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The Cross of Sacrifice, Imphal War Cemetery
With the poppy wreaths laid in memory of
Major Hugh WALKER and Major 'Sandy' LAMBERT

A CONCISE BIOGRAPHY OF:

MAJOR H. A. LAMBERT

A concise biography of Major Henry Alexander LAMBERT, an officer in the British Indian Army between 1935 and 1944. Dedicated to the late Jo ELLESTON, 'Sandy' LAMBERT's daughter who never knew him other than in spirit.

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A Concise Biography of Major H. A. LAMBERT

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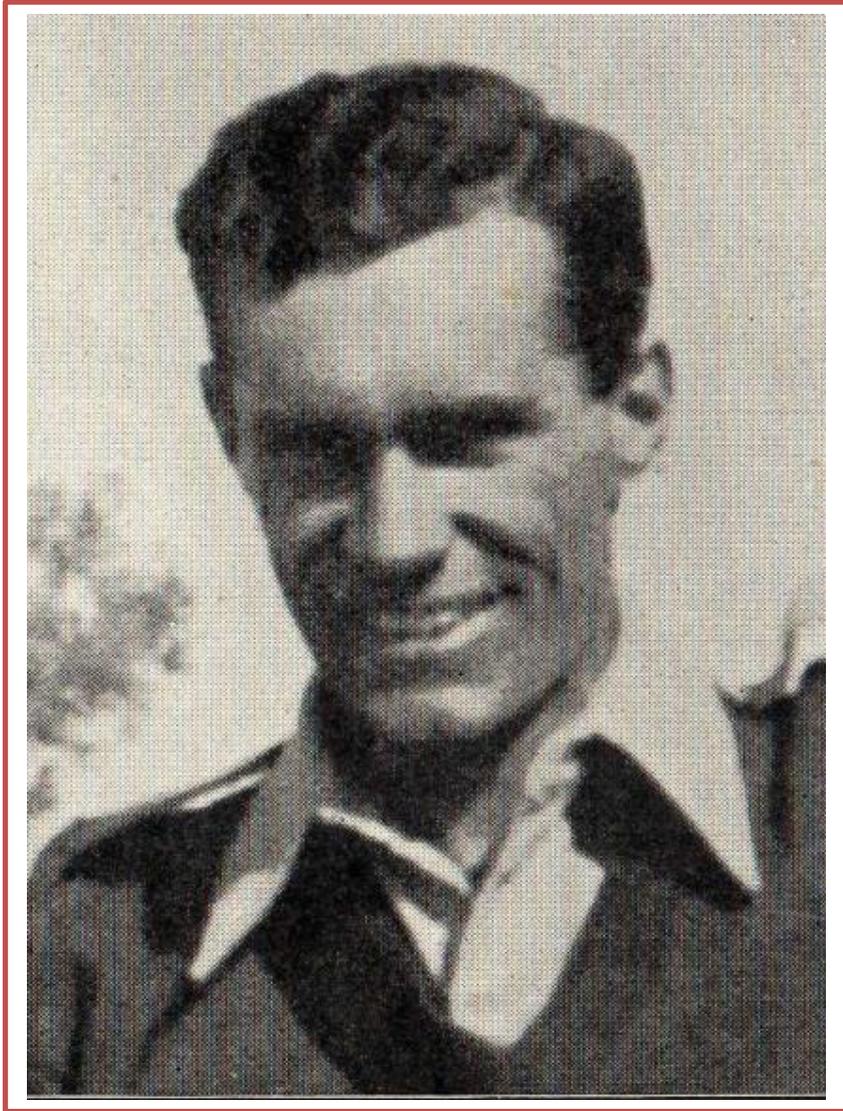
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Major Henry Alexander LAMBERT



Introduction

Major Henry Alexander LAMBERT was an officer in the British Indian Army during the Second World War, during which he served in Iraq. He later moved with his regiment to Burma where he played a significant role in the battle of Imphal during which he lost his life.

Early Life

Henry Alexander LAMBERT (known to his colleagues and friends as 'Sandy') was born in Ealing, Middlesex, on 31 January 1915; the son of Henry and Violet LAMBERT. He attended the Dragon School in Oxford from May 1923 until July 1928, where he was described as a cheerful and popular member of the school community.



