

Lieutenant George Buist (1807-1842) of the 10th Bengal Light Calvary: A Tribute to his Life and Times **By His Distant Cousin, Michael T. Tracy**

George Buist spent most of his short life in the Bengal Army. He was the first born son of the esteemed Reverend Doctor George Buist, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of St. Andrews. The Bengal Army was the army of the Bengal Presidency, one of the three Presidencies of the British Raj within the British Empire.¹ The Presidency armies belonged to the East India Company and Buist was well suited for a life in the military. After his cadet training in 1827-29, he first arrived at Bombay, India in 1829. Later, he would fall in love with Captain Thomas Mason's daughter Isabella while stationed at Dum Dum, Calcutta and later quickly marry her. The couple would have four children who were all born in India. Later this dashing young officer would be assigned to the 10th Light Calvary and received his commission as a Lieutenant in 1836.² Lieutenant Buist and the 10th Bengal Light Calvary were ordered to invade Afghanistan and in December of 1838 set out from Punjab.³ This invasion became known as the First Anglo-Afghan War. He would eventually be stationed at Camp Jellalabad, Afghanistan where he would meet his eventual fate. This then is a tribute to the life and times of George Buist, a Lieutenant in the 10th Bengal Light Calvary.

Early years

Falkland parish contains the Royal Burgh of Falkland and the villages of Newton of Falkland and Freuchie and is bounded by Kinross, Strathmiglo, Auchtermuchty, Kettle, Markinch and Leslies parishes, measuring about 6 miles by 4 miles.⁴ It was here that the first born son of the Reverend Doctor George Buist and Margaret Fernie was born on Sunday, 2 August 1807.⁵ His father at that time was a Minister of the Gospel at Balmerino Parish Church.



Fig.1. Balmerino Parish Church, Balmerino, Fife, Scotland, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy

¹ Military.wiki.com. Accessed at: Military.wiki.com/wiki/Bengal_Army

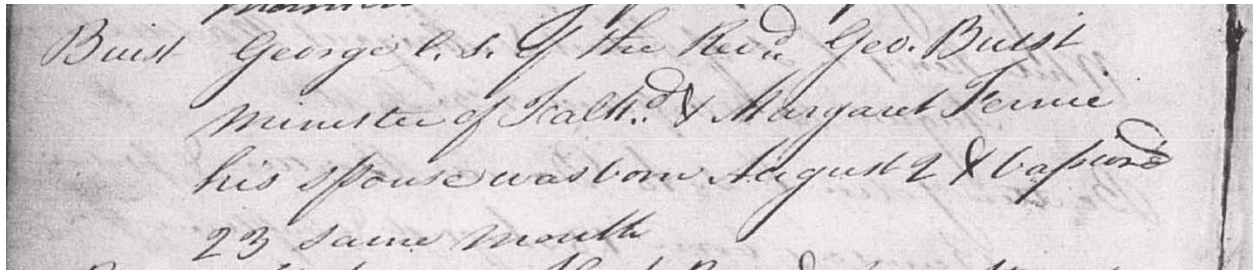
² Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

³ First Anglo-Afghan War. Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Anglo-Afghan_War

⁴ Westwood, A. Westwood's Directory for the Counties of Fife and Kinross. Cupar, Fife: A. Westwood. 1866 p.77

⁵ Baptismal Record of George Buist, 23 August 1807, Falkland Parish Records, Old Parish Records 428/0020 0270

George Buist was baptized on Sunday, 23 August 1807 at Falkland Parish.⁶



Buist George b. s. of the Rev. Geo. Buist
Minister of Falk. & Margaret Ferrie
his spouse was born August 2 & baptized
23 same month

Fig.2. Baptismal Record of George Buist, 23 August 1807, Falkland Parish Records, Crown Copyright



Fig.3. Falkland Parish Church, Falkland, Fife, Scotland, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010
Michael T. Tracy

He would spend his formative years in St. Andrews, Fife.

⁶ Baptismal Record of George Buist, 23 August 1807, Falkland Parish Records, Old Parish Records 428/0020 0270

Education

George Buist began his educational years at United College in St. Andrews beginning in 1820 as a student of Latin and Greek.⁷



Fig.4. United College, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy

Buist continued his educational studies during the school term of 1821-22 by taking courses in Latin, Greek, Logic and Math.⁸ During the school term of 1822-23 he took courses in Ethics and in 1823-24 added Math to his studies.⁹ In the last year of studies at United College Buist took Chemistry and Physics in 1824-25.¹⁰ George Buist would graduate from United College in the spring of 1825.¹¹

East India Company Military Seminary (Addiscombe)

After graduating from United College in St. Andrews, George decided to seek an appointment to the East India Company's private army in India as a cadet for the Bengal Calvary. He solicited the help of John Carstairs, Esquire who recommended him with the aid of the Honourable Hugh Primrose Lindsay who was a Director of the East India Company in 1827.¹² Buist was formally nominated on Wednesday, 31 October 1827 by the Honourable Hugh Primrose Lindsay.¹³ George Buist signed the Petition also on the same day.¹⁴

⁷ The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897. Anderson, James Maitland. Edinburgh. 1905. p.123

⁸ The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897. Anderson, James Maitland. Edinburgh. 1905. p.123

⁹ The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897. Anderson, James Maitland. Edinburgh. 1905. p.123

¹⁰ The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897. Anderson, James Maitland. Edinburgh. 1905. p.123

¹¹ The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897. Anderson, James Maitland. Edinburgh. 1905. p.123

¹² Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

¹³ Applications for Cadetships in East India Company Armies, 1789-1860. IOR Reference Number L/MIL/9/168, Folio Number 439-42, The British Library, London, England

¹⁴ Applications for Cadetships in East India Company Armies, 1789-1860. IOR Reference Number L/MIL/9/168, Folio Number 439-42, The British Library, London, England

Produced King's Commission.

389. Governor Hancock
05. 31 Oct 1827

SEASON, 182

To the Honourable Court of Directors of the United East-India Company.

The humble Petition of *George Buist*

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioner is desirous of entering the Military Service of the Company, as a Cadet for the *Bengal Cavalry*, to which he has been nominated by *Lieut. Colonel Hugh Lindsay* Esq. at the recommendation of *John Carstairs* Esq., and should he be so fortunate as to appear to your Honours eligible for that station, promises to conduct himself with fidelity and honour.

That your Petitioner has been furnished with the Articles of War, as also the Terms, and the Resolutions of the Court of the 9th August 1809, to which he promises faithfully to conform; as also to all the Rules, Orders, and Regulations, which have been, or may be established by the Honourable Court, or the Governor and Council at the Presidency to which he is appointed.

And your Petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

George Buist

DIRECTOR'S NOMINATION.

I *the Honble Hugh Lindsay* Esq., being one of the Directors of the East-India Company, beg leave to present the Petitioner *George Buist* as a Cadet for the *Bengal Cavalry* on one of ~~my~~ Nominations of the season *1826* provided he shall appear to you eligible for that station; and I do declare, that from the character given of him by *John Carstairs Esq.* who certifies that he is well acquainted with his family, character, and connexions, he is in my opinion a fit person to petition the East-India Company for the appointment he now herein solicits.

Recommended to me by *John Carstairs* Esq.

H Lindsay

East-India House,
the 31st Oct^r 1827

Examined and passed the

31st October 1827

by *L Baillie*

NOTE.—If the Cadet has previously held a Commission, for the space of one year at least, in His Majesty's Army, or in the Militia or Fencible Men when embodied, and called into actual Service, or have been in the Company of Cadets of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, he must produce his Commission, or proof of the same, when he embarks, or before he embarks, otherwise he forfeits all claim over the other Cadets sailing at the same period as himself.

Fig.5. Petition of George Buist for Cadetship, 31 October 1827, Photograph Courtesy of The British Library © The British Library

The following papers are in his file for Cadetship in the Bengal Calvary of the East India Company armies.

