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**'Report on the Persian Army compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the
Quarter Master General's Department in India by Lieutenant J.A. Douglas 2nd
Bengal Lancers'**

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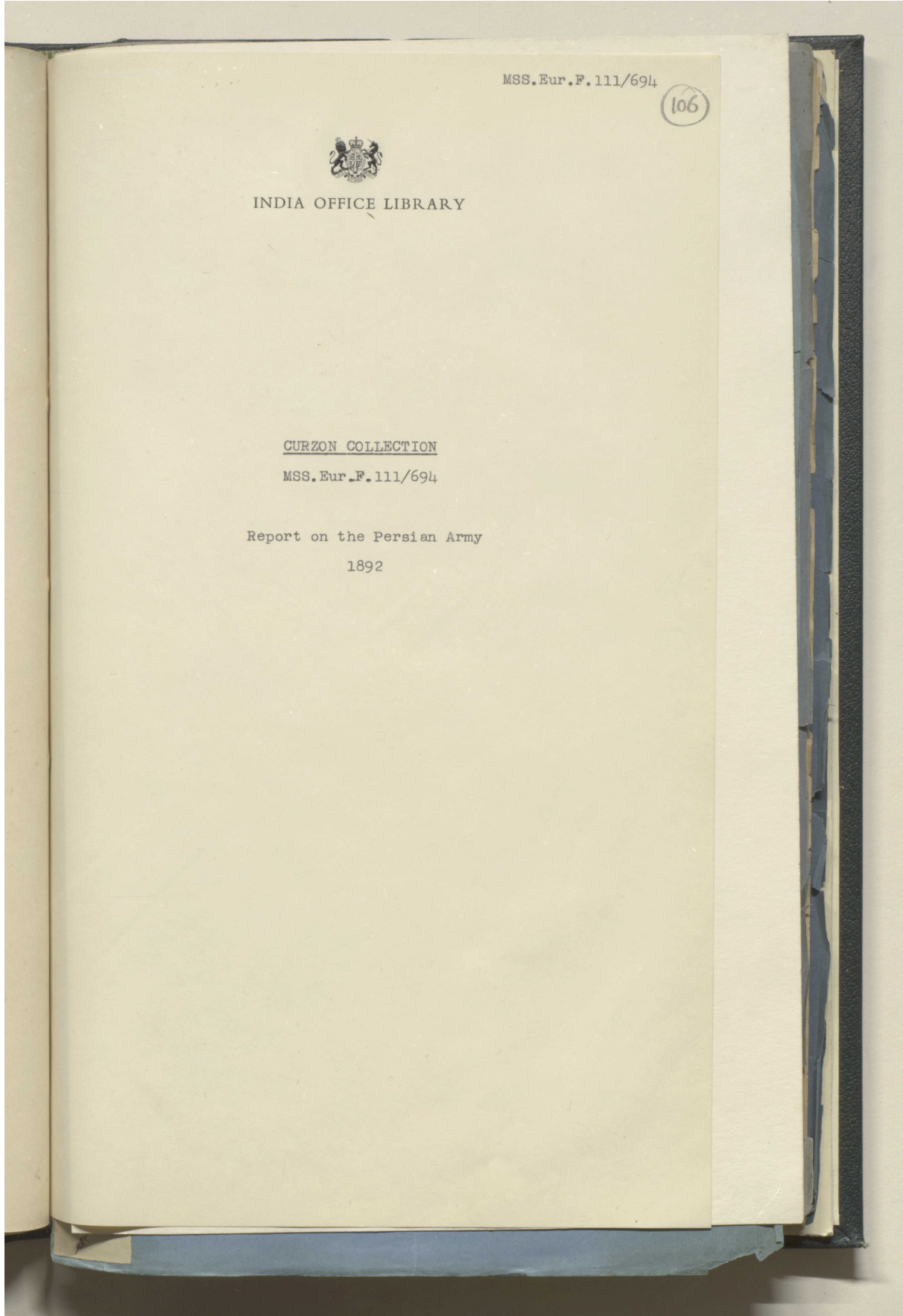
About this record

This file is a report on the structure of the Persian Army. Compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master General's Department in India by Lieutenant James Archibald Douglas, the report gives the British perspective of the strength and weaknesses of the Persian Army.

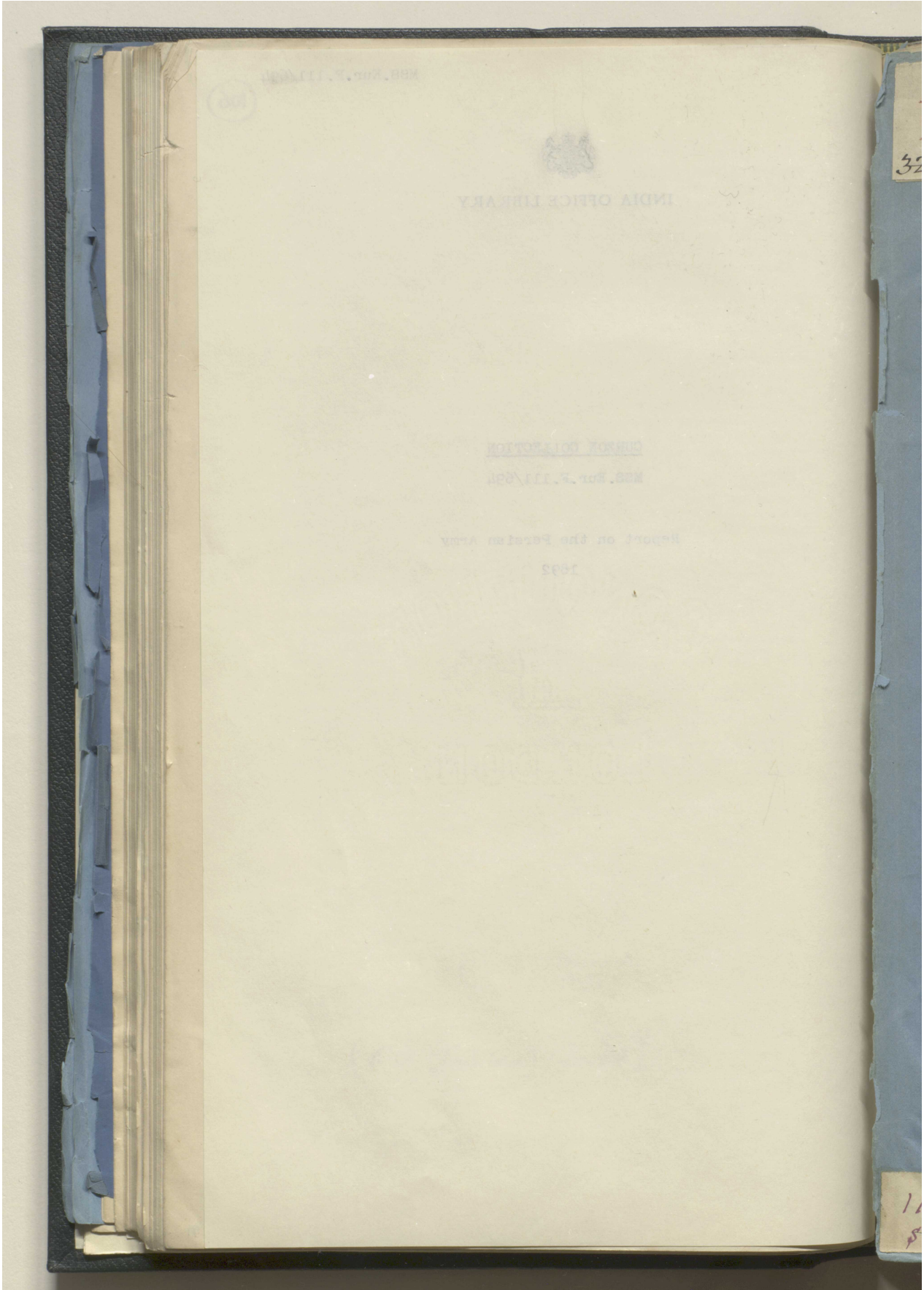
The report is broken down into: infantry (organization, strength, method of recruiting, armament); semi-regular cavalry (Cossack brigade, Russian officers); irregular cavalry (General Gordon's opinion); artillery (mule batteries, artillery horses); miscellaneous bodies (militia, camel artillery, the Austrian corps); recapitulation of strength distribution (breech-loading rifles, Werndl rifles; Berdan rifles, Chassepot rifles, Gobelin rifles, magazine rifles, and breech-loading ammunition); the army's pay; the army's uniforms; the state of the army; fighting campaigns against the Bakhtiaris, Lurs, and Arab tribes.

Included is a slip regarding the custody and disposal of secret documents (f 108).