He was good at both the academic and sporting elements of school life. He played for the Under 10's cricket eleven against another school (Cothill) making the top score with the bat and also taking four wickets. In 1926, he was a member of the Fourth Eleven, and next year he played for the Third Eleven.

'Sandy' whilst a pupil at the Dragon School.

In his last year although he did play for the First Eleven, he just failed to make the regular squad. Sandy also played hockey and soccer for the Dragon School, being a very safe goalkeeper in both sports. He also sang in the chorus of school production of *The Mikado* in 1924.

From the Dragon School, Sandy progressed onto Tonbridge School in Kent. His sporting achievements at Tonbridge included representing his House at cricket, hockey, cross-country running, fives, and rowing. He applied, and was accepted, for entry to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst as a Gentleman Cadet. He continued to play hockey and running cross-country whilst at Sandhurst. He generally played for the second teams at the college, although occasionally played for the first teams.

The First Years of His Career

Sandy LAMBERT was commissioned on 29 August 1935 on the Unattached List for the Indian Army. He left the United Kingdom for India, where on arrival he was posted to a British infantry battalion, the Green Howards. This was the usual practice for newly commissioned officers joining the Indian Army. This allowed them to learn the culture and responsibilities of being a junior officer, as the number of British officers in Indian Army infantry battalions was less than British infantry battalions, so each individual officer carried greater responsibility in an Indian infantry battalion.

On 16 November 1936, Sandy was admitted to the Indian Army on being posted to the 3rd Battalion, 9th Jat Regiment as a Second Lieutenant, his army number being 532/AI. His battalion was stationed in Waziristan. After serving in Waziristan, on 10 October 1937 the battalion was sent to Jhelum for a short period to rest and refit. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on 29 November 1937.

The battalion returned to the North West Frontier and spent six months at Shagai, moving in April 1938 to Landi Kotal. This period was quiet, with the battalion performing the usual training and deployment of columns into the surrounding areas. Serving on the North West Frontier was good grounding and experience for the young officers of the Indian Army. They had the chance to learn to command their units on operational duties under the guidance of more experienced men.

The Second World War

The declaration of war by the United Kingdom on Germany on 3 September 1939 meant little practical difference to the Indian Army. Some formations and units were mobilised for service in the Middle East, in a similar manner to that of the First World War only some twenty-one years earlier. On 22 October 1939, the 3rd Battalion, 9th Jat Regiment, began the mobilisation procedure and moved to Ahmadabad. Training commenced in driving and maintenance of vehicles, field firing and unit drills. Sandy LAMBERT was promoted to the rank of Acting Captain on 28 November 1939 and Temporary Captain on 28 February 1940. Lieutenant Colonel H. V. BRAGG assumed command of the battalion on 1 October 1940 replacing Lieutenant Colonel C. SOUTHGATE who had left on 24 August 1940 on appointment as the Assistant Adjutant & Quarter-Master-General of the 7th Indian Division. On the same day that Lieutenant Colonel BRAGG took up his appointment, Sandy was promoted to the rank of Acting Major, and then Temporary Major and War Substantive Captain on 1 January 1941.

The battalion moved to Mansar Camp, Attock, and began training on the use of mortars, carriers and mechanical transport. This was a period of disruption due to the significant expansion of the Indian Army, with several experienced personnel transferring to other battalions and appointments. In addition, new personnel had to be integrated into the battalion. Mobilisation was successfully completed and on 20 May 1941, the battalion left Ahmadnagar by train for Bombay, where it embarked on H.M.T. Neuralia bound for the Middle East.

Under command of the 25th Indian Infantry Brigade, 10th Indian Division, the battalion found itself heading for Basra. It arrived on 30 May 1941, the day before the armistice was signed with the Iraqi government. The brigade was involved in the invasion of Syria, but the 3rd Bn. 9th Jat Regiment was not directly involved in the fighting. In early August, the brigade was transferred to the 8th Indian Division and had to travel from the Turkish border through Syria to Basra. The brigade was ferried across the Shatt-el-Arab waterway on 25 August, and invaded Persia. Whilst the other two battalions in the brigade saw action, the 3rd/9th Jats did not. During all this period, Sandy LAMBERT was the battalion's Adjutant, the key administrator and logistics officer within the unit. He had to organise all the moves, transport arrangements, signals, and briefings.

