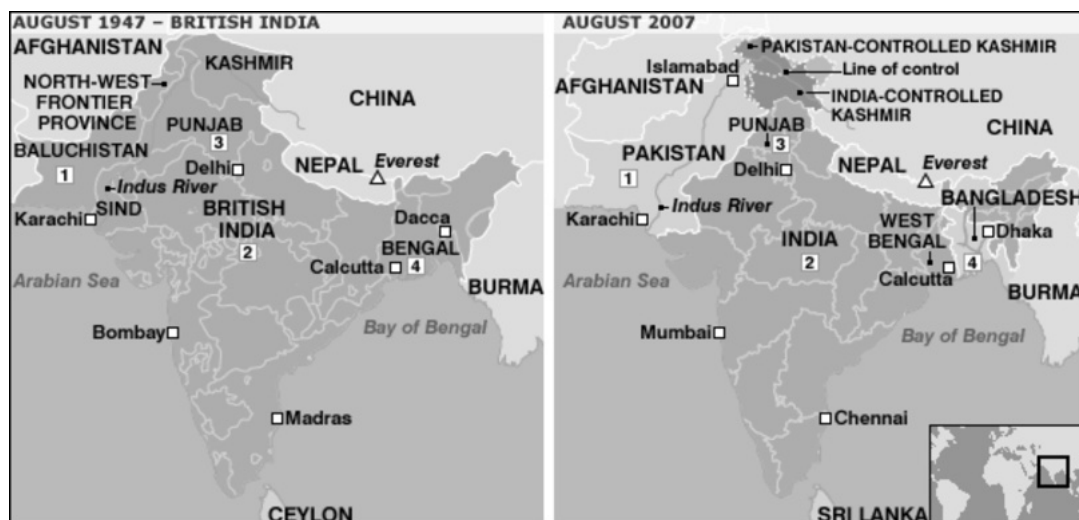
Other documents cover the remaining parts of their Life Notes – up to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 and after John's retirement until their deaths in 1972 (John) and 1985 (Mag).

India before Partition – locations of places referred to in this document

For the majority of this document the term “India” refers to the whole of British India prior to August 1947 when it achieved Independence from Great Britain. Partition, on largely religious grounds, resulted in the formation of the modern nations of India and Pakistan. The states of Punjab and Bengal were split between India and Pakistan. East Bengal became East Pakistan which achieved independence in 1974 and was called Bangladesh. Events in this document after Partition refer to place names in modern India and Pakistan.



Map of India before Partition, from India Office List, 1940, Edinburgh Geographical Institute



Map of India before Partition (left) and India, Pakistan and Bangladesh after Partition (right) from [BBC News online](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-12345678) (2007)

Life Notes – Part 2 – Beginning of World War 2 to Partition of India

2.1 John Hubert (1938-1942) – the early war years

The whole Hubert family were on long leave in England in the autumn of 1938 when the conflict in Europe, instigated by Adolph Hitler's grandiose ideas for the expansion of the German Empire, looked like heading to war. In August John was recalled to the 4/16th Punjab Regiment in India.

Peter's immediate schooling had been organised at Windlesham House School near Horsham, Sussex, where Peter was to attend as a boarder. John's sister Marjorie acted as Peter's guardian in John and Mag's absence.

Anne and Mag returned to India by ship arriving in early 1939 to discover that John was posted to 'Heron Force' to train in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, as part of the Infantry Brigade destined for the 4th Indian Division of the 8th Army destined for Egypt. Fortunately, he had been issued a bungalow in Poona to the southwest, and accumulated the necessary household items, as well as a car and two horses, so Anne and Mag had somewhere to stay while John was away.

2.1.1. Egypt and the horn of Africa

'Heron Force' finally left India in July 1939 by ship to Cairo and then on to Mena camp situated in the desert, John having been appointed a Staff Captain with the force.



John (an eiderdown around his legs to keep warm) with the Brigadier and Brigade Major



A small Sphinx statue at the Museum

It had been decided that Mag and Anne should follow him to Egypt with the aim of travelling on to Britain at some stage, as war had not yet been officially declared. The declaration was made on 3rd September 1939 with Mag poised to leave India.

They were still able to travel and were met by John at Port Said in October, to live in a small flat in Cairo. The family were able to meet occasionally and even enjoy a small Christmas party. They were also able to visit the Pyramids, Sphinx and

other attractions during what was called the 'phoney war' period when the troops were training in desert warfare and waiting for further orders.

In mid-July 1940 John was sent as Quartermaster with a small force to Eritrea to join a mixed battalion which included soldiers from Chad, Free French Forces, French Foreign Legion and an Indian Brigade. The aim of the force was to 'create a diversion from the main thrust in the west' against the Italians - which was about to commence led by General Wavell. The Italians had made an aggressive incursion into British Somaliland. Logistics and the countryside were difficult, with problems catering for food for a mixed force out of a small harbour using dhows for transport. The terrain was rugged and similar to the worst parts of the North-West Frontier Province in India. John was sent south to join Headquarters staff in Somaliland.

Fighting was fierce and the force was outnumbered about 12:1, eventually to be forced to withdraw. In John's words *"My final responsibility was the evacuation of the force in one night - a hair raising procedure - put years on me lest anything went wrong. It so happened that the last troops for embarkation arrived down in Berbera just before first light and the transports sailed at day break I stayed on with the HQ Staff for an extra day picking up stragglers having embarked on a warship. We were heavily bombed that evening but got away with it"*. He was dropped off at Aden to write up the campaign and to organise the dispersal of units, enduring heavy bombing due to the absence of fighter aircraft support. He then had to return to Cairo.

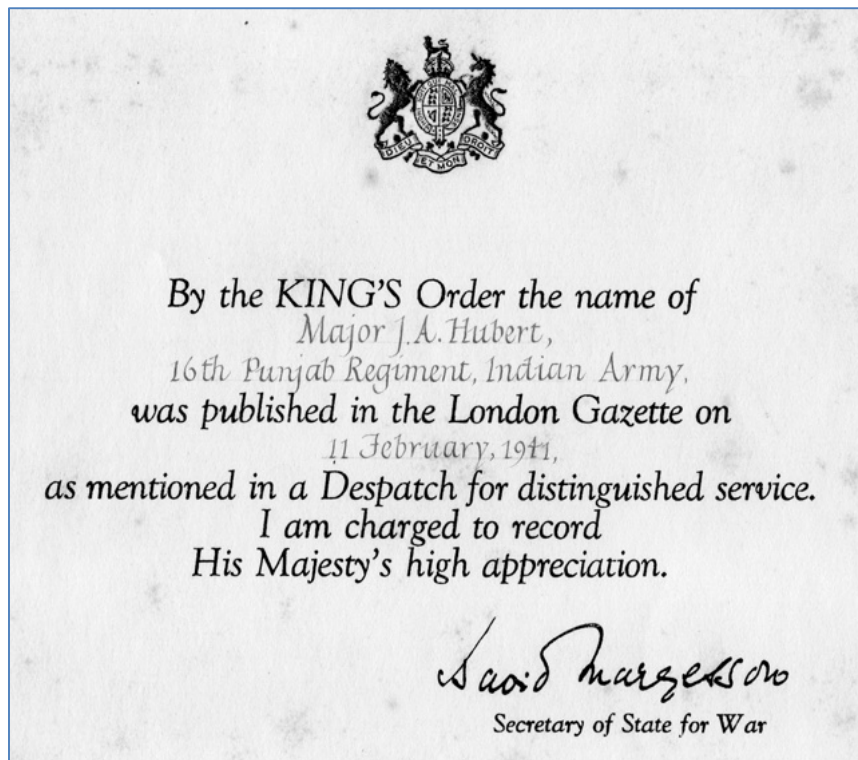
While in Aden at the end of August John was very pleased to meet up with Mag and Anne for 24 hours after they had been evacuated from Cairo and forced to return to India due to the worsening war situation. In January 1941, they moved to lodgings in Kotagiri, located in the Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu, southern India, where they anticipated a long stay.

2.1.2. Crete

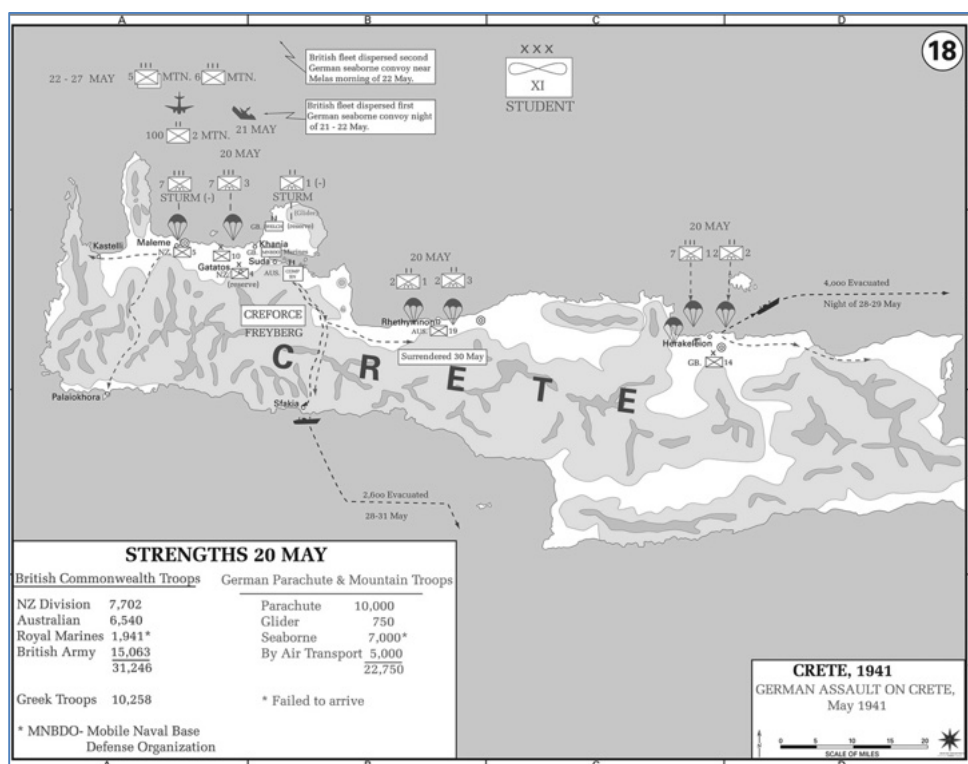
John was almost immediately sent back to G.H.Q Middle East in Cairo, continuing with Quartermaster duties until 15th December when he was sent to join the Allied, Greek and Commonwealth forces in Crete with similar duties to those in Somaliland. John's early impressions were that *"Crete is a delightful island, cutting out war! The country people, in fact everyone, are terribly enthusiastic about war, very helpful and cheery. The scenery is magnificent - you would revel in the sunsets which alas at this time of the year are not very frequent as it rains a lot"*.