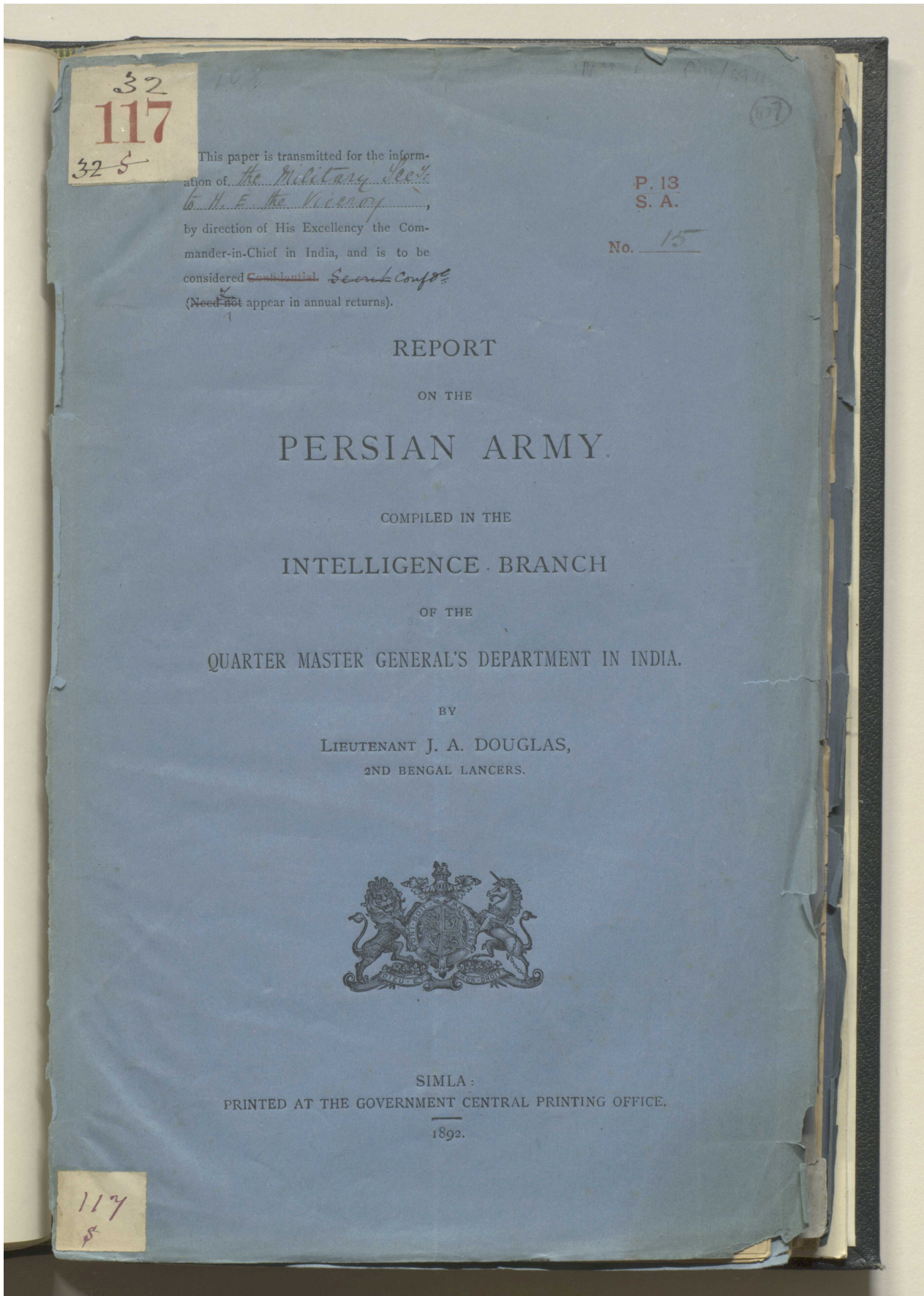
'Report on the Persian Army compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter
Master General's Department in India by Lieutenant J.A. Douglas 2nd Bengal
Lancers' [106r] (1/22)



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Lancers' [106v] (2/22)



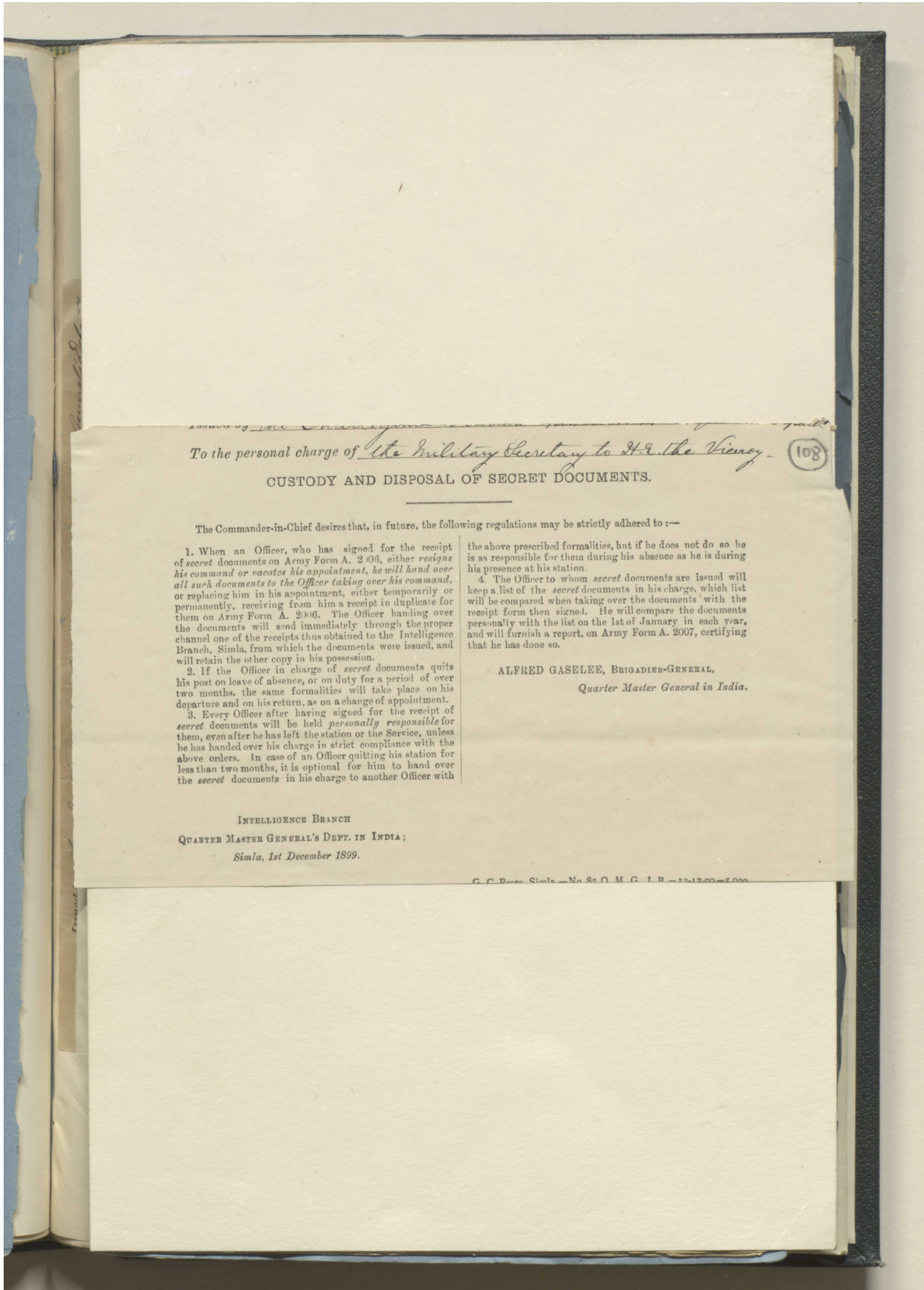
'Report on the Persian Army compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master General's Department in India by Lieutenant J.A. Douglas 2nd Bengal Lancers' [107r] (3/22)



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'Report on the Persian Army compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master General's Department in India by Lieutenant J.A. Douglas 2nd Bengal Lancers' [108r] (5/22)



To the personal charge of *The Military Secretary to H.R. the Viceroy* - (108)

CUSTODY AND DISPOSAL OF SECRET DOCUMENTS.

The Commander-in-Chief desires that, in future, the following regulations may be strictly adhered to:—

1. When an Officer, who has signed for the receipt of secret documents on Army Form A. 2006, either resigns his command or vacates his appointment, he will hand over all such documents to the Officer taking over his command, or replacing him in his appointment, either temporarily or permanently, receiving from him a receipt in duplicate for them on Army Form A. 2006. The Officer handing over the documents will send immediately through the proper channel one of the receipts thus obtained to the Intelligence Branch, Simla, from which the documents were issued, and will retain the other copy in his possession.
2. If the Officer in charge of secret documents quits his post on leave of absence, or on duty for a period of over two months, the same formalities will take place on his departure and on his return, as on a change of appointment.
3. Every Officer after having signed for the receipt of secret documents will be personally responsible for them, even after he has left the station or the Service, unless he has handed over his charge in strict compliance with the above orders. In case of an Officer quitting his station for less than two months, it is optional for him to hand over the secret documents in his charge to another Officer with

the above prescribed formalities, but if he does not do so he is as responsible for them during his absence as he is during his presence at his station.