A Staff Appointment

In February 1942, Sandy was posted to the Headquarters, 10th Army as a General Staff Officer Grade 3 (Military Training). He remained in that role until January 1943. In the meantime, the 3rd/9th Jats had moved to Egypt to join the 9th Indian Infantry Brigade in the 5th Indian Division. The battalion saw active service in the Western Desert, during which Lieutenant Colonel BRAGG and most of his staff from battalion headquarters were killed by shellfire.

Sandy Re-joins the Battalion

When Sandy rejoined his battalion, it was back in Iraq with the 5th Indian Division. He was appointed the commanding officer of 'C' Company, which comprised Punjabi Mussalmans. The term Punjabi Mussalmans describes those Muslim Classes and Tribes which are to be found in the Punjab and North West Frontier Province between the Indus and the Sullej Rivers to the south of the main Himalayan Range. The new commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel Bernard GERTY, who was a friend of Sandy's, having been a pre-war Regular officer in the British Indian Army with him, and who had joined from another battalion of the regiment that had been serving in Burma.

In May 1943, the battalion returned to India with the division. On arrival, all ranks were allowed a period of leave; after which a period of jungle training took place. In December 1943, the brigade moved to the Arakan and was deployed to the Razabil area, facing a strong Japanese position. The first clash the battalion had with the Japanese was by 'A' Company on 13 January 1944. The battalion deployed and 'C' Company moved into a thick wood between 'B' and 'D' Companies. All the companies were subjected to night attacks by the Japanese, but with little losses.

The organization of the 3rd Battalion, 9th Jat Regiment as on 1 January 1944 was:

Commandant	T/Lieutenant Colonel B. C. H. GERTY
Second-in-Command	T/Major R. H. WHITE
Adjutant	T/Captain R. R. AITKEN
Quarter-Master	T/Captain H. T. MUSKETT
Medical Officer	Captain, D. B. DOCTOR, I.A.M.C.
Intelligence Officer	Lieutenant R. G. JORDAN
Headquarter Company	
Officer Commanding & Signals	T/Captain W. D. ROWLING
Mortar Officer	Lieutenant T. LEWTHWAITE
Guerrilla Platoon O/C	T/Captain G. R. SELL

Administrative Company	
Animal Transport Officer	Lieutenant R. H. BEAUMONT
Motor Transport Officer	Lieutenant J. M. BIRNIE
‘A’ Company (Jats)	
Officer Commanding	T/Major W. G. PETRIE-HAY
‘B’ Company (Jats)	
Officer Commanding	T/Major W. A. WATSON
‘C’ Company (Punjabi Mussalman)	
Officer Commanding	T/Major H. A. LAMBERT
‘D’ Company (Mussalman Rajputs)	
Officer Commanding	T/Major W. D. RITCHIE
Company Officer	Lieutenant Mohd SHERIF, I.D.S.M.
Reinforcement Officers	Lieutenant N. SAIN
	Lieutenant Zia-ul-HASSAN

The Battalion Headquarters included a sniper section, and the commanding officer’s escort, and the intelligence section, as well as five Naiks (Corporals) for ammunition duties. The H.Q Company had five platoons, a Signal Platoon, a Mortar Platoon of six 3” inch mortars, a Pioneer Platoon, a Carrier Platoon (armed with seven Bren guns) and a Guerrilla Platoon. The Administrative Platoon comprised a Transport Platoon, with both animal and motor transport, a Medical Platoon and the Quarter-Master’s Platoon. The motor transport allocated to the Battalion comprised two Jeep 4 x 4 vehicles, one scout car, one office truck, and twenty-one 15 cwt trucks. There was also one water carrier, the Commanding Officer’s carrier, seven Bren gun carriers and seven Mortar carriers.

On 19 January, a Japanese force occupied an area in front of ‘D’ Company, so a counter-attack was organised using ‘A’ and ‘D’ Companies, during which the battalion second-in-command Major R. H. WHITE was killed, and ‘A’ Company commander Major W. E. PETRIE-HAY was seriously wounded. In early February 1944, the Japanese launched a significant offensive in the Arakan surrounding the 7th Indian Division. In March, the battalion advanced into the foothills of the main Mayu Range. The 3rd Battalion 9th Jat Regiment, together with all its stores and equipment was flown from Dohazari to Imphal on 25 March 1944. This was because the Japanese had launched a second, and more significant offensive designed to invade India. The Imphal plain was a major British base, and the Japanese were closing in.