John received a Kings Order 'Mention in Despatch for distinguished service' which was gazetted on 11th February 1941 - it is assumed that this was awarded for war service in Crete although no details are available.

Major General Freyburg was appointed commander of the Allied forces in Crete on 30th April 1941. The main battle for Crete commenced on 20th May with German paratroopers being dropped around airfields, followed by attempts to supply ground support and equipment by sea two days later, while the evacuation of Allied forces by sea began on 28th May ending on 1st June.



John Mentioned in Despatches, gazetted 11 Feb 1941



Map of German Assault on Crete, 20 May 1941

The battle for Crete was a desperate affair well recorded elsewhere – John's contribution is summarised in his description to his sister Marjorie at the end of 1941 *"exciting conditions – not the least my getting away from Crete. I was terribly lucky to be part and parcel of the most fantastic battle ever fought in history. Looking back on it all I suppose it was somewhat grim – but we were all much too*

busy to notice the grimness. We certainly got accustomed to bombs and machine gunning from the air, let alone mopping up parachutists. I don't propose to go into details but I have got my own back for Bobbie's death in 1917 and a bit over. Funny I was definitely not marked down in Crete for a bullet etc. Had some amazing escapes, the most exciting being on a day towards the end when the GII and I lost two cars from machine gunning from the air. The GII was wounded and I should have been killed but instead got away with it scot free – well enough of that. We hit the Hun an almighty crack which he will remember for many years to come losing a great number of his picked airborne troops. There is no doubt also we saved Cyprus and M.E. from the airborne thrust”.

Once again John was in charge of an evacuation, this time of part of the Commonwealth forces from Crete. He was lucky enough to be on the last flying-boat after the Navy had completed the evacuation of all those from Sfakia on the south coast, who could retreat and escape from the Germans advancing from the north. The rescue of about 6000 by the British Navy 29-30 May 1941 was at great cost. There were many tales of the local populace assisting and hiding retreating soldiers at their own peril, and thousands were left behind on the island in hiding, joining the resistance or being captured.

John was evacuated to Alexandria, returned to Cairo and - *“was given 7 days leave in June, but on the 4th day I got orders to proceed and join an HQ at Deraa and remained in Syria till the fall of Damascus when I was recalled to Cairo and then flown out to India. I had some most exciting experiences for a few days in Syria – was working with the Free French and an Indian Brigade. The latter were magnificent”.*

2.1.3. Back to India

John to Marjorie: *“I thoroughly enjoyed my flip out from Cairo to Karachi – my first long trip. They shoved me in a flying boat – the country of course was somewhat uninteresting but I enjoyed looking down on the Persian Gulf with not too happy memories of my first years' service in the I.A. – and so on to Simla unscathed and outwardly no apparent difference as from the last time I was up there in 1933. Mag and I left our various starting points on the same day (i.e. 4th July 1941) I arrived in Simla on the 7th morning at 11am. Mag arrived exactly 24 hours later – very weary after 4 days, day and night in the train. I had no idea I would be kept out here so I thought it only sensible to meet up in Olympus. As it has turned out it was a waste of a considerable amount of money. I was in Simla about a week writing up my story and then shot around India on tour – it took me 5 weeks. The most tiring 5 weeks I have ever done – never more than one night in bed and travelling in July and August – pretty grim hot. I broke tour at Bangalore and went up to Kotagiri where Mag had returned on her own from Simla. Anne was in grand form – looking pretty good and coming along very well – a little less inanimate like her father! We spent 5 very happy days together. Then she was duly plunked into St Mary's Convent School run by nuns”. To start with she stayed with the Greens who had two daughters at the Convent, and then moved in as a boarder.*

The first lecture tour was followed by a second for seven weeks ending in October, after which John was to be posted to be a lecturer at the Tactical School based in Kirkee, Poona. By October Mag had moved to Poona from Kotagiri, with Anne destined to join them at the end of the term.

John was determined that he should get his own command and he wanted to rejoin his regiment which was still fighting in the Western Desert. The authorities keep saying that he was not yet senior enough for command, due to the priority given to other men who had longer service and were now re-entering the forces in droves. Consequently, John had to be patient and take *"what he can get ... Well here we are back in Poona, funny returning to my kicking off place of two years previously. This job is worth one year and teaching is not my line of country! But there it is, they are keen to get people who have experience in schools and from my point of view I suppose doing something you don't really care for is good for the soul!"* By July 1942 he was saying a lot more – *"I have just about had enough of this place. It is definitely not my line of country especially the hectoring side of it! I cannot get out of the habit of wanting a hospital bottle before each lecture!! Far more nerve wracking than anything else I've done in this war so far. What happens to me when my year is up here I don't know but my age class is now coming up for command so presumably I shall get one."*

In January 1942 John was in camp in the district of Attock, west of Islamabad, with Mag and Anne staying nearby in Nowshera for a few days.

They had moved to Sialkot awaiting orders in January after John had been specially selected as a replacement CO for 4/16th, and GHQ Middle East Forces had asked for him to be sent out by air in October November 1941. This was immediately cancelled because *"Middle East would not have a change in command during the ops."* This news was hugely disappointing, and meant more waiting for John, back to lecturing for another six months, and continuing boarding school for Anne.



John Hubert 1942

2.2 Magdalene (Mag) Hubert (1938-1942) – the early war years

2.2.1 Back to India then Egypt and return again to India

Mag and Anne were left in England in August 1938 to make their own way back to India, after placing Peter at Windlesham House School. They sailed from London on the 25th November 1938 arriving in Poona in early 1939 to discover that John had been posted to receive training in Ahmednagar in preparation for him joining 'Heron force' 4th Indian Division, as a Staff Captain bound for Egypt.

The Indian contingent finally left by ship in July 1939, and before John sailed the family were able to meet for a week in Ahmednagar. During this period, they had decided the best course of action was for Mag and Anne to make their way to Egypt to await developments. This required the packing up of the bungalow in Poona, selling the two horses, and staying temporarily with the Molls. The 'Declaration of war on Germany' was heard in the officer's mess on 3rd September 1939.

Mag and Anne travelled by coastal steamer from Bombay to Karachi, and then by ship to Port Said. They arrived in October as agreed and John was able to meet them. There was trouble with customs over John's shot gun which was in Mag's luggage. Having sorted that problem out they moved to Cairo to rent a small flat in the suburb of Zamalek.

The 'phoney War' ensued for the next few months, and they were able to visit the pyramids and other antiquities, some of which Anne remembers because she was very annoyed at being too young to see them! She also remembers having lessons from a shared governess with the boy next door, and playing in the sandpit at the Cairo Club where Mag was working in the canteen for the troops. John was able to visit occasionally from the camp at Mena, and they did manage to have a small Christmas party at the flat.

John was sent to Somaliland in mid-July 1940, and as the war against the Italians was nearing Cairo, all civilians had to be evacuated. Shipping was short, and conditions in England and Europe had deteriorated leading to mobilisation, restrictions and rationing. The evacuation of Dunkirk had occurred in May 1940 and the blitz of Britain in the summer of the same year. Mag and Anne were therefore sent back to India in August 1940 in a convoy to Aden (the only ship to call in) where John was able to stay on board for a day, writing "*that they had weathered the Red Sea well*".

2.2.2 Peter in England

In the meantime, Peter and Marjorie were enduring the blitz, there were threats of invasion, and it was not safe to live in Brighton – all very disturbing to his parents who were by this time out of immediate communication. Peter's school was evacuated twice, the holiday home became unsafe, and so a decision was made to send him with many other evacuated children to America – in Peter's case to his great aunt Addie in Florida.

He had a term off school waiting for a passage but in the meantime U-boats were sinking most of the shipping between the two countries. Thankfully he returned

to his school instead in 1941, which was now in its war-time home in the Lake District having taken over a former hotel in Ambleside, bliss for a young 10-year old. He was lucky to be able to stay at the school for holidays and the headmaster and his wife became surrogate parents having a child the same age.

During the year Peter developed appendicitis which went incorrectly undiagnosed until it burst, and he was rushed to hospital in Newcastle where Marjorie was called upon to be with him for three weeks before he could start recuperating back in Brighton, in spite of air-raids!



Peter at Temple Gardens, Brighton in 1940 (left) and 1941 when recuperating

Westholme
Shipfold
N^o 11 Northam
Sussex.

Dec 31/1940

Dear Auntie Clarie.

Thank you for your letter and the canoe you sent me.