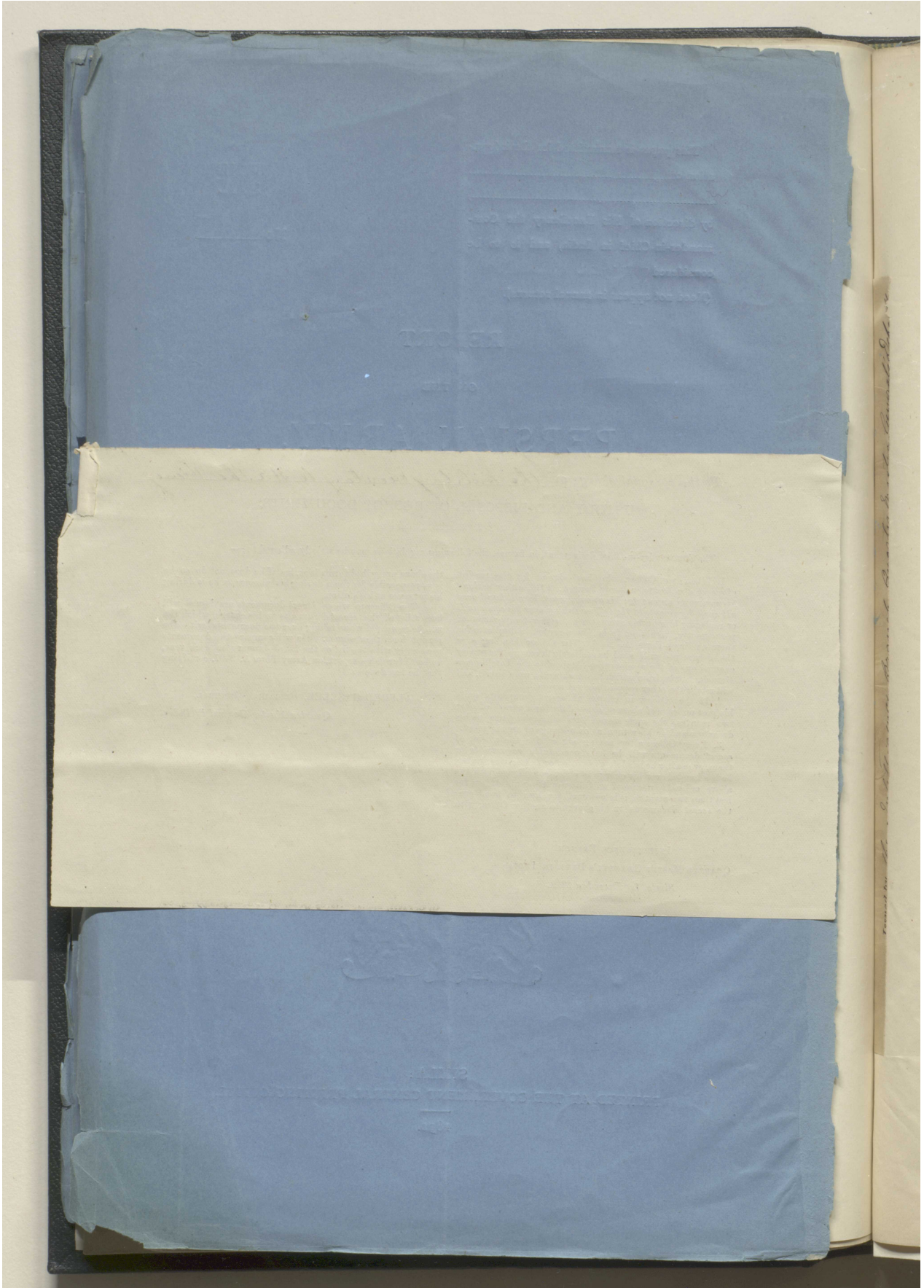
4. The Officer to whom secret documents are issued will keep a list of the secret documents in his charge, which list will be compared when taking over the documents with the receipt form then signed. He will compare the documents personally with the list on the 1st of January in each year, and will furnish a report, on Army Form A. 2007, certifying that he has done so.

ALFRED GASELEE, BRIGADIER-GENERAL,
Quarter Master General in India.

INTELLIGENCE BRANCH
QUARTER MASTER GENERAL'S DEPT. IN INDIA;
Simla, 1st December 1899.

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Lancers' [108v] (6/22)



'Report on the Persian Army compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter
Master General's Department in India by Lieutenant J.A. Douglas 2nd Bengal
Lancers' [109r] (7/22)

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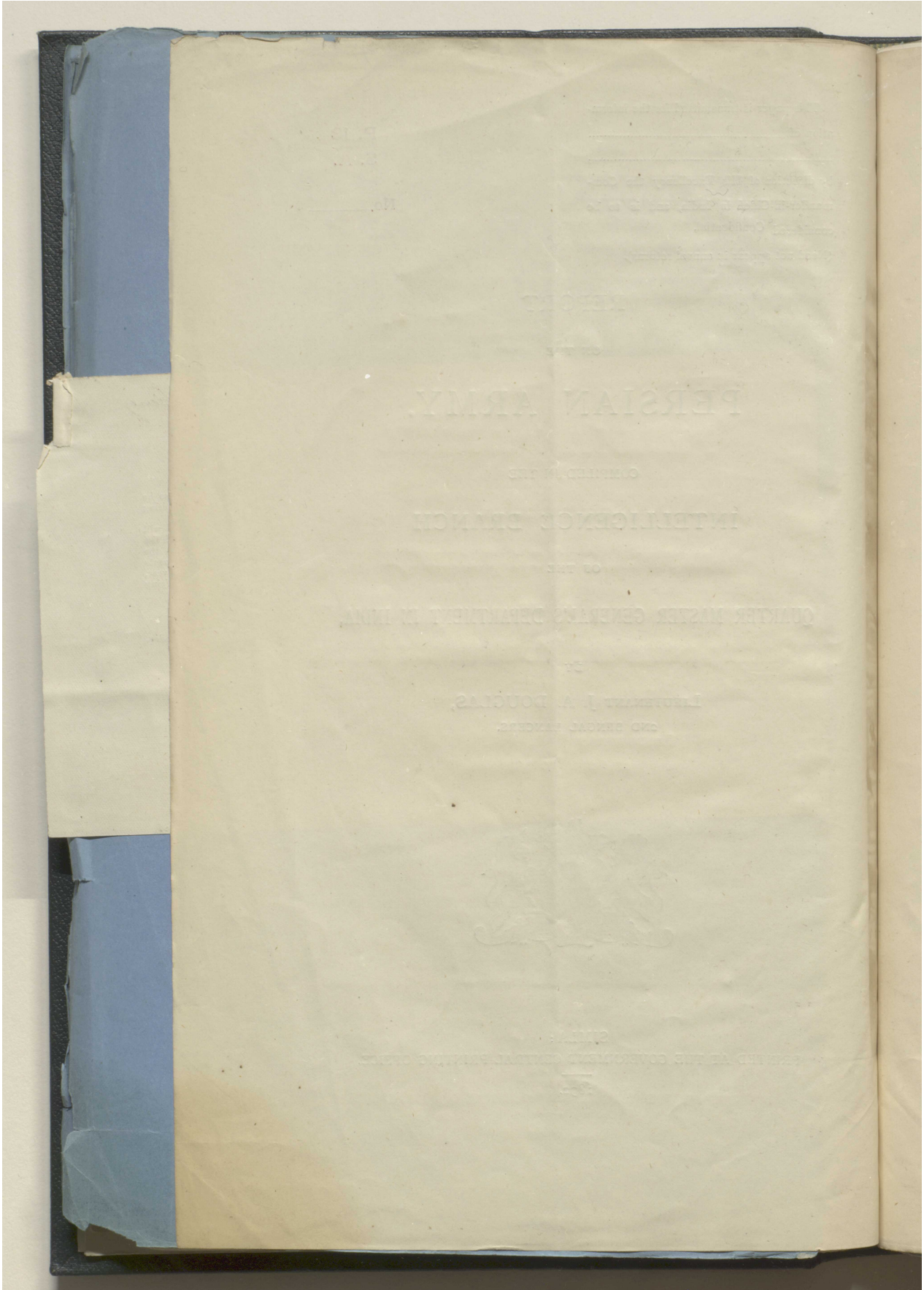
No. _____

REPORT
ON THE
PERSIAN ARMY.
COMPILED IN THE
INTELLIGENCE BRANCH
OF THE
QUARTER MASTER GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT IN INDIA,
BY
LIEUTENANT J. A. DOUGLAS,
2ND BENGAL LANCERS.