The Battle for Imphal

The Japanese were advancing on Imphal from several different directions. The Japanese 33rd Division was advancing from the south at Tiddim, and it was pushing the 17th Indian Infantry Division back towards the Imphal plain. The 20th Indian Infantry Division was engaged around the Tamu area to the south-east, and the 23rd Indian Infantry Division was also engaged on the Tiddim Road, trying

to extricate the 17th Division from being surrounded. This meant the northern side of the Imphal plain was left uncovered, but the Japanese 15th Division was advancing on Ukhrul and had surrounded the 50th Indian Parachute Brigade at Sangshak. The 5th Indian Infantry Division, of which the 3rd Bn. 9th Jat Regiment was part, was flown in to protect the northern flank of the Imphal plain. About midway between the roads from Ukhrul and Kohima runs the River Iril. There is a large hill feature called Nungshigum, and the battalion took up a position guarding a track near there on 29 March 1944. That evening the Battalion's intelligence officer saw a large force of Japanese troops streaming down the side of a hill towards the village of Pukhao.

During the night of 5 April, a Japanese force occupied a feature to the west of the junction of the two tracks from Imphal and the Litan road. They drove the Jat patrol off the feature, which meant that they overlooked 'D' Company's position. A patrol went out at first light, and they estimated that at least forty Japanese soldiers were now dug-in on that position. The officer commanding 'D' Company, Major W. D. RITCHIE, M.C., ordered Jemadar Abdul HAFIZ at attack with two sections from his platoon at 09.30 am. An artillery concentration was arranged, but the slope up to the Japanese positions was completely bare, with no cover for the assaulting troops, and it was steep sided towards the top. Jemadar HAFIZ led the attack, having told his men that they were invincible and that, however many of the enemy were on that hill, they would be either killed or driven off.

Jemadar HAFIZ led his men with great dash. The Japanese held their fire until the Indian troops were just short of the crest. They then opened fire with machine guns and threw grenades. Jemadar HAFIX led the assault personally, shouting the Mahommedan war cry. The last few feet were very steep, but Jemadar HAFIZ did not falter. On reaching the crest, he was wounded in the leg, but seeing a machine gun firing from the flank, he immediately made towards it, seized the barrel, pulled it upwards while another Jat killed the Japanese gunner. Jemadar HAFIZ then picked up a Bren gun from a wounded soldier, and he moved towards the Japanese firing (presumably from the hip) as he went forwards. He killed several Japanese soldiers, and then the remainder, decided to flee from the position. Jemadar HAFIZ pursued the Japanese, but he was then hit in the chest, and collapsed while holding the Bren gun. He shouted at his men, '*Reorganise the position while I give you covering fire*', but he died shortly afterwards.

The gallantry of Jemadar Abdul HAFIZ was such that he recommended for, and was posthumously awarded, the Victoria Cross, the highest award in the British Army for gallantry in the face of the enemy, and as such, Jemadar HAFIZ became the first Muslim soldier in the British Army to receive this award. His citation reads:

Jemadar Abdul Hafiz (11460), 9th Jat Regiment, Indian Army.

In Burma, in the early hours of the 6th April, 1944, in the hills 10 miles North of Imphal, the enemy had attacked a standing patrol of 4 men and occupied a prominent feature overlooking a Company position.

At first light a patrol was sent out and contacted the enemy, reporting that they thought approximately 40 enemy were in position. It was not known if they had dug in during the hours of darkness.

The Company Commander ordered Jemadar Abdul Hafiz to attack the enemy, with two sections from his platoon, at 0930 hours. An artillery concentration was put down on the feature and Jemadar Abdul Hafiz led the attack. The attack was up a completely bare slope with no cover, and was very steep near the crest. Prior to the attack, Jemadar Abdul Hafiz assembled his sections and told them that they were invincible, and all the enemy on the hill would be killed or put to flight. He so inspired his men that from the start the attack proceeded with great dash. When a few yards below the crest the enemy opened fire with machine-guns and threw grenades. Jemadar Abdul Hafiz sustained several casualties, but immediately ordered an assault, which he personally led, at the same time shouting the Mohammedan battle-cry. The assault went in without hesitation and with great dash up the last few yards of the hill, which was very steep. On reaching the crest Jemadar Abdul Hafiz was wounded in the leg, but seeing a machine-gun firing from a flank, which had already caused several casualties, he immediately went towards it and seizing the barrel pushed it upwards, whilst another man killed the gunner. Jemadar Abdul Hafiz then took a Bren gun from a wounded man and advanced against the enemy, firing as he advanced, and killing several of the enemy. So fierce was the attack, and all his men so inspired by the determination of Jemadar Abdul Hafiz to kill all enemy in sight at whatever cost, that the enemy, who were still in considerable numbers on the position, ran away down the opposite slope of the hill. Regardless of machine-gun fire which was now being fired at him from another feature a few hundred yards away, he pursued the enemy, firing at them as they retired. Jemadar Abdul Hafiz was badly wounded in the chest from this machine-gun fire and collapsed holding the Bren gun and attempting to fire at the retreating enemy, and shouting at the same time "Re-organise on the position and I will give covering fire." He died shortly afterwards.