I got a new bicycle for Christmas it is one of those fairy bicycles it is quite a big one, a few days ago I went up to Shipfold Village to post some letters then I went back and I went with Mr. Bailey on my bicycle and then we went just going to go up the lane when we decided to go up Young R² so we went on until we came to Young R² so we went up Young R² the car came to the end of Young R² so we went up Young Hill it was quite a steep hill but we got up it. The going down it we free-wheeled the whole way home, altogether we went about 14 miles.

On Dec 20th when the snow was on the ground I went down to one of the ponds and the ice was thick enough to stand on and so I went on the edge and a big lump of ice gave away and I was standing out

2 Temple Gardens
Brighton. 1.
30/12/41 Sussex
30/12/41

Dear Auntie Clarie.

Thank you very much for the book you sent me. I arrived just before Christmas. I have had so much excitement so far such as getting my "big Chiefs" but I have had my appendix taken out, which was a great surprise to Aunt Marjorie and myself! I swallowed 8 blue stones but none did not cause it, I don't think any body knows what caused it, but I am quite well now. I had a lot of parcels at Christmas. A MOCANO set, Tiddlywicks, a pack of cards, 5 books & long trousers. The children of the Mountains The Man with Three Eyes and a few others. The Man with Three Eyes is very exciting so I have just read it. I have been to write a few fairy stories in Brighton.

2 letters from Peter to Aunt Clarie written 31 Dec 1940 (left) and 30 Dec 1941 (right)

By the end of 1944, Peter was due to start his secondary schooling. It fell on the shoulders of the headmaster of his junior school, Windlesham House, with Marjorie's authority to make the decision for Peter's parents, who were not only out of communication most of the time but also unable to do the necessary research into the schools available. It was decided that Peter should progress to Stowe School whose headmaster at the time was well known and admired for his policies.

2.2.3 Mag and Anne in India

In January 1941 Mag decided that they should move to Kotagiri in the Nilgiri Hills, in southern India, for the duration of the war – a popular place with a couple of good schools. The move required a long train journey and they lost their ayah on the way – it was thought that she had strayed onto a platform looking for food, and was never seen again. They moved into lodgings, and Anne became a daygirl at the Convent. The lodgings consisted of one long room at the back of an old house, with two beds and two chairs. There was a dining-room where they ate meals.



Anne with Mag at lake,
1940



Anne in her new party dress,
Kotagiri, 1941



Anne in new shorts with Mag,
Kotagiri, 1941

John had been sent to Crete in December 1940, was evacuated in May 1941, and then posted to Syria until June, when he received orders to return to India, arriving in Simla on 7th July. This was very unexpected, and it took Mag four days and nights by train to arrive 24 hours later than he!

After a few days writing and reporting on his experiences John was instructed to go around India briefing other areas for five weeks. Mag who had left Anne staying with local friends called 'Green' who had daughters at the Convent, remained in Simla to recover from the journey and then had to return to Kotagiri.

John's tour took him down south so he was able to break his journey in Bangalore and took a bus to Kotagiri to stay with Mag and Anne for five days after which Anne became a boarder. Bus trips were exciting and always

overcrowded - on one occasion Anne remembers John being on the roof amongst other travellers and their baggage!



Anne and 2 friends with a very smelly tiger, Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra, Oct 1940

Another tour followed for seven weeks ending in Poona in October 1941, after which John was posted to lecture at the Tactical School based in Kirkee, Poona. Mag had moved to Poona during this period and developed malaria and gastric 'flu, while Anne continued as a boarder in Kotagiri until the end of term.

They all got away from Poona for a short time in January 1942 to Nowshera near Islamabad in the north while John was in camp. They then moved to Sialkot briefly awaiting orders after John had been deprived of a promised command, and ended back in Poona for another six months lecturing – a job he hated – while Anne remained at school in Kotagiri.

2.3 John Hubert (1942-1944) – later war years

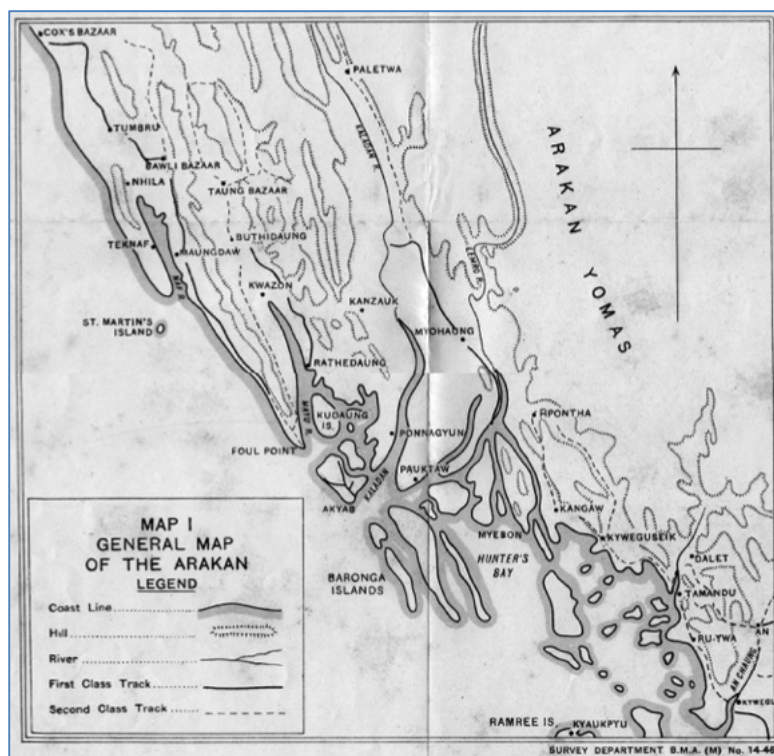
2.3.1 Birth of the 7/16th Regiment (1942)

In August 1942 John was given a month's war leave, part of which was spent in the local hotel in Kotagiri where Anne joined them, going to school every morning. Mag and Anne moved to Simla for the rest of the hot weather and stayed on for the winter. John joined the 7/16th in September having been appointed 2nd in command to George Payne. The 7/16th was a Regiment raised in March 1941 in Sialkot, and was in a large scale Divisional training scheme for three months, ending in tents on the banks of the Indus outside Nowshera for a week's leave around Christmas.

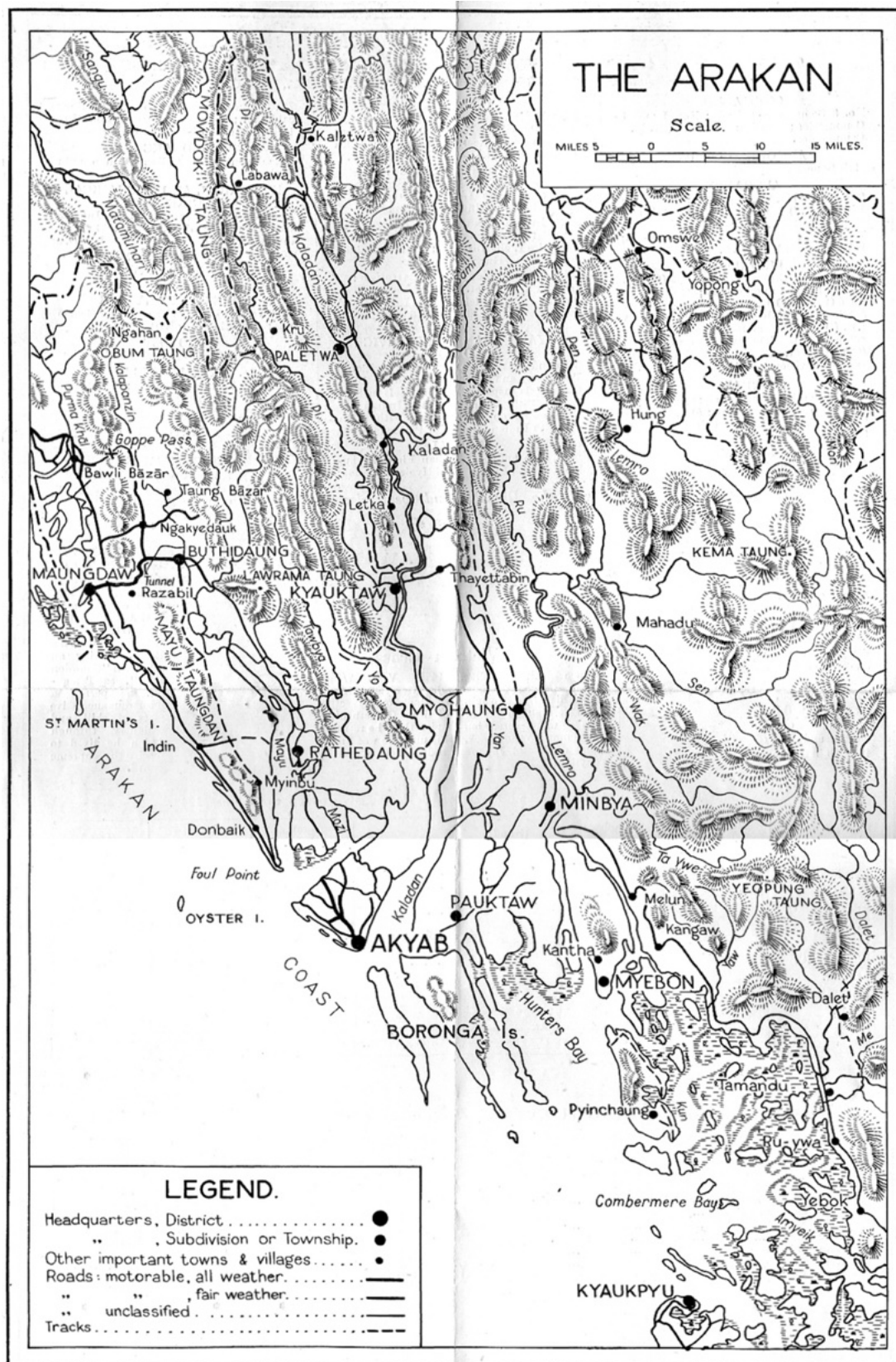
On returning from leave in January 1943 they were entrained to Chhindwara south of Nagpur, Central Provinces, to train in the jungles. John became Colonel in command of the 7th Battalion in April 1943 with Major Ian McHarg as second in command.