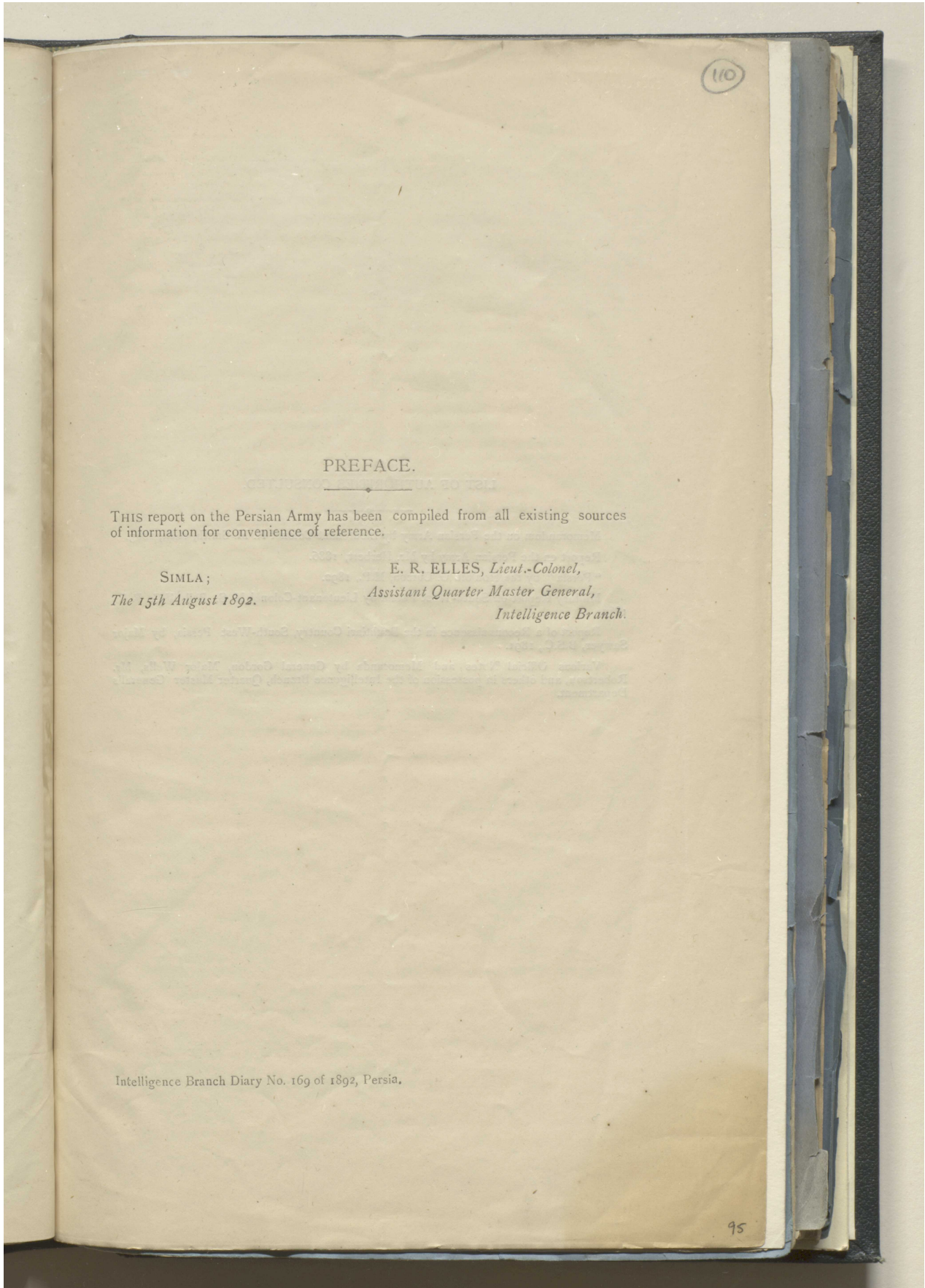


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Lancers' [110r] (9/22)



'Report on the Persian Army compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter
Master General's Department in India by Lieutenant J.A. Douglas 2nd Bengal
Lancers' [110v] (10/22)

LIST OF AUTHORITIES CONSULTED.

- Memorandum on the Persian Army by Lieutenant-Colonel R. M. Smith, R.E., 1883.
Report on the Persian Army by Mr. Herbert, 1886.
"Persia" by the Hon'ble G. Curzon, M.P., 1892.
Military Report on South-West Persia by Lieutenant-Colonel M. S. Bell, V.C., R.E.,
1885.
Report of a Reconnaissance in the Bakhtiari Country, South-West Persia, by Major
Sawyer, B.S.C., 1891.
Various Official Notes and Memoranda by General Gordon, Major Wells, Mr.
Robertson, and others in possession of the Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's
Department.

'Report on the Persian Army compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master General's Department in India by Lieutenant J.A. Douglas 2nd Bengal Lancers' [111r] (11/22)

REPORT
ON THE
PERSIAN ARMY.

The Official Army List of the Shah, published in the *Sal Nameh* or Annual Gazette, gives the total strength of the army as 200,000—150,000 in the regular army, and 50,000 in the militia and reserves. These figures, however, are based entirely upon imagination, and are utterly devoid of meaning.

The Persian army consists of—

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| (1) Regular infantry. | (3) Irregular cavalry. |
| (2) Semi-regular cavalry. | (4) Artillery. |
| (5) Miscellaneous bodies. | |

Organization—The infantry consists nominally of about 80 regiments grouped in "tomans." Of the regiments composing a toman, the first is styled "Bahaderan" or Grenadiers, and the last "Mukhberan" or Chasseurs. This arrangement, however, is purely nominal, and the only real unit is the "Fauj" or one battalion regiment.

Of these regiments one-half are on furlough at their homes, and the other half are embodied. This at least is the system, but in reality the actual numbers serving with the colours is much less, and the regiments embodied have seldom more than 500 to 700 present out of a nominal strength of 800 or 1,000.

Strength.—Colonel Smith in 1883 gave the nominal strength of the infantry as 64,500 and the actual strength, or number liable to be called out for service, as 35,400, and the numbers actually serving as 18,000 to 20,000; Mr. Herbert, in his report in 1886, gives 26,100 effective, *i.e.*, actually on service, out of 85 regiments of a nominal strength of 800 to 1,000 each; and the Hon'ble G. Curzon states that in 1891 the nominal strength was 63,700 and the effective strength 25,000, while the number actually serving with the colours was considerably less than the latter figure. He states that the total under arms in that year (1891) was not more than 13,000 at the most.

Method of recruiting, &c.—The regiments are all local, a certain district furnishing a regiment, to which each tribe or village supplies its quota. There is, however, no fixed proportion between the number of soldiers and that of inhabitants. Some districts are heavily taxed in that respect; others not at all. The villagers themselves generally choose the recruits, and make an agreement to pay him or his family so much per mensem while he is serving with the colours. This local payment is called *khanehwari*, and varies according to the wealth of the village, from 3 to 30 tomans a year, the average being about 8 or 10 tomans, or about £3-10-0. Once chosen and accepted, the soldier serves for life, unless he can scrape together sufficient money to buy a discharge from his colonel or bribe a substitute to take his place.

The number of regiments drawn from each province is nominally as follows:—

Azerbaijan	26
Khorasan	12
Mazanderan	7
Gilan	1
Isfahan	5
Khamsch	5
Demavand	4
Kazvin	3
Kirmanshah	4
Kezzaz and Ferahan	6
Kamareh	1
Gulpaigan	1
Gerrus	1
Luristan	2
Malair	1
Nihavand	1
Hamadan	4
Kurdistan	1

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Armament.—The infantry are mostly armed with old smooth-bore muskets. One hundred breech-loading rifles have been served out to each regiment, and in case of emergency they would be supplied with more breech-loaders from the store at Teheran. (See later "Arms," &c.)

Semi-regular
Cavalry.

This consists of the Persian Cossack brigade and a certain number of sowars maintained for parade purposes and as a body-guard for the Shah.

General Gordon says (1890): "There are comparatively few cavalry permanently embodied at a time. At Teheran and each provincial centre a certain strength is permanently maintained for parade, escort, and ceremonial purposes. The Shah's 'Ghulams' (Body-guard cavalry) are in considerable force at Teheran for duty at the palaces and in camp." These men supply their own horse, forage, and arms.

Cossack Brigade.—"The Persian Cossack brigade consists of six sotnias and a horse artillery battery of four guns. The nominal strength is one thousand, in which, I am told, is included about one hundred pensioners and boys, sons of deceased and disabled officers and men. They have a full complement of Persian officers from Sartip (Colonel-General) to subaltern, and a further large number of supernumerary officers. Service in the brigade is most popular with officers and men on account of the punctual full payment of what every one is entitled to."—(Gordon.)

Russian officers.—The present Russian establishment consists of a Colonel Commandant, three captains, and six non-commissioned officers. The Commandant has full power to enlist, punish, and administer, subject to general control by the Minister for War. The men supply their own horses, but arms and accoutrements are furnished by the State. They are dressed and equipped like Russian Cossacks and armed with the Berdan rifle and a sword.

The effective strength of the whole of the semi-regular cavalry is put down officially at about 2,500, but the actual number serving is probably much less.

Irregular Cavalry.

In addition to the above, there are numerous levies of armed horsemen. These have no instruction or organization of any kind, and in ordinary times act solely as police for supporting the authority of the Governors, keeping down highway robbery, enforcing the collection of the revenue, &c.

