

FAUJ-I-KHAS

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a strong supporter of new ideas and trends. He was quick to respond to the exigencies of political situation prevailing around. He created a strong and disciplined army. He was able to perceive early that the traditional machinery of warfare to which the Sikhs had been used to, would not stand the demands of the time. He made up his mind to modernize his military organization. He inducted into his service a large number of Europeans, whose talent was employed in modernizing the military administration of his kingdom. However, he wanted to have them more in the capacity of trainers.

In 1822 two former French officers of Napoleon, J.F. Allard and J.B. Ventura arrived at Lahore. Maharaja employed them after verification of their credentials. Allard possessed qualifications and experience of a trained military officer. Ventura was a Colonel in the Napoleonic infantry. Maharaja asked them to raise Fauj-i-Khas or Special Brigade. The corps with five regiments of infantry, three regiments of cavalry and the topkhana was 10,000 to 15,000 strong.



General Allard



General Allard's medal of commander



General Ventura



General Avitabile



General August Court