In June 1943, the 7th moved to Ranchi to carry out their final training before tackling the Japanese. Mag was able to visit for two weeks from Simla.

An unfortunate incident occurred in Ranchi which delayed their departure and they were unable to accompany the 7th Division to the Arakan. A Subedar Major had been killed by a grenade while in his sleep and an inquiry was necessary – morale and trust had to be restored, led by the faith and determination of their commander, plus hard work and jungle training which restored confidence and pride to the unit.



General Map of The Arakan



Map of The Arakan

In October 1943, the 7th battalion moved to Chittagong with John in command. Guard duties limited their training to one company at a time but by December the unit moved out into the jungle for more training. While carrying out an

exercise they were inspected by Major General Woolner G.O.C 81st (West African) Division, and soon afterwards orders were received to proceed under his command for operations in the Kaladan valley.

2.3.2 Background to the Arakan and Kaladan campaigns

In 1941-42 the Japanese Army were on the offensive, threatening Southern India and had occupied a great deal of Burma, up to the sea in the Bay of Bengal, with good defensive positions. The fall of Singapore on 15th February 1942 left the opposing forces in disarray if they had not already been taken prisoners of war. The Burma campaign in 1942-43, which aimed to protect Chittagong and the plains of Bengal from invasion, managed to force the Japanese back to their defensive line positions.

In the winter of 1943-44 a Japanese threat existed from the Kaladan River Valley. This valley ran south to north parallel to the Kalapanzin which was closer to the coast. The Indo-Burma border at the northern end of the valley was a gateway into India. The 14th Army command had anticipated the threat and the counter-offensive tactics the Japanese would employ to hold this vital position open.

January 1944 saw the start of the second Arakan campaign which was undertaken by 26th Division. Again, the aim was to clear and protect the east-west roads and tracks through the mountains to prevent further incursions by the Japanese and to pick up any units in retreat. The exercise was repeated in February by the 15th Indian Corps and 25th Indian Division, continuing through the monsoon months from March to June.

2.3.3 Arakan and Kaladan campaigns (1944)

The 1944 Arakan and Kaladan campaign took place from 11th January to 27th May 1944. The 7/16th battalion with John in command, was allocated to support General Woolner of 81st (West African) Division.

Battalion History relates - "The Division had moved to the area of the Kaladan Valley and the battalion had a trek of 100 miles through difficult jungle country over an endless number of 2000 and 3000 foot high ranges. 52 mules and 23 Dodge 4-wheel drive trucks constituted the transport ... By 26th January the Battalion had arrived at Mowdock on the Sangu River on the India Burma frontier and they were ordered to concentrate at Satpaung on the Kaladan River and dispatch one Company up the river to Leingteing Ridge. ...

Dug-out canoes brought from the locals were the usual transport on the river and Lt. Col. Hubert (C.O.) proceeded by this means to Paletwa – a two-day journey – to meet Gen. Woolner ... a 14-day journey to Chittagong resulted in the C.O. obtaining instructions and a much-needed wireless link ... on arrival back at Battalion H.Q. a message was received placing the Battalion back under command of 81st W.A. Division.

The Battalion then concentrated at Paletwa and the C.O. proceeded down river to Kyauktaw to Divisional H.Q. to be informed by Gen. Woolner that there was apprehension of a 'right hook' attack by the Japanese and ordered a Company detachment of the Battalion to the area of Mizawa (on the Mi Chaung) and the Battalion less one Company to maintain a firm base at Paletwa. During the return

journey by dug-out canoes, now powered by outboard motors, the C.O. encountered strong LMG fire, they were forced to abandon the canoes and set out by foot to rejoin the Battalion. ...

By 5th February 1944, dispositions were: one Company on the Mi Chaung and one Company located on the Pi Chaung dispatched to the Battalion line of communication through Labawa, and Battalion less two Companies concentrated in the Paletwa area. The supply route for the Battalion was now open from Comilla by 'air drop' and on 5th February 1944 the Battalion received the first drop of 5 days' rations.

On the 5/6th February the 81st W.A. Division encountered the enemy in strength and due to the confused nature of the engagement, some 200 W.A. troops withdrew and passed through the Battalion position ... Due to the failure of any Superior H.Q. to provide a wireless link, often requested by the C.O., communication was most difficult and the C.O. decided to move the Battalion less two Companies forward to Namada in an endeavour to make contact with the Company at Misawa. ...

Report (erroneous) came through that 'C' Company was overrun and had withdrawn up the Mi Chaung towards Sami where a 'V' force post was established. Enemy contact was also made north of Kaladan village. ... W.A. troops moving back through Battalion H.Q. now numbered some 400 ... in order that the Battalion could keep open the main line of communication, the Battalion moved to Labawa. The Company at Misawa fought a successful defensive battle inflicting many casualties over 4 days and then, handling their wounded, succeeded in re-joining the Battalion".

Hubforce History continues - "Having regrouped at Labawa orders came through for the Battalion to join up with one Battalion (Gambia) from 81st W.A. Division. The two Battalions were to come under command of Lt. Col. Hubert and their task was to deny the Kaladan Valley approach routes to India via Mowdock. 15 Corps Command (Lt. Gen. Christison) designated the two Battalions "Hubforce" with orders that the enemy was to be engaged in a series of delaying actions without the force being tied to the defence of any area of the valley, and also ensuring that the force could ultimately withdraw through Mowdock by the 20th May, by which date the monsoon should have started and created conditions unsuitable for further operations in the area.

Hubforce was strengthened by the addition of a Battalion of Tripura Rifles and a detachment 'V' force. Communication and Surgical Team were also added, and on April 9th 1944 Hubforce was formed. The (7th) Battalion was now under the command of Major I.H. McHarg, and had moved to the area of the Kaladan village to establish contact with the enemy...."

A series of battles with the enemy ensued involving all individual units of Hubforce, in Kaladan village, the Kyandauk area, Leingthan and Labawa in support of Tripura Rifles in a successful engagement. The Battalion prepared to defend the frontier until commencement of the monsoon.

"Every platoon in every Company was now engaged at various times with the enemy since the (7th) Battalion was operating on a three-mile front, and following suitable delaying actions at great cost to the enemy, the Battalion established firm concentrated positions on the hills outside Labawa. These positions were occupied

by 20th May and then commenced the most notable action of the Battalion in this Campaign, (the Battle of Frontier Hill).

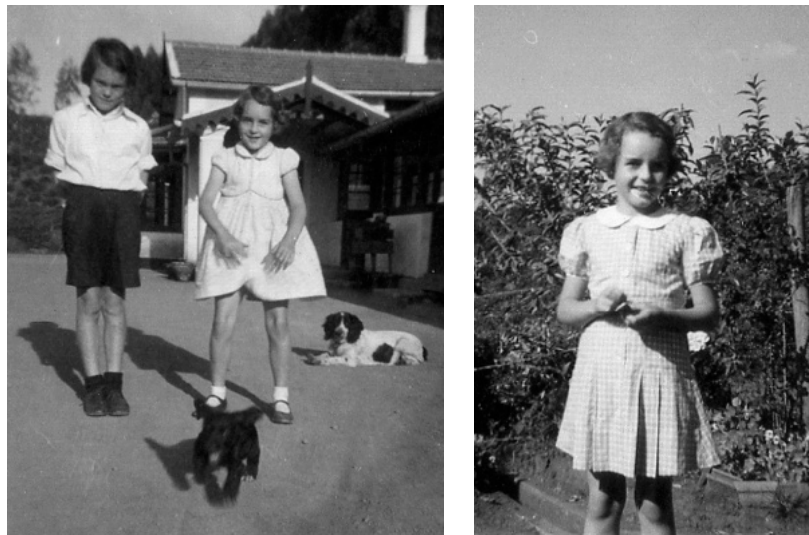
For 5 days and nights the Battalion withstood constant attack requiring hand to hand fighting on several occasions to repulse the enemy. The Japanese were determined to claim that they had crossed the Frontier into India before the monsoon, but the equally determined and vigorous attitude of the Battalion completely undermined the enemy intention. The Battalion stood firm and having suffered severe casualties the Japanese were forced to withdraw in disarray, and with the onset of the monsoon they had to break contact having failed in their mission. The monsoon provided conditions of security for the Frontier and the Battalion withdrew to Mowdock on the 27th May.

With the successful completion of their part in this campaign, the (7th) Battalion commenced to move down the Sangu River on 5th June 1944 towards Dohazari to a well-deserved rest. The Battalion gained several awards among all ranks and made major contribution towards the infliction of more than 500 casualties on the enemy during the seven-week campaign”.

2.4 Magdalene (Mag) Hubert (1942-1944) – later war years

2.4.1 Kotagiri and Simla

In August 1942 at the end of the time in Poona lecturing, John and Mag enjoyed a month's war leave, part of which was spent with Anne in Kotagiri staying in a hotel while she attended school by day.