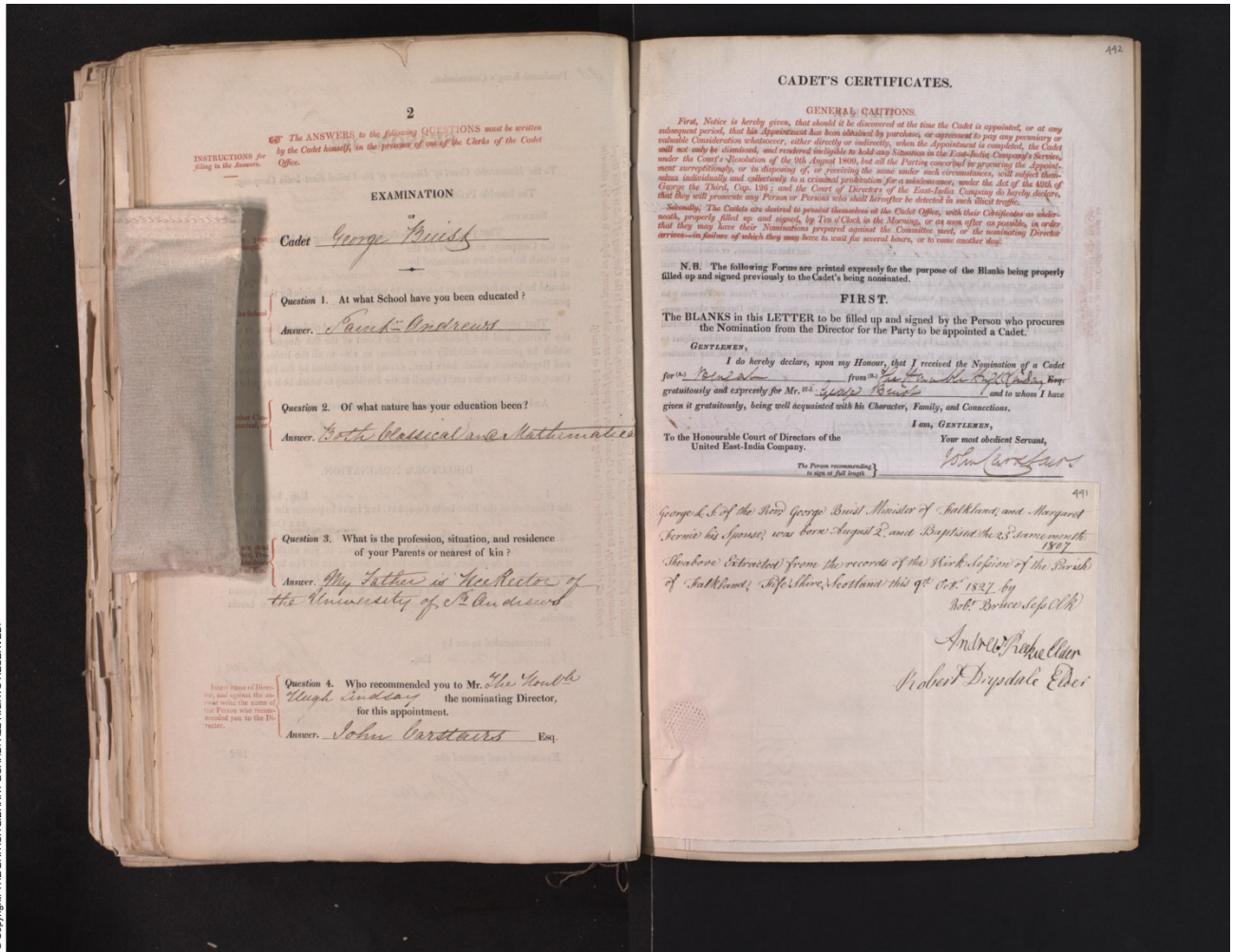
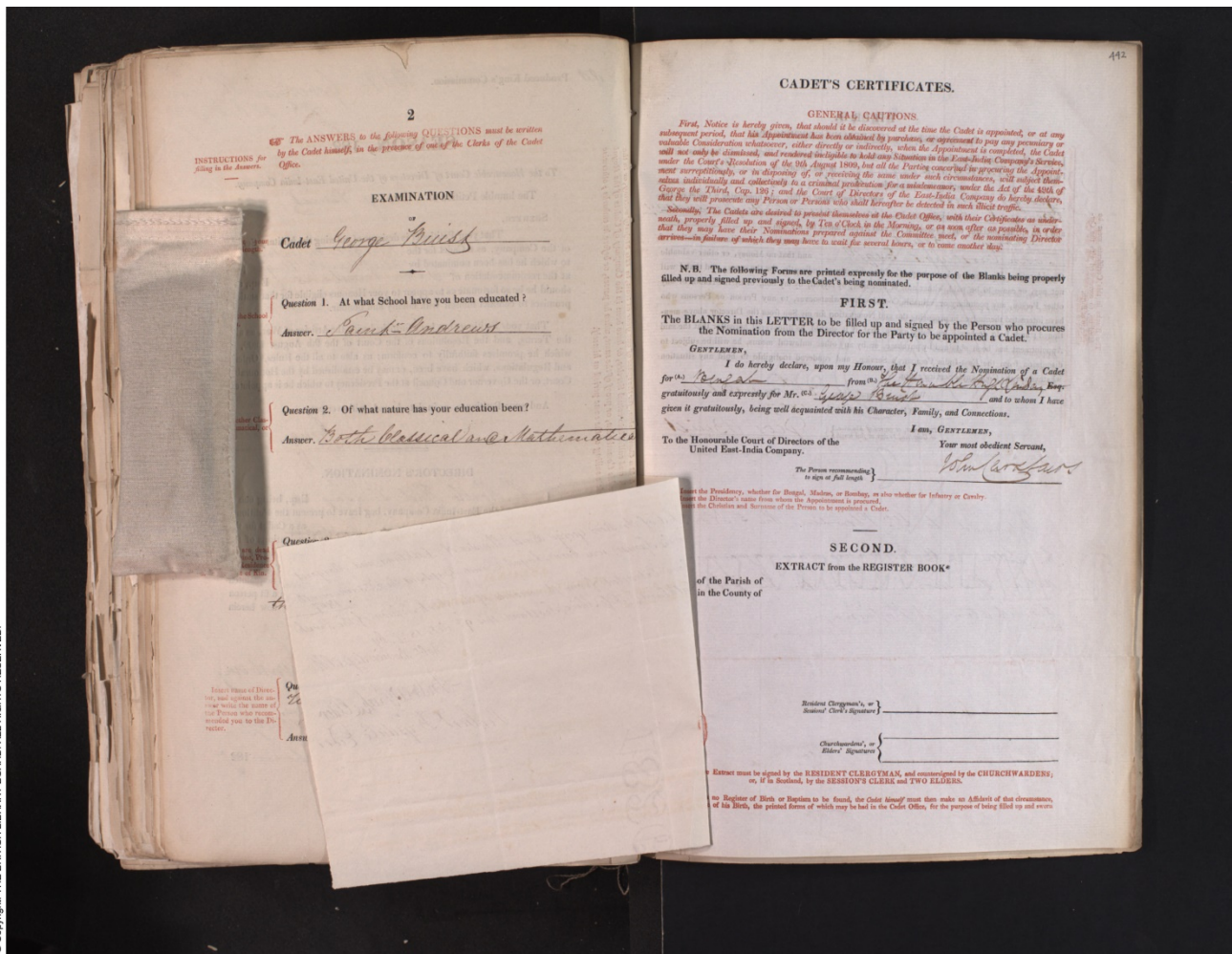


Fig.6. Cadet George Buist's Certificates, Photograph Courtesy of The British Library © The British Library



INSTRUCTIONS for filling in the Answers. The ANSWERS to the following QUESTIONS must be written by the Cadet himself, in the presence of one of the Clerks of the Cadet Office.

EXAMINATION

Cadet George Buist

Question 1. At what School have you been educated?

Answer. St Paul's - Andrews

Question 2. Of what nature has your education been?

Answer. Both Classical and Mathematical

PORTUGUESE ENGLISH

Insert Name of Director, and against the name, write the name of the Person who received notice to his Director.

CADET'S CERTIFICATES.

GENERAL CAUTIONS.