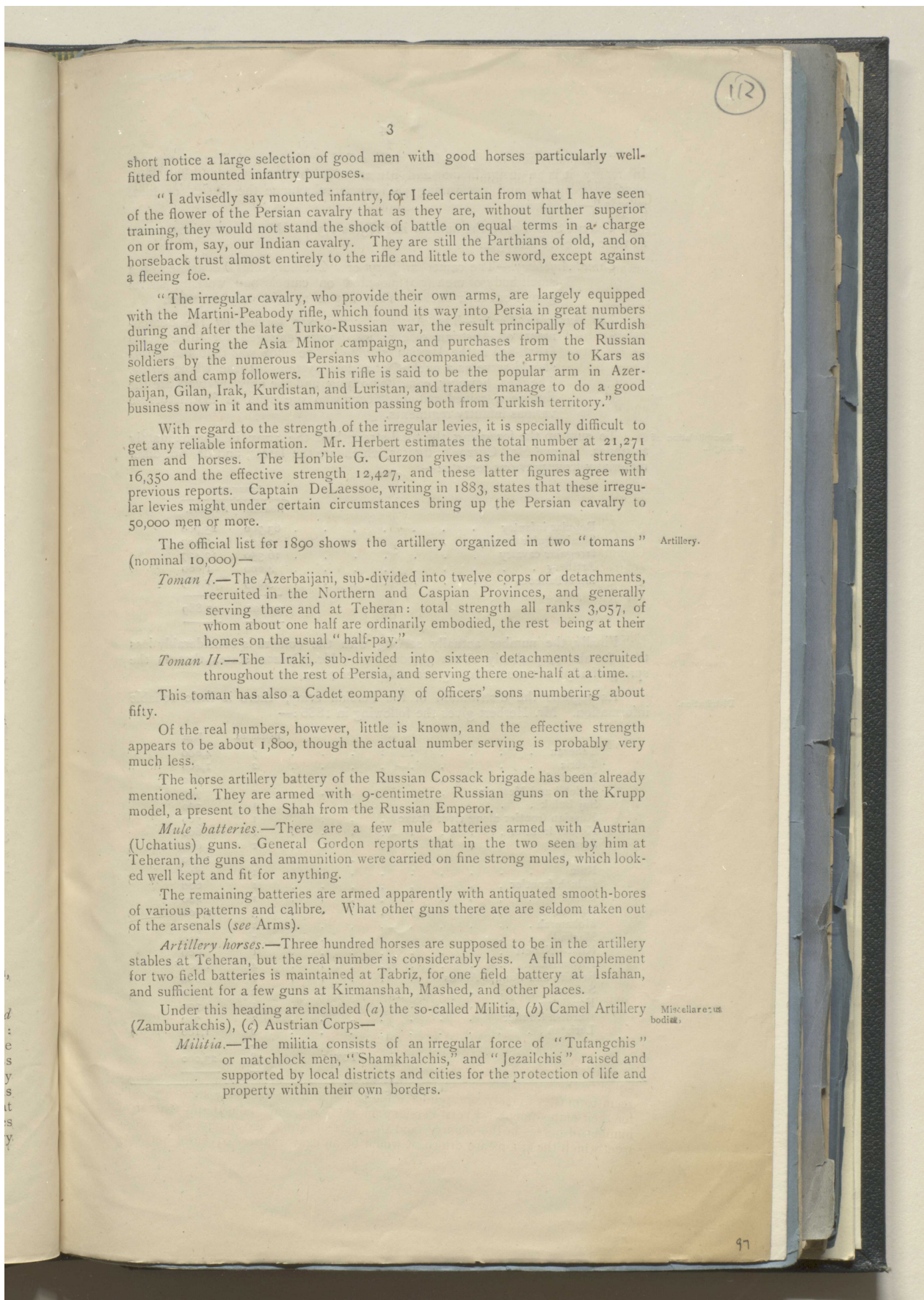
Mr. Herbert in his report of 1886 divides them into squadrons, varying in strength from fifty to a thousand men and horses, distributed as follows:—

Azerbaijan	23 squadrons.	
Khorasan	24 "	
Gilan and Mazanderan	5 "	
Irak	4 "	(including the Bakhtiari).
Burujird	4 "	
Khamseh	4 "	
Teheran	6 "	
Arabistan	3 "	(Faili and Bakhtiari Lurs).
Kazoni	4 "	
Kirmanshah	5 "	

and one squadron each in Astrabad (Yamut Turkomans), Shahrud, Kirman, Gulpaigan, Kamareh, Luristan, Shiraz, and Hamadan.

General Gordon's opinion on the fitness of these tribal series for mounted infantry work.—General Gordon has the following remarks on them (1890): "The numerous bodies of tribal and territorial irregular horse shown in the Persian Army list are officered and organised in some manner more or less equal to their simple requirements. As far as I can gather from reports, they seem to muster quickly, and render willing service when necessity suddenly calls for their embodiment. Every Persian can ride well, and considering the great number of horses in the country, and the pride of arms shown by the classes from which the troops are drawn, it would be an easy matter to enrol on very

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short notice a large selection of good men with good horses particularly well-fitted for mounted infantry purposes.

"I advisedly say mounted infantry, for I feel certain from what I have seen of the flower of the Persian cavalry that as they are, without further superior training, they would not stand the shock of battle on equal terms in a charge on or from, say, our Indian cavalry. They are still the Parthians of old, and on horseback trust almost entirely to the rifle and little to the sword, except against a fleeing foe.

"The irregular cavalry, who provide their own arms, are largely equipped with the Martini-Peabody rifle, which found its way into Persia in great numbers during and after the late Turko-Russian war, the result principally of Kurdish pillage during the Asia Minor campaign, and purchases from the Russian soldiers by the numerous Persians who accompanied the army to Kars as settlers and camp followers. This rifle is said to be the popular arm in Azerbaijan, Gilan, Irak, Kurdistan, and Luristan, and traders manage to do a good business now in it and its ammunition passing both from Turkish territory."

With regard to the strength of the irregular levies, it is specially difficult to get any reliable information. Mr. Herbert estimates the total number at 21,271 men and horses. The Hon'ble G. Curzon gives as the nominal strength 16,350 and the effective strength 12,427, and these latter figures agree with previous reports. Captain DeLaessoe, writing in 1883, states that these irregular levies might under certain circumstances bring up the Persian cavalry to 50,000 men or more.

The official list for 1890 shows the artillery organized in two "tomans" Artillery.
(nominal 10,000)—

Toman I.—The Azerbaijani, sub-divided into twelve corps or detachments, recruited in the Northern and Caspian Provinces, and generally serving there and at Teheran: total strength all ranks 3,057, of whom about one half are ordinarily embodied, the rest being at their homes on the usual "half-pay."

Toman II.—The Iraki, sub-divided into sixteen detachments recruited throughout the rest of Persia, and serving there one-half at a time.

This toman has also a Cadet company of officers' sons numbering about fifty.

Of the real numbers, however, little is known, and the effective strength appears to be about 1,800, though the actual number serving is probably very much less.

The horse artillery battery of the Russian Cossack brigade has been already mentioned. They are armed with 9-centimetre Russian guns on the Krupp model, a present to the Shah from the Russian Emperor.

Mule batteries.—There are a few mule batteries armed with Austrian (Uchatius) guns. General Gordon reports that in the two seen by him at Teheran, the guns and ammunition were carried on fine strong mules, which looked well kept and fit for anything.

The remaining batteries are armed apparently with antiquated smooth-bores of various patterns and calibre. What other guns there are are seldom taken out of the arsenals (*see Arms*).

Artillery horses.—Three hundred horses are supposed to be in the artillery stables at Teheran, but the real number is considerably less. A full complement for two field batteries is maintained at Tabriz, for one field battery at Isfahan, and sufficient for a few guns at Kitmanshah, Mashed, and other places.

Under this heading are included (a) the so-called Militia, (b) Camel Artillery Miscellaneous bodies.
(Zamburakehis), (c) Austrian Corps—

Militia.—The militia consists of an irregular force of "Tufangchis" or matchlock men, "Shamkhalchis," and "Jezailchis" raised and supported by local districts and cities for the protection of life and property within their own borders.

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"Nominally this is a large force, only called out in case of dire emergency. In reality it is an insignificant and contemptible body of men, armed with obsolete weapons, and performing with much reluctance the duties of local guards."—(Curzon.)

Colonel Smith gave the number in 1883 as 1,300. Mr. Curzon gives 2,000 as their effective strength.

Camel Artillery.—The camel artillery or "Zamburakchis" consisted of a small body of men (90) mounted on camels and working swivel guns from their backs. They appear to exist only on paper.

The Austrian Corps.—The Austrian corps was formed by the detachment of Austrian officers who were engaged for three years (1878-81) in the Persian service. The idea was that the corps should serve as a nucleus of a new system for the whole army. The idea, however, came to nothing, and the only survivors are the European-trained native officers who are sent as instructors to various infantry regiments.

Recapitulation of strength. To sum up the foregoing, the total strength of the army is approximately as under. I give Mr. Curzon's figures, which are the latest, and do not differ materially from previous reports:—

	STRENGTH.	
	Nominal.	Effective.
Regular infantry	63,700	25,000
Semi-regular cavalry	2,493	2,493
Irregular cavalry	16,350	12,427
Artillery	4,000	1,800
Miscellaneous	3,849	2,169
	<u>90,392</u>	<u>43,889</u>

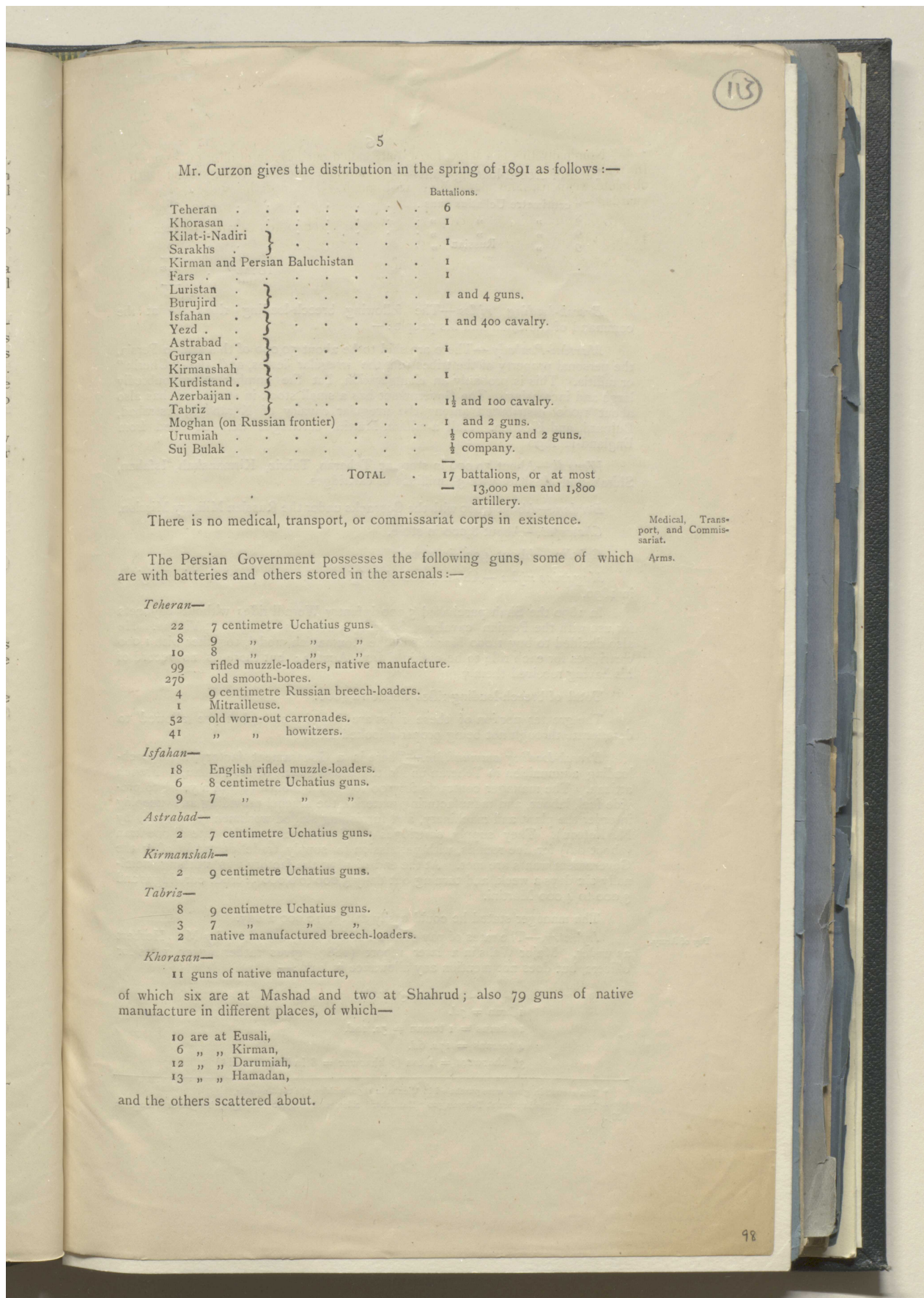
Finally, the number actually serving with the colours is considerably less than the above, probably about 30,000 men. Mr. Curzon states that in the spring of 1891 not more than 15,000 were under arms.