Anne and friend plus Squeak and Chips, Poona, Jan 1942 (left) and Anne at Kotagiri, 1942 (right)



Anne holding her dog Squeak with Barnes children who were staying at 'Dilkush' then - note tea growing hills, early 1942 (left) and 'Dilkush' (our room marked with cross), early 1942 (right)

Mag then moved to Simla arranging for Anne to join her at the end of term and well before the hot weather– a horrendous journey by a young girl on her own, taking 5 days with nights spent at two unknown senior schools and two on long-distance trains. They stayed in Simla for the following two years, while John was getting command of the 7/16th Battalion and training with them south of Nagpur and in Ranchi in June 1943, and then fighting the Japanese in Burma until the summer of 1944.



Anne in party dress, Simla, 1943 (with friend on left)



Magdalene Rawson Hubert, Simla 1944

Mag was able to see John for two brief periods in 1943 before he went to Burma. While in Simla Mag and Anne lived at a hotel below the ridge on which was the Simla Club – a very prestigious place but where Mag must have found companionship, occupation and some entertainment.

Because their hotel suite was very small, and had to accommodate both of them plus Squeak the dog, Anne spent most of her time playing with friends who lived in the hotel and in 1944 learning how to skate on the flooded tennis-courts. In 1943 and 1944 she stayed with two different families while Mag was away. The second family was with the Birch's, who had a pony, which all three children shared going to the Convent School.

Mary Davis and children also lived in Simla where Henry was working in the Government, and John Lockie's family were residents for a period.

Mag had two short stays in the local hospital, probably in early 1944, which was well equipped and smelled of disinfectant!



Anne in school uniform, Simla, 1944



Anne seated with Squeak, Poona, 1944

2.5 John Hubert (1944-1946) – end of the war years

2.5.1 The 16th Punjab Regimental Training Centre

“During the summer of 1944 the Seventh lost Col. Hubert on transfer to the Regimental Centre. He was later awarded the D.S.O. for his outstanding leadership of the Battalion”.

Mag and Anne had spent another year including the winter of 1943-44 in Simla. After June 1944, they travelled back to Poona when news came that John had left Burma incapacitated in the shoulder, probably due to heavy packs and the wet climate he had endured. He was really disappointed at having to again leave his Regiment.

John must have gone through some medical rehabilitation, and started as Second-in-Command to William Moll at the Regimental Centre at Sialkot, before he took command of the Centre later in the year. Col. Moll eventually returned to England in December 1945.



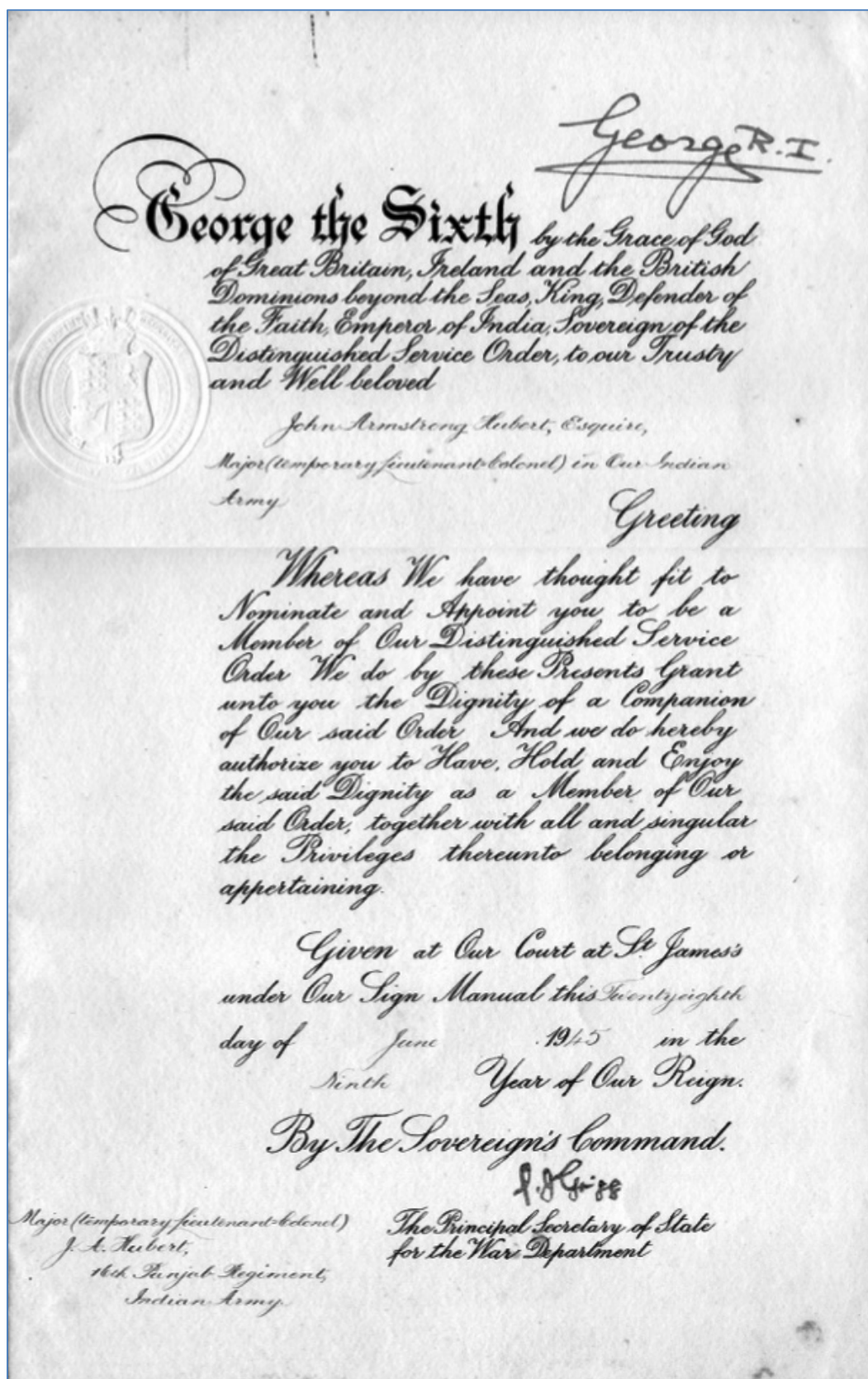
At Sialkot, Punjab, 1945 – John and Mag (left) and John (right)

Mag and Anne left Simla for Poona to be with him, and had a brief stay in Sialkot when he arrived at the Regimental Centre in January 1945. They remained centred in Poona however, because they were due to return to England early in the year.

Mag and Anne travelled back to England in April 1945, from Poona and transit camp in Bombay as part of a convoy to England, arriving on 5th May three days before ‘V.E.’ Day.

John had already moved to Sialkot and the Regimental Training Centre.

He was given a month’s leave in December to travel to England to see his son for the first time since 1938, and attend the investiture at Buckingham Palace on 11th December 1945 to receive his D.S.O. He returned to his duties in Sialkot before Christmas.



Award of Distinguished Service Order to Major (Acting Lt Col) John Armstrong Hubert

The Training Centre was renamed the 'Regimental Training Centre' in 1943 and the commandant (John) became an acting full Colonel. At the end of the war the Centre was busy with demobilisation as well as the reception and rehabilitation

of returned prisoners of war and those recovering from severe wounds. This activity was completed by early 1946.

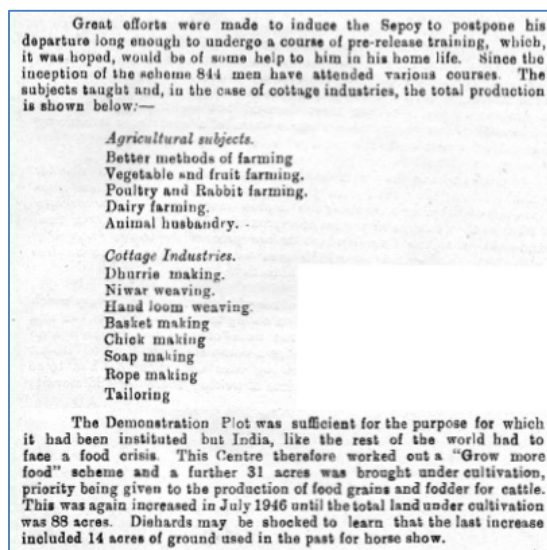
In 1947 at the Regimental Reunion John stated that, in addition to the above work, 15,070 recruits had passed through the Centre during the war years.

John's command began with Lt. Col. VP Northam as Second-in-Command, and then later in 1946 Lt. Col. Maurice Steele took over. They were both on their own in Sialkot until their wives Mag and Peggy sailed from Southampton to Bombay on 5th October to re-joined them.

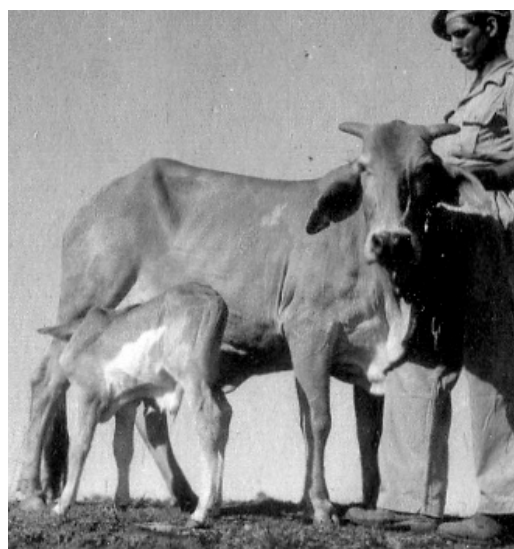
The year 1946 was a busy one starting with a conference held in March attended by 9 Battalion C.O.s – the comment was made that someone missed the opportunity to execute a “Guy-Fawkes Plot” accident in the mess! This gathering took place at John's bedside in the Bombay Military Hospital and they say helped towards his speedy recovery!

