

THE QUETTA HERITAGE

R

Pending completion of buildings at Quetta, the College was temporarily established at Devlali, utilising the buildings in which the Military Hospital and some portion of School of Artillery are now located. The first entrance exam was held on 15 May 1905 and the first course of two years' duration commenced on the 1st of July the same year. The first Commandant was Brig Gen AWL Bayly, CB, DSO, a Camberley graduate.

In 1907, the College moved to Quetta and was officially opened on 1st of June, the same year, by Maj Gen (later Lt Gen) HL Smith-Dorrien, who was then commanding the 4th (Quetta) Division. The aim of the College was to produce officers who could organise all the necessary staff arrangements that spell success in war.

The Staff College, Quetta, maintained close liaison with Camberley and even adopted the Owl with the motto "Tam Marte Quam Minerva" as its own.

The year 1906 saw the formation of a General Staff in the British Army. All General Staff officers were essentially to be Staff College graduates and were to be rewarded by accelerated promotions. Hence, there was keener competition to seek entry to the Staff College. These officers came to be regarded as the brains-trust of the army. Their role was to advise on strategically important matters, supervise training of officers and men, study military plans, collect and collate military intelligence and direct the general policy in army matters.

The Staff College, Quetta, closed down after the outbreak of the First World War, on 15 September 1915. The accommodation was transformed into a Cadet College to train young men for grant of commission in the British and Indian armies. It was only in 1919 that the College started functioning again.



The building in Devlali, where the College was temporarily started in 1905.



Gen Sir Claude Auchinleck, C-in-C India, meets the staff of the Staff College, Quetta. Seen talking to Lt Col JN Chaudhri. OBE (later COAS).



*Gen Sir Auchinleck, C-in-C India, with
Maj Gen Irwin, Commandant. Staff College,
Quetta, Nov 1945.*

Quetta had its share of brilliant students and instructors. FM Slim attended the two-year course in 1926. Field Marshals Auchinleck and Montgomery were Chief Instructors between 1932 and 1937, in the rank of Col. The first King's Commissioned Indian Officer (KCIO) to attend the 1933-34 Staff Course was Capt KM Cariappa, later the first Indian Commander-in-Chief and FM.

The next KCIO to get his 'psc' was Capt (later Lt Gen) Kalwant Singh of the 1st Punjab Regiment, who attended the 1936-37 Staff Course. He was followed next year by Capt Thakur Sheodatt Singh of 16th Cavalry and Thakur Nathu Singh of the 7th Rajput Regiment. The first one-year course began in 1938. It was attended by Capt PN Thapar of the 1st Punjab Regiment, later Chief of the Army Staff, Capt Naranjan Singh Gill of the 19th Hyderabad Regiment and Capt Sardar BS Chimni of the Royal Army Service Corps.

Several future Army and Air Force Chiefs, FM, Heads of State and future Commandants of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, attended the short war courses at Quetta between 1939 - 46.



The swimming pool at Staff College, Quetta.



View of Staff College, Quetta, 1941.

The Directing Staff Library at the Staff College, Quetta, 1941