Distribution. As regards the distribution of the Persian army, there is little reliable information. Mr. Herbert gives the following in 1886:—

	Battalions.	Men
Teheran	7	4,800
Tabriz	2	1,400
Miandoab	1	600
Ardebil and Meshgin	1	700
Suj Bulak	1	700
Russian frontier along river Oraxe	1	700
Kotour frontier	1	600
Sarakhs	1	600
Astrabad	3	1,500
Kain	1	600
Baluch frontier	1	600
Euseli	1	400
Isfahan	3	2,000
Mohamrah	1	700
Mashad	1	500
Kilat-i-Naderi	1	600
Kirmanshah	4	1,800*
Bushire and Bandar Abbas	1	600
Shiraz	2	1,400
Kurdistan	1	700
Kurdish frontier	1	700
Luristan	2	1,100
TOTAL	<u>38</u>	<u>23,000</u>

* In winter only.

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Pay of Infantry per annum—

Amir Toman	In cash, 2,400 tomans. In kind, 85 kharwars straw, barley, &c. " " 151½ " wheat, &c.
Sartip (General), 1st class	In cash, 1,200 tomans. In kind, 43 kharwars straw, barley, &c. " " 75 " wheat.
Sartip, 2nd class	In cash, 960 tomans. In kind, 34 kharwars straw, &c. " " 60½ " wheat.
Sartip, 3rd class	In cash, 800 tomans. In kind, 10½ kharwars straw, &c. " " 19 " wheat.
Sarhang (Colonel)	In cash, 400 tomans. In kind, 14½ kharwars straw, &c. " " 25½ " wheat.
Yavar (Major), 1st class	In cash, 120 tomans. In kind, same as Sartip, 3rd class.
Yavar, 2nd class	In cash, 96 tomans. In kind, like Sartip, 3rd class.
Mushrif (Paymaster)	In cash, 100 tomans. In kind, like Sartip, 3rd class.
Sultan (Captain)	In cash, 57 tomans. In kind, 5½ kharwars straw, &c. " " 9½ " wheat.
1st Naib	In cash, 28½ tomans. In kind, 3½ kharwars straw, &c. " " 6½ " wheat.
2nd Naib	In cash, 19 tomans. In kind, 1½ kharwars straw, &c. " " 3½ " wheat and two suits of uniform.
Vakil Bashi (Sergeant-Major).	In cash, 17 tomans, 1 kran. In kind, 2 kharwars. Two suits linen uniform. One suit cloth uniform.
Vakil (Sergeant)	In cash, 10 tomans. "Gireh" or food allowance, 10 tomans. Two suits linen uniform. One suit cloth uniform.
Private soldier	In cash, 7 tomans a year. "Gireh" or food allowance about 5 krans a month, but is regulated by the price of corn, &c., at the Naoroz (21st March). Uniform, two suits linen. One suit cloth. Two pairs of shoes.

By regulation every private when his regiment is disbanded, *i.e.*, about every two years, should get a bonus of six months' pay to help him home. This, however, they do not get, and anything over 12 tomans a year finds its way into the pocket of the Sarhang and his underlings. A soldier makes a living by working as a day labourer, butchering, money changing, &c.

Artillery.—The rates of pay of the artillery are nearly double that of the infantry. A gunner receives in cash 12 tomans, *gireh* 10 tomans a year, three suits of uniform, and boots.

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Pay, &c., Cavalry. *Cossacks*.—Pay is drawn for each man at the rate of 15 kran a month and 12 shahis* a day "gireh," i.e., food allowance (about 5d.); but the men only receive about 8 shahis. Forage for horses is paid at the rate of a kran a day; but the men only receive about 12 shahis. (A kran a day is the rate at which private individuals can forage their horses well and shoe them.)

The *gireh* and forage allowance are given only when the regiment is on the march or elsewhere than in Teheran.

In Teheran the men receive per day $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. meat and $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. bread every evening, except twice a week, when $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. rice (pilao) is given in addition.

The allowance per day per horse in Teheran is—

2 mans † straw	= 13 lbs.
$\frac{1}{2}$ " vetches	= 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
1 " barley	= 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Uniform and arms are supplied by Government.

Horses are the property of the men. In case of death 10 tomans are allowed towards the purchase of a new one.

Russian officers.—The Russian officers in addition to their regimental pay receive as Persian pay:—

Commandant.—200 tomans a month, forage for 5 horses, and travelling allowance of 150 Russian Imperials (£122) on first appointment.

Other officers.—100 tomans a month, forage for 3 horses, and travelling allowance of 75 Imperials (£61) on first appointment.

General Gordon, writing in 1890, says: "The brigade cost the Persian Government last year 97,480 tomans. I will not here go into the details of pay, &c., but merely say that the Cossack brigade occupies the prominent position of being the only corps in the Persian army which gets its pay regularly and without peculating deductions. Under the protection of the Russian Legation, the Commandant is enabled to take his own measures to produce and issue the pay of all ranks on pay day."

Irregular Cavalry.—A sowar of the irregular cavalry gets nominally 50 tomans a year for pay, *gireh*, horse, forage, clothes, &c. In reality they do not get more than 12 tomans, and serve about three months a year. Deductions to the amount of 38 tomans are made for uniform, horse trappings, &c., together with the perquisites of the colonel. On the other hand, a sowar pays no taxes to Government. Each man supplies his own horse, forage, and arms, and in case of his horse dying, the Government allows him 10 tomans.

The officers receive—

Sartip, 1st class	In cash, 400 tomans a year.
	In kind, 17 kharwars straw, &c.
	" 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wheat.
Sartip, 2nd class	In cash, 240 tomans.
	In kind, 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ kharwars straw.
	" 25 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wheat.
Sartip, 3rd class	In cash, 150 tomans.
	In kind, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ kharwars straw.
	" 19 " wheat.
Yazbashi	In cash, 697 tomans per annum.