By April John was visiting 3 battalions on the NW Frontier, (the 5th Battalion at Bannu had become the 2/16th Battalion with addition of returned prisoners of war). In December 1945 one Company of 160 trainee parachutists led by Lt. Col. RC Robinson literally dropped in onto the Parade Ground – a great recruiting incentive for a burgeoning Parachute Battalion!

The Centre ran many sporting events and fierce competitions during the year covering boxing, swimming, inter-company hockey and athletics. There was a Band tour to Iraq for four months. The band started off with 9 Indian tunes, but British troops were continually asking for repeat performances and the repertoire was increased with the development of a dance band.



Post war 'life skill' courses, 1946



First calf born at the Regimental Farm, 1946

Many Indian Army V.C.O.s (Viceroy's Commissioned Officers) and junior reserves passed through to go on pension, some unwillingly and others only after being persuaded to take 'life skill' courses first. The Regimental Farm was expanded to 88 acres to help feed everyone and for training purposes. There was a brick-laying and cement mixing industry, which helped the construction of a fine brick-built open air theatre with sloping auditorium to seat 1000 people. Dairy and cattle sheds and a modern dairy building were under construction and a 60 foot

well was being excavated to water the extra 35 acres bought for grain production. Up to the end of December over 7000 demobilised men had been released after completing a 'life skill' course.



Mag and John on horses, Sialkot, Dec 1946



John with Tippoo and Snippet,
Sialkot, 1947

A place in the Boy's Company (300 strong) was highly sought after. They were given at least 3 hours of study and 2 hours on parade each day and as much sport and competitions as were available, with the object of developing leaders. They were inspected by the H.E. C-in-C, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck in March 1945 when they did a Ceremonial Parade, and a second time in November when he presented them with their own colours after they had done a general salute and march past. The new colours were the fulfilment of a promise the C-in-C never forgot after being very impressed with their performances. In addition, 500 new army recruits were being trained by the end of December 1946.

Light entertainment was not forgotten. Duck and snipe shooting was undertaken in spite of the difficulty of obtaining cartridges, and the tale went – *“One fine Sunday morning the Commandant, while shooting snipe in a marshy area up the Jammu Road, foundered and sank by the stern. The local village children swelled their vocabularies that morning with many words which they have never heard at school, and which it is unlikely they would learn even at Cambridge”*.

2.6 Magdalene (Mag) Hubert (1944-1946) – end of the war years

2.6.1 India to England and back

In June 1944 John was invalided out of Burma and was destined to take over the 16th Punjab Regimental Centre in Sialkot from William Moll, after some rehabilitation in Poona. Mag and Anne left Simla for Poona to be with him, and had a brief stay in Sialkot when he arrived at the Regimental Centre in January 1945. They remained centred in Poona however, because they were due to return to England early in the year, finally parting with Squeak to move into a transit camp in Bombay and leave as part of a convoy in April.



Anne with her beloved dog Squeak, Poona, March 1945

There was still enemy activity in the Red Sea, Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean, consequently the convoy was accompanied by a destroyer. Mag and Anne were on the vessel the 'Durban Castle' which broke down in the Red Sea. There was an explosion and the captain thought they had been torpedoed. When all passengers had been summoned to collect life-belts, preparing to abandon ship and standing around their assigned life-boats, it was discovered that the engine had blown up. The convoy had been halted while this occurred but due to the danger of being stationary they steamed away down the Red Sea and towards Liverpool and their final destination. The crew of the 'Durban Castle' eventually got the engine to function again and the ship proceeded on its own through a very rough Atlantic to Liverpool, arriving on 5th May three days before 'V.E.' Day.

Mag and Anne travelled by train to London, and down to Brighton to be greeted by Peter, Marjorie and Grace, and to celebrate the end of the war in Europe with a tot of brandy from Mag's emergency hip flask! They settled into war-torn Britain at Temple Gardens and Anne went temporarily to the High School across

the road until a boarding school could be found – she hated it! However, in September she became a boarder at St Audrey's near Minehead, Somerset, on the north coast for two terms. The school enjoyed a bracing climate but was run by elderly staff with outdated ideas, where she felt very confined in spite of the spacious grounds. Peter during this time was enjoying life at Stowe School as a fourteen-year-old.

John had been awarded a D.S.O. in June 1945 and was given a month's leave to attend the investiture at Buckingham Palace in November and to see his son for the first time since 1938. Peter and Marjorie attended the investiture, and Mag and John were able to fit in a trip to Stowe School and see Anne in Minehead for a day.



Peter, John, Anne and Aunt Clarie at Temple Gardens, Brighton, (left) and Peter at Stowe School dressed very smartly (right) before the investiture Nov 1945

John had returned to India before Christmas while the family celebrated in Brighton. Peter gave his mother a hand-crafted wooden lamp he had made at school – unfortunately his electrical skills were in their infancy and it shorted all the electric circuits of the house twice!

In April 1946, Anne was sent to her final school in Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, initially to the junior school and in September moved up to the senior school. Mag stayed on in England for the summer months and the three of them had a wonderful summer holiday at Mawgan Porth near Newquay, North Cornwall in August, staying in a primitive converted farm yard arranged by Mag's brother Hugh. Mawgan Porth had been Mag's childhood holiday venue so there were many remembered places to explore.

Mag returned to India in early October 1946, after the children had gone back to school, sailing from Southampton with Peggy Steele to arrive in Bombay.

They took the train to Sialkot to be united with their husbands for the final time before all British officers were forced to leave the country after Partition in August 1947.

2.7 John and Mag Hubert (1947) – end of their time in India

2.7.1 Regimental Reunion (Feb 1947)

It had been decided in June 1946 to hold the Regimental Reunion every two years, and by December 1946 invitations were sent out to 500 pensioners (their names having been obtained from all regular battalions and Centre records) and as many officers as possible.

The first Reunion since 1940 was planned for 25-27th February 1947, at Sialkot, and was attended by H.E. Sir Claude Auchinleck, C-in-C of the Army. Other important guests to arrive were Maj. General JC Bruce, Maj. General D Hawthorn, and Brigadier CP Clarke, and non-regimental guests Brigadier Colyer, the Resident of Kashmir and Mrs Webb.

Pensioners began arriving on the 22nd and many of the officers with their wives on the 24th. A reception committee made them welcome and they were informed of their individual accommodation details and meal arrangements. In the end, only 74 officers were able to come to the Reunion, the number actually attending reduced due to continual communal tensions, a disappointment to some of the older pensioners who were hoping to catch up with their old C.O.s.



Regimental Reunion - Band Master 4/16th and John talking with 2 officers



Regimental Reunion - Winners Hockey Tournament

The active battalions sent their bands making an impressive display. There were 4 Pipe Bands and the Brass Band from the Centre marching in unison and counter marching in quick and slow time. On the last day, the beating and sounding retreat was magnificent with 40 drummers, 10 side drums and 3 big drummers, and the Buglers left nothing more to be said.

The three-day programme was packed with an official welcome address, a Cocktail Party with buffet supper, Hockey matches and Tug-of-wars, Athletics and P.T displays, Boxing, Drama in the open-air cinema, Parades, Presentation of Medals, and the C-in-C's address followed by a Regimental Dinner. The C-in-C left a congratulatory and appreciative message on leaving.

He was very happy to be staying with Mag and John who he had met as an officer in Egypt and later when in charge of the training of forces for Burma and Malaya. Mag was extremely nervous over potential household or other dramas during his stay, but it all went well and she was able to enjoy the functions as well.



Regimental Reunion - Boys Brigade march past



Regimental Reunion - Officers at the Mess - 2nd row Maj AC Henley, Lt Col SW Packwood, Lt Col VP Northam, Col BJ Amies, Col JA Hubert, Lt Col RC Robinson, Lt Col MCB Steele, Lt Col GJ Hamilton, Lt Col IH McHarg, Maj JV Bolam

2.7.2 Holiday in Kashmir (Jul 1947) and Partition

Early in April 1947 John and Mag visited the 7/16th battalion in Bannu and the 2nd and 4th Battalions on the NW Frontier, and between mid-June to the end of July they were on leave in Kashmir camping and fishing.



Kashmir holiday - John outside tent and fishing (top), mountainous terrain of the area (next),
Mag with bearer and fish, John carrying Mag over very cold river (next) and
Mag crossing a plank bridge and mountainous terrain of the area (bottom)

Knowing that they would have to leave India sometime after Partition, they had chosen and ordered various small pieces of household furniture and other items, all hand-crafted out of Kashmiri Walnut timber, to be delivered before they left – indeed some of these are still being used.

In July 1947 John received a confidential message from Gen. Messervy, C-in-C Northern Command Rawalpindi, to the effect that the UK's High Commissioner in India was looking for suitable military personnel over 45 with good administration and language skills to fill certain vacancies being planned for the oncoming changes. This must have been the time when John was negotiating to remain for two or more years to take on a yet to be established post in Kashmir, with the intention of getting Peter to spend time with them after he had left school, until he began further training.

The Viceroy and others hoped that Kashmir would remain a separate entity after partition, with its majority Muslim population concentrated in the Kashmir valley but ruled by a Hindu Maharaja installed by the British in 1846. However, the Maharaja signed an instrument of Accession with India after heavy attacks from Pakistani tribal forces. His Hindu base was predominantly in the region of Jammu. Fighting started in Kashmir in October 1947.

In early August John and Mag returned to Sialkot and found chaos in the city of Lahore – rival forces were trying to set fire to the city, looting and murdering each other. Immediately John had to take troops to restore order and was away for 48 hours forcing Mag to move from their bungalow to a hotel for safety.