The inspiring leadership and great bravery displayed by Jemadar Abdul Hafiz in spite of having been twice wounded, once mortally, so encouraged his men that the position was captured, casualties inflicted on the enemy to an extent several times the size of his own party, and enemy arms recovered on the position which included 3 Lewis Machine-guns, 2 grenade dischargers and 2 officers' swords. The complete disregard for his own safety and his determination to capture and hold the position at all costs was an example to all ranks, which it would be difficult to equal.

Abdul HAFIZ was born on 1 July 1918 in the Rohtak District of the state of Punjab in India, and was aged twenty-five years when he died.



Jem. ABDUL HAFIZ, V.C.



Above Top – Jemadar Abdul HAFIZ, V.C.

Taken from: History of the Jat Regiment

Above Lower – The Grave of Jemadar Abdul HAFIZ in the Imphal Indian War Cemetery in Manipur State.

Taken by: The Author (2011)

General Sir Claude AUCHINLECK, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, wrote to the Regimental Centre of the 9th Jat Regiment on 31 July 1944, stating:

Please accept my warmest congratulations on the award of the Victoria Cross to Jemadar Abdul HAFIZ...his wonderful courage and magnificent leadership will remain as an inspiration to the Regiment, and to his clan, and to the whole Army. Please convey my congratulations and deep sympathies to the relatives of Jamadar Abdul Hafiz.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Fourteenth Army, Lieutenant General SLIM, also wrote a letter to the Commandant of the Regimental Centre, which was passed to the mother of Jemadar Abdul HAFIZ, and his letter stated:

The Army Commander and all Officers and Men of the Regiment wish to express their sympathy on the death of your son. Jamadar Abdul Hafiz has won the highest admiration of the whole Army, and his courage has won for him the highest award of the King Emperor – the Victoria Cross. This award will prove a comfort to you in your loss, and an inspiration to the whole Fourteenth Army.