First, Notice is hereby given, that should it be discovered at the time the Cadet is appointed, or at any subsequent period, that his Appointment has been obtained by purchase, or agreement to pay any pecuniary or valuable Consideration whatsoever, either directly or indirectly, when the Appointment is completed, the Cadet shall not only be dismissed, and rendering the holder liable to hold such Nomination in the East-India Company's Service, under the Court's Resolution of the 9th August 1800, but all the Parties concerned in procuring the Appointment, most exceptively, or in disposing of, or receiving the same under such circumstances, will subject themselves individually and collectively to a criminal prosecution for a misdemeanor under the Act of the 44th of George the Third, (Cap. 125) and the Court of Directors of the East-India Company do hereby declare, that they will prosecute any Person or Persons who shall hereafter be detected in such illicit Traffic.

Secondly, The Cadets are desired to present themselves at the Cadet Office, with their Certificates as aforesaid, promptly filled up, and signed, by Ten o'Clock in the Morning, or as soon after as possible, in order that they may have their Nominations prepared against the Committee, prior to the nominating Directors arriving in London, of which they may have to wait for several hours, or to come on board Ship.

N.B. The following Forms are printed expressly for the purpose of the Blanks being properly filled up and signed previously to the Cadet's being nominated.

FIRST.

The BLANKS in this LETTER to be filled up and signed by the Person who procures the Nomination from the Director for the Party to be appointed a Cadet.

GENTLEMEN,

I do hereby declare, upon my Honour, that I received the Nomination of a Cadet from Mr. Buist for George Buist and to whom I have given it gratuitously, being well acquainted with his Character, Family, and Connections.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient Servant,

To the Honourable Court of Directors of the United East-India Company.

The Person recommending is John Lawrence

Insert the Presidency, whether for Bengal, Madras, or Bombay, or also whether for Infantry or Cavalry, from the Director's name from whom the Appointment is procured. Insert the Christian and Surname of the Person to be appointed a Cadet.

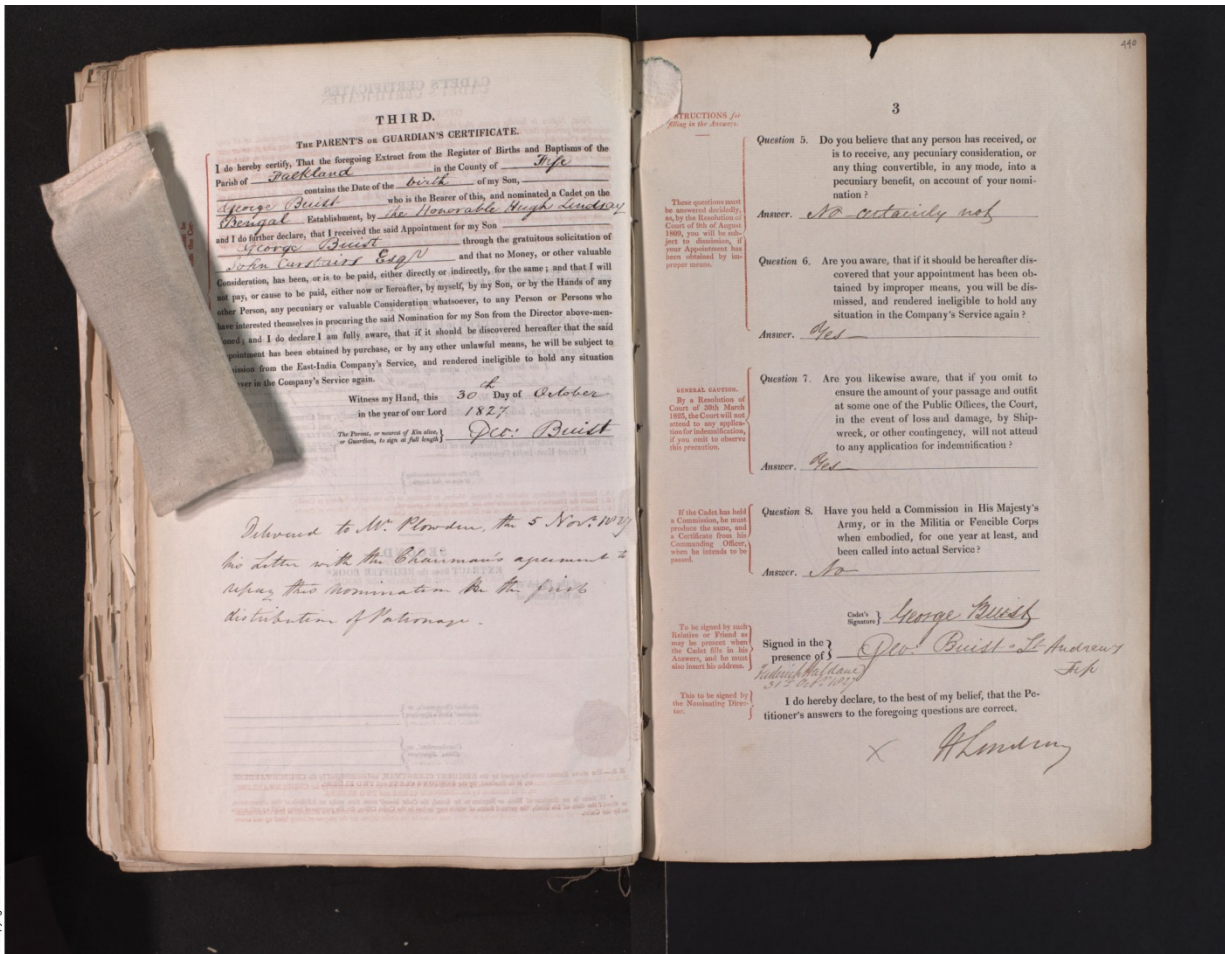
SECOND.

EXTRACT from the REGISTER BOOK*

of the Parish of _____ in the County of _____

Resident Clergymen, or Minister's Clerk's Signature }
Churchwarden, or Elder's Signature }

*Extract must be signed by the RESIDENT CLERGYMAN and countersigned by the CHURCHWARDEN, or, if in Scotland, by the SESSION'S CLERK and TWO ELDERS. No Register of Birth or Baptism to be found, the Cadet himself must then make an Affidavit of this circumstance, of his Birth, the printed form of which may be had in the Cadet Office, for the purpose of being filled up and sworn.



© Copyright. THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Fig.8. Cadet George Buist's Certificates, signed by his father, the Reverend Dr. George Buist, Tuesday, 30 October 1827, Photograph Courtesy of The British Library © The British Library

Thusly, a twenty year old George Buist entered the East India Company's Bengal Army at Addiscombe in the London Borough of Croydon sometime after Wednesday, 31 October 1827 for cadet training.¹⁵

The East India Company Military Seminary was officially opened in 1809 and its purpose was to train young officers like George Buist to serve in the East India Company's private army in India.¹⁶ A cadets curriculum comprised instruction in the sciences of Mathematics, Fortification, Natural Philosophy and Chemistry; the Hindustani, Latin and French languages; in the art of Civil, Military and Lithographic Drawing and Surveying; and in the construction of the several gun-carriages and mortar-beds used in the Artillery service, from the most approved models.¹⁷

¹⁵ Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

¹⁶ En.wikipedia.org. Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addiscombe_Military_Seminary

¹⁷ Bourne, J.M. (1979). "The East India Company's Military Seminary, Addiscombe, 1809-1858." *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 57: 206-222