There was on-going panic amongst the populace as Lord Louis Mountbatten had brought forward the date for partition and independence to 14th August 1947 from June 1948, the original time-frame the Viceroy Field Marshall Wavell had been working towards.

There had been enormous political manoeuvring for some time, both between leaders of the Hindus and Sikhs, and the Muslims, as well as in Britain, culminating in P.M. Atlee deciding that Partition of British India should take place as quickly as possible. In addition, the final boundary between the two new countries had not been formalised until the 17th August 1947. India formerly became an Independent Dominion on 15th August. General Auchinleck was appointed Supreme Commander of all British forces remaining in both countries until November 1948.

Sialkot was in Pakistan very close to the new border with India, on the main train route between the two States, consequently there were well over 80,000 refugees passing through the Centre between August and the end of November. These families all had to be fed and guarded, and rescued off trains passing through in both directions. The overloaded trains were often brutally attacked by marauding sectarian forces. The Centre ran mixed race guards during all this time, and foraging parties to find food in the countryside.

2.7.3 Pakistan Day (27 Nov 1947)

John remained in command of the Centre, which celebrated Pakistan Day on 27th November 1947 attended by the Hon. Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, and senior officers from the Pakistan Battalions. There was a march past

by the Training Groups and presentation of a cheque for money collected for the Relief Fund for refugees in East Punjab and Dehli. Mag was now involved in her official capacity as commandant's wife rather than as hostess.



Pakistan's Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan saluting the march past of Training Groups



Breaking the Pakistan Flag above the Regimental Flag (left) and
Presentation of cheque towards the Relief Fund (right)

2.7.4 Hubert Day (17 Dec 1947) and return to England

To mark his retirement as commandant, John was given a special 'Hubert Day' parade on 17th December 1947, with an Inspection, Salute and March Past, followed by a present from the Officers and VCOs of the 16th Punjab Regimental Centre, and a Farewell Address. This culminated with Sports, tea with the VCOs and Dinner in the Officers Mess with John and Mag being feted as guests of honour.

This very emotional event brought to the end John's 27-years with the 16th Punjab Regiment. Much of his long career was centred in the Punjab, among the men he got to know so well. It was all the more poignant because it was cut short by Partition. As Mag mentioned they were "*the last pale faces to leave Sialkot*".

16TH PUNJAB REGIMENTAL CENTRE.
HUBERT DAY - 14th DECEMBER 47.

Programme for COLONEL J.A. HUBERT D.S.O.
Retiring OFFICER 16th PUNJAB REGT.

Serial No.	Time	Event
1.	1100	The Guest of Honour arrives.
2.	1101	Takes General Salute.
3.	1104	Inspects the parade.
4.	1114	Returns to the Saluting Base.
5.	1119	March past in slow & quick time.
6.	1149	Take the Salute of the parade on completion of the advance in reverse order.
7.	1155	Formation of the Hollow Square.
8.	1200	Receives a present from Officers & V.C.O's of the 16 Punjab Regt.
9.	1204	Parade Address by 16 P.R.C.
10.	1209	Address by G.O.
11.	1219	FILE
		I N T E R V A L
12.	1515	Patrol Sports.
13.	1600	Tea with V.C.O's.
14.	1630	RETREAT.
15.	2000	Dinner in the Officers Mess.

H.A. Durr
Captain,
Adjutant,
(M.C. Hill).

REMARKS:
6/12/47. G.I. J.A. HUBERT D.S.O.
All Officers.
All C.O. Units.
File.

16TH PUNJAB REGIMENTAL CENTRE.
HUBERT DAY - 16th & 17th DEC '47.

Programme for Mrs HUBERT.

Date	Serial No.	Time	Event
16th Dec.	1.	1600	Tea with Officers, V.C.O's and P.O.R's families in the Welfare Centre Garden.
17th Dec.	2.	1100	Attend the Ceremonial Parade.
	3.	1600	Present prizes at Patrol Sports.
	4.	1605	Tea with V.C.O's.
	5.	1630	Retreat.

M.H. Durr
Captain,
Adjutant,
16 Punjab Regt Centre.

DISTRIBUTION.
Mrs. HUBERT.
2.1/4.
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Hubert Day Programmes for Col JA Hubert DSO and for Mrs M Hubert

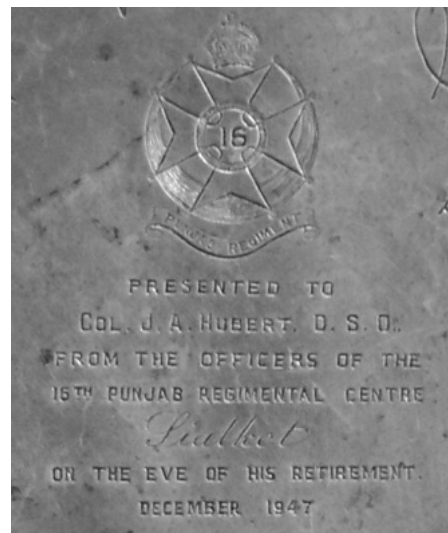


Plate presented to Col JA Hubert DSO from the Officers of the 16th Punjab Regiment on the eve of his retirement in Dec 1947 (left) and centre detail of plate (right)

Within a few days they had collected their belongings including the new furniture to be delivered to the transit camp, travelled to Lahore and on to Karachi only to have to wait for a month in the transit camp before taking a ship to Britain to start a new life of unknown certainties. They eventually docked in Southampton on 27th February 1948 to begin their new life.

The next part of these Life Notes is in a separate document and covers the period after their return to England in early 1948.

Anne Molver (January 2017)

2.8 Appendix 1 – John Hubert – Honorary Guest at Centenary Celebrations of the Punjab Regiment (1959)

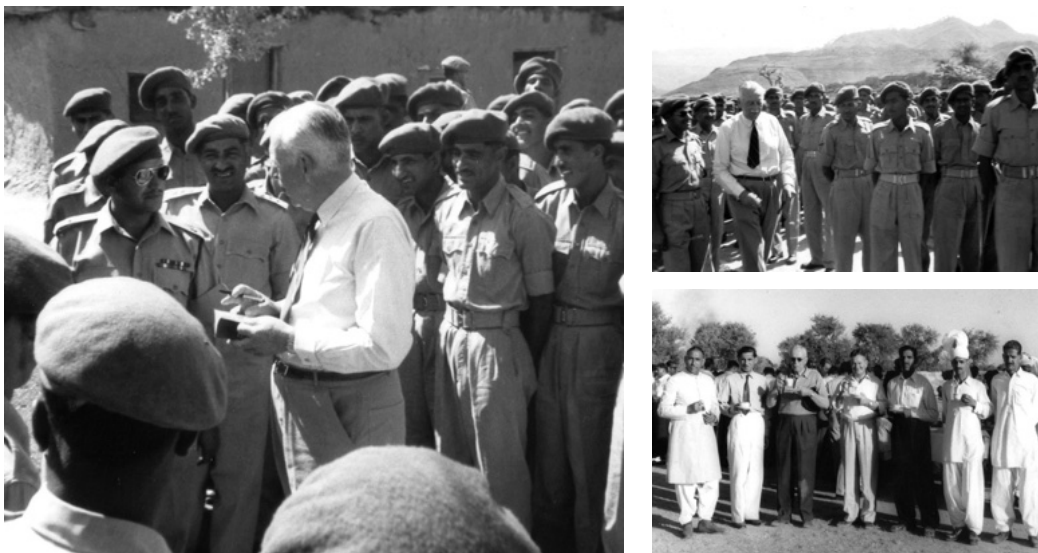
At the end of 1958, John received an invitation to return to Pakistan as the Honorary Guest to join the celebrations to be held in Sialkot of over 100 years of service by units of the Pakistan Army who contributed to British India.

Together with many serving and retired men, particularly those present at the Regimental Centre Reunion in February 1947, they gathered to remember the past and their many exploits.

John was well garlanded and feted and managed to get around Pakistan to the infantry units with whom he had connections.



Centenary Celebration – John receiving garlands (left) and with garlands talking with officers and men (right)



Centenary Celebration – John chatting with officers and men (left), walking around and talking with officers and men (upper right) and enjoying tea with officers (lower right)



Centenary Celebration – Band march past (left) and Pipes and drums (right)



Centenary Souvenir presented to Col JA Hubert DSO

The 'Centenary Souvenir' depicts the badges of units which grew into the 17th Battalion of the Punjab Regiment – Bhopals from WWI in Mesopotamia and NW Frontier, who melded into 9th Bhopal Battalion with service in India, France, Egypt and Mesopotamia, the 16th Punjab Regiment with whom John saw all of his service with the 4th and 7th Battalions, and finally the 17th Punjab Regiment – an amalgamation of men from several of old Punjab Infantry Regiments including the 16th.

History relates that the first infantry unit was formed in 1759 by the British India Company, the 22nd and 31st Punjab Infantry were raised in 1857, and the 4/16th Battalion became the 17th Battalion Punjab Regiment in 1956.

2.9 Appendix 2 – John Hubert’s Medals (1920-1947)



Colonel John Armstrong Hubert, DSO.
4th BTN 16th Punjab Regiment

The above medals were awarded to John over the time of his service in the Indian Army from 1920 – 1947. The plaque refers to his connection with the 4th Battalion – the latter part of the war was with the 7/16th.



Distinguished
Service Order
(D.S.O.)



Indian General
Service Medal
North-West
Frontier 1935



1939/45 Star



Africa Star



Burma Star



Defence Medal



War Medal
(Mentioned
in Despatches)



Coronation
Medal 1937



HH Maharaja of
Bikaner Golden
Jubilee Medal 1938

The D.S.O. was awarded for distinguished service in Burma during the 1944 Arakan/Kaladan Campaign and his leadership in 'Hubforce' (the 7th battalion of the 16th Punjab Regiment and a Battalion (Gambia) from 81st W.A. Division).