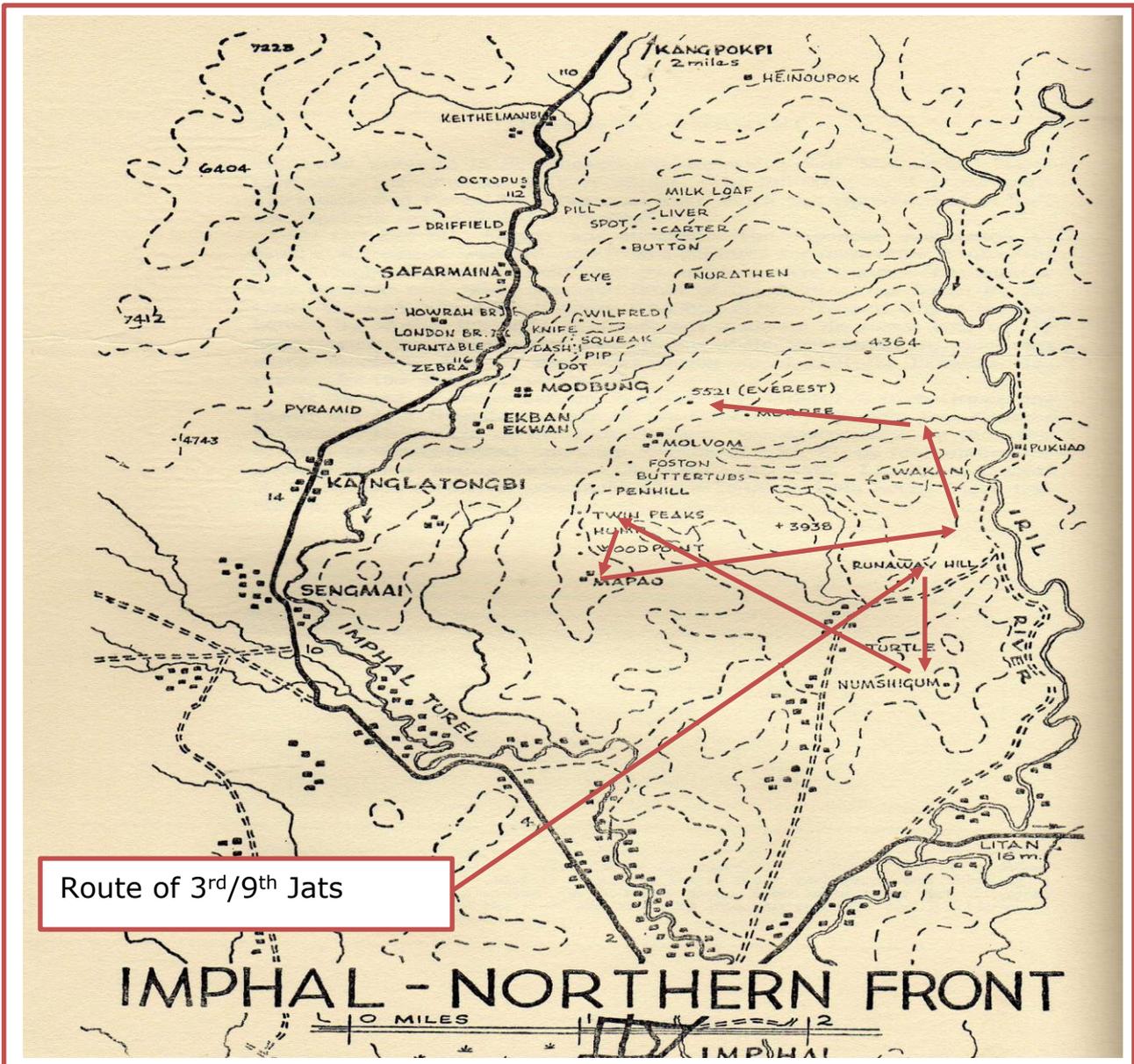
The widow of Jamadar HAFIZ wrote to the Commandant of the Regimental Centre in a reply dated 14 August 1944. She said:

Abdul Hafiz would have to die some time, but he could not have died better than by bringing honour and fame to his Regiment and family. Such a death is not death, but life continuous.

This letter was published by the Regiment as an example of the courage and loyalty which commands the greatest admiration of all ranks within the Jat Regiment and their families.

The Japanese launched a series of sustained assaults on the Nungshigum feature and the 3rd/9th Jats had to pull back. 'A' Company suffered heavy casualties, so 'B' and 'C' Companies were ordered to retake the Nungshigum position on 13 April. Major Graham Ross SELL was temporarily commanding 'C' Company for this attack, but he was mortally wounded. Some Lee tanks were sent to support the 3rd/9th Jats, and on 15 April, the Nungshigum position was found to be clear of Japanese troops.

The 3rd/9th Jats returned to their original position on the western branch of the track leading from the Iril valley to Imphal. Between the Iril Valley and the Kohima road is a range of hills rising to over 2,500 feet above the Imphal plain, which itself is about 2,500 feet above sea level. The Japanese occupied these hills as far south as the village of Mapao so that they overlooked the Imphal plain.



The 5th Indian Division was ordered to clear these hills, so they advanced into the hill range. 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 3rd/9th Jats occupied a saddle between Wood Point and Twin Peaks, whilst 'A' and 'B' Companies occupied Wood Point itself. The Japanese held the other end of Wood Point, so the battalion attacked towards Mapao to clear the ridge. 'C' Company led the attack on 25 April from Wood Point to Mapao, successfully clearing the Japanese from the whole of this ridge.

On the night on 4 May, having marched up the Iril valley, the battalion was ordered to capture features north of Molvom. 'C' Company attacked towards a feature called 'Everest'. The company got within five-hundred yards of Everest and then went to ground in thick cover to wait for an artillery bombardment. On the morning of 5 May, once the artillery bombardment finished, the company attacked. Two platoons led the attack, with a third in reserve.

