

Razmak Brigade photograph album

Ms. Coll. 1304

Finding aid prepared by Kelin Baldrige.

Last updated on May 23, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 May 8

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Title	Razmak Brigade photograph album
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1304
Date	1930s
Extent	0.1 linear feet (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	This photograph album, created by an unidentified British soldier, contains pictures from the Razmak Brigade (located along the North West Frontier of India, near Afghanistan) during the 1930s, likely during the Waziristan campaign. The album documents the wartime realities and daily life of the soldiers and locals in the region.

Cite as:

Razmak Brigade photograph album, 1930s, Ms. Coll. 1304, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

The Razmak Brigade was an infantry formation of the British Army located along the North West Frontier of India, near Afghanistan. The Brigade was formed as early as the 1920s and hosted soldiers through the Second World War. Razmak is at a high elevation, around 7,000 feet and today is part of Pakistan.

The British soldier who created this unbound photograph album is unidentified. These photographs were probably taken during the Waziristan campaign, during which the British Army fought against the Fakir of Ipi from 1936 to 1939. According to the *Telegraph*, "Fakir, born Mirza Ali Khan in the village of Ipi in 1898, was a mullah who managed, after centuries of internecine conflict, to unite the warring tribes of the mountainous province of Waziristan." In late 1936, the British moved troops through the Khaisora Valley, from the garrison at Razmak to the east, but the troops were attacked and forced to retreat, which increased support for the Fakir of Ipi. As a result, the British increased the number of troops (both British and Indian) in the area to reinforce the garrisons at Razmak, Bannu, and Wana. The British Army faced guerrilla warfare and the Fakir of Ipi was never captured. However, his support did begin to wane by late 1937, ultimately leading to the end of the conflict.

Scope and Contents

This disbound photograph album contains pictures taken by an unidentified British soldier while serving at the Razmak Brigade during the 1930s, likely during the Waziristan campaign. The album documents the wartime realities and daily life of the soldiers and locals in the region. There are many pictures of actual combat and/or training, including bombings, gunmen in action, a crashed plane, tanks and trucks captured from up close and from a distance with their surrounding scenery, prisoners, armed men not in uniform, and the resulting destruction. In addition, there are many pictures capturing daily life, including the sleeping quarters and tents of soldiers, portraits and group shots of both British and Indian soldiers, documentation of a Hindu funeral, a celebration with dancing, men and women in prayer and meditation, wrestling matches, and leisure activities such as sports, water skiing, and boating. Finally, there is also extensive documentation of architecture and landscape. While the majority of the photographs were taken in India, there are several images taken in Europe, probably while the creator was on leave, including two images of Paris, one of Rome, one of Edinburgh, and two of Berlin.

There are handwritten captions in the album; however, many are fading and/or the handwriting is illegible. Readable captions are frequently fairly vague, documenting "outposts," "encampments" "columns," and "peace conferences," without any additional specific details. Similarly, captions such as "in action," "bombing villages," "training," and "marching" can be found under photographs that show soldiers actively engaged in military actions. The creator's terse captioning is often tinged with humor or understatement--several photographs are captioned "traffic control" and there is a photograph of a downed airplane captioned "bad luck." Several photographs taken of landmarks with signage include Wucha Jawar Camp, "Frontier of India," and Avantisvara Temple.

The pages of the album are loose and there is no indication of the type of binding--or if the pages were ever bound into a volume. There are several photo corners without photographs, but despite a few missing photographs, the volume contains more than 200 photographs documenting a soldier's experiences in India during the 1930s.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 May 8

Finding aid prepared by Kelin Baldrige.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Source of Acquisition

Purchased, 2000.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

At the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts:
Razmak Brigade photograph album, circa 1936-1938, Ms. Coll. 1174

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Great Britain. Army.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Photograph albums
- Photographs

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- India--History--British occupation, 1765-1947
- India--History--British occupation, 1765-1947--Photographs
- India--Photographs
- Razmak (Pakistan)
- Waziristan (Pakistan)

SUBJECT(S)

- Armed forces
- Military

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Photograph album, 1930s.	1	1-2