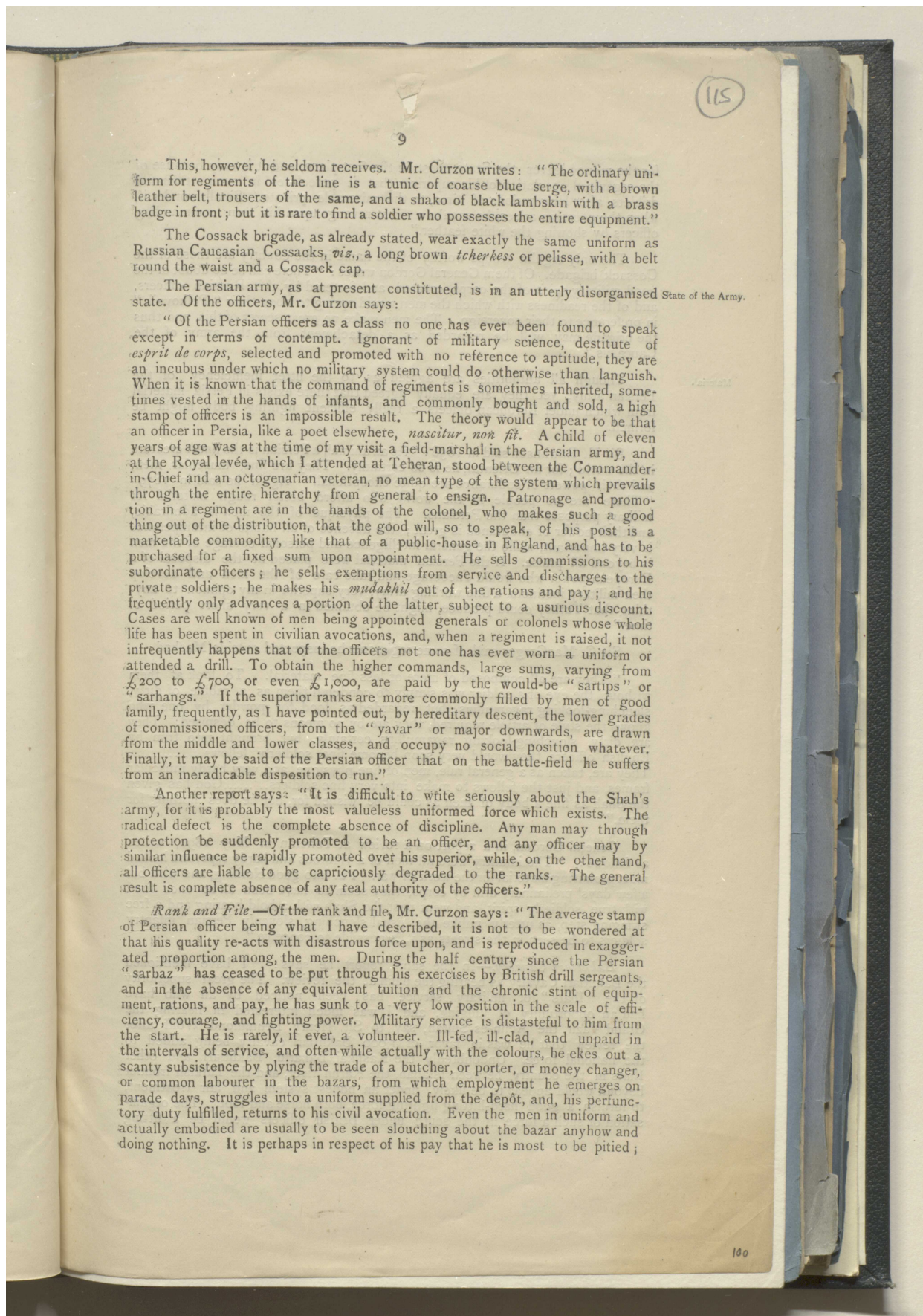
Barracks. The barracks of the Persian soldiers are built like sarais. Major Wells writes (1889): "The accommodation of the men has much improved of late. New barracks have been built both in Teheran and Isfahan. Ten men are placed in a room. The rooms have doors and windows, and the men are much less crowded than formerly."

Uniform, &c. Men of the infantry and artillery while serving are supposed to get three suits of clothing a year, viz. :—

- 1 suit of yakkesh, thick.
- 1 " " kishbaf canvas.
- 1 " " cloth for parade.

* (20 shahis = 1 kran).
† Persian "man" = 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

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This, however, he seldom receives. Mr. Curzon writes: "The ordinary uniform for regiments of the line is a tunic of coarse blue serge, with a brown leather belt, trousers of the same, and a shako of black lambskin with a brass badge in front; but it is rare to find a soldier who possesses the entire equipment."

The Cossack brigade, as already stated, wear exactly the same uniform as Russian Caucasian Cossacks, *viz.*, a long brown *tcherkess* or pelisse, with a belt round the waist and a Cossack cap.

The Persian army, as at present constituted, is in an utterly disorganised State of the Army. state. Of the officers, Mr. Curzon says:

"Of the Persian officers as a class no one has ever been found to speak except in terms of contempt. Ignorant of military science, destitute of *esprit de corps*, selected and promoted with no reference to aptitude, they are an incubus under which no military system could do otherwise than languish. When it is known that the command of regiments is sometimes inherited, sometimes vested in the hands of infants, and commonly bought and sold, a high stamp of officers is an impossible result. The theory would appear to be that an officer in Persia, like a poet elsewhere, *nascitur, non fit*. A child of eleven years of age was at the time of my visit a field-marshal in the Persian army, and at the Royal levée, which I attended at Teheran, stood between the Commander-in-Chief and an octogenarian veteran, no mean type of the system which prevails through the entire hierarchy from general to ensign. Patronage and promotion in a regiment are in the hands of the colonel, who makes such a good thing out of the distribution, that the good will, so to speak, of his post is a marketable commodity, like that of a public-house in England, and has to be purchased for a fixed sum upon appointment. He sells commissions to his subordinate officers; he sells exemptions from service and discharges to the private soldiers; he makes his *mudakhil* out of the rations and pay; and he frequently only advances a portion of the latter, subject to a usurious discount. Cases are well known of men being appointed generals or colonels whose whole life has been spent in civilian avocations, and, when a regiment is raised, it not infrequently happens that of the officers not one has ever worn a uniform or attended a drill. To obtain the higher commands, large sums, varying from £200 to £700, or even £1,000, are paid by the would-be "sartips" or "sarhangs." If the superior ranks are more commonly filled by men of good family, frequently, as I have pointed out, by hereditary descent, the lower grades of commissioned officers, from the "yavar" or major downwards, are drawn from the middle and lower classes, and occupy no social position whatever. Finally, it may be said of the Persian officer that on the battle-field he suffers from an ineradicable disposition to run."

Another report says: "It is difficult to write seriously about the Shah's army, for it is probably the most valueless uniformed force which exists. The radical defect is the complete absence of discipline. Any man may through protection be suddenly promoted to be an officer, and any officer may by similar influence be rapidly promoted over his superior, while, on the other hand, all officers are liable to be capriciously degraded to the ranks. The general result is complete absence of any real authority of the officers."

Rank and File—Of the rank and file, Mr. Curzon says: "The average stamp of Persian officer being what I have described, it is not to be wondered at that his quality re-acts with disastrous force upon, and is reproduced in exaggerated proportion among, the men. During the half century since the Persian "sarbaz" has ceased to be put through his exercises by British drill sergeants, and in the absence of any equivalent tuition and the chronic stint of equipment, rations, and pay, he has sunk to a very low position in the scale of efficiency, courage, and fighting power. Military service is distasteful to him from the start. He is rarely, if ever, a volunteer. Ill-fed, ill-clad, and unpaid in the intervals of service, and often while actually with the colours, he ekes out a scanty subsistence by plying the trade of a butcher, or porter, or money changer, or common labourer in the bazars, from which employment he emerges on parade days, struggles into a uniform supplied from the *dépôt*, and, his perfunctory duty fulfilled, returns to his civil avocation. Even the men in uniform and actually embodied are usually to be seen slouching about the bazar anyhow and doing nothing. It is perhaps in respect of his pay that he is most to be pitied;

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for the money leaves the State chest in the first place, and it is only because of the organised peculation of his superiors that it percolates in such attenuated dribbles, after long periods of time, to the miserable private. Small wonder if, when the occasion arises, he wreaks a sweet revenge upon his own commanding officers by showing the white feather."

The only regular troops worthy of the name in the country are those of the Cossack brigade. Of them General Gordon writes: "There can be no doubt of the good military spirit of the corps, created and fostered by the Russian officers, and of the readiness with which the men would spring to obey their "Polkovnik" in preference to their sovereign. The men make no great secret of this, and thus the brigade may well be regarded as a detachment from the army of the Caucasus."

Material. Though all authorities are agreed as to the utter inefficiency of the Persian army, yet they are equally agreed that there exists in Persia material from which under European officers a really efficient fighting body might be formed.

Sir H. Rawlinson said in 1858: "As an animal, a Persian is the finest creature in the world; for an Oriental, he is so certainly. They are fine, muscular men, and their powers of endurance are quite exceptional." Again he said in 1879: "There are no people in the world who afford better rough material for military purposes than the Persians. The physique of the men is admirable, and their power of endurance is great; the absence of all habits of intemperance is very important, while the general intelligence and personal courage of the men is beyond all praise. If the Persian material were placed at the disposal of a European power who would encourage and take care of the men and develop their military instincts, a fine working army, very superior in my opinion to anything that Turkey could produce, might be obtained in a very short period of time."