The Indian General Service Medal (of which there were 5 over the years) was for service on the North-West Frontier between 1930-1932.

The three stars were awarded for service in three areas of campaign during World War 2.

The War Medal was issued to men who were 'mentioned in despatch' – in John's case his six months in Crete in 1941.

The Coronation 1937 Medal recorded his presence with the Indian Forces Contingent for the Coronation of George VI.

The Golden Jubilee Medal 1938 was a special gift from H.H. the Maharaja of Bikaner presented to John at the end of his Jubilee Celebrations, when he was leaving Bikaner after 4 years acting as Military Adviser.

2.10 Appendix 3 – John and Mag Hubert’s timeline (1938-1947)

Note that the term “India” in much of this document refers to the whole of British India prior to 17 August 1947 when it achieved Independence from Great Britain.

Events before this date refer to place names which reflect political boundaries prior to Partition. After this date, place names refer to political boundaries after Partition.

Year	Date	John	Mag
1938	May	Family on leave to Jersey, Channel Islands, England, seeing John’s mother Blanche and both children getting measles (Peter quite badly)	
1938	Aug	Family in West Wittering, Sussex, England, having arranged for Peter to attend Windlesham Prep School, near Washington, West Sussex, England, and his holiday accommodation near to John’s sister Marjorie who was to be Peter’s guardian	
1938	Aug	John called back to India urgently for unknown service joining his regiment in Poona, Maharashtra, India	
		John ordered to report to Ahmednagar, northeast of Poona, Maharashtra, India, to join the 11 th brigade (Heron Force), as a Staff Captain destined for overseas duty	
1938	25 Nov		Mag and Anne sail from London for India arriving early Jan
1938	24 Dec	Promoted to Major	
1938	Dec		Mag and Anne return by ship to India and travelled to Poona, Maharashtra, India, where John had organised a home and Pooji the horse for Anne
1939	Jul	John leaves India bound for Egypt with Heron Force	
1939	3 Sep	Declaration of War – the start of WW2	
1939	Sep		Mag and Anne travel to Egypt
1939	Oct	Family meet up in Port Said, Egypt	
1939	Oct		Mag and Anne living in small flat in Cairo, Egypt, where they were able to meet John and visit the sites
1939	3 Nov	Death of John’s mother Blanche at Temple Gardens, Brighton, Sussex, England	
1940	mid	John sent as Quartermaster with a small force to Eritrea	
1940	End Aug		Mag and Anne evacuated from Cairo, Egypt, to return to India
1940	End Aug	Family meet up in Aden for 24 hours	
1940		John returns to GHQ Cairo, Egypt, as Quartermaster	
1940	15 Dec	Sent to join the Allied, Greek and Commonwealth forces in Crete	
1941	Jan		Mag and Anne moved to lodgings in Kotagiri, located in the Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu, southern India, Anne became a day student at the Convent

Year	Date	John	Mag
1941	11 Feb	Mentioned in Despatches	
1941			Peter returns to school after plans to send him to the US did not materialise – the school had relocated to Ambleside in the Lake District. While at school Peter suffered a burst appendix, rushed to hospital in Newcastle and then recuperated back in Brighton, in spite of air-raids!
1941	20 May	Main battle for Crete commences with German paratroopers invading	
1941	28 May – 1 Jun	Evacuation of Allied forces – John evacuated to Alexandria, Egypt, and then Cairo	
1941	Early Jun to 21 Jun	Sent to Syria until the Fall of Damascus, Syria	
	After 21 Jun	Recalled to Cairo, Egypt, and then flown to India	
1941	7-8 Jul	John arrived in Simla, Himachal Pradesh, India, with Mag arriving 24 hours later from Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, India, where Anne remained at boarding school	
1941	Jul-Aug	5-week lecture tour	
1941	Aug		Mag returns to Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, India, to be with Anne, John able to join them briefly when Anne became a boarder
1941	Sep-Oct	7-week lecture tour	
1941	Late Oct	John appointed as lecturer at Tactical School based in Kirkee, Poona, Maharashtra, India	Mag joins John in Poona, Maharashtra, India, leaving Anne at school until the end of term
1942	Jan	John in camp in the district of Attock, west of Islamabad, India (now in Pakistan)	Mag and Anne stayed nearby in Nowshera for a few days
1942	Jan	Family moved to Sialkot, Punjab, India (now in Pakistan), then John was back in Poona, Maharashtra, India, for another six months, Anne remained at school in Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, India,	
1942	Aug	John given a month's war leave, joining Mag and Anne in Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, India, with Anne going to school every morning	
1942	Sep		Mag and Anne move to Simla, Himachal Pradesh, India, where they stayed for 2 years
1943	Jan	John trained for jungle warfare with the 7 th Battalion at Chhindwara, south of Nagpur, Central Provinces, India	
1943	Apr	John made Colonel in command of the 7 th Battalion	
1943	Jun	7 th moved to Ranchi, Jharkhand, India, to carry out their final training before tackling the Japanese	Mag was able to visit twice from Simla, Himachal Pradesh, India
1943	Oct	7 th battalion moved to Chittagong, India (now in Bangladesh) with John in command	
1944	11 Jan – 27 May	1944 Arakan and Kaladan campaign	
1944	After Jun	John had left Burma incapacitated in the shoulder, probably due to heavy packs and the wet climate	Mag joined him in Poona leaving Anne in Simla

Year	Date	John	Mag
1945	Jan		Peter moves to Stowe School, Buckinghamshire, England, for his secondary schooling
1945	Jan	Second-in-Command to William Moll at the Regimental Centre at Sialkot, Punjab, India (now in Pakistan), and later in the year took over the command	Mag and Anne travelled back to Poona, Maharashtra, India, and briefly to Sialkot, Punjab, India (now in Pakistan)
1945	Mar	Inspection of the Boys Brigade by the H.E. C-in-C, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck	
1945	Apr		Mag and Anne travelled back to England from Poona, Maharashtra, India, and through a transit camp in Bombay, and then continuing as part of a convoy to England – leaving behind Anne's beloved dog Squeak
1945	5 May		Mag and Anne arrive in England three days before 'V.E.' Day
			Mag and Anne met Peter, Marjorie and Grace, in Brighton, and celebrated the end of the war in Europe with a tot of brandy from Mag's emergency hip flask
1945	Jun	John awarded his D.S.O.	
1945	Sep		Anne became a boarder at St Audrey's near Minehead, Somerset, on the north coast for two terms
1945	Nov	Presentation of colours to the Boys Brigade by the H.E. C-in-C, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck	
1945	11 Dec	John receive his D.S.O. at an investiture at Buckingham Palace able to meet his son Peter for the first time since 1938	Peter and Marjorie were at the investiture and Mag and John were able to visit Peter at Stowe and Anne at Minehead
1945	Late Dec	John returned Regimental Centre at Sialkot, Punjab, India (now in Pakistan), as commandant with rank of acting full Colonel	The family except John enjoyed Christmas celebrations in Brighton
1946	Apr	John visited 3 battalions on the NW Frontier, (the 5 th Battalion at Bannu had become the 2/16 th Battalion with addition of returned prisoners of war)	Anne arrives at her final school at Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex – initially to the junior school and in September moved up to the senior school
1946	Summer	The Centre in Sialkot continued with 'life skill' courses and running the Regimental Farm in addition to numerous activities associated with training	Mag, Peter and Anne enjoy a wonderful summer holiday at Mawgan Porth near Newquay, North Cornwall in August, staying in a primitive converted farm yard arranged by Mag's brother Hugh
1946	5 Oct		After Peter and Anne had returned to school, Mag and Peggy Steele sailed from Southampton to Bombay and the train to Sialkot, Punjab, India (now in Pakistan), to re-join their respective husbands
1947	25-27 Feb	Mag and John attended the Regimental Reunion at Sialkot, Punjab, India (now in Pakistan), with H.E. Sir Claude Auchinleck, C-in-C of the Army and many other important guests	
1947	Apr	Mag and John visited the 7/16 th battalion in Bannu and the 2 nd and 4 th battalions on the NW Frontier	

Year	Date	John	Mag
1947	mid-Jun to end Jul	Mag and John on leave in Kashmir, India, camping and fishing	
1947	Jul	John received a confidential message informing him that the UK's High Commissioner in India was looking for suitable military personnel over 45 with good administration and language skills to fill certain vacancies being planned for the oncoming changes	
1947	Early Aug	John and Mag returned to Sialkot, Punjab, India (now in Pakistan), and found chaos in the city of Lahore – rival forces were trying to set fire to the city, looting and murdering each other	
1947	14-15 Aug	Partition of India into two independent states: Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan – the final boundary not being finalised until 17 th Aug	
1947	Aug to end Nov	The Centre being located in Sialkot (now in Pakistan but very near to the border) played an important role in managing refugees who needed to be fed, guarded and even rescued from trains which were often brutally attacked	
1947	27 Nov	John remained in command of the Centre, which celebrated Pakistan Day on 27 th November 1947 attended by the Hon. Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, and senior officers from the Pakistan Battalions – Mag involved in her official capacity as commandant's wife	
1947	17 Dec	John was given a special 'Hubert Day' parade, with an Inspection, Salute and March Past, followed by a present from the Officers and V.C.O.s of the 16 th Punjab Regimental Centre, and a Farewell Address – Mag and John were feted as guests of honour	
1947	Late Dec	Mag and John travelled to Lahore and on to Karachi, Pakistan, only to have to wait for a month in the transit camp before taking a ship to Britain	
1948	27 Feb	Mag and John arrive in Southampton – to start a new life	