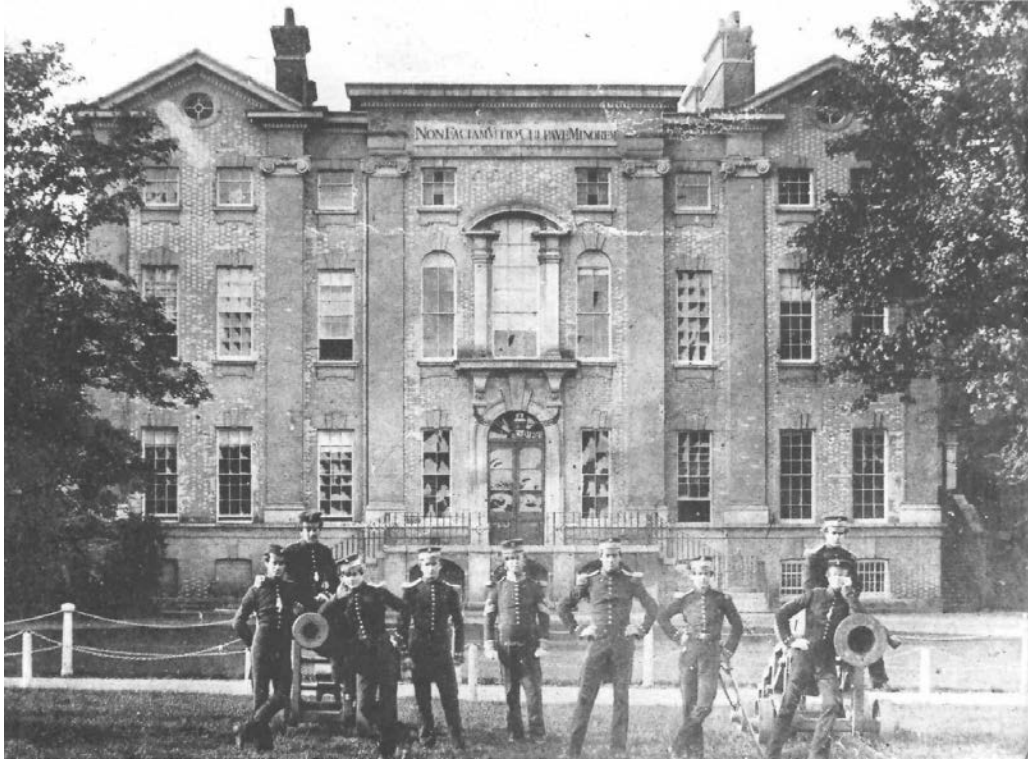


Fig.9. Addiscombe Place, c.1858, East India Company Military Seminary, with 9 cadets posing in foreground, Public Domain Photograph

Cadets were required to wear uniforms at all times, and were not permitted to go beyond the grounds or into Croydon without permission.¹⁸ The cadets worshipped regularly at Croydon Parish Church marching there each Sunday in uniform, accompanied by their own band.¹⁹



Fig.10. Croydon Parish Church where Cadet George Buist worshipped on Sundays, Photograph Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

¹⁸ En.wikipedia.org. Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addiscombe_Military_Seminary

¹⁹ En.wikipedia.org. Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addiscombe_Military_Seminary

Examinations were held twice yearly and they lasted about three weeks, and culminated in a public examination, a day-long affair of some ceremony before a distinguished audience, which included orchestrated book learning and of swordsmanship, pontoon-building, and other military exercises; and exhibition of drawings and models; a formal inspection; and the distribution of prizes.²⁰ Buist was appointed a Cornet on Monday, 3 December 1827.²¹ George Buist would graduate from the military seminary before Sunday, 1 June 1828 although the exact date of his graduation is not stated in his military service record. However, what is known is that he was granted leave for 6 months to the Presidency via Bombay on Monday, 20 April 1829.²²

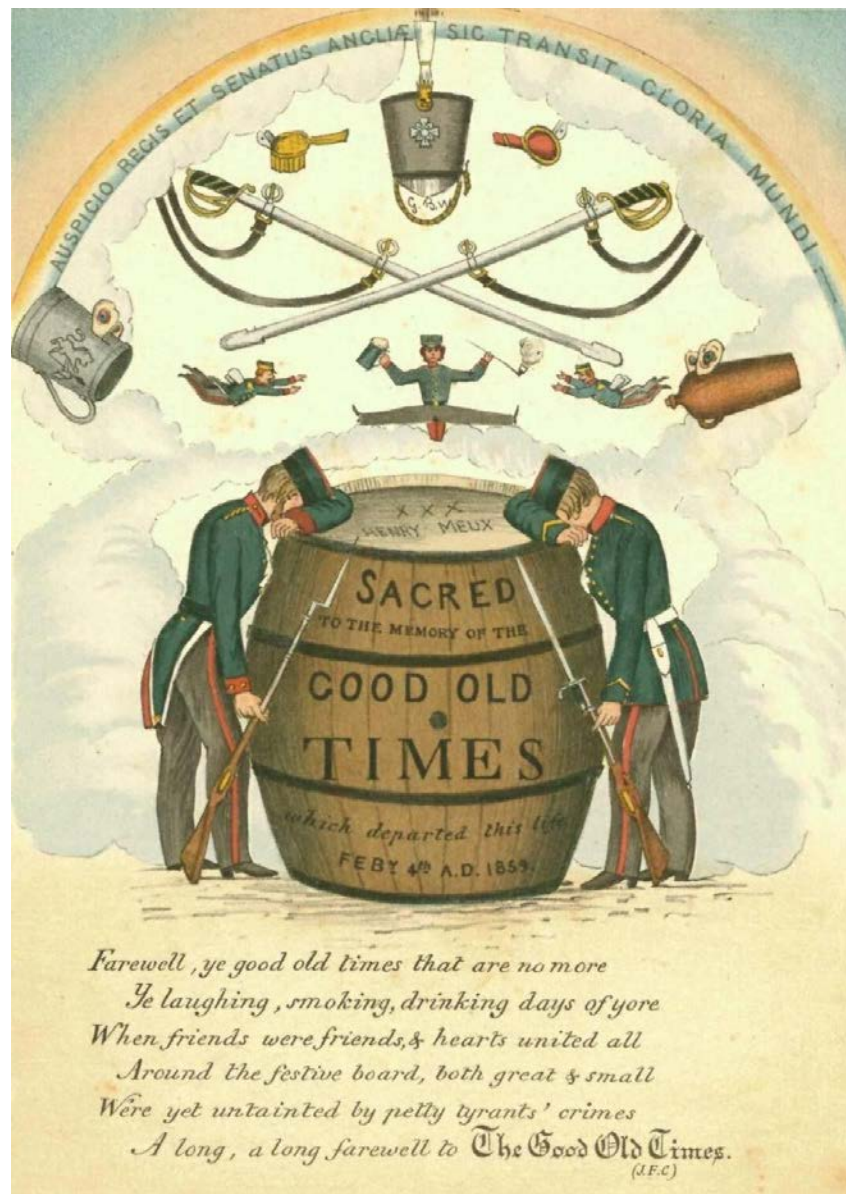


Fig.11. Nostalgic cartoon by Cadet George B. Wymer, and poem by Cadet John F. Cookesley, marking their passing out from Addiscombe in 1859, Public Domain Photograph

²⁰ En.wikipedia.org. Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addiscombe_Military_Seminary

²¹ Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

²² Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

Military Service in India

After receiving his orders on Monday, 20 April 1829 Buist was bound for Bombay, India.²³ During this time the East India Company began to maintain armies to each of its three main stations, or Presidencies of British India, at Calcutta (Bengal), Madras and Bombay. Buist was assigned to the Bengal Army specifically to its Light Cavalry Regiment for a very short time before re-enlisting on Thursday, 13 August 1829 at Calcutta.²⁴ Thusly he would spend the rest of his military days with the Bengal Army stationed at Calcutta.

The Bengal Army was the military force of the Bengal Presidency in India which was the largest of the three Presidencies. As a result, its governor was in effect the commander of the military forces. The caste system was recognized and practiced as much as possible in Bengal. The Bengal Army had a widespread reputation for lack of discipline, and it was not unusual for a lower-caste officer to defer to a high-caste sepoy.²⁵ A sepoy was the formal designation given to an Indian soldier in the service of the British Empire.

George Buist, after his re-enlistment on Thursday, 13 August 1829, was assigned to the 10th Light Cavalry of the Bengal Army as a Cornet.²⁶ A Cornet was a commissioned officer in a British cavalry troop who carried the standard. The 10th Light Cavalry was stationed at the Dum Dum Arsenal which was a British Royal Artillery armory north of Calcutta. The armory was a gun and shell factory established in 1801 in the name of the Gun Carriage Agency by the East India Company for repair and manufacture of gun carriages.²⁷ It was also the headquarters of the Bengal Artillery.