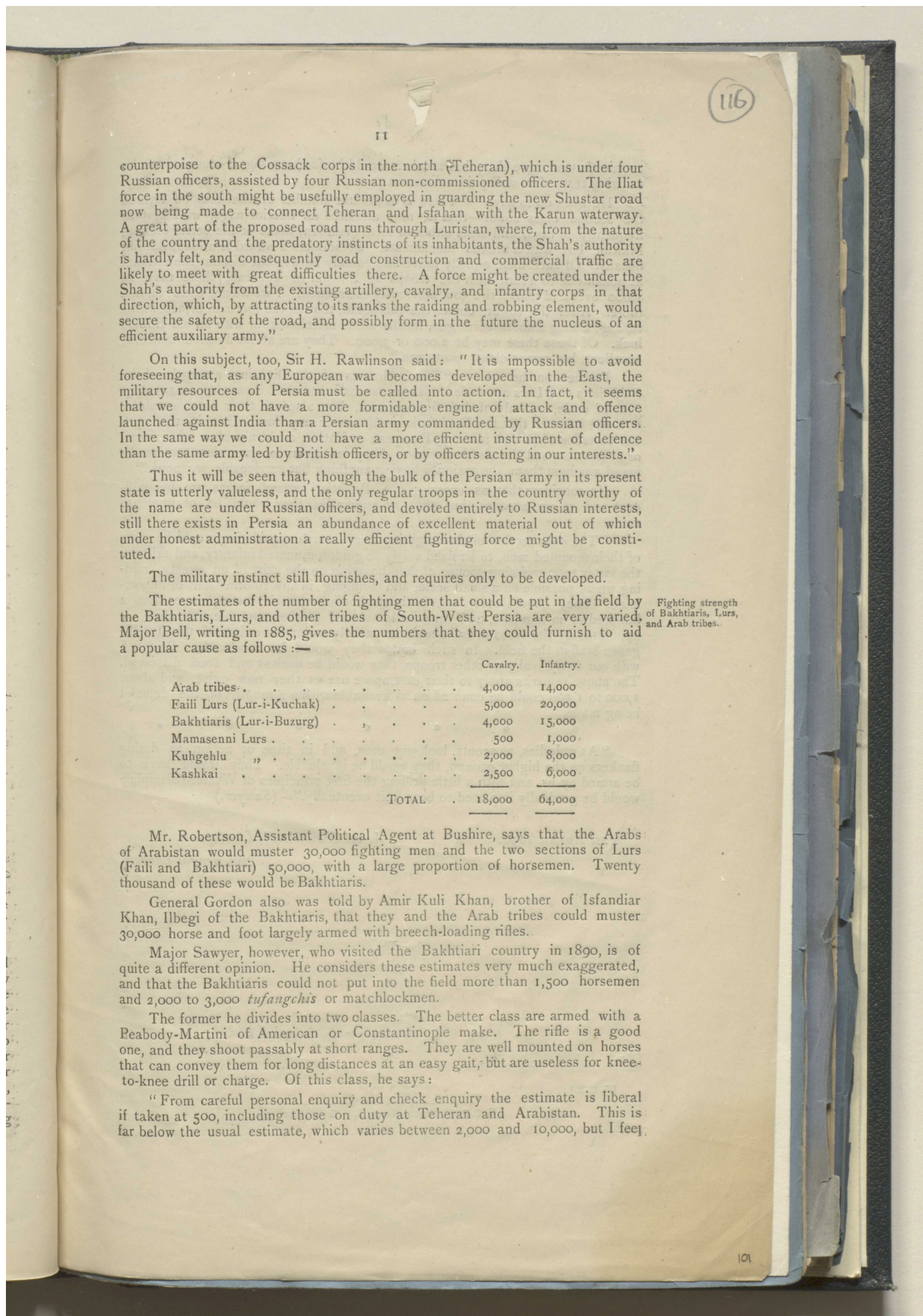
Sir C. MacGregor said of some regiments he inspected outside Mashad:

"They are all composed of more or less fine material. To look at them without the eye of a soldier was simply to condemn them as a rabble of dirty, slouching-looking ragamuffins; but regarded as food for powder by one who knows the style of article required, they are by no means to be despised. They are dirty, slouching-looking ragamuffins certainly, but brought into trim by English officers, they would very soon become fine soldierly fellows..... They are, taken as a general rule, men of fine physique and very hardy muscular frames, and just the fellows to make into very fine soldiers..... God has given the Shah as fine a body of men as could be wished for, but he does nothing for them."

General Gordon, in a report on a review at Teheran in May 1890, writes as follows: "The infantry were all men of a vigorous and hardy type, and looked most promising material for the work of war. Put into good clothing, and with but a few days' preliminary drill by corps, they seem to have been all at once fired with true soldierly spirit, and went past the Shah with a bold bearing and a free swinging step, as utterly unlike the usual slouching, slovenly Persian infantry soldiers to be seen in the streets as it is possible to conceive."

Bakhtiari Cavalry.--In the same report he says: "I have mentioned the Bakhtiari Cavalry as bearing the palm at the review. The great superiority of the "Iliats" for military service has been noticed by all who have had an opportunity of judging, and I was much interested in hearing the Grand Vazir, the Amin-es-Sultan, say to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff after the review that he was in favor of 1,000 Bakhtiari cavalry being added to the national force. Undoubtedly the Kashkai, Baharlu, Bakhtiari, and other Iliats in the country between Isfahan, the Karun river, and the Turkish frontier beyond would appear to be likely, under an honest system and fair treatment, to furnish a good hard-hitting fighting force, both horse and foot. The organisation of such a force in the south under British officers would be a fitting

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counterpoise to the Cossack corps in the north (Teheran), which is under four Russian officers, assisted by four Russian non-commissioned officers. The Iliat force in the south might be usefully employed in guarding the new Shustar road now being made to connect Teheran and Isfahan with the Karun waterway. A great part of the proposed road runs through Luristan, where, from the nature of the country and the predatory instincts of its inhabitants, the Shah's authority is hardly felt, and consequently road construction and commercial traffic are likely to meet with great difficulties there. A force might be created under the Shah's authority from the existing artillery, cavalry, and infantry corps in that direction, which, by attracting to its ranks the raiding and robbing element, would secure the safety of the road, and possibly form in the future the nucleus of an efficient auxiliary army."

On this subject, too, Sir H. Rawlinson said: "It is impossible to avoid foreseeing that, as any European war becomes developed in the East, the military resources of Persia must be called into action. In fact, it seems that we could not have a more formidable engine of attack and offence launched against India than a Persian army commanded by Russian officers. In the same way we could not have a more efficient instrument of defence than the same army led by British officers, or by officers acting in our interests."

Thus it will be seen that, though the bulk of the Persian army in its present state is utterly valueless, and the only regular troops in the country worthy of the name are under Russian officers, and devoted entirely to Russian interests, still there exists in Persia an abundance of excellent material out of which under honest administration a really efficient fighting force might be constituted.

The military instinct still flourishes, and requires only to be developed.

The estimates of the number of fighting men that could be put in the field by the Bakhtiari, Lurs, and other tribes of South-West Persia are very varied. Major Bell, writing in 1885, gives the numbers that they could furnish to aid a popular cause as follows:—

	Cavalry.	Infantry.
Arab tribes	4,000	14,000
Faili Lurs (Lur-i-Kuchak)	5,000	20,000
Bakhtiari (Lur-i-Buzurg)	4,000	15,000
Mamasenni Lurs	500	1,000
Kuhgeflu "	2,000	8,000
Kashkai	2,500	6,000
TOTAL	18,000	64,000

Fighting strength of Bakhtiari, Lurs, and Arab tribes.

Mr. Robertson, Assistant Political Agent at Bushire, says that the Arabs of Arabistan would muster 30,000 fighting men and the two sections of Lurs (Faili and Bakhtiari) 50,000, with a large proportion of horsemen. Twenty thousand of these would be Bakhtiari.

General Gordon also was told by Amir Kuli Khan, brother of Isfandiar Khan, Ilbegi of the Bakhtiari, that they and the Arab tribes could muster 30,000 horse and foot largely armed with breech-loading rifles.

Major Sawyer, however, who visited the Bakhtiari country in 1890, is of quite a different opinion. He considers these estimates very much exaggerated, and that the Bakhtiari could not put into the field more than 1,500 horsemen and 2,000 to 3,000 *tufangchis* or matchlockmen.

The former he divides into two classes. The better class are armed with a Peabody-Martini of American or Constantinople make. The rifle is a good one, and they shoot passably at short ranges. They are well mounted on horses that can convey them for long distances at an easy gait, but are useless for knee-to-knee drill or charge. Of this class, he says:

"From careful personal enquiry and check enquiry the estimate is liberal if taken at 500, including those on duty at Teheran and Arabistan. This is far below the usual estimate, which varies between 2,000 and 10,000, but I feel

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certain that no more than that number would be forthcoming if brought to the unerring test of a well-paid enlistment."

He goes on to say: "There is a greater number of what may be termed the second class sowar—that is, men mounted on inferior nags, with clothes frequently in rags, and arms either of local (Isfahan) make or the better looking Martini, but with a broken mechanism. Sometimes a sword is added, but not usually. Of such men, equally brave and equally hardy, but without the attempt at polish due to a turn with the troops at Shustar or Teheran, there may be 1,000 over and above the 500 previously mentioned. I would not count on one more. After the sowar comes the tufangchi, that is, the footman armed with a *tufang*, a long smooth-bore gun, locally made matchlock, or with an old Enfield lock. Of these there may be 2,000 or 3,000. They are all hardy mountaineers; excellent, but remorseless, sportsmen."

Further on he says: "The estimates of the fighting strength of the Bakhtiari and Lurs are varied. Their own estimates are invariably on an exaggerated scale, not only of their fighting men, but also of their total numbers. It is not believed that the Bakhtiari could muster any force that in the open one battalion of British infantry, European or Native, could not blow into space, or at least beyond the visible horizon. Very few arms of precision are to be found amongst them, the majority having anything but serviceable weapons."

He considers that as enemies the Bakhtiari armed forces are insignificant and of no account, but that as auxiliaries they would be of immense value.

"The only portion of their fighting forces worth considering would be some of their mounted men, to be used solely as guides, mounted infantry, and skilters, the latter term meaning groups of men hovering on the skirt of an enemy, raiding where possible on a small scale, and bringing in any information of importance. They should never act in large bodies, that is, never more than a hundred or so together, and their leader should be their own selected chief, or appointed by the Ilkhani, and should be entirely under the orders of the Intelligence staff in the field. In such hands they would be invaluable. Brigaded with our own cavalry or other troops, they would be useless and soon dissolved. The above remarks apply to their extempore use as they now exist, and about 1,000 to 1,500 could be counted on as available within a month of the demand being made."

* * * * *

"As orderlies, as scouts, look-out men, and in time of action as daring flankers on the higher ground, they would be invaluable. They would have to be armed by us, and with a little drilling the first principles of Western discipline would be gradually imparted to bear fruit eventually."—(*Sawyer*.)

1st August 1892.

J. A. DOUGLAS, Lieutenant,
2nd Bengal Lancers,

[To 102 (bunk cover) discarded]

[G. C. F.]

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