

Esmatullah Khan Kunary



Esmatullah Khan Kunari was born in Nawabad, Kunar, in 1901 (1280 AH). He was Ghazi Mir Zaman Khan Kunari's second oldest son and assisted his father in his historical battles in support of King Amanullah Khan's regime. Esmatullah Khan was the commander of the Asmar battalion in Kunar. He was also the civilian administrator of Asmar.

Esmatullah Khan was a graduate of the Kabul Military Academy, rising to the rank of a Regimental Commander in the Afghan Army. The mass imprisonment of the Zamani family in Dehmazang, Kabul, in 1945 (1324 AH) marked the end of his military career, denying him the opportunity for further promotions.

Esmatullah Khan fought alongside Ghazi Mir Zaman Khan against the Shinwari revolt of November 1928. Mir Zaman Khan was sent to Jalalabad by King Amanullah Khan to quash the rebellion with the help of his Kunari tribes who were successful in holding their positions against waves of popular attacks. King Amanullah's subsequent move to send additional forces from Kabul to Jalalabad proved disastrous as the commander of the forces, Sardar Ali Ahmad Khan, had his own agenda and proclaimed himself King. Mir Zaman Khan left for Kunar to muster support in an attempt to attack the forces of Habibullah Kalakani via Tagao with help from local Safi tribes. The plan was foiled when Mir Zaman Khan was assassinated in Kunar.

Esmatullah Khan left Kunar to join King Amanullah Khan on his way to Kandahar following the King's decision in January 1929 to abdicate. Esmatullah Khan accompanied King Amanullah Khan to Quetta, Pakistan, via Kandahar, and took part in the clashes that the King's accompanying small army was involved in.

Following the departure of King Amanullah Khan into temporary exile to India, from where he travelled to



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Europe and settled in Italy, and later in Switzerland, Esmatullah Khan was taken into custody by the British and held in Peshawar, Pakistan.

According to Esmatullah Khan's oldest son, Mr Sher Ali Zamani, the British informed Esmatullah Khan of the assassination of Mir Zaman Khan in Peshawar and offered him and the Zamani family to abandon their anti-British stance in return for a safe haven and promised him a great deal of land and property in what is now Pakistan. The British also reminded Esmatullah Khan of the bleak prospects for his family in the post-Amanullah Afghanistan. However, Esmatullah Khan totally rejected the offer and instead clandestinely returned to Afghanistan with the help of the Mohmand Pashtoon tribes.

Esmatullah Khan died in 1960 in exile and was buried in the well-known shrine, Ziarat-i-Mowafaq, in Herat.



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