The right-hand platoon advanced through thick cover up an almost vertical slope until only twenty yards from the top it was halted by a shower of hand grenades thrown from Japanese trenches and bunkers. The left-hand company advanced through more open country, but they met heavy machine gun fire about fifty yards from the top of Everest. At this time, a mortar round landed in company headquarters injuring Major LAMBERT. Sandy LAMBERT then decided to go forward with his reserve platoon to the right of the right-hand platoon, and as he went forward, a hand grenade burst directly on him and he was killed instantly. He was twenty-nine years of age.

Accounts of Sandy's Death and Tributes to Him

Lieutenant Colonel Bertie GERTY, the commanding officer of the battalion at the time, gives a similar account of Sandy's death. A company of Jats had captured a hill on a high ridge on 4 May 1944, and the battalion was ordered to capture another, higher, hill that overlooked the one that had just been captured. This hill was about 5,500 feet above sea level.

On the morning of 5 May 1944, Sandy led his company up the four-hundred foot climb to the Japanese positions at the top of the hill. The artillery had bombarded the hill prior to the assault, but it had little impact as the Japanese were well dug in. It was quiet until the leading Jat troops were only about ten yards from the Japanese positions, when they opened up with violent machine gun fire and a shower of grenades. Some of the Jats actually reached the Japanese trenches and one grabbed hold of a Japanese soldier's rifle before being killed, but the withering fire forced the Jats to go to ground. Sandy LAMBERT realised that the leading platoons were held up, so he went forward to see what was happening and provide leadership to his company. As he neared them, he was hit by a grenade splinter that cut him above an eye. He had to stop to have his wound bandaged. He then spoke with his commanding officer on the radio and assured him he was all right. They discussed the current situation and LAMBERT agreed to find a new route to the top of the hill with his third platoon.

Typical of his style of leadership, LAMBERT led the third platoon as it headed up the hill, when a Japanese grenade burst very close to him and he was killed instantly. Despite reinforcing the attack, the position could not be captured. The bravery of the men of 'C' Company was evident later after the British and Indian troops later occupied the position. Indian soldiers were found lying on the top of Japanese trenches, and others had died trying to rescue wounded colleagues. They did not give up the attack until ordered to do, and lost forty-seven men killed and wounded in that attack.

No further attempts were made to capture the Molvom ridge, as it was too strongly held and was not posing a direct threat to Imphal. Instead, the Japanese were contained. The battalion left the Iril valley on 4 June to participate in the follow up of the Japanese retreat.

Sandy LAMBERT's men later buried his remains on the same ridge on which he had died, but the grave is now lost in the jungle. He is commemorated therefore on Face 38 of the Rangoon Memorial, along with others whose graves are lost or unknown.



Face 38 of the Rangoon Memorial at the Taukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar; inscribed with the name of Major H. A. LAMBERT under the 9th Jat Regiment.

Taken by: Jon WORT (2011)

LAMBERT was posthumously Mentioned in Dispatches on 5 April 1945 for his gallant and distinguished services in Burma as a Temporary Major. Lieutenant Colonel GERTY paid tribute to a fellow officer he knew well and with whom he was close friends; a pre-war battalion being like an extended family. GERTY said:

He was leading the same company that I gave him in January 1943 when he rejoined us in Paiforce. There is only one word to describe them that day, and that is by the word magnificent. They suffered rather heavy casualties themselves, but never budged an inch, although they were in a rather sticky position. He must have known before he died how really splendid they were being. His place in the battalion will be quite impossible to fill. It would be difficult to find anywhere someone who was so essentially fair and honest.

Another officer in the same battalion also wrote of LAMBERT:

Sandy was one of the finest and truest persons I've ever known.... He was a first rate soldier, very keen on his work and impossible to replace in the battalion. He was extremely popular with his fellow officers and his men.

A friend of Sandy LAMBERT in another regiment wrote to say:

I thought I would write to you to tell you how much I, for one, will miss him. I had known him ever since 1936 and been on courses with him, and as the regiments were usually in the same part of the world, saw a good deal of him. I shall always remember him as one of the nicest chaps I have ever known..... The regiment has lost a good soldier and I know how he will be missed by his brother officers and men. I know how popular he was with them all and how proud he was of the regiment. From his point of view and from what I know of him I feel sure that, as it had to be so, he would have wished to go out that way. Certainly, no man could make a finer end than to fall in action with his men around him. You will always have a proud memory of him, as will all those who knew him, and I hope Sandy is happy in knowing it...

