

WAZIRISTAN DISTRICT.

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AT the conclusion of the military operations against the Wazir and Mahsud tribes in April, 1923, the force, named "Wazirforce," operating against these tribes remained in occupation of certain parts of the tribal country.

The peace terms with the tribes included the right to construct roads, to open up the country and to station troops permanently where required.

The interest of this new District to Royal Army Medical Corps officers coming to India lies firstly in the fact that many of them will be detailed for a tour of service there, limited at the present time to one year for medical officers. Secondly that the bulk of their work will be with Indian troops. This being the case it is felt that some information regarding stations in the district may be of use to officers of the Corps, more especially as the climate and conditions of life in Waziristan differ materially from the conditions prevailing in India.

The alignment of the main strategical road is the principal factor governing the location of the military stations. This main road, generally known as the "circular" road, links up the railhead at Bannu in North Waziristan with the railhead at Khirgi in South Waziristan, joining at the latter place with the previously existing road to Dera Ismail Khan. The attached map shows the road and the various stations. For the purposes of description the stations fall into two lines, viz., South Waziristan Line and North Waziristan Line.

At this juncture, for the information of married officers, I may say that no accommodation for families exists, nor are women and children allowed to proceed to any station on either line, except at Dera Ismail Khan in South Waziristan and Bannu in North Waziristan. At these places the existing accommodation is reserved for officers stationed there, and practically none is available for the families of officers stationed elsewhere in the District. Consequently those officers must make their own arrangements and the nearest stations where hotel accommodation can be obtained by families are Rawalpindi and Peshawar.

STATIONS ON SOUTH WAZIRISTAN LINES.

Dera Ismail Khan, 560 feet.

Headquarters of Waziristan District. An old-standing Cantonment on the right bank of the Indus.

Accommodation: Fair bungalows, fitted with electric light and fans. Furniture can be obtained on hire.

Climate: A bracing cold weather from November to the end of February. A severe and trying "hot" weather from May to end of September. Women and children go to the hills for the hot weather.

Tank, 850 feet.

Climate similar to Dera Ismail Khan. A perimeter camp, huttet. Accommodation: None for women and children. Officers in mud-brick huts provided by Government at a monthly rental, fitted with electric fans and light. Practically no facilities for local purchase.

Manzai, 1,450 feet.

Headquarters of the 10th Indian Infantry Brigade. A perimeter huttet camp situated on an absolutely bare plateau in the foothills.

Climate: Very cold in winter months (October to March). Severe heat in summer months (May to mid-September).

Accommodation: Tents or mud-brick quarters (monthly rental for both) fitted with electric light and fans. A desolate-looking camp where one cannot move outside the perimeter without an escort.

Khirgi, 1,650 feet.

A small fort. Headquarters and one company of Indian infantry. The water supply of Manzai is pumped up from the Takki Zam and piped to Khirgi.

Climate: Like Manzai.

Accommodation: Like Manzai.

STATIONS ON THE NORTH WAZIRISTAN LINE.

Bannu, 1,250 feet.

An old-standing cantonment. Headquarters of the 8th Indian Infantry Brigade. Cantonment surrounded by barbed wire entanglement.

Accommodation: Fair bungalows fitted with electric light and fans. Furniture can be hired locally. Usual cantonment shops.

Climate: Good in cold weather (November to February). Severe and trying in hot weather (May to October). Women and children go to hill stations.

Idak, 2,477 feet.

A perimeter camp. Not allowed outside without escort.

Accommodation: Tents or mud-brick Government quarters. Monthly rental. Electric light and fans.

Climate: Pleasant cold weather. Severe hot weather.

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Damdil, 4,000 feet.

Perimeter camp. Not allowed outside without escort.

Accommodation: Tents only at present. Quarters will be erected in course of time.

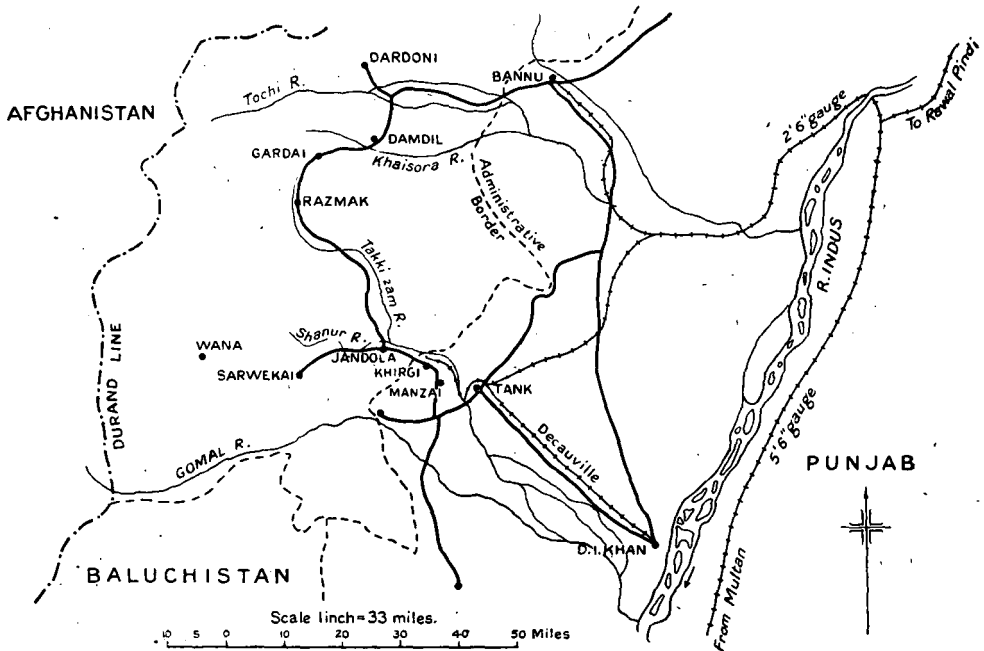
Climate: Good cold weather. Moderate hot weather, but trying.

Gardai, 5,250 feet.

Headquarters, 9th Indian Infantry Brigade. Perimeter camp, protected by permanent picquets.

Accommodation: Tents only. Huts to be provided later.

Climate: Severe winter, with snow at times. Cool hot weather.



Razmak, 6,500 feet.

Headquarters, 7th Indian Infantry Brigade. Perimeter camp, protected by permanent picquets, containing the mobile column consisting of 7th Indian Infantry Brigade and additional holding troops. The largest military station in Waziristan.

Accommodation: Partly tents and partly huts. To be completely "hatted" in time. Electric light.

Climate: A "first class" Hill Station. Severe winter, with a lot of snow. Cool in summer. Constantly subject to "sniping." Cannot go outside perimeter wire without escort.

The figures given refer to the height above sea-level. For purposes of comparison Rawalpindi and Peshawar are 1,687 and 1,149 feet respectively.

Mobile columns, complete with field ambulances, are kept ready for action at Razmak and Manzai. These columns march at intervals through the tribal territory to "show the flag."

The strength of Royal Army Medical Corps officers in Waziristan at present is: Lieutenant-Colonels, 2; Majors, 5; Captains, 7.

The normal method of travel is by motor car, motor lorry or Ford vanette. People are only allowed to travel during certain specified hours, when the road is protected by troops or levies. Every officer must carry a loaded revolver when travelling on account of the possibility of fanatical attacks.

Officers are advised to bring up only kit for games, grey flannel trousers, blazer, &c., but except in Dera Ismail Khan or Bannu store suits are not necessary.

A little "scatter" gun shooting can be obtained under organized arrangements.