

Extract from letter by Andrew Beal describing his court martial

..... In place of anything better I will now give you an account of my Trial by a Court Martial which Reduced me from the rank of Sergeant to that of Private. I was promoted to Sergt in July and about the end of that month I fancied I would like to have a game at cards so I goes over a mountain about a quarter of a mile from this along with two or three Ptes of the Regt to have a bit of a game in the cleft of a large rock we had not played long before the Provost Marshall of the Regt came past, evidently on the look out for gamblers and he was close to us ere I observed him it was too late to run as he had looked me full in the face and knew me well I begged of him not to report me and he promised that he would not but when I got home I saw him go straight to the Sergt Majors Quarters. I could not believe that it was to report me but the Sergt Major came to my room where I was and ordered me to consider myself under arrest. I was summoned before the Colonel next morning (31<sup>st</sup> July) and he ordered a Court Martial to assemble for my trial on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August consisting of one Captain and four Lieutenants. The proceedings of which are as follows; "The proceedings of a Regimental Court Martial assembled at Kussowlie on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1847 by order of Lieut Colonel G. Congreve C.B. Commanding HMS 29<sup>th</sup> Regt. The president and members having been duly sworn proceed to the trial of No 2198 Sergt Andrew Beal of No 2 or Capt ? Kirbys Company confined and brought to trial on the following charge. For having near Kussowlie on or about the 30<sup>th</sup> July 1847 been Detected in gambling with privates of HMs 29 Regt to which he the prisoner pleads guilty. The court on the Evidence p. in support of the prosecution are of the opinion that he the prisoner No 2198 Sergt A. Beal is guilty of the Charge preferred against him which being in breach of the Articles of War and Subversive of good order and Military Discipline do now Sentence him the prisoner No 2198 Sergt Beal to be reduced to the rank and pay of a private Sentinel . Approved and Confirmed. Signed \_\_\_\_\_ . I was brought out on the Parade and in front of the whole Regt and the proceedings read over and had my stripes cut off my arms by the Drum Major who always performs that Duty. So you see that a Sergt hold his rank on a very uncertain tenure in this Regt and for a paltry game at Cards I forfeited a rank that I cannot regain for many years and also nearly 30s a month and the privilege of wearing Scarlet clothing. But a Private can make himself as well off on his small pay as a Sergt can on his so I am contented. ....