



The Last of the Bengal Lancers

Francis Ingall

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One of the last of the famed Bengal Lancers, Brigadier Ingall has spent most of his life in India and Pakistan. When he first went to India in 1929, all the officers were English and all the enlisted men were Indian (Hindu, Sikh and Moslem). India was part of the British Empire and the Army was basically involved with hunting down outlaw bands of horsemen and keeping them in order. One of his first experiences there was leading a charge on horseback (swords in hand) of the 5th D.C.O. Lancers in the battle of Karawal near the Khyber Pass. Later, in the Second World War, he commanded the 6th Lancers in a drive through northern Italy. By this time he had traded their horses for light armour (manufactured by General Motors), but the hazards were no less great. In one 2-hour punch, Ingall's forces cut a swathe through the remnants of the three German Divisions and penetrated 50 miles into enemy territory. For this he won the DSO. He was also awarded an OBE by King George VI for his service as founder and head of the Pakistan Military Academy which he was invited to found by no less person than Mohammad Ali Jinnah himself. Ingall serves as the academy's Commandant until 1951. Since then he has revisited the area several times as an honoured guest of the state. In 1982 he was appointed Honorary Council General of Pakistan, in California, where he now lives, by its president General Zia-ul-Haq, who described Ingall as 'one of the founding fathers of our army.' During his many years in India and Pakistan he knew and worked with the areas most important dignitaries such as Lord Mountbatten and Lord Ismay, Gandhi and Nehru. This is an autobiography full of incident and humour which will delight not only the old and bold but all those who enjoy reading about the last days of the Raj.

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