Marriage

Isabella Jane Mason was the daughter of Captain Thomas Mason who was stationed at Dum Dum Arsenal in Calcutta. Isabella was four years older than George Buist and was born in December of 1803 in Deal, Kent, England.²⁸ Buist would meet this young woman and soon they began dating. In a short time the couple married at St. Andrews Church in Calcutta on Thursday, 20 August 1829.²⁹

²³ Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

²⁴ Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

²⁵ Raugh, Harold. *The Victorians at War, 1815-1914: An Encyclopedia of British Military History*. ABC-CLIO Ltd. 2004. p. 46

²⁶ Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

²⁷ Sylhetiyouwelfareassociation.wordpress.com. Accessed at: Sylhetiyouwelfareassociation.wordpress.com/2013/10/11/dum-dum-cantonment

²⁸ Baptismal Record of Isabella Jane Mason, 27 January 1804, England Births and Christenings, 1528-1975, database, Family Search, 2010

²⁹ Marriage Record of George Buist, 20 August 1829, India Marriages, 1792-1948, database, Family Search, 2010

52-53
179

Marriages at Saint Andrew's Church Calcutta 1829

I, William Roper, do hereby declare that I am a Member of the Church of Scotland.

Signed / W. Roper

This declaration was made this fifteenth day of August one thousand eight hundred and twenty nine years before us.

Signed / Jas. Brown
W. J. Rodgers

X
William Roper bachelor and Elyn Wylton Spinster both of Calcutta were Married this fifteenth day of August one thousand eight hundred and twenty nine years before us.

This Marriage was solemnized between us,

Signed / W. Roper
Elyn Wylton

Signed / James Brown
Saml. Min. of St. Andrew's Church

In presence of

Signed / Jas. Brown
W. J. Rodgers

I, George Buist, bachelor, and Isabella Jane Massie, Spinster both of Calcutta were Married this twentieth day of August one thousand eight hundred and twenty nine years before us.

Signed / George Buist
Isabella Jane Massie

This Marriage was solemnized between us,

Signed / George Buist
Isabella Jane Massie

Signed / James Brown
Saml. Min. of St. Andrew's Church

In presence of

Signed / William Roper
James Roper
G. C. Staff

Fig.12. Marriage Record of George Buist, 20 August 1829, St. Andrews Church, Calcutta, India (Second entry) © The British Library



Fig.13. St. Andrews Church, Calcutta, India, Photograph Courtesy of the Calcutta.org

Back home in Scotland, the *Morning Post Newspaper* of Friday, 12 February 1830 reported the marriage by stating: "At Dum Dum, Cornet G. Buist, 10th Light Calvary to Isabella, daughter of Captain T. Mason, St. Andrews."³⁰ The couple would have 4 children. They were:

George William Mason born on Friday, 22 October 1830³¹ and died on Tuesday, 11 May 1880;³²

Isabella Margaret Fernie born on Monday, 3 March 1833³³

William Fraser born on Friday, 18 December 1835³⁴ and died on Monday, 1 January 1900;³⁵

Henry born on Tuesday, 21 July 1840 and died on Friday, 7 August 1840.³⁶

Mhow, Madhya Pradesh

By 1830 George Buist and the 10th Bengal Light Calvary were on the move and ordered to Mhow in the Madhya Pradesh district which was located south of Indore. Mhow used to be the headquarters of the 5th Mhow Division of the Southern Command during the British Raj.³⁷ It was here that George and Isabella Buist's first child was born on Friday, 22 October 1830.³⁸

³⁰ *Morning Post Newspaper*, 12 February 1830 p.4

³¹ Baptismal Record of George William Mason Buist, 7 January 1831, British Library, India Office Records, Reference Number N/1/29 f.105

³² Burial Record of George Buist, English Cemetery, Salto Oriental, 1869-1920, Entry 46

³³ Baptismal Record of Isabella Margaret Fernie Buist, 5 June 1833, British Library, India Office Records, Reference Number N/1/35 f.111

³⁴ Baptismal Record of William Fraser Buist, 31 March 1836, British Library, India Office Records, Reference Number N/1/44 f.67

³⁵ Death Record of William Fraser Buist, 1 January 1900, Edinburgh Newington Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 685/05 0010

³⁶ Burial Record of Henry Buist, 8 August 1840, British Library, India Office Records, Reference Number N/1/58 f.109

³⁷ En.wikipedia.org. Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mhow

³⁸ Baptismal Record of George William Mason Buist, 7 January 1831, British Library, India Office Records, Reference Number N/1/29 f.105



Fig.14. Map of Madhya Pradesh, India © Maps of India.com

The Buist family and the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry did not stay in the region for long as by 1832-33 they were ordered to Karnal in the Punjab region of India.

Karnal, Punjab

Karnal is a small city in the Indian state of Haryana situated in northern India. It was at Karnal that the couple's second child, Isabella Margaret Fernie Buist was born on Monday, 3 March 1833.³⁹

³⁹ Baptismal Record of Isabella Margaret Fernie Buist, 5 June 1833, British Library, India Office Records, Reference Number N/1/35 f.111

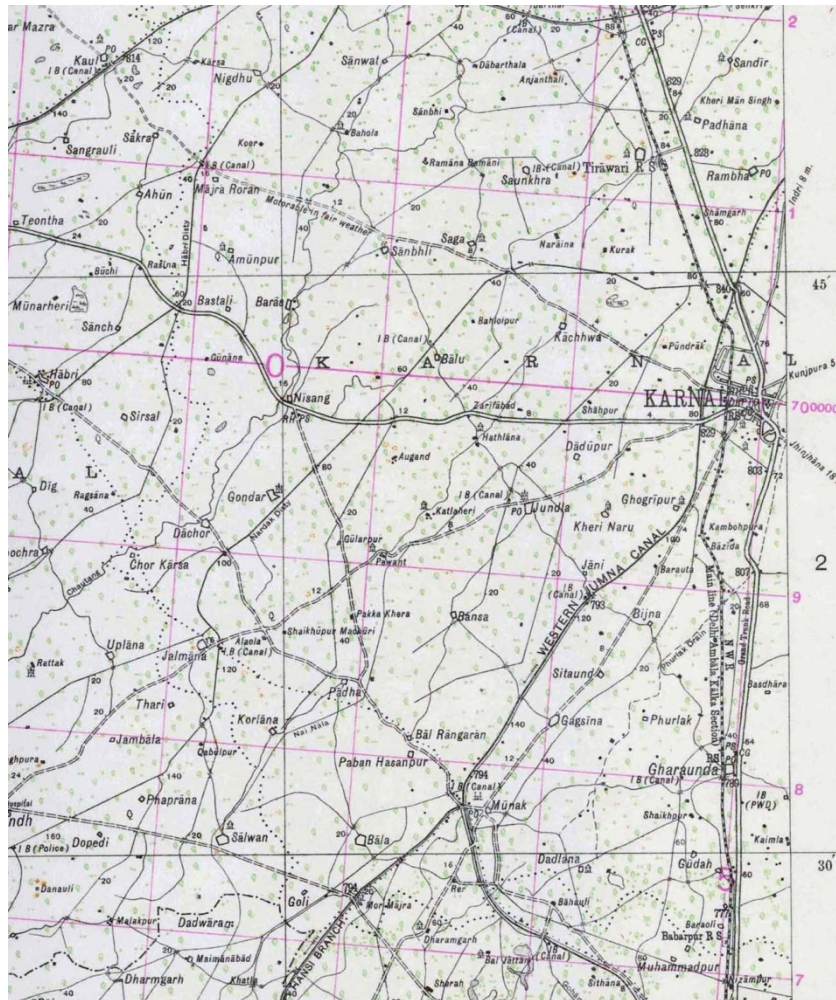


Fig.15. Map of Karnal, Punjab, India, Photograph Courtesy of University of Texas

Muttra, Uttar Pradesh

By 1835 the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry of the Bengal Army were ordered to Muttra in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Today the city is known as Mathura and is considered holy by the Hindus. It was at Muttra that their third child, William Fraser Buist was born on Friday, 18 December 1835.⁴⁰

Buist received orders on Friday, 29 January 1836 directing him to “receive charge of the recount horses from the Hipsa Stud on his arrival at Muttra and proceed with them to Nimach.”⁴¹ Nimach is a town in the Malwa region of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. This undoubtedly was many miles of travel especially on horseback and was quite a feat.

⁴⁰ Baptismal Record of William Fraser Buist, 31 March 1836, British Library, India Office Records, Reference Number N/1/44 f.67

⁴¹ Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

Promotion to Lieutenant

Subsequently, George Buist was appointed to Lieutenant of the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry on Wednesday, 17 February 1836.⁴²

The First Anglo-Afghan War and The Tragedy of Afghanistan

“Snow like powder from the sky softly falls,
When before Djelalabad a rider halts.
‘Who’s there’ - ‘A cavalrist from Britain’s army
A message from Afghanistan I carry.’

Afghanistan. So weakly he’d said.
Half the town around him had met;
The British commander, Sir Robert Sale,
Helped to dismount the man whose face was so pale.

Into a guard-house they guided him
And made him sit at the fire’s brim;
How warm was the fire, how bright was its shine,
He takes a deep breath, and begins to explain.

‘Thirteen thousand men we had been,
When our outset from Kabul was seen-
Now soldiers, leaders, women and bairn
They are betrayed, and frozen and slain...’

‘Like blindfold they’ll err and yet are so near,
The way to their safety, now let it them hear,
Play songs of old, of the homeland so bright;
Bugler, let thy tune carry far in the night.’
And they played and sang, and time passed by,
Song over song through the night they let fly,
The songs of their home so far and so dear,
And old Highland laments so mournful to hear.

They played all night and the following day,
They played like only love made them play;
The songs were still heard, but darkness did fall.
In vain is your watch, in vain is your call.

Those who should hear, they’ll hear nevermore,
Destroyed, dispersed is the proud hose of your;
With thirteen thousand their trail they began.
Only one man returned from Afghanistan.”

Theodor Fontane

Known as the First Anglo-Afghan War, this war was fought between the British East India Company and Afghanistan beginning in the winter of 1839. This war would be famous for the killing of 4,500 British and Indian soldiers, plus 12,000 of their camp followers, by Afghan tribal fighters.⁴³ During this period of time in British history, England was fearful that Russia would possibly invade India through Afghanistan

⁴² Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

⁴³ Baxter, Craig. “The First Anglo-Afghan War.” Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Afghanistan: A Country Study. Baton Rouge, LA: Claitors Publishing Division. ISBN 1-57980-744-5

thus setting the stage of competition for power and influence in Asia. England would extend its control over neighboring Afghanistan thus opposing Russian influence in the country. This conflict would become Lieutenant George Buist's first taste of battle and would ultimately lead to his demise.

A year before the war actually began, on Monday, 10 December 1838 set out from the Punjab, Lieutenant Buist was with the columns of the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry marching and riding towards Kabul, Afghanistan. Colonel Ranald Macdonell in his Letters of Reminiscence wrote: "At last our marching orders came, and were hailed with the greatest delight by both officers and men, who had all been chafing at our detention in the plains. Hope deferred had made the monotonous routine of cantonment life irksome in the extreme, so it was with feelings of the greatest relief and satisfaction that we started on our march from Ferozepore to Peshawar, under the command of Colonel Blair. Our orders were to push on without delay to join the force which was on the point of starting for the relief of the army returning from Cabul. And we did 'push on' accomplishing long marches through that dry and sandy country, swimming our horses over four of its formidable rivers, (Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab, and Jhelum) the fifth (Indus) we crossed on a bridge of boats, and we succeeded in reaching Peshawar in December."⁴⁴ By March of 1839 the British forces had crossed the Bolan Pass, reached the city of Quetta, and begun their march to Kabul.⁴⁵ They advanced through rough terrain, across deserts and 4,000 meter high mountain passes, but made good progress and finally set up camps at Kandahar, the second largest city in Afghanistan on Thursday, 25 April 1839.⁴⁶

On Monday, 22 July 1839, in a surprise attack, the British-led forces captured the fortress of Ghanzni located in the central-east part of the country and blew up one city gate and marched into the city which would achieve a decisive victory over the Afghans and by August of 1839 started their retreat from the country and returned to India. This retreat would prove to be short lived.⁴⁷

After leaving Afghanistan, Buist was ordered with the rest of the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry to Nusseerabad (Nasirabad) Rajesthan in central India where his fourth and last child was born on Tuesday, 21 July 1840.⁴⁸ With the British objective of securing Shuja again to the throne in Afghanistan, it was apparent that the Afghan shah's rule could only be maintained with the presence of a stronger British force after their withdrawal. The Afghans resented the British presence and the Shah's rule.⁴⁹ As Colonel Macdonell wrote: "Shah Sujah was re-instated as Amir in 1839, and about two years later the order was given for the breaking up of 'the Army of the Indus,' and the return of the troops to India. This decision brought defection, defeat and disaster in its train, which misfortunes we were all keenly desirous of now retrieving."⁵⁰

Jellalabad

By late 1841 British forces were once again called into action in Afghanistan. Buist, however and the rest of the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry did not partake in the Battle of Kabul and the Siege of Jellalabad. After months of relative inactivity in India, they were ordered into Afghanistan before April of 1842.

⁴⁴ Macdonell, Ranald, Colonel. Letters of Reminiscence. National Archives. Kew England

⁴⁵ En.wikipedia.org Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Anglo-Afghan_War

⁴⁶ En.wikipedia.org Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Anglo-Afghan_War

⁴⁷ En.wikipedia.org Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Anglo-Afghan_War

⁴⁸ Burial Record of Henry Buist, 8 August 1840, British Library, India Office Records, Reference Number N/1/58 f.109

⁴⁹ En.wikipedia.org Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Anglo-Afghan_War

⁵⁰ Macdonell, Ranald, Colonel. Letters of Reminiscence. National Archives. Kew England

Colonel Macdonell wrote: "Before dawn on the 5th April 1842, General Pollock's force advanced to the mouth of the Khyber Pass, which we found blocked up by a strong barricade of boulders and thorny bushes. This our gunners soon blew down, and while the infantry clambered up the steep and rugged hillsides, contesting every inch of ground, but gradually driving the enemy before them, and at last 'crowning the heights' on either side of the Pass, we held on our way below. At night we bivouacked in the Pass, lying on the ground at our horses' heads. We got to Jalalabad in about ten days, and to our bitter disappointment found that General Sale, who was besieged in that fort, had the very day before our arrival, sallied forth and defeated Akbar Khan, Dost Mahomed's son. The old Jacobite song with which the 13th Light Infantry (Somerset Light Infantry) played us into camp, 'Oh, but ye've been lan o'coming!' had a touch of sarcasm in its welcome that was not soothing to our wounded spirits. Leaving the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry and several other regiments in an entrenched camp at Gandamak to keep open communication and to collect supplies, the rest of the army went on to Cabul, and having rescued the prisoners, and destroyed a great part of the city. While encamped at Gandamak [with the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry], we came one day on the spot in a certain valley where the Army of the Indus, in fleeing from Cabul, had made its last stand. The place was completely covered with skeletons: there were many hundreds of them. The bodies had been stripped of their clothing, and their skins were perfectly dry on their bones, and yet some of them were recognized by their old comrades. It was a sad sight, and sadder still was the thought of that terrible flight in the depth of an Afghan winter, without tents or almost any protection from the bitter frost and snow. It was calculated that 4,500 men and 12,000 camp followers perished then, shot down, frost bitten or exhausted with cold and fatigue. Only one man, Dr. Brydon, a friend of mine, escaped to Jelalabad, of all the large body of men that left Cabul. We could not leave the skeletons as they were, so we made a huge cairn of them: so light were they, that I and others carried one in each hand."⁵¹ The young Lieutenant would have most likely seen this large display of the dead and probably helped in the clean-up operations.

After leaving Gandamak, Buist, along with the rest of his regiment moved to the British camp at Jellalabad where they would stay encamped.

⁵¹ Macdonell, Ranald, Colonel. Letters of Reminiscence. National Archives. Kew England

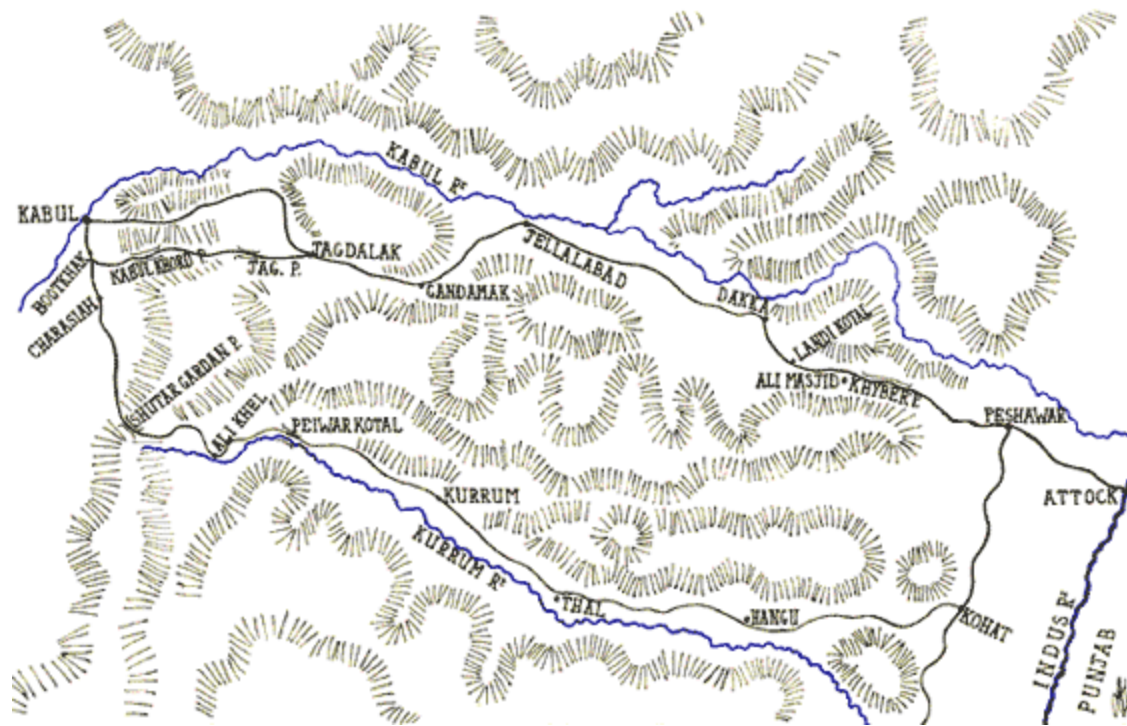


Fig.16. Map of Afghanistan showing Gandamak and Jellalabad, Photograph Courtesy of British Battles.com © British Battles.com

Death of Lieutenant George Buist

The 10th Bengal Light Cavalry was stationed at Camp Jellalabad in July of 1842 according to the service record of Lieutenant Buist.⁵² According to one source, the *London Morning Post Newspaper*: “At Jellalabad, on the 29th of July, of the bursting of an abscess, Lieutenant George Buist, 10th Bengal Light Cavalry.”⁵³ Another source, his monument inscription at St. Andrews Cathedral burial ground indicates that Buist was killed in action at Jellalabad.⁵⁴ Therefore it will never be known which source was correct with regards to exact cause of death of the young Lieutenant. His obituary notice appeared in the *Preston Chronicle Newspaper* dated Saturday, 15 October 1842: “On the 19th of July, at Jellalabad, Lieut. George Buist, of the 10th Bengal Cavalry, eldest son of Professor Buist, St. Andrews.”⁵⁵

It is presumed that his remains were shipped back to St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland and interned in the Buist family lot at St. Andrews Cathedral burial ground. His gravestone reads: “George Buist, Lieutenant of the 10th Bengal Native Cavalry died at Jellalabad in Afghanistan on the 29th July 1842.”

⁵² Service Record of George Buist, British Library 10R/L/MIL/10/28/429, London, England

⁵³ *London Morning Post Newspaper*, Saturday, 8 October 1842 p.4

⁵⁴ Chalmers, Class list; Hodson I.246; Monumental Inscriptions St. Andrews Cathedral burial ground

⁵⁵ *Preston Chronicle Newspaper*, Saturday, 15 October 1842 p.3



Fig.17. Grave of Lieutenant George Buist, St. Andrews Cathedral Burial Ground, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland, Photograph Courtesy of Dr. Iain Macintyre © 2013 Michael T. Tracy

Life after the Death of George Buist

Isabella Buist was back in Calcutta with her two surviving children, George and William. Upon learning of her husband's death, she immediately admitted her eldest son, George, who was 12 years of age at the time, to the Military Orphan (Upper) School at Kidderpore, Calcutta on Friday, 29 July 1842.⁵⁶ The Bengal Military Orphan Society provided orphans of officers care and housing.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Bengal Military Orphan Society 1820-1857 Records. 10R/L/196/23/7/7

⁵⁷ Purnokolkata.com. Accessed at: purnokolkata.com/2013/12/31/military-orphan-school-upper-kidderpore-calcutta-1850s



Fig.18. Military Orphan (Upper) School at Kidderpore, Calcutta, Photograph Courtesy of Captain R.B. Hill, 1850s, Gilman Collection, Accession Number 2005.100.9 48.21 (26)

Isabella's youngest son, William Fraser Buist was later admitted to the Military Orphan (Upper) School on Wednesday, 1 February 1843 when the child was 8 years of age.⁵⁸

NAMES OF CHILDREN.	Date of Birth.	Date of Admission.	Names of Fathers.	When written to about only settlement	To whom Pensions payable.	Date of Discharge	REMARKS.
Bagatt. Ella Louise	26 th January 1843	1 st Feb 1843	Lt. H. G.		Mother all		P.P.
Sarah Hannah	10 th Aug 1842		Bagatt.		Louise Bagatt.		P.P.
Quist. George William Russell	22 nd Oct 1832	29 th Feb 1842	Lieutenant		Mother all	22 nd Oct 1847 being 17 years of age	
William Fraser	10 th Dec 1835	1 st Feb 1843	George Russell	1 st Jan 1852	Buist		P.P.

Fig.19. Bengal Military Orphan Society Records of George and William Buist, Photograph Courtesy of The British Library (10R/L/196/23/7/7)

The two children would stay at this orphan school in Calcutta for a number of years. George being the oldest was discharged on Friday, 22 October 1847 being 17 years of age and William was subsequently discharged on Saturday, 18 December 1852 also being 17 years of age at that time.⁵⁹

Meanwhile Isabella Buist returned to England sometime before June of 1845 while her two children were in Calcutta, India, settling in the small town of Newcastle Upon Tyne in Northumberland.⁶⁰ Accordingly in June of 1845 Isabella Buist was granted a pension of 300 pounds by the East India

⁵⁸ Bengal Military Orphan Society 1820-1857 Records. 10R/L/AG/23/7/7

⁵⁹ Bengal Military Orphan Society 1820-1857 Records. 10R/L/AG/23/7/7

⁶⁰ PCC Administrations relating to India 1840-1857. Families in British India Society. Accessed at: fibis.org

Company, the company stating: "of St. Andrews in North Britain, Lieut. George Buist, 10th Bengal Light Cavalry at Jellalabad died 29 July 1842, to Isabella Jane Buist of St. Andrews the widow, 300 pounds in North Britain."⁶¹ According to the 1851 England Census for Newcastle Upon Tyne, St. Andrew, Northumberland, England Isabella is 40 years of age, a lodger and widow and is an annuitant residing with her younger son, William who is 15 and a scholar.⁶²

Death of Isabella Jane Buist

Sometime later Isabella Jane Buist relocated back to Scotland residing at James Place in Broughty Ferry, Angus.⁶³ Isabella Buist died on Christmas Day, Saturday, 25 December 1852 at her residence at the age of 49.⁶⁴ She was buried in the Buist family lot in St. Andrews Cathedral burial ground in St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland on Thursday, 30 December 1852.⁶⁵

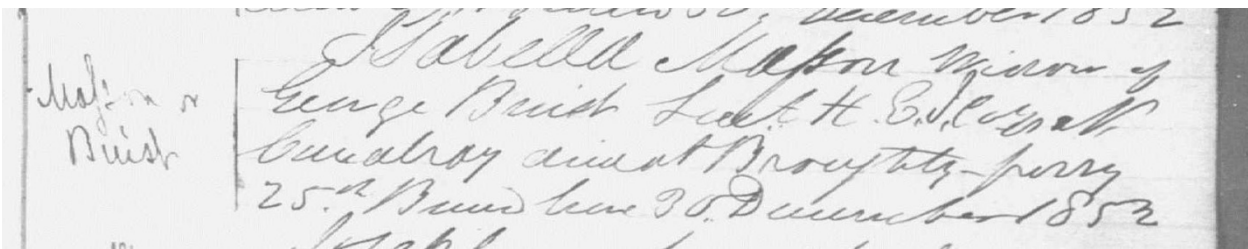


Fig.20. Burial Record of Isabella Jane Buist, 30 December 1852, St. Andrews Cathedral burial ground, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland, Crown Copyright

Her two sons George and William Buist would have interesting lives of their own. George became an engineer and settled in Salto Banda Oriental, South America, modern day Uruguay and died there on Monday, 10 May 1880 at the age of 49.⁶⁶ Similarly, William Buist became a land owner and traveled to Uruguay like his brother and raised his family there. He died on Monday, 1 January 1900 in Edinburgh, Scotland at the age of 64.⁶⁷

⁶¹ PCC Administrations relating to India 1840-1857. Families in British India Society. Accessed at: fibis.org

⁶² 1851 England Census for Newcastle Upon Tyne, St. Andrew, Northumberland, England; Page 52

⁶³ Inventory of Isabella Jane Buist, 28 March 1853, Dundee Sheriff Court SC45/31/10

⁶⁴ Inventory of Isabella Jane Buist, 28 March 1853, Dundee Sheriff Court SC45/31/10

⁶⁵ Burial Record of Isabella Jane Buist, 30 December 1852, St. Andrews & St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0210 0201

⁶⁶ Burial Record of George Buist, 11 May 1880, English Cemetery, Salto Banda Oreintal 1869-1920, Entry Number 46

⁶⁷ Death Record of William Fraser Buist, 1 January 1900, Edinburgh Newington Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 685/05 0010

The eldest son of the esteemed Reverend Dr. George Buist certainly lived up to his father's expectations and pursued a life in the military service of the East India Company. He witnessed and experienced life in a strange foreign land known as British India during the height and power of the East India Company. Buist traveled through many parts of the country on horseback with his fellow soldiers of the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry. He was the cornet of the regiment and most likely carried the standard proudly through unknown parts of this strange but exciting land of British India.

Soon after arriving in Calcutta, Buist met a Captain's daughter while stationed at Dum Dum. They were married shortly later and would have a family of four children. George Buist was promoted to Lieutenant of the 10th Bengal Light Cavalry at the age of 29 and as an officer lead his men through the crowded streets of Calcutta; through the clouds of the mountain peaks of the Himalayas; through the many Hindu temples dotted across the country and crossed the famous Ganges River on more than one occasion.

The First Anglo-Afghan War otherwise known as Auckland's Folly was the first war in the "Great Game" or "Tournament of Shadows" as it is known to the Russians. It was a strategic economic and political rivalry and conflict between the British and Russian empires for supremacy in Central Asia at the expense of Afghanistan.⁶⁸ In his book "Outline of the Operations of the British Troops in Scinde and Afghanistan," Dr. George Buist, a distant kinsmen of the Lieutenant's wrote: "Of the first campaign, no general account is to be found comprised in any single work; and the reader who desires to make himself acquainted with the operations of 1839, must not only study with care those just alluded to, but must peruse, besides, many elaborate and tedious official papers, before he can have anything like a distinct conception of the subject."⁶⁹ Buist further elaborated: "Throughout the greater portion of this period the present writer had been occupied as Editor of the *Bombay Times*. Constantly engaged in examining, sifting, and comparing accounts from the seat of war, reconciling discrepancies, correcting or rejecting statements which appeared over-coloured or inaccurate, and then reducing them to a narrative form for a bi-weekly paper, to be subsequently re-examined, corrected and abridged for a monthly publication... [I] have warmly and fearlessly assailed the dishonest and aggressive foreign policy alike of Lord Ellenborough as Lord Auckland, aware that, in doing, he [the author] should incur the displeasure of the men of both parties who might happen to sour his speculations with perusal."⁷⁰

In the First Anglo-Afghan War, the British lost nearly 20,000 troops including a young Lieutenant named George Buist of St. Andrews. In 1843 British Army Chaplain G.R. Gleig wrote a memoir of the disastrous First Anglo-Afghan War, of which he was one of the very few survivors: "a war begun for no wise purpose, carried on with a strange mixture of rashness and timidity, brought to a close after suffering and disaster, without much glory attached either to the government which directed, or the great body of troops which waged it. Not one benefit, political or military, was acquired with this war. Our eventual evacuation of the country resembled the retreat of an army defeated."⁷¹

⁶⁸ En.wikipedia.org. Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Game

⁶⁹ Buist, George. Outline of the Operations of the British Troops in Scinde and Afghanistan, Betwixt Nov. 1838 and Nov. 1841. Bombay: Times Office, 1843. P.IV

⁷⁰ Buist, George. Outline of the Operations of the British Troops in Scinde and Afghanistan, Betwixt Nov. 1838 and Nov. 1841. Bombay: Times Office, 1843. P.IV

⁷¹ En.wikipedia.org Accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Anglo-Afghan_War

Presently there stands a monument to the fallen located at Dum Dum in Calcutta. It is located next to the entrance of the Dum Dum Ordnance Factory.⁷²

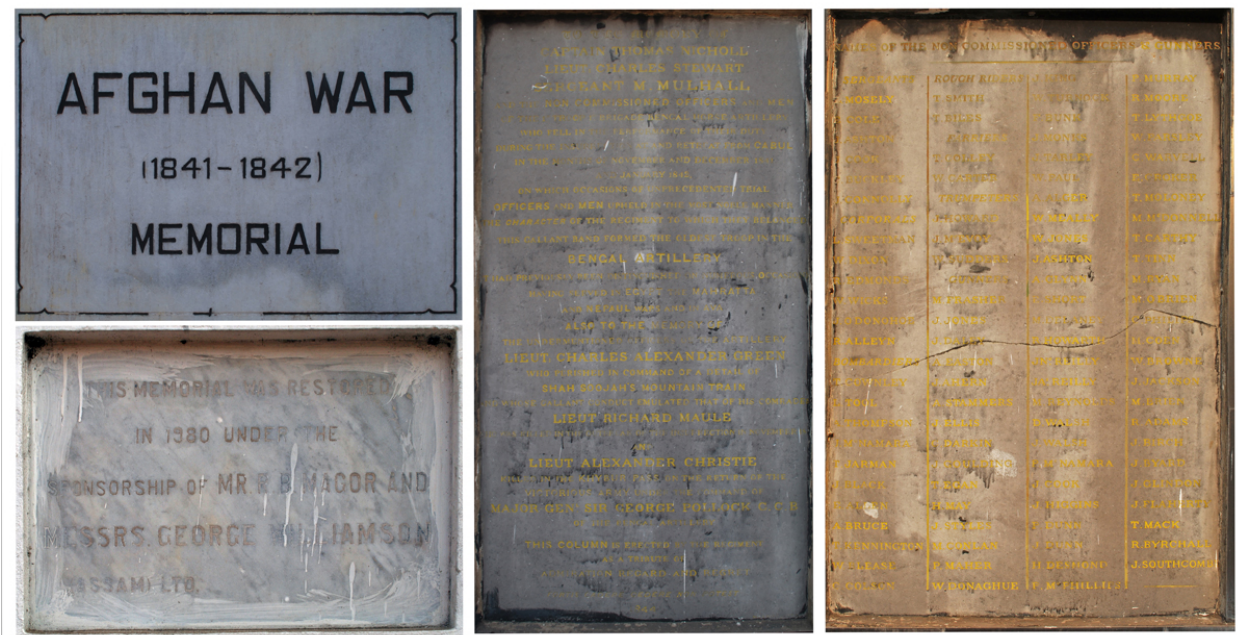


Fig.21. Anglo-Afghan War Memorial, Dum Dum, Calcutta, India, Photograph Courtesy of Rangan-datta.info

This white monument stands as a fitting tribute to the many fallen of the First Anglo-Afghan War and to a brave young Lieutenant named George Buist who was a son, a brother, a husband and father. The legacy of this soldier and family member will now never be forgotten and is enshrined forever in the pages of history. In vain was your watch, in vain was your call. George Buist is warmly commemorated here in grateful esteem and recognition by his distant cousin, Michael T. Tracy. This work is dedicated to the Memory of George Buist, Lieutenant of the 10th Bengal Light Calvary.

Memoratus in aeternum (Forever Remembered)

Copyright © 2016 Michael T. Tracy

⁷² Rangandatta.wordpress.com. Accessed at: Rangandatta.worldpress.com/2015/02/26/afghan-war-memorial-dum-dum-kolkata-calcutta/#more-9040