The Letter

Part of Lieutenant Colonel GERTY's role as a commanding officer of a battalion was to write to the next of kin of the deceased. As another pre-war Regular Indian Army officer in the battalion, Lieutenant Colonel GERTY knew 'Sandy' LAMBERT well. His letters to the wife and parents of 'Sandy' LAMBERT give a good indication of the care and affection in which Bernard GERTY held his officers and men. These letters cannot have been easy to write, especially to people that he knew so well. The fact that these letters were so well received is a testament to the way they were written, and that a Regiment in the British Indian Army was like a large family.

3/9 Jat Regt. S. E. A. C. 9 May 44.

----- You must by now have received the official news of Sandy's death on the 5th May. He died, like he lived, in a truly gallant manner. This was the way of it.

Another company had captured a hill on a high ridge on the 4th May, & we were ordered to capture a still higher one which overlooked the one we had just captured. So, on the morning of the 5th May, after an artillery concentration, Sandy's company advanced up a steep slope towards the enemy's position. The climb was some 400 feet up to the position, which was some 5,500 ft above sea level.

All went well until the men of his leading platoons reached within about 10 yards of the Jap forward trenches. Then the Japs reacted violently with automatic fire & grenades. Some of his men actually got as far as the forward trenches, & one man died with his hand on a Jap rifle. The platoons were definitely held up & he went forward to see what had happened.

As he was nearing them a splinter from a Jap grenade cut him just above the eye & he had it bandaged. He spoke to me shortly afterwards on the wireless & said he was quite alright. We talked of the situation, & agreed to try another route with his third platoon.

He went forward to fix it up & while forward another grenade burst very close to him. He was killed on the spot, I'm afraid. His men recovered his body & he is buried on the same ridge at a height of 5,000 ft & about 14 miles north of Imphal.

He was leading the same company that I gave him in January '43 when he rejoined us in Paiforce. There is only one word to describe them that day & that is by the word magnificent. They suffered rather heavy casualties themselves, but never budged an inch although they were in a rather sticky position. He must have known before he died how really splendid they were being.

I am feeling very bad about it, and his place in the Bn will be quite impossible to fill. It would be difficult to find anywhere someone who was so essentially fair & honest, and all of us in the Bn feel a great sense of loss. -----

Yours sincerely,
Bernard Gerty.

Above – The letter sent to the wife of Major Sandy LAMBERT by Lieutenant Colonel GERTY, the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Bn. 9th Jat Regiment.

Courtesy of: The late Jo ELLESTON

Personal Life

Sandy LAMBERT married Jose Emma LAMBERT, and they had one daughter. Jo was destined never to meet her father as she was born only five weeks before his death.

The memory of Sandy LAMBERT lives on, as does that of his brother John Dirom LAMBERT who also died in the war. John was Sandy's elder brother, and he joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. He died on 29 September 1944 at the age of thirty-one years. He held the B.A. (Cantab) having studied at Charterhouse School and Magdalene College, Cambridge. He is buried in Grave 5.A.8. of the Karachi War Cemetery, now in Pakistan.

Jo ELLESTON married and lived at Chagford in Devon, until she and her husband moved to Dorchester after his retirement. In mid-2018, Jo began to feel unwell, and finally she went to see her doctor. He commissioned some tests, leading to an ultra-sound examination on 3 September 2018. A few minutes into the examination, the Consultant was called, and an immediate CT scan was arranged. This revealed that Jo had pancreatic cancer, and it had spread to her liver. The next day, Jo saw an Oncologist Consultant, who confirmed the diagnosis, and advised her that the prognosis was extremely short. She died peacefully at her home five weeks later, on 12 October 2018, aged seventy-four years.

It was a joy for her to learn so much about her father and his life, as she was only just over a month old when her father died in Burma. He never saw his daughter, and as many men who died in the Second World War, he did not live to return to the U.K. to be reunited with his family.

There is another reason why Jo ELLESTON is fondly remembered, and that is because she proved to be an inspiration to the author to research and write about military history in the Second World War. Her support, encouragement, and gratitude, directly led to the development of the website, www.BritishMilitaryHistory.co.uk as it is today.

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