

No. 77.

The Deputy Adjutant-General of the Army to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department.

Head-Quarters Camp, Cawnpore,  
December 22, 1857.

SIR, No. 34 A.

WITH reference to my Despatch of the 10th instant, No. 20 A, and its enclosures, relative to Brigadier M. Carthew's defence of the bridge and Bithoor road at Cawnpore, on the 28th ultimo, I have now the honour, by direction of the Commander-in-Chief, to forward, for submission to the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, copies of letters, as per margin,\* marked A, B, and C.

2. When the Memorandum, dated 9th instant, was written, copy of which was transmitted in my letter, No. 20 A, and in which the conduct of Brigadier Carthew was commented on by His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief was under the strongest impression that Brigadier Carthew had retired from his post on the 28th November without orders, and that no discretionary power had been given to him.

Sir Colin Campbell conceived it to be an imperative duty to mark what he considered to be a violation of one of the first principles of war.

3. It appears now, however, that His Excellency's impression was erroneous, and it is a matter of the sincerest regret to him, that his having acted under such erroneous impression should have been detrimental to Brigadier Carthew, and give pain to that meritorious officer.

4. The Commander-in-Chief directs me to request that you will solicit the permission of his Lordship in Council, that his Memorandum of the 9th instant may be considered null and void, and if it should have been sent forward to the Government of Madras, he begs that this further correspondence may be despatched to the destination, in justice to Brigadier Carthew.

I have, &c.,

H. W. NORMAN, Major,  
Deputy Adjutant-General of the Army.

No. 78,—A.

Brigadier M. Carthew, commanding Madras Troops,  
to Major-General Mansfield, Chief of the Staff.

SIR, Cawnpore, December 15, 1857.

WITH reference to your communication to me of the 9th December, conveying the remarks of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, regarding my retreat from the position I had been directed to defend by Major-General Windham, commanding the force, on the evening of the 28th November, I beg I may be permitted most respectfully to state that I was under the full impression that I had due authority from the Major-General to retire when the post became no longer tenable.

I received a verbal message during that day, either from the late Captain McCrea or Lieutenant Budgeon, (cannot recollect which,) that when I could hold out no longer I was to retire to the entrenchment where Her Majesty's 64th Regiment was located.

\* A—From Brigadier M. Carthew to the Chief of the Staff, dated 15th December 1857.

B—From the Chief of the Staff to Major-General C. Windham, C.B., dated 19th December 1857.

C—From Major-General C. Windham, C.B., to the Chief of the Staff, dated 19th December 1857.

I cannot call to mind receiving any express instructions to that effect from Major-General Windham himself, but I am under the impression that the Major-General, on the previous evening, made some such remark as, "Well, gentlemen, when we can hold out no longer we must retire to the entrenchment."

Under that impression I acted during the day, and made my retrograde movement into the entrenchment in the evening, and I trust his Excellency will be able, on this explanation, to exonerate me from blame and censure in that particular respect.

I have, &c.,

M. CARTHEW, Brigadier,  
Commanding Madras Troops.

No. 79,—B.

Major-General W. R. Mansfield, Chief of the Staff,  
to Major-General Windham, C.B., commanding  
5th Brigade.

Head-Quarters, Camp, near Cawnpore,  
December 19, 1857.

SIR, I HAVE the honour to enclose, for your remarks, a letter received from Brigadier Carthew, in answer to a memorandum written by order of the Commander-in-Chief, and forwarded through you by the Assistant Adjutant-General of the Army, conveying his Excellency's opinions on the retreat of that officer from the post entrusted to his charge, on the 28th November 1857, without, as his Excellency conceived, any discretion having been left to him for such a movement on his part.

His Excellency would be much obliged to you to communicate to me, for his information, your opinion as to whether Brigadier Carthew had reason to imagine that a discretionary power was left to him in the exercise of his command of the post in question, which could be interpreted in the sense implied in the enclosed letter.

His Excellency's impressions on this subject were founded on the fact of the general surprise displayed by yourself and others at the abandonment of the post in question, after you had proceeded with the reinforcements demanded some short time before, almost immediately after his Excellency's arrival in the entrenchment.

I have, &c.,

W. R. MANSFIELD, Major-General,  
Chief of the Staff.

No. 80,—C.

Major-General C. A. Windham, C.B., to Major-General Mansfield, Chief of the Staff.

SIR, Cawnpore, December 19, 1857.

IN answer to your communication of to-day, I have the honour to state, for the information of his Excellency, that I think Brigadier Carthew has made a fair representation of my views.

On the night of the 27th, at a general meeting of the superior officers, I thought it my duty to hold as much of the town as I could, as we might expect a large number of women and children, sick and wounded, to arrive shortly, and that it would be cruel to shut them all up in the fort, even if it were possible.

Therefore I was resolved that every one should hold on as long as possible, and if obliged to fall back, they could but come to